

The story of those  
'White Horse' years.

# RELAPSE

Number 17:  
Spring 2010

"Relapse #16 is, like its predecessors, a marvel of the age." – Mark Plummer, LoC



'It gets pretty busy on Thursday nights, and watch out for the bald one with glasses  
– he thinks he's going to the Moon!'

- With the usual apologies to 'Giles'

**INSIDE:** 'Fandom and the Post-War Boom' by Phil Harbottle; '(More) Extracts from Bill Temple's Diaries' by Joe Patrizio; 'A Fifties Farrago' by Sam Youd; 'Music, Martians & Machines' by John Burke; AND MORE



# RELAPSE

It's 1946 and everyone is demob happy. London fans have moved to the 'White Horse' and we're going to visit them in our mental time-machine, piloted by me, Peter Weston (in my 'Biggles' goggles) at 53 Wyvern Road, Sutton Coldfield, B74 2PS. I'm still collecting stories of past times and you can write, call (0121 354 6059) or e-mail me at [pr.weston@btinternet.com](mailto:pr.weston@btinternet.com). For the paper edition you'll occasionally need to Do Something but I'll gladly send the pdf on request (my preferred option for overseas readers), while it goes onto the *eFanzines* website four weeks after printed copies have been posted. *Relapse* is nothing without your *Response*, and with your help we continue to explore the rich history of British science fiction fandom.

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"What an astonishing thing. There's so much information about so many things it is actually more than somewhat intimidating." – Greg Pickersgill, e-mail LoC-substitute on #16.

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The 'bald one with glasses' mentioned in the cover caption is of course Arthur C. Clarke even though I'm probably pushing it a bit because in 1953 he wasn't really bald but just suffering premature hair-loss. But it seemed apt to show him in his absence, as it were, because this issue has largely been constructed around an Arthur Clarke-shaped hole and while we have no direct words from Ego himself his presence looms large over our view of the SF world of the early fifties. Clarke really was a phenomenon, shooting to super-star status on both sides of the Atlantic in only a few short years, and I'm particularly pleased to present some forgotten photographs from inside his study, taken at a rather challenging time in his life!

When I mention that 'mental time-machine', by the way, I'm not entirely joking because for the last couple of months I've been so wrapped-up in the fandom of the early fifties that it's sometimes seemed almost more alive than present-day fannish concerns coming through daily on the internet, so much so that I stumbled through the recent *Corflu* in Winchester with a head full of thoughts about the distant past. It's a difficult feeling to describe but after the last issue appeared it was as if I'd opened a magic box and all sorts of things were tumbling out, bits of detail, anecdotes, pictures, new characters to fit into the jig-saw story of British fandom. And it's a story I find peculiarly uplifting; many of the people in this drab post-war world didn't have two pennies to rub together and yet they had an idealistic *belief* in science fiction which is pretty much foreign to us now. Well, I said all that before, but see what you think when you've been through this issue.

It's another big one, something over 40,000 words, but there was a lot to fit in this time. The five articles here are complementary, buttressing and supporting each other to give a rounded picture of those wonderful evenings in the White Horse. I couldn't leave any of them out – as it is, I've had to apologise to Mike Ashley for holding his contribution over to next time. Mike has written a long biographical and bibliographical piece on forgotten British SF author Peter Phillips, once one of our brightest stars until he stopped writing quite suddenly in the early fifties. Just *why* he stopped is one of the questions Mike attempts to answer in the next issue – and incidentally, Peter is still with us, although at the age of 91 he is understandably frail and not in the best of health.

## Labour of love?

For several years I've been in occasional correspondence with John Ingham, a man who (as it has widely been known) might be said to have something of a fixation on the life and works of Eric Frank Russell. And, trying to be helpful, I offered him a copy of the last *Relapse* in view of the various references to Russell therein. John replied by return, and through one of those coincidences which run through this issue like a fault-line said, "Hope there isn't anything on EFR that I don't know about as the book has just been set up by Roger Robinson of Becon Publications and should be going to the printer early in the week beginning 22nd February." In other words, within 48 hours of my approach!

Well, that was a missed opportunity because a short extract from John's book – about the way EFR magically 'cracked' *Astounding* with his very first story in 1936 – would have fitted beautifully into my previous issue. As it was, with the book scheduled for release at Eastercon there didn't seem much point in reprinting material that would soon be generally available. And then by yet another coincidence, a day or two later I visited the home of John Carnell's daughter and came away with a large envelope of old photographs – treasure trove, indeed! – and that night wrote to John, "You'll hate me for this since the book has gone to press but I think I've unearthed a few more pictures of your hero."

I think this is called 'coming in under the wire' but as Roger Robinson can testify, John somehow managed to fit my three new photographs into his text (pages 121, 127, 290), and in return he let me have four period pictures which you'll find in 'The Melting Pot' in this issue. And he also sent me his (unpublished) Introduction which addresses the central question I asked him; 'Why Russell?'

Like everyone else I enjoyed EFR's stories when I was a lot younger, with particular favourites like 'And Then There Were None' and 'Fast Falls the Eventide', but as the years have gone by I've felt that his work has dated very badly; by modern standards much of it is simplistic, almost slapstick in places. John, however, doesn't see it like that; as a science fiction writer he thinks Russell was "one of the greatest who has ever lived".

John seems to have followed the usual path in discovering SF through the *Eagle*, 'Jet Morgan', H. G. Wells, then into Clarke, Van Vogt and so on, but then something went wrong – he never found the magazines! This is so amazing (let alone astounding) that I find it hard to understand; after all, we're talking about the early sixties when *New Worlds* and the BREs were still going strong, and John lived within three miles of Bradford city centre which was hardly the back of beyond. But this omission seems to have stultified his reading experience, restricting him to the occasional paperback or hard-cover with the result that he was nineteen before he encountered his first Russell story, THREE TO CONQUER, in 1965. And then he was bowled over. "After only the first few lines I was well and truly 'hooked', the Russell 'magic' working its spell on me as no other author had ever done before, or to be honest, has ever done since. I thought it was terrific."

Well, yes, it wasn't bad. I remember when the Corgi edition came out and it is probably Russell's best novel, but I wonder if John would have been quite so smitten if he'd first read *THE PUPPET MASTERS* which is equally fast-moving, not to mention *NEEDLE*, *WILD TALENT*, and Fredric Brown's *THE MIND THING*, all having similar aspects of plotting and story-line (alien possession and/or telepathic powers). Still, it obviously made a big impression on John, even though it took him three more years to find *WASP*, which he thought "every bit as good", and another year before he found a couple of short-story collections. He continued slowly acquiring Russell's books and by 1986 naively thought he'd read everything until someone sent him a copy of an M.I.T. bibliography and John realised, "I hadn't even begun to scratch the surface". That's when the serious collecting of EFR material began, and this book, *INTO YOUR TENT*, is the result, all 360 pages of it.

I wouldn't have believed how much John could unearth, particularly in view of what Russell himself called his "almost pathological dislike of biographical sketches", and his other bad habits (for a biographer) like the way he burnt manuscripts and letters in his kitchen stove. But the book contains all sorts of information about his childhood, family life, his involvement with early fandom, the month-long holiday in America in 1939 and his time in the RAF, as well as the most minute details of his stories and articles. It really is fascinating reading, although it leaves little doubt that Russell himself was an absolutely *vile* man! He was deliberately rude, vulgar, awkward, suspicious, and curmudgeonly. At several points John wonders why Russell has been 'almost forgotten' – well, it might have something to do with the way he insulted and abused various editors (me included) who had the temerity to try and put his material into print!

During his search John seems to have belatedly discovered the SF magazines and realised what he missed. In his Introduction he advises anyone wanting to savour Russell "in the raw" to seek out the magazines where the stories first appeared, unedited, and accompanied by "period artwork by great illustrators". Strangely, he doesn't mention Kelly Freas, even though the Freas illos in *Astounding* made a near-perfect match for Russell's stories. There are a few minor slips – 'Vargo Statton', 'Forrey Ackerman' and 'August Derlath' for instance, and the book badly needs an Index. But these aside, it's well-written without a scrap of pretension, full of information and excellent value at the ridiculously low price of £9.99 (plus postage). Get it from Cold Tonnage, Brian Ameringen, or enquire direct to John at [PlantecUK@aol.com](mailto:PlantecUK@aol.com).

#### **Treasure Trove, indeed!**

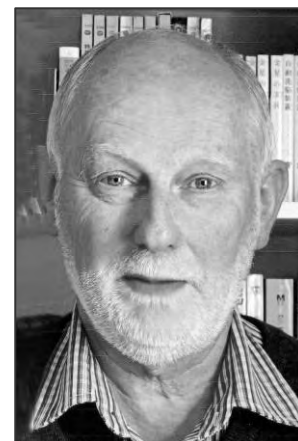
I hardly knew Ted Carnell; somewhere in late 1965 Rog Peyton and I visited him at his home in Plumstead but by the time we came along he was already on the way out of science fiction, rarely attending conventions (1969 being an exception), and of course he died in 1972 at the tragically early age of only 60. However, I was recently privileged to be given a small glimpse into Ted's life when I visited his daughter Leslyn at her house in Watford.

She and her husband Alan made me very welcome and in no time at all we were chatting away as if we'd known each other for years. The first thing that struck me was how much she looked like her father – "everyone says that," she said, and then I must have made some comment about her name because Leslyn told me that she'd been named after Robert Heinlein's first wife – and Heinlein was actually her godfather!

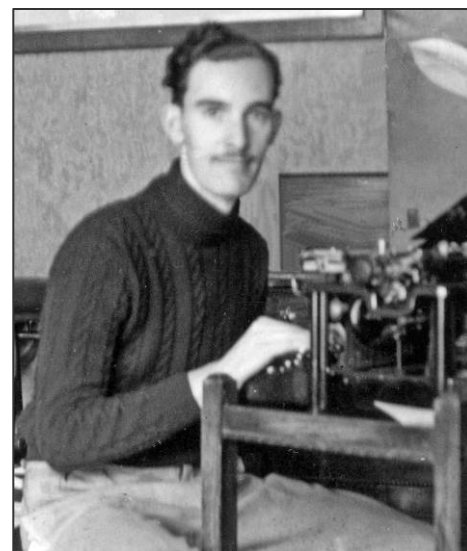
We went through into the back room and Leslyn obligingly pointed me at a whole pile of her father's memorabilia which she'd brought out for my visit. Various books, papers and photographs – a great pile of them, and for me these were treasure trove indeed! So I set up my laptop and scanner and began to sort them out.

They were loose and not in order, though I noticed a number of the smaller prints were mounted on ruled sheets clearly torn from some sort of exercise book, usually with typed captions beneath. These all seemed to date from pre-war and I imagine Ted probably took them himself (he was a keen photographer), or they were sent to him in correspondence. It's a record of fandom in the thirties – early shots of British fans like Ken Chapman, Syd Bounds, Sid Birchby and Harold Chibbett (I hadn't encountered his name until recently but it now seems to be everywhere), along with images of some of the American fans of the day like the youthful Don Wollheim, Fred Pohl, Dave Kyle and so on. And of course, Eric Frank Russell.

I'd seen some of the larger pictures before – for several years I've been corresponding with Ted's grand-daughter, Susannah Belsey who has been scanning them for me, including the BIS shots last time – but it's been a bit of a scattershot arrangement so there were still lots of surprises in the pile. For instance, I came across a series of 50 or so pictures from 1949, when Ted made his first trip to the United States and visited the 7th World Science Fiction convention in Cincinnati. There he is addressing the audience and looking the very model of an English gentleman in smart suit and tie, and on another picture he's posing with Big-Name Fans like Del Rey, Ackerman, and Milton Rothman. Then there were shots of Ted in a more casual bomber jacket and chinos at an outdoor gathering by the lakeside with Don Ford, Lou Tabakow, some of the other local fans and Bea Mahaffey. Gosh, she was so pretty!



**John Ingham – while not a fan himself, he has done a great job in producing a major piece of fan-history! His photo.**



**Above; Typewriter on his knees –that sounds familiar! Photo probably early thirties.  
Below; Leslyn and PW in February, 2010.**



“Can you imagine what that trip was like for Ted in 1949?” I asked Leslyn. He went across on the *Queen Elizabeth* – there’s a grainy picture of him by the rail at Southampton – leaving a grey and battered country which still had rationing and shortages, and for a few weeks he must have felt as if he’d escaped into the future. The food, the cars, the luxury hotels.... I don’t know how he managed it – money must have been tight – but maybe Ted was able to claim the costs as a business expense? (Although there’s a suggestion in *A WEALTH OF FABLE* that the trip was financed by a fan-fund). Certainly many of the major writers seemed to have been there, Fritz Leiber, Jack Williamson, E. E. Smith....

Suddenly that name registered with me and I picked up one of the books Leslyn had shown me earlier. It was Smith’s *SPACEHOUNDS OF THE IPC*, the Fantasy Press edition published in 1947, and it was absolutely full of hundreds of signatures and inscribed messages; on the end-papers, in chapter headings, in the margins, everywhere. We hadn’t realised the significance of the book but now, looking more closely, I understood. It’s easy enough to imagine Ted Carnell turning up in Cincinnati and meeting his old correspondent Lloyd Eshbach, founder of Fantasy Press, who presented him with a signed copy of one of his recent releases. And since the author was in the room, he signed it as well, and because this was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for Ted, so did all the other BNFs and professionals – in fact, so did almost everyone at the convention.

After that it would have been natural for Ted to take his book along to the *Festivention* and collect more signatures as the pages clearly show, then again on his return trip to the USA in 1956, and at the London worldcon the following year, and probably everywhere else he visited. The result is a wonderful historic document, a sort of testament to Ted’s life and travels.

I noticed an amusing line from Arthur C. Clarke in 1951, who wrote, ‘To Ted, for infallibly rejecting my best stories’. This is perhaps one half of a long-running jest, because in Walt Willis’ comments on Carnell’s speech at the *Festivention* he notes:- “Apparently, after Carnell had been pestering Clarke for several months for a story, Arthur would dig something out of an old trunk that had been written in capitals on a child’s exercise book and send it off magnanimously to Carnell. When it was rejected he went around telling everyone that he had been rejected by *New Worlds* again!”

Suddenly I realised that an hour had gone past and while I was having a marvellous time sorting photographs and chatting to Leslyn, I wasn’t actually getting very much done! So we put the rest of the pictures in a large envelope for me to take home and I took a closer look at an old exercise book with brown-paper wrappers. It was another marvel! Dating from September, 1929 when Ted Carnell was just seventeen, it’s the hand-written magazine of the ‘Silver Hawks Cycling Club’, a single copy which would have been passed around the members of the club, complete with illustrations, articles, letters and editorial comments; clearly Ted had started early on his chosen path!

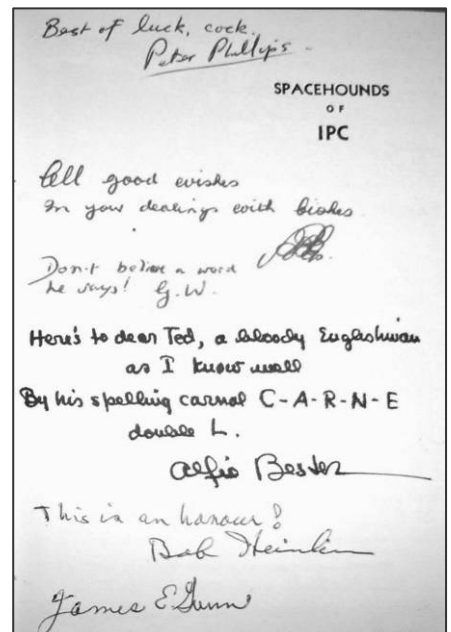
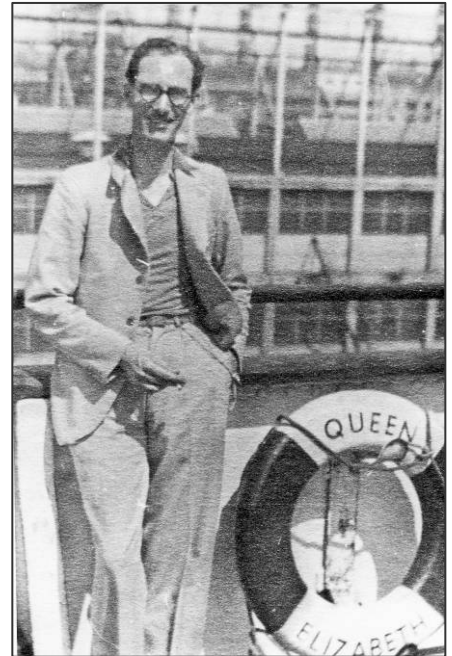
“What was it like,” I asked Leslyn, “to grow up in a household devoted to science fiction?” She thought for a moment but couldn’t really answer – like most children of fans she didn’t quite understand the attraction of SF, or why her father had devoted his life to the genre. But she remembered many of Ted’s friends, in particular Ken Chapman and his wife, and Les & Edith Flood, who were frequent visitors. Dave and Ruth Kyle, too – she recalled their 1957 *Loncon* costumes which involved wearing “colanders on their heads”!

In the end I stayed nearly three hours and came away with well over a hundred photographs still to scan, though the greater proportion were of American fans (I’ve already sent the Cincinnati pictures to their local group). You’ll see some of them in this current issue.

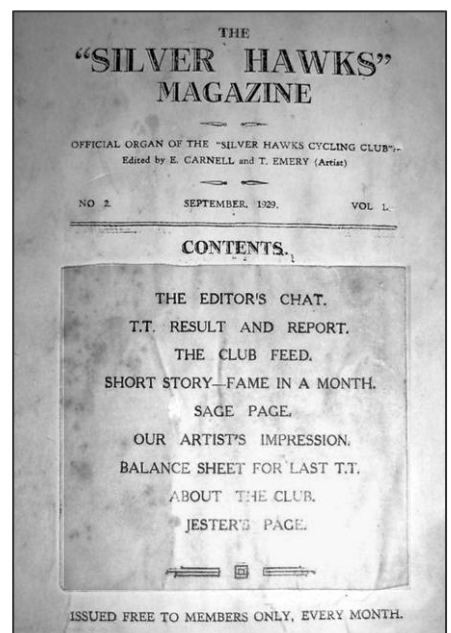
And there’s a postscript; on Easter Saturday I made a flying visit to the Heathrow *Odyssey* and on the way home stopped at High Wycombe to return the envelope of prints to Leslyn. We started chatting, and I think I asked her again about her name and the Heinlein connection. Suddenly she vanished upstairs, returning with another album, this one containing family pictures. “I think we have some of him here,” she said – and yes, there they were, several pictures of the young Heinlein and his bride on their honeymoon in Laguna Beach in 1932. He looked like Errol Flynn!

There were other great shots – Ted waving a machine-gun in Syria, Ken Chapman in Merchant Navy outfit, others which you’ll see in *Relapse*, sooner or later. Let me end, for now, with an epithet for Ted Carnell by Peter Nicholls in the *SF ENCYCLOPEDIA* which I think sums up a lifetime spent in the science fiction world: ‘He was scrupulous, worked hard and profited little’.

– Peter Weston, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2010



Above: ‘This is an honour!’ wrote Heinlein – but a mystery – when did they ever meet?





I began corresponding with Phil Harbottle in late 1963 through my fanzine *Zenith* and met him at Peterborough the following year. Even then he knew a lot about early science fiction and he's been active ever since, first as editor of *Vision of Tomorrow* but also as critic, artist, researcher, publisher and more recently as agent for Ted Tubb, among others. Phil has just completed a major expansion and revision of his 1994 book, *VULTURES OF THE VOID*, covering the 'mushroom' period of British book publishing in the ten years after the War (see page 30) and he has generously allowed me to run this short extract since it perfectly sets the scene for this issue of *Relapse*. [pw]

*Photo from Phil*

## Fandom and the Post-War Boom

By Phil Harbottle

**Ted Carnell &  
Frank Arnold  
preside at the  
1952 London  
convention.  
Photo from Ted  
Carnell's album.**



The end of the Second World War led to a publishing boom unequalled to this day, as some of the pre-war publishers returned to set up or re-start their companies and less scrupulous men set out to exploit the market. And yet their history is something that has frequently been glossed over in historical texts in favour of more 'literate' SF (or something that will shed a better light on science fiction). Nevertheless, it remains a fact that in this decade sales of British science fiction publications went through a 'boom' period while simultaneously hitting an all-time low in academic esteem. Why this happened is the main subject of my book – the product of a lifetime's research.

With the end of the war, the SF fraternity began to regroup and start, once again, to pressure publishers into issuing a British SF magazine. Walter Gillings had left Benson Herbert and Utopian Publications in 1946, after he had edited two issues of a reprint fantasy magazine *Strange Tales* (February and March of 1946). The first issue was especially notable for carrying the first-ever reprinting in the U.K. of a story by Ray Bradbury ('The Tombstone'). Herbert himself had also made two reprint selections, *Thrilling Stories* and *Strange Love Stories*, after which Utopian ended their SF and fantasy list and returned to west-erns and saucy magazines, with such titles as *Cowgirl Capers* and *Peppy Stories*, along with sexy 'foto' sets.

Ever since 1943, soon after the folding of *Tales of Wonder*, Gillings had been putting material together in preparation for either re-launching his pre-war magazine or editing a new one. In 1944, he approached Temple Bar Publishing Company and persuaded them to launch a new magazine, *Fantasy* (not a continuation of Newnes' pre-war title). It was 1946 before the plans finally came together and by the time the first issue appeared at the end of the year, Britain was to see the launch of not one but five SF magazines. And first off the pad was *New Worlds*.

Soon after demobilisation, in January of that year, Carnell met Frank Arnold, another long-time SF fan and occasional author who had just persuaded another publisher to issue a science fiction line. Frank introduced Carnell to the company's director, Stephen Frances, and on the strength of his unused 1940 portfolio he was invited to edit an SF magazine. This pivotal moment in British SF history was captured by Frank in a memoir he wrote in 1970 for my intended book, *THE IMPATIENT DREAMERS*:-

"I vividly remember the reunion, early in 1946, of members of the pre-war Science Fiction Association, all of whom had mercifully survived the war unharmed. The meeting, held at the Shamrock Tavern in Fetter lane, close to our old haunt at Grays Inn Road, was a cheerful and heartening occasion and I recall that we were less concerned with war-time memories than with what we were going to do now that the fuss was all over. One surprising development was a general aversion to reviving the old SFA, probably because it had given its committee-men too much hard and thankless work. Another and more urgent point was the need for a new magazine to replace Walter Gillings' *Tales of Wonder*, a war-time casualty. This is where I came in.

“A little while before the reunion I had joined a transient Writers’ Circle somewhere in Soho where I had encountered Stephen D. Frances, then a freelance publisher. Steve was an instant convert to SF and invited me to edit a series of booklets for him, beginning with a reprint of some of my own early stories. Soon after, having read some copies of *Astounding* and *Startling Stories*, he was on fire with enthusiasm for the new magazine he intended to publish – and for which he had only the paper and printers, no authors, no stories, nothing. By a happy coincidence Ted Carnell had just been demobbed and I knew he had in his possession the ‘dummy’ of the magazine projected as long ago as 1940. The three of us got together over a noggin, and thus Pendulum Publications and *New Worlds* was born.

“Though the SFA was not to be revived we all agreed it would be a good idea to meet again at the pub, regularly, starting the following week. The day happened to be a Thursday, and we have been meeting on Thursday ever since. The gatherings at the Shamrock quickly grew too big for its confines and before long we had to cross the road to the greater space of the White Horse, which had a dining room that wasn’t used in the evening.

“From start to finish, seven years later, those evenings at the White Horse were crowded, noisy and crammed with activity. Fans had been suffering from SF-starvation for years and, scraping together what stocks they had, they rushed them to their own market to buy, sell and exchange. For Ted Carnell, who now had a real live magazine on his hands and only his spare time in which to work on it, each session turned into an editorial conference. It seemed almost every visitor was hoping to be a contributor and it was a grand sight to see him expounding art and literature to the bright-eyed hopefuls over the tankards! It is heartening to realise how many of them subsequently made good as authors or artists. And all the while the room was buzzing with talk, argument, discussion and controversy over SF.

“We had not been at the White Horse for long when we had a change of landlord. The newcomer was one Lew Mordecai, man of the sea and reader of books. With his liking for company and his fund of good stories Lew soon made himself a leading member of the circle, not only as the official host but as ‘one of the boys’. He became such a central figure that when he finally left the White Horse and transferred to the Globe in Hatton Garden (where his father had once been landlord) the whole company packed its traps and trooped round the corner to join him. But we are anticipating.

“These first years at the White Horse coincided with the early career of Arthur C. Clarke, formerly our host in the old days with Bill Temple and Maurice Hanson at Grays Inn Road. With his RAF experience behind him and the renewed activity of the British Interplanetary Society as a stimulus, Arthur now burst out all over the Press with articles on rocketry and interplanetary travel, with such success that he gave up his job on *Science Abstracts* (‘It was preventing me from earning a living,’ he complained) to concentrate on his own proselytising journalism.

“His efforts brought him political contacts and encounters in high official places. One evening at the White Horse he told me he had been lunching that day with the then- Minister of War and had regaled him with prophecies of great rocket-driven atomic missiles razing whole cities in the wars of tomorrow. With the V2 rocket and the atomic bomb both so recent in memory his prophecies must have been convincing, for the Minister for War, said Arthur gleefully, ‘was scared stiff’.

“In 1950 came Clarke’s first book, the brief technical monograph INTERPLANETARY FLIGHT. Then in 1951 came his breakthrough with the magnificent success of THE EXPLORATION OF SPACE, from which sprang his career as globe-trotter, undersea explorer and inspired writer of fact and fiction. He was one of the first theorists, if not the very first, to see the curious analogy between exploration undersea and in outer space; both being airless regions.

“A second best-selling book of 1951 was John Wyndham’s THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS. We all knew that this was our old friend and idol John Beynon Harris, who had written so many fine things for the Gernsback magazines and others.

## At The Pub of The Universe



Authors Ted Tubb David Griffiths, William Temple and SydBounds discuss space opera.

