



Newsletter

Issue 7 - September 2016

Welcome to our seventh newsletter from the project, and we trust you all had a good summer.

This is our way of staying in touch with our membership, now having passed a half-century of exceptional authors. We are highlighting your work and bringing you all up to date with the latest writings.

We hope you enjoy reading it and would welcome any feedback.

If there is anything else you would like to see, or you find any inaccuracies then please email me. As we are stored electronically, the newsletter can be updated on the hoof.

In this issue we look at new Inca novels, further taboos to steer clear of and briefly look at cover design. Your cover is the shop window of your book. If it is not great, people will not be interested in buying. As a guinea-pig, I've got Robert to submit some of his covers for you to look at and criticise.

Reminder: if you are doing a promotion on your books, please let us know because then we can help you to advertise it through the Inca portals.

Best wishes

Bridget

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News from the Incas

Inca Symposia

A third one was convened in Hertfordshire between ourselves and JW Lawson in the summer. Mummy's Little Angel is doing extremely well, and there have even been talks about film rights. As one would expect from an American publishing company, they needed Jo to rewrite parts of it to make it more American in its feel. "Better for that market," they said.

Father McGargles by Norman Morrow

This entered the Amazon top 50 in British & Irish Contemporary Literature in July 2016. Congratulations to Norman for an excellent result.

The Inside Story

Darius is collecting a number of interviews from characters in the some of the books highlighted. The main site is at <https://theinsidestoryweb.wordpress.com/>

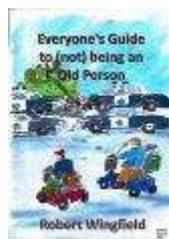
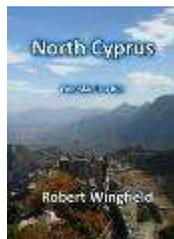
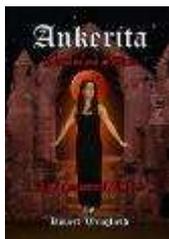
There are more interviews with characters from the books linked from the Inca home page. Do have a look and enjoy listening to Sir Cristian Gilleson, Father Brennan, The Magus etc.

Please contact him through the link above and get your favourite character a bit of extra publicity.

This Quarter's Thoughts

Book covers

Never judge a book by its cover? Now who said that do you think? Probably a couple of centuries ago before self-publishing was available, and there were only three books in the library, it was true. Now, in this instant access world, people skim across the mass of literature available, and reject a book if the cover doesn't get their attention. We have guidelines for covers on the Inca site, but Robert Wingfield has bravely offered some of his for you to judge for yourselves. By looking at the cover you should be able to get an idea of what to expect inside. Without peeping, see if you can guess which is what, and feel free to get in touch with us and suggest improvements so that you would be unable to resist buying the book if you saw it in a charity shop (which sadly is where a lot of works end up, even from well-known authors).



More thoughts on Pricing

An unknown writer will most likely to be selling only to friends. For the sake of a few pence, we don't really want to rip them off. I always set mine to minimum price. If one ever gets famous, then put the price up to the acceptable level after that - or say that the book is on offer for a while, and put the price up after your friends have bought their copies.

Scared of losing your Thumb Drive

To reduce the impact of the loss of your drive – in taxis, usually along with your main company database, and personnel records of the entire Health Service, change its drive label.

Load the thumb drive.

Go to Explorer, right-click on the drive and **Rename**

Change the name of the drive to **<PostCode space House number/name>** (11 letters maximum) e.g.

MK40_6QD_11

That way, if an honest person finds the drive, and yes there are plenty about (lost drives *and*

honest people), the moment they see the drive label they will know who to contact to return it. If you add a text file on the drive itself, to say that a reward will be given, and maybe your phone number, you might get even better response.

