

***This Months Spotlight
Interview:
Feat.
Stephen Hunt!
on Pg 13***



SPOTLIGHT INTERVIEW

W/ STEPHEN HUNT

For our April Issue, we've reached out to both traditionally and self-published author Stephen Hunt. I first discovered Stephen while prowling around a bookstore sometime in 2008, and something about the simplicity of the parchment colored paperback titled "The Court of the Air" hooked me immediately. Now, we know your office fields somewhere between 300-700 emails daily so thank you for taking the time to join us Stephen!

H.M. - As a fan of Steampunk personally, I absolutely love your Jackelian Series, but steampunk aside, we also know that you write SciFi and Crime/Thrillers. During our research we noticed that you write under two names for each of these genres, under fantasy/sci-fi you write as Stephen Hunt but for your Crime/Thriller books you write as Stephen A. Hunt. What prompted the change?

S.H. - There're two elements to this. The first is that it's a small nod in honour to my sadly now passed friend Iain Banks who used to write his science fiction books as Iain M. Banks, reserving Iain Banks for his literary fiction.

The second factor is more pragmatic. It helps your sales on Amazon to write different genres with delineated names ... this is because it boosts the accuracy of Amazon algorithms determining who to serve

new books to. In my case, Stephen A. Hunt's books gets shown to crime and thriller fans on the 'Zon, while boring old Stephen Hunt gets targeted against the fantasy and science fiction readers.

H.M. - You state on your website that you didn't necessarily start out with the intent of writing steampunk, but rather and I'm using my own words here, that you unwittingly wrote yourself into it, all the while influencing the genre. How does that make you feel knowing something you wrote had that much of an effect on so many people especially when it wasn't something you intentionally set out to do?

I suppose it makes me laugh at my deep lack of self-awareness. What I really wanted to do with the first Jackelian book was to write a fantasy novel that would reveal the true nature of the English character in a fantastical setting. Exactly what Tolkien looked to do with his Lord of the Rings books. Except, rather than being a Shire of merry hair-footed peasants resisting the industrial revolution, mine were a bunch of Football thugs in search of a good punch-up with any foreigners who were up for it, while fully embracing the industrial age - via steam-driven robots, pneumatic tube systems, airships, and transaction engines.

It's a party that even Joe Abercrombie has now walked into with his latest novel, A Little Hatred, albeit over a decade after The Court of the Air was first published.

H.M. - You stepped down as the "big-cheese" of SF-Crownsnest.com "a magazine dedicated to such geek interests as science fiction, fantasy, horror, steampunk, science, engineering, futurism and other worthy genres." (Source: <https://www.sfcrownsnest.info/about-us/>) How did you first come to be involved there and what prompted you to move on?

Do you still get emails from inquisitive readers regarding the magazine? You mention on your site you received an email "... moaning about receiving a bad review" did that happen?

I first became involved when it was a print magazine called *Protostellar* back in 1991 - I was working for Apple at the time, involved in launching their AOL and Compuserve competitor, AppleLink (this was pre-web). I put the magazine online at AppleLink for the then print editor, Shadwell, and also digitized the magazine in HyperCard for distribution on computer magazine CD cover-mounts. When the print magazine dwindled, I took over the helm and kept it online until the World Wide Web came along. It was one of the first web-based

magazines of any genre, because we were in so early.

I stopped being Editor in 2000, when Geoff Willmetts, the book editor, took over the command chair. Because I helped found the thing, I still get the occasional email, even though my name isn't on the masthead. It's never nice correspondence, though. Nobody ever emails to say: 'thanks for giving my book such a nice review.' It's always, 'how dare you diss my work of genius, you talentless toad.'

I understand Isaac Asimov still gets pissed-off letters from would-be contributors about their rejected stories at Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine, even though he's been dead for twenty-eight years.

Something for my grandchildren to look forward to, perhaps, after I'm dead and buried?

H.M. - Let's talk publishing, for many of our readers; getting published by "The big four" is a dream, what was it like to be published by the SciFi Imprint of Harper Collins?

It did feel like a bit of a dream at the time, to be honest. I wasn't just published by them, my first book was being fought over by them, and went to auction via my agent, John Jarrold, with all the big names scrapping between each other to be the one

to publish *The Court of the Air*.

Then, as the cherry on the cake, when *The Court of the Air* did come out, it was voted 'Best Novel to be Made into a Film' by the committee of the world's largest film festival, the Berlinale (it has half a million admissions).

H.M. - To caveat off the last question, you've mentioned that you found more success in independently publishing through your own Green Nebula Publishing vs. traditional publishing, why do you think that is?

S.H. - This is a more recent phenomena and is all to do with the trajectory and evolution of the market. Basically, if you sell a £10 novel through Amazon as an indie author, you get £7 per book (paid a month later). If you sell a £10 novel through one of the big four publishers, you might get a ten pence royalty payment (paid a year later).

Given that Amazon accounts for about 92% of all e-books sold around the world, and 70% of all print books, even if you are still publishing via one of the big publishers ... well, which channel are you going to publish through?

The numbers – and commercial logic for anyone who wants a full-time career as an author – sadly speak for themselves.

