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- [Home](#)
 - [About Us](#)
 - [Photo Gallery](#)
 - [Testimonials](#)
 - [Contact Us](#)
 - [Members](#)
 - [News](#)
 - [Guestbook](#)
- [FAQ](#) [Authors and their book cover](#)

News

[« Back to News](#)

[« Older Entry](#) | [Newer Entry »](#)

[author interview -- Mary Ann Bernal Writes Ten Centuries Apart](#)

 Posted by [Matt Posner](#) on March 26, 2014 at 5:25 PM






One of my best friends in the independent author business is Mary Ann Bernal – and she's back again with news about her recent doings. Welcome back to School of the Ages, Mary Ann. Since you've been here before, let me ask you some questions I hope you haven't been asked before. But before I do that, tell us about your latest work so that we can celebrate it together.

Thanks for having me back, Matt. My latest release, [The Briton and the Dane: Timeline](#), veers off my beaten path, in that we start off in the 21st century and travel back in time to the 11th century. This novel is dedicated to Gwyneth and Erik – however, they are not the same Gwyneth and Erik referenced in the trilogy; they have their own story to tell. I must admit I did feel somewhat guilty about not giving the original Gwyneth and Erik more “screen time” when I wrote their story since the supporting cast had demanded to have their tales told, and thus, one novel turned into three. In [The Briton and the Dane: Timeline](#), I did not “listen” to the ancillary character demands, keeping the storyline where it should be, focused on the “stars”.

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Matt says: there's an excerpt after the interview...

There are many references to the modern era in this tale, which the reader can relate to. It is easy to speculate as to what might have happened in an earlier time, i.e., does Erik die in his sleep or was he killed on the battlefield? Without documentation, one can only guess.

Of course, if Gwyneth's true lineage is discovered whilst visiting another century, she would be considered the devil's spawn and condemned to death. This does not stop her from trying to incorporate her wealth of knowledge into her daily existence, knowing full well the dangers time travelers faced, but most importantly, taking care not to change the timeline. Remember the [Star Trek Paradox](#)? Yes, I did include the premise in the story.

Reviews have been positive, and I do hope to diversify my fan base with this release.

You and I are part of a group of authors who promote each other, also including Mark Barry (Wiz Green), K. Meador, and Ngaire Victoria Elder. I came late to this informal team -- how do you think you guys found each other and wound up working together?

The group was initially set up by historical fiction and children's author, K. Meador. K-Trina invited quite a few authors, some of which were unknown to each other when the group was created.

It was through Mark Barry that I met K-Trina and Ngaire. And how did I meet Mark Barry, you ask? I answered his Facebook post request to submit a book title to be included in [Green Wizard Publishing's Catalogue and Indielit Scrapbook](#). The rest, as the saying goes, is history.

While social media promos do more for visibility than for actual sales, being part of groups does have its advantages. If it were not for the internet, interacting with friends in the UK, Spain and many European countries would have been impossible – think about it – what are the odds?

The support given by members of our group is priceless, and I cherish the friendships.

*Your series is called *The Briton and the Dane*. Leaving out characters you have written about, who in history is your favorite and least favorite Briton, and your favorite and least favorite Dane?*

My favorite "Briton" is the erroneously maligned [Richard III](#) whose reputation had been tarnished by the usurper, Henry Tudor (Henry VII).

My least favorite "Briton" is [Thomas, Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby](#), whose treachery at the Battle of Bosworth cost Richard III his crown and his life.

Yes, in addition to being an Anglophile, I am also a Yorkist.

My favorite "Dane" is [Cnut the Great](#) who was King of Denmark, England, Norway and Sweden. Rather than use force, he united the Danes and Englishmen (Anglo-Saxons) with cultural enticements (e.g. keeping local customs, acquiring wealth).

My lease favorite "Dane" is [Harald Hardrada](#) whose untimely invasion of England was the catalyst, which ended the Anglo-Saxon era.

When I was a child, I encountered subject matter somewhat similar to yours when I read [Mary Stewart's](#) books about Merlin and Arthur. Do you have any reflections upon this hugely popular author?

Mary Stewart is a role model for aspiring female authors, in my humble opinion. Her gender did not stop her from becoming one of Britain's best-selling authors, and her novels continue to spark the imaginations of today's youth. I read most of her books, but my favorite is *The Last Enchantment*.

What would you look for if you could fly a glider above the Battle of Hastings?

Finding Harold's line that was retreating in confusion, and another break in the line later in the day, which allowed the Normans to fight their way into the Saxon position at the top of the hill. If Harold's men had held their ground, the results might have been different. I've included a map for easy reference.

Final words to close this interview?