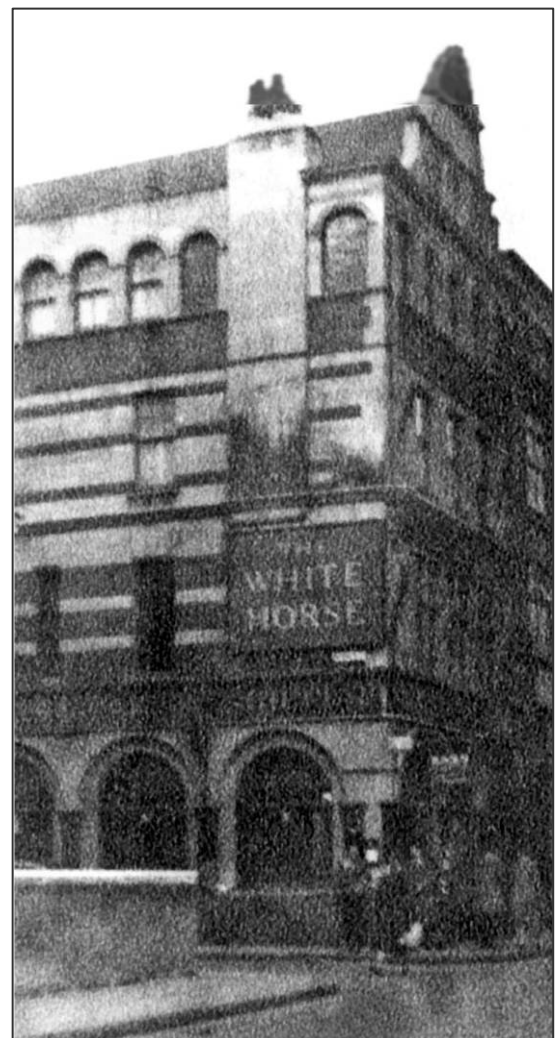
## The White Horse Tavern

FETTER LANE, HOLBORN, E.C.4  
(2 minutes Chancery Lane Tube Station)

Science fiction personalities meet every Thursday throughout the year. When in London, make it a date at the “White Horse”  
5.0 — 10.30 p.m.

**A MEUX HOUSE**

*Above;* ‘Public Service’ advertisement from the inside cover of *New Worlds*, Sept 1952. *Below;* a view of the White Horse – it was a big place. Photo from Frank Arnold’s album, courtesy of Dave Rowe.



“For John this book marked the beginning of a new and notable career as a novelist, which only ended with his untimely death in 1969. Not many of us had known him well, for he was shy, reserved, and we saw him seldom. But, unlike so many men of this kind he was not in the least unsociable –always good company and it was always a pleasure to meet him

“The now-famous Visitors’ Book of the Globe was originally established at the White Horse in 1951. The first signatory was ‘Lew Mordecai, Landlord’, followed immediately by the first visitor, who was none other than Poul Anderson<sup>1</sup>, already a name with which to conjure. Poul and his brother John were in London briefly at the start of a trip to Europe, but they paused on the way to meet a houseful of admirers and give us a good evening of SF talk. Before the end of the year we had a couple of visits from L. Sprague de Camp, a man of wit, learning and copious conversation, which we enjoyed to the full. These are the first of many famous names in the book, which is now nearly half-full and contains some eighty pages of signatures and addresses from all over the world.

“But for the Circle of the White Horse the highlight of 1951 was *Festivention*, the great International Convention at the Royal Hotel in London. More than 150 fans from all over the British Isles were joined by visitors from Australia, France, Holland, Sweden, and the U.S.A. – evidence, surely, that SF fandom was already a worldwide network. The con was a lively affair with plenty of speeches and demonstrations, film shows, art exhibitions, bookstands and all the cheerful convention paraphernalia now so familiar.

“Another London convention was held in 1952, and then *Coroncon* in 1953, this time at the Bonnington Hotel in Southampton Row. Walter and Madeleine Willis and a whole contingent from Northern Ireland came to greet Bea Mahaffey of *Other Worlds*. The radiant Bea queened it beautifully throughout, and that final farewell drive through the decorated streets of London (it was Coronation Year, of course) will not be forgotten by those who shared it.

“Later that year *New Worlds*, which had gone through difficult times in the first seven years, was taken on by an established company, to be published on a regular basis with Ted Carnell as full-time editor. He has been an editor ever since, only leaving *New Worlds* in 1964 to produce NEW WRITINGS IN SF for another company. Meanwhile the original proprietor of *New Worlds*, Stephen D. Frances, had gradually withdrawn from most of his publishing interests to concentrate on his own novels. He first created ‘Hank Janson’ (a trade-name which he later disposed of to others) that looks like becoming the Sexton Blake of our time. Since then he has written novels in his own name that have sold in tens of millions.

“The dismayed news that Lew Mordecai was leaving the White Horse was sprung upon us suddenly in the early autumn. For a while we were at sixes and sevens, and I’ll never forget the cry of one very young fan – “Oh, it won’t be the same!” Then we heard he was going no further than the Globe in Hatton Garden, less than five minutes walk away. An advance party went out to inspect the premises and came back with a favourable report. That settled it – we were going to move.

“Among the last visitors to the White Horse was our old friend Professor A. M. Low. Although his health was then beginning to suffer he was in excellent spirits that evening and glad to renew old acquaintanceships. I have happy recollections of that distinguished man and have refreshed them by dipping into the excellent biography *HE LIT THE LAMP* by Ursula Bloom (Burke, 1958). He was a pioneer of television as long ago as 1914 and had produced the first radio-controlled aircraft in 1918.



**Above:** Lew Mordecai pulls a pint for H.J. ‘Bert’ Campbell, editor of *Authentic*, late 1951. Photo from Ted Carnell’s album.



**Above;** Bea with Frank in the White Horse, eve of *Coroncon*.  
**Below;** Walt & Madeleine Willis, Chuck Harris, Bea and James White stroll outside the Bonnington Hotel (James was quite smitten with Bea – see *Prolapse #8*). Photos from the Vince Clarke album, made available by Rob Hansen.



<sup>1</sup> And Martin Easterbrook informs me that the very last entry was that of Isaac Asimov. Alas, the Visitors’ Book went missing after the death of Frank Arnold – and all efforts to find it have so far failed. [PW]

“After World War I he became famous as a popular journalist of the ‘Marvels of Science’ variety, wherein he gave free rein to his sense of humour and, it must be admitted, a streak of irresponsibility. This earned him a lot of criticism in official circles and his wartime inventions, made under service conditions, never gained him a penny of reward. (This state of affairs was only put right, to the benefit of other inventors, after World War II). Disappointments failed to break his spirit. He believed as passionately as Wells or Gernsback that the progress of science was a matter of unbounded benefit to humanity and he never ceased to encourage that belief wherever he could. We all shared it with him, and we still do.

“On the last night at the White Horse, in December 1953, we had an unexpected pleasure when some new visitors brought in the distinguished novelist and dramatist Clemence Dane. Tall and of impressive appearance, a shade theatrical in manner, Miss Dane proved to be a mine of knowledge about SF and gave us a grand evening of conversation. It was a fitting climax to the years of the White Horse.

“Wrenching ourselves away from that familiar haunt was no easy effort. For seven years that saloon-bar had been our home-from-home, our drawing room, our market, parliament and battleground. I remember gazing round for the last time: at the table in the north corner where the Convention Committee had fought it out toe-to-toe; the tables in the centre where the ‘Filthy Hucksters’ had piled up their books and magazines; the long table in the south corner whence young couples had held hands and talked in whispers. Hard to leave, even to rebuild the scene elsewhere – but as Ted Carnell put it, ‘Friendships mean more than panelled walls,’ and we were off to the Globe, irrevocably.”

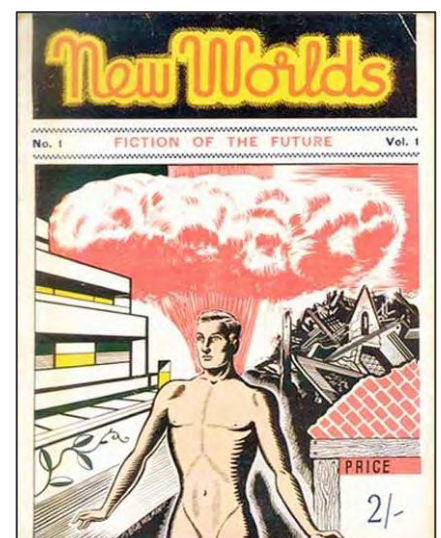
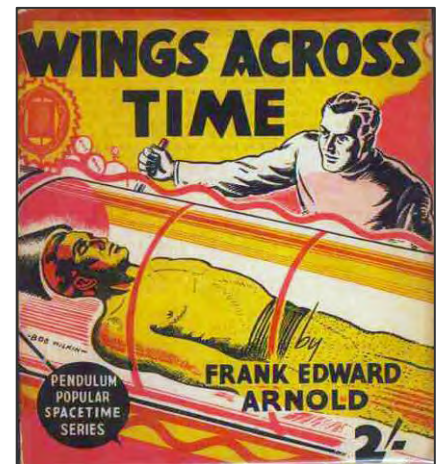
Frank Arnold had seen the fruits of his work appear in April 1946, when the first of the Pendulum ‘Spacetime’ series of books under his editorship appeared with a reprint collection of his own American pulp short stories entitled WINGS ACROSS TIME, followed a month later by a novel, OTHER EYES WATCHING by ‘Polton Cross’ (John Russell Fearn). The first title in the ‘Fantasy’ series, edited by Carnell, was published in June 1946, an original anthology entitled JINN AND JITTERS; and in July the first issue of *New Worlds*.

As Carnell has noted elsewhere, that issue was far from successful and only three thousand copies of the 15,000 print run were sold. Much of the blame was put on the cover by Bob Wilkin, a successful and competent commercial illustrator who had succumbed to working to a policy of producing quickly-drawn comic strips and illustrations for children’s annuals, particularly for Gerald G. Swan. His cartoon-like cover was not particularly effective and would have been lost among the welter of magazines then appearing. But, as noted, Carnell adroitly managed to retrieve the situation by putting a new cover on the remaindered copies. So, back in 1946, it looked like Britain had a steady science fiction market and the appearance of more titles of varying quality showed that SF was again a genre to be reckoned with.

Hamilton & Co. (Stafford) Ltd., had been established for some three years, issuing diverse ‘original’ paperbacks and pamphlets, but generally following and copying the products of their competitors. They were quick to spot the initiative of Pendulum’s *New Worlds*, and commissioned their mainstay writer Norman Firth<sup>2</sup> to write science fiction for them. A self-styled ‘Prince of British Pulp Peddlers’ Firth was a versatile hack willing to turn his hand to whatever fiction was in demand – gangster, western, saucy stories and juveniles.

Their first SF product was a 48-page pulp-size effort entitled *Futuristic Stories* in October 1946, followed a month later by *Strange Adventures*. Both magazines were originally priced at two shillings but trade resistance to the high price quickly forced Hamilton to distribute later copies with a one shilling sticker over the old price. Each contained three stories by author Norman Firth, under his own name and two pseudonyms ‘Earl Ellison’ and ‘Rice Ackman’. They were generally of an appalling standard, mechanically written space operas, although a couple showed flashes of wry humour. Both titles featured lurid and garish space operatic covers (robots and monster respectively) painted by veteran cover specialist H. W. Perl, whose idea of science fiction was apparently rooted in 1930s Flash Gordon serials. Each magazine featured a single uncredited full-page illustration, unusually, executed in scraperboard; these were actually quite good but the overall impression of both magazines was pretty dreadful and did nothing to advance the cause of British science fiction.

Hamilton followed the magazines with two paperback books that were of a slightly better standard – TERROR STRIKES by Firth, and STRANGE HUNGER by Michael Hervey (previously known only as a prolific crime writer). Firth’s 78-page novella was a routine reworking of Wells’ THE INVISIBLE MAN and sported another lurid (but quite striking) Perl cover. The book, somewhat overpriced at one shilling and sixpence, was printed on very thin cheap paper, which didn’t help. But Hervey’s novel ran to a full 128-pages, printed on much better stock, and consequently carried the high price of two shillings and sixpence. It was a rather curiously restrained Utopian story, not at all lurid or sensational.



Images taken with thanks from the Collectors Showcase website.

<sup>2</sup> This was the character who lived in the cellar of Benson Herbert’s house, although he was not ‘chained to the wall’ as Steve Holland suggests elsewhere! The full story is contained in Phil Harbottle’s book.

Hervey was a talented writer and his earnest and well-written novel had a serious anti-war message. It deserved a better publisher; Hamilton clearly did not know how to illustrate it, so used a Perl painting obviously originally intended for one of their romance novels, showing a languorous leggy lovely (Perl was much better with 'Good Girl Art' than he was with SF!). Unsurprisingly the books would have made little impact and were probably not perceived as science fiction anyway.

Both *Futuristic* and *Strange* made only one more appearance, in December and the following January, this time reduced to only 32 pages priced at one shilling, with only a single Firth novelette. The uncredited covers were even more lurid, this time laminated, and executed by rising young artist Oliver Brabbins who also probably did the garish comic-strip-style half-page interior illustrations. SF was decidedly not his forte and he would go on to much better things in later years. One can safely assume that sales were deservedly poor, as Hamilton did not produce any more science fiction for four years.

These four titles probably did more than any other SF offerings at the time to blacken the reputation of the genre. They were spotlighted and burlesqued by the noted novelist and critic Margot Bennett<sup>3</sup> who lambasted them in her article 'Space-ships also Leak' in the famous monthly *Lilliput*, in which she chivvied 'incredible science writers'. Unfortunately she appeared to put them in the same category as *New Worlds* and *Astounding*, at whom she also poked fun, with '...green mammoth egg-headed statues and an intrepid pilot on the cover... Moral of this scientific pulp seems to be to keep the future with its fatal exaggeration of the present away from your door... As for the ice-men, metal-men, fish-men, space-jelly and incredible writers, a bottle of Martian Sitch would probably keep them all quiet for a small part of the future, at least.'

Of much higher literary tone was *Outlands*, edited by Liverpool fan Leslie Johnson. Although operating on a shoestring budget, Johnson managed to bring together old and new authors for his debut issue by soliciting rejected material considered too unorthodox for other publications. Whilst the sedate blue cover with inset river scene would have looked more at home on a church journal than a science fiction publication, the banner headline 'A Magazine for Adventurous Minds' and the announcement of 'Pre-Natal' by John Russell Fearn could have left no doubts in the minds of fans as to its contents. But even veterans like George Wallis and youngsters like Syd Bounds (his first professional appearance) could not save it. A complete failure to secure newsstand distribution killed *Outlands* before the second planned issue could appear in December 1946.

But that month did bring *Fantasy* from Walter Gillings and Temple Bar, at digest size (5½ by 8 inches) with good illustrations and with 96 pages printed on good stock. This magazine was also led off by John Russell Fearn with his novelette 'Last Conflict', and included contributions from Arthur C. Clarke ('Technical Error'), Philip Cleator, newcomer Norman Lazenby, and Stanley Weinbaum's 'The Worlds of If', betraying Gillings' conservatism.

The year 1947 should have seen science fiction magazines settling down to more regular schedules. With two quality magazines on the market and the war now a bad memory, spirits must have been quite high, but wartime shortages were still affecting the publishing industry. With more and more publishing houses being launched, the problem of paper supply was getting worse instead of better. Although some restrictions were gradually being lifted, the paper shortage meant that rationing was still in full force. More supplies were coming through, often from Canada or Ireland, but far from enough.

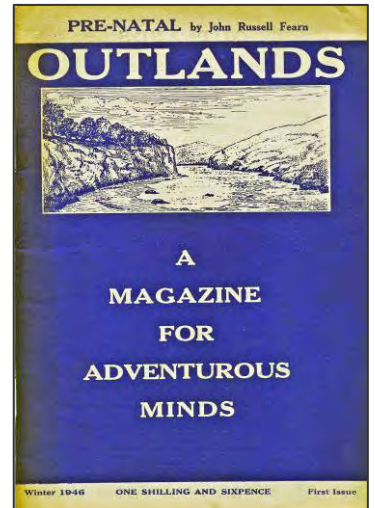
*Fantasy* appeared again in April 1947 with interesting non-fiction pieces by the editor, a short story by Clarke ('Castaway' as Charles Willis), two by Lazenby ('Survival' and 'Haunted House' as J. Austin Jackson) and others by E. R. James and P. E. Cleator, with Eric Frank Russell providing the lead novelette, 'Relic'. There was a gap of four months until August when the third and final issue appeared. The enterprising Gillings had obtained 'Time Trap' a new novelette from veteran American writer Stanton A. Coblentz, supported by short stories by Norman C. Pallant, (who also appeared as Charles Allen Crouch), F. G. Rayer and Clarke, whose story 'The Fires Within' as by E. G. O'Brien would later be sold to *Eagle* (who would think it was a new story). The issue was rounded out with a condensation of Bohun Lynch's 1925 'Menace From the Moon' and a non-fiction feature by the editor under his Thomas Sheridan by-line.

At that point, although *Fantasy* was selling out its 6,000-copy print run, Temple Bar decided to axe the magazine in favour of using the paper for other, more lucrative publications. Gillings once again retired back to fan publishing and concentrated on *Fantasy Review*, which he had started in March 1947. His journalistic experience ensured that the fanzine was anything but amateur in content.

Problems were also besetting Ted Carnell's *New Worlds*. There was a year's gap between the second and third issues and, when the third finally did arrive in October 1947, the editorial put the blame on power cuts and distribution problems (caused by bad weather in the early part of the year) from which the magazine had only just survived. Its publisher, Pendulum, was also hit with financial problems and soon went into liquidation, taking *New Worlds* to a premature end with it. British science fiction was back to square one again, with only the occasional low-quality product put on the market.

It is ironic that the healthiest SF production was the British Reprint Edition (BRE) of the American magazine *Astounding*, which had appeared regularly from Atlas Publishing and Distributing Co. since August 1939. The magazine was trimmed-down from its American original, missing certain features and replacing some items with British advertisements. It was, nonetheless, a much-needed publication for the fans of 1948. Atlas also issued a doctored edition of *Unknown Worlds*, which folded in 1949 after forty-one issues (more than the original, since the BRE had fewer stories per issue).

It was a bleak year for SF fans, but it proved to be the calm before the storm and 1949 was to see the start of a deluge that has not been rivalled since. And it would be the two factions from the recently-liquidated Pendulum Publications, director Stephen Frances and editors Arnold and Carnell, who would be instrumental in launching both the best and the worst science fiction into the British market. // [Phil Harbottle will continue the account in his forthcoming book – PW]



Scanned image by Bob Wardzinski

<sup>3</sup> This may have inspired Margot Bennett to write her own SF novel, THE LONG WAY BACK (1954), which after a promising beginning falls into a beginner's trap, as described by Damon Knight in his book, IN SEARCH OF WONDER. I'd better make the note that while I agree with this evaluation Greg Pickersgill definitely does NOT concur! [PW]

Last time we saw how Bill Temple joined the British Interplanetary Society in 1936 and made simultaneous contact with SF fandom, only to find more-or-less the same people were involved in both. Diving in, Bill moved with Arthur Clarke into 'The Flat' at 88 Grays Inn Road, which subsequently became the stuff of legend and unofficial H.Q. for fan activity in London for the next two years. Bill sold his first story to Wally Gillings in 1937 followed by several others to *Amazing*, became editor of the *BIS Journal* and married his wife Joan as war broke out in September 1939. He was subsequently called-up and served with the Eighth Army for three years. [pw]

## (More) Extracts from Bill Temple's Diaries, 1945-54

By Joe Patrizio

Bill Temple at  
the White Horse,  
Summer 1950.  
Photo from Joe  
Patrizio.



These extracts are from two sets of journals: Bill's personal, and a 'marriage' one which is written in the third person.

We left Bill in December 1942 going off to war; it was 12 October 1945 before he got back home to an extended period of leave – LIAP, Leave In Addition to Python (Python being the code name for the posting home of troops who had been overseas for 2 years 9 month or more). Between then and 15 November, when he returned to his unit, the only mention of SF people is on 3 November:

*"After a quiet morning we prepared to greet Arthur Clarke in the afternoon. He arrived about 3 o'clock in fine Ego form & he & Bill were soon deep in the subjects of books, records, atomic bombs & BIS etc. They went for a short walk before tea, afterwards settling down to Tchaikovsky's 5th Symphony, Clair de Lune & Arthur lectured to us on 'Radar'."*

13 March 1946, Bill arrives home as a civilian at last (although still a 'Z Reservist' which meant that he could be recalled in the event of an emergency – i.e. another war).

On 21 April 1946 the family visits the Carnells and meet Ken and Joan Chapman there – perhaps as a substitute for the lack of an Eastercon that year. Other than this, there's no mention of meeting fans for the rest of the year, although surely he must have done so. However, there is the odd comment about the trials of writing, e.g. 13 June 1946:

*"The paper shortage looks like going on for ages. How can I hope to get anything published? I finished the typescript of '4-Sided Triangle' (80,000 words) [started on board a troop ship in January 1943]....Carnell's New Worlds published my '3 Pylons' but they can't get the mag distributed & I can't get my money."*

Whilst the family were on holiday in St Agnes (in August), the BBC broadcast the news that H. G. Wells had died, but Bill doesn't record this until 3 September 1946:

*"H. G. Wells died while I was in Cornwall. I can't say I wasn't affected: I was, deeply. You can't make a hero of a man all your life & not be upset when he goes. Last Friday (30th August) .....I had a stroll up to Hanover Terrace, where HGW had died at No.13 on the 13th of the month." Bill's mother had died on the 13th of the month, many years earlier, and he hated the date.*

On 2 September 1946: *"One thing was that Mrs Mary Elsom, Alfred Hitchcock's film story editor over here, was interested enough in it [FOUR-SIDED TRIANGLE] to send a synopsis to Hitchcock, but she foresaw censorship difficulty. But that led to some pleasant daydreams about film rights."*

31 March 1947: *"Nothing happened about the film rights of '4-SIDED TRIANGLE. Something might have done – Gainsborough Pictures were interested in it, but that very same week that I tried to interest them two new American films reached the West End based on the situation of the heroine being identical twins. No such situation has been used in films for many years now. But 2 examples have to crop up this same week. Quite enough to frighten Gainsborough off....."*

*"Curtis Brown got John Long, one of the firms owned by Hutchinson, interested in the novel. They required some alterations; I made them. After a silence, they said they wanted to buy it. But they had to have the endorsement of the big white chief, Walter Hutchinson, which they expected to get 'in a week or so'. Three full months later they got it & offered terms which I accepted."*

"Now they are supposed to be getting out the contract which again needs the signature of 'Mr. W. H.' Again it would only take 'a week or so'. That was a month ago".

And to add to the uncertainty, the government had just cut the fuel allocation to paper mills – less fuel, fewer books. Bill was even more depressed than usual. But even for Bill, bad times didn't last for ever;

1 May 1947: "[Bill] was sitting at his fortnightly 'scientifiction' session in the saloon bar of The White Horse in Fetter Lane. He was imbibing beer, & Chibbett & his medium friend, Mrs Fielding, were imbibing wisdom from him (Bill). And then, dramatically, the door was flung open, & there was Joan, flushed and panting on the threshold, waving Hutchinson's contract for Bill's '4-SIDED TRIANGLE' novel, which had arrived by the afternoon post.

"This was her excuse for her unexpected appearance – probably her real reason was to check up on W's behaviour on his rare evenings on the loose. Anyway, W. fell on her neck, then fell on the floor (he had been imbibing, as aforementioned) & bought her a stout & himself a pint of bitter, & we drank to W's genius in getting such a contract in these impossible times in the publishing business. What a glorious opportunity (of which he took full advantage) to wave the contract triumphantly around under the noses of the assembled company.

The entry for 6 May 1947 details a visit to the Kilburn Empire to see ACC's aunt Mollie as Mrs Warren, in Shaw's 'Mrs Warren's Profession', and going round to the dressing room after the performance. Nothing to do with SF or fandom, this, but I hadn't known about this theatrical connection, and that Arthur wasn't the only performer in the family.

19 May 1947; "In the afternoon W. went up to town 'to see his publishers' (ahem!). He had a chat with Martin Haywood, the manager of John Long's, in the office in Pont St, which turned out to be much as he'd expected – simply no hope of the novel coming out for a long time yet, & not printing more than 5000 copies. So we shan't make our fortunes. Still, it's better than nothing."

There's very little other than personal stuff for the next 10 months; the odd mention of meeting Frank Arnold or Wally Gillings, say, or going to the White Horse but no details. This period seems to have been difficult for Bill; in a job he loathed in the Stock Exchange, he was trying to write his way out of it at a time when the country was still trying to pay for the war. In fact, from here to the end of the period we're covering, there are few references to fans or SF, but here they are;

7 March 1948; "At a BIS Brains Trust the night before last, I asked, 'Do the Brains Trust think that the [BIS] Council is in the least perturbed by the knowledge that a proportion of the Society's members are engaged in war research rockets? Does it think the Council fully appreciates the philosophical truth that the employment of bad always leads to bad ends?' The debate went on for a good 20 minutes – Smith defending the rocket researchers, & very well too.

"Last night...I journeyed through fog to Brixton...to attend a little party at the flat of Sam & Joyce Youd. Eric Hopkins, Doug Webster & 3 others were also present. It made a nice change. We discussed, among other things, free will & determinism – that old, endless argument."

On 17 May 1948 (Whit Monday) we get a tantalizing snippet; "Sat. I went to see Hugi with Chibbett, & the pair of us journeyed by bus to the White Horse & -sf

convention." That's it, no details of what was the first post-war con. However, as I was writing this, Rob Hansen announced that he had put the two Whitcon booklets on-line – see "THEN – Archives".

30 June 1948; "On Thursday last at the White Horse Wally Gillings came in – sacked. Hutchinson's losing money right & left & sacking right & left. It became plain that the hold up of '4-S.T.' was deliberate.

"On Friday I rang up the manager of John Long. He had a month's notice. Future of J. L. uncertain. Future of my novel even more so."

8 July 1948 at the White Horse. "Quite a crowd there & W. had to stand a stiff round. Chatted with Ted Carnell & Harris & Sam Youd & Eric Williams & Chibbett, & sat in a corner listening to Wally Gillings' woes & marital troubles."

11 September 1948; "...4-Sided Triangle has now definitely gone to the printers at last. There's a chance that I may even live to see it come out."

4 November 1948; "Last night I was at Frank Cooper's Bookshop in Stoke Newington Rd., a pleasant little party upstairs with him, Gillings, Harris, Vincent Clarke, Daphne Bradley, & 3 others, chatting about sf and the riddle of the Sphinx. Frank mentioned he'd written to John Long's ordering plenty of copies of '4-Sided Triangle' in advance."



Top: The tasteful cover of the 1949 John Long edition of Bill Temple's novel.



Bottom; A more lurid treatment for the original, shorter version published in Amazing, November 1939.

As an aside, Bill mentions in this entry that he picked up a good copy of a 1st edition of THE HISTORY OF MR POLLY for 3/- (15p); those were the days!

13 March 1949; *“On Saturday I saw Ego at a BIS meeting in St. Martin’s School, Charing Cross Rd. Cleaver lecturing on Astronautics since the War. R. A. Smith sat next to me. We had a pow-wow afterwards.”*

On 11 July Ted Carnell phoned to say that he’d seen an ad for ‘4-Sided Triangle’ in the Observer, and the entry for 17 August tells us: *“However, 4-Sided Triangle came out on July 28th. I get my first novel out at the age of 35! After having my first story published at barely 20. There has been a 6-year war in between, but even so no one would call me a hustler. And, of course, 4-ST has been 3 yrs. coming out.”*

The next two entries are interesting, in that I missed them first time round (tiny writing and, unusually, pale green ink). It was Jim Linwood who pointed out that the BBC had put on a TV play (‘The Perfect Woman’) that had a plot similar to ‘4-Sided Triangle’, but no credit for Bill.

