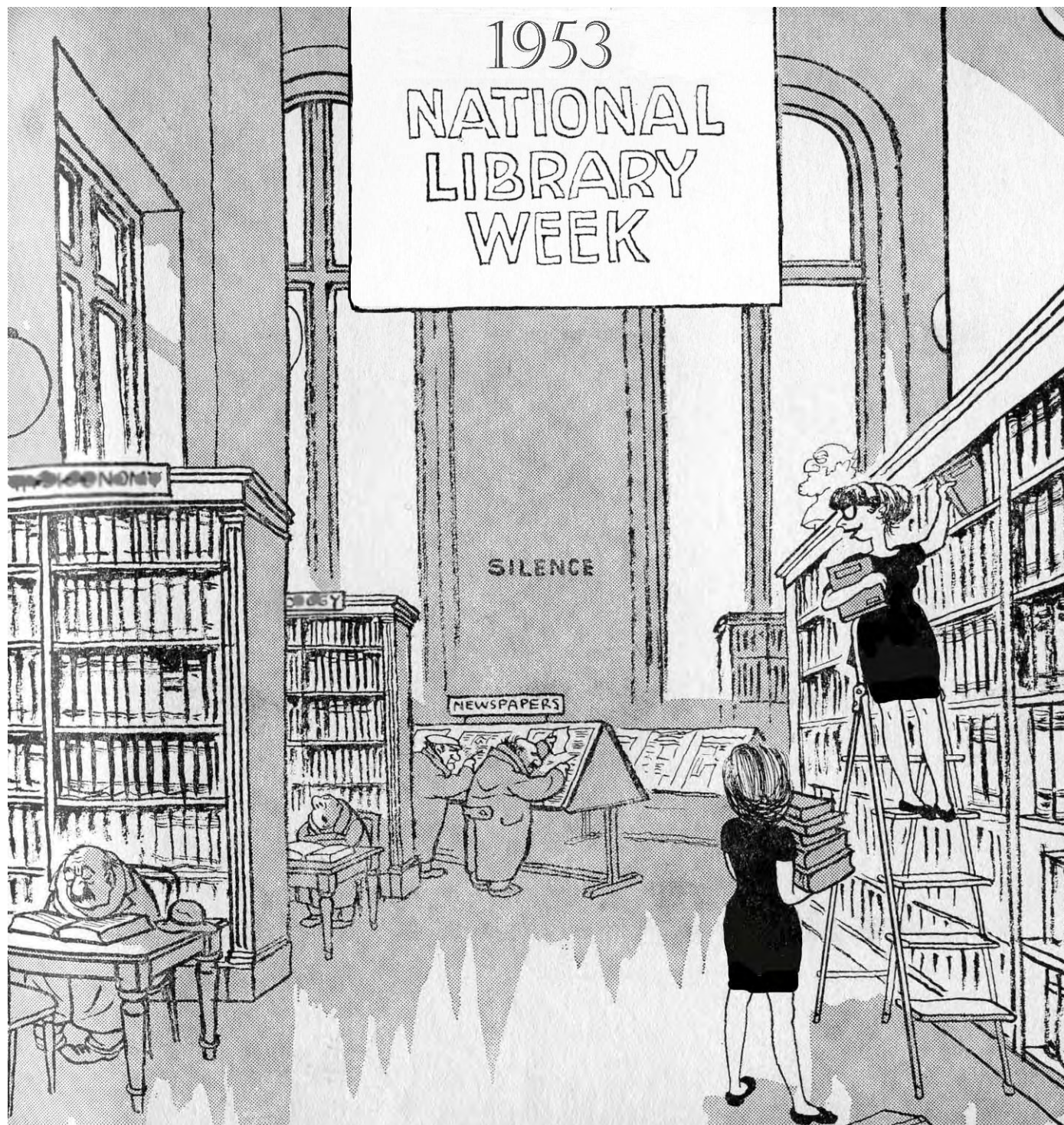


Our chronoscope looks
back to the fabulous
fifties....

RELAPSE

Number 18:
Autumn 2010

“I am so happy to have this fine fanzine to read and treasure. The pictures
alone are wonderful.” – David Hartwell, e-mail comment.



‘Maybe all this awful science fiction will liven things up around here!’

SF hits the libraries – see editorial. *With the usual apologies to ‘Giles’*

INSIDE: ‘Tales from the White Horse’ by Frank Arnold; ‘Extracts from Bill Temple’s Diaries’ by Joe Patrizio; ‘Peter Phillips – Lost Memories’ by Mike Ashley; ‘The Hardback Explosion’ by Phil Harbottle; AND MORE.



RELAPSE

Focussing firmly on the fifties (and try saying that after a few drinks) our chronoscope this time looks back on a brief period when science fiction in Britain seemed to have come of age. Once again I've unearthed tales and images of a time gone by, to which I hope you'll respond by writing to me, Peter Weston, at 53 Wyvern Road, Sutton Coldfield, B74 2PS; or by e-mail to pr.weston@btinternet.com. This is the electronic edition (with full colour!) but there's a printed edition for the favoured few who contribute or express interest. It will also go onto the *eFanzines* website after four weeks (where previous issues can be found) and with your help we will continue to document the rich history of British SF fandom.

"Another bleary-eyed late night courtesy of The Never-Ending Symposium. (Next morning, my daughter looked at me and actually inquired, were my eyes all right?)" – David Redd, LoC

I'd better explain the cover, something which came about through a visit I made earlier this year to that well-known dealer in books and magazines Bob Wardzinski, who turned out to be living less than ten miles from my Bournemouth bolt-hole. Bob is a genial sort of character who was obviously bitten by the Kolektinbug at a very early age and as a result he has one of the best SF collections I've ever seen; he doesn't mess about but buys other people's collections complete, so the dealing is mostly to unload the vast amount of duplicate material he's accumulated. Naturally I had a great time in his Aladdin's Cave – he had some particularly fine early British hardback editions, I noticed – and I took the opportunity to complete my run of *New Worlds* (or almost complete; I still need # 35) something I've never had apart from a few hours in 1966 when I briefly took custody of Cliff Teague's set – but see my book 'WITH STARS IN MY EYES' for that particular episode.

Since then I've been reading my way through the magazines and have reached the early forties. Why? Well, partly to experience the stories because even though most of them are pretty dated they do often have a certain charm that's lacking in modern SF. It's also fascinating to see how some of the British writers got started; Ted Tubb, for instance, and James White, who both seem to have been absolute 'naturals' when it came to storytelling, and Bertram Chandler who had a nice, steady rhythm. And the other reason of course is that after my research for the last issue I've been feeling considerable admiration for Ted Carnell and his long struggle to maintain an original British presence in the magazine market.

As an aside, it's pretty clear what a marginal proposition the whole thing was. Erratic schedule, thick paper, and you'll remember the slightly washed-out appearance of the front cover artwork and the blue lettering on back and inside covers? This was because they utilised a clever little printing-trade dodge to keep costs down by using what's known as '3-colour process' to reproduce the artwork, omitting the usual black ink. Theoretically you can get a good colour range with just cyan (blue), yellow and magenta, although in practice those three colours produce nothing darker than brown. Black ink is added in normal 4-colour work to give density to shadows and fine detail (and for lettering), but this requires a separate pass through the press. Eliminate black for the covers and you can make a useful 25% saving on printing costs, even though it must have infuriated Gerard Quinn to see the way his splendid paintings were effectively neutered!

This method continued until June 1958 by which time Brian Lewis had taken over as principal cover artist. Maybe he was the one who suggested that there were other ways to be economical because his cover for #72 is rather cleverly done in just black and yellow ink. The next four (all by Lewis) were 3-colour jobs but in black, yellow and red, with no blue at all. It wasn't until #77 (November 1958) that *New Worlds* had its first 4-colour cover. A year or so earlier Carnell had eliminated interior illos, which might have been another economy measure or maybe he was simply fed-up with the time and trouble he had to spend in sending out stories for illustration. He certainly mentions that he had been less than satisfied with the standard of the art he'd been getting, and later said that "artwork in digest-size magazines is as out-of-date as a coal fire". Whatever the reason, perhaps he decided to use these savings to make the magazine more visually attractive to the casual purchaser, and (with a few exceptions) 4-colour work was standard right up to the end of illustrated covers in the early sixties.

'The barrier is down'

Sorry, I was side-tracked with all that technical stuff! What I really wanted to talk about were the editorials, and in particular the one in *New Worlds* #18 (November 1952) in which Carnell wrote, "In the summer, 1951 issue were the first two advertisements from professional publishing houses publicising new books in the field. Both advertisers admitted privately that they were experimenting with a medium for which there was no known market – that is, for hard-cover science fiction. Certainly, not even the most enthusiastic visionary of a year ago could have visualised the rapid build-up of interest in bound volumes published in this country, in such a short space of time."

Carnell went on to explain the background to all this, and then concluded, "The two advertisers of a year ago have now been supplemented by many others who list bound volumes, and the next six months will see many more entering the fieldFrom here on the barrier is down – science fiction has come into its own."

I thought this was a bit odd to say the least, since these 'professional' publishers (Grayson & Grayson and T.V. Boardman) were entering the field at the very same time as the fly-by-night paperback outfits were busily dragging the reputation of SF down to an all-time low. One might have expected such gems as 'Mushroom Men from Mars' and the like to have frightened-off any outfit which valued the reputation of their imprint, but evidently not. I was baffled, and so I wrote to Phil Harbottle who I knew had been investigating the period. He replied by return:-

"What is even more worrying than my inability to write a long LoC is your covering letter when you ask about the anomalous situation of how quality British hardcover SF co-existed with the mushroom rubbish. NO one has EVER tackled that, and, dammit, it is a central pivot of my book, which I researched for the first time. And then you wonder if I've covered it! Pete, what are you: some kind of amazing psychic mind-reader?"

Well, the upshot of my clairvoyance was that once again Phil has sent me a chapter from his forthcoming book [VULTURES OF THE VOID: THE LEGACY, Prime Books, U.S.] this time dealing with what I've called 'The Hardback Explosion'. Yes, it's about SF rather than fandom *per se*, but the one wouldn't exist without the other so a bit of publishing history won't come amiss here. It was a long chapter, well over 9000 words, so with Phil's blessing I've omitted much of the detail and brought it down to around half that length. It's still startling to see that between 1951-55 an amazing total of more than twenty firms released the fantastic total of nearly 200 SF books in hardcover form. They published a whole galaxy of American reprints, if only anthologies of magazine stories with just an occasional original novel from a British writer; I wonder why there weren't more. But the most astounding thing is that these books weren't disguised in any way but were openly labelled as authentic 'science fiction'. No wonder Ted Carnell found it all so thrilling!

Why did the publishers go overboard on SF? Well, Phil puts forward some reasons but on a return visit to Bob Wardzinski I discussed the article and asked Bob if he would scan some of the dust-jackets in his collection (he did, and you'll see some superb examples in this issue, particularly if you view them in colour on the website). But in some cases he couldn't help. "Take Boardman, for instance," he said, "I like to collect the very best possible copies of these early hard-covers, but you hardly ever come across a Boardman title in first-class condition. They always seem to be ex-library editions, which tells me that's where the publisher was selling them." And most likely, I realised, so were all the other publishers as well.

This is where I came in. In 1957 I visited the public library five miles up the road that had *two entire shelves* of science fiction anthologies. The very word 'anthology' was a new concept to me, a sort of magazine in hard-covers, and I went at them furiously. They were in plain bindings, marked on the spine with the letters 'Sc'; no bright dust-jackets in those days. They were British editions of American titles, generally abridged (as I discovered later) with editors such as Bleiler & Dikty, Groff Conklin, August Derleth and so on (and I wondered why the editors all seemed to have such funny foreign names). I was only allowed to take out one fiction book at a time so I used to hide a few others until my next visit, concealing them behind gloomy racks of technical volumes which looked as if they hadn't been disturbed since time began.

Until one day, shock horror! Those two shelves had been emptied, cleared-out completely. And I hadn't read half of them! Stunned, I asked the woman at the desk (probably looking not unlike the two on our cover) what had happened.

"They're out of date," she said severely, "they've been withdrawn from circulation."

"But I wanted to read them," I protested desperately, making no impression on her whatsoever. "If they've been withdrawn, can I buy them?"

"Certainly not!" she replied, shocked and affronted. "They have to be *burnt*."

I originally wrote-up that little episode for 'STARS...' but couldn't resist repeating it here. Maybe they thought they were doing me a favour by getting rid of all that nasty stuff? I mean, why else would they withdraw whole shelves of books that couldn't have been more than a few years old? Perhaps while removing the dust-jackets with their ridiculous rocketships those severe females had tut-tutted and wondered how this deplorable material had somehow sneaked in to their little palace of culture? Because despite what the publishers may have proclaimed in their publicity, there's no doubt that in literary quarters science fiction was still viewed with the deepest suspicion. Maybe it was the library system's reluctance to continue taking SF books which brought the boom to a sudden end. It's a thought, isn't it?

Anyway, that's where the cover idea came from, and Giles did the rest. Now let Phil tell the story.... [Page 26]

The Arthur C. Clarke Mystery

Well, not much of a mystery at all, really, but I think it's still worth a few words and it gives me an excuse to run a photograph that I missed. After the last issue Jim Linwood wrote to me as follows:-

"Bill Temple's diary entry about Arthur Clarke getting married in the States in June 1953 gave me concern that I may be suffering from False Memory Syndrome. Many English homes in that month, my folks included, had bought TV sets to watch Queen Elizabeth's coronation on the 2nd of June. When the ceremonies were over and my folks safely off to the pub to celebrate, I settled down in the evening to watch my highlight of the day – a programme called *Reaching for the Moon* hosted by one Arthur C. Clarke. He talked about the future of space travel which he illustrated with a clip of the rocket takeoff in Fritz Lang's *Frau im Mond* and by leafing through the covers of old pulp magazines. That's why I remember Coronation Day and there's even a shot of Arthur on the BBC website in front of a camera in 1953, exactly as I remember him.

"Arthur married Marilyn Torgenson on the 15th June 1953, so could he have gone to the States after the broadcast, met, courted and married her all in 13 days or am I really suffering from FMS?"

A little research in ODYSSEY, the authorised biography, soon cleared this up. Arthur had been diving off North Key Largo, and it was here on 28th May that he met Marilyn Torgenson (née Mayfield), and in just two days managed to get himself engaged. He went on to New York city and Marilyn followed him there shortly afterwards, and they were married on 15th June as Jim says. This means either that Jim is indeed having a False Memory, or that perhaps the programme he recalls was pre-recorded – they could do that in 1953, surely?

Apparently when they met Arthur was sporting a copper-coloured Van Dyke beard which Marilyn thought looked stunning, and she was 'shocked rigid' when he shaved it off after they were married. No picture survives of the beard but in *New Worlds* #22 there's a 'profile' of Arthur with a distinct hairline moustache. It looks terrible!



Mr & Mrs Clarke alight from their transatlantic flight, July 1953. Photo from ODYSSEY.

And now for something completely different...

I've also been looking through back-issues of *Interzone*, which made quite a contrast. This came about because in June I was helping to collect for the local Rotary club in Erdington High Street, and while walking back to my car I looked in at the old Market Hall. There's a chap who sells books... well, he's a house-clearance man really, and his stall is heaped with bits of old furniture, ornaments, VHS cassettes and random book titles poking out from the rubbish. This time I was in luck; I spotted a familiar cover, and burrowed down to find a total of 42 issues, mostly fairly early. Someone locally must have been a collector because *Interzone* was never easy to find, but naturally the stall-holder couldn't remember where he'd bought them.

Anyway, the most interesting thing I found was a column from my old friend Charles Platt, in #27 (Jan/Feb 1989) titled 'The Triumph of Whimsy' in which he describes his experiences as a judge for the Philip K. Dick Award for best new paperback novel in the American science fiction field. Charles comes to two conclusions; first, that there's an awful lot of juvenile adventure fiction being marketed by American publishers and most of the books have no new ideas in them. Second, most of the science fiction is pretty dumb but the fantasy is even dumber, and there's more of it.

Charles expanded on the second point; "most of the 'science fiction field' isn't science fiction any more, and most 'science fiction awards' go to fantasy novels and stories." Remember, this was 1989! He went on to maintain that SF, written conscientiously, must always be inherently more important, more useful and more powerful than fantasy fiction. He then used the rest of the column to explain his position and to speculate about what had gone wrong.

All this was music to my ears, and then I found another column in #30, titled 'In Purely Commercial Terms' in which Charles quoted a short passage and asked if the reader could guess the (American) author:

'When dawn broke over the capital city of Walden, the sight was appropriately glamorous. There were shining towers and curving tree-bordered ways, above which innumerable small birds flew tumultuously. The dawn, in fact, was heralded by high-pitched chirpings everywhere.'

I was pretty sure I knew the answer but went on to the second clue and then I was certain:-

'He'd been a misfit at home on Zan because he was not contented with the humdrum and monotonous life of a member of a space-pirate community. Piracy was a matter of dangerous take-offs in cranky rocketships, to be followed by weeks or months of boredom in highly unhealthy re-breathed air...'

This is someone who Charles describes as having written with ironic detachment and stylistic self-awareness, succinct in a way that suggests some feeling for economical prose. "In fact, all three quotes are unusually literate compared with most modern American science fiction," he wrote. "They seem nicely balanced between satire and seriousness, light entertainment and wordplay. You may be surprised, then, to learn they were written by Murray Leinster. They came from his novel 'The Pirates of Ersatz', serialised in *Astounding Science Fiction* issues dated February-April 1959 – just over thirty years ago".

Charles went on to marvel that "today, thirty years after the above extracts were first published, they look so surprisingly good. The novel that they are taken from is full of ideas, is compulsively readable, has little twists of irony, and manages to make gentle fun of adventure fiction while telling a strong, fast, adventure story. Overall it's surprisingly, impressively competent."