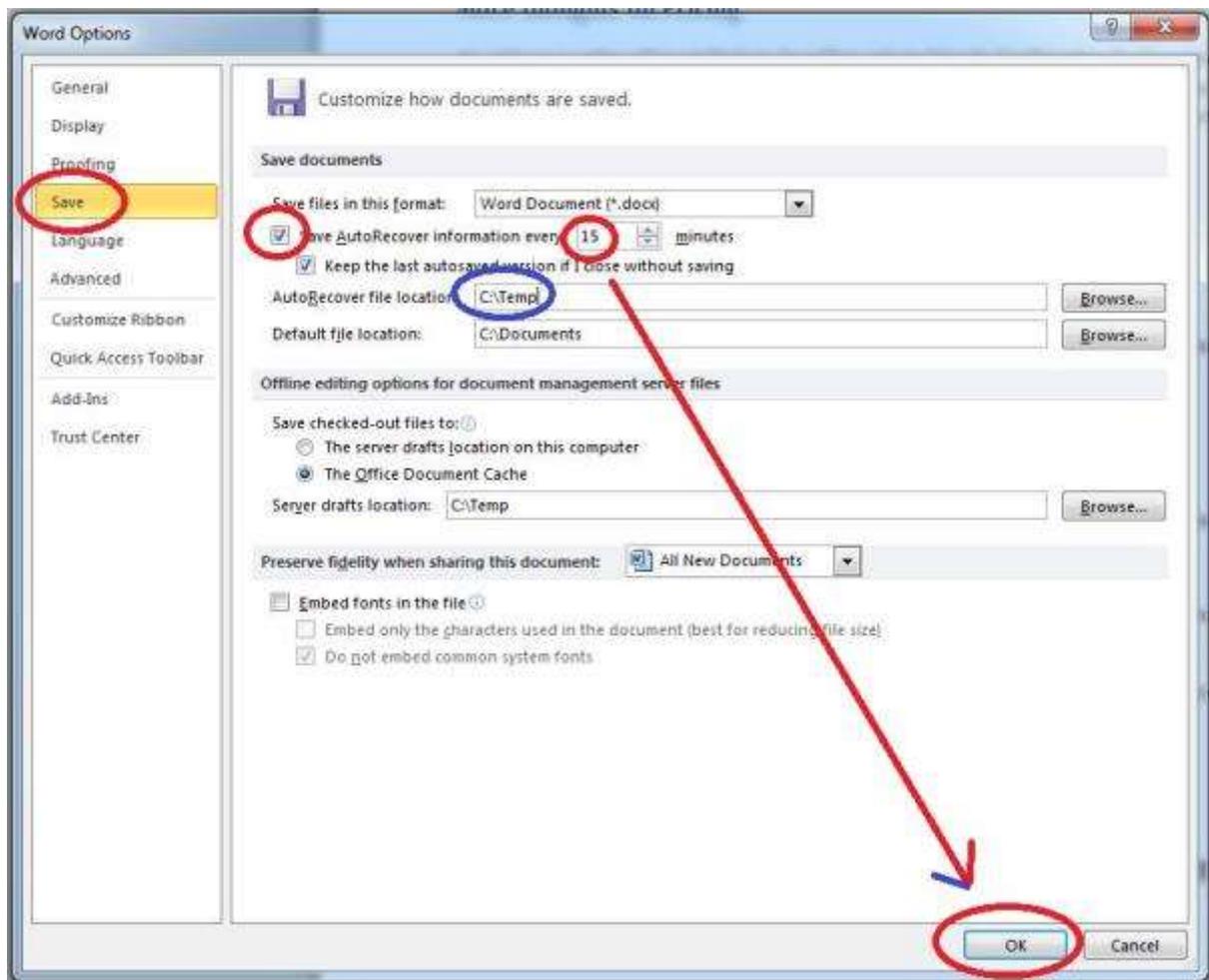
You can also change the name of your other hard disks in the same way. It has no effect on how they work. It is what it says, a label only

You can also buy encryption software, which is great until you forget your password – more about that next newsletter.

Setting Auto-recover on Word Documents

As well as regular backups to a thumb drive, you can set auto-recover in Word.

Go to File – Options – Save and set it on if not already. Reduce the default 30 mins to 15 and even with a power outage, you will only lost 15 minutes maximum. The missing files will be in the location you've set (under the blue circle).



Writer's Block – getting round it

We've probably done this before, but worth another mention:

- Eavesdrop on a phone conversation - fill in bits you can't hear
- Go to a playground with your kids and join in
- Use music to inspire character/scene
- Set a day aside to play with other creative pursuits
- Dust off some old writing
- Trade the latest 10 pages with a writing friend and ask them what comes next
- Jot down snippets of ideas as they come to you
- Read poetry or something that inspires you
- Put a storyboard together
- Window shop like your character might.
- Start working on your book cover
- Go to the beginning of your novel and start editing. Look for hanging plotlines.