And before we leave 1949, it’s interesting (at least to me) and frustrating that there are no entries for April, in either journal. April is the month of the Eastercon at which Bill was GoH, and yet there is no mention of this. However, all is not lost; Rob Hanson to the rescue again – see THEN.

6 February 1950; *“I could not face up to starting the radio play adaptation of 4-ST [the] BBC had asked me to do. But I’ve been dodging that for the last fortnight. Partly because of S.E. [Stock Exchange] work, the kids, Hutchinson’s continued blocking of its publication (which is necessary to the play)...”*

I’m pretty sure that Bill had nothing to do with ‘The Perfect Woman’ and so far I haven’t found a reference to whether the play he was working on was rejected by the BBC or if he even finished it.

13 March 1950; *“But I resumed work on the BBC play version of ‘4-Sided Triangle’ none-the-less, & meant to really get going with the pen from Monday on.”*

Bill left the Stock Exchange in July 1950 to pursue the life of a writer. He gave himself a year in which to establish a regular income, but things didn’t turn out as well as he’d hoped. On 6 October he wrote; *“I left the Stock Exchange on the 21st July. Now, 2½ months later, I still have not made a single sale since then, & I’m getting very depressed.”*

By 18 October he was writing; *“...the long silence from Ackerman [his U.S. agent] had got me right down (especially after an evening in The White Horse...hearing about the continued successes of Arthur Clarke, Burke & Youd) and I exploded at him in an air letter”.*

16 November 1950; *“This morning Ego rang to tell me of another sale by Meredith for him – his novel PRELUDE TO SPACE, a pocket edition of 150,000 copies, he getting a cent a copy and 750 dollars (over £250) advance. Only fair to add it was after 3 years’ hawking & over 30 rejections. But Ego always gets there in the end if he doesn’t, as is more frequent, do it right away.”*

The ‘need’ to answer letters was always a source of distraction (Bill was a prolific letter writer) as was things such as, on 20 November;

*“...another [letter] from Neil Bell together with an uncovered proof copy of Lovecraft stories being put out by Gollancz – Victor needed Bell’s comments & Bell needed mine...”*

For the rest of the year, not much other than family stuff. Some very brief mentions of further sales, visits to The White Horse or a visit from one fan/author or another, until 11 February 1951;

*“A[nne] & I sat alone by the fire, listening to John Keir Cross’s ‘Book Club’ on the radio. And suddenly he reviewed THE DANGEROUS EDGE\*, very favourably. ...this seemed the only piece of good luck I’d had since leaving the S.E. (& it was owed largely to Cross’s generosity – but, then, my luck was in meeting him at the right time).”* [\*This was Bill’s mystery novel – PW]

20 March 1951, and another lift in spirits; *“Yesterday I saw a ‘pull’ of a review of ‘4-SIDED TRIANGLE’ (American edition) by Groff Conklin for the May Galaxy which was so overwhelming in its praise that I thought all the agonies and frustrations of writing that book worthwhile.”*

But in the main, 1951 was to end up being a depressing and bitter year for Bill. FOUR-SIDED TRIANGLE and DANGEROUS EDGE didn’t sell as well as he’d hoped, and his short stories (arguably his best work) struggled to get published.

In May 1951 the Ackermans came over to Europe to holiday and take in the Whitsun con. Descriptions of this visit are pretty mundane, except for a brief comment on 7 May: *“A Portuguese ether-breathing mental case called in a car for Wendayne at 8.30 a.m. She’s [Wendayne] a ‘Dianetics’ expert, & is treating him among others.”*

On 17 May there’s a brief mention of the con; *“Preparing for the big s-f convention over Whitsun at the Royal Hotel, Bloomsbury. Dreaded my speech, but it went down well – even Youd congratulated me.”*



**At the 1951 Festivention, Bill with Arthur Clarke & John Beynon Harris (back row), and French fan Georges Gallet & Ted Carnell (front). Photo from the Vince Clarke album.**

Later in the entry: *“Tonight have to visit John Newman in Westminster Hospital, smitten in youth by cancer, ere going to White Horse & probable farewell to Forry Ackerman.”*

7 June 1951; *“What upset me yesterday was the return of my story ‘Whispering Gallery’, from Lilliput, one of my few stories that I know to be good [and one that has ended up being reprinted probably more times than any other of his stories]. They’d had it for 2½ months, & I’d begun to hope this was a good sign, that they were considering taking it. But with it was a letter regretting the delay because the M.S. had ‘somehow got shuffled to the bottom of the pile’. That’s just my sort of luck.*

"Just afterwards Arthur Clarke rang to say that the Sunday Chronicle after (a) commissioning him to write 3 articles at £50 each, had (b) extended it to 7 articles at £50 each, then (c) got someone to write then for him, then (d) stopped publishing after the 6th article so that No. 7 still remains unwritten and not needed then (e) paid him the whole £350 for 7 articles. In effect, he's got £100 for nothing. That's his sort of luck. Comparisons are odious, so I made them – & myself miserable."<sup>1</sup>

3 July 1951; "A Scotsman from Aberdeen, Macgregor & writing under the name of James MacIntosh, turned up at the White Horse last week. He approached me – he knew of me. I only knew he'd had a story in Astounding & another in New Worlds. Today a Super Science came with a lead story by him – 'Outpost Zero'.

"It was everything I've been trying (& failing) to put into s-f lately: style, maturity, ingenuity of construction, & above all, characterisation. There are too many bright boys in s-f & they're all passing me. Luckily, I've no ambitions in s-f. My audience isn't the bright boys, nor the morons, but the ordinary middle class. The best s-f has a very limited market & is likely to remain so."

Having had his year at trying to make a living at writing, and not doing well enough, on 15 August 1951 Bill applied for, and got a job.

"And the next day I got a cheque for 30 guineas from Hulton's. And the next day Campbell rang me up & commissioned a new story for Hulton's. And the next day came (when I no longer worried whether there was any post or not – I remember thinking, on getting up, 'I just don't care any more about the post') a letter from Scott Meredith reporting that Galaxy had offered 600 dollars (£215) for 'Field of Battle'. I was dazed."

2 December 1951; near the start of this entry is a cutting from the Sunday Observer of a glowing review of Arthur Clarke's THE EXPLORATION OF SPACE, which elicits the response:

"Yes, I'm rather jealous. 'The Exploration' success is well-deserved. But 'The Sands' – not so much. Arthur is not 'an excellent novelist'. He's an excellent scientific journalist. Arthur was in practically every paper & magazine I picked up last week, & also on the radio. And here's another of his appearances last week, in the National Newsagent' [photo of ACC reading at the bookstall].



This cutting from Bill's Diary gives an idea of the publicity given to Clarke's EXPLORATION OF SPACE. Ironic that it was published by 'The Temple Press'! Arthur's SF novel THE SANDS OF MARS appeared at almost the same time from Sidgwick & Jackson, also to considerable fanfare.

"I still have not written anything since 'Field of Battle' (still on the fence with Galaxy, but I fear fallen off\*). Received, after some trouble, some more royalties – from 4-ST from Fell, 4-ST & DE from John Long. 4-ST sold as a pocketbook to Galaxy – they're supposed to be printing 150,000 copies in Jan. Fell had a 500-dollar advance on it, sat on it & said nothing. Half of it's his to start with – and 3 agents are muscling in too, so if I do ever get anything out of Fell, it won't be much." [\*Something went wrong because 'Field of Battle' eventually appeared in the much poorer-paying Other Worlds, Feb. 53 – PW]

Then, "Paul Tabori, a film writer & novelist, rang up out of the blue to say he'd read the 4-Sided Triangle & wd. like to do a film script of it if he could get any producer interested enough. He'd tried, was & is trying, but told me not to build up any hopes – as if I would."

30 December 1951. "Now I seem to be landed with the job of editing the Dan Dare annual for Hulton's, against my inclinations, for the project is a hot-bed of intrigue, & I don't feel cut out for the work, which promises to have plenty of headaches & damned hard slogging.

"Paul Tabori, novelist & sometime film-writer, was very interested in 4-Sided Triangle & wanted to write a film version of it – if he could interest any film producer, a near enough impossible task in these hard times in the studios. Joan & I went to cocktail party he gave at his house in Kensington on Boxing Day evening, & met John Brophy, Matthew Norgate, Raf de la Torre, some minor film & BBC people, & Alan Jenkins, my rival for the 'Dan Dare' job\*."

[\*Bill got the job but after putting in a great deal of work the publisher had a change of mind and most of his selections were omitted from the eventual volume. – PW]

After a gap of just under a year, the journal starts again on 21 August 1952. A résumé includes meeting Paul Tabori at a Boxing Night party, which leads to: "In March a message from Paul Tabori told us that he had a film company interested in the 'Triangle', & as a result Bill had a contract with 'Exclusive Films' for the film rights of the 4-Sided Triangle." There followed visits to the studios and meeting stars, but little detail. And then the gala launching of the film – well, not quite!

10 May 1953; "Then [Bill] happened to notice in The Observer that the 4-Sided Triangle film was on at the Marble Arch Pavilion tonight (actually, we found out that this was its 4th night – nobody ever tells us a thing). But we thought it was the 1st night, & set out, en famille, in style, on top of a trolley bus. So we arrived at Edgware Rd. As we walked down it we saw posters up advertising the film – coloured lights showing the heads of Barbara Payton, Van Essen, Stephen Murray, James Hayter, saying the film was Amazing, Astounding, Unbelievable!

"There was a queue outside the Pavilion...and we joined it, feeling rather nervous. Bill felt that maybe if these people knew he was partly responsible for getting them to waste such a fine afternoon in the cinema seeing what they might think utter rubbish they might lynch him for barefaced robbery. Cliff [their 6 year-old son] kept trying to say out aloud 'It's your film, Daddy!' & Bill kept sitting on him... &

<sup>1</sup> John Birchby recalls a story from the period when Bill was trying to make it as a writer. "Bill had only £17 come in during the previous month when he happened to bump into Arthur Clarke. After the usual exchanges he asked Arthur how he was doing and Clarke said, 'Not at all well, Bill. It's Thursday already and I've only made £300 so far this week.' It says a lot for Bill's character that he would treat it as a joke and tell a young fan about it."

then at last, with W. shrinking in his seat & his hand clasped firmly over C's mouth, the titles appeared, with 'Based on the novel by William F. Temple' in quite large letters.

"An interminable introductory monologue by James Hayter eventually made everyone join the author in squirming restlessly in their seats, & slowly the story, a lot messed-about, got under way. The unconsciously funny lines made this typical Sunday audience laugh, just as W. had predicted, & the 'scientific' experiments were right out of any Boris Karloff film. Nonetheless, the acting was quite good & the remnant of the story still had enough to keep the audience guessing & interested, but the ending was badly bodged. We came out thinking it wasn't anything special but it was definitely better than we had feared. But we cursed the missed opportunities."

16 June 1953; "This evening Sam Youd rang up & gave us staggering news – Arthur Clarke had married, very suddenly, an unknown (to us) girl named Marilyn, in the States. This is something we predicted would never happen. The things Ego continues to do just to surprise us!"

24 July 1953; "Arthur Clarke had asked us and some of the White Horse crowd to his house in Wood Green tonight because Maurice Goldsmith & a photographer from Illustrated were coming there to interview us for said magazine....Jack [Bill's brother] came with us, on 112 bus from Stonebridge Park. Jack had a selection of his best photos with him to show Arthur.

"We walked up from the gasometer to Ego's home arriving on the dot of 8pm to find everyone else already there: Goldsmith & the photographer, Ted Carnell, Sam Youd, Jack Chandler, Dave McIlwain, Ted Tubb & - of course – the two Mr. & Mrs. Clarkes [Arthur and new wife Marilyn, and brother Fred with Dorothy].

"Jack & W. went upstairs for the photography, interviewing session while J[Joan] stayed downstairs with Fred, Dot & Marilyn, & soon wished she hadn't, for Marilyn, aloof & unfriendly, practically ignored her, drank gin continuously. Told Fred & Dot how bored she was with Arthur's friends, & went & had a bath! .....Then we were treated to a long colour film of Arthur's, showing the millionaires' hotel at Miami where he met Marilyn, and we were given coffee & biscuits by Fred & Dot. Shortly afterwards we were shown off the premises, our hostess having already retired to bed."

3 October 1953, a visit with Joan to "...Caxton Hall where the BIS was holding a meeting, with a guest, one Yvonne de Carlo. ...Yvonne, wearing dark glasses so as not to draw attention to herself, sat in the front row next to Marilyn Clarke. Arthur was on the platform, with Cleaver, pretending not to notice us [seemingly, Bill and Cleaver had had some difference of opinion, but I don't know over what]; & we pretended not to notice them, which was pretty silly, as Arthur was Chairman & Val the lecturer. The lecture was popular & non-technical, containing nothing really new.

"There was a question period which went OK. And then it was 8 pm and we were shuffling out, & the Clarkes, Cleaver, etc, were clustering around Yvonne, preparatory to 'entertaining' her. We didn't stop to see how they did it. We feel right outside the BIS now – the hall had been packed with people, & with the exception of 2 or 3...they were strangers. And so we went quietly home, remembering the days when the BIS was a much smaller & more friendly affair... But so far as we can see its future now is little but marking time until a great many technical & political & financial problems are solved. We are still a long way from real space travel."



Joan & Bill celebrate their Silver Wedding anniversary, Autumn 1964. Photo from Joe Patrizio.

17 February 1954; "In the evening we went up to town, walking along Piccadilly on a wet night, to the National Book League, 7 Albemarle St. We bumped into Wally Gillings in the foyer, & went across to the Duke of Albemarle for a drink with him. Then returned to the posh meeting room, & bumped into Val Cleaver, who sat with us, apparently forgetting previous differences of opinion. A contingent from The Globe was there including Ken Bulmer, Vince Clarke, Jim Rattigan, the Buckmasters, & Joy Gresham. Robert Lusty was in the chair.

"The speakers were Ted Carnell, Arthur Clarke, John Beynon Harris, & one Stevenson, librarian of Hornsey. The subject – scientific. Once, at Arthur's prodding, Lusty tried to draw Bill into the discussion, but [he] refused to be drawn. Afterwards we said goodbye to Arthur again, as he flies to America in a couple of days' time & may not be back for years – though he may pay a flying visit in the summer."

8 July 1954; after four years away from the Stock Exchange, Bill visited his former colleagues for the first time since leaving. When asked what he thought of going back: "I said, & meant: 'Not for worlds!' Then I went on to the Globe, & entered my living, breathing world, with Sam Youd, Joy Gresham, John Harris, Wally Gillings, Bert Campbell, John Newman, Frank Arnold, Alan Devereaux, Bryan Berry, etc. And so got tight & came home happy..."

7 August 1954. "Arthur Clarke has separated from Marilyn & is paying her an allowance of \$5000 pa. Comment fails me."

16 September 1954; Bill and Joan's 15th wedding anniversary, and after seeing Tosca at Sadlers Wells, "...we walked in a fierce and cold wind along the dark and near-deserted streets, to Mt. Pleasant, & down Farringdon Rd., to Clerkenwell Rd, & Hatton Garden. The pubs were nearly empty, & silent. The wind was gusty & raw. The alleys were empty, shadowed – nice place for a murder. Then we approached the Saloon Bar of the Globe & heard a noise like a zoo inside. In we went, & there was a fair chunk of the old s-f crowd: Wally Gillings, Ted Carnell, Sam Youd, Joy Gresham, Bert Campbell, Frank Arnold, etc."

After being thrown out of the Globe and going to a café with the crowd, Bill and Joan left. "Then we walked up Fetter Lane, past the dark, closed White Horse, with a floodlit St. Pauls away to the right, & paused (at midnight) to look up Grays Inn Road in the direction of the old flat, where this marriage of ours began just 15 years ago. What a lot has transpired since!" //

## ‘Come and meet the Wife’

I found these crystal-clear pictures among Ted Carnell’s papers, with no names or date but marked with the stamp of a professional photographer. Clearly this was a special occasion – and it didn’t take me long to realise what it was all about!



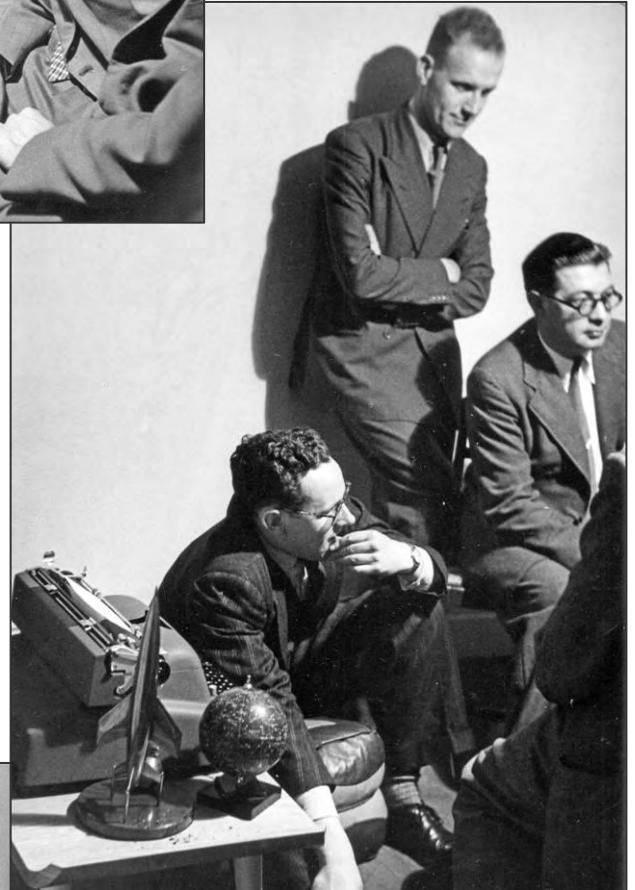
*Left;* Arthur Clarke faces David McIlwain, Bill Temple and Bertram ‘Jack’ Chandler, with Ted Tubb just peeking into the frame.

*Below;* Sam Youd, David McIlwain and Bill Temple, with typewriter and IFA rocket clearly visible. What was the significance of the celestial globe?

The date was 24<sup>th</sup> July, 1953 and on his return from Florida Arthur Clarke had invited his friends around to the house to meet his new wife. As Bill Temple describes, the men went upstairs for a photography session and these pictures were taken by the man from *Illustrated* magazine.

This was probably Arthur’s study, with his typewriter and the International Fantasy Award rocket he won in 1952 for THE EXPLORATION OF SPACE (it was collected by his brother Fred at the London convention that year). The White Horse crowd were in their best suits and are hanging on to every word as Arthur tells them the tale of how he met the lovely Marilyn!

Maurice Goldsmith was the ‘Science Correspondent’ of the magazine, and Joe Patrizio found the article in the Edinburgh Reference Library. It used the main photo (below) but the write-up was very disappointing; no picture of Marilyn, alas!



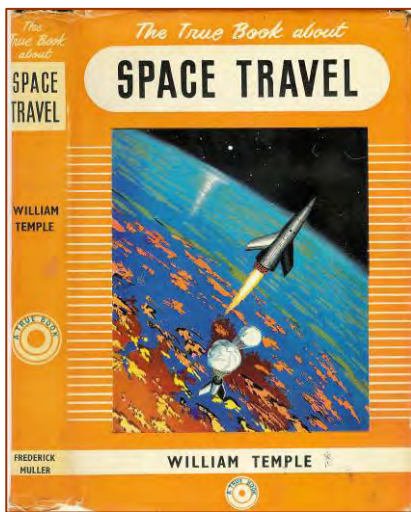
*Left;* ‘What have I done!’ says Arthur.

These are rare views of McIlwain and Chandler, the latter very natty in bow-tie and fancy waistcoat. No false beards to be seen (see Sam’s account) but is that a trace of moustache on Clarke’s upper lip?

*This picture appeared in the September 12<sup>th</sup> issue of the magazine.*

## THE BOOKS BILL DIDN'T MENTION – Afterword by Peter Weston

The odd thing about the Temple Diaries is the bits they leave out, including Bill's failure to mention some of his most successful books. In *Foundation #55* (Summer 1992) Mike Ashley tells the story of Temple's involvement in the juvenile market, following his disappointment over the 'Dan Dare' anthology project:

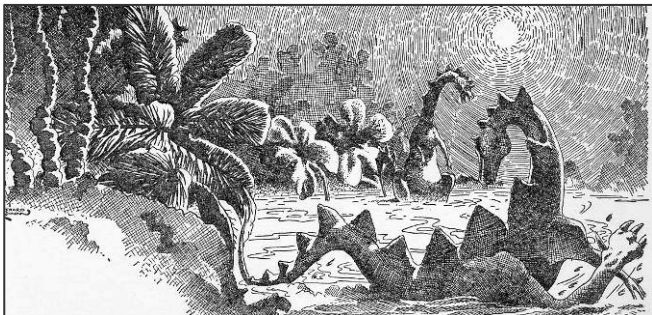


Gorgeous colour cover and black-&-white interiors, below, all by Gerard Quinn.

“The episode had put him in contact with the children's market. With the current popularity of books on space travel, Temple sold his own, THE TRUE BOOK ABOUT SPACE TRAVEL, to Frederick Muller. Completed in June 1953 it was published in February 1954 to much critical acclaim, and sold to Prentice-Hall in America. Muller then commissioned a series of novels for young readers.”

Mike notes that “it was probably his son, Cliff, reaching that enquiring age that inspired Temple; the book was dedicated to Cliff.” It's now quite scarce (only two listings on *Abebooks*, both in Australia) and the production is not lavish, being in standard size (5" x 7½") rather than large format and with black-&-white interior artwork.

Those illos, however, along with a quite splendid jacket painting in full colour, were done by the Irish artist Gerard Quinn, then doing the majority of artwork for the *Carnell* magazines. Though they're hopelessly dated – canals on Mars and swamps and monsters on Venus – they do still have a period charm.

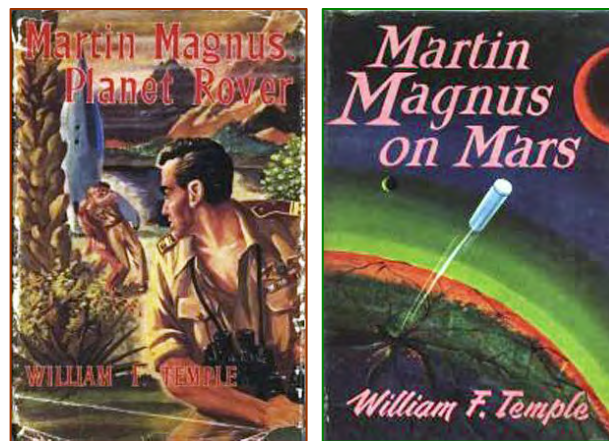


The novels that followed concerned the adventures of Martin Magnus, a special investigator in a world of the near-future in which mankind has reached the Moon and Mars and is getting set to tackle Venus. The first in the series, titled MARTIN MAGNUS PLANET ROVER, also appeared in 1954 and legend has it that it was a re-working of material originally intended for Temple's own contribution to the truncated 'Dan Dare' volume. Whatever the origins, Martin Magnus had a major impact on at least *three* juvenile readers, one of whom was me!

Looking back with the perspective of more than fifty years I can see the attraction of the Magnus books (two more appeared, at 12-monthly intervals). Temple didn't write-down to his audience; there was a strong sense of realism, little touches about world events and the characters seemed to have personalities of their own.

Magnus himself, for instance, is an oddball who doesn't actually *like* space travel and who unwillingly departs on his various adventures. In one scene his young sidekick/apprentice (named Cliff!) is attempting to land on the Moon and is alarmed to notice Magnus beginning to hum discordantly, something that he 'only ever did when he was really worried'. A nice touch for a children's book!

I realise now that the series succeeded because Temple lavished as much care on them as he would have given to an 'adult' story. He set his stories in intriguing situations, particularly on the Moon where he draws in a genuine astronomical 'mystery' involving the crater Linnaeus, which appears to have changed its shape and colour during a couple of centuries of observation.



This was gripping stuff for an eleven-year-old who was tiring of a diet of 'Just William' and 'Biggles', so much so that when I entered fandom and discovered William F. Temple was a real-life human being I sent him a letter, which Joe Patrizio has recently reminded me about, with a P.S. which said, “Your three Magnus books started me on SF. Why didn't you ever write a follow-up, perhaps taking the chap to the stars?”

In hindsight, the 'science' and plot-logic is awful, with breathable atmospheres on Venus and Mars, and no less than five other intelligent species rattling around the Solar System. But when you're new to science fiction you can forgive these little discrepancies!

The second youngster who was hooked on the Magnus books was my younger brother, now deceased, who thought they were terrific. And I just recently discovered a glowing tribute from a third reader called Simon Haynes, a Briton now living in Western Australia, on his website: <http://www.spacejock.com.au/Magnus.html>

There's an epilogue; with these books I suspect Bill Temple might have felt that he was writing 'below his game' and in this regard his story 'Better Than We Know' must be at least partly autobiographical. It concerns a writer who is trying to produce a master work and who reluctantly has to turn his hand to a popular book about space travel in order to pay the bills. And yet the book so inspires a young reader that in the end he becomes the world's first space voyager. The writer had indeed wrought better than he knew – and so did Bill Temple! //

Between 1939-41 Sam Youd produced nine issues of *The Fantast*, one of the very top British fanzines, before serving throughout the war in the Signal Corps, much of the time on Gibraltar. Demobbed, he was given a £300 writing award by the Rockefeller Foundation and his first SF short story 'Christmas Roses' appeared in *Astounding* in 1949. His (mainstream) novel *THE WINTER SWAN* appeared in the same year, with his first 'John Christopher' novel *THE YEAR OF THE COMET* in 1955, swiftly followed by the famous *DEATH OF GRASS* the following year. Altogether he has published more than fifty novels under his own name and at least six pseudonyms, and amazingly, most of them were written single-draft in something like four weeks. [pw]

## A Fifties Farrago

By Sam Youd

**The 28-year-old  
Sam Youd  
outside the  
White Horse,  
Summer 1950.  
Photo from Joe  
Patrizio.**



Before the war I lived in science-fictional isolation, in an ugly town deep in the heart of Hampshire. Contact with those sharing my passion for the gaudy U.S. magazines was confined to the three-halfpenny post, though in the summer of 1938 I did stretch a tight budget to accommodate a trip to a convention in London. (I seem to recall paying fourteen shillings for a rail day-return, at a time when I was earning little more than that per week). Outside the conurbations of London, Leeds and Liverpool we were like Swiss peasants, yodelling to one another from isolated mountain peaks.

The war inevitably wrought changes. In London they were most strongly signalled by the break-up of the famous trio-flat at 88 Grays Inn Road, which in fact had begun some months earlier when Maurice Hanson was among the first of the National Service inductees to be conscripted. His new life was probably not improved by some of us writing letters to his camp, addressed to 'Maurice K(iller) Hanson'. After war was declared Arthur Clarke was the second to go, and then Bill Temple, by now married to Joan. Arthur sent me a terse postcard: "See you in Basra, after" – a censor-baffling reference to the Wells-Korda film, 'Things to Come'.