Here's the punch-line. Charles asks how it can be that a writer who was thought of as mediocre in his time now seems so much better than average? The answer, he suggests, "must be that 'average' has changed its meaning over the past thirty years. Fairly decent writers of the 1950s now look like grand masters compared with their modern equivalents. Even their prose (which some of us used to criticise as being glib and trite and shallow) looks better".

I've condensed his argument considerably, but you get the idea.

I contacted Charles and congratulated him on both columns. "You might have been voicing my thoughts exactly. Yes, most so-called 'science fiction' isn't SF at all, or not as we knew it. I've been banging on about this ever since I noticed that in the main Borders shop (now gone) in Birmingham they had a full-height rack of what was labelled 'Essential Science Fiction' and only one book was either 'essential' or 'science fiction' (THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE). The rest was fantasy, mainstream near-future action novels, and media spin-offs. (I complained to the manager but he didn't care).

"And in your second column you're really describing what we (you & I) now recognise as 'sci-fi', books which might be labelled 'SF' but which are pure action-adventure with little original thought in them. (Willis called it 'boilerplate'). You cite Jack Chalker and I agree, but there are now probably a lot worse than him. I despair.

"So from these two columns it seems we're on the same wavelength again. I thought you'd like to know that."

Charles answered by return, and at length:

"Sad, isn't it, that my complaints from the 1980s still seem valid (or maybe more so) in 2010?"

"Before I moved to London in the early 1960s I remember hitch-hiking around England to meet the people I had come to know through fandom. As you know, I visited Birmingham (I still remember your duplicator sitting out in the little hallway, and I think you were sharing a bedroom with a sibling in your parents' house). I don't



'The Freas cover of the pirate with the slide rule in his mouth has always been one of my greatest favourites. I remember seeing it on a bookstall on Cambridge railway station, and just staring at it in amazement. It was like a message from another world--a world of ideas, fun, science, rebellion, and adventure, so very different from the grey boring world of England.

It told me that space travel could happen, and nerds could be swashbuckling law-breakers doing whatever they wanted and getting away with it. I think I fell in love with science fiction at that moment. And the basic principle of that cover--the juxtaposition of two images (slide rule and pirate) in an arresting way--stuck with me for the rest of my life. It even influenced some *New Worlds* covers!' – Charles Platt, letter.

remember any significant disagreements between me, you, Clifford Teague, and the others who were around at that time, regarding our reading tastes. I think we all enjoyed 1950s science fiction in the same way. So – what happened?

“I moved to London, found myself living only a few blocks from Mike Moorcock, and went through a process of literary discovery that began with William Burroughs (Mike lent me a copy of *NAKED LUNCH*) and continued with J. G. Ballard. This stuff was a shock to my system because it was so radical, so exciting, and I didn't entirely understand it. I had never acquired much of a literary education, and tended to approach fiction with the mentality of an engineer (which was my father's occupation).

“Experimenting with style seemed as interesting, to me, as experimenting with content, so I was wide open to the New Wave. Two or three years later, I still didn't understand some of the stories. In the case of Tom Disch, I didn't even like most of what he wrote. Yet the literary experimentation still seemed somehow important and excited me in many ways.

“Not until 1970 did I begin to understand that something had been lost. At my first and last Milford Conference, I was highly unpopular because everyone assumed I was part of the Disch/Sallis/Moorcock school, and I kept saying, “I don't really like this kind of fiction.” They thought I was being perversely disagreeable, but I had expected a *science-fiction* conference, because that's what it was called: The Milford Science-Fiction Conference! So where was the science fiction?”

“My heart, really, was still in the stories that I had read as a teenager. There was little in the late 1960s/early 1970s that could possibly compare with Kornbluth or Budrys, so far as I was concerned. I had gone through a five-year detour where I was heavily influenced by material that excited me partly *because* I didn't fully understand some of it. At the same time, I was full of confusion and anger for entirely personal reasons, which led to all kinds of bad behaviour, for which I think I have already apologised to you.

“This is a roundabout way of explaining why you found yourself agreeing with some aspects of my *Interzone* columns. By the 1980s I had come back to the fundamentals which you had never abandoned. I saw the awful consequences of ‘soft’ science fiction (and fantasy, and movie tie-ins, and all the rest of it) and realised that despite our mockery of someone such as John W. Campbell, who was of course an easy target in some ways, he and a couple other strong magazine editors had been a kind of anchor for the field.

“The column in which I quoted the Leinster book was especially heartfelt, because I had been thinking to myself, ‘Was it just my childhood naivety, or were those really good stories in *Astounding*, back in the day?’ So I opened the magazine that contained the first instalment of ‘The Pirates of Ersatz’, and I was just blown away. It was inventive! It was clever! It even had irony! And although it made fun of some science-fiction scenery that had become rather well worn, it was, at the same time, true to it.

“If I hadn't moved to London, I doubt I would have ever followed the path I did, as a writer and as an editor. I think I would have retained the mentality of an engineer. Indeed, this is where I have ended up, designing and building prototypes, and not writing any fiction at all.”

I wrote back:

“I think our attitudes diverged because I was always more conservative than you, less willing to be a rebel, and you were in a much more stimulating environment, in London, with Mike Moorcock and pals while I was rather desperately trying to scratch a living in one inhospitable location after another and attempting to discover what I really wanted to do with my life. You weren't the only one to suffer from angst and alienation!

“Oddly, we both seem to have ended up with similar aspirations; I admire engineers and knowing what I know now I would have studied mechanical engineering. As it is, I never had any formal engineering training beyond ‘A’ Levels in the Sciences, but I've always had an ‘affinity’ for mechanical engineering, allowing me to understand and interpret what ‘real’ engineers are saying, and generally to point them in the right direction to make a saleable product. Eventually I was able to take over a small engineering business and build it up to a reasonable size.

“But back to SF. I might be generalising rather too much here, but it seems to me that the reason you didn't ‘understand’ the fiction you mention was because there really wasn't all that much there to *be* understood. I always thought those ‘experiments with style’ were largely bunkum; yes, the SF genre did need stylistic improvement but my attitude (conservative again) was ‘evolution, not revolution’.

“And of course there always were stylists in SF; you mention Kornbluth and Budrys, and I'd add Leiber, Bester, Sturgeon, Walter Miller and a good few more. The important thing about SF was what it had to *say*, the ideas and the fresh perspectives it gave us on life. I don't mind admitting it was an absolute god-send to me, back when I was an impoverished teenager stuck in the dreary back-streets of Birmingham. But I'm fortunate; I'm an optimist, always have been, rarely get depressed, so it all worked out OK in the end.”

Came the reply:-

“I do think it would be a mistake to generalise regarding all the stories in *New Worlds*. The magazine never had a really clear identity; I see it as a default home for orphans that wouldn't be adopted elsewhere. Some of the stories really irritated me, and said nothing that resonated with my life. Sallis was too mannered and oblique, Disch was pretentious and full of futility, and the Jerry Cornelius stories had nothing for me either. But Ballard always seemed extremely important, Sladek was fun, and I enjoyed most of Brian Aldiss's work. I think there was a real need for a place where various types of experimentation could be explored. The stories were also free to explore sexual themes. Remember how conservative the American magazines were, through the 1960s?”

“I had the luxury of growing up in a family where we were not super-rich, but very comfortable, because my father was a director of Vauxhall Motors. My parents somehow gave me the idea that I could do whatever I wanted. I was self-supporting by the age of around 20, but the years prior to that were important as a kind of launching pad. In addition my father was an innovator in his field (as an automotive engineer in the early days, he championed ‘radical’ concepts such as four-wheel brakes and the elimination of the starting handle!). And my mother was an abrasively independent woman. So I grew up in a home where independence and creativity were encouraged and rewarded. The downside of this was that I was different from the people around me, and was subjected to large helpings of abuse at school. Hence the anger, which I didn't know what to do with for many years.”

To which I countered:-

"I didn't dismiss – or even mention – *New Worlds*, only said that some of the stuff which baffled you (Burroughs, etc), might not have been quite as clever as you believed at the time. So far as the magazine was concerned I actually enjoyed quite a lot of it; Disch's CAMP CONCENTRATION was impressive, though very dark; I liked BUG JACK BARRON and have always had a lot of time for Spinrad, and so on. But we'll have to disagree over Ballard. I could never see the attraction then and can't see it now. I've always been irritated by the triviality (as I see it) of JGB's themes, the lack of rationality and the failure to follow-through in storytelling terms. But most people seem to think he's terrific, so it must be me."

Last word from Charles:-

"I think that on a superficial level Ballard appeals to people who like to get lost in his landscapes, and have a perhaps morbid interest in the destruction of the world. That was what got me hooked, anyway. An authoritative writer telling me that everything would self-destruct . . . and it would be really exciting! But I enjoyed his book reviews the most. He had an amazingly good analytical eye when it came to seeing real implications and cutting through bullshit. There's a collection of his reviews and non-fiction essays. Almost all of them are really good."

Talking about Ballard....

I've been corresponding with John Baxter who is writing a biography of the great man, and I sent John a few notes about JGB's participation in the 1957 London World convention. And then I made a surprise discovery. Here's what John has to say:-

'In 1957, J.G. Ballard attended his first and last convention, Loncon, held at the King's Court Hotel in London. 268 people took part, including a large US contingent. Ted Carnell was Chairman and John Campbell the GoH. Carnell persuaded Ballard, a relative newcomer, that it would be professionally useful to be there. The program included a talk on the then-new London Planetarium and a demonstration of hypnotism. Alan Whicker filmed it for the BBC, with the customary tongue-in-cheek references to "little green men."

'Not, on the face of it, very offensive, but Ballard, who only visited for a single evening, described the experience in apocalyptic terms. "It shattered me," he wrote, "and then I dried up for about a year. For over a year I didn't write any SF at all. I was disillusioned and demoralised." He never gave reasons, except to remark, tersely, "the Americans were hard to take, and most of the British fans were worse." What spooked him? Did he resent the clubby atmosphere, with old hands like John Wyndham, Sam Youd, Ted Tubb and even the teetotal Arthur Clarke leaning on the bar, discussing everything but science fiction? Was he offended by fans in costume, waving water pistols and sporting propeller beanies?

'Reminiscences of Ballard's attendance vary wildly. In Mike Moorcock's memory, he didn't even enter the building. By chance, Moorcock turned up at the door at the same time as Ballard and Wyndham. "As luck would have it, a guy in a propeller beanie with a zap-gun water pistol came up to a guy in front of us and said, 'You're zapped!' Jimmy told me later that he'd expected a bunch of French-style existentialists all discussing the latest ideas in science and medicine. That would probably have made others turn on *their* heels." In *THE SHAPE OF FURTHER THINGS* (p.102), Brian Aldiss offers "I went to the bar and bought a drink. Standing next to me was a slim young man who told me that there were some extraordinary types at the convention, and that he was thinking of leaving pretty smartly. He introduced himself as J.G. Ballard. I had already read his early stories in *New Worlds*; indeed, at that time, his were the only short stories (apart from my own) that I could read there with any pleasure."

'Our editor casts doubt on the suggestions of riotous fan behaviour. "By 1957 the zap-gun fad had all but died out," he says, "as had propeller beanies, while Ted Carnell in particular had been at pains to stress the serious nature of the convention and the need for the attendees to 'put on a good show', as it were, for the press and other outside interests. If Ballard had come for the programme sessions and met some of the many other authors and editors present, he might have been rather more impressed."

'And now Peter has found two photographs that appear to show Ballard in the audience at an unidentified presentation, probably the auction which took place on Saturday night. He is apparently enjoying himself, along with Arthur Clarke, Brian Aldiss and various fan luminaries. And is that his wife Mary at his side? If anyone has memories of Ballard at Loncon, or further evidence of his presence, I'd be pleased to have it.'



The first picture is definitely Ballard (front row centre) but there's some dispute over the second – I think he is the smiling chap in the third row, behind Norman Weedall, but Linda Moorcock believes JGB is the man behind him, partly obscured. Photos taken by Peter West, from Norman Shorrock's album. - pw

Who was Maurice Goldsmith?

The Temple diaries last time referred familiarly to someone called ‘Maurice Goldsmith’, who wrote-up the meeting for *Illustrated* magazine when Arthur Clarke’s professional friends turned up to meet his new bride. He was clearly well-known to the ‘White Horse’ crowd but now seems to have been forgotten, so I searched the *Ansible* site and found that he turned up some years later in connection with the Arthur C. Clarke Award, but died in March 1997. The obvious thing to do was to talk to some of the past Administrators of the Award, starting with Paul Kincaid, who wrote:-

“He was already part of things when I was first invited to a meeting, so I’ve no idea exactly how he became involved but it seems to have been through George Hay. Goldsmith had been in touch with Clarke (so he may or may not have known him previously) suggesting that Clarke put money behind a magazine. Clarke said there were already too many magazines, how about an award. Maurice knew nothing about awards so he went to the Foundation, who in turn contacted me because we were already running the BSFA Award. But how these contacts came about I really have no idea.

“Maurice ran an outfit called the International Science Policy Foundation, an impressive name for something that seems to have consisted of one man, a secretary, and a tiny cramped office near Charing Cross. The ISPF was a lobbying outfit on behalf of science, though I never worked out exactly what he did. He did, however, seem to have an impressive range of contacts – one year the ISPF judge on the Clarke Award was a member of the House of Lords.

“The ISPF was supposed to provide two judges, one of them changing every year, so that no-one ever served more than two years on the jury. But Maurice seemed to finagle it so he was a judge practically every year. And the moment he died, the ISPF ceased to have anything to do with the Award. (To be honest, I’m not sure whether the ISPF actually continued after Maurice died, I suspect it may not have done). And that’s about all I know about him. An odd man, I never really warmed to him, and though I knew him off and on for several years, I never felt I actually knew anything about him. He certainly never mentioned any previous acquaintance with SF fandom. As far as the award was concerned, he seemed to see it purely as proselytising for science, and didn’t appear to have a very wide awareness of the genre.”

Then I turned to John Clute, who added a few more details: “I remember him only from the mid-1980s, when the Arthur C Clarke Awards were being formulated. There were three bodies involved – the Science Fiction Foundation (then in the middle of the years of plague at North East Polytechnic (hence University of East London), the BSFA, and what I remember was called the International Science Policy Foundation, and various of us met variously. Maurice Goldsmith represented the ISPF, which from early on I suspected may have had very little existence beyond Maurice himself.

“My own sense of Maurice was mixed. He claimed an intimacy with Arthur C Clarke, and to have been the inspiration behind Clarke’s approval and financial backing of the award. I never met Clarke myself, and my correspondence with him was infrequent and addressed to other things than the ACCA, and I have no reason to doubt Maurice’s description of his role. But two problems cropped up soon enough: I don’t think any of us ever got around to thinking about transforming an agreement to hold an award into thinking about giving the ACCA a legal existence, probably as a charity (Serendip eventually picked up that slack, though that is another story. . . .); and the SFF and BSFA folk both thought that the judges each selected (as did the ISPF) should serve fixed terms – but Goldsmith balked at this, indicating that he expected to serve as the ISPF judge more or less indefinitely. Some sort of ultimatum was finally laid down and Goldsmith found someone else for a year or so; in any case, I felt increasingly at odds with the ACCA culture as expressed in its choice of winners, even though I was ineffectively involved as a judge for two separate stints. Then he died.”

So, we’re not much wiser. However, doing a little more research I discovered that Goldsmith had attended the 1953 *Coroncon*, and from Fred Robinson’s report in *Camber-2* I extracted this short passage:-

‘Carnell opened the session by introducing Nick Osterbaan, editor of the new pro-mag *Planeet*. Nick proved to be a short guy but long on humour, and a perfect speaker in English. He was the only editor I’ve ever heard say he was in it for the money, which is why he’s an author’s agent and translator as well. Nick was followed by Maurice Goldsmith, a former UNESCO Science Editor, who read a paper on SF that went over very well. Then Ted introduced Bea Mahaffey...’

On looking through my photographs from that year I’ve found this one, taken by Eric Bentcliffe, which seems to fit the bill; I sent it to John Clute who agreed that the man on the panel did indeed look like Goldsmith as he remembered him. So I think we have a likeness, and as a bonus we’ve also identified Nick Osterbaan. Go to Rob Hansen’s site: www.fiawol.org.uk/FanStuff/THEN%20Archive/ and follow the links for an excellent new feature he’s just completed on the *Coroncon*.



Conquest of Space

Did I mention that I heard from Robert Conquest? Twice? This particular episode began several months back when He who must be known only as ‘MJE’ noticed that Conquest’s name was on the list of members for the 1952 London convention. This was surprising to say the least, since although he was known to be well-inclined towards SF there had been no previous suggestion of him having had any connection with our fandom. But I wondered if Conquest actually attended? So I investigated, found our man was a Research Fellow at Stanford University in California, and sent him a copy of #16.

To my great surprise Mr Conquest telephoned me a few weeks later. It was a bad line and I couldn’t hear him very clearly but he definitely agreed that he had attended a convention. However, he was more interested in talking about his SF novel *A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE*. “Read the second edition, not the first,” he said, “It’s nearly twice as long, with Sir Arthur Clarke as one of my characters. I got that one right!”

There was more, but as I said it was a poor line; I’ve been hoping Mr Conquest would subsequently send me an e-mail but he said he doesn’t use it himself. Where are those Research Assistants when you need them!

But I did get hold of his novel (the Sphere 1970 edition) and very interesting it was, too. It claims to be 'first U.K. publication' but that's not strictly true since the first (scarce) version appeared in September 1955 from Ward Lock during the 'hardcover explosion'. [Page 34] Evidently there were sufficient changes for it to be considered almost a new book.

As a novel, frankly, it still needs drastic surgery. While there's a good cast of characters, a solid plot and a lot of (over) optimistic future speculation, the whole thing is burdened with far too much 'info-dumping', long passages where the protagonists lecture each other on things they already know. And there are a couple of passages which have clearly got out of control, just like the stratoyacht in which the character Stahlberg is making a landing in Greece (p.15):

'The speaker said, "Your height is seven kilometres. Your speed is three kilometres a second." This was undoubtedly rather high. "Are you sure you do not want to use the auto?" it concluded.'