In today's age, history is not in the forefront of favorite topics. My stories incorporate current issues, such as the plight of the military family when their loved one is deployed. I hope to instill some insight into the past, bringing to life people who lived in a long ago time, people who experienced the same emotions we experience today. Hopefully, one day, society will learn from its mistakes.

Thanks so much for having me, Matt. It's been fun.

Brief Bio



Mary Ann Bernal, author of *The Briton* and the *Dane* novels, is an avid history buff whose area of interest focuses on Ninth Century Anglo-Saxon Britain during the Viking Age. While pursuing a degree in business administration, she managed to fit creative writing classes and workshops into her busy schedule to learn the craft, but it would take decades before

her "Erik the Viking" novel was ultimately published.

Mary Ann is also a passionate supporter of the United States military, having been involved with letter writing campaigns and other support programs since Operation Desert Storm. She has appeared on The Morning Blend television show hosted by KMTV, the CBS television affiliate in Omaha, and was interviewed by the Omaha World-Herald for her volunteer work. She has also been a featured author on Triangle Variety Radio, The Phil Naessens Show, and The Writers Showcase, and has been interviewed extensively by American and European bloggers.

Mary Ann is a New York "expat," and currently resides in Omaha, Nebraska.

Links

[Webpage](#)

[Twitter](#)

(You'll find all of my tweets here -- Mary Ann Retweets 'em all... -- Matt)

[Blog](#)

[The Briton and the Dane: Timeline at Amazon UK](#)

[youtube trailer for The Briton and the Dane: Timeline](#)

The Briton and the Dane: Timeline - excerpt

"It's done, I leave for Wareham at the end of the week. Another reenactment, Alfred the Great and the Danish Vikings, when Lord Richard commanded the citadel!" Gwyneth exclaimed.

"I didn't think there were any of those reenactment groups left."

"There are a few, but finding these reenactors was quite by accident. I still can't believe it's happening."

"How long will you be away?" Malcolm asked, calendar in hand.

"Just the weekend; I'll be back early Sunday afternoon. I haven't forgotten about the reception and convincing Viscount Beaumont to fund another year excavating the ruins; that is, unless you could speak to him?"

"Just how long is this event?"

"Two weeks."

Malcolm watched Gwyneth intently, but their eyes locked for a brief moment, when the truth of unspoken feelings was revealed, acknowledged, then veiled within the recesses of two souls. Gwyneth averted his gaze as she stood up from her desk, the flickering lights creating eerie shadows. The

seconds were a welcome respite from facing the inevitable. Gwyneth fumbled through the drawers, searching for a flashlight, her shaking hands barely discernible as she groped for the familiar torch. She wrapped her fingers around the precious light source and was relieved when the ceiling lights finally stopped fluttering.

Malcolm was also unnerved, his vulnerability exposed for a split second. He coughed, his eyes upon the floor while waiting for the moment to pass. He concentrated on his work, his profession, and the reason for his visit.

"Take the two weeks," Malcolm said. "I'll deal with Beaumont."

"Oh, Malcolm, really? Thank you. I will make this up to you, I promise," Gwyneth beamed, hugging him briefly before stepping back, somewhat embarrassed. "I'm sorry, please forgive me."

"Gwyneth, I don't mind, really, but now that this matter is resolved, I would discuss the reason for my visit. I am pleased to inform you that you are now officially tenured, and I will be putting your name forward as head of the department."

"That is your job; are you leaving?"

"In a manner of speaking."

"Malcolm, stop being so secretive. Tell me, I cannot bear the suspense."

"You are talking to the deputy vice chancellor, but you must not say a word until the appointment has been announced."


In her excitement, Gwyneth embraced Malcolm, kissing him on his cheek, but this time he held her tightly, kissing her lips as the lights flickered unsteadily, plunging them into darkness.

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2 Comments



Mark Barry

Reply

6:41 PM on March 26, 2014

Fantastic interview, you two. Love Mary Ann's work. Couple of points. I have stood at the precise point where Stanley held back his troops and allowed the butchery of Richard III. He could have intervened – he was expected to intervene – but he worked out the odds and realised he would have been better off with Tudor. He's not liked. His ancestors, however, own Ouija Board, who is one of my favourite ever racehorses, so I have softened in my dislike of him. Secondly, did you know that Cnut's attempt to stop the tide from coming in is now considered an ironic, almost fatalistic gesture, rather than an act of madness as they taught us at school. Keep up the good work, you two. Big fan...Mark/Wiz



Mary Ann Bernal

Reply

7:16 PM on March 26, 2014

Softening does not computer, Mark – also Margaret Beaufort, Stanley's wife, and the usurper's mother, is even money with most disliked Brit. Of course, in the parallel universe, Richard III could have been victorious. Thanks for liking my work, considering my genre is not on the top of your list. Appreciate the support. Mary Ann