Following the war and release from the Army a year and a half later, I married and went to live in London; and after a year of trying to survive by writing short stories and a poorly-received first novel found a job with the Diamond Corporation. The advantage of a small but regular monthly income was enhanced by location: my office was in Ludgate Circus, no more than a long stone's throw from Fetter Lane and the White Horse pub, which had been chosen by the elders of the tribe as the site for the weekly meetings of the London Circle.

On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday evenings I took the train home to immerse myself in the sweat of literary endeavour. Thursday was freedom night: the office closed shortly before the White Horse opened for the evening and until the eleven o'clock closing time I sat on a stool by the bar, drinking beer and arguing about ... well, anything; even sometimes, despite a growing disillusionment with the genre, science fiction.

Compared with such veterans as Wally Gillings, Ted Carnell, John Harris, Arthur Clarke and Bill Temple, I was, along with Ted Tubb and Ken Bulmer, one of the younger generation, observing with mild indulgence those even younger fans who inhabited a hinterland where they exchanged magazines and really did talk SF. The group itself acquired a modest reputation which, in particular, attracted visiting Americans. I remember Bob Silverberg enumerating a list of places he had ticked for visiting on his first trip to London, the White Horse being top. (I asked him, as a follower of the game, if he had included Lords cricket ground; to which he responded no, he thought he would take in a sporting event instead). And I was awed by another trans-Atlantic explorer who had been First Mate on a ship working the Gulf of Mexico, but had abandoned his hard-won ticket and status and signed on as a deckhand to work his passage across the eastern ocean just in order to make our acquaintance. It seemed a telling indication of the difference between the European concept of slow and steady advancement and Yankee get-up-and-go free enterprise.

Two of the pre-war Liverpool group, John Burke and Dave McIlwain, had moved south and attached themselves and were among our ranks of would-be writers. Of these, only John Harris had (as John Beynon Harris) earned a pre-war

reputation as a stylish contributor to the American magazines; the rest of us were younger and immaturely struggling. John was busy re-establishing his reputation under the usual stimulus of needing the money. He broke through when *TRIFFIDS*, a combination of two failed efforts, was taken by *Collier's*, launching him into the stratosphere of the highly paying slicks, compared with the SF pulp world where *Astounding's* two cents a word represented a pinnacle.

John aside, a straw poll would probably have tipped Bill Temple for success rather than Arthur Clarke. An engaging and quick-witted (if occasionally melancholic) character, he published his first novel *THE FOUR-SIDED TRIANGLE* in 1949, two years before Arthur brought out *PRELUDE TO SPACE* – a book suffering, in the judgement of *THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION*, from ‘rather wooden prose’. Bill’s prose seemed lighter and brighter, and *TRIANGLE* sold to Hollywood where its story – of two men loving the same girl and cloning her, only to find her emotions had been cloned along with her body so that the cloned girl was stuck with the wrong man – was turned into an extremely wooden film starring the notorious and ill-fated Barbara Peyton. But a movie is a movie is a movie, and this was long before the glory days of Kubrick and Clarke’s 2001.

And character is as significant a factor in writing as in any other human endeavour. Bill worked as a clerk in the Stock Exchange and loathed it. When a firm was ‘hammered’ – the trade term for liquidation – he was required to put in long hours of overtime, and although that was a rare occurrence during the post-war economic recovery, his life was permanently clouded by the dread possibility. He also, like many another writer, resented the drudgery of writing; and unfortunately had a sympathetic wife. When he moaned, Joan encouraged him to cover the typewriter and take her to the pictures.

Arthur’s situation and character were very different. Back in 1938 he had written to me – the letter is included in the biography *ODYSSEY* by Neil McAleer – about being harangued by Wally Gillings over wasting his time reading astronomical theses rather than writing science fiction; commenting: “There is more chance of fame in astronautics than SF, I’ll tell the universe! That is, if one wants fame, and modesty was never one of my vices”. He went on to elaborate on this: “I don’t want writing fame, and can see no reason to believe that I have any great literary ability”.

What he did have, in super-abundance, was single-mindedness and a driving ability to work. Much as he might have preferred the more austere path of science, when the goddess of fiction unclenched her knees a mere smidgeon he took her with ruthless ardour. His freedom from emotional ties undoubtedly helped: he travels the fastest who travels alone.

Arthur made no secret of his sexual orientation, and when, during his first tour of the USA, news reached us that he had married and had also grown a beard we thought it must be a joke, and organized a counter-jest. Ted Carnell procured false beards which we solemnly wore at the White Horse on the Thursday evening he was due back. Arthur duly turned up with bride on his arm ...and clean-shaven. I don’t think our Marx Brothers moment was the main factor in determining the brevity of the marriage, but it can’t have helped.

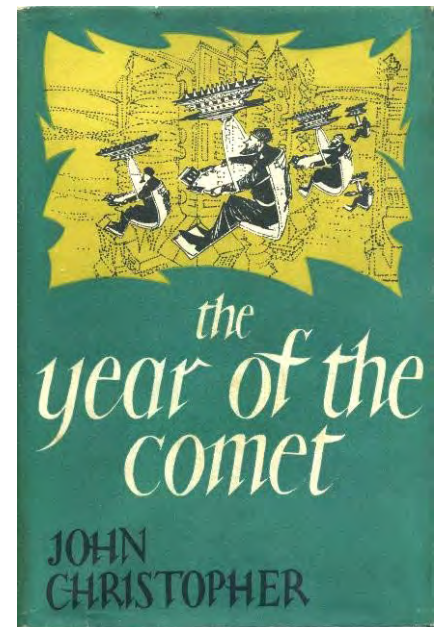
John Brunner was another newcomer with writing aspirations. Meanwhile, although coming from a more affluent background, he had to work like the rest of us. For a time indeed we shared an employer. My boss went down with a stroke and for nearly a year I had to run the department. A major part of my work had consisted in abstracting technical articles on industrial diamonds and John took this over. Mindful of the time when I would have to pick up the burden again, I warned him against over-productivity but my advice fell on deaf ears. He worked like an especially hungry beaver and I soon found myself swamped in a wild excess of material. It was no consolation to find that it also featured an excess of errors which sharply increased my editorial duties.

In a quiet way the group became known, and strangers from the wider world dropped in from time to time: Marie Stopes, the high priestess of contraception was one, the flamboyant journalist, Nancy Spain, another. (In the *Daily Express* she administered a light-hearted but stinging put-down to my first Christopher novel, but was kind to Hilary Ford<sup>1</sup>). And one evening a petite dark-haired American lady, who had heard of us through our equivalent New York group, turned up. That was Joy Gresham.

During the last winter of the war I’d read *PERELANDRA*, and written a letter to its author, appreciative but reproachful. I took issue with his representation of the scientist, Weston, as deeply evil, seeing this as an unjustified slur on such as my friend Arthur Clarke. I had a reply from Lewis:

Dear Sir,  
There may be something in what you say.  
Yours sincerely  
C. S. Lewis.

Years later I mentioned this to Joy, who roared with laughter. It was, she said, a stock response to men who wrote him letters: had I been a woman, he would have been less dismissive. She spoke with authority, since her own acquaintance



*Above; The first ‘John Christopher’ novel, scan by Bob Wardzinski.*

*Below; Joy Gresham (From C.S. Lewis website).*



with the man she would eventually marry had begun with a letter from her. She knew she was not alone in being admitted to correspondence because of gender; there had been another American lady who got so carried away as to have the banns of her marriage to the unwitting Lewis called in an Oxford church.

I don't know how many women there were with whom Lewis innocently flirted by mail; but I would guess Joy was the most intelligent. Her mind, Lewis wrote after her death, 'was lithe and quick and muscular as a leopard'. It was through her that Lewis visited the London Group. I subsequently wrote him a second letter, basically to congratulate him on the Narnia books which, in my early thirties, I was devouring. Mindful of the previous encounter, I did not include my address. He nevertheless wrote back to me, care of the Globe Inn in Hatton Garden to which the science-fiction group had moved: a warm letter whose opening line stays in my memory: "It is a fine Elizabethan thing to address a man at his tavern ....." The fact that by then Joy was living at The Kilns sufficiently accounts for the difference.

Joy herself I got to know quite well. We drank bitter together and argued endlessly through those Thursday evenings. She was a Jewish intellectual from the Bronx, and had been a prominent member of the Communist Party in New York. Following marriage to another writer, William Lindsay Gresham, the birth of two sons, and the realisation that the marriage was a failure, she had a born-again experience, a revelation of God. This initially prompted her to go back to her Jewish roots, but the pull of Christian apologetics, of Lewis perhaps, was stronger. Yet she retained a real sense of Jewish identity; I remember her quoting Matthew: "Think not I am come to destroy the Law ... till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no way pass ... till all be fulfilled".

Joy never stopped arguing, and we derived much mutual pleasure from the exercise. She told me I reminded her of her brother Howard, a New York psychiatrist, with whom she had shared an unending childhood battle against a frightening father, and of whom she was deeply fond. She did not tell me that Howard had cut off all contact, following her participation in a feature story, 'From Communism to Christianity', in the *New York Post*. He wrote to her after learning she was terminally ill, but they never met again.

Father apart, she had endured a cruelly-hard childhood, involving a range of diseases that included curvature of the spine, exaggerated insulin secretion resulting in excessive appetite and a weight problem, and Grave's disease – hyperthyroidism. For the last she was treated by a doctor who required her to wear a radium collar around her neck, weekly for a year. It appeared to cure the condition, but one can speculate on the cost in later life. I did not know any of this before reading *AND GOD CAME IN*, her biography by Lyle Dorsett, published in 1983. Nor did she talk about her achievements as an award-winning poet, her authorship of two well-regarded novels, or her stint in Hollywood as a screenwriter. Perhaps she did not want to belittle our petty triumphs in sales to *Astounding Stories* or *Galaxy* or *New Worlds*.

Luck turned her way when she was engaged by Lewis as his housekeeper at The Kilns. The real reason, she explained, was that his brother Warnie was an alcoholic who had reached a stage of needing continuous care. She came back to the pub a couple of times after that, presumably coincidental with necessary London trips. She spoke of Lewis with a new confidence. She told me with a smile that a mutual acquaintance had passed on a remark of Lewis that he was aware of being attracted to her, but after practising Christian celibacy for a quarter of a century was at a loss in dealing with physical desire. I had no doubt she felt she could put things right in that respect.

The next news was by way of a newspaper story, revealing that she was desperately ill and that Lewis had married her: a death-bed ceremony was implied. I saw her a final time when, as the newly installed Manager of the Industrial Diamond Information Bureau, I attended a Diamond Conference in Oxford. Dodging an incomprehensible lecture, I telephoned The Kilns and was asked to tea.

It was an extraordinary experience. I had never previously been in the company of two people sharing and radiating such an almost palpable happiness; despite the fact that Joy was confined to bed, one leg wired to a hoist, and Lewis had developed a spinal deterioration which made getting into or out of a chair a lengthy and painful business. The atmosphere was easy and good-humoured. I was lodged at Brasenose College; I marvelled at the plethora of games exhortations on the notice board, and Lewis joked about school and university connections: Eton and King's, Winchester and New College, Whipsnade and B.N.C. .... While he was making tea, Joy filled in bits of their story: about her cancer, to start with.

She had found a lump in her breast before coming to England, and had gone to have it checked. The doctor told her there was nothing to worry about: the position of the lump made it unthreatening. Presumably with the radium collar in mind, she took a second opinion, with the same result. On her second visit to England she went to a consultant in Harley Street, and for a third time was reassured. After moving into Lewis' home she had pain in her hip, which she tried to disregard. Then one night, prosaically opening a window to let the cat out, she slipped and fell, shattering a hip riddled with secondary cancer from the primary in the breast.

The other thing she told me was that Lewis had married her not as a lover, but a protector. Critically ill in hospital, she had received a letter from her ex-husband – he had divorced her to marry her cousin Renee – saying that he proposed taking the boys back to the States when she died. Marriage to Lewis would establish his guardianship, and ease her distress. Love came later but was real, though short-lived.

She had a tremendous sense of humour. How amused she would have been at the suggestion that she might eventually, thanks to 'Shadowlands' in its various incarnations<sup>2</sup>, be represented as one of the great tragic heroines of the twentieth century. I seem to hear her laughing now. //

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<sup>1</sup> 'Hilary Ford' was the pseudonym used for the two 'Felix' books, about the 'angriest of Angry Young Men' (1958-59).

<sup>2</sup> 'Shadowlands' is a 1985 television film, written by William Nicholson, directed by Norman Stone and produced by David M. Thompson for BBC Wales. Its subject is the relationship between Oxford don and author, C. S. Lewis and Joy Gresham. It has subsequently been adapted by Nicholson as a stage play and then as a cinema film. The film began life as a script entitled 'I Call it Joy' written for Thames Television by Brian Sibley and Norman Stone. Sibley was credited on the BBC film as 'consultant' and went on to write the book, 'Shadowlands: The True Story of C. S. Lewis and Joy Davidman'.

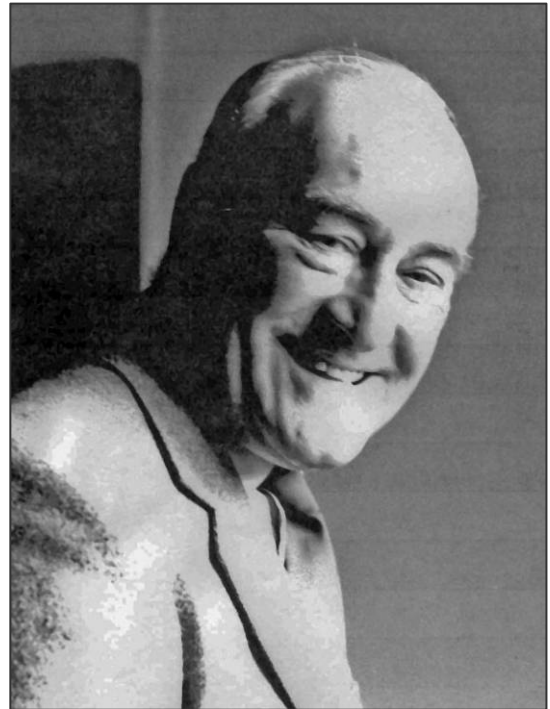
John is another of that band of super-keen fans from just before the war, in his case editor (or co-editor, as he says below) of *The Satellite*, fourteen issues of which appeared between October 1938 – August 1940 and which is now quite scarce – John himself doesn't have copies. After the war was over he took the same path as Clarke, Youd and others by joining the White Horse crowd and turning to professional writing, with stories in the British magazines and a number of SF and fantasy novels. He makes it all sound so easy.... before being lured away by more lucrative markets (or that's how I read it, anyway). John seems to have maintained a good memory and a great sense of humour, and he's finishing a new mystery novel at this moment. – [pw]

## Music, Martians, and Monsters

by John Burke

John Burke at  
Southwold, 1989.  
His photo.

*Satellite* cover by  
Harry Turner.



In my teens in Liverpool, what grand ambitions did I have for my future? As a fledgling science-fiction author, did I see myself as another H. G. Wells or John Wyndham? Well, actually, in those days JW did not exist as such, his name appearing in magazines as John Beynon or John Beynon Harris. And, to be quite frank, I much preferred a vision of myself as a new Benny Goodman, playing my clarinet in front of a large swing band.

There were, however, some overlaps. My three closest school friends were Dave Eaton, Dave McIlwain, and Dave Goldberg. I've no idea what became of the first Dave; but Dave Goldberg went on to become award-winning guitarist with Ted Heath's orchestra, and Dave McIlwain became Charles Eric Maine, SF and thriller writer – and for a while pianist in the jazz trio formed by the two of us plus a drummer friend, playing in the Burkes' suburban front room to the delectation (or dismay?) of the neighbours.

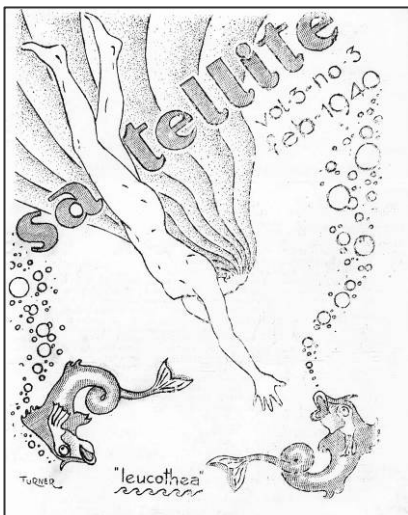
Dave and I were also devoted early on to science-fiction, largely gleaned from pulp magazines such as *Wonder Stories* (later *Thrilling Wonder Stories*) and *Astounding*, discovered intermittently in Woolworth's for 3d, imported from the States as ballast and often reeking of leaked chemicals which turned the pages a murky brown. Like many other members of the newly formed Science Fiction Association, we were interested more in what ought to be called galactic fantasy than in real science, though after the war Dave did eventually become editor of *Electronics Weekly*, and I did work for Monsanto Chemicals and later for Shell International,

In May 1939 we both went to London from Liverpool on an overnight train costing all of 11/- for a meeting of fans in the Hall of the Ancient Order of Druids. One important aspect of this for both of us was meeting not just Bill Temple and Arthur C. Clarke but Sam Youd from Eastleigh, with whom we had been corresponding after early contacts via the readers' columns of SF magazines. Sam was waiting for us on the platform at Euston, and I well recall him marching up to me, his hand out-thrust, and saying: "All right, you don't have to tell me – you're Dave McIlwain." I did have to tell him . . . that I wasn't.

Dave and I founded the fanzine *The Satellite*, to which Sam contributed a gossip column under the pseudonym of 'Fantacynic', often arousing the ire of some folk with snide remarks and criticisms.

During the war we lost touch for long spells, but on return to this country from playing my part in the Liberation of Europe – mainly by playing in various jazz and dance groups in North Berwick, Antwerp and elsewhere – while awaiting demob in Newcastle-upon-Tyne I was contacted by Mike Rosenblum, who suggested I come down for the day to Leeds, while he also invited Sam from some course he was on at, I seem to remember, Woburn Abbey.

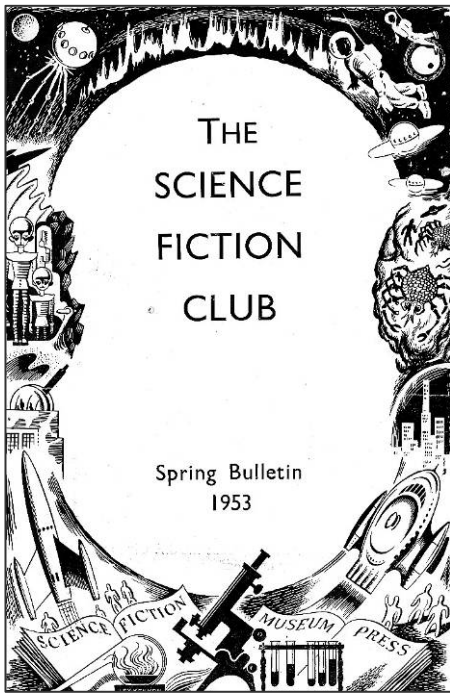
It must have been quite a blow for Sam, in the early war years a patriotically militaristic type, to find after languishing for a large part of his military career as a mere Signalmans on Gibraltar that he was confronted by the one-time pacific John Burke flaunting a sergeant's three stripes, an armful of good conduct stripes, and four medal ribbons.



After some unsettling personal post-war experiences during which I wrote a novel called SWIFT SUMMER which won an Atlantic Award in Literature from the Rockefeller Foundation, there came a time when I worked for Museum Press and commuted daily from Rye to London. The monthly 1<sup>st</sup>-class season ticket cost £12, which I recouped in no time at all by taking my portable typewriter on the train and, during the hour some time in the morning or evening when I could usually find a compartment to myself, writing short stories for a variety of publications.

I produced a science-fiction serial for that magazine of my boyhood, *The Wizard*, and eventually began, with much more enjoyment, writing a long string of short stories and novellas for Bert Campbell's *Authentic Science Fiction*. This led on to Panther Books commissioning a number of hardback and paperback SF books. In due course I was also contributing to other British magazines such as *New Worlds* and *Science Fantasy*.

At Museum Press, as editor and production manager I was also in charge of a Science Fiction Book Club including works by Heinlein and Simak, and also, with the approval of the management, two of my own titles – ALIEN LANDSCAPES (short stories) and PATTERN OF SHADOWS. For a brief time we had monthly lunch meetings with other SF publishers' editors, including a very young Antonia Fraser of Weidenfeld, and Bertie van Thai of Home & Van Thai – the celebrated anthologist of the Pan Books of Horror Stories.



It is with pleasure that I welcome you as a member of the newly-formed SCIENCE FICTION CLUB. You may already know me from my articles in S.F. magazines and from various collections of stories which I have edited over the past few years. Now, in my capacity as Editor of the S.F. Club, it will be my job to bring you up-to-the-minute news of the S.F. world and advance tips on the best forthcoming books dealing with all aspects of the subject.

Hitherto, American authors have predominated in this field, and rightly so, for it has been largely due to their pioneering and persistence that S.F. has achieved its present standing. However, it will be the policy of the S.F. Club, while always presenting what it considers the cream of the American books, to encourage up-and-coming British S.F. writers. Indeed, we already have one such Author, about whom I shall have more to say later.

First let me tell you of our plans for the near future. To start with, we propose to make available an average of one outstanding title a month. The quality of the books will always be a paramount consideration, and I hope that my advice will prove this policy. I should stress that we are always glad to hear from members about books not already published over here and which they think are worth while. From time to time we may include a non-fiction book, but by and large we will concentrate on S.F. (interplanetary, adventure and a little fantasy).

But this is enough by way of general introduction. All I will say—before letting you pass on to our news and announcements—is: tell your friends about the S.F. Club and ask them to send me their names and addresses, so that I can enrol them free as members in our Science Fiction Fellowship.

S.F. Book Club,  
63, Old Brompton Road,  
London, S.W.7.

Yours sincerely,  
John Carnell

#### FOUNDER PUBLICATIONS

Edmond Hamilton's  
**THE STAR KINGS**

A romance of the great age of space travel in whose dawn we now stand, this tells of the adventures of a present day man flung into a perilous whirl of intrigue and conflict between the great star kingdoms of two thousand centuries from now. 8 6 net.

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One of the finest novels from the pen of an outstanding fantasy novelist, this is the story of Middletown, transplanted by a scientific cataclysm into the remote future on a dying Earth. 9 6 net.

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**THE BLIND SPOT**  
A. Hall and H. E. Flint

Long an acknowledged "classic" of the genre, this famous novel has at last been put into book form by popular request. It tells of another plane of life, coexisting with ours but not interfering with it, and the startling results that might follow the establishment of communications between these planes. 10 6 net.

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Robert Heinlein

A flying saucer-like craft lands and the horrifying discovery is made that it contains parasitic slugs from another world which can dominate men's minds as well as their bodies. This is one of the most powerful modern novels in recent years, by a top-ranking auth or of the field. 9 6 net.



I wrote to John: "A few months ago we were discussing 'Science Fiction Club' in our little internet discussion group and we came to the conclusion that it wasn't a 'real' club at all, but was more of a marketing ploy inspired by the Sidgwick & Jackson SFBC which was launched a little earlier. We were also amused to see that Ted Carnell was trying to ride both horses in the same race by being editorial consultant to both clubs! We also noticed that the Bodley Head press had a similar imprint, 'Science Fiction Club', though we've not come across any more detail than the logo on a few dust-jackets. Perhaps their editor came along to one of your lunchtime meetings?"

John replied, "Yes, you're right about the whole thing not being a Club at all. And Ted (poshing himself up as 'John' in those days) did no more than give his name to the project, and we had very little contact with him thereafter."

Above; The Club 'Bulletin', Spring 1953 (final page omitted for clarity). From Vince Clarke's collection, scanned by Rob Hansen.

On Thursday evenings I always took the last train home after a short spell at the White Horse, invariably meeting Sam, at the time working for the Diamond Corporation, and a number of newcomers. I was there when a rather brash American, Joy Gresham, appeared on the scene after divorcing the American writer William Lindsay Gresham. She announced that she was determined to meet C. S. Lewis, author of the Narnia books, and help him with his work. We thought she stood little chance, since that notoriously reclusive bachelor was unlikely to respond very amiably to an ebullient, pushy American. The moving play and film 'Shadowlands' proved us wrong; though I cannot associate the beautiful actresses who played the part as resembling Joy in the slightest.

Eventually I settled in London full-time, and could stay for longer sessions at the White Horse and then, when the landlord Lew Mordecai moved, at the Globe in Hatton Garden. Sam, however, soon quit the scene, having as 'John Christopher' made so much money from his splendid book THE DEATH OF GRASS that he went abroad to escape taxation, finishing up in Guernsey. I was able to offer him accommodation in my basement flat whenever he came over for a few days to see his publisher and agent; and there was quite a reunion when we discovered that Dave McIlwain was living just round the corner.

By now I was writing 'straight' fiction rather than SF, but at the same time moving on to what was increasingly an interest in weird tales rather than interplanetary ones, though among a large number of film and TV paperback 'novelisations' I was commissioned to tackle were two volumes of 'UFO' and 'Moon Zero 2'. When I finally went full-time freelance and moved with my wife Jean and our first son – another David – to Southwold in Suffolk, I was interleaving ghost stories and horror stories for various anthologies with travel books and extensive contributions to the Readers Digest travel books. Weidenfeld published three titles dealing with a 19th-century stage magician and telepath, Dr Caspian, who with the equally telepathic Bronwen becomes involved in work against black magicians and phoneyes.



**I sent this picture to John and wrote, 'I have a suspicion that the chap on the left could be David McIlwain'. John replied; "You'll remember that I told you the story of my first encounter with Sam Youd and his insistence that I was Dave McIlwain? It seems that the error is catching. I must once again assert that it is John Burke. And the bloke to Sam's left, between him and Daphne Buckmaster? It's not unlike Ron Hall, to whom I shall be writing soon and will ask for confirmation – or otherwise." Who is Ron Hall I wondered? This led on to another fascinating exchange, as revealed on the following page. – pw (View of a night at the Globe, probably 1956, from Vince Clarke's album, scanned by Rob Hansen).**

One commission I had from Batsford publishers was to write a book on London pubs. After being paid an advance and doing some preliminary recces, I had to tell Batsford that I found so many old haunts, sadly including the White Horse, had deteriorated so deplorably that I felt unable to continue the task. I offered to return the advance, but it was later set against a more ambitious publication, THE ENGLISH INN. I don't think any of my various projects has ever brought in so many enthusiastic offers of collaboration from old friends and acquaintances!