But here and there are little snippets which will be instantly familiar to the fan and which reveal quite a bit about Conquest the man. For instance, this early passage (p.29) sets the scene;

'...the great spire in the foreground, the building which housed that most distinguished and exclusive of all bodies, the Interplanetary Society. Its ninety-odd-years-old Honorary President, the legendary 'Sir Arthur', was one of the guests and his ripe, self-assured voice was now audible behind them.'

This makes it clear that Conquest was familiar with the sound of Clarke in action, and that he was being ironic – or maybe it was wishful thinking – since in 1955 the British Interplanetary Society was generally regarded with derision, as the author undoubtedly realised. A little later one of his characters says (p.46);

"I really take *Selene* for its science fiction story – they had one by old Willis this week. All about a really educated fellow knowing all about science, and open-minded too, going ahead to the year 2500 and not understanding anything at all about the techniques, or even about society."

To which another character comments, "Why you call that science fiction I don't know. It's admission-of-ignorance fiction." This, I suspect was an oblique dig at the '2500 A.D.' anthology which had recently been compiled with much fuss and commotion by Angus Wilson from entries to a contest run by *The Observer* newspaper. And of course the reference to 'Willis' shows that Conquest had penetrated at least some distance into fandom.

A little later there's some further discussion about the magazine *Selene*, and the character Custis asks (p.84);

"For instance, what's the point of having a science fiction story?"

"To help loosen-up literary thinking, the editorial said," Vlahov replied unexpectedly to the rhetorical question.

"Yes, but that isn't a battle that needs to be fought these days. All literature is more-or-less science fiction now. The old-style stuff – sensitive, style-minded, observant, psychological, and *only* that – is virtually extinct. It was only a temporary aberration anyhow. A story writer who didn't know that the future was different from the present and one society from another, can hardly exist."

That's undoubtedly Conquest permitting himself a swipe at the literary establishment of his day and its inability to see any virtues in science fiction. As Dave Langford has reminded me, he later coined this little verse for the rather good SPECTRUM anthologies which he edited with fellow SF-sympathiser, Kingsley Amis;

"SF's no good," they bellow till we're deaf.

"But this looks good" – "Well, then, it's not SF."

But A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE is mainly a reflection of Conquest's preoccupation with the conflict between democratic and totalitarian societies, and in particular with the horrors of Soviet-style communism, as he later wrote about at length in his various books on Stalin's Terror. He was also highly critical of its apologists in the West (Stalin's 'useful idiots'), as spelt out in several passages, the first (p.39) where Stahlberg writes;

'They were able to deplore in extravagant language the minor inhumanities in their own parish, at the same time as they excused with relish the atrocities in the totalitarian lands, on the grounds that they were in the interests of progress, and hence, *really* humane.'

And there's an exchange absolutely dripping with irony between the 'idealists' who are plotting to overthrow the almost-utopian world government in a Soviet-backed revolution (p.106);

"We do not anticipate serious opposition. The coup will be carried out under our watchword of freedom from compulsion. We shall have to resort to psycho-compulsion temporarily, of course, and the population will be fully conditioned in detail to accept the new regime in the weeks after our victory."

Finally, and maybe I'm reading too much into this, but at the end of the novel as the first starship is about to be launched there is a press conference at which a question is asked by 'Giles Mox of the *Telegraph*, always astonished by the most obvious speculation'. Could this possibly be a concealed dig at the expense of the afore-mentioned Maurice Goldsmith, well-known Science Correspondent at the time and perhaps rather a little too full of himself?

In his second call Mr Conquest confirmed that he *had* been an occasional visitor to the old White Horse and that he'd joined the BIS in 1939, right on the outbreak of war, and that Arthur Clarke had sent him various *Bulletins* before the Society closed for the duration. It certainly seems that Conquest was an even greater friend to science fiction than we have previously suspected; what a pity he was never invited to be convention GoH in the same way as was Kingsley Amis. - pw // 27-9-2010



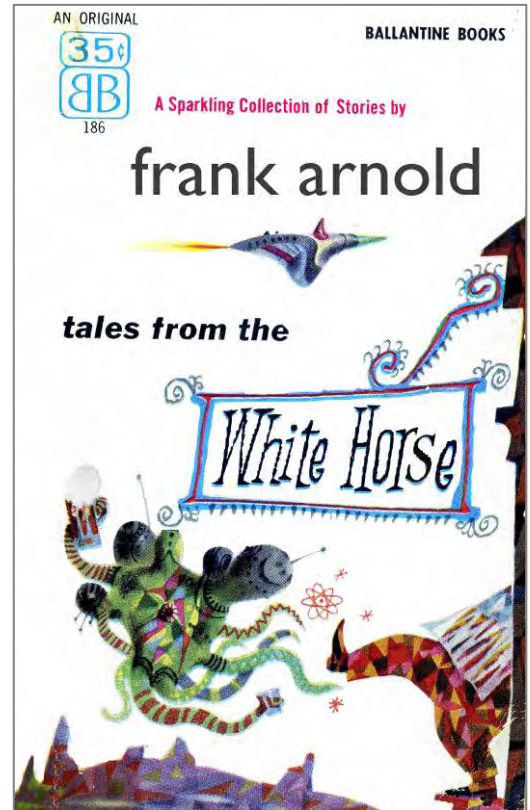
Robert Conquest in Moscow, 1989. Photo from his introduction to RED EMPIRE, published 1990.

Frank Arnold's 'Mordecai of the White Horse' appeared in *EYE* #3, late 1954, to mark the London Circle's move to the Globe, and Frank was still there when I first visited the place over ten years later. By then he was a wizened little gnome of a man who sat by the door and whose sole preoccupation seemed to be making sure that every newcomer signed his precious Visitors' Book. Only much later did I discover that he had once had some minor success as an author, although I can't imagine how his fiction would read today. Frank had, you see, a fondness for overblown prose and wrote as if he were chronicling the Decline of the Roman Empire, as his piece here will amply demonstrate. I've resisted the urge to tone-down the hyperbole and this is pure, undiluted Frank – or 'Francis', as he preferred – telling us how it was in those 'Golden Days' of British fandom. The indefatigable Rob Hansen sent the text from Vince Clarke's papers, and you'll see that I've had some fun with the Ballantine cover of Arthur C. Clarke's famous collection of tall stories based on his White Horse days. In 2007 Peter Crowther's excellent PS Publishing produced a splendid new edition, with an additional story co-authored by Steven Baxter – pw

Mordecai of the White Horse

by Francis Arnold

Original cover art by Richard Powers, 1957



He has been 'Mordecai of the Globe' for quite a while now, but just as a famous admiral is always linked with the name of a single famous ship (Vian of the 'Cossack', Mountbatten of the 'Kelly', etc.) so the name of Mordecai will always be coupled with that of The White Horse Tavern, Fetter Lane: the house whence he emerged from honourable nonentity to the ranks of London's most famous taverners, assured of a place in our social history along with Tom Lord, Ted Lloyd, Kit Catt, Tom Topham, Dirty Dick, Charles Morton, Auguste Romano, Victor Berlemont, Charley Brown, Walter Plinge and Sir Harry Preston.

A Londoner of the very pavements, Lewis Mordecai was born in Holborn in 1911, the son of a publican. All his boyhood memories are centred round this borough and it was while he was going to St. Andrew's School, near the Viaduct, that his father became landlord of the Globe Tavern in Hatton Garden, where the family remained for many years.

Young Lewis was quite ready to follow his father into the family trade, with all its amenities and advantages, but naturally enough he wanted to sow a wild oat and see the world a bit before settling down to the peaceful humdrum of a publican's life. In a word, sea-fever was in his blood and he was hearing things:

Hark! The voice of the ocean is calling
With an insistence
Sad and appalling.....

The call of the sea is never to be resisted by those who have heard it, and accordingly the young Mordecai applied for a job at the Orient Line and was taken on as a steward, aged sixteen. Years of life on the waves were to follow. Cape Horn, the China Seas, the Barrier Reef, the Barbary Coast, the Rio Grande, the Spanish Main, the Isles of Greece, Table Bay, the North Cape, the South Pacific -- Mordecai saw them all.

Then came the war years and Mediterranean convoys, with U-boats and dive-bombers all around; the Arctic convoys to Murmansk and Archangel, and pocket-battleships to cope with. Mordecai doesn't talk much of all those years, but sometimes, in quiet moments behind the bar, with his pipe going strong and the cat on his lap, there comes a faraway look into his eyes which tells us that the old shellback is dreaming dreams of long ago.

The war over and done with, Mordecai felt he had seen as much of the sea as he wanted; and it was time to settle down. A vacancy was going in a London tavern, and he took it, but after a time things changed, and he came to the White Horse, with a pretty wife and a small son to keep him company (another small son came to join them a little later).

Here in Fetter Lane, so close to Holborn Viaduct, he was back on his native heath, with the familiar City clientele coming through his doors every day; the shopping crowds of Holborn, the staff people from Gamages, the Prudential and the Daily Mirror. Since most of his business was done in the

daytime with a brisk lunch trade at the midday hours, the evenings were comparatively quiet with only a handful of regulars dropping in.

One evening in the week was an exception, however. For more than a year before his arrival a crowd of twenty or thirty young people had occupied the saloon bar for the whole of Thursday evening, every week with clockwork regularity. Their mutual interest was literary; they did a sale-and-exchange trade of books and magazines and talked themselves hoarse over their pet enthusiasm, a specialised form of literature, bearing the unappetising name of 'science-fiction'. They were not a formalised literary body – like the Poetry Society or the Dickens Fellowship. Theirs was more the loose fraternity of the Johnsonians; the Janeites, and the Baker Street Irregulars, united solely by their speciality.

Now, Mordecai had a touch of literary taste himself. It was no illiterate deck-swabber who went to sea in 1927, but a fairly cultivated lad who always packed four or five books into his ditty-box, always including a Shakespeare and a Dickens.

The ostensible ringleaders were youngish men of his own age, Cockneys like himself, with the Cockney's robust and matey sense of humour. In this atmosphere, Mordecai began to expand and breathe his own and in a very short while, boss and landlord though he was, he found himself drawn in irresistibly as one of the boys.

No one who knew the saloon bar of the White Horse in its hey-day from 1946 to 1953 will ever forget it. When we passed through that front door of a Thursday evening it was like stepping into our own drawing room, with the whole place and the whole crowd before our eyes at the first corner neatly cut off by the quadrant of the bar itself, a glass panelled partition separating it from the public bar and with glance. It was a squarish, compact, oak-panelled room, one

the staircase behind and overhanging it. The elements of a drawing room, a stage, an arena and a market-place were all present, and the scene was enlivened by a little undercurrent of drama that had brought the whole crowd together in the first place.

The aforesaid ringleaders had first united their forces before the war 'to promote the aims and objects of science-fiction', and now, six years later, they realised that the only way to do it was to promote a magazine themselves. Accordingly, amateur journalists and artists who would be professionals were gathering round them like bees round a hive, and things were humming merrily.

Amid the unwholesome atmosphere of post-war public affairs with its suspicions, animosities, and false alarms, the circle formed a bright little centre of enterprise, vision, progress and optimism, a force that was certain to make its impression and establish its foothold, sooner or later, on the vast, confused, incoherent market of commercial publishing.

But of course the circle as a whole, informal and unorganised as it was, had no interest in commercial enterprise; they came in simply to meet their pals and have a chat. Now, in a public house the focus of interest is always the bar itself. Customers may drift from table to table, spending ten minutes here or half an hour there, but throughout the evening they return to the counter, for obvious reasons. The man behind the bar is usually a nonentity, but sometimes he can be the making or breaking of a circle of his customers. In this position Lew Mordecai showed up at his best. He could discuss books with anyone in the room. He could tell a funny story with the best of them, and his repertoire was inexhaustible. He held his own easily in wisecracking backchat with Ted Carnell. He listened sympathetically to the doleful autobiographies of Wally Gillings and Bill Temple, and with intent amusement



Ted Carnell is at the bar with an unidentified couple, then Fred Brown with Arthur Clarke behind, and Lew Mordecai in striped suit. Pam Bulmer is at front right, Frank Arnold is in the far corner with Jim Ratigan, and Fred Robinson is sitting at the table reading a book. Who is the woman in beret, I wonder? Photo from Ted Carnell's album, early fifties.



**'King and Jester'
- Lew Mordecai
outside the White
Horse, early
1950s.
Photo from Vince
Clarke's album,
scanned by Rob
Hansen**

to the disquisitions of Sam Youd, exuding philosophic perspicacity from his seat in the corner.

All the time he attended dutifully to the flow of orders at both bars, passing through the archway from one to the other like a presiding deity, going about his business with a seaman's quiet efficiency and economy of effort. In short, he kept his house in order with the minimum of fuss and flurry; and indeed, with his wiry frame and silvery hair, impish grin and slightly pointed ears, he radiated good cheer and contrived to be both King and Jester at once, the life and soul of a Thursday evening.

And what a varied and lively scene he looked upon from his eyrie in the corner! Here in the centre were authors and artists talking shop with Carnell and dazzling him with their offerings. Just beside them the luckier lads, much luckier, were gathered closely around Audrey Lovett, and they weren't talking shop at all (does she still think sometimes, I wonder, of the boys she left behind her?). On the centre table the noisy magazine market was always in full swing, the brightly-coloured journals lighting up the room like jewels on a Woolworth's counter.

At the side table sat Fred Brown and Charlie Duncombe glowering at each other in battles of dialectical chess. In the far corner a trio or more, usually including Syd Bounds, John Newman and Vince Clarke, fought it out regularly on the dartboard; at this point, too, was the famous 'Battle Corner' where the Convention Committees battered each other to a pulp as they hammered out a programme for the next convention. In the other far corner lay the long leather divan, where so many couples for so many years, settled down to hold hands and talk in whispers. All the time the later arrivals were flowing in and new faces were of frequent appearance. For of course the circle was no parochial affair, the boys from Manchester and Liverpool and Northern Ireland were regular annual visitors, and at one time or another of our friends drifted in from all parts of the British Isles.

The great middle period of the circle ran its course from 1949 to 1951. By now the budding authors of 1946 were settling down, getting into stride and fulfilling some of their early promise. At long last Bill Temple finished his novel, 'Four-Sided Triangle', and launched it on its amazing career with its many translations, its film version and the many new literary friendships it brought him. At about the same time a new novel, 'The Winter Swan', began the

prolific career of John Christopher and Jonathan Burke made his bow with 'Swift Summer'. Now the brilliant career of Arthur Clarke burst out in its first blaze of glory, and then John Wyndham, the quiet fellow in the corner, shook the reading public with his famous 'Day of the Triffids'.

These were the halcyon days, the midsummer years, the golden age of the circle, when everyone could see that the White Horse was developing into a sort of twentieth-century amalgam of the Mermaid Tavern, Lloyd's Coffee-rooms, and Charley Brown's in 'Limehouse'. Needless to say its light reflected pleasantly on the genial soul behind the bar. One presentation copy after another crossed the counter, all inscribed "To Lew..." with various good wishes and kind regards, making their way to the neatly-furnished rooms upstairs and taking their place on his shelves beside the war-memoirs of the Prime Minister, the Everyman classics and the works of his favourite novelists, Joyce Cary, Somerset Maugham, Raymond Chandler and Evelyn Waugh.

This, too, was the time when the White Horse emerged as the world's rendezvous for science-fiction's fandom, for 'fandom' is an international movement that has flourished so far for twenty years. Fans all over the world who had a chance of making the trip to Great Britain were told that, amid the friendly lanterns of London's pubs, one house reserved a welcome for themselves alone, on any Thursday, if they cared to drop in. Accordingly across the seven seas that Mordecai had once sailed the fans came travelling, to gather merrily at their own inn at the end of the journey.

Impossible to remember now who came first, or how many came in the time --- random names from the bran-tub of memory is all I can offer now. Some may recall Clive Isherwood, the athletic New Zealander who came over to brave the terrors of an English winter, or John Cooper, who dropped in one evening from Sydney, New South Wales. Of course, we all remember the night when the door opened to reveal the beaming bulk of Fory Ackerman, and how we rushed him to the centre table, with Wendayne Ackerman at the other end, plied them with teetotal tipple, and kept them talking till closing time. Or the night of that glorious confab with Sprague de Camp (who can forget his delivery of a Hamlet soliloquy, in the London accent of 1606?) while Mrs. de Camp chatted quietly in the bar corner.



Glamorous Pam Bulmer with Ken and incredulous Vince Clarke at the side-table. Other chap is unknown. Photo from Ted Carnell's album, scanned by Susannah Belsey.

Or, brightest memory of all, those nights when the cavaliers of the White Horse clustered thickly in adoration round Bea Mahaffey (most of them were queuing up just to

get near her) when for once the Thursday system broke down and we came in nearly every evening for a fortnight; until that evening when we drove her through the flagged and festooned streets of London, in a fleet of cars, and escorted by motor-cycle outriders, past the squad of the Metropolitan Police drawn up in smart array outside the Lord Mayor's Mansion House, to that farewell of laughter and tears on Liverpool Street Station before her departure for Harwich and the Continent.

But these were only the most famous of our USA visitors. Of others we can recall jovial Red Johnson of Dayton, Ohio, and demure Elizabeth Smith (E. Evelyn Smith, sometime *Galaxy* authoress) from Pittsburgh, Pa., (it shook us when we heard that 'E. E. Smith' was coming to Town!). Or Rita Krohne of Milwaukee, Wis., strolling through the glades of Russell Square with a quintet of admirers in her wake, and Jesse Floyd of Savannah, Ga., who claimed a brief acquaintance with glamorous Lee Hoffman of the same city. O those familiar faces of only a little while ago – when shall we see them all again?