Chapter Length... again

Always use chapters. Long books with no breaks are difficult to read.

Try to keep your chapters of even length. Why? Most people have busy lives and will pick your book up and read it in stages. A bedtime or train journey read will ideally split into 15-20 minute segments (average people's attention span) and this amounts to 3000-4000 words: one chapter.

As a guideline, if the novel is 25 chapters and 80,000 words, which is the optimum for price versus revenue on Createspace, then the ideal chapter length will be 3500 words. If you find yourself greatly outside of this, consider adding shorter chapters together and using a page break and subtitle to indicate change of scene or time, or conversely splitting very long chapters into shorter ones.

If you've written a book much longer than 80,000, then consider writing it as two books. This will keep the cost of each down, make you more money and also be of greater interest to publishers – you have the beginnings of a series. On the whole, publishers are not interested in one-hit wonders.

Finally, a very short chapter is fine occasionally. These may mostly be at the beginning or end of the book, and contain punchy scenes separate from the rest of the narrative. Don't over-use them.

Section and chapter dividers

If you are changing scene or perspective, it is a good idea to use some sort of indication to the reader. The Inca template uses three or five asterisks to denote section and chapter., but please feel free to use any related image you like. Pen and Ink style looks best, rather than involved images. You simply obtain the image as a graphics file and then "insert image". Use the style "Centred" to get it in the right place without margin indents, shrink to look good, and there you are. You can get images from Open Clipart (<https://openclipart.org/>) but you can also design and draw your own, or use photographs turned into line drawings using Photosketcher, (<http://fotosketcher.com/>) a free converter that's lots of fun too.

Reviews on Amazon

Apparently people can place reviews of books they haven't read. That seems a bit odd, but I'm game to give it a try. In the case of the Inca works, we editors may have read the book if it was passed to us for copy editing and formatting, or kind authors may even have sent us a promotional copy. We will thus be able to provide a glowing review with the comment to that effect. If you have reviewed a book for one of our authors, please do give it a glowing review (if you hated it, keep quiet. Even a bad book has had many hours of work put into it, and you may discourage the author from writing a masterpiece in their next book.)

Taboo words

We are still building our collection of words to try to avoid in your text, although they are usually acceptable within quotation marks – people do speak this way.

To recap, we have:

- **Well** – beware starting a speech with this
- **Indeed** – only used in Victorian melodramas by the BBC when they want to sound posh, and all too often in modern journalism. If you write the word, try deleting it and see if the context of the line changes.
- **Very** – try to be more descriptive (very busy = frantic, overloaded, on fire etc.).
- **Really** – like 'Very'.
- **Just** – Often not needed. Try removing it completely and if the sense of the phrase changes, qualify it with different words.

New this quarter

- To be perfectly honest

Please contact us with any other hate words, phrases or clichés you would like us to highlight and we will credit you in the next newsletter.

New Books

Here are our latest releases for the last three months. Please let me know directly if I've missed any. I do sometimes see them on Facebook, but we rely on you to tell us when you have published.

The Villainous Viscount – Lucinda Elliot

An appreciative satire of the clichés of traditional Gothic romance.



When Clarissa Greendale inherits the fortune of disreputable uncle she hardly knows, she does not expect to find herself forced into marriage with an aristocratic fortune hunter and wild, brawling, debauched social outcast.

Neither does she expect to inherit too the legacy of a wrongdoing from half a century before...

For the wicked Lord Venn is rumoured to have inherited a family curse, which, having dispatched the main perpetrators of the old crime, now moves on to their heirs, who are just as wild a set of rakes as their elders. There are rumours of violent deaths preceded by appearances from an inexorable Hooded Spectre, of inexplicable strikes of lightning, and of haunted mirrors.

The light hearted Harley Venn dismisses all these as conjuring tricks. He even hires a drunken charlatan of a professional magician to prove it.

Clarinda is far from sure that there is any rational explanation. Still, it would take more than an enforced marriage to a pugilistic libertine or persecution from malevolent spectres to damage her steely nerves and sense of the ridiculous.