I was delighted when I was able to persuade the publishers of the long range of Pan Books of Horror Stories, to which I had contributed a couple of stories, including the later much-anthologised 'Party Games', also featured as a 30-minute play in the early days of BBC2, to let me make a collection of what I thought more interesting – 'Tales of Unease', meaning stories which, rather than being outright ghostly or horrific, make you look behind you or start fretting about you-don't-know-what. Happily the first volume was a great success here and in the U.S. and Sweden and I went on to collect material for two more paperbacks. Six titles from the first volume, plus a story of my own, were featured in a London Weekend TV series, 'Tales of Unease', to be followed by a 13-part series, 'The Frighteners', of which I became Story Editor and had to spend weekdays in London, returning exhausted to Southwold for weekends.

Renewing old acquaintanceship, I was also gratified a few years ago to be asked to collate and edit a sequence of pieces from Arthur C. Clarke's interplanetary writings, which we called BY SPACE POSSESSED. I was able to persuade Arthur to include a very early piece dealing with the early BIS and SFA days at 'The Flat' with Bill Temple and others, which at first he thought was too frivolous but in the end agreed with my own judgment of it as an essential launching pad. We had some enjoyably gossipy phone conversations between my present home in Kirkcudbright and his in Sri Lanka – the last we were ever to have, as he died not long after.

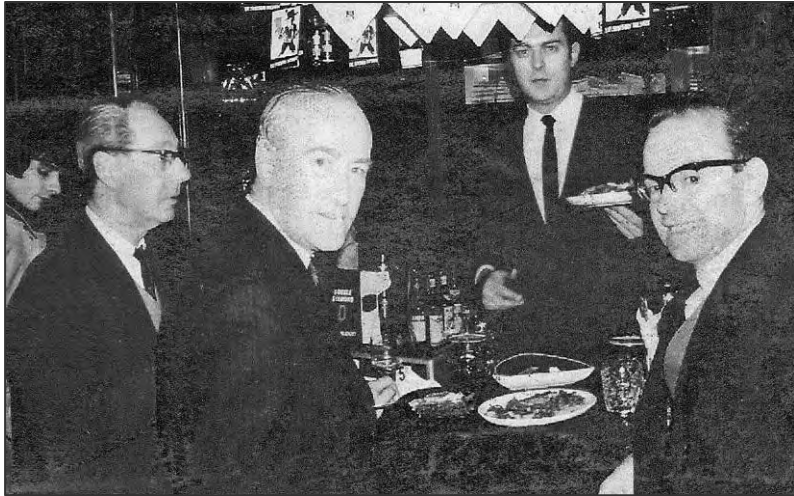
And today . . . ? Well, late in 2008, at the age of 86, I had my right leg amputated. Before I could return home, my wife and younger son did a fantastic job of re-creating my top-floor study, with its magnificent views over the town, on the first floor adjacent to a re-fitted bathroom and bedroom. Sitting where I am now, at my desk, I have only to look to my right to see a bookcase of which the lower three shelves are jammed entirely with anthologies containing my short stories, all the SF magazines to which I've contributed, and all the early hardback and paperback SF novels. So many of them bring memories not just of the actual writing but of the people I knew then, and the places I enjoyed on my travels.

Any further plans? Maybe a novel combining those pet subjects of music, SF, and horror? A bandleader on an interplanetary cruise liner who loses his first trumpet to the wiles of a lissom Venusienne capable of assuming beautiful or terrifying shapes while singing fortissimo with her own built-in amplification attached to her vocal cords? Title maybe 'Swinging in Space', or 'Young Martian With a Horn'. . . ?

Leave it with me. //

# Who is Ron Hall?

Prompted by John Burke I wrote to the mysterious 'Ron Hall' in early February and sent him a copy of the last *Relapse*. Within a week or so I had a reply – by post. I really *love* getting letters in the old-fashioned way, especially when they contain a photograph or two, as this one did, and a couple of surprises! [pw]



John Beynon  
Harris, John  
Burke, & Ron  
Hall, around  
1970. Photo by  
Sam Youd.

Dear Peter

What a pleasant surprise to hear from you – it brought back a flood of memories. I only read the highlights of SF nowadays, but I find myself occasionally re-reading the classics.

I first went to the Globe at the age of about 28, when I was working for Boardman publishers and, although on the marketing side, had been asked to look after the American SF they were importing: much of it rubbish, but some lovely material from Fredric Brown. I hope I raised the general level a little.

So I went along to the Globe one Thursday evening, little realising that I was about to change my life. At the bar three blokes were standing, drinking bottled beer. I ordered a mild and bitter and stood near them with my back to the bar, surveying the somewhat hectic goings on. After a while one of the chaps spoke to me, asking if I were new to the Globe. I explained my situation and that I had been feverishly reading science fiction in order to do reasonably well at picking out new authors. He introduced himself and the others, but, as usual with me I didn't really catch the names.

We talked about what I had been reading and I said that I had been amazed at the level of writing since the war, particularly English authors. I said that I had been particularly impressed by a writer called John Wyndham. There was a stiffening of attitudes and some strange smiles. The elder of the three seemed to somehow shrink away. I said "good heavens, you're not John Wyndham?" He nodded. "I thought I caught your name was Bates, or something." "He writes under a pen name," said Sam Youd, "he's so ashamed of the stuff he turns out."

And so started a life-time friendship with John Burke, Sam Youd (John Christopher) and John Beynon Harris.

I started to meet John H. once a week or so in the afternoon at an Italian restaurant- cum-cafe near Great Ormond Street Hospital – he lived or worked nearby and I worked in Bloomsbury. He was an intensely shy, I might almost say timid, man, but gradually we became more relaxed and had some wonderful chats. When he died I was truly sad, then and from time to time afterwards. John Burke and Sam Youd have remained my friends ever since, and we still correspond – nowadays, in spite of our advanced age, by e-mail. I enclose a photo of three of us in a pub in Soho. The photographer was Sam and so is not in the picture.

I also came to know Kingsley Amis and George Orwell, who have been on the fringes of SF. I was also taken along by one of the Directors of Seeker & Warburg to meet H.G. Wells. I revered the man and this was a great disappointment: he had a very high, squeaky voice and the conversation concerned only money. I later came to know that most conversations with authors mostly concern money! The greatest blow, however, was that he treated this 16-year-old as if he were twelve and sent me next door to look at his lead soldiers! It was only years afterwards that I realised what a privilege this was!

Peter, I recently happened to re-read your 'Andromeda' anthology which we published at Futura – ah how it takes me back! If you want to know anything more about my meetings with Kingsley and George Orwell, let me know.

**On this cryptic note Ron ended, leaving me scratching my head. Dim memories stirred, and I wrote back, perhaps rather tactlessly...**

But tell me, you mention Futura – were you there during the time I was dealing with them, between 1974-76? That would have been during Anthony Cheetham's reign, of course, and my editor was Andrew... Hall? Can't remember, but I know he died fairly soon afterwards. Nice chap, anyway.

**Ron wrote back, this time by e-mail:**

Yes I was at Futura and worked under the name Andrew Hall, because there were so many Ronalds around. From then on I was known in the trade as 'Andy'. As far as I know, though, I didn't die.

**Well, that served me right! It turned out (of course) that I had been thinking of Richard Evans, who was my editor for the first two Andromeda collections before he moved to Arrow and died a few years later. 'Andrew' had come in as his replacement – but had never told me about his long and illustrious prior involvement with science fiction personalities. Naturally, however, I took him up on his offer about Amis and Orwell....**

I was born and brought up in Bethnal Green and what education was available was mucked-up by the war. Still I wanted to go into the world of books, either as a librarian or publisher. It was soon made clear to me that I must lose my Cockney accent and that to learn shorthand-typing and a language might help. So, while working at the local town hall, I attended evening classes three nights a week, attained a decent speed in shorthand and discovered that I had a gift for languages. Armed with shorthand and surprisingly good French, I applied, age sixteen for a job with Secker & Warburg, little knowing that this was the most prestigious small publishers in the UK. They published every worthwhile European author in translation as well as the later political works of H. G. Wells and all of George Orwell.

I adored Orwell's work and was overwhelmed when I was invited to lunch with him and our directors. All of them, including Orwell, were six feet or more and I could manage 5'6" in my thicker socks. We ate at a terribly posh French restaurant in Soho. Although it was war-time and still a danger of day-time raids, we ate on the roof, under canopies. I tasted wine for the first time and found myself sitting diagonally across from Orwell. He was somewhat stooped and had a very croaky, squeaky voice: result of a bullet through the throat during the Spanish Civil War.

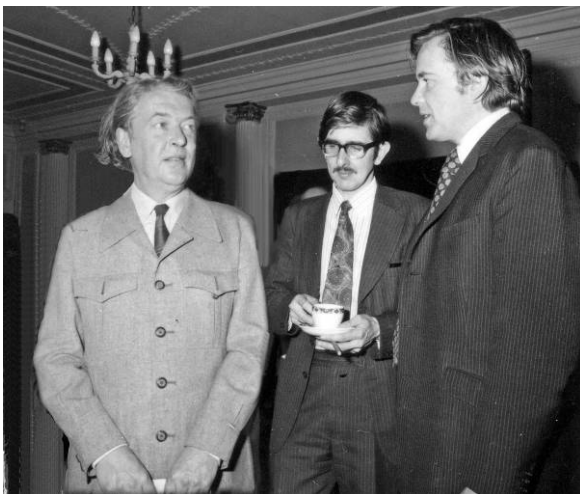
Usually when publishers and authors meet, the talk is of money. This time, however, it was fascinating and I realised, more than ever, just what I did not know of the world. During a pause in the conversation, and no doubt emboldened by the wine, I leaned across to Orwell and said: "I see you've changed your mind". Amazement all round. "In what way?" he asked. "Well, in 'Down and Out in Paris and London' you said that having worked in a top-rate restaurant and seen what goes on in the kitchen, you would never eat in a restaurant again." "Ah, you see, I'm a true socialist – if there's something for nothing, I'll take it!" Laughter all round as I turned red and tried to disappear under the table!

I subsequently met him on several occasions but didn't speak. Then, just before I went into the army I was invited to a reception by another publisher and he was there with Fred Warburg, my boss. After a while he came over to me and said that he understood that I was from the East End. We talked for some time about the East End and I mentioned that I was trying to rescue a neglected garden in N.E. London. He became quite excited and asked me how I managed compost in a town garden. I explained my newly-found method and he actually took out a notebook and took notes. We shook hands and I turned to get another drink, only to realise that the whole gathering was looking at us in wonder. Fred came over to me and asked what on earth we had been talking about. When I told him 'compost' he burst out laughing, and apparently told the story at various lunches, etc., for months after. That was my last meeting with Orwell, but it still thrills me that I was involved in the publishing of ANIMAL FARM and NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR.

I met Kingsley Amis much later, some time in the early sixties. I was then Sales Manager of Macmillans, the Prime Minister's publishing house and we published Robert Conquest, an expert on Soviet Russia. Amis was a close friend of his and one day I found myself trying to keep up with their drinking, in a pub on the corner of Long Acre, near Covent Garden: fascinating. I joined them several times in the next few months and when I transferred to Futura as an editor I lost touch with them. After about a year Futura asked me to take on their science fiction list and I was very lucky to find several good English and American authors for them. I also came across this strange chap, called Peter Weston, who seemed to be hanging around the place. We instituted a prize for the best Science Fiction novel and I contacted Amis, through his son, Martin, who was involved in choosing the winner. Amis agreed to present the prize, as long as he didn't have to give a speech. I have a photo of the occasion somewhere and will e-mail it to you when I find it. (He did – see below).

Subsequently I met Amis on a number of occasions, once by accident at a concert in Madrid, and I valued those meetings. Our tastes in books and music were incredibly similar and he had his own way of looking at everything. I was occasionally uncomfortably aware that he had taken mental note of something, and that a wildly distorted me might appear in one of his books.

**Ah, yes, that competition, I replied; 'I was a bit miffed at the way that worked out. I was one of the three judges – and the other two (Martin Amis and another chap) simply got together and decided which title they were going to choose, without any reference to me. There I was up in Birmingham, diligently reading all the new releases, and I wasn't even consulted. But I remember that reception (in Albemarle Street?) and even have a photograph of my own from the occasion. Here's Kingsley and Anthony Cheetham, with me in the middle.**



**And the winner was.... as Ron's picture on the right shows, Ian Watson, shown here holding daughter Jessica and the prize cheque, with Kingsley and 'Andrew' looking on benignly. That was an interesting little trail, and I've suggested to Ron that we'd be very interested if he should want to tell us about his time with T.V. Boardman. - pw**

Everyone of my generation knows Ted Tubb. He wrote for all the British magazines and was the acknowledged Master at convention auctions (“This fantasy trilogy will give you four inches of shielding against gamma rays – protect your unborn children!”) and for years was a regular at the old White Horse and Globe. But Ted became an SF fan long before the war, right in there with contemporaries like Clarke, Temple, Youd and John Beynon Harris, and turned from fan to professional in much the same way. Once started however, he took a rather different path – perhaps he needed the money more urgently or maybe he had simply found his true calling; either way Ted began to generate a non-stop flow of ideas, writing quickly and fluently enough to turn a hobby into a profession, even at the terribly low word-rates being paid in the early fifties. [pw]

## TED TUBB, TRAM-DRIVER?

By Peter Weston

Ted arrives at the  
White Horse in his  
Ford Pilot,  
c. 1951-2.  
Photo from Vince  
Clarke's album.



In seeking to get a handle on Ted Tubb I'm drawn right back to my very earliest days in fandom when Ted sent me a short piece for the third issue of my fanzine *Zenith*.

Response had otherwise been slight and I was so grateful for his kindness that ever since I've associated him with the character 'Profan' in *THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR*, the rich and famous author who helps the beaten and bedraggled neo-fan in his hour of need (even though Willis admitted that if Profan was modelled on anyone it would have been Eric Frank Russell).

Anyway, what Ted sent was a short story titled 'No Smoking' but the really interesting part was the preamble in which he explained; "A long while ago a gaggle of scribes and me were talking about writing, and how a story could develop from quite a simple idea, or, if not an idea, from a single word, situation, or action. For example; 'The gun kicked in his hand'; 'Rain washed away the blood'; 'Love'; 'Bang!' Get the idea? .... To put it a little more simply for the benefit of those who might like to try it out – think of an action, situation, or scene, and ask 'Who? Why? When? Where?' and carry on, answering your own questions."

This, I think, possibly casts some light on the way Ted himself became a professional writer, especially taken with a revealing remark he made in an interview with Charles Platt for his excellent book *THE DREAM MAKERS*;

"I've always been somewhat numbed to realise that I am an author. I suppose it's a feeling of inferiority that could only stem from never having had a proper education. Not only was I trying to learn English and how to spell, but also trying to learn how to write. I left elementary school at age fourteen and went out and got a job. I gave my parents

all my money, whatever it was, twelve shillings a week, and they gave me back two, for fares, and this went on until the war came and stirred everything up."

Wartime experience is something he's never talked about but in an interview with Vince Clarke in the *Novacon 16 Programme Book* Ted explained; "I wrote stories during the war – handwritten. I was a lousy handwriter. The very first thing I did was in diary form – everyone does it. It was awful. But then, meeting people like Syd Bounds fired me. This was a selling author. I didn't want to imitate him, I just wanted to write a story."

Ted read his first SF magazine – *Astounding* – when he was twelve, in 1932. In the *Novacon* interview he said; "I started getting the older issues in the local market, became a collector when I was thirteen. I haunted the bookshops, they used to have these things all tattered and torn, *Amazing, Astounding*... various stamps on them.

"And then I met a chap in the market who knew about the Science Fiction Association, which held meetings in the Druids Hall, as I remember, Lambs Conduit Street. There I met Ted Carnell, Frank Arnold, listened to Professor Low, talked about the stories and rubbed shoulders with many who were later to become notable. A good beginning checked by the war during which other things had to take first place."

In conversation Ted once told me that the best job he'd ever had was driving trucks for the American army. Things certainly weren't easy for him. In the Platt interview he continued, "We started in one room, no larger than about eight by ten. We had a baby in one corner in a cot, and a sink in one corner, and a gas stove in the other, and a double bed, and that was home....."

He married Iris in 1944 and their first daughter was born in 1948, but throughout everything Ted kept his interest in SF alive. His name was listed in the 1945 'Directory of Anglomania' as member 102 of the British Fantasy Society, and although the BFS was wound-up shortly afterwards by 1948 he was enrolled as #56 in the successor organisation, the Science Fantasy Society.

As he explained in *Cypher* #2 (1970): "Hostilities over, the bug bit again with renewed vigour. A tenuous communication still existed and it wasn't too hard to get in touch with other fans. Fred Brown suggested we meet at his house and there, for the first time, I learned that a group still held regular meetings at a pub in Fetter Lane, 'The Shamrock', and it was suggested that we join that group. Almost immediately the venue was changed to 'The White Horse', also in Fetter Lane, and that was the beginning of what came to be known as the London Circle [April, 1946].

"At first the group was small – so small that it was the custom for each arrival to buy drinks all round – a pleasant custom which encouraged early attendance, once a week on a Thursday evening.

"The group, small though it was, had a smaller 'in' group which consisted of the professionals, the writers, the editors, and later the publishers. These people were the object of envy because they had crossed the line separating amateur from pro. To join them was the aim of everyone writing for the fan mags, not because of any hope of monetary reward, but because professional acceptance would stamp the writer's work as being of a high standard. It was an ambition, equal to the desire to produce the best fan-mag, to own the most complete collection, to get hold of rare and out-of-print books. It was a part of the general enthusiasm of attending those early meetings."

By then Ted had appeared in fanzines with articles in the two *Whitconzine* booklets and in *Science Fantasy News*. They exhibit a characteristic economy of words and his 'punchy', direct style, while his crackling performance at fannish auctions was a pointer to an exuberant personality. So it's no surprise to me that once Ted started writing seriously he appeared to make his first sale very quickly, even though in the 1964 *RePetercon* Programme Book Ken Bulmer did hint at otherwise-forgotten teething troubles:-

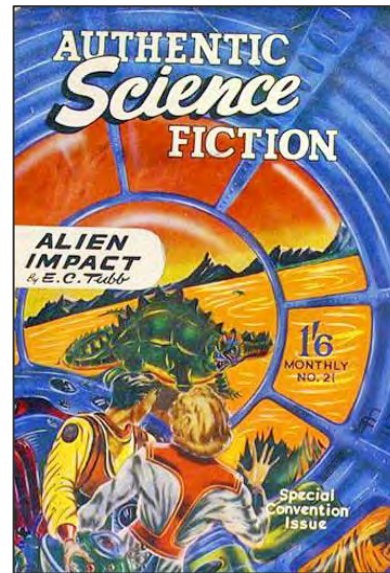
"I remember one Thursday evening in the old White Horse," Ken said, "with Ted saying to me in a grim tone of desperate comic-tragedy, 'I can't sell stories without an agent, but I can't get an agent until I sell a story.'"

This problem solved itself when Ted started selling to Ted Carnell, his namesake and drinking companion, who became both his agent and his main customer. At first this suited them both and it gave Carnell first sight of stories he could use in his magazines, but it might not have been the best arrangement for Ted Tubb in the long-term.

In the *Cypher* interview he remembers, "I didn't sell my first story, not then or ever, nor did I sell those which immediately followed though some, revamped, did see print later. June 1950 rang my bell. It was then that I sold my first-ever story to *New Worlds*. It was a year before 'No Short Cuts' was published, but before it was I'd written and sold several more yarns."

Ted was well away, and quickly appeared in the other British magazines such as *Authentic* (May 1952), *Nebula* when it started in 1953, and then in other markets.

Back to the *Novacon* interview; "Once having learned that you could earn money by writing – well, this was nice. We used to get 12/6d per 1000 words... a novel was £27. Your usual weekly wage was £7, so you would be earning 4-5 weeks' wages for a paperback novel."



Ted's first full-length novel to be published under his own name, in *Authentic*, May 1953. Image from *Collectors' Showcase*.

But then Ted made a surprising confession; "Sometimes I think that was the worst thing that could have happened to me, because it entirely changed my way of life. I was all set to emigrate to Australia. There was no way forward for a lorry driver living in a couple of rooms with a wife and kid. I thought I'd go to Australia. I was going to sign-up for six months on a project out there – tram driving, I think. They'd take you. Then I'd send for the wife. But I sold this story. Then I sold another one. Then I got in with the pocketbook crowd."

It wasn't quite that simple, as he told Charles Platt; "Got robbed, but it's all education. In the early 1950s I met a friendly fellow who came along to the pub, and he was a reader for Curtis-Warren. He said, 'You write the story, and I'll put it in as mine, and that way it's certain to sell.' Now, it's the oldest con job out; he took all the money, I only got paid for one book out of the three. He still owes me £54, wherever he is. Not £54 for each novel – for the pair! I suppose it was about four weeks' work. Anyway, that was my first lesson – trust no-one!"

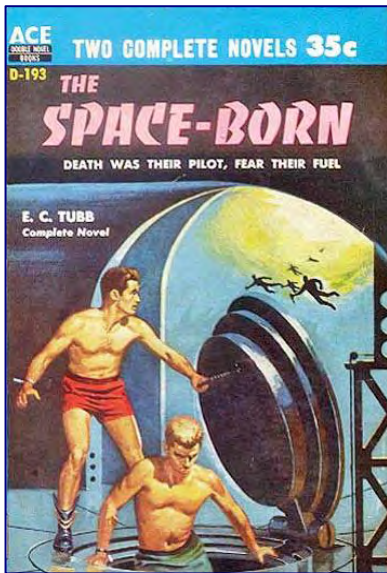
Still, after that first hiccup Ted started to do well. "I thought, 'Never mind Australia now'. I got up to two pocket books a month, which was £90 – great compared with the average wage. I'm really earning. Then I got this house. Then everything collapsed. The bottom fell out of the market. They all shut down."

Ted had arrived during the great early-fifties boom in paperback science fiction, those years when 'mushroom' imprints like Scion, Curtis-Warren, Milestone and Hamilton were pumping out titles with little regard for quality. Most of them were rubbish and inevitably, boom turned to bust. But it's important to put their low word-rates in the context of the times, when most people were fortunate to earn a pound for a full day's work. If you wrote quickly you could actually make good money, so while it lasted Ted did well; from a publisher's point of view he was an ideal author being fast, consistent, and above all *reliable*.

This is illustrated by an anecdote from Vince Clarke, quoted in *THE TALL ADVENTURER* (by Phil Harbottle & Sean Wallace). Vince wrote, "I remember turning up at Ted's house with some friends on a Bank Holiday in the 50s and he came to the door theatrically wiping the sweat from his forehead. He said his publishers had phoned him on the Thursday saying that some other author had let them down, and could Ted let them have a story immediately after the holiday? So he reckoned he'd sat down and turned out a 40,000-word pocketbook over the period of Friday, Saturday and Sunday."

Working at this sort of speed was never going to produce great literature, as Ted knew quite well. Even so he maintained a remarkable level of consistency with original ideas and a ‘hard-edged’ style, carrying his plots through with lean, driving prose that was very different to the more mannered approach of other British SF of the period. In fact, many of Ted’s stories use American settings and mannerisms in much the same way as did Eric Frank Russell, which makes it all the more surprising that he sold relatively little to the American magazines; just twenty stories out of his immense output.

To put that in perspective remember that at the height of the U.S. boom – slightly later than that of the ‘mushroom’ period in Britain – over thirty magazines were being published every month, including titles like *Startling*, *Thrilling Wonder*, *Amazing*, and *Fantastic*, all of which would seem to have been ideal for Ted but none of them ever ran a Tubb story. He sold just four to *Galaxy* and the same number to *Astounding/Analog*, and I do wonder whether he might have been better served by an agent rather more in touch with the American market.



**The Ace Double edition of ‘Starship’ (from *New Worlds*). Imagine how much better it would have looked in a Ballantine edition with a cover by Richard Powers! Image from *Collectors’ Showcase*.**

Phil Harbottle makes an instructive comment about Ted’s 1955 novel, *THE SPACE-BORN*: “Tubb was unfortunate in that this ‘break-out’ novel was not first published by a major American publisher. Ballantine Books actually made an offer, but Tubb’s then-agent, John Carnell, had already contracted the novel to Ace Books via Don Wollheim. In retrospect, a bad decision.” Ted went on to sell dozens of novels to Ace and later to Wollheim’s DAW imprint, but Ballantine had been pushing Clarke and Wyndham at the time and were *THE* prestige market.

And amazingly, throughout all this period of intense activity, Ted Tubb also had a ‘day job’. As he said in *DREAM MAKERS*; “I started selling printing machines at the same time I started writing. I did it on and off for the next seventeen years. They ended up bribing me to become manager; it nearly drove me mad.

“Then I did demonstrating; reached my peak selling knives and kitchen equipment. Did quite well at that. I’ve found it a great asset to be working as well as writing. You get stale, and it’s blasted boring living in one room with a world of your imagination and a typewriter. The job you can leave at any time because you’ve got another source of income. As for the writing, you can say, ‘Not today’; really, that’s the only way to stay sane.”

Ted has continued writing and since turning eighty ten years ago he has had over fifty books published in the



**Ted with PW, February 2007. Still in the same house!**

U.S. and U.K., most of them reprints or revisions of older work, but including five new novels most notably *CHILD OF EARTH*, his new ‘Dumarest on Earth’ novel published in December 2008. Phil Harbottle (now his agent) tells me he has only recently sold *STARSLAVE* (a new sequel to *STARDEATH*). Both titles are set to appear from Ulverscroft as well as in Croatia, in translation.

Looking back on his experience of the early fifties, Ted said; “The good thing was that I’d learned to write, the bad part was that I’d never learned to be cautious about writing. I was developing a style which was really bad, so I was slumming. But you tend to write what you like to read. I like adventure stuff and I’m stuck with it.”

I think he was too hard on himself. Yes, he wrote fast and furiously, but as Mike Ashley recently said, “Ted was one of the few writers at the time who saw the dark and dangerous side of space travel and there’s a lot of despair and negativity in his work. No wonder he wasn’t that much of a Campbell writer and I tend to think of him as the one author whose work distinguished *New Worlds* from *Astounding* and made it sufficiently different.

“Ted wrote up the idea of problems with payload and stowaways in ‘Precedent’ in the May 1952 *New Worlds*, long before Tom Godwin’s ‘The Cold Equations’. For that matter ‘First Effort’ in one of the John Spencer mags (*Worlds of Fantasy*) has the first explorers travelling to Venus having to commit suicide when the whole expedition goes awry. For their time these were remarkable stories.”

Or look at ‘Skin Deep’, published in 1954 in the *British Science Fiction Magazine*, one of the lowest of the low titles around. This deals with an astronaut from the Deep South, himself a racial bigot, whose skin colour is turned from white to black by radiation. Needless to say he is rejected by his hometown sweetheart and their family, with consequent heartbreak all round. As Phil Harbottle says, it was ‘courageous, and did credit to Tubb and the editor who accepted such a controversial story.’

John Clute notes in the *ENCYCLOPEDIA* that Ted’s work is ‘consistently readable’, and about his novels, ‘they all display a convincing expertise in the use of the language and themes of pulp-magazine SF’. That’s praise, I think, though not enough, for someone who has been one of the most prolific of all British SF writers. He’d definitely have been wasted as a tram-driver! //

*THE DREAM MAKERS* Vol. I, aka *WHO WRITES SCIENCE FICTION?* Copyright by Charles Platt, 1980, Savoy Books.