Our European neighbours came over to the conventions in a solid phalanx, Georges and Mme. Gallet from Paris, Ben and Barbara Abas from the Netherlands, followed soon by Jan Hillen and Nic Oosterban, and Sigvard Ostlund from Sweden, and so distant a visitor as Frank Lam, from Hong Kong, and more Antipodeans like Ken Paynter from Sydney. Here indeed were gatherings of united nations, with goodwill all around and no slinging of vetoes in any direction!



The elfin features of Lew Mordecai are caught (with Bill Temple) behind the first International Fantasy Award, 1951. Photo source unknown. Bill wrote, "Lew, the White Horse landlord, spent a busman's holiday in the bar."

And where did our central figure take his place among all the International celebrations? [1951 – pw] Let us recollect that moment in one of Carnell's introductory sessions when he called upon Lew Mordecai to stand up and be presented, and how Lew shuffled to his feet amid a thunderous roar of cheers, smiling and actually blushing, probably for the first time in his life!

The golden age reached its meridian and died down towards the afterglow, as golden ages always do. The saloon bar was a densely crowded place in the last couple of years, for all of its ample spaciousness; many a night we had to struggle through the crush to reach the bar, and raise our voices to be heard above the hubbub. There was a curious atmosphere of impending crisis. That was the year when the Londoners agreed to forgo their annual convention thereafter, to give the other cities a chance to offer hospitality. For London it felt like the end of an age, the beginning of a long breathing-space before another age commenced.

The blow fell in December, when suddenly the buzz went round – "Lew is leaving the White Horse!" At first it seemed incredible, but then we recalled he had been

unusually quiet just lately, and a rather hangdog look had replaced his usual cheerful grin. When questioned he glumly admitted it was true, and up went the disappointed cry – "Oh – it won't be the same!"

But after all, he wasn't going far -- just across Holborn to the Globe in Hatton Garden, a mere five minutes walk from the White Horse. Promptly an expedition was despatched to the Globe to sample its wares, and it came back with a favourable report. It was the hour of decision; seven years of close personal associations were not lightly to be broken, for the whole world had heard of the White Horse, and in any case, most Londoners have a feline attachment to their favourite haunts and are always reluctant to quit them.

But with a new management coming a change was inevitable, and as Carnell put it later, "Friendship means more than panelled walls". The decision was spontaneous, unanimous and instantaneous – the circle was transferring, lock, stock and, of course, barrel.

Friend, we will go to Hell with thee,
Thy griefs, thy glories, we will share,
And bind the earth and rule the sea,
And set ten thousand devils free ----

A fortnight before Christmas, 1953, the first meeting was held in the great green cavern of the saloon-bar at the Globe, a house twice as large as the White Horse and twice as busy. The little huddled group of fans, fresh from the intimacy of 'the Nag', seemed lost in that crowded arena. Attendance was sparse that night and the week after, and for a while it seemed that the circle had broken up, with most of the regulars absent and the floating population completely lost. Then from Christmas onwards the tide turned, regular faces reappeared, long-lost faces turned up again – "Old ones, new ones, loved ones, neglected ones" – all came back to the familiar circle in its new home, the life of the circle resumed its carefree flow and all Hatton Garden knew that once more a Mordecai ruled the Globe.

For to Lew of course it was a return to the home of his boyhood, and inheritance, as it were; of a family estate. His wife and family settled down quickly, and once or twice his father has come up from Brighton to look the old place over. The transfer has proved, after all, happy and satisfactory. With the story of the White Horse to inspire it and the trusty hands of Lew Mordechai to guide it, we can confidently expect that one day the Globe will be as famous as the Cheshire Cheese, the George and Vulture, the Elephant and Castle and the Prospect of Whitby.

Time and the Circle alone will tell. //

Bob Wardzinski writes:

In the 1980's I occasionally drove a van for Fantasy Centre and did so when they purchased Frank Arnold's collection shortly after he died. He lived in a couple of rooms at the top of a dilapidated Victorian terraced house in South London which he rented from an elderly couple. The décor of the house was very badly neglected with threadbare carpets and meagre furnishings. Indeed, all Frank appeared to possess aside from a few clothes was a small number of bookcases housing his SF collection. After just a little searching, Dave Gibson and I found the Globe Visitors' Book in Frank's sock draw. Dave immediately said this was not to be sold but was to be given to the Science Fiction Foundation (then housed at the NE London Poly).

I have checked recently with Dave and he says the visitor's book was given to Vince Clarke and he in turn delivered it to the SF Foundation. As I remember, it was black, about A4 in size and quite unassuming.

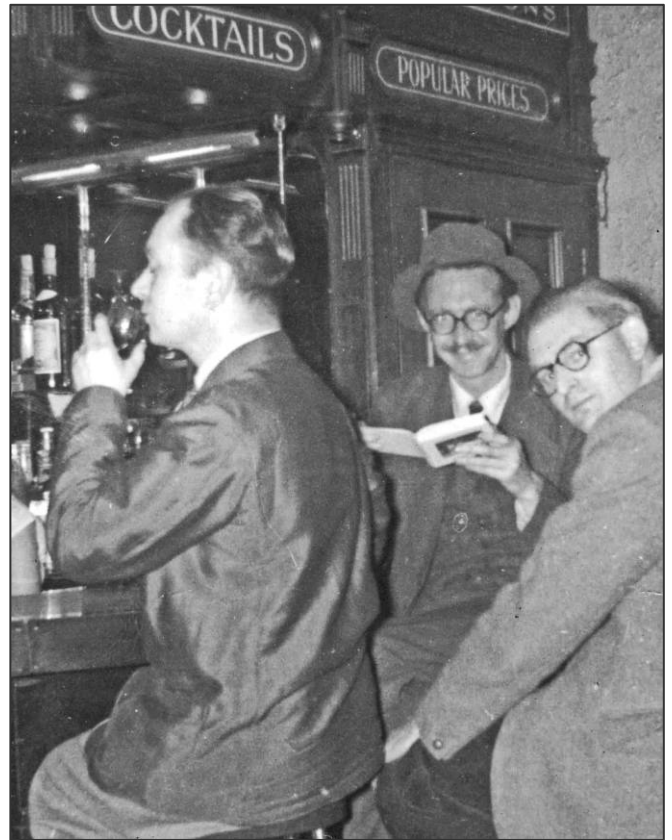
Of all the 'White Horse' regulars-who-became-professionals, the most mysterious is Peter Phillips. Today he's almost completely unknown yet he cracked *Astounding* in his first year with a story that everyone says is 'read and never forgotten', he was widely anthologised and never had a rejection slip. If he'd continued writing he might have been one of our biggest-name SF authors... and yet he stopped just when he was hitting his stride. Why? It's a question I asked Mike Ashley, who set out to find me an answer.... -pw.

Peter Phillips: Lost Memories

By Mike Ashley

That cheeky grin is the trademark of Peter Phillips, at the bar of the Globe with Frank Arnold and Syd Bounds, probably around 1955.

Photo from Brian Burgess' album, rescued by Greg Pickersgill.



Back in 1978 I had this grandiose idea that I would compile a complete bibliography of all British science fiction. I suspect it was not an achievable task even then, let alone now, but that didn't stop me attempting it. I kept at it for two or three years until promotion at work plus other writing commitments curtailed my time and the project faded away. But for a while I made good headway, tracking down and contacting a lot of old-time writers including Lan Wright, Lisle Willis, Peter Ridley and Tony Glynn. Amongst them was Peter Phillips.

At the time I didn't think Phillips had been totally forgotten even though he hadn't published anything new for twenty years. His career in SF lasted less than ten years, from 1948 to 1957 but a few of his stories continued to be reprinted afterwards. 'Dreams Are Sacred', generally considered his greatest achievement and rightly acclaimed a classic, had been reprinted in several anthologies, including SPECTRUM-3 (1964) from Amis & Conquest and THE ASTOUNDING-ANALOG READER-2 (1972) by Brian Aldiss and Harry Harrison, and 'Manna' had also just been reprinted by Robert Silverberg in TRIPS IN TIME (1977).

Yet, despite these reprints, when Barry Malzberg compiled NEGLECTED VISIONS at just the same time I made contact with Phillips, he noted that he was "typical of a certain kind of writer unique to the genres of American fiction: a writer about whom almost nothing is known, who comes in, drops one, two or five incredible pieces on the field, and disappears, perhaps never to be heard of again."

He quoted James E. Gunn who, in his history of SF, ALTERNATE WORLDS (1975), had referred to "the mysterious Peter Phillips." Malzberg cited three of Phillips's stories which he rated as "brilliant": 'Dreams Are

Sacred', 'Manna', and the one he reprinted in NEGLECTED VISIONS, 'Lost Memory', which is my own favourite of Phillips's work.

Peter Phillips was perhaps heading towards legendary status, and if almost nothing was known about him then, little has been added since. There was no entry for him in the updated edition of Donald H. Tuck's groundbreaking ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION (1977), nor in any of the editions of TWENTIETH CENTURY SCIENCE-FICTION WRITERS from St. James's Press.

There was a brief entry in the first edition of the SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPAEDIA compiled by Peter Nicholls in 1979, but that was dropped from the second edition in 1993 on the basis that Phillips had no published book or collection of his work.

As it turns out, that original entry had his date of birth wrong and said almost nothing about his personal details. In fact the only information about Phillips was the Profile provided in the January 1958 issue of *New Worlds*, which also showed a photograph of him. Ironically this was his last appearance in the science fiction magazines as if, having suddenly been identified, he had vanished.

But this profile created another mystery. It said that between 1948 and 1952 Phillips had produced "over thirty science fiction and detective stories". But I could only identify 22, and even here there was a puzzle. Don Day's pioneering INDEX TO SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINES, 1926-1950 had noted that "Ziff-Davis may have used this as a house name." I only knew of one of Phillips's stories in a Ziff-Davis magazine, 'Well, I'll Be Hexed' in the August 1950 *Fantastic Adventures*. So, was that written by Phillips, or not?

James Gunn was right. He was indeed, “the mysterious Peter Phillips.” For my bibliography I wanted to resolve these puzzles and see if there were any other lost or forgotten stories by Phillips, perhaps under pen names.

I can’t remember now how I found his contact details. It was probably from Leslie Flood, then running John Carnell’s Literary Agency and who proved very helpful in not only providing addresses for various authors, but also in identifying pseudonyms. I later learned Peter Phillips was a long-time friend of Syd Bounds, with whom I’d already been in touch, so I probably could have contacted Peter much earlier.

Phillips then lived in Surbiton. I sent out my fairly standard letter which explained what I was doing, included the inevitable questionnaire plus a listing of all of his stories, or at least all the ones I knew about. It was the inclusion of that checklist which helped encourage a response. His letter was dated July 30, 1978.

“I feel friendly because you have done what I have vaguely been intending to do for years,” Peter’s response began, “to make a checklist of my science fiction.”

My letter had asked three main questions in addition to the basic personal details in the questionnaire. I had wanted to know whether my checklist was complete or if there were further stories; whether Peter had used any pen names and how this might relate to the Ziff-Davis puzzle, and above all, why had he stopped writing.

It was the last point that Peter tackled first, and at length:-

“One of the many, incredibly varied but mainly feeble excuses I have made over the years for not writing more is that I first had to know just what I had written; and the task of finding out loomed larger and larger every time I thought about it. So I stopped thinking about it.”

That did seem a rather feeble excuse and Peter knew it was. He went on:-

“Why should I allow this fairly simple job to assume such proportions in my mind? You don’t know my suppurating subconscious. Neither do I. I suspect that fear of failure, leading to uneasy procrastination, is one of the reasons (as distinct from excuses) for my long absence from the field—an irrational, and therefore more potent fear, since I had never had a rejection.”

It still didn’t make much sense. It seemed that Peter was simply finding excuses for not having written, something which apparently Syd Bounds had commented upon, remarking wryly that Peter had so many excuses he could write a book on why he had stopped writing!

Peter continued:-

“Hell; man, you’re making me think. The moment I start trying to give honest answers to those implied questions I run flat up against a mess of contradiction—which is liable to happen to anyone who examines past motivations.”

He eventually summed it up by saying: “I wrote because I wanted to. I stopped writing because I wanted to.” Hmm. But he did qualify it;-

“It is certainly not because I wrote myself out, or lost my enthusiasm for SF. It’s still my main leisure reading. Perhaps because I lacked financial pressure, being very gainfully employed as a newspaperman? But I never wrote that stuff primarily for money anyway.”



Peter, wife Barbara and poor old Syd Bounds in best ‘Hannibal Lecter’ mode, early fifties. Photo from Vince Clarke.

That makes more sense to me. Throughout the 1950s – when Peter was in his thirties – he had been very busy as a journalist, working for the *Daily Herald* in London. This was the old Labour/TUC rag that eventually morphed into *The Sun* in 1964. Peter became the features sub-editor. He explained more:-

“After years of Fleet Street sub-editing and rewrite work, combined for twelve years with writing my own weekly column of book reviews—mainly mystery fiction, plus SF when I could wangle the space—and, latterly, a spell of rewriting for Readers’ Digest publications, I decided two years ago to get back to my own writing. No hurry. I could live on savings while I thought about it. Woke up to reality, indignantly penniless, last April (I must have had the vague impression that my savings would last forever). Now not only do I want to write SF again—I’ve damn’ well got to!”

But he added:-

“I’m starting lots of stories—scads of ideas. I’ve got to concentrate on finishing the things.”

He did note that he had completed a 23,000-worder called ‘Shaggy Dog’, which he had sent to his US agent, Scott Meredith, who was “delighted” with it, but such long stories are hard to place and it was Meredith who had asked for shorter stories. Peter did later show me that novella which, by then, had been rejected by *Asimov’s SF Magazine*.

I have only a vague recollection of the plot which I think revolved around the idea, popular at the time, that aliens were abducting humans to try and understand them. There was a lot of sexual activity in the story, I do remember that, and that may be why it was rejected because *Asimov’s*, at that time under George Scithers, was publishing relatively inoffensive material aimed at a rather younger readership.

So, having revealed why he had stopped writing and that he was trying to get back into the field, Peter turned to my more specific questions about himself.

I learned he was born on the Isle of Dogs on 21 January 1920, the son of Francis George Phillips and May Victoria Price. He referred to his “Welsh forebears on both sides of the family” being gloriously long-lived. He had been married but was now divorced. He had two daughters, Ann and Kate. Ann was married to Andrew and just the year before had made Peter a grandfather with the birth of little Oliver. Oliver was watching his grandfather type the letter in a tent in Norfolk – the family were renovating the house, apparently.

His description of his own house and garden in Surbiton is rather fun, so I'll let him tell it:-

"I live and sometimes work in a pleasant suburban semi, accompanied by an ancient step-dad (88, but as spry and fit as a 60-year-old, bless him), and an enormous young black-and-white cat called Cleopatra, who is about to become the mother of at least four kittens.

"In my garden there is a frog-pond, a thousand frogs, four indignant carp (indignant because delicious tadpoles grow up into those uppity inedible frogs), a thousand poppies, all different (this year I have one that looks exactly like a carnation), four-million blades of restfully-brown grass, and nothing to eat except seven different kinds of mint. (Sorry, garden, I've just remembered I found a gooseberry the other day). My 14-year-old car is called Viva Hyk. Oh, and I keep four voracious rudd in a plastic tank. Why rudd? Why not? I don't know their names."

He told me that his hobbies were photography ("especially of frogs"), playing chromatic harmonica, treble recorder and guitar ("in order of ability").

Remember, all this was written in 1978. I asked him what else he had written, including his non-SF.

"My non-SF stuff was just that: non-SF. Mainly written to order. A thriller just after the war for a winkle-bag printer who had got hold of some black-market paper cheap and wanted words to fill it up; a two-part whodunit written in two days for the national newspaper I was working for – the features editor just wanted something to advertise as 'entertaining Bank Holiday reading'; a Dashiell-Hammett-type short for *Suspense*, to win a bet that I could write in that style. And oddments I can't recall, written to amuse the kiddywinks when I was a teenager on a West Country newspaper."

I have no idea what the thriller was for the "winkle-bag printer". There's none known under Phillips's own name, so maybe it appeared anonymously or the printer slapped a house name on it. The newspaper serial must be something in the *Daily Herald* waiting to be rediscovered by someone with the energy to plough through the old files. And the story in *Suspense*, which I'll come to later, is one that appeared under his own name but is sometimes attributed to Howard Browne. This brings me to the matter of pen names:-

"I have never written under a pseudonym. I was mildly amused when Howard Browne claimed 'Peter Phillips' was a Ziff-Davis house name; but I didn't correct him because (a) I couldn't be bothered, and (b) I wasn't particularly fond of the yarn. Too youthfully self-indulgent."

This was 'Well, I'll Be Hexed' in *Fantastic Adventures* (August 1950). It's a fairly routine story about a sherelebubekin, the name for an American leprechaun, which uses its shape-changing abilities to torment a lawyer to stop his client building on the leprechaun's land.

It's an out-and-out fantasy, and in his letter Peter commented that he "liked the sub-genre" and had another fantasy planned in his work schedule. But in fact fantasy was where Peter began. This gives me a chance to look at some of those early stories because Phillips's use of fantasy, even within his science fiction, is worth noting.

His first appearance was in the May 1948 *Weird Tales* with 'No Silence for Maloeween'. No, that's not a misprint

for Hallowe'en. Phillips enjoys odd names, especially ones beginning with M. It's a ghost story of sorts. An ageing college professor marries a beautiful young woman but rapidly finds her lifestyle is so noisy and intrusive that he can no longer concentrate on his work. One of her attractions had been that she could whistle like a bird and do perfect imitations of a blackbird or nightingale or robin. But even that now drove Maloeween crazy. In the end he poisoned her in such a way that it looked like she'd accidentally taken an overdose but her whistling continued in his mind so that he could never find silence.

Vengeance from the grave was also the theme of 'Death's Bouquet', also in *Weird Tales* (September 1948). It concerns a viniculturist renowned for his superb wine. A widower, he is overprotective of his daughter and kills her suitor, burying him in the vineyard. Alas the suitor's spirit finds its way back through the vine into the grape and so into the drink.