This lively Gothic comedy, written as a good natured satire of the clichés of Gothic romance, gives the reader a warm hearted and courageous heroine, a wicked but beguiling anti-hero and an authentic historical background to the delightfully over-the-top adventures, plus a host of vivid supporting characters and many chills on its way to its tumultuous conclusion.

Who Killed Vivien Morse? (DCI Hatherall Book 4) – Diana J Febray

Vivien Morse, a young social worker is discovered battered to death in Silver Lady Woods. Everyone assumes she was attacked by her estranged husband until her supervisor disappears. The connection appears to be Vivien's last client. A damaged and disturbed girl who believes a bundle of rags is her lost baby and never leaves the family farm while she awaits the return of her lover.

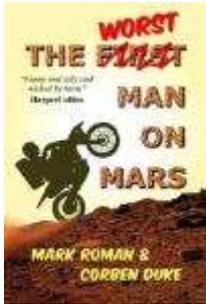
The matter is confused by the arrival of a stranger to the area clearly searching for something or someone and an escaped convict with connections to the area.

DCI Hatherall has to separate fact from fantasy to discover who did kill Vivien Morse.



The Worst Man on Mars – Mark Roman and Corben Duke

An offbeat sci-fi comedy, laced with quirky British humour.



Flint Dugdale, blunt Yorkshireman and reality TV show winner, seems an unlikely contender for First Man on Mars. The Right Stuff he is not. But the tragic death of the mission's brave commander has created a vacancy which Dugdale, with his large frame and 'persuasive personality', has been quick to fill. He has put himself in charge of Britain's first group of colonists to the Red Planet. With a place in History assured, Dugdale plans to see out the rest of the mission drinking lager, eating pies and watching his favourite sports on wide-screen TV.

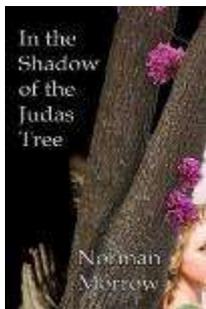
But all is not well on the Martian surface. For five years an advance party of robots with evolving AI personalities have been building Botany Base. They are a long way behind schedule and have made some crucial dimensioning errors. So the base's rooms are too small, the doors don't fit, and the lift-shaft is too narrow for the space elevator that is to bring the humans down from their spaceship. Worse, the food supplies sent from Earth have mysteriously gone missing, the drinking-water is muddy, and the Polish builder bots have gone AWOL.

On the eve of the descent to the surface, Dugdale knows nothing of these problems. And he is also unaware that the ship's scanners have detected living organisms two miles north of the base.

It seems there is Life down there. But will it be pleased to see him?

In the Shadow of the Judas Tree – Norman Morrow

The eagerly awaited next book from Norman does not disappoint. Set before the time of Father McGargles, we see the errant priest struggling with his vocation. Its working title was 'Summer of Forbidden Love' as you may remember from the old work in progress page.



Love maketh the man; forbidden love maketh the priest.

In 1982, twenty-five-year old curate, James Brennan, grapples with his lack of vocation and his relationship with an unmarried mother, Summer McMahon. Fate offers James a future beyond the priesthood as love blossoms between him and Summer, but the discovery of a predator lurking within the community derails this plan. Crushed by duty, and the deception that surrounds him, James is determined to right a wrong before claiming the right to be happy.

An intricate marriage of comedy and tragedy, the shadows of betrayal stretch far beyond the Judas tree.

In the true spirit of the Incas, Norman is donating some of the zillions of royalties he is expecting to a charity working with survivors of sexual abuse - oneinfour.ie

Sentenced to Obscurity - Oznonymous

A tortured tale of forbidden love that degenerates into a dystopian nightmare from our very own DJ Meyers, writing from Australia as Oznonymous.

The Gargoyle Chronicles continue.

Author Indigo Meier does not take risks, but he does have a furtive imagination that spawns the futuristic tale, 'Humanity's Sunset over Osaka Bay'. His first mistake is to fall for an actress on hard times; the beautiful Charlotte Watson. The second is to allow her to be the only person to read his novel. All subsequent mistakes are written into a history that could destroy them both.

Humanity will never be the same

The future isn't written, it is rewritten

The past was not written, it was designed...