*THE TALL ADVENTURER*, Becon Publications 1998, £12.00. Available from Roger Robinson at: [roger@becon.org](mailto:roger@becon.org)

## FRANCES GLYNN FERGUSON, 1933-2009 – An Obituary by Tony Glynn

Peter has kindly given me space to say a few words about my sister, Frances Glynn Ferguson, who died at the home of her daughter in North Ridgeville, Ohio, on March 13 2009. She was two months short of her 76th birthday.

A native of Manchester, she was the last of the group of female fans who formed themselves into the Femme-fans and who launched their *Femizine* at the *Supermancon* in 1954. She designed the poster which publicised the new female-slanted fanzine. The group included the late Ethel Lindsay, Shirley Marriott, and the late Frances Evans – later Frances Varley. The two Franceses, both dark-haired and attractive, were frequently mistaken for each other.

Frances and I both belonged to the Nor' West Science Fiction and Fantasy Club, the pioneering fan group gathered together by Dave Cohen which used to meet on Sunday evenings in the upper room of a pub in the Cheetham district of Manchester. It included Frank Simpson, Eric Needham, Eric Bentcliffe, Terry Jeeves (who travelled in from Yorkshire), Brian Varley, Cyril and Frances Evans, and the multi-talented Harry Turner. This was the core group which organised the highly successful and memorable *Supermancon*. Frances, whose background was in fashion design and dressmaking, was remembered for her convention skirt, sporting spaceships, planets and stars.

She emigrated to Ohio in the middle sixties and soon became friendly with fans in and around Cleveland. She married Cleveland fan Ben Jason and attended the 1966 world convention (*Tri-con*), of which he was chairman, and subsequently other American conventions.

When I went to the 1980 worldcon in Boston, I discovered that certain male fans viewed Frances as a pugnacious scrapper because of her display of Irish fighting spirit – her father was from County Mayo – at an earlier convention. They were, however, gallant enough to admit that they asked for it! Some fully-grown male fans had been indulging in horseplay with a Frisbee in the pool with little regard for some small children nearby who were frightened. Frances, always a staunch defender of children and animals, sailed in and gave the males a piece of her mind. Survivors of this battle still recalled the clash, saying such things as: “Boy, your sister sure is a fighter!”

Frances was particularly friendly with married pro-authors Leigh Brackett and Edmond Hamilton and frequently visited them on their farm in nearby Kinsman, Ohio.

She married a second time to former career soldier Jim Ferguson who pre-deceased her, and she then divided her time between North Ridgeville, Ohio, and my home in Southport, a town with which our family had long associations and where she and I were evacuees for a time in the Second World War.



**Top right; Frances and The Skirt.** Photo from Joy Clarke's album, scanned by Bill Burns.

**Centre; Ethel Lindsay, Frances Evans & Frances Glynn display their posters.** Photo from Eric Bentcliffe's album.

**Right; With Edmond Hamilton at Kinsman, 1967.** Photo from Tony Glynn (colour).



[*Funny old world, isn't it! I haven't heard from Phil Harbottle in something over forty years, but for some reason I thought it would be a good idea to send him a copy of the last issue. As it turns out my timing was spot-on, resulting in a mutually-beneficial exchange of correspondence.*]

Phil Harbottle  
pjhar@global  
net.co.uk



Photo from Phil  
– and he's  
hardly changed  
a bit since 1965!

Dear Pete,

It was kind of you to send me *Relapse* 16; It evoked a flood of memories, most of them bitter-sweet. I was especially interested in Bob Parkinson's splendid article on Les Johnson and I can offer just one small correction—the mss wasn't written in 1982, but in 1978-9.

I had been in correspondence with Les since before 1973, when I bought first British rights to his story 'Eternal Rediffusion' which he had co-authored with Eric Frank Russell in 1937 and which had never been published. After it appeared in pamphlet form in my *Fantasy Booklet* series, it was quickly reprinted in the US and also anthologised, and Les and I became friends. We arranged a meeting in Blackpool in 1978 where we discussed my arranging for publication of his other unpublished work, including a non-fiction book he was working on at the time. Although he intended to send a copy to the B.I.S. (and also to his friend Arthur C. Clarke) he was not entirely sanguine that they would use it, because of his 'feud' with Cleator.

In 1979 he sent me his 45,000-word manuscript, *A History of the British Interplanetary Society, 1933-1945*. This was a minutely detailed documented history of the Society, from its beginnings in Liverpool, through its transfer to London in 1936 up to the end of the war in 1945. It had been our intention that I would either publish it as a book myself, or agent it. Unfortunately, the onset of my wife's severe ill-health meant I had to almost single-handedly look after our seven year old daughter whilst holding down an increasingly demanding full-time job in local government. I was forced to abandon my plans and suspend any SF publishing and agenting activities. Regrettably, then, I lost contact with Les, along with many other correspondents and agency clients.

His mss and letters disappeared into my archives and were lost to view under a patina of subsequent events and documentation. However, buried deep in my subconscious was a nagging guilt that I should publish them or at least extracts framed in an historical context. I assuaged this guilt with the resolve that I would do so when I wrote my own next book on British SF History, by including a long separate chapter on the interface of SF fans and the British Interplanetary Society and the dream of space travel. I remember stating this intention to Roger Robinson when I met him in London in 1998, along with Ted Tubb, to promote my book on Ted, *THE TALL ADVENTURER* which Roger published under his Becon imprint. We had a long talk about it and Roger expressed interest, but fate has decreed that I've simply never had time to write the book, and until recently it looked as if I never would.

Then my wife died suddenly and unexpectedly last October, and like most mourners I then engaged on a frantic ransacking of my archives to find any buried letters, cards, photos etc. In doing so I finally unearthed Les' complete mss – or rather two mss, because Les had rewritten his first one, to "tone down" his excoriations of the dictatorial Philip Cleator. It was a catalytic moment, because I realized two things: one, that I *had* to expiate my guilt in sitting on the mss, and that as a widower, I *did* finally have the time to write that book. I made it my New Year's Resolution – and from January 1st this year I have worked on it on and off every day. And because Les' story was already written, I wrote *around* it, leaving a hole in the mss that I would then fill in when the rest of the book had been completed.

I'd typed in the following words:

*"Les passed on a number of years ago, but I am sure he would have approved the publication of the following brief extracts from his memoir in this present book. Any of his heirs or executors reading this are invited to contact me, as are any publishers interested in issuing the complete book."*

Now, Pete, believe it or not, and I swear this is true, I'd *actually finished* my first draft of the book – one hundred and fifteen thousand words – *the night before* I received your letter. I was going to tackle the missing chapter on Les and the B.I.S. the *very day* I got your magazine.

You can imagine how absolutely gob-smacked I was when I opened it and found that Bob Parkinson had *precisely* anticipated my intention. I was even more amazed – and delighted – to discover that Bob had already published all the memoir (or parts of it? The article is not quite clear on this point) in his book *INTERPLANETARY*, which I'd known nothing about.

It seems to me that it is now impossible for me to compile the chapter I'd planned – Bob's article *is* that chapter, and done so perfectly that I could not hope to match it. I'd therefore be profoundly grateful if you could pass my letter to Bob Parkinson, together with my request that he contact me, with a view to negotiating the use of a mutually agreed and credited edited version of his article. Incidentally, my book (titled *VULTURES OF THE VOID: THE LEGACY*) is written from the bibliographical and actual *science fiction publishing* aspect – *not* the 'fan' history you and your colleagues are exploring and preserving (though there is of course some overlap) – so there is no real conflict of interest.

I have Frank Arnold's memoir but I'm not using it in my book, principally because the events are covered much more authoritatively and in detail by John Carnell's memoirs, which I use in full – and also because it is more fannish, telling anecdotes about the White Horse, etc. These don't really fit into my book, but it occurs to me that Frank's account might well suit your magazine.

[*It certainly does! This is the first appearance of Frank's complete memoir, though in 1993 Dave Rowe used extracts in his tribute to Frank in Bill Bowers' *Outworlds* #65. Dave appears to have Frank's photo-album and I'd hoped he also had the *Visitors' Book*, but alas, it seems he doesn't.*]



Les Johnson and  
(presumably) his  
wife, 1940.  
Photo from Ted  
Carnell's family  
album.

**George Locke**  
[george\\_locke@  
hotmail.com](mailto:george_locke@hotmail.com)



*George at  
Cytricon V.  
Photo by John  
Dallman*

Dear Peter,

I've been in the throes of sorting and disposing of my stock all this winter in anticipation of being out of Cecil Court at the end of August (lease expiry; too old to sign up for another five years), so I've been focussed on that to the exclusion of virtually all else (save eating). I did manage to attend the Brighton World Horror Convention, but didn't make it to Eastercon; too much to do.

While chatting to Mike Ashley the other day, he told me that Wally Gillings had had a serious falling out with Carnell and Co., when he lost control of *Science Fantasy*. I think the whole history of fandom in the 1940s needs to be thoroughly researched; you made a good start by printing the stuff about the Cosmos Club; I contributed some stuff about it in the last of my 'Cheap Century Return' booklets a couple of years ago. What I would dearly love to locate is the ten or so numbers of the manuscript magazine the Cosmos Club produced. John K. Aitken wrote about it in the 1948 *Whitcon* programme book, saying that the set was on display at the convention. Where did it go from there? Remain in the Aitken family? Maybe somebody out there knows something.

And how about Wally Gillings' archive and collection after he died? Several fantasy dealers just before that had been invited round to make offers on fairly small parts of his collection (I remember buying his copies of the Utopian paperbacks). But then, after several amiable visits and transactions, I heard nothing further, nor was there any evidence that anything else had come onto the market. I gather, from Mike Ashley that people had tried to find out what happened to his stuff, and the general consensus seems to be that it all went into the skip. Wally's wife, I gather, had been pretty pissed-off with the fan world after what had happened after the war. There were, I gather, two sons – maybe somebody could track them down and find out what really happened?

*[In his Festiventon report Walt Willis wrote, "Ted Carnell announced that he himself was taking over editorship of Science Fantasy. He paid a glowing tribute to Gillings' work on it. Obviously, Gillings had every quality of the ideal editor except ability. There was absolutely nothing wrong with SFY that a complete abolition of all traces of him wouldn't cure. The format was to be changed to conform to that of New Worlds, not one of Gillings' backlog of stories was to be used, and the vestigial remains of the old Fantasy Review were to be purged."*

*Gillings had one son at least, another 'Ron', who was fourteen when he attended the 1948 Whitcon, which would make him 76 by now. Working backward, that means Ron was born in 1934, about the time Wally was getting seriously into early fandom, so he probably would have been married by 1933 (when he was just 21). Gillings appears on a set of four pictures recently sent to me by John Ingham, and I wrote back to him, commenting, "We'll probably never know when or where they might have been taken".]*



**Above: Gillings and Les Johnson.**

**Above & right; John Russell Fearn, Gillings and friend Geoff Medley, at a fairground somewhere.**



**Above; Eric Frank Russell, Fearn, Medley, Ellen Russell & Madeleine Gillings.**

**Left; Russell & Wally Gillings.**

*[The pictures came from Julius Schwartz, Eric Frank Russell's original U.S. Agent, and on seeing these views of John Russell Fearn I sent copies to Phil Harbottle. He replied: "It was very kind of you to send me those Fearn photos. You weren't to know that I already had them from when I was corresponding with Schwartz about 20 years ago. And I know ALL about them! The photos date from August 1937, and were taken at the Blackpool Pleasure Beach on the South Shore. They clearly show the famous Noah's Ark (still there today) just inside the entrance to the Park. Geoff Medley was (maybe still is, I last corresponded with him about 15 years ago) a friend of Fearn's who worked as a clerk in a Blackpool solicitor's office – Fearn used to be called in by his firm to help out with their typing of long legal documents (Fearn was a speed typist). Geoff was encouraged by Fearn to submit a couple of stories to Tales of Wonder, but Gillings rejected them, and Medley didn't continue with his SF writing, though he and Fearn remained close friends until the war."]*

Tony Glynn  
Southport

Hello Peter,

The last *Relapse* was, of course, up to the usual high standard and I particularly enjoyed your rediscovery of those old stalwarts of the thirties like Leslie Johnson, Gillings and the rest. I have a battered Clayton *Astounding* from October 1931 which contains a letter from Leslie G (sic) Johnson, of Old Swan, Liverpool, on the founding of the Ilford Literary Circle by Walter Gillings and urging all readers of science fiction in the Liverpool area to contact him because he wanted to 'organise' them. Young Leslie was obviously an enthusiastic recruiter in those days of the first stirrings of British fandom.



Talking of *Astounding*, there must have been some special magic about the July 1946 issue that Brian Aldiss wrote about last time. It was the BRE of that issue which I believe I discovered in 1947 that turned me on to 'real' science fiction though I had been a sort of fan since 1937 when my dad bought me a copy of an American comic book to read on a railway journey and, aged seven, I became hooked on Buck Rogers.

And, would you believe that another for whom the BRE of that issue marked an epiphany in his reading life was none other than John Brunner? I'm not sure where but perhaps in addressing some con, I recall Brunner saying its discovery marked the start of his involvement with SF. I recall him quoting the contents page from memory – as I could myself at one time: 'Cold Front', 'The Blindness', 'Stability', 'Rain Check' and the rest.

Even now, those very titles bring back a thrill. Now, dammit, I've worked up a nostalgic yen to see that BRE again. I suspect it was dated later than the U.S. edition of July 1946. Everything in the last issue was enjoyed but the starring role was your whole coverage of those early days of British fandom, and the issue provides us with a good potted history of the pioneers and their efforts.

[Here you are, Tony, it's the December 1946 BRE. When I visited you in October I think I mentioned Dave Wood's excellent 'The Atlas Mystery' which matches-up British & American issues. It's on the eFanzines site, naturally. ]

Philip Turner  
[farrago2@lineone.net](mailto:farrago2@lineone.net)

Greetings, Peter!

Yes, I was right, there is a fair bit of reading in *Relapse* #16 – all about a world of fans who were happily exploring science and science fiction, and then a world war came along and put the mockers on the whole business. And it was educational, too, with the debunking of the folk myth that The Flat at 88 Grays Inn Road was bombed to bits with the Red Bull pub when it's still there in 2010. Which is more than you can say about some historic buildings in Manchester.

My Dad was planning to do a 'From this window' piece about the attic at 41 Longford Place, H.Q. of the Manchester Interplanetary Society and a hotbed of fandom in Manchester – only that part of the terrace has gone (according to the Google street views of Manchester), just like the houses on Brunswick Street where he spend the early part of his life. Which makes it rather difficult to post a Blue Plaque.

My father was an outgoing person who led an active and interesting life and had the talent to document it in interesting ways. His article on Arthur 'Spaceship' Clarke does a good job of painting Clarke as a hyperactive bloke who never had enough time to get everything done. In other words, as an entirely normal person, just like me! And I'm sure fans of the pulp fiction magazines from the 1930s & 40s were groaning when they read the memoir and found that the pulps – well, *Astonishing*, anyway – were being dumped from one person to another as a way of dealing with an inconvenience rather than being archived and lovingly preserved for later generations.

I suppose it's a mark of the unsuppressability of SF fans that they were still holding conventions in the 1940s and still able to circulate magazines – it was a time which really cried out for e-publishing, given the paper, ink & everything shortages. Except that if computers had been around at that time, the government would have collected them all up to turn into Spitfires and just dumped them somewhere.

What a difference a couple of pages makes. Robert Hale is an 'illustrious' publisher on page 4 but 'third rate' by page 6. Having had three of my epics published by Hale in the 1980s, I'm not sure whether to feel chuffed or rubbish! And I can identify with the BIS members not noticing the ground floor of their building was on fire. That's me when I'm servicing a website on No. 1 PC while watching an episode of Babylon 5 from my Big Box Set on No. 2!

The letters section was a bit of a desert for me, however. I recognised some of the names but the most of what they were going on about passed me by. But page 40 triggered the thought that a BEM is the ideal award for a SF fan – it always stands for Bug-Eyed Monster, as far as I'm concerned, and British Empire Medal trails in a very distant second.

You are to be congratulated on your stamina in producing such a monumental magazine! And if you're looking for more fan history to trawl, I recently rediscovered a stash of Walter Gillings' magazine, *Fantasy Review* from the late 1940s and found that my Dad had designed the cover artwork for the first few issues [see the strip on the left – pw]. So I'm busy knocking them into shape for inclusion on Bill Burns' website. The idea is to provide a PDF version to show what the layout of the magazines was and an HTML version for those who want to do searches.

[Thanks Philip, I was very grateful for your help last time, both for allowing me to run the Arthur Clarke article as well as providing so many excellent photographs. As Phil Harbottle noted earlier in this issue, the indefatigable Gillings started Fantasy Review after the collapse of his short-lived magazine Fantasy, and the 18-issue run is now on the eFanzines site. It eventually 'evolved' into Science Fantasy before the falling-out with Carnell to which George Locke refers. For those who haven't seen it, Philip's own excellent site is at: <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/farrago2/rafsite/het/hetobit.htm> ]



Philip in 2010  
– his picture



[Just after I'd finished the last issue Rob Hansen put a comment on the secret e-list about Doug Meyer, one of the original members of the SFA, mentioned in both Bill Temple's diary and in Les Johnson's account of the early days of the BIS. Thanks to Andy Sawyer we've just discovered that Meyer edited a 16-page report on the world's first SF convention, in January 1937, which Rob is putting onto his own site at: [www.fiawol.org.uk/FanStuff/](http://www.fiawol.org.uk/FanStuff/). Anyway, I asked Rob to expand his note about Meyer...]

**Rob Hansen**  
[rob@fiawol.demon.co.uk](mailto:rob@fiawol.demon.co.uk)



*Rob at Corflu Cobalt. His picture.*

Dear Peter,

So I was going through old letter files as part of my current, very slow upgrading of THEN when I came across a letter from Harry Turner containing outtakes from his diary of the 1930s/40s. Among these were the following:

3 Oct 38 – ref to Doug Mayer having article 'No More Bombs' published in the *Daily Worker*.  
28 Jan 40 – Doug Mayer's article in the Dec. *Scientific American* titled 'Is Light Slowing Down?'

These of course reminded me of the following from Airey and Warnes' article (in John Owen's 1970s fanzine *Crystal Ship* #14) about Mayer, who was at Leeds University in 1940 studying physics:

'...he also wrote a science column for the local paper, *The Yorkshire Evening Post*. From papers and information gathered at the university he deduced that the atomic bomb was now more than just a possibility. He mentioned this in his column and as a result the editor had no choice but to refer the matter to 'higher authority', who promptly whisked him away to London, where he became one of the famous 'backroom boys'. From there on we had no contact with Douglas nor any news of him until after the war...'

I wonder how many columns Mayer wrote, dates of the first and last, and what it said in the one that got him referred to 'higher authority'?

Anyway, intrigued by a budding career as a science writer that was now revealed as more than just the newspaper column, I did a web-search on 'Douglas W. F. Mayer' and turned up a single reference to an article he had in the September 1939 issue of *Discovery*, a short-lived science journal edited by C. P. Snow. This was cite number 124 in a paper at: <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/87b9h6gk>

The paper is titled 'Nuclear Fission: Reaction to the Discovery in 1939'.

Given Mayer being whisked off by the authorities in 1940, and the famous Cleve Cartmill incident of 1944, I'd always assumed most people were unaware that A-bombs were probably being developed, but this paper suggests otherwise. It's actually a fascinating read but it does make me wonder just what Mayer and Cartmill wrote that so spooked the authorities. Were they just ignorant of how much was out there or was it perhaps the detail Mayer and Cartmill went into about the processes involved?

From the 'Update' section in THEN #2:

'Mayer was General Secretary of the National Union of Students, 1948-50 and General Secretary of the British World University Service Committee from 1950-55, later serving the Government of Cyprus in London as Student Liaison Officer. In 1956 he emigrated to Canada where he took up the post of General Secretary of the World University Service of Canada. He died there in 1976 at the age of 57.'

All taken from Airey and Warnes' about Mayer, of course. He kept in touch with them but had no further contact with or interest in fandom after going to university. I have to admit to being intensely curious about what he did as one of the 'backroom boys' – in scientific intelligence with the likes of R. V. Jones, perhaps – but I'm not entirely sure how to pursue that.

One thing I did discover just now while flicking through the issues of *Crystal Ship* was that at the time of *Conception* (the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary convention in February 1987) Warnes was 77 and Airey 71. Warnes died four years later in Feb 91. And a bit about that con from Mal Ashworth's intro that will have you gnashing your teeth:

'I had the pleasure of re-introducing George (Airey) to Harry Turner after a gap of 49 years, and an animated group spent a few happy hours listening to reminiscences, exchanging views, comparing *Now and Then*, poring over old photographs...'

[Intrigued by Rob's rediscovery of this fannish genius, I consulted our Resident Boffin....]

Dear Peter,

I don't think that I can give you any further leads on the Douglas Mayer story (& possibly if I could I might have to shoot you). I'm not surprised that a scientific/SF fan would get the idea of an 'atomic bomb' in 1939. Lisa Meitner's calculation of the missing mass from fissioning uranium was already known both in the UK and Germany and so I imagine it was in the open literature, along with Otto Hahn's realisation that the fission process could release more neutrons than it took. At that point the clever bit was how you got it all to happen in a hurry. Heisenberg in Germany never got it, and while he was on the way to constructing a nuclear reactor I gather that even after the war when the Bomb was announced he had very little idea of how it was done. (It is my regular thought on these occasions that if Hitler had not been so anti-semitic he might have won the War!)

But once the Manhattan Project was started, Security would have a knee-jerk reaction to any such thoughts. Security people are not expected to understand the science (if they did they could be gainfully employed elsewhere), simply to be paranoid about key words & phrases so it would not be difficult to 'spook' them. And bright physicists were in serious demand during the War, so my guess was that Douglas Mayer made himself visible and was instantly recruited into almost anything where they needed physicists. His subsequent career doesn't suggest anything truly dramatic (but I could be wrong).



*Doug Meyer in November 1937. Photo from Ted Carnell's album.*

**Bob Parkinson**  
[bobparkinson@ntlworld.com](mailto:bobparkinson@ntlworld.com)



*Bob Parkinson, photo from his website.*

**Mark  
Plummer**  
[mark.fishlifter  
@googlemail.  
com](mailto:mark.fishlifter@googlemail.com)



*Young Mark – honest! – from 1987. Note Sensitive Fannish Face! His photo.*

**Georges Gallet and his wife with other French fans at the 1953 Coroncon. Photo from Ted Carnell's album.**



**David Redd**  
[dave\\_redd@hotmail.com](mailto:dave_redd@hotmail.com)

Dear Peter,

*Relapse #16* is, like its predecessors, a marvel of the age. And doubly interesting this time as I was privileged to see and indeed take part in the workings of a small part of the *Relapse* research machine. It's a minor part of Rob's account of the 1944 Eastercon but I rather enjoyed all those back-and-forth emails before Christmas, trying to pin down just what 'American' fan John Millard was doing in the Canadian Airforce, and indeed whether there were two John Millards as Harry Warner's index implied. A small bit of lost fannish knowledge has now been recovered. We must take care not to lose it again.

Lots of good article content this time -- a minor gripe is that personally I'd have avoided those big blocks of italic type – but I keep coming back to your exchange with Gregory as mentioned in the editorial of pages 2 and 3.

I can certainly relate to this idea that the appeal of early fandom is that it's all so new, that everybody is making it up as they go along rather than simply replicating what's been done before even to the extent of ploughing on like the crew of a generation starship that's forgotten exactly why they were doing it in the first place. And I do see what you mean about the enthusiasm for SF; although I suspect that at least part of that is because, as you say earlier, we're talking about young fans, teenagers or early twenties. Greg says the genuine interest in SF was there in the 70s and 80s and I'd suggest that it's there now too, although you need to look for it on the blogs rather than in the fanzines. It may be a slightly different kind of enthusiasm, and it's probably more critical simply because there's so much SF out there, but it's no less valid.

Even so, I'm not entirely enthusiastic about that all-consuming enthusiasm as typified by Wally Gillings 'practically liv[ing] for SF'. Greg gave us some old issues of *Voice of the Imagi-Nation* at *Novacon* last year. The lead letter in #42 came from George H. Gallet. His previous letter had been over three years earlier and his absence from the letter column and subsequent reappearance are explained by the date of #42 (May 1945) and his address (he lived in France). Life, he concedes, had been a little tough what with bombings and the food shortages and the street fighting during the liberation. Along with his wife he had to live in the cellar for a couple of weeks although, he tells us, 'it wasn't too uncomfortable in the warm summer'.

But, he continues, 'it has been one of my greatest privations since 1940 to be unable to get new American science fiction books or magazines.' You know, rather than the bombing or the food shortages or the street fighting. But it's not all gloom. 'I managed, during all that period, to receive English, and occasionally American, magazines, through friends in the Swiss diplomatic service.' And this is the clincher: 'I had to be rather careful of course as the Germans considered this a capital offence.'

I mean, on one level, yes, that's \*enthusiasm\* (beat that, Niall Harrison!) – but to actually risk being shot just to get your hands on, I don't know, a stray copy of *Planet Stories*? Wally Gillings 'practically lived for SF' but this guy's willing to risk dying for it and assuming he's not massively exaggerating for effect he seems to be hovering in the area where devotion shades into unhinged.

I have more sympathy with this notion that research is different when you're dealing with people you don't know. One of my guilty secrets is that I find the TAFF wars of the 1980s strangely compelling. But it's very much a car-crash kind of compulsion and I know that I'm reading about something that was

deeply unpleasant for the protagonists, some of whom I count as my friends. Which is not to say that I think more recent fan history is best avoided, but rather that it does bring its own (often excess) baggage.

And of course I'm sure it's right that, as Greg says, we do think we know about the later eras because, for whatever individual values apply, we lived through them. But actually we probably don't know. Just last night I was disagreeing with Mike Meara about the date of the first *Faancon* and he conceded that I might well be right 'cos I've read about it whereas he was merely there.

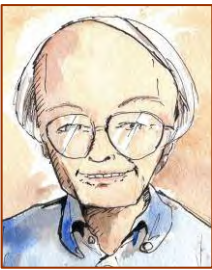
*[Smart-looking chap, Georges Gallet. He came across for both 1951 and 1953 cons, bringing his wife and two or three other French fans and a poster advertising something called 'Anticipation'. He edited a magazine called Le Rayon Fantastique and was a judge for the International Fantasy Award. Anyone know anything more about him? ]*

Dear Peter,

The usual trouble with *Relapse* occurred: envelope arrives, I open it, and an hour later find myself still in the hall reading, while in the next room those work papers lie forgotten. But you know that already, don't you?