Although he avoids the pun in the story, I suspect Phillips got the idea for the story simply on the two meanings of the word 'spirit'. Phillips clearly loves the English language and throughout his stories he uses obscure words, often simply for their rhythm, their alliteration (remember how he commented on his "suppurating subconscious" in his letter), and words that create sound pictures. It's one clue in identifying his stories.

For instance, take 'She Didn't Bounce' in the Spring 1951 *Suspense*. For some reason this story has been attributed to Howard Browne, as if he had used it here believing it to be a house name. The introduction to the story makes it pretty clear it's by the real Peter Phillips, and in his letter Peter confirmed the story was his. But even without that, there are phrases here typical of Phillips and certainly ones that Browne would not have used.

For instance, instead of a wolf-whistle, he refers to a "lycanthropic glissando." The story title is itself a joke. The male narrator has become enamoured of a rather fat woman who was otherwise very beautiful. He becomes protective of her because of other men's jibes, one commenting that he bet she'd bounce. Clearly this had a double meaning but the woman was hurt by it, and any reference to her size drove her increasingly crazy until, ultimately, she threw herself out of a window. The title served to replace the final sentence.

That story, incidentally, probably served as a dry run for 'Sylvia', in *Fantasy Fiction* (June 1953) which is about a beautiful *femme fatale* whom, we discover, is a spirit incarnate who has taunted men down the centuries but who finally meets her match with a seemingly timid journalist who is a rival spirit incarnate.

I digress, but simply to emphasise that Peter Phillips had a joy for words, and that made him excellent company. It'd be great to know other people's memories of him from the 1940s and 1950s.

But let's get back to those early stories. The same month that 'Death's Bouquet' appeared in *Weird Tales*, 'Dreams Are Sacred' appeared in *Astounding*. The story is a quantum leap in quality and originality from the earlier two, and yet it starts with the narrator remembering how, as a child, he had been scared by a ghost story that gave him nightmares. His father had reassured him by showing him his gun, and telling him how this could defeat any monster. The young kid even slept with the gun under his pillow – not sure what they'd make of that today – but knowing it was there was enough to put the nightmare monsters to flight.

Twenty years later the narrator is hired by a psychiatrist at a mental hospital to help save Martin Craswell a science fiction who had gone a step too far and had lost control of his imagination. He was now locked in a coma,



A great Cartier illo that perfectly captures the irreverence of the story (with an ending worthy of Philip K. Dick!)

fighting the demons of his mind, and the narrator's psyche is sent into Craswell's mind to help fight those demons.

The story is a perfect blend of science and fantasy and would not have been out of place in *Unknown*. It's even illustrated by Edd Cartier. Much of what the narrator encounters is the stuff of dreams and fantasy but Phillips relates it all in psychological terms thus making it genuine science fiction. It's the first such story that I know about to scientifically explore how one person can enter the mind of another. It could even be seen as a precursor to 'virtual reality' since the protagonist experiences the dreams of the other as if they were real.

This was, of course, the period when John W. Campbell was exploring psychic powers and becoming interested in alternative sciences, so it's no surprise that the story appealed to him. I also have wondered whether he discussed it with L. Ron Hubbard, because there's something in this story which makes me think of dianetics. It was published just eighteen months before Hubbard gave dianetics to the world and we know Hubbard was a reader of *Astounding* – indeed, he was in the same issue as 'Dreams Are Sacred'. It's pure conjecture, but I'll come back to Hubbard shortly.

Phillips hadn't done with ghosts. In fact his next story in *Astounding*, 'Manna' (February 1949) takes even more liberties with science fiction, and yet this story is also regarded as a minor classic and has been anthologised by Groff Conklin, Damon Knight, Robert Silverberg and Isaac Asimov. Set in the future, 'Manna' starts out as if it's going to deal with a new super-food and its effects, but Phillips soon turns a surprising twist.

The establishment where the "manna" is being manufactured is on the site of an old monastery and the spirits of two of the former monks remain trapped in that area because they had been punished for past misdemeanours and had not "translated". Phillips introduces superb scientific jargon to explain the existence of these ghosts one of whom, Brother Gregory, had taken advantage of his many years in purgatory to acquaint himself with all the advances in science, and he had come to understand his existence and how it could be used to travel through time. Just how the author links together a super-food, ghosts and time travel is what makes this story so much fun and is the sign of a writer on top of his trade.

It is evident that not only was Phillips well acquainted with all the tropes and concepts of science fiction, but also had a good grounding in science. The *New Worlds* profile revealed that his parents had hoped he would become a scientist and he had a good scientific education before the War intervened and thereafter Phillips chose the

world of the journalist. He was thus ideally trained as a writer of science fiction.

The readers of *Astounding* clearly enjoyed both these stories. Both came out top in the Analytical Laboratory rating of each issue's contents, which was some achievement when you consider that they were up against Henry Kuttner, Jack Williamson, L. Ron Hubbard, George O. Smith and Eric Frank Russell. The letter column, 'Brass Tacks' was, as now, rather more full of scientific discussion than about individual stories, but one writer labelled 'Dreams Are Sacred' as the best story of the year and another said that here was a writer to rival L. Sprague de Camp. It's a good comparison. There's a similar humour in their work, a good grasp of language and solid grounding in the sciences.

Phillips had one other story in *Astounding*, 'P-Plus' (August 1949). It's never been reprinted, to my knowledge, and is pretty much forgotten, but it's another one that makes me think of Hubbard and dianetics. The "P" in the title refers to "Personality" and the story deals with a technique, as much mind control as anything else, that can turn an introvert into an extrovert or convert a weak individual into a driving force. It even refers to engrams, and though I know that word had been in use for over forty years by then, its appearance just before Hubbard's unveiling of dianetics in the May 1950 issue, does give pause for thought.

That was the last time Phillips appeared in *Astounding*. New markets were opening up, including *New Worlds* in Britain and *Galaxy* and *F&SF* in America, where most of his material would appear over the next few years. One other story, though, that belongs to this early period is 'C/o Mr. Makepeace'. Though published in the February 1954 *F&SF* it had originally been sold to Damon Knight's magazine *Worlds Beyond* and was announced for the March 1951 issue, which never appeared.

It's another psychological story mixed with the idea of ghosts or poltergeists in this case. Mr. Makepeace lives alone but starts to receive letters addressed to a Mr. Grabcheek care of his own address. He has no idea who this Grabcheek might be. Makepeace returns the letters unopened but they get redelivered. Eventually he overcomes his conscience and opens the letters but inside is just a sheet of blank paper. Over the weeks this turns his mind and he is finally admitted to a sanatorium. The authorities discover that Makepeace has been writing the letters to himself, but the shock comes when he receives one in the sanatorium, even though he has been under constant scrutiny and never let out. The story ends with a chilling final line.

Until then Phillips's stories could be classified as generally light-hearted, clever ideas written with a little tongue in cheek. There were more like this. 'Field Study' (*Galaxy*, April 1951) is about an investigation into a healer who seems to be able to cure anything though he is not qualified and he has the ability to move on undetected to pastures new when the authorities close in on him. A man gets close to him and discovers his true identity, which I won't spoil for those who haven't read the story. There's a lot of clever word-play and obfuscation which allows the story to be interpreted on more than one level.

'She Who Laughs' (*Galaxy*, April 1952) is another story that involves ghosts, psi powers and changes of identity and though it doesn't work on quite the same level as his earlier stories, it shows how Phillips can continue to manipulate material in ever more unusual ways.

But two other stories stand out, as if he had been working towards them, perhaps unknowingly. The fact that they are both robot stories shows that Phillips was still exploring the mind and the individual and what it is that makes us human. 'Unknown Quantity' appeared in *New*

Worlds #5, at the end of 1949 and later in *Marvel Science Fiction* (August 1951) as 'At No Extra Cost'.

A company that manufactures humanoid robots finds itself under threat from a Preacher who has rallied public opinion against the company for making what amounts to slaves without a soul. The Preacher is eloquent and convincing in his arguments, allowing Phillips ample opportunity to use his vocabulary. The company decides to perfect a robot that can equal the Preacher in its eloquence and so pit one against the other in a televised debate about what is human and what is machine. Although the ending is predictable it doesn't spoil what is a well-constructed and at times profound story.

And then came 'Lost Memory' in the May 1952 *Galaxy*. A human crashes on a planet and is trapped in his spaceship. The world is devoid of life but is populated by robots which had been created by a highly advanced computer in an automated spaceship which had landed many years before. The robots thus have no concept of a human being and indeed think that the spaceship is itself the outer casing of a robot which they set out to repair with no idea of the consequences to the trapped spaceman. It has the most chilling ending of any of Phillips's stories and is one of those that once read, is never forgotten.

I hadn't intended to discuss all of these stories but it's impossible to write this piece without covering the main ones and showing why they should be remembered. Another factor is important. Most of them, certainly all the ones mentioned above, don't really date. Okay, there are certain descriptions which are outmoded but when Phillips creates a future, it's a surprisingly familiar one. He talks freely about global television and broadcasters vying for the limited attention span of the viewers. He has ideas remarkably close to the internet and mobile phones. He wasn't the only writer to consider them, but he works them into his stories as so commonplace and natural that you have to remind yourself these were written sixty years ago.

'Plagiarist' (*New Worlds* #7, Summer 1950) describes a rather more pastoral future in which some of Phillips's more socialist views surface alongside his artistic ones. In this future the natural abilities of children are encouraged from a very early age so that when we meet young Jamie as an infant he is already showing his skills as a poet and storyteller. Children are also able to fly small machines – flitters – before they're in their teens.

But in this future much of the past has been deliberately wiped away and forgotten. Jamie is preparing for his Estfodd, the future equivalent of the Eisteddfod, where he is expected to pass his examinations as an artist. However, he finds a time capsule and so rediscovers the past, and rather than deliver his own work he chooses to perform the works of Beethoven and Shakespeare and is regarded as barbarous and psychologically deficient. In the end he condemns the judges for murdering their heritage.

By the end of 1953 Phillips's main output of stories had ceased. His last of any significance is 'University' (*Galaxy*, April 1953). It's another psychological story, this time exploring the effects of long-term confinement on a group of individuals in Earth's first starship.

Only three more followed over the next four years. 'First Man in the Moon' (*F&SF*, September 1954; *Science Fantasy*, May 1956) is a rather grumpy little piece when the man everyone believes was the first to step on the moon confesses what really happened. 'Variety Agent' (*Infinity*, June 1956), which Peter told me he never saw in print, is another grumpy story where a man from the future seeks to draw people from the past in order to entertain those in the future. However he picks on a sour old drunk who robs the

time traveller of his mechanism for travelling through time and so traps him in the horrendous present.

And finally there was 'Next Stop the Moon'. This was written to order to be serialised in the *Daily Herald* just after the Russians put *Sputnik 1* in orbit in October 1957 and was reprinted in the January 1958 *New Worlds*. It foresees the space race but looks forward just a year to when the Russians have put a manned satellite in orbit but have trouble getting the men back alive. The British have a rocket which can help but has space only for a small astronaut—so the scientist's nine-year old son has to do it. Improbable though it may sound the story is written with reportorial gusto which carries it through.

That was Peter's last appearance and though the occasional anthology appearances kept his name alive, he was starting to fade into oblivion. I'm sure Peter must have kept in touch with other SF writers in the twenty years from his last story to when I wrote to him. There was, of course, Syd Bounds, with whom he regularly played chess, but it would be interesting to discover who else knew him and what memories they have.

After that exchange of letters I heard no more from Peter but I wrote to him again in February 1980 to find out what he was up to. This time, instead of writing back he drove over to see me with no advance warning and we spent the best part of a day together talking about his life and works. I only wish I had recorded it all, but I didn't, and neither did I make any useful notes. That was because Peter could so entrance you with his yarns that you didn't want to spoil the moment by writing things down.

I would imagine that in his heyday he was great fun and a great socialiser. I fear habit may have got the worst of him, though, because when I met him he was a recovering alcoholic. Thankfully he had sworn off the drink, and we spent most of the day drinking coffee and eating snacks, while he regaled me with all kinds of memories. As the old photos show, Peter was tall, easily my own height at 6ft 4, and his shock of unruly hair was still evident, if rather grey and thinner.

We'd met up in late February, so the days were still short. Peter was having trouble with his car battery and wanted to get back in daylight, and so I shepherded him to the motorway at about 3.00 p.m. and watched him go. That was the last I saw of him.

On those occasions when I met Syd Bounds I would ask him how Peter was, and he'd tell me he was okay and that they'd still meet up now and then to play chess. But as Syd aged and finally moved away from Kingston, I wondered how Peter was. After all, he'd now be 90. I couldn't believe he was still alive.

Nevertheless, prompted by the need to write this piece, I thought I'd see what I could find. I was amazed to discover a website run by a young artist, Sally, whose uncle turned out to be Peter's son-in-law. She responded to my e-mail with the wonderful news that Peter was still alive, though frail. He had moved to Norfolk to be close to his family and had, for a while, taken up pottery. She put me in touch with her uncle who is a local artist, Andrew Dibben.

Not surprisingly, I learned that Peter's health was deteriorating but he was otherwise bright and cheerful and still had a good memory. The family had gathered together all of his stories with a view to publishing a complete volume. The project was simply awaiting Peter to proofread the stories.

I took the opportunity to ask more about Peter's life and writings and Andrew kindly filled in some of the gaps in my knowledge:-

“Peter was briefly in the army during WW2, but was invalided out while still undergoing training, due to his asthma. He became a journalist after this, working at first for the *Bournemouth Evening Echo* (which still exists). It was while in Bournemouth that he met Barbara, whose parents had moved from London as a result of the moving of the National Savings Department there due to the war. We think they married in 1947, and returned to London, where Peter worked for the *Daily Herald*. He left the *Herald* when it turned into the tabloid *Sun*, and lived for some years on the not-very-large golden handshake he was given, with the intention of pursuing his writing. Sadly, not much writing was done! Financial necessity saw him working for a few years on a freelance basis for *Reader's Digest* publications, work which he quite enjoyed initially. He worked on motoring guides to various areas of the country, and even had one or two of his photographs included in the publications. This was about 1971-1976 (or 77).”

Andrew sent me an early photograph of Peter on a motorbike;-

“I think Peter's about 15 in the motorbike shot, certainly no older. He was the only son of the couple you mention in your piece, and his father was the manager of the Ripolin paint factory in Ripon. Peter had the run of the factory, with its laboratory, which is where he first imbibed industrial alcohol! His father let him drive his car on private ground, and also this bike.”

He also sent me a rather striking montage that Peter had taken of himself using multiple exposures sometime around the time I met him back in 1980. There were also some photos of Peter's pottery.

“He describes his pots as 'neo-primitive'; he has an abhorrence of the potter's wheel, and constructs pots by coiling and joining slabs. He did many experiments with different materials for glazing, and produced one large piece by firing it in a bonfire, mainly because he had been told it was impossible! He made me a little box, like a butter-dish, with a boat's sails adorning the top, at a time when I was a keen sailor. He also produced some rather nice jugs in the form of birds, complete with their eyes. Peter hasn't done any pottery for a few years due to ill-health; his hands are a little weak for the necessary kneading of the clay.”

It was good to know that Peter had kept active even if he hadn't returned to writing. But I was curious about those other early stories. Andrew went to investigate and his e-mail of 18 February 2010 contained the following:

“Chatting to Peter this afternoon, I learned a bit more; he remembered some other stories he wrote. Apparently, a story about a little girl eating the universe was published in a magazine called *Courier* or *The Courier*, c.1943. The mag was a bit like a predecessor of the *Reader's Digest* magazine. He wrote a short story called 'The Flying Pub' for *Reynold's Illustrated News*. Another tale, entitled 'Snake in the Sand', was written for the *Daily Herald* weekend edition, c.1952. These last two were crime stories. He also wrote a series of stories under the pseudonym 'Uncle Albert', aimed at children, possibly when he was still in his teens. These were published in a newspaper.



Above; The young Peter, aged about 15. Below: Aged about 60, this montage is particularly effective in colour. Family photos.



“I was wrong about the *Bournemouth Evening Echo* – he never worked for this paper, but rather for the weekly *Bournemouth Times*. I lived in Bournemouth between the ages of 9 and 19, and was familiar with these papers, hence my confusion. Peter worked for the *Dorchester Chronicle* and the *Poole & Dorset Herald*, as well as the *Bournemouth Times* (in different locations); these papers were all owned by the same chap. He then went on to work for the *Daily Worker* before the *Herald*. (He was a paid-up member of the Communist Party!)”

I remember *Courier*. It was a slightly odd-shaped magazine which was almost but not quite digest size. It had started in 1937, so wasn't really a predecessor to the *Reader's Digest*, and it was published by Norman Kark who many may remember later saved the *London Mystery Magazine* and kept it going for many years. So it seems that Peter Phillips's very first SF story appeared there before his stories in *Weird Tales*. That's something to track down. And I wonder what 'The Flying Pub' was all about!?

But still no more information on this thriller he wrote. Let's hope there are more memories to come. I wouldn't mind betting that as a reporter, Peter encountered some fascinating stories with which he would regale his friends at a local hostelry. But with Syd Bounds now gone, who else is there to remember them?

It's been a pleasure revisiting Peter's stories and a delight to know that he's still with us, and that there are further stories to discover. But I still can't help thinking about all those ones he didn't write and now almost certainly never will. Those are the real "lost memories". //



In the last issue we followed Bill Temple from his return to civilian life in 1946 to the filming of his novel, *FOUR-SIDED TRIANGLE*. Through his eyes we saw the first post-war conventions and his unsuccessful attempt to support himself as a full-time writer. Ever-conscious of the triumphs of his old flat-mate, Arthur C. Clarke, Bill was obliged to return to writing in his spare time but in 1953 he successfully sold a book for young people on space travel which led to the popular 'Martin Magnus' series of juvenile novels. Oddly, though, he seemed to regard these very lightly and as a result he failed to follow-up on his successes in the children's market.

