

Inca Author Information Page

Robert Wingfield

Currently living in: Darkest Norfolk, England

Main works: The Ankerita Series, The Legend of Dan Series, One Man in a Bus (Sicily and North Cyprus), Starfire Flight and Orinoco II, Everyone's Guide to Not being an Old Person.

I started writing because: I needed to get something on paper for people to read and marvel at once I've shuffled off my mortal and they realise my true brilliance.

My main writing interests are: Satirical Sci-Fi, Gothic, but I like to set myself the challenges of turning my hand to anything dealing with the written word.

My sources of research and information are: Imagination, Life, study, newspaper articles, technical journals, the Internet and visiting the places I'm writing about, to see them first hand.

My inspiration comes from: Normally chatting with people, bouncing ideas, or even seeing a news article concerning something bizarrely stupid... oh and a degree of bile directed towards the petty, self-important do-gooders trying to dictate our lives.

My stories are planned like this: Sad to say, I rarely storyboard my stories. I get the general idea and a vague target to head for, but normally, the writing takes over and the story ends way out of any original plans. The endings are sometimes as much of a surprise to me as to the reader.

I have written a series of books based on: Satirical sci-fi. I've worked inside large organisations for a long time, and situations there are what people say 'You couldn't make it up'. I've taken that, and the various ridiculous situations that happen to each of us every day, and shoved them to the limit with scathing satire and running gags. It's called 'The Dan Series', and although started off a bit like a rude version of the 'Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy' has moved far beyond that as I'm getting more cynical with old age.

My future plans are to: More of the same, but varying the genres. I've written two more books leading on from the Gothic chiller, 'Ankerita', and am going off to other locations, hopefully to pen another one of the 'One Man in a Bus' comical guides to holidays.

My own favourite character is: I have a number. I can't help liking Mrs Tuesday, the tea lady in 'The Fifth Correction', who solves a load of problems and makes a cup of coffee that actually tastes like freshly ground beans smell... or the demon, Didiubas, in Ankerita, whose side he's on you can never fathom. I planned to lose him in the later Ankerita books, but he seems irrepressible. That's the great thing about writing; the characters seem to take on a life of their own. And then there is BJ, the feisty teenager from the modern day Swallows&Amazons type stories, 'Starfire Flight' and 'Orinoco II, The Miracle', and finally, the Magus, doing all the things private detectives are supposed to do, in 'Fourth Universe' and getting them totally wrong.

I sometimes find myself thinking like: The Magus as he gets bounced from 'pillow to poster' in all the Dan series. All he wants is a quiet life and to settle down with a good ale, but fate has other ideas.

I also have a few other books I'd like to highlight as follows: If you have an aging relative, or are getting on a bit yourself, you might like 'Everyone's Guide to (not) being an Old Person'. I've studied the way people act when they get older, and got a good friend to illustrate the various indications that you are getting old, such as slippers, cakes and rigid routines. There's a great quiz at the end to actually work out your perceived age (ignoring the wrinkles of course).

My advice to new writers would be: Don't go into writing expecting to make a living. Unless you have studied it for years or have something people really want to read, such as you were the head of HM Revenue and Customs or the man who invented speed cameras, then the bigtime hangs on extreme hard work and a big dollop of luck. Write because you like writing. It should not be a job, but pure pleasure of completing a novel. It's on your own bookshelf; maybe nobody is the slightest bit interested, particularly family who seem to treat it as nothing. But you know what you have done and can see the massive achievement you have made.

Writing has its ups and downs: The best is crafting the book itself - you sit down and the story flows all over you. You look up at the clock and realise a whole day has gone by. The downs are for the same reason - you've developed cramps for sitting too long and are starving hungry, but you know that if you stop, you might lose the inspiration. If you get honest encouragement from a good friend or family member, it makes all the difference.

When I'm not writing: Visiting friends and relations, planning the next book, taking notes when someone comes up with a trigger phrase for the next story, feeding the rabbit, trying to work out how to afford to live on a tiny pension, wondering why the Tax Office want to take 25% of what little royalties I have earned, and trying to exercise to keep fit.

For copy editing and proofreading: My biggest critic is my own son, but fortunately I have some other literate friends who are happy to read through and comment on my work as well. In the Incas, we tend to read and edit each other's work, which is a great help in all directions.

I accept criticism from: It's good to get constructive criticism. One of our authors let a friend read his book and ended up being totally demoralised at the feedback. That's not how it should happen, and all our authors know that. Feedback from them is valued, and frequently taken on board.

My experiences with self-publishing: I think it's great that CreateSpace have taken up the print on demand facility. It's possible to spend a lot of money doing this with any publisher, but if you are prepared to do the work yourself, then you can do it very cheaply. If it hadn't been for CS, none of my recent works would be in paper. It was tricky to start with, but I was never one to shy away from giving feedback, and they have listened and improved the offering considerably since the beginning - cover design and submission being the main advance. Now Amazon are doing something similar, but I'm suspicious about their printing costs and royalty calculations.

I promote my books via: Facebook, Twitter local libraries, local papers, and even give a few to local bookshops for them to sell. One sneaky trick is to leave a copy on those bookshelves in pubs where they do book exchange for charity - the watchword is 'visibility'. Never mind the profit, get the book out there to as many people as possible.

My favourite mainstream authors are: Robert Rankin, Wilkie Collins, John Buchan, Arthur Ransome and anyone else who tells a good tale.

I am currently reading: 20,000 Leagues under the Sea by Jules Verne. It's hard going unless you are a marine biologist from a century ago.

I prefer to read books in: paperback - the hardbacks are too heavy to cart about and the electronic form seems too impersonal - I do read on Kindle, PC and iPhone, but there's nothing like the presence of a physical book.

A bit about my other interests: I love exploring old buildings and delving into history, although when archaeology gets to be simply 'a collection of small walls' and muddy knees, I tend to lose interest.

My most unattainable ambition is: to score a goal for the Swedish Ladies' Football Team

Last thoughts before we go down the pub/club/library/boot-sale/exercise yard: Keep writing, one day you'll be discovered, hopefully while you're still alive enough to spend the royalties.

Author Links

Website: www.cantbearsd.co.uk

Amazon Author page: <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Robert-Wingfield/e/B0069IR0EG>

Twitter: @twodansmith

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/robert.wingfield.5>

Any other links: The Inca project of course, but then you know that; you're already here!