More Brunner revelations with Ian Millsted providing the best fannish name-dropping ever: King George V, Queen Mary, Prince Ferdinand de Liechtenstein, Churchill, Gladstone, Charles Hawtreay and more. Wonderful work by all your researchers (not forgetting their editor). By coincidence, last night in reading Wollheim's *WORLD'S BEST SF 1978* I reached Brunner's 'The Taste of the Dish and the Savor of the Day' – a story both enjoyable and irritating (and with a couple of odd typos which surely can't be Brunner's fault), but seemingly with occasional echoes of the author's background in there?

Lots of other good stuff especially in the *Melting Pot* where if I must single out any one of many brilliant letters, Mike Moorcock's especially is the sort of thing for which I must keep the *Relapses*. Good piece from Sandra Bond; I still treasure the pairing of my Holdstock SF *ENCYCLOPEDIA* and the *Wrinkled Shrew* she mentions. 'Wegenheim' appears in the final un-indexed 'Catalogue Miscellany' with



David sent a sketch from 2000 by family friend Goichi Hirata showing him 'in his Mekon phase'.

other nice details: "...fiction fanzines, never very good, but never better than The Oxford University SF Group's *Sphinx*, Robert Holdstock's *Macrocosm* ..." And a paragraph on Vargo Statten which concludes, "Charles Platt was greatly influenced by his writing."

Tony Glynn is always interesting, and his report of antipathy between Eric Needham and Alfred Hind does rather bear out Greg's comments on how we're experiencing the old fans simply as fans without the other stuff. I think Tony himself was one of those SF writers who also contributed to the Sexton Blake Library, either old pals of Howard Baker's from his Hamilton days or brought in by Mike Moorcock, with Ted Tubb, John Burke, etc., mostly quitting the Library after one story due to the usual financial problems although Syd Bounds hung on for three. (I recall a hint that Ken Bulmer had had a go, but can't see his name on anything and I never thought to ask him when I could have.)

Going back to Tony's friend Alf Hind, I tried Googling the name but got nowhere, other than the usual four stories plus an assertion that he'd written another as 'Thomas Rochdale'.

The Temple diaries (thanks Joe): great. More please! Similar applause for Bob Parkinson and Leslie Johnson. Really good article. Incidentally, the Eric C. Williams mentioned back in 1937 is obviously the same man who was so generous to the fannish cause in wartime [*he sent a donation of £5.00 to the British Fantasy Society while he was still in the army, this representing more than 50% of their funds at the time*], and he must be the SF author who started selling in the Sixties, did better than most with Robert Hale and was still placing stories in Phil Harbottle's original anthologies this decade. I corresponded with him about five years ago and he seemed a very nice chap from his letters. Don't know if he's still around but his address was in Horsham, West Sussex.

*[David, I was amazed that you had been in such relatively recent contact with Eric Williams, and since he's still listed at that address in '192' I telephoned, only to get a recorded voice message. I tried the next day and spoke to Eric's widow, Mona. Would you believe that the previous day she had been at his funeral! NOT a good time to call, but we had a long chat anyway. He was 91, she is 85 and was very aware of Eric's past history, and shortly afterwards she wrote me a very nice letter, below:]*

**Mrs Mona Williams,**  
Horsham.

Dear Mr Weston,

Thank you for sending *Relapse*, which I, my daughter, and son-in-law found very interesting. I do so wish Eric could have seen it.

Eric, from an early age, read avidly and a great deal of his reading was science fiction, and later he wrote his novels and many short stories for magazines. He was in a Writers' Circle and played a large part in their competitions, etc. Someone from the group spoke about him at the funeral and they are going to name their next annual competition in his name and the cup will be suitably engraved – I am holding the cup now, as Eric won it last year. He was a man with many interests, reading, writing, painting, astronomy, classical music and latterly stamp collecting. I imagine in the years you mention he was immersed in building his own telescope – very time-consuming! However, the interest in science fiction never waned and he still read whenever he found a new book.

I am finding this new chapter of my life very difficult and I have very many sad moments, but I am very fortunate to have a lovely family and they give me such support and kindness. I know Eric would want me now to carve out my life in a different way and to take each day with courage. I hope I have been of help to you in your quest. I am enclosing one or two photographs which you may find useful.

*[Well, knowing what Eric looked like I've subsequently been able to spot him all over the place – at the Globe, at the IFA ceremony in 1953, and among Ted Carnell's pictures. Eric was certainly keen, how much so being made clear by a report in Ken Slater's 1948 Whitconzine about Carnell's rescue plan for New Worlds, following the collapse of Pendulum Publications.*

*Carnell said that four fans, Eric Williams, Ken Chapman, Walter Gillings, and himself, had, during the last few days discussed the idea of publishing a magazine themselves. The title rights to New Worlds had been acquired, there was a good deal of material on hand, and an artist had offered to do the cover illustration of No. 4 for nothing. It was further suggested that a company be formed, with 20000 x 5/- shares, available to fans. This became Nova Publications and the four, presumably, were the Board.*

*So there we are, a brief look at another of the wartime fans, one who kept his enthusiasm and love of science fiction right to the end of his life. Good for him, I say!]*



**Eric Williams through the years; left, circa. 1937. Centre, with Bill Temple at the IFA ceremony, 1953. Photos from Ted Carnell's album. Right, probably late 60s, from Mrs Williams.**

**John Burke**  
Kirkcudbright



*John in 2007.  
His photo.*

*Below; Eric  
Hopkins in  
uniform. Photo  
from his family,  
via Joe Patrizio*



Dear Peter.

Strewth! Drop a pebble in a pond and start a tsunami! While I was in hospital last year having my right leg removed, several kind people sent me books and magazines and kept up a correspondence which, in one particular case, jogged my memory of early SFA days and my (de)formative years in Liverpool. Finding that so many of the current autobiographies seem to wallow in self-pity about dismal childhoods, incest, and brutal beatings, I suggested that I might write a cheerful, flippant autobiography full of bad jokes and general Mickey-taking, but with a solid background of the SF days, my early writing of short stories for *Authentic Science Fiction*, *New Worlds*, my clarinet playing in peacetime and during the Liberation of Europe (we still managed to win in spite of my contribution), and so on. Then, trying to cope with being wheelchair-bound in my much reshuffled home and sorting out files and boxes which had been shoved around in a newly organised study, I came across Rob Hansen's piece and was at one engulfed in further memories. Now *you* appear on the scene!

Thanks so much for the pictures. It was good to be reminded of Bill Temple. (I didn't need reminding of Sam Youd, with whom I was in constant touch after the war, offering him a bed for several nights at a time when I worked in London and he wanted to come over from Guernsey.) I recall that on the day of Bill's wedding in 1939 I was travelling from Liverpool to Rye to spend a holiday with my maternal grandparents and, having complained to the London branch about what I thought were some maladministration of the Liverpool SFA by Les Johnson, was met by Ted Carnell and Ken Chapman straight from the wedding and escorted across London by tube while we thrashed the problem out. Can't have taken long, and was probably pretty trivial anyway.

After the war Bill did me a very good turn. He was in touch with Neil Bell in Southwold, and Bell told him that he had been given a present by Patience Strong, who had bought Henry James's inkstand when HJ's successors were selling-off the contents of Lamb House in Rye before the National Trust took it over. Bell hated HJ's work, but when Bill told him that I was a great admirer, he sent the inkstand to me when I was back living in my birthplace, Rye – so it came back to Rye. Many years after Bell's death we moved to Southwold, so it went back *there*. Now it rests on the shelf immediately behind me at this moment. The last time I heard from Bill was after my appearance on *Mastermind*, when I won my first round (no, not on an SF subject) but dropped one of the general knowledge questions, which provoked a brisk rebuke from Bill.

Thanks for *Relapse #16* and another stimulating chunk of SF memorabilia, and for the fascinating screed about John Brunner which really was an eye-opener. As to your earlier queries about my appearance or non-appearance at conventions, I fear I rather missed out on most of them when becoming increasingly preoccupied with other publishing matters – not to mention personal problems at the time. Yes, I remember Eric Williams very well from what one might call prehistoric times, but lost touch with him some time after the war. Don't think I ever met his wife. Another stalwart Eric, incidentally, was Eric Hopkins, with whom I did keep in touch throughout the war and who several times came with his wife Pam to visit my then-wife and myself in Rye.

*[Thanks John, and I'm delighted you're participating in the collective madness which is Relapse, both here and elsewhere in the issue. I don't think we know much about Eric Hopkins except that his family are also in Scotland and that they popped around to see Joe Patrizio last year. Here's Brian Varley with another story about Service life ....]*

Dear Peter,

I suppose the fact that I was born in September 1932 has much to do with my army days and the effect they had on my life. In 1950 I was working in London and was due to do National Service for the two years starting October 1950 or thereabouts. This would mean that I would miss the Festival of Britain in 1951, a thing I didn't want to do. I therefore entered myself for an exam which would delay enlistment by one year, though I guess I didn't take the exam seriously, but managed to have one helluva time both at the Festival site and Battersea.

I was recruited into the RAPC and did my initial training in Devizes. After eight or so weeks we were told that volunteers were required to go to the Officers Pay Unit in Manchester, but that no-one from that area would be allowed to apply. What it turned out is that they meant if you signed on in the Manchester area, you couldn't apply. Thus, as I signed on in London I was accepted and packed-off up North to arrive one evening at an old factory in Longsight, now converted to an office for desk-bound squaddies. We found out that as there was insufficient accommodation, in fact none, we were all being billeted on local families. Unfortunately, there were 40 of us, but only 20 beds available. We were asked if we had relatives, friends or anyone at all who could offer a bed for a short time. Thus, at about 9.00 pm that evening I was given bus money and told to go to my new billet, back to the bed that had been mine for the period before I went to London.

Now, at that time I was reading Fantasy and SF whenever I could find it and by some freak found myself working for a section headed by a Sergeant Sanderson, who became quite a friend as he soon noticed the books that I was wandering around with at times. We started to swap books and as Sandy had quite a few American books I was soon introduced to Heinlein and others. After a few months Sandy showed me a small ad in the *Manchester News*, an evening paper which I never read, about a North West Science Fiction club that had a meeting the following Sunday evening. We went and thus my life was altered radically, though it seemed most improbable at the time.

The first *Mancon* took place, I met Fran, though then she was firmly wedded to Cyril Evans, and Ethel Lindsay, then based in Glasgow, apparently for life, came into my life and, for a while fandom

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*Brian in 2008.  
PW photo.*



**Brian, Fran Evans & Sandy Sanderson at the 1952 Mancon. In back row are Frank Richards & Dave Cohen. Photo by Eric Bentcliffe.**

became an almost totally absorbing obsession. Also, of course, I met Harry Turner who certainly had a very great influence on my subsequent life, introducing me to art, music and God knows what else.

After my two years I returned to London a fully fledged fan. As is clear, none of what transpired in my life afterwards would have happened if I hadn't had the desire to go to the Festival of Britain. I was not, I'm pleased to say, a dedicated soldier. Had no photos taken, got no promotions, was never mentioned in despatches.

The only distinctive feature of my service occurred when the whole office was required to go to the rifle butts and obtain a minimum level of proficiency with a rifle. I failed to get the required standard along with about 15 others and was sent back to try again.

I think they must have issued us with decent rifles on the second occasion as when the results came in for the second batch I had reached a standard which designated me a sharpshooter. I was promised by the Colonel some kind of recognition of the achievement, but I think they decided to quietly forget this. Don't blame them, either!

*[Funny you should mention the RAPC, Brian, because here's another anecdote about a member of this crack unit. John Birchby is of course brother of the late Sid, often found in association with the Manchester and Liverpool groups and another one for whom fandom changed his life.]*

**John Birchby**  
Chingford.



*John in 2002.  
Photo by Phil Harbottle*

Dear Peter,

I remember Frank Arnold with pleasure, he was another who had time for young fans and would chat with them. I must have been about seventeen when I started visiting the 'White Horse', but nobody seemed to worry about age in those days.

You might be amused by the tale of how my brother Sidney had his life changed by fandom! Sid was twelve years older than me, so would have been 21 in 1939 and like most young men then, he wanted to join the Armed Forces. The problem was they could not accept all the potential recruits because of the lack of training facilities. Every time Sid cycled to another recruiting office they sent him away and said they would 'be in touch'.

So he decided he must have a better presentation, and having been to a grammar school created a C.V. He had a job but was free on Saturdays, so off he went on his bike with his new C.V. to yet another office where he handed it to the Sergeant in charge, who looked at it and said something like, 'this is nicely set-out and typed, did your mother do it for you?' 'Oh no,' said Sid, 'I did it. I taught myself to type so I could correspond with friends in the USA.' 'Come into my office,' said the Sergeant, 'we will have a chat and see if we can find something for you.'

That was Sid's entry into the RAPC where he met his future wife, obviously progressed well and near the end of the war had accepted an appointment as a 'Colonial Officer' in Uganda. Later, he and Jay came home so he could take a BSc at Manchester, and had a nice little redbrick terrace house in Levenshulme. In those days it was a lovely, friendly area; NOT SO now, I understand. Anyway, that's what happens when you write to SF mags and to the fans you get to know!

*[Sadly, just a few days after this issue was published, John passed away on 29<sup>th</sup> May. His end was peaceful, in hospital, from heart failure. He would have been 80 this October. Funeral arrangements are being handled by his friend, Roger Robinson. And now we'll never get to hear more of his stories. ]*

Dear Peter,

I was knocked sideways by your further research into the Brunner clan. It's astonishing to think that John's grandmother was also a writer, but more intriguing still that we don't have a motive for her husband killing her and shooting himself. In a family like that conspiracy theories are bound to appeal to the modern mind, but I should have thought that some liaison or other was really at the heart of it.

Ian Millsted noted that John scripted a film called 'The Terrornavts' and to my knowledge he also worked on a film that finally emerged entitled 'Toomorrow' starring Olivia Newton John and others. The producers showed John a rough cut and he was so appalled he wanted his name taken off it. The script is credited to the director Val Guest – but JB's story was it was his, but he didn't want anyone to know. (That's presumably why he told me and a lot of other people!) I believed him, because, heaven forgive me, I have seen it, and its awfulness is beyond my powers of description! You could argue that only John Brunner could have written a story like that – but maybe that would be unkind. He also worked on a version of 'The Golem' which never got made. I think he may have worked with David Gerrold on that – or maybe I'm confusing it with something else he and David did together.

You utter a tormented scream: "How on Earth did he manage to resist boasting about his well-connected family, when he boasted about everything else?" But, at least when I knew him, it would have been most un-cool to mention your family background in the circles in which he moved. The same goes for Marjorie. When you are in CND, support left-wing causes, know radical MP's and such, you don't go around advertising the fact that actually you are a scion of the *haute-bourgeoisie* and the rest of your family are bloated plutocrats whose fortunes derive from some of the blackest northern chimneys imaginable. He didn't boast about his family because he didn't think he had anything to boast about.

You will keep bringing that up about fans then and fans now. However, I think your excellent articles by Bob Parkinson and Joe Patrizio prove my original point. There was an unshakeable faith in those pre-war and even wartime days that science and progress would lead us all to a better future.



**John Hall**  
[John.sila@virgin.net](mailto:John.sila@virgin.net)

*John at  
Cytricon V,  
2008.  
Photo by John Dallman.*



Clarke again – he was an optimist, he believed in man going to the Moon. Was he wrong?  
Photo from Ted Carnell's album.

Those fans were optimists. My father was the same. His brain was turned by *Popular Mechanics* or some such title in the nineteen thirties but his cynical eldest son was way too pragmatic by the time he reached the same age. I wanted to change the world by dropping out and starting over. Dad wanted to change the world with Technology. Well, look where that's got us. If he were alive now, my Dad would be a climate change denier, even though he would be overjoyed by the thought that we might have to build more nuclear power stations. (My dad thought nuclear power was the greatest human achievement in his lifetime, Windscale, Three Mile Island & Chernobyl notwithstanding). It's a big divide that runs through SF and its fandom – one generation's utopias are the dystopias of the next.

Those fans of the 30s probably don't care much for the world around them. We fans of the 60s/70s think we've reaped just what we've sowed. When Arthur Clarke came up with the idea of geostationary communication satellites, did he think they would be used for Nation Speaking Peace Unto Nation, or just so that that I can see a few thousand naked people on the steps of Sydney Opera House as I eat my cornflakes in the morning? I think I know the answer, and if I do, it's because I'm different from that earlier generation of fans.

*[Good for your dad! I wish mine had been such a visionary. But we're poles apart on this; why does the environmental lobby always draw the wrong lessons from Chernobyl (which only shows what happens when a very badly-designed station is run by incompetent drunks), Three-Mile Island (which didn't melt down) and the Windscale leaks that were more harmful to reputations than to wildlife. Why not look at our marvellous AGR stations (we were world-leaders until we lost our nerve) or the French stations, all 59 of them, which have been running quietly and efficiently for the best part of forty years?]*

### Jim Linwood

[JLinwood@aol.com](mailto:JLinwood@aol.com)



Jim at *Cytricon V*, 2008.

Photo by John Dallman.

Hi Peter

I particularly liked Joe's edited extracts from Bill Temple's diaries. If the journal continued up to 1985 will there be any more? I'd be interested to know what Bill thought of the Parker Penitentiary meetings he attended in the 60s and what he made of Ella and her fellas.

When I heard of Rob's investigations into the Cosmic Club I did a similar trek around their Teddington haunts on my doorstep, including The King's Arms (now The Clock House), of which *Beerintheevening* remarks: 'Used to be a complete hell-hole around which the vermin of surrounding areas swarmed. However, since a complete refurbishment meaning you wouldn't recognise it as the old place, the Clock House is now a very pleasant place to spend a few hours. Lovely open fire and a terrace which looks like it will be very pleasant in the summer if it's not crowded with smokers.'

I'd always fantasised that the Cosmic Club membership worked at the National Physical Laboratory alongside Alan Turin after his stint at Bletchley Park...but not the Paint Research Station! Even the large wartime SHAEF HQ in Bushy Park doesn't figure in the CC history...surely there must have been a few pulp-zines floating around Teddington at the time?

I was intrigued by Chris Priest's comments about never having liked Peter White. Along with Charles Platt they seemed inseparable buddies at *RePetercon* in 1964 and became briefly known as 'The Gang of Three'. On his website, (<http://cid-5fb1122d5376279d.profile.live.com/details/>) Peter describes himself as a "Polymath & Idiot Savant", a retired aircraft captain and unemployed race driver living in Dorking. He flew with British Airways and Korean Air Lines. Peter's sercon credentials include pieces on Ballard in *Beyond* and *Zenith*, and in the BSFA's *Vector*.

Sandra admonishes me for not realising that Charles Platt's description of the Globe and its habitués was 'fan fiction'. Well, here's Charles in the Mike Moorcock section of his otherwise excellent book *THE DREAM-MAKERS*: "The Globe, a mediocre, obscure pub in Holborn, where diehard British science-fiction fans gathered socially on the first Thursday of each month. Most of them looked like refugees from a pornographic bookstore: weary middle-aged men in raincoats, trading tattered copies of pre-war pulp magazines and reminiscing about the golden age of 'Scientifiction'; and fat, dowdy students with pimples amid the fur on their faces, debating monster movies and pop music." Not the Globe I remember!

*[Somehow, Jim, I doubt if Peter would appreciate *Relapse* and he's not on my mailing list. And yes, I also thought Charles' account of the Globe didn't quite ring true, which was why I declined to run it.]*

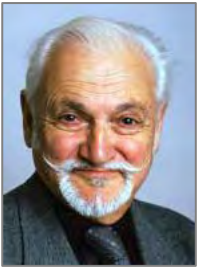
### Bryn Fortey Newport



Dear Peter,

Michael Moorcock's letter set me thinking about the late sixties and early seventies, exciting days when this country boasted a professional short story scene worthy of the name, and inhabited by some very larger-than-life characters. Moorcock became editor of *New Worlds* in 1964 and Kyril Bonfiglioli edited *Science Fantasy*, which if I remember rightly had the same publisher. Both Pan and Fontana produced regular short story anthologies, as well as many short lived endeavours such as 'New Writings in Horror & the Supernatural' and others. They all bought stories and it was quite a vibrant scene.

I never did crack either *New Worlds* or *Science Fantasy* (which was later renamed *SF Impulse*), but I did progress from printed reject slips to quite long and detailed personal letters. So when I was visiting relatives in Headington I decided a trip into Oxford to call on Kyril Bonfiglioli might be both interesting and beneficial.



Kyril Bonfiglioli –  
from a French  
website.  
(It sounds better  
than the original  
'Cyril'!)

I arrived at his address, a marvellously rambling old house, at noon. Believing, in my innocence, that editors ran well-organised offices, I went and sat in a nearby park so as not to interrupt his lunch hour. When I returned, I knocked, but got no answer. I waited for what seemed an age, without success, and was about to leave when someone strode past me and pushed the front door open. Standing inside was a smallish man with uncombed hair and a week or more of stubble on his chin, wearing pyjamas and dressing gown.

"Hello, Bon, I've come to sell you a camera," said the new arrival, who went on into the house.

"Mr Bonfiglioli?" I asked, not really sure how his surname was pronounced.

The man in the dressing gown nodded, so I continued, "I'm Bryn Fortey. I've been sending you stories, without success, but your letters have been very encouraging."

"Bryn Fortey? Ah, yes, you wrote that one about a man murdering his mother. Well written, good storyline, but too strong for me. You should send it to Mike Moorcock."

"I did. *New Worlds* rejected it too."

We stood in silence for a minute. Then: "You haven't come here to hit me, have you?"

"No."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive."

"Some writers can be very funny about being rejected."

I explained about being in the area and that this was nothing more than a social call. Unfortunately, it seemed he had just resigned the editorship. But he did invite me in, offering to give me the address of the new guy.

I waited in a room filled with old sporting prints while Bon, as he insisted I call him, dealt with the man trying to sell him a camera. It seemed that his wife was visiting relatives in France and he was surviving on liquid meals. He offered me a drink.

"No choice, I'm afraid. Only gin."

He had crates of the stuff and he found two of those large brandy glasses you need two hands to hold. I gulped nervously as he merrily poured away.

Kyril Bonfiglioli was a most entertaining and interesting man, even if meeting him was doing nothing for my non-existent writing career, but after three of the brandy glasses filled with gin I decided I had better leave while I could still stand. Just.

"I'll drive you," offered Bon, trying to get up but falling back into his seat.

I assured him the bus would do me fine and we said our slurred goodbyes.

Once outside I staggered through the late afternoon Oxford city centre, even stopping the traffic at one point. I was sick on the bus and an old lady tut-tutted in disgust and told me I should be ashamed of myself. When I reached my cousin's house in Headington I fell through the front door and my wife refused to speak to me for the remainder of our stay.

Those were the days. Oh yes. They don't make editors like that anymore.

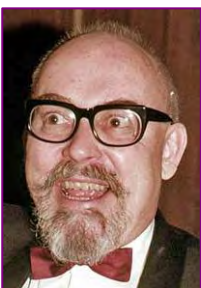
Keith Roberts, of PAVANE fame, took over from Bonfiglioli, with assistance from Harry Harrison, but the recently re-titled magazine did not last a great deal longer. *New Worlds* went on, going through different formats and ending up as a paperback anthology edited by Mike Moorcock's former wife.

[Mike had a fair bit to say last time about Bonfiglioli and Keith Roberts but Harry, alas, failed to take the bait. Here he is anyway.]



Below; Keith  
Roberts, photo from  
Dave Langford – I  
think!

### Harry Harrison Sussex.



Harry in  
action!  
Photo by Bill  
Burns

Dear Pete,

I rush to the defence of Kingsley Amis. Yes, in his declining years he was grumpy, brusque and no fun to be with. But oh, the glorious days. Like the First Trieste SF Film Festival. He, I and Brian savoured every moment of it. There were high points. On the opening night we all enjoyed the films at the outdoor cinema—*I think* – Castello San Giusto. I don't know how they did it – but the ceremony opened with a partial eclipse of the moon. Then came the film 'The Invisible Man'. Truly dreadful. Produced by Roger Corman and starring Ray Milland. Brian, Kings and I groaned through it. Cracking jokes, making rude comments, moans of despair. You know the sort of thing. Then the house lights came up and sitting directly in front of us was – yes, you guessed it – Corman and Milland. Shrinking to two inches tall we slunk out. I am happy to report that Roger, ever a gentleman, is still a good friend.

Brian is right, Kings' SF novel THE ALTERATION is masterful SF. And THE GREEN MAN, stunning as Brian says. Walk, don't run, to Amazon or Abebooks.

He was always most hospitable; whenever I visited him I usually spent the night. I had to, since I was paralysed by drink. He was the only person I knew who stopped for a drink on the way to a drink. He had a largish house in North London that you had to enter through the kitchen. The giant entrance hall and reception room was given over to drink stores; cases, barrels, jero-boams. One morning, very much the worse for wear, we met in the kitchen. He asked if I had any suggestions for revival. I told him that in Italy they favoured an *aperitivo* called Fernet-Branca. He then said, and I quote, "I've never tasted it – but I think I have a bottle." And he did. He tried it, loathed it, drank it.

While rushing to the defence of Kings I can't defend Martin. He was a miserable child, a worse adult – and when I last met him and his equally sordid mate, Salman Rushdie, we had a long moment of equal curled lips. I will forget him and always remember his father as a good friend and one of nature's gentlemen.

[Thanks Harry. The effects of Amis' contribution to our field still linger on after all these years, as Fred Lerner observes in our Literary Supplement...]

**Fred Lerner**  
[Fred.Lerner@  
Dartmouth.EDU](mailto:Fred.Lerner@Dartmouth.EDU)



Fred in 2008.  
His photo.

Dear Peter,

In his review in #15 I'm surprised that Tom Shippey didn't mention that 'Unreal Estates', the conversation between Brian Aldiss, Kingsley Amis, and C.S. Lewis in the first (Spring 1964) issue of *SF Horizons*, was reprinted in the March 1965 issue of *Encounter*. This wasn't the only indication of an interest in science fiction on the part of cultural media in Britain during the early 1960s. In *The Spectator* for 21 August 1961, William Golding's 'Androids All' described SF as 'a sort of intellectual game'. His essay was apparently inspired by the publication of NEW MAPS OF HELL in 1960. Twice during 1963 significant articles on SF appeared in the *Times Literary Supplement* (2 August and 25 October 1963), and the following year Aldiss had a piece on 'SF Art' in *Saturday Book* #24. I wonder if Amis's interest in science fiction was taken as a signal that the field could now be taken seriously by outsiders?

*[Interesting idea, Fred. Back when I was really getting going with Speculation – say about 1970 – I remember feeling that SF was finally starting to get somewhere, was at last being taken seriously by some 'mainstream' critics. That's how it seemed to me, anyway. And then Star Wars came along, with Battlestar Galactica and Silent Running, and the 'sci-fi' boom put us right back into a pulp ghetto every bit as bad as in the days of the 'mushroom' publishers! Or am I wrong?]*

I don't know that I'd agree with your view that "by about 1970 we were finally getting somewhere, science fiction was finally beginning to be taken seriously, and then the media-explosion dragged us right back down to the lowest levels". What my study of 'How science fiction became respectable' proved was that most of the consideration that SF has received over the years from professional observers of literature outside the field itself has been pretty favourable: and that has continued to the present-day. Sure we see snarky references to "talking squids in space" from writers who should know better. But we also see frequent references to Asimov and Heinlein, Bradbury and Dick, in contexts that suggest that science fiction is widely accepted as part of our general cultural background. We superannuated actifans are not the only people who grew up with science fiction, nor are we the only people who have fond memories and some respect for the literature we grew up with.