Photo from Joe (Bill's son-in-law)

Extracts from Bill Temple's Diaries 1955-66

By Joe Patrizio

**Bill with John Burke
in the Globe, the
night before the 1957
London Worldcon.
Photo from Norman
Shorrocks's album.**



We left Bill in September 1954, not particularly happy nor particularly successful. The problem was that he was not writing what he wanted to write, but what would sell. Nevertheless, even if he was bored with what he saw as trivial, he always gave it his best shot. In the light of what Peter said in *Relapse 17*, I find the following extract from 15 January 1955 interesting:

"This afternoon I typed the 100th page of Martin Magnus on Venus (25,000 words). All I've been able to do. A minimum of another 20,000 words to write & type within 15 days, in scrag ends of time when I'm whacked. This wretched book is the hardest, dullest writing task I've ever taken onOften lately it's taken me 2 hours to grind out 250 words, & they're not worth reading after all that."

There are many entries where he says that he hates writing, it's a waste of time and insignificant, and is going to give it up, and other entries where he says that writing is all he wants to do, and he wants people to leave him alone to get on with it. There is a lot of self analysis, writing about writing, and quotes from a wide range of writers (Amiel, Bertrand Russell, Priestly, Virginia Wolf and many others) about writing, the meaning of life ("If God made man in his own image, it doesn't say much for him") and so on.

The essence of his thinking on the subject comes in the entry for 7 May 1956:

"I had a boyhood ambition to be, like Shakespeare, 'not for an age, but for all time'. But I'm no Shakespeare. What I have written & published in this lifetime is already dead, before I am. I would be satisfied if I could write just one book that will be read & known – if only for a few years – after I'm dead. It's only one way of outsmarting the verdict with no appeal. But if such a book were in me, it

would have been out by now.So, apart from the money payment, writing to me seems pretty futile. And as writing was to have been my life, there's little else left that can satisfy the need for self expression. Yet – when I do try to break the hypnotic negative spell of inertia that binds me, & succeed in beginning to write, I find myself worrying & anxious to make a good job of it. Why, for God's sake, if I think it ephemeral, unappreciated, wasted effort, futile? This silly contradiction must be resolved. Writing can't be important if it isn't."

The rest of the 1950s is pretty light on references to SF, writers or fans. The next few extracts cover the entries where there is significant detail of such activity.

14 October 56: *"This year, among other work, I've written 32 weekly stories for the comic Rocket @ 9 guineas a throw, each containing at least one new invention or gadget. It was becoming rather a strain to think up something new each time. But now I don't have to any more. The Rocket has been bought by Beaverbrook."* And that was the end of another market, as was made clear at a meeting he had with the editor of *Express Weekly*, where he was told that Rocket "was on the way out".

26 May 1957: *"At long last I managed to reach the Globe again last Thursday evening, after wondering if I'd ever have a good evening there again. Sam was there & he bt. me two Worthingtons on sight: a nice gesture. In gratitude I immediately started pulling DEATH OF GRASS to pieces & accused Sam...of being a sadist! Burke was there, & Ron Hall, Fred Brown, Gerard, Vince & Joy Clarke, Syd Bounds, Alan Devereaux, Ted Tubb, & various others, including Lew, & I had a good jaw, got tight, & it was all like the old times."*

19 September 1957: "A fortnight ago I was at the World Scientifiction Convention.....hobnobbing with Wyndham, Youd, Arthur Clarke, Forry Ackerman, Peter Phillips, Bob Silverberg, Sam Moskowitz, E. F. Russell, old Janser, Les Flood, Frank Arnold, Sid Birchby, Carnell, Ron Hall, etc, etc, & I took Anne along one evening, & she enjoyed it, with Forry & a young German lad literally sitting at her feet, while I sat with Wyndham & Youd."

3 November 1957: "The Thursday before last I got to the Globe again at last, wondering whether there'd be anyone there or whether it'd be a flat evening & I should have to go on a lone pub crawl. Surprisingly, Arthur Clarke was there—still in England & been attending the Globe weekly since the Convention. But this was 'positively the last appearance'. I may not see him again for years. We had quite a talk. Wyndham was there the week before but not this week – I'd missed him again: a disappointment. Had a yarn with ex-Editor Tubb, & Vince & Joy Clarke, & Lew, & Ron Hall, Burke & Youd joined my conversation with Arthur. Went home with a huge pile of periodicals, given by Lew, originally Youd's."

After a somewhat miserable visit to an almost empty Globe on 20 February 1958 (only a few people there) "Called in at the Penn Club. Good lord, Harris in, albeit with a sore throat. Settled in his room for over 1½ hours, jawing & drinking his brandy, & looking at his books. One bed sitter, with a small desk at the window, angle lamp, 2 armchairs, bed against the wall, loo 2 floors dn. & miles away. So this is his life. I enjoyed the jaw – but don't know if John did. But he was friendly."

20 June 1959: "I was also looking forward to meeting [John Beynon Harris] again, with Carnell & Flood, at the White Horse last night. But none of the trio turned up at all. I was miserably disappointed. To make matters worse I was dragooned into attending in the room upstairs a 'business meeting' of the London Circle, which was even worse – & longer – than I'd feared. A schism has developed in the LC – Tubb v. the Vince Clarke mob.

"Petty bickering and recrimination. Regressive. A waste of time. Also, they persuaded me to give one of my 'brilliant speeches' (Tubb's words) at the next Con – handclaps. Damn! Chucked out at 10.30, trailed round to the Globe with Frank Arnold, Ron Hall & the Buckmasters. Another coupla drinks & a brief chat with Lew. Then home, depressed, my long looked-forward-to return to the LC a washout."

30 January 1960: "Wandered on to St. Martins-le-Grand & the bomb-damaged Post Office. Looked for the pub on the corner where had made speech at the Easter Con after the war, Wally Gillings in the chair. But it – the Raglan – had been pulled down. Felt sad."

26 June 1960: "Early in May Sam Youd phoned me at the office & I met him at the Globe with Ron Hall, & Ella Parker; Frank Arnold, Gerard, Ted Tubb were among others present – & Frank Fears – & Lew was talkative & I drank & talked & it was like old times."

And after the shock of hearing from Ron Hall that Dave McIlwain had left his wife and children:

"Vince Clarke also wrote me a painful letter abt. the break-up of his marriage – that cold egocentric fish Sanderson is taking Joy to the States. Seems to me the less I know of writers & fans, perhaps the better – tho' I've accepted an invitation to become acquainted with the Goosequill Club of writers tomorrow at Ruislip – & wonder if I'll regret this move also."

So far, I haven't come across a further reference to the Goosequill club; was it just a local club? How long did it last, and other questions come to mind. I've tried looking for it on-line, without luck.

24 November 1960. Having received an invitation from Ted Carnell to a Press showing (on the 22nd) of 'I Aim at the Stars', (about Werner von Braun)

"..up Shaftsbury Ave bound for CX Rd. to buy a copy of New Worlds with 'Sitting Duck' in it. Bumped into Carnell, Flood, Sellings, J. G. Ballard, Brian Lewis, heading for Leicester Sq. Theatre. They heeled round, went back with me to CX Rd. & the s-f bookshop in Newport Court, & while the editor of NW waited outside, I went in & bt. a copy of his mag.

"So to the Leicester Sq. Th/re - & Harris-Wyndham waiting in the foyer. 'Hiya, Bill, you look like J. B. Priestley more every time.' He insisted on my sitting next to him up in the circle, with the others in the row in front. Then Joan Chandler came & sat on my other side. The film was poor. I made a few cracks, but found it hard to concentrate."

28 December 1960: "On the Saturday before Xmas I went to a science-fiction club party at Ella Parker's at Kilburn – Ted Tubb, and the Bulmers with baby daughter, Deborah, were there, & Ethel Lindsay & Syd Bounds & Brian Burgess & Joe Patrizio & George Locke & the Potters & Fred Parker & others, & I drank & talked plenty & was brought home on the pillion of a motor scooter about 1.20 am by a young New Zealander (Bruce Burn) whom I asked in for a cuppa & drunkenly showed my library (including my own books on the landing) & he was impressed, or seemed to be, & it was a good time."

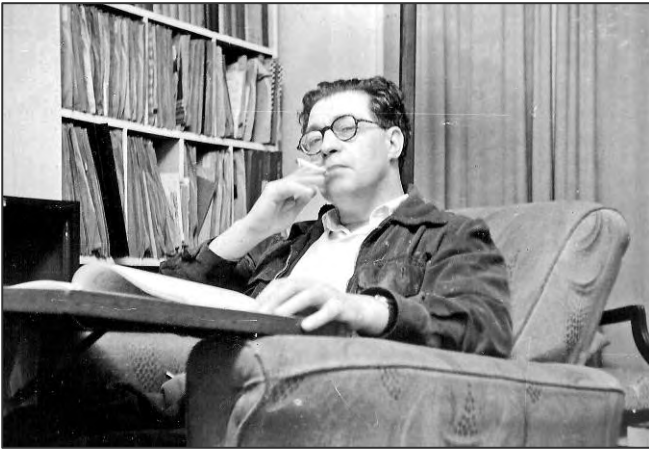
Bill on the back of a scooter verges on the unimaginable; he must have been just drunk enough to get on it, and not drunk enough to fall off!

Right; Ken as proud father! Photo from Andy Young website.



Below; Bill with Ted Tubb, Ethel, Brian Burgess. Photo from that 'young New Zealander' Bruce Burn.





Bill at home, thinking, 1961. Photo from Joe Patrizio.

8 May 1961: Mentions Bruce Burn's flat-warming party in Warwick Avenue, but this is little more than a list of people there that he knew, and another list of what he drank, and the consequent hangover (bet it wasn't as bad as mine). This is the party where I met Anne; Bill writes "*Joe P. & Jim G[roves] paid her attention*".

Later in this long entry he writes: "*Carnell hasn't answered the angry letter I wrote him two or three weeks back. Tubb reports he [Carnell] wants an apology. He'll not get it from me in this life – the hidden enmity is better in the open & declared. I don't know what grudge he's nursed against me for so long.....*" I think, but am not sure, that this has to do with Carnell's rejection of Bill's stories for *New Worlds*, stories that subsequently found other markets, but they did patch thing up soon after.

On 2nd July, while visiting childhood haunts around Eltham and Plumstead, we get: "So I began to think of Carnell, not far from here, & mellowed by drink, decided to contact him". And on phoning: "Rene answered. Asked to speak to Ted – if he cd. be spoken to. He came on. I said 'I gather an apology is expected of me. Well, I don't think one is in order & I'm certainly not going to apologise in this lifetime'. After which we got on famously".

2 August 1961: On holiday in Swanage, Bill and Joan walked to Durlston Head and near there "*We found a way round to the gun emplacements on the downs, which Ted Carnell helped to man in 1940, & which are now public weather shelters*".

21 August 1961: "*[Last Saturday] J., A., & Joe & I had been at a party at Bruce's....a farewell party in honour of Ella Parker leaving for the States. Present, among others, Ted Tubb, Archie Mercer, Ron Bennett, Atom, Brian Burgess, Ella & Fred Parker, Ethel Lindsay, Bruce, a yank named Al [this would be Al Hoch] ...Atom drove us to the station. Joe was staying the night. As we were having a cuppa before retiring, he suddenly said: 'How would you like me for a son-in-law?' And took the wind right out of our sails.*"

4 November 1961: Bill, Joan, Anne and I are off to Wood Green: "*...we'd been invited by Arthur Clarke to what we thought was a little party. The house was supposed to be directly opposite the Police Station on the corner of Nightingale Rd., but the only erection in such a place was a public convenience: we tried to imagine the party taking place there.*"

Eventually discovering a WVS Centre: "*[We] went in – to a deserted hall. Then J. heard Arthur's voice, muffled, coming from behind closed doors. We went in – to darkness. A film show was in progress, & there was a*

sizable audience, & Arthur was on a platform presenting a running commentary – it was a silent film. Also a poor one: it broke down. The lights went on. We floundered to back seats beside Flood & Ted Carnell. The film was one of Arthur's underwater things, almost as dull as his commentary". After the films "the audience moved into the next room for 'refreshments'" – tea & sandwiches only, to W's disgust. "Then we circulated, trying to talk to everyone in turn – Arthur himself, Val Cleaver, John Wyndham, Ted & Rene Carnell & their daughter, Les Flood & family, Harold & Lily Chibbett, & other people we knew by sight but not by name. Somehow, although W. introduced Anne & Joe on every side, he omitted to present them to Wyndham, & later got into trouble for it."

This was the only opportunity I ever had of being introduced to John Wyndham; of course he got into trouble for it! "*Arthur told them [Anne and Joe] he'd like to attend their wedding, but he was flying to Bombay tomorrow morning.*"

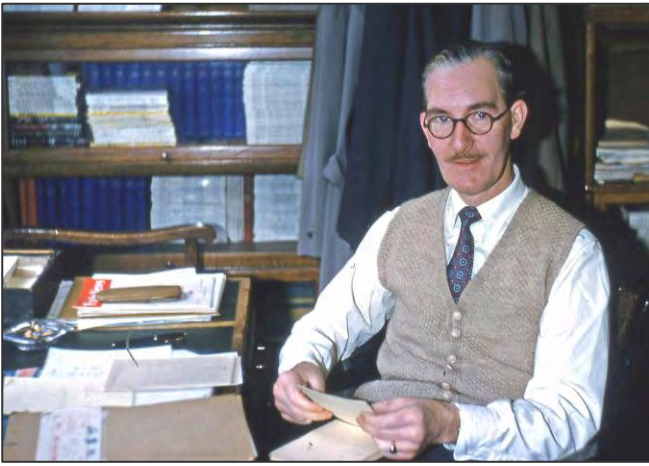
12 May 1962: "*[On 2 May] I was up at the Globe to meet Ron Ellik. The American TAFF fan. He's from the far-off Los Angeles club & knows Forry well – in fact, Forry introduced him to the club. Jaw with Lew, who stood me Worthingtons & gave me a 12" LP of Judy Garland. Jaw with Mike Wilson, just back from Ceylon – & Ego in his sick bed. Jaw with Syd Bounds & Frank Arnold after all this time. And Ken Potter, Pat Kearney, Ella Parker, Ted Tubb, & Alan Rispin & Diane, & a blonde, prospective Tory MP for Fulham – we disliked each other, naturally & I even forget her name. Well, I enjoyed it at the time, tho' I had an old-fashioned hangover next morning.*"

16 March 1963: "*I was down to give a talk on Sunday [10th] pm to a s-f meeting at Ella Parker's new flat, & as always, in anticipation I plumbed the depths of depression & cd. concentrate on nothing until this ordeal was over. Went along there with Anne & Joe – 7th floor, new block of council flats overlooking Queen's Pk. Stn. A fair gathering, Ella, Ethel Lindsay, Atom, and plenty more, including a tiny boy who kept jumping on me. I gabbled through the talk too fast, anxious to get it over & done with. Moreover, I was stone cold sober – no chance of a drink except tea. I forgot a lot of good gags, but those I remembered went dn. well enough, apparently. But, if I can avoid it, no more of these wretched ordeals – it's not so much the ordeal itself, but the shrinking anticipation of it that paralyses me.*"

8 September 1963: "*Last Thursday met, at his request, Ego Clarke in the Globe. He had £1000 worth of silver coins spread on the bar, just part of the loot he's dredging-up from a 16th-Century wreck off the Ceylon coast. He & Mike Wilson had made a film of the operations, which they've sold to BBC-TV (fee: £800 for 1st showing, £400 for a repeat.) He appears next Tuesday on BBC-TV in Pat Moore's programme. In a few weeks he goes to the US to pick up a gold medal award for his part in Telstar. But he was still a sick man from his polio crack-up (lungs not functioning properly: has to use stomach diaphragm to breathe; & he has a bad limp). And I had to phone for a taxi to take him back to Wood Green – public transport is hell for him. He appears to have lost his interest in music.*"

From this entry I get the impression that Bill was quite concerned about Clarke; it's one of the very few entries where he fails to report getting in a dig at Arthur.

29 December 1963: "*...had a letter from Sellings about he & Carnell wishing to see me for a friendly drink last Monday (23rd) lunchtime in the Nova office. Phoned*



Ted Carnell in the Nova office, 1960. Photo by Don Ford.

Irene Carnell, then Ted, in the a.m. Got away from office at noon, found my way to 7 Grape St. alongside Shaftsbury Theatres. Into Carnell's new office (Maclaren Publications). Mike Moorcock, Barry someone, & Tom Barns (psychiatrist pal of Sellings) there. No Sellings. He rang up. Couldn't make it. On the wall, as I sat in Ted's editorial chair, was a foto of s-f space-ship Award being presented to Clarke. Nova pubs due to fold in March. This where, after 18 years of publication, *New Worlds* ends."

6 October 1964: "Yesterday a letter from Alan Dodd, praising 'Beyond the Line'....Praise for my writing comes so very rarely that this was like water in the desert. Today he sent me lists of 8mm films for sale: 'The Black Pirate' for \$50. 'The Thief of Baghdad' for \$59. And *The Phantom of the Opera*." These were films that Bill couldn't then afford, but which he got a couple of years later.

20 December 1964: "One of Blake's 'Proverbs of Hell': - 'You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough'. I had more than enough at Ella Parker's final s-f party at her Queens Pk. flat on Friday evening, the 18th Dec.After this - temperance.At Ella's party Ted Tubb told me Ace had turned down his last 3 novels, & then Michael Moorcock was turning down his stuff too, & he was fed up & was giving up s-f altogether."

15 February 1965: "Took a day's leave with the idea of picking up the dead weight of the 'Shoot At The Moon' novel where I'd dropped it.And suddenly it was lunchtime & I hadn't even glanced at the MS. Prepared my own lunch. Glanced at the MS. My mind froze up like the weather. Christ, how bored I am with s-f!" And later - "Indoors to settle by the fire with MS & beer. Slowly, slowly got writing again, like a rusty machine starting up. No enthusiasm. Still some 35,000 words to grind through to finish it - & who would care tuppence about it, anyway, when I had finished it." Well, Simon & Schuster did; this turned to be one of his most successful novels. Incidentally, he mailed the MS on 20th August.

29 August 1965: Bill covers the 1965 London Worldcon in both the joint 'marriage' journal and in his personal journal. The writing suggests that Bill actually wrote the entries in both journals, though it's possible that Joan had some input in the 'marriage' journal. The following couple of extract are from the 'marriage' journal:

"The World s-f Convention was in progress yesterday & today (ends tomorrow) at the Mount Royal Hotel, Marble Arch. Joan & Anne were brought along by Joe this evening in the car. They found William 'sloshed', in company with Harold Chibbett and Forry Ackerman. They

met Arthur Clarke again and went in search of Bill ('Last seen making for Room 501, in need of care & attention' Arthur Clarke reported). He [Bill] came down in the lift with Chibbett, & was persuaded to go home in the car, 'navigating' from the back seat. If anyone had heeded him (which they didn't) we would have ended up in Clapham Junction. Chibbett fared worse: missed the last train, ran for the last bus, missed both it & his footing, fell down, cut, bruised, & strained himself, got a lift from a car, walked a long way, & got home at 2.30 a.m. & in dreadful trouble from his wife, Lily."

29 August 1965: "Last day of the Con. Bill, Joe, Anne, Andrew, & Lisa went - Joan stayed home [had enough, I expect]. Andrew [2 years old] met Forry Ackerman, took all his badges off & pinned them back - on Forry. Blood ran" Forry remained calm; said he'd always been a stoic.

9 September 1965: The following is from Bill's personal journal: First, mentions going to the Globe the night before the Con for an arranged meeting with Wally Gillings, and where a pre-Con gathering was expected. Wally didn't turn up; Bill got fed up and left, just before the others turned up.

"I attended 3 days of the Con at the Mount Royal, Marble Arch, a vast place with lousy room decoration, high prices, & grudging service - I hated the place. I was tight much of the time, which made me stupid; & depressed when I wasn't tight. I jawed nonsense to Bob Bloch, was deliberately rude to Wollheim twice (no more sales to him!), talked trivia with Ackerman, Walt Willis, & many others, saw Terry Carr not at all - nor Harbottle, either - was introduced to Christopher Lee, & with Chibbett gate-crashed Dennis Dobson's party (to the annoyance of Arthur Sellings), was taken to the Committee Room & given too much whisky & talked (not very brightly) with Judith Merrill, Karen Anderson, Mack Reynolds, & was stupid (though well-meaning) with John Wyndham (whom I never saw again after a brief few minutes), & drank beer in a near-by pub with George Locke, Don Geldart, & a Yank named Ed, visited Ted Forsyth's flat (with Anne & Joe), jawed with Gillings, the Rosenblums, & Wally Weber & Fred Parker, & Joan Chandler & her daughters, & greeted Peter Philips, was photographed with Arthur Clarke, & was boorish to John Brunner, & argued with the formidable John W. Campbell (would have scored more if I'd been sober)& was thrilled to meet & talk with Jack Williamson & his wife, & hardly saw Carnell at all.



The post-Loncon party at Ted Forsyth's flat; Judy Merril, Bill, Ron Ellik, with Fred Parker at rear. Ted Forsyth is taking pictures from an unusual angle on the floor. Photo by Peter Mabey

27 September 1965: “We were knocked sideways this morning by a wildly enthusiastic letter from Scott Meredith, announcing the sale of W’s novel ‘Shoot At the Moon’, to Simon & Schuster, with a \$2,500 advance on the signing of the contract, saying S&S were going to advertise it as a major novel, had had rave reports on it, & hoped to sell the book club rights as well, and wanted to buy the Canadian rights too.In the evening, W. phoned Arthur Clarke & Ella Parker. Arthur, of course, already knew about it: Scott Meredith had mentioned it to him in a transatlantic phone call.”

On 7 October, Bill had a call from Tony Richardson of Penguin books about ‘Shoot at the Moon’, asking for a copy of the MS, as he’d heard from Ted Carnell about the S&S sale. Later: “I rang Ted Carnell to ask how he’d heard abt. the ‘Moon’ sale – He’d got it from Arthur Clarke. Reading between the lines, I deduced things weren’t going too well for him & he was financially worried. So I asked him to be my agent. He seemed surprised & grateful. When I was in that same worried insecure position, in the Black Year of 1950, he rejected everything I offered him.... I can’t forget that. Why, then, ... ‘This Weeks Deliberate Mistake’, as I described it to Joan? I could have gone to **any** literary agent in London with that Meredith letter & been welcomed.

“The motives are mixed. I’m not made the same way as Carnell, & feel genuinely sorry for people for whom the breaks are going humiliatingly the wrong way – I want to extend a helping hand.... He & I are both proud, & it may

lead to friction. He’s a good agent, s-f wise – but I’m trying to get out of s-f, & in that wider world he may stumble & flounder with my fortunes.

“But, ever since that Dark Year of 1950, I’ve wanted to turn the tables on Ted Carnell – I was dependent on him & he let me down. One day, I told myself...he may find himself dependent on me – & then I’ll turn him down. And now that it’s actually come to it, I haven’t the heart to do it.”

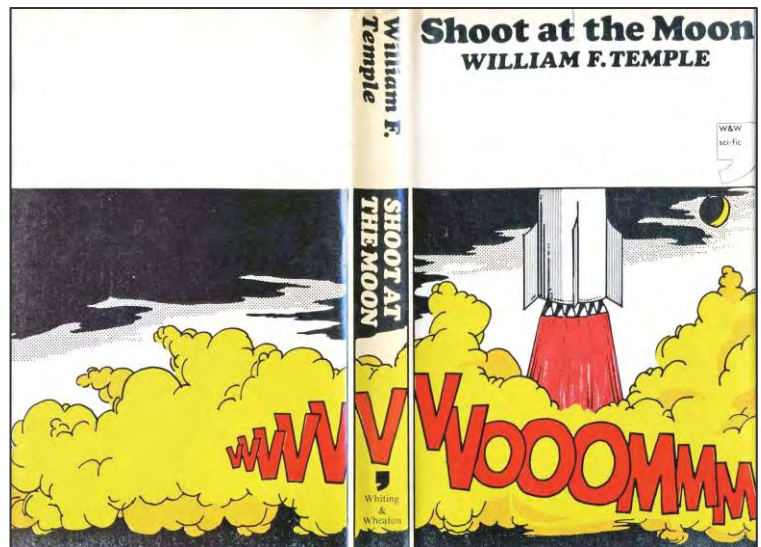
But things didn’t turn out quite as well as Bill hoped. *The Saturday Evening Post* had shown interest in serialising ‘Shoot at the Moon’ which would have been a very lucrative deal for Bill. However, in the end, they decided against it, as they were just about to run an Asimov serial “(actually, not even Asimov’s own story but a novelised version of someone else’s film-script)”. Scott Meredith told Bill that it had been “touch-&-go, a very near thing”, but it was still a great disappointment to Bill, particularly as he blamed S-M for sending *The Saturday Evening Post* a copy of the MS a month later than they could/should have.

Anyway, Bill and Joan moved to Folkestone at the end of 1966, which meant a lot less physical contact with fans and writers (although still a constant stream of letters). Although he continued writing his journals until August 1985, this is probably the last selection of extracts, so perhaps the best way to end is with the words he told Anne he would like as his epitaph: ‘He meant well’.

– Joe Patrizio, 2010

Shoot at the Moon - but hit the remainder shelf

Review by Peter Weston



Poor old Bill. His British hardcover publisher didn’t do him any favours with this cheap and off-putting dust-jacket in brilliant red and yellow. Brian Ameringen recently listed a copy and I bought it out of interest. My conclusion? That the *Saturday Evening Post* was right to prefer *Fantastic Voyage* which is a lot more believable and contains better science.

SHOOT AT THE MOON is an oddly old-fashioned novel which would better belong to the late thirties when an author could have been forgiven for not realising that a space mission would require years of meticulous preparation, besides mention the care with which would NASA select its crews. But here we have the first British expedition to the Moon, in a nuclear-powered rocket with a crew consisting of a misanthropic pilot, the head of the project (think John Prescott) and his beautiful but schizophrenic daughter, an introverted mouse of a geologist and a blowhard ‘doctor’. Apart from the pilot none of them have had any training for the mission and they climb aboard, take off in one sentence, and then wander around the spaceship while it accelerates to escape velocity. The pilot chooses an arbitrary site and lands by the seat of his pants, forgetting to fire one of his engines (!) and this is where the story really begins.

It would have been better titled as ‘Murder on the Moon’ and I think Bill was trying to write something along the lines of an Agatha Christie-type thriller, but unfortunately the ‘mystery’ is only resolved with the introduction of a new element and a load of pseudo-scientific double-talk worthy of ‘Star Trek’ at its worst. The standard of the writing is as good as one might expect but for 1966 the whole plot scenario is hopelessly dated. Perhaps Bill could have rescued it by deleting the low-key love interest and offering the book as a follow-up to ‘Magnus’ for the juvenile market where he already had a loyal following. But of course he wouldn’t have wanted to do that.

- PW

Some Thoughts on Bill Temple

By David Redd



I still think we're missing something about William F. Temple, the “nearly man” of Fifties SF. The pre-war fannish dream gone sour? (Other fans-turned-writers such as Syd Bounds and John Russell Fearn also reverted to day-jobs at times, but such setbacks seem to have hit Temple harder.)

I think he did have something to say, but unfortunately Clarke was saying it longer and louder already, leaving Temple with little new to add. Pity, because Temple on form was actually a better writer than Clarke as regards style and social observation, etc., – old Ego's main talent was for deploying his limited literary resources with enough skill to avoid most mistakes. Whereas Temple the writer reacted badly to commercial pressure, possibly for reasons Joe Patrizio may be ruminating over. (I still regret that the padding of ‘A Trek to Na-Abiza’ into *THE THREE SUNS OF AMARA* ruined the virtues of the original story). I'm sorry that Temple's dogged fan-to-writer career in SF seemed – to me as an onlooker – to give him so little satisfaction

MARTIN MAGNUS ON VENUS was a boyhood favourite of mine too, as were Temple's weekly humorous short stories in the short-lived *Rocket* (a comic which deserves an informed write-up from someone who was there, eh?). The 'St. Rockets' stories did begin as mild fan-humour ('Professor Popinjay' etc) but soon degenerated into hackwork. Even as a boy I noticed their quality declining, although one of the better late stories did get reprinted in some children's annual-type book alongside work by (I think) Moorcock, Bounds, Frank Richards, etc

There's more to be said about his fifties efforts, I'm sure; maybe it's in Mike Ashley's book. Haven't found the book, but in Mike's *Foundation 55* article I see (p.16) that *THE THREE SUNS OF AMARA* paid for a certain wedding reception. All understood now. What father in that situation wouldn't have done the same?

But he could be diligent and produce high quality fiction even when he found the work tedious; his ambitious novel *SHOOT AT THE MOON* is an enormous improvement on the original short story in *Nebula*, and I find its title significant. (Although, as John Brunner says of someone else's novel in that same *Foundation 55*, it's a pretty good book but not in any sense a necessary one. *MOON* needed writing a decade earlier.) Similarly, perhaps *FOUR-SIDED TRIANGLE* succeeded artistically because its theme (of satisfying rival desires) mirrored, however faintly, his own situation. These and some short stories suggest a Theory of Temple on the lines that the further his writing strayed from himself the less was his involvement and the quality.

If there's any point to emerge from these occasional comments of mine it's the same old notion that Temple felt commercial writing to be both opportunity and pressure. This and the ephemeral nature of the field seem to have weighed on him more heavily than on most. He certainly suffered too many unlucky breaks, but I wonder how many other problems were self-inflicted? He mentioned once taking a day's leave to work on a novel, and then not even looking at it all morning. And he seems to have been argumentative with editors and others, as indeed was the above John Brunner. The question in both cases is still, why?

I genuinely have sympathy for Bill Temple – he deserved the "Best of" collection he didn't get, and as for the emphemerality, I too have been in a con book room and seen early stories lying dead in their browning pulp-paper coffins, and somebody like Temple would have brooded about that.

– David Redd, 24 July 2010

[While compiling these extracts Joe mentioned that he was finding it “psychologically hard going”, to which I replied, “I suspect that Bill tended to look on the black side.... what a pity! I think part of ACC's success was his relentless optimism and cheeriness, which comes across in his books and articles. Bill had a lighter side but didn't show it too often!” Joe replied: “I think I'm saying that Bill had periods of clinical depression; he shows many of the classical signs. On the other hand, he was good at hiding it in public; it just showed itself as acerbic wit.” The title drawing, above, was done by Bill's nephew, Ian, about 35 years ago. – PW]

I wanted to show the lighter side of Bill Temple, so it was a stroke of good fortune when Joe Patrizio unearthed a copy of the *Bulletin* of the British Interplanetary Society, March 1939, which contained the following piece. - PW

An Outsider at a Technical Meeting, by William F. Temple

As I mentioned in a previous article*, I have a mind which refuses to grasp even the simplest technicality (I always throw away a fountain pen when it runs out of ink) and I felt quite ill at the thought of reporting a B.I.S. Technical Committee Meeting. However, duty is duty. Diligently, I swotted up some scientific textbooks to be forearmed, but only one phrase stuck in my mind; the Nebular Hypothesis. I thought that sounded good. I made a note of it.

The meeting was at Mr Janser's flat, and when Arthur Clarke and I arrived Messrs Janser, Smith and Ross were already there. Mr. Ross had painted a picture of the Earth as it should look from space, and was persuading the others to look at it from the other side of the room through a telescope – slightly out of focus to get the required hazy effect. I peered through the telescope and had some difficulty in getting anything clear at all. Then suddenly it came right, a lovely, indefinite picture of a globe floating in space. One got the thrill of looking through the observation port of a spaceship, three days out. "It's fine," I said, "though I think you've coloured it too red in the centre." I removed my optic from the eye-piece, and discovered that in my ignorance I had trained the telescope full on Mr Janser's cherubic countenance. He was standing there looking thoughtful, having just returned from a visit to his cocktail bar in a curtained recess.

Mr Janser is a many-sided genius. He has a bookcase which covers an entire wall, and it is full of books on every avenue of science, from chemistry to psychology, from astronomy to biology. Hoping that he had not heard my remark I turned and pretended to look for knowledge among his bookshelves. I noticed 'How to be a Yogi', 'How to Prolong Life' and the 'Complete Limerick Book'. I found that I already knew most of the verses in the latter, only with different last lines. A book titled 'While Paris Laughed' caught my eye. I yanked at it and lo! a dozen others came with it. They were all just dummy-backs joined together, and they swung away to conceal a hidden compartment behind.

I looked round furtively. Mr Edwards was just arriving, muffled up to the nose in a red scarf. "I'b god flu" he was saying, "Cardn't stob long." While the others sympathised, I took a peek into the secret compartment. There were several more books there and I observed 'Gentlemen Prefer Blondes', 'How to Do Your Own Laundry' and 'Memoir of a Little Monkey'. Before I could investigate these intriguing volumes Mr Janser approached and I shut the secret panel hastily and pretended to be absorbed in 'A Textbook on Dynamics'.

"This is an interesting one" said Mr J, arriving, and pointing to 'The Meteoric Hypothesis'. I snatched at the opportunity. "Yes," I said gravely, "I have always thought the Nebular Hypothesis purely hypothetical". "Some do, some don't" said Mr J, and vanished into a certain curtained recess.

I wandered back to the main body. They were discussing Weights. "Does anyone know a shop that sells weights?" asked Clarke. "I do," I said brightly. "I usually get Woodbines, but they sell Weights." They ignored me. It seemed that the proving stand was now finished and ready for delivery. They wanted to buy a cheap set of weights, up to 50lbs, to use on it (see diagram, Jan. Bulletin). Mr Janser returned, and showed us his home-made set of chemical weights carved from odd sheets of zinc. For no reason whatsoever Mr Smith went on to describe how he had been lecturing on astronomy to Boy Scouts and introducing the B.I.S. space-ship to them. "Catch 'em young – that's the way," he said.

Mr Janser vanished again, then suddenly returned with tea and cakes. The company helped itself and seated itself, and began to discuss the altimeter. Or rather, Mr Edwards began to discuss the altimeter. He had been making it, and described just how. This was a rather elaborate process, carried out with two expressive but empty hands and a patch of empty air. A swift circular sweep in the air meant 'a wheel', a corkscrew wiggle 'a spring' and a Nazi salute 'about so high'. Once 'a long lever' nearly carried a vase off the mantelpiece. All this semaphoring was accompanied by a machine-gun fire commentary by Mr Edwards, somewhat indistinct from his cold ("two spriggs attadged to thad chaid"). I thought, supposing a foreigner came in now, and Mr Edward's explanation was unintelligible to him – wouldn't he think Mr E's frantic catching of invisible flies rather funny? At this moment, Mr E. stuffed his mouth full of sausage-rolls and his explanation *did* become unintelligible, and it *was* funny.

Apparently the altimeter wouldn't behave. Sometimes when it was supposed to indicate the exact height to which it had been lifted, the indicator shot back past zero and pretended the thing was buried in the ground. Mr E. pointed out how embarrassing this would be if it happened at a public demonstration. "We could always tell them that that proves space is curved," rapped out Clarke smartly, and everyone guffawed. Except me, who couldn't work out how it proved that. Someone suggested we scrap the altimeter and use an egg-timer in the space-ship instead [*the Secretary noted that this wasn't as silly as it sounded and added some incomprehensible maths to prove it – pw*]. It would be the regular duty of one of the crew to keep turning it over. I volunteered at once for the post of Egg-Timer Watcher. "I place my entire knowledge of the Nebular Hypothesis at your disposal," I said with emotion. They ignored me.

