

# LISA L GREER

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## Mary Ann Bernal: The story behind "The Briton and the Dane" trilogy

Lisa Greer has graciously invited me to provide a guest blog post for her site and I wish to thank her for this wonderful opportunity before we get down to business. Many thanks, Lisa.

First, a little background about myself and my novels. In addition to being an avid history buff whose area of interest focuses on Ninth Century Anglo-Saxon Britain during the Viking Age, I am also a passionate supporter of the United States military, having been involved with letter writing campaigns and other military support programs since Operation Desert Storm. On the home front, you will find me cheering for my grandchildren at dance competitions and sporting events, receiving "extra credit" when braving the elements.



Since we are now acquainted, I shall get right to the heart of:

### The Story behind The Briton and the Dane Trilogy

I fell in love with medieval England after reading Sir Walter Scott's "Ivanhoe" in my sophomore year of high school, but my interests soon turned towards the Dark Ages when the formidable Vikings harassed the civilized world once Hollywood released such blockbusters as "The Vikings," "The Longships," and "Erik the Viking." Add to the mix "Alfred the Great," "Prince Valiant," and "King Arthur," and an incurable romantic anglophile was born.

As time went on Hollywood changed its venue of period movies, but I found solace with the many British programs being aired on our local PBS station. With the advent of BBC America and History International, I was able to find great documentaries such as "The Dark Ages," "Life in Anglo-Saxon Times," "Dark Age England," and "Viking Exploration," to name but a few.

During this time, Erik the Viking was hovering in the cobwebs of my creative mind, waiting to escape oblivion, waiting to tell his story, waiting and waiting and waiting, but it was not until 2008 that I was able to find the time to devote to fulfilling my lifelong dream of writing my Erik the Viking novel.

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Why did I focus on Alfred the Great and King Guthrum? I chose these two formidable characters because I find them fascinating. This was a time of conflict and change, when Christianity was replacing the pagan religion, and the feared Vikings no longer plundered the fertile country of Britannia but remained and settled the land.

When King Alfred defeated King Guthrum in 878, one of the terms for peace was the Christian baptism of the Danish King. I wondered how this heathen King might have felt about denying the gods of his ancestors as he willingly accepted the Roman Christ God, and also wondered how willing his subjects had been to submit to the rules of the new religion.

In addition to the religious conflict, there were also petty Kings who coveted the throne, not only King Alfred's crown, but King Guthrum's as well. Throw into the mix, illegitimate offspring and you have all the makings for a great story.

While Erik started out as my main character, the supporting characters quickly sought to usurp the protagonist role. I had often heard the phrase, "but then my characters took over," and suddenly discovered that the statement is very true. Erik had to share the limelight with the many prominent figures, and these characters refused to play a minor role in an ongoing saga.

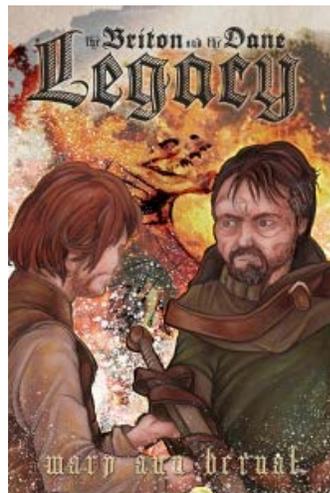
The same holds true for the antagonist; there are many opponents as the story unravels, each with their own agenda, but each seeking power and wealth.

I delve into the minds of the characters as they deal with conflicts that are quite common today: father/son relationships and acknowledgement of paternity, religious confrontation, and warfare. The people who lived in the Ninth Century were flesh and blood as we are flesh and blood. They faced the same problems, made similar choices, and perhaps regretted their decisions, just like us.

I also wanted to reach out to the families of our modern day warriors, and to remind everyone that the only thing that has changed in warfare over time has been its weaponry. What has not changed is the anxiety as one awaits the fate of loved ones; waiting is difficult no matter which century a person lives in.

Since "The Briton and the Dane: Legacy" is the third and final installment of the trilogy, I should be willing to say goodbye...the key word here is should...but there are many stories still to tell, and many characters to meet, and enough passion, intrigue, treachery and betrayal to enthrall an audience...so fear not my faithful fans, the series will continue.

"The Briton and the Dane" trilogy has been a joy to write, and I trust a joy to read. Enjoy the adventure, it only gets better.



Coming Soon:

"The Briton and the Dane: Concordia" – available 2013

**For more information, please visit:**

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<http://www.maryannbernal.com>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Omaha/The-Briton-and-the-Dane/279770885805>

<http://twitter.com/#!/BritonandDane>

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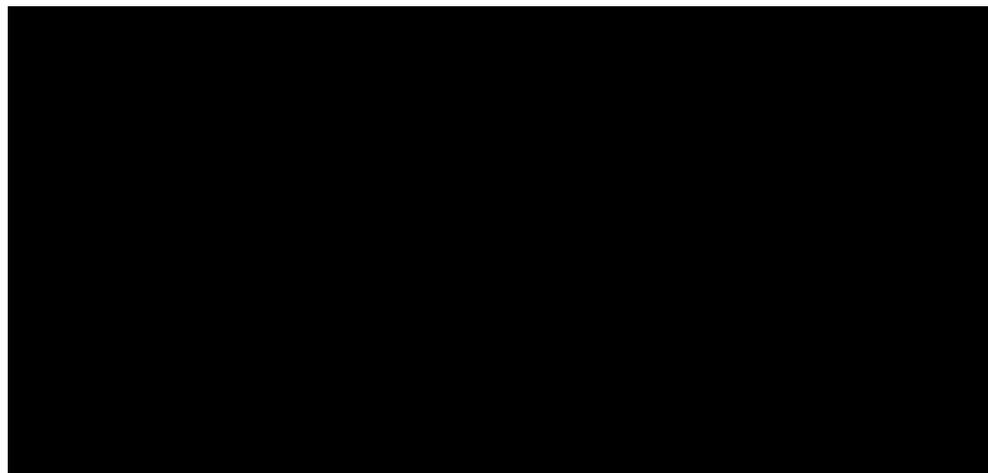
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The Literary Underground

<http://www.litunderground.com/MaryAnnBernal.html>

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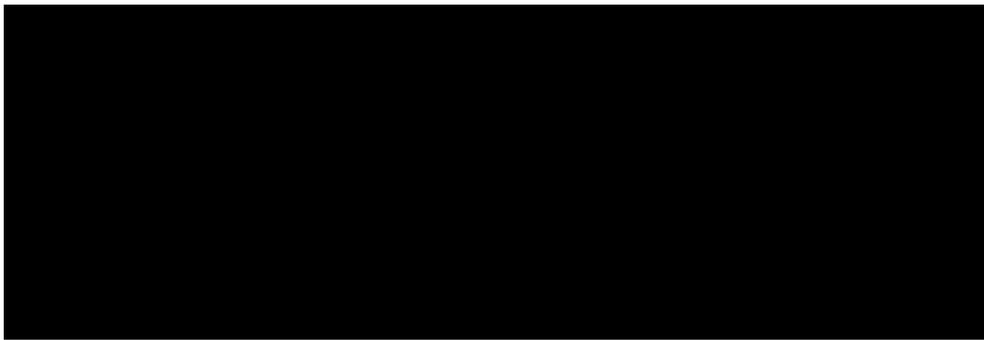
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### Giveaway

Mary Ann has graciously offered to give away one copy of "The Briton and the Dane: Legacy." Just leave a blog comment for her, and I'll draw a winner by 5pm, June 14th.

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