*[If only, Fred! But I'm not entirely convinced, not when I see so many snide comments on SF in the 'As Others See Us' department in Ansible. Although sf-nal references DO turn up in the most unlikely places. For instance, just before the election The Guardian reported a comment from Conservative MP David Davies, who quoted 'one of Heinlein's Laws which says that the only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible'. Shame he got it wrong; it would be nice to think a politician was familiar with Arthur Clarke's writings. I did advise Central Office of the error but they haven't got back to me yet.]*

**Alistair Durie**  
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Alistair in  
2009.  
PW photo.

Hi Peter,

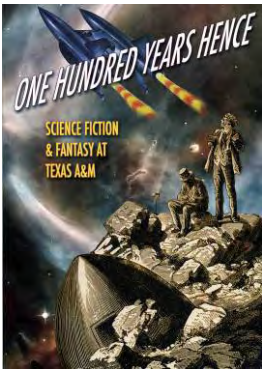
I see that George Locke in #15 has exhorted me to publish a checklist of *Hutchinson's* magazine. First, it is intended, eventually, that the British Library, in the guise of Mike Ashley, will publish a complete index to all the older British fiction magazines. Mike covered the history of these in his excellent book AGE OF THE STORYTELLERS. I think the index is on a low priority regrettably. However I am pretty sure that the *Hutchinson's* are covered in depth by the SF Fantasy and Weird Fiction Magazine index published by Locus on a CD Rom. I say that I am pretty sure because my new CD Rom is coming in the post and my old one is no longer readable with my new computer! I did give Steve Miller lots of info on these because the only complete runs of these are at the Bodleian as the British Library lost them in the war.

In the same issue I see that you were discussing the merits of university libraries having fanzines. The Science Fiction Foundation at Liverpool University has a reasonable collection but what all of these collections suffer from is that there is no indexing of the contents, or so I believe. The SFF have indexed some, but only those sercon issues that are of immediate academic interest. Other fans, of course, are putting some fanzines on line in their entirety which is excellent, but it would be great if there was a push to get the early – say pre 1945 – issues indexed. Then at least researchers would know where to look.

Kim Huett mentioned my name in #16 as collecting fanzines. That is true but I do try and restrict myself to pre-1945 issues which, to me, have much of the history of the early SF movement in them. But, as I say above, it would be much better if we knew what was in them!

*[I've hit this problem head-on; I want to research early writings about the development of SF & SF fandom in the UK, but without actually being able to see the fanzines of the period it's easy to miss something. So far I've been relying on a mixture of blind luck and tips from other people, but I've now made a list of titles to investigate when I next visit Greg Pickersgill in Wales. As for University libraries, I know that Rob Latham's people at Riverside are cataloguing their fanzine collection and the results are on-line, though I haven't tried to use their site myself, and suspect it's a list of titles and dates rather than an overview of contents. Ditto with the Texas A & M University.]*

I went and saw Hal Hall at Texas A&M when World Fantasy was in Austin, Texas in 2007. He also wants to index the contents but thought it would be unlikely in the near future because of the resources necessary to do that. I was supposed to try and come up with some proposal, but I just don't have enough time. So I have done a few which I have sent to the *fictionmags* group and which should turn up in the *fictionmags* index on Phil Stephenson-Payne's website. But these are only those which have some fiction content and, as you know, most fanzines didn't have fiction. John Burke's *Satellite* is an exception and that is covered in the index. When I saw Hal he was only a few years from retirement so I don't know if he is still there or not.



On a completely different tack, I went to the Memorial for Don Grant in October 2009, which the family kindly scheduled so I could go on afterwards to the World Fantasy Convention in San Jose. It was held in a very nice restaurant near Bristol, Rhode Island, on the Sakonnet River, with lovely views over the sound. The Americans do things differently to us and the event was a very pleasant affair with people talking about Don's life and his impact on fantasy publishing.

I met him for the first time in 1986, when he lived in Rhode Island, and Linda and I became firm friends of Don and his wife Shirley. In later years he moved to Florida to get away from the New England winters. He got a wasting disease that went on for many more years than anyone expected but throughout that time he just held up with amazing fortitude. In the last few years he could hardly communicate. I think he was the kindest and most lovely person I have ever met, and I will miss him dearly. We hope to keep in touch with Shirley but she hasn't yet decided whether to stay in Florida or move closer to her daughter near Boston. As for Don, if nothing else, he should go down as the man who invented the illustrated/limited edition. Some of the Don Grant titles he published – such as the early Conan stories – are beautiful works of publishing and he was also the man who persuaded Stephen King to publish the Gunslinger books.

[Sorry Alistair, I never knew him. But I wrote to Hal Hall – he's still there, and he sent me a nice letter and a beautifully printed colour 'catalogue', *One Hundred Years Hence*, illustrating some of the material in their collection. Now, two more Book Men have tales to tell...]

**John Egging**  
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John in 2008.  
His photo.

Dear Peter

I'm not sure where the weeks go these days, here I am still thinking of my response to *Relapse* #15 when in comes #16 !!! Many thanks.

Briefly looking through the latest issue I'm sorry to see that George Locke didn't pick up on your question in the previous issue, "who was this 'guy who changed your life?'" When I read that I thought he was probably meaning book dealer and collector Stuart Teitler and was looking forward to reading George's reminiscences. Stu, who worked for 'Caz' Cazedessus in the 1960s before starting of his own business, Kaleidoscope Books, built up an amazing collection of lost race novels but suffered various setbacks, sold his collection off to Peter Howard, and returned to his first love of dancing.

By strange coincidence Martin Stone, another bookman who, like Stu, is spoken of with awe and has strong associations with Peter Howard (and with several of your readers), can also be seen alongside fellow Parisian John Baxter at; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHFR5QZAZkE>.

In the current *Relapse* Ian Millsted speculates on the worth of the Roscoe and Ethel Brunner estates. The actual figures are £146,938 and £36,694 respectively, as reported in contemporary newspapers, see : <http://newspapers.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/3845612?searchTerm=roscoe+brunner>

Their wills were also reported in *The Times* in 1927 but I'm not about to pay Murdoch to look at his archives, I'd far sooner pay *Relapse* closer attention. Which I'll do now.

**Andy Sawyer**  
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Above; Andy in 2008. His photo.

Hi Peter,

ARRGH! "Andy, of course, is employed by the John Moores Liverpool University" (p. 6). No, that's the OTHER one. We are the University of Liverpool, established 1881, one of the original 'red-brick' universities. JMU is down the road, former Liverpool Polytechnic. Not that there's anything wrong with that, it's a good place, some of my best friends, etc., but I have nothing to do with Colin Askham via a connection with John Moores, sadly.

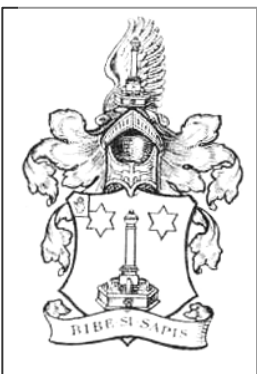
"Two John Brunner archives – care to explain?" (p. 44). Gladly. Sir John Tomlinson Brunner 1842-1919, was grandfather of 'our' John Brunner, whose mss and awards are now part of the Science Fiction Foundation Collection. But we already had the 'other' JB papers. And what hadn't quite sunk in here was that the reason we had them (or one of the reasons) was not that Brunner/Mond/ICI was a Cheshire firm and we are the nearest university but that he was actually Pro-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool from 1909. So there \*is\* a kind of local relevance to our John's archive coming here.

John Tomlinson Brunner was co-founder of Brunner, Mond and Co. (1873), which developed through mergers into the multinational firm of ICI (1926). He was Liberal MP for Northwich, Cheshire, 1885-1886 and 1887-1909, and was made a Privy Councilor in 1906. He served as Pro-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool from 1909, and was one of its major benefactors. Some of his outstanding benefactions include the endowment of the Brunner Chairs of Economic Science, Egyptology, and Physical Chemistry. I haven't actually looked at any of these papers, but one day I might discover a lost science fiction novel by John Brunner's grandfather hidden in a diary.

Incidentally, the 'Mond' of Brunner-Mond, (Ludvig Mond) is supposed to be alluded to in the name of the World Controller in BRAVE NEW WORLD, Mustapha Mond. So there's a double SF reference in the company title.

Appropriate motto ('Bibe Si Sapis') don't you think? (I'm swanking – I'm thinking 'drink' "and 'wisdom' but I don't know the grammar. 'Si' could be 'If'. 'If only drinking made you wise' – a very fannish motto. But ask Tony Keen, who'll understand the Latin!) If you go to the site of the Heraldry society and scroll down or do a search for that phrase you'll find a short piece from Hugo Brunner explaining the family motto and giving a different translation (apparently in German, "Brunnen" or something like it means 'well' or 'fountain', so it's a neat pun). It also says that the Brunner family in the 19<sup>th</sup> century came from Switzerland to - - Liverpool. I've no idea if John ever used the crest; we don't have his correspondence. Maybe someone who got letters from him will know.

[Sorry, sorry, I was confused during my last visit; I swear I followed the signs to 'John Moores' University' yet somehow still ended up at your place!]



Below: the Brunner coat of arms

[Thanks to the help of a person known only as 'MJE' I've recently made contact with Don Allen, one of the leading fans of the mid-fifties, who by coincidence also published a fanzine titled *Satellite*. Don was hyper-active for a few brief years before vanishing into Her Majesty's Forces but once again he proves my belief that old fans never quite forget the fannish days of their youth....]

**Don Allen**  
Gateshead

Dear Peter,

Thanks for *Relapse* 15. I like it very much, interesting articles and so many familiar names. I enjoyed your bit about the box of old fanzines – ah yes, I remember them well, though I had quite a shock when I saw that old pic of me. That's the second one you've used, the other being of me with Eric Jones at Kettering. And some of my old illos, too; they've stood the test of time, don't know about me!

I have seen issues before since Jim Cawthorn used to pass them on. I was very sad and upset when Jim died because he was a great friend for over 50 years. One of my most treasured items is Jim's adaptation of Mike Moorcock's *STORMBRINGER* in which he has a dedication to me saying that I was responsible for it all! We met regularly with other local fans in a Newcastle pub. Now they are all gone.



**I think this is the picture Don means – I'd previously thought that was Mal Ashworth with the beanie and zap-gun! – pw  
Photo from the Kettering local newspaper**

I have been helping a lad in Gateshead who is researching a book about the town. I was showing him some old photos of Gateshead, one of which was of Northbourne Terrace. "That's where my friend Jim Cawthorn used to live," I remarked. "You mean the fantasy artist?" he asked. It turned out he is a fan of Mike Moorcock's writings, Jerry Cornelius and Elric, and all that, and years ago he had bought an original piece of Cawthorn artwork at some convention. I filled him in on Jim's life in the town and he's going to put some of it in the book. He also suggested that there should be a plaque put up where he was born, as one of Gateshead's famous personalities, although since Jim's house is long gone it would have to be put on a motorway pillar!

Jim and I first met when we worked at the same place in 1952. During our lunch breaks he would be reading comics such as *Batman*, *Tarzan*, etc., and I was reading SF. One day I gave him a copy of Edgar Rice Burroughs' *PRINCESS OF MARS* and he was hooked! The rest is history, as they say. His artistic skill developed when I started to publish *Satellite* and introduced him to the wonderful world of fanzines. Stencil cutting is an art in itself. We experimented with various tools and designed some to get the right effect. The Gestetner office in Newcastle took up some of our ideas and even displayed some of our illos in their showroom.

When Arthur Thompson was just starting he asked for advice on what we were using to get the finer points of shading, etc. Using carbon paper would help, and the better-quality stencils had carbons between the wax sheet and the backing sheet. We worked out that an intricately cut stencil, held together with nail varnish, would last for about 200 copies before falling apart. Such skills! Sometimes I thought my duplicator was not enchanted but bewitched. *Satellite* went out all over the world and had top BNF's and Pros amongst its many contributors. And it was one of the first to use printed covers and photos.

One of the first things Mike Moorcock wrote was in *Satellite*, when he was in Paris, and before he started to read SF! There were lots of strange things going on in fandom then. Michel Boulet, Ray Nelson, and Pierre Plantard talking about weird societies in Paris. Erwin Skudla in Austria, Alver Apletoft in Sweden and some German fans were writing about conspiracy theories. Eric Jones formed the Knights of St. Fantony and got into trouble with the local Freemasons. I visited Eric often, even attended one of the ceremonies in Cheltenham.

All my fannish stuff is stashed away in boxes up in the fan-attic, and I've been browsing through some of it. I even enjoyed my own writings of visiting Ron Bennett and Paul Enever, going to the Globe and meeting London fandom, and visiting Walt Willis and Irish Fandom. I played Ghoddminton in the fan-room and in the excitement of the game I tried to leap the table (which was against the rules) to get a better shot and nearly brought the thing crashing to the floor. What larks! And apart from *Satellite*, all the illos, cartoons and stuff I was doing for other fanzines. Don't know where I found the time, or the energy!

I enjoyed John Berry's article about his writings. I wonder if he included his 'Letterhacker's Guide' from *Satellite*? Or if he remembers the 'tribute' cover I did of him? His wife Diane said I made him look like a manic Charlie Chaplin.

That bit about Alan Dodd was also interesting. I remember going to Hoddesdon in search of him. I was visiting an aunt of mine who had an off-licence in Welham Green, near to Hoddesdon where Alan lived, so I wrote to him and suggested that we could probably meet up. The strange thing is he replied saying he had never heard of Welham Green and was I just making it up as a hoax or something. Anyway, I found his house, knocked at the door, and an old lady answered (his Mother?) but said he was out. I did notice the net curtains twitching, though! Jim Cawthorn had a photographer friend by the name of Harrison Marks and he said Alan used to visit his studio in London. I've still got all my old letter-files so I may read through some of Alan's letters to see, knowing what I know now, if I can pick up any clues to what he was all about.

The Melting Pot looks good, full of familiar names, but Joan Burns was Alan Burns, doing a Sandy Sanderson (making up a female persona).

[*'Harrison Marks'... now where have I heard that name before!*]



**Don Malcolm,**  
Paisley



*Don at  
Intersection,  
1995. His  
photo.*

Dear Peter,

Many thanks to all those who made such kind remarks about my article in #15; David Redd (twice), Bruce Burn, Bill Burns and Ian Williams. I was especially intrigued by the part in David's letter, "no clue as to the 'charm of SF' many found in Don's stories". The phrase isn't familiar and I don't remember anyone actually using it in conversation with me, but I'd be pleased to be remembered for that!

As a Fellow of the British Interplanetary Society for over fifty years I much enjoyed the articles about the early days of the BIS. A question for Dr Bob; is there any mention in the records of the Scottish branch of the Society? I was Secretary, then Chairman, and we had our biggest turn-out – over 100 – when Yuri Gagarin went into space, then the audience got smaller and smaller until we had to close down. We had an Edinburgh branch and one evening our solitary attendee was a trainee journalist, Ghandi's grandson. [!/] The subject was 'Design for a Spacesuit', and the next day's comment in the newspaper was that apparently, Edinburgh 'didn't want a spacesuit, even with two pairs of trousers'. And they say they're a humourless lot in Edinburgh!

So John Berry is another astro-philatelist, although we obviously took different roads in space-theme collecting. When I read that the USSR had issued two Sputnik I stamps in 1957 I decided that I'd concentrate on that country, and I'm glad that I did. My collection now includes stamps, special envelopes, cards and cachets and autographs, including two from Gagarin. I have 240 sheets mounted and about 30 years' worth in boxes and stock-books. I'm still collecting but not adding much of interest.

And this brings me to the name on the SFA letter on page 18, 'G. Kenneth Chapman'. Surely this must be my great philatelic editor, Kenneth F. Chapman, of *Stamp Collecting*, who survived to about 93 and I believe, was in the RAF?

*[Well I don't know, Don, it could be true, but 'our' Ken Chapman was definitely a Navy man – I have a photo – and after the war he became a speciality book-dealer. Probably just a coincidence. But interesting to hear about the BIS in Scotland. They used to have a branch in Birmingham.....]*

**David Hardy**  
[Dave@astro  
art.org](mailto:Dave@astroart.org)

Hi Peter,

This ish was especially interesting for me, because of all the BIS material. So here's my take on it: I joined the BIS in 1952 -- so I beat Bob by five years! -- at the age of 16.

Now, the thing to make me take special notice was the start of Harry Turner's piece: 'After completing a lengthy radio course at Birmingham College of Technology. . .' Having myself been propelled into a career in science ("You can't make a living at Art" – said my so-called Careers Officer at grammar school, who was also Biology master. He was quite right, of course,) my first job was as a lab technician at. . Birmingham College of Technology, which is now part of Aston University.



Having read Arthur C. Clarke's book INTERPLANETARY FLIGHT I knew that there was a British Interplanetary Society, and I was sure there must be a Midlands Branch, so spent my lunch hours going to the Library, CAB, etc., trying to find out where it was in Birmingham. When I did eventually find out it was a pleasant surprise: meetings were held monthly at Birmingham College of Technology!

At one of the first meetings I met Arthur C, and later I met artist R. A. (Ralph) Smith, P. E. Cleator, and other BIS luminaries. I started making posters for the meetings, to put up on the students' notice boards, and also did some large paintings for BIS exhibitions, held at the Midland Institute, the Stratford upon Avon Flower Show (yes, really), and so on. I know Bob Parkinson, of course, but because he's now a member of the IAAA, of which I'm European Vice President (not as impressive as President of the BIS, but. . .)

Finally, you might find the attached photo amusing. It was taken in 1972, upon the launch of my book with Patrick Moore, CHALLENGE OF THE STARS. Did I really have all that hair?

*[Thanks for your LoC, Dave, and the excellent picture of ACC, sideburns and all! I've said this before but in some respects many of my experiences parallel yours, only some a few years behind and generally less successfully. For instance, we both went to the old CAT at Gosta Green, and we both started as lab technicians before escaping to more interesting things! And I would have followed your example with the BIS, if I'd been a bit more resourceful.*

*Like you, I discovered the BIS, which in those days was at 12 Bessborough Gardens, London SW1, and I wrote to them for information. In reply they sent me a copy of their Journal, along with a great pile of other leaflets about books and events. Well, this was 1956 and I was a schoolboy. I couldn't afford to subscribe, and besides, the Journal was full of maths and meant nothing to me, but I was interested in all the other stuff, so I used to write up every two or three months for more of the same. They never twigged! But they also never gave me any reason to suspect there was a Midlands branch, or I would have gone along. Instead I found the Birmingham Astronomy Group, which in those days met every week in a cellar of the old University buildings in Edmund Street.*

*The trouble was that I was just fourteen, and shy with it. I was awed by all the clever people there (remember Mr Burdon, grinding that huge mirror?) and they more-or-less ignored me so I gave it up after a year or so. I know you were also a member, and if things had worked out only slightly differently we might have met years earlier!]*

## WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

**Doug Bell** who “really enjoyed Harry Turner’s ‘Spaceship Clarke’ piece – a lovely vignette of classical music, science fiction and rocket propulsion set against the backdrop of military service. One detail caught my eye – Arthur’s use of two record decks to continually play music. It now seems that we have to include the creation of modern DJ-techniques alongside com-sat technology as one of Clarke’s great inventions!” **Greg Benford** “liked Mike Moorcock’s stories about *New Worlds*, and recall visiting him in summer 1969. He said he wanted some science in their fiction, though not too much. I later sent him the first part of IN THE OCEAN OF NIGHT, a novelette of same name. He said it was more appropriate for *Astounding*, but I published it in *F&SF* instead. I never sent *New Worlds* anything further, though did contribute to *Interzone* in its early days. Much of what I do in the field depends on getting a personal reading of editors. Mike I always liked but we’re on different wavelengths. I saw that in 1969, noting a character buzzing through Mike’s book shelves at Ladbroke Grove. I asked who he was and Mike waved this away, saying ‘some Canadian’ -- John Clute.” And **Larry Bigman** wrote, “I am VERY intrigued, especially by all the John Brunner coverage. I’ve gotten increasingly obsessed by Brunner, his books, personality, etc, over the last few years. The recent Centipede Press reissues of STAND ON ZANZIBAR and SHEEP LOOK UP have very interesting autobiographical information in them.”

**Steve Green** wondered, “I have no idea how *The Terronauts* has evaded me, especially as I wrote an extensive article on 1960s UK SF movies for *Novacon 18* and thought I’d covered every entry. Please warn Ian Millsted this is not the only sub-standard SF credit for Charles Hawtrey during that decade: in the equally obscure *Zeta One*, he and James Robertson Justice play sadistic criminals who torture pretty young aliens to death (among them Carol Hawkins, later the mouthy blonde in *Please Sir!*”). **Sam Long** calculated: “A (wartime) con membership for 15 shillings, including meals ...ah, if only.... Let’s see: I think a private soldier’s pay in the British army was about 3/- per day after 6 months service, so the con membership was 5 days pay. I think an American private got about \$50 a month all found, or \$42/month after deductions, which would be about twice that of a British soldier. No wonder the not-so-funny joke went around HM Armed Forces during WWII, ‘The Yanks are overpaid, oversexed, and over here’, to which the Yanks replied, ‘The Brits are underpaid, undersexed, and under Eisenhower’.” And **Mike Meara** asked: “Mike Deckinger and Bill Burns both mention fan films. Does anyone make them any more? Despite the fact that it’s never been easier, thanks to modern technology, I can’t bring a recent example to mind. The appeal of these films lies not in their artistic merit – I’ve seen *Breathworld* and it was dreadful – but in the opportunities they offer to see fans of the past, sometimes the dead past, moving and perhaps even speaking. Plenty of fans bring stills cameras to cons these days, but very few bring camcorders, though many must own them. Whenever I mention bringing my own camcorder to a con I am met with groans and howls of horror, outrage and protest.”

**Ian Millsted** noted: “I think it was Sir Alfred Mond who was referenced in BRAVE NEW WORLD rather than his father Ludwig. Alfred was ambitious and high profile and had died in 1930 which is probably about the time Huxley started writing his novel. Mond had been Minister for Public Health which coupled with his industrial background touches the bases in Huxley’s book. Mond had been a Liberal MP but switched to the Conservatives in 1926. He became a peer in 1928 as Lord Melchett (the same name as used in *Black Adder*). It is interesting to compare Sir John Brunner who tried to avoid being made a Lord and Mond who seems to have sought it.” **Lloyd Penney** grieved: “Believe me, when it came to science fiction, I would have been happy to turn it into a career, but it wasn’t to be. I tried my hand at writing, but I am more journalist than author. Trying to get into publishing in Canada is extremely difficult, for it is an entry into a Canadian high art and clique. And, in many ways, the publishing capital of Canada is New York, so not being American closed many doors.” **Greg Pickersgill** marvelled; “What an astonishing thing. There’s so much information about so many things it is actually more than somewhat intimidating. Don’t misunderstand me, it is a wonderful thing, truly, but a lot to absorb. I’m actually amazed by it. It’s kind of like reading one of those mid-period Baxter novels, where every twenty pages or so you have to stop and let your brain have a rest and try to absorb it all. Except it’s less pages with *Relapse*.”

**Charles Platt** enthused; “personally I get as much out of the pictures as I do out of the text. Maybe more. The photos of Arthur Clarke are priceless, and I’ve never seen a picture of Prof. A. M. Low before. It’s frustrating not to be able to get high-quality versions.” [You have only to ask, Charles]. **Dave Rowe** advised; “Look up the November 2008 issue of *Sky At Night* magazine. Patrick Moore wrote an article on the 75th anniversary of the British Interplanetary Society and there’s a good photo there of Arthur C. Clarke, Ted Carnell and Wally Gillings.” **Fred Smith** remembers: “Coincidental, from Harry Turner’s piece that both he and Arthur C. Clarke were stationed at RAF Yatesbury, Wiltshire, in 1943 since I did my ‘square-bashing’ there a couple of years later. A horrible experience, especially in the depths of winter! Regarding your comments about Brian Aldiss’ ‘demolition’ of THE LEGION OF TIME, I suspect that Brian had a soft spot for the novel, possibly because, if he had read it in the original *Astoundings* in 1938, he would have been about thirteen at the time. It made a big impact on me, too, since I was eleven when I first read it!” And **Tony Thorne** recalls: “At a London Con I went to the Masquerade Ball as a cloaked and over-fanged Count Dracula. In a dark corridor I managed to confront Arthur Clarke with a bloodthirsty hiss. His startled reaction was ... “YE GODS!” I can still see him now, recoiling in mock horror. I met him, at the White Horse, and later the Globe several times, he was always kind and willing to chat, Frank Arnold and John Brunner too, always ready with a friendly welcome, same with Vinc Clarke and the Buckmasters. I remember them all so vividly.”

**Ian Watson** wrote: “I feel very privileged to have one of the rare paper copies of *Relapse*, especially when it has so much Brunner research in it, of perennial interest to me. I always perceived he was a toff, or at least semi-toff, so we were all very privileged that he moved amongst us. King Babar, indeed. Pray continue the Chronicles of King Babar as much as possible and compatible with editorial necessities and reader patience. Royalty sometimes bestow boons and I still remember John saying very generously that, if I was in a scrape, I could ‘tap him for a thousand’, and he meant it, and undoubtedly in that era, unlike later, he did have a spare thousand or two. Thousands are necessary to the lifestyle of royalty and it’s sad that he ended up not having enough of those thousands.” And **D. West** concluded: “Well, I did ask for anything more positive that might be said about Ken Potter, so it’s no surprise to see him defended by various people. No doubt he could be agreeable enough in small doses, particularly in his younger days. I expect that when Jim Linwood, Pat Kearney and Joe Patrizio knew him they were entertained by the gaffly mind and the wild talk and passed over anything less palatable as nothing more than the temporary effects of drink or youthful exuberance. My own view was based on information from people who probably knew him much better and certainly knew him much longer (Dave Wood from childhood, Malcolm Ashworth from the mid 1950s, Hazel Ashworth from the late 1960s).” **Other comments** were received from **Keith Freeman, Farah Mendelsohn, Murray Moore, Roger Robinson, Fay Symes & Stan Nicholls**.

## HOW TO RECEIVE ONE OF THE RARE PAPER COPIES:-

*Relapse* is a labour of love; it costs a fair amount to produce and postage costs are horrendous, so I only print 100 paper copies which go to those people interested in British fan-history and who can make an occasional contribution. Otherwise, I’ll send the pdf on request as each issue appears (my preferred option for overseas readers), or you can read it on the *eFanzines* site, usually about four weeks after publication. Let me say it again; *Relapse* is nothing without your *Response!* – 20/5/2010