Instead they talked about designing a rocket-aeroplane to be used as a super-fighter. It was to have the ability to put on a sudden spurt of 700 m.p.h. which would carry it out of any awkward corner of a dog-fight before any of the enemy pilots had realised it was gone. One difficulty, Mr Smith said, was that in such a spurt the pilot would overtake his own machine-gun bullets and shoot himself. Clarke said no, they would slide back down their respective barrels.

Messrs. Smith and Edwards went into the wing design of this plane at great length and detail, and the rest of us, after sundry attempts to bring the conversation back to normality, let it go on. It went on. Clarke awoke me at 11 p.m. by chucking my coat at me. "Home," he said. "Oh, but regarding that Nebular Hy—" I began. "The higher the fewer", he interrupted enigmatically, and sent me on ahead to buy the fish and chips for supper.

*Apparently Bill had earlier described one of the meetings of the BIS Experimental Committee in similar vein, although we have not as yet been able to find the relevant issue of the *Bulletin*, have we Bob! – pw



Ted Carnell was ecstatic; in his editorial for March 1953 he wrote, ‘The advent of Coronation Year has virtually opened the floodgates for science fiction to pour in, for the New Year was hardly born before advance information of a virtual spate of new magazines and books was announced. It seems a far cry to three years ago when *New Worlds* was virtually a lone voice in the publishing wilderness.’ These days it’s hard for us to appreciate just how much the situation had changed in that time, from NO hardbacks to more than FIFTY in 1953 alone. The publishers had stampeded into science fiction in a big way, as Phil Harbottle describes below. [pw]

Photo from Phil

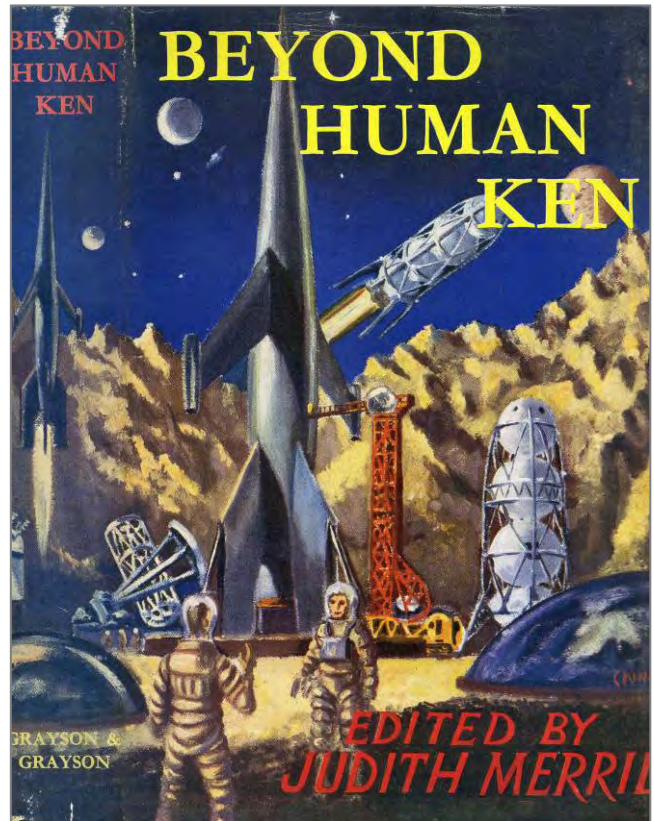
The Hardcover Explosion

By Phil Harbottle

(Abridged & condensed from his forthcoming book, *VULTURES OF THE VOID; THE LEGACY*)

Cover scans provided by Bob Wardzinski unless noted; captions by pw.

Nothing to do with the book, but a fine cover by Mudge-Marriott, clearly inspired by *Destination Moon*.



Before 1951 science fiction books in hardcover were few and far between in Britain. Over the years some occasional titles had appeared, from the wonderful early novels of H. G. Wells to authors such as Olaf Stapledon, David Lindsay, H. P. Lovecraft, George R. Stewart and so on. But they were not usually *identified* as such. Instead, they were referred to as fantasy, imaginative fiction, or ‘a parable’. Rupert Hart-Davis, for instance, published Ray Bradbury’s collection *THE SILVER LOCUSTS* in September 1951 and then his other early SF titles, but they were not ‘packaged’ as genre SF, for Bradbury was an exceptional writer who transcended genres and who commanded the respect and plaudits of even the most acerbic critics.

The first time the words ‘Science Fiction’ appeared on the jacket of a hardcover book was with John Russell Fearn’s first novel, *THE INTELLIGENCE GIGANTIC*, from *World’s Work* in 1943 – boldly labeled as “A Master Thriller Science Fiction novel!” The same publisher – who had earlier published the magazine, *Tales of Wonder* – had put out Eric Frank Russell’s *SINISTER BARRIER* several weeks previously but without any cover label (though ‘science fiction’ *was* mentioned in the inside blurb).

Grayson & Grayson (1951); 23 titles

But in July 1951 the venerable firm of Grayson & Grayson launched a bold, sustained *and clearly labelled* line of science fiction hardcovers and released three titles

simultaneously: *THE VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE* by A. E. van Vogt, and two anthologies, *MEN AGAINST THE STARS* edited by Martin Greenburg, and *THE BEST SCIENCE FICTION* edited by E. Bleiler and T. E. Dikty, all with darkly attractive pictorial dust jackets by ‘C.W.B.’ They were announced as being part of the publisher’s new ‘Adventures in Science Fiction’ series, and their jackets carried a punchy manifesto:

‘From America, land of Science and the Machine, comes a new kind of book. Foreshadowed in the works of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells, Science Fiction answers the age-old query: “What next?” Science Fiction is written by men with the scientific “know how”; men who, however far their imagination may range, convince by their attention to detail and to the fundamental truths of Science’s magic world. Science Fiction is exciting, convincing.’

Gone were all the tortuous apologetic euphemisms: here was the real thing, not afraid to speak its name! It was a breath of fresh air and deserved to succeed.

The following year saw *POSSIBLE WORLDS OF SCIENCE FICTION* edited by Groff Conklin; *I, ROBOT* by Isaac Asimov; and *BEST SCIENCE FICTION STORIES: SECOND SERIES* edited by Bleiler and Dikty, and then perhaps the finest of all the early American SF anthologies, *ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE* edited by McComas and Healy (although with only 11 out of an original 33 stories).

From the fourth title, E. B. Mudge-Marriott did most of the dust-jacket cover art in bright, attractive pictorial designs, with iconic SF imagery. The actual technical details and SF ‘hardware’ were a little vague and naïve at times, indicating that the artist was not too familiar with SF or astronomy, but he made a decent stab at it! His work would attract the attention of several other publishers, who would also secure his services when they followed Grayson’s lead.

The 1953 programme consisted entirely of four more American anthologies, and 1954 looked like continuing Grayson’s obsession with this form but in February came the unexpected: an original British single-author collection, John Christopher’s *THE TWENTY-SECOND CENTURY*. Unfortunately this was not followed up: there were four more American anthologies that year, with three in 1955 and two others in 1956. The only two novels to appear were *COSTIGAN’S NEEDLE* by Jerry Sohl and Murray Leinster’s rather pedestrian *OPERATION: OUTER SPACE*.

Grayson’s initiative had both positive and negative consequences for British hardcover SF publishing. It set other publishers scrambling to follow suit, but it had concentrated overwhelmingly on American authors and anthologies with British writers being almost entirely ignored.

Boardman (1951); 18 titles

Next to take the plunge was T. V. Boardman. The firm’s founder had American roots and they were noted for publishing a very strong line of American detective fiction in both hardcover and paperback editions, with strikingly painted covers by the talented Denis McLoughlin that made them instant collectables. They opened their SF programme in the autumn of 1951 with American reprints, but refreshingly these were all novels and not anthologies. *THE PRINCESS OF THE ATOM* by Ray Cummings; *THE BIG EYE* by Max Ehrlich; and *WHAT MAD UNIVERSE* by Fredric Brown.

They were followed in January 1952 by a rather pedestrian original British novel, *WRONG SIDE OF THE MOON* by Francis and Stephen Ashton, dealing with an early attempt at space travel. Their next title was much better—John Carnell’s anthology *NO PLACE LIKE EARTH*, a strong selection of 10 stories, headlined by stories from John Wyndham and Arthur C. Clarke, who also provided an introduction that ably promoted science fiction as a legitimate literary form. Four of the stories had first appeared in *New Worlds*, and another four had been reprinted there.

Boardman issued no SF titles in 1953, continuing to concentrate on their hugely successful detective novels, but they returned in 1954 with an impressive run of six American reprints, and five more titles in 1955 including *ALIEN DUST* by E. C. Tubb, but despite their being augmented by some outstanding dust-jacket cover art the line eventually petered out as the year ended. One late Boardman SF title, Shepherd Mead’s *THE BIG BALL OF WAX* (October) was in fact packaged as a mainstream novel with an arty two-colour cartoon cover! Their last title, *THE SWORD OF RHIANNON* by Leigh Brackett, despite stating ‘First printed in Great Britain in 1955’ was in fact not released until September 1956.

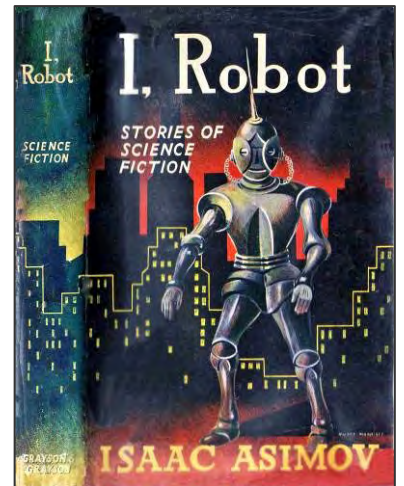
Ron Hall was editor at Boardman and he says:

‘Tom Boardman was a good business man, who appeared very relaxed, but was always on the ball. His mixed American/English makeup proved very useful to the firm and to the publishing firms which he later joined. He then had considerable success on the business side of television.’

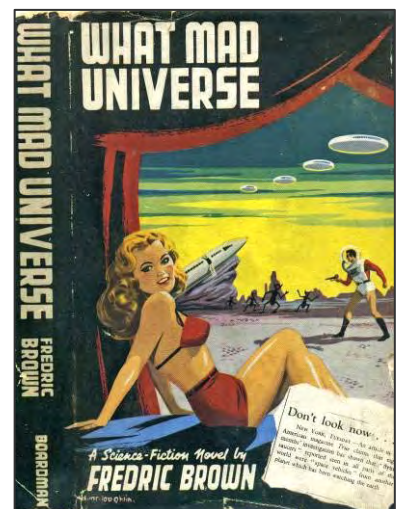
Did the artist ('C.W.B.') ever see the dramatic Astounding cover of Coeurl, the Black Destroyer, I wonder? If so he should be ashamed of this mangy tom-cat in sun-glasses!



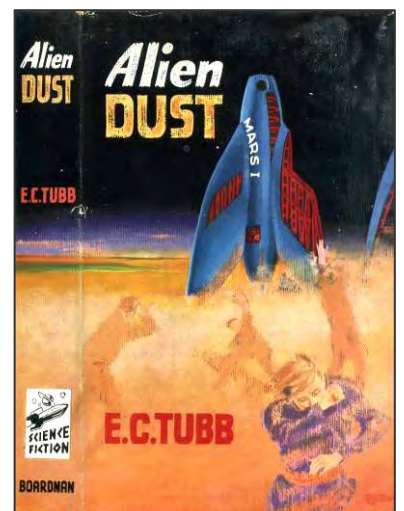
Another Mudge-Marriott, one which influenced the later Digit paperback edition. Scan by Peter Crowther.



This cover is by Denis McLoughlin; completely different to (& better than) the later Boardman paperback.

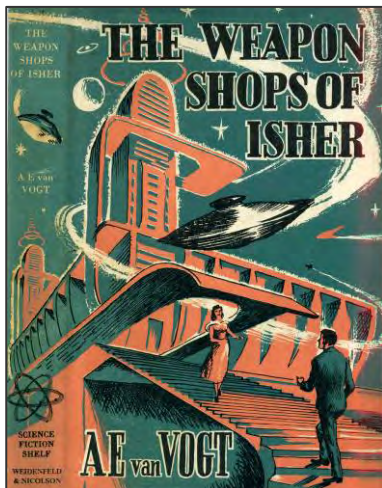


Wonderful Gerard Quinn painting; Phil has the original – ‘I traded the cover from a fan more than 30 years ago. I swapped him three mint issues of 1936 Weird Tales. It was a tough call at the time.’





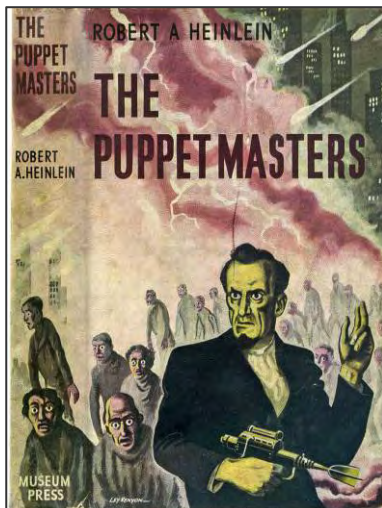
Beautiful cover by Harold Johns, one of the best artists of the period. Scan by Dave Langford.



Odd loose style and unusual combination of green and orange for this Pagram cover.



Beautiful full-colour art job by Charles King on this collection of rather old-fashioned stories by the *Astounding* reviewer.



John Burke where were you when this 'March of the Zombies' cover was submitted? Art by Ley Kenyon, and he should be ashamed!

Weidenfeld & Nicolson (1952); 16 titles

Entering the 'genre SF' lists in spectacular fashion this publisher released two American reprints in September 1952; *THE WEAPON SHOPS OF ISHER* by A. E. van Vogt and *NEW TALES OF SPACE AND TIME* edited by Raymond J. Healy. Both books were slightly larger than normal size, 8 inches by 5.1 inches, as opposed to the standard 7.5 by 4.9 inches, and were priced at 9/6. They had stylish atmospheric cover art by Pagram, and on the back covers announced that they were to be the first in a series designated as the publisher's 'Science Fiction Shelf'.

Two more van Vogt titles followed in 1953, with *STRANGER FROM SPACE* (an original British novel by Hazel Adair and Ronald Marriott), Isaac Asimov's *FOUNDATION* and the inevitable American anthologies; Groff Conklin's *INVADERS FROM EARTH*, and *PRIZE STORIES OF SPACE AND TIME* edited by Donald A. Wollheim. The high standard was maintained in 1954 with Clifford Simak's award-winning *CITY*, along with van Vogt's *THE WEAPON MAKERS*. There was a surprise full-colour pictorial dust-jacket for P. Schuyler Miller's collection *THE TITAN AND OTHER STORIES*, and the year concluded with Henry Kuttner's collection *AHEAD OF TIME* and his novel, *MUTANT*, plus two August Derleth anthologies, *BEACHEADS IN SPACE* and *WORLDS OF TOMORROW*.

The series unexpectedly and disappointingly ended in February 1955 on another high note with Raymond J. Healy's *9 TALES OF SPACE AND TIME*. It had been a good effort by an enterprising publisher.

After many years of virtually ignoring SF it may seem surprising that English hardcover publishers were suddenly coming up with so many excellent American choices. But they were helped by having several knowledgeable literary agents. Gordon Landsborough has paid tribute to the substantial role paid by Laurence Pollinger in promoting good SF throughout the post-war decade, helping to stem the tide of so much rubbish.

He quite evidently knew the American field, and his firm of Pearn, Pollinger and Higham was probably behind most of the better choices. In this endeavour he was soon joined by John Carnell. In his position as editor of Britain's leading SF magazine, *New Worlds*, Carnell was uniquely placed to know all the best writers—on both sides of the Atlantic. Increasingly, British publishers began to ask his advice and Carnell quickly started to become an agent himself, while continuing to edit his magazines.

Museum Press (1952); 18 titles

Museum had published Edmond Hamilton's *THE STAR KINGS* in August 1951, billed as 'Science Fiction at its Best'. This was a label that would persist for years on diverse British editions, constantly repeated—presumably in an attempt to differentiate it from other publishers' inferior offerings! It was used so often it eventually became meaningless.

THE STAR KINGS looked like remaining a one-off until September the following year, when they brought out another Hamilton title, *CITY AT WORLD'S END*. This time they meant business, identifying it as the first in their 'Science Fiction Club' books. John Carnell was approached by Museum Press to edit this series which steadily developed into a substantial line – and which led to later confusion amongst non-fan booksellers with the totally different 'Science Fiction Book Club' which commenced shortly thereafter. The Museum titles were not in any way a book club, but straightforward ordinary trade editions. The label was simply an attempt to attract reader loyalty to their

line, their house ads offering to supply details of their new and forthcoming SF publications. Museum eventually phased the label out in favour of 'Books of the Future'.

Under Carnell's guidance their SF line quickly flowered to produce a string of first-class titles, mostly by American authors, or UK writers whose books had already appeared first in the US. The only exceptions were a few titles by Carnell himself (anthologies) and John Burke (who worked at Museum as an editor, and wrote as Jonathan Burke). Dust-jacket art was upgraded to full colour, and apart from the occasional dud, was of a good standard by experienced SF artists such as John Pollack, Gerard Quinn, John Richards and E. B. Mudge-Marriott.

Carnell's first titles in 1953 were *THE BLIND SPOT*, a creaky but atmospheric old pulp yarn that had been pushed by American agent Forry Ackerman who wrote a typically overblown introduction for it, and the much better *THE PUPPET MASTERS* by Robert A. Heinlein. The books were successful enough to be followed by *DREADFUL SANCTUARY* by Eric Frank Russell and *THE HUMANOIDS* by Jack Williamson.

1954 brought a further five titles between February and October: Carnell's own all-British anthology *GATEWAY TO TOMORROW*; Russell's *SENTINELS FROM SPACE*; Williamson's *DRAGON'S ISLAND*; *THE STARMEN* by Leigh Brackett; and an original British novel, *PATTERN OF SHADOWS* by Jonathan F. Burke.