H.M. - For someone who's been in the "Great Game" (Forgive a little Jackelian reference there) for as long as you have, have you ever considered writing a non-fiction self-help book with tips and tricks for authors looking to get

published? Also, is writing your full-time career or do you do something else on the side?

S.H. - I have got a book outline for a 'How to be an Author' book well fleshed out, now, mixed in with a little general life advice and biographical material. It might be a few years before I get around to penning it, though.

Writing has been a full-time gig for me since my third Jackelian novel, although I still do a little futurology consulting for private clients.

H.M. - Regarding your online blog about life, the universe and everything that catches his 'jaded eye' is your unique views on prime films/series. We really need to know more about working yourself into an 'existential lather' about streaming films and series. Just how often do you do this, and could you elaborate on what that means?

S.H. - When it comes to writing new blog posts, TV series and films are always low-hanging fruit – most of the output (massively increased thanks to the proliferation of battling streaming services) is so bad, it's easy to poke holes in it.

H.M. - What's next for Stephen Hunt? Any new books in the works?

Dozens of the flipping things. I have a comedy SF novel on the boil – my attempts to do a Terry Pratchett or a Douglas Adams book. There's a standalone near future novel which packs in all my ideas of where I think society might be going in

fifty years, looking at what makes a dystopia and utopia.

There are two new Sliding Void novels – one a military SF follow-up to *Hell Fleet*, one a Gravity Rose crew-focused book. I also have a new crime book fully fleshed out, which needs time to write. There's also a second *Songs of Old Sol* book, as a follow-up to *Empty Between the Stars*.

H.M. - Finally, where can we find you? We know you're on twitter, you maintain a website and a monthly newsletter but are there any other social outlets we can find you on?

Here's the full list:

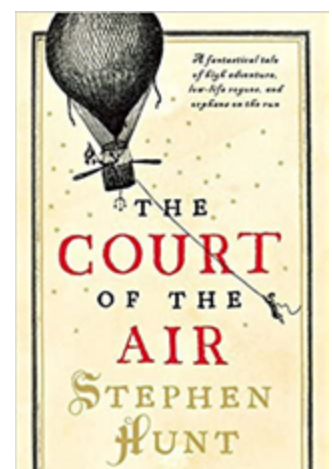
Twitter: [HERE](#)
Website: [HERE](#)

I also have two Facebook pages, at <https://www.facebook.com/SciFi.Fantasy/> with 62,000 scifi readers

and <https://www.facebook.com/steampunkish> with 160,000 steampunk readers, as well as the Facebook group over [HERE](#) (which is really the old science fiction gits club, although the ostensible focus is the movie *The Forbidden Planet*).

I still pen the occasional article for *SFcrowsnest* and you can sign up for the free weekly magazine over [HERE](#)

H.M. - Thanks again for your time Stephen and we can't wait to see what comes next!



Spotlight Author Book Reviews



IN THE COMPANY OF GHOSTS (Book 1, The Agatha Witchley Series)

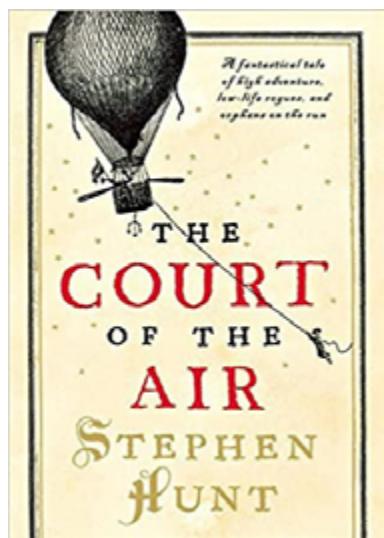
"The woman he has in mind for the job might be paranoid, she might be lethal, she might be half insane and drawing a pension, but it's amazing how you can forgive that in a genius when it's a genius's help you need."

With that intro to Agatha Witchley 'IN THE COMPANY OF GHOSTS', by Stephen A. Hunt how can you not be intrigued?! Fabulous blurbs always hook me and book 1 of this trilogy series was a thrill ride beyond comparison. This is not a standalone, but all three parts are available to read in one fell swoop. Perfect!

Agatha is a super spy assassin AND a ghost whisperer to dead celebrities, released from the asylum to solve a murder – yeah, you KNOW this is going to go deliciously awry. I can't give any more away.

Fast-paced, humorous, quirky yet gripping, so deliciously maddeningly tantalizing!

[Buy Here](#)



I'll preface this review with the following disclaimer, this book really got my love for steampunk started so to the casual reader I might seem biased. Book #1 in the Jackelian Series 'THE COURT OF THE AIR' by Stephen Hunt, the description in the upper right corner of the cover says it all and delivers!

"A fantastical tale of high adventure, low-life rogues, and orphans on the run."

Whether it's following the orphan Molly Templar as she comes to grips with her connections to the hexmachina, young Oliver Brooks as he realizes the full potential of his fey powers or the disreputable Harry Stave as he introduces us to the overseers in the sky, The Court of the Air. This is hands-down an adventure any science-fiction or fantasy reader will love. If you've never heard of steampunk or you're merely curious, pick this book up. You won't regret it! - Hill Manner

[Buy Here](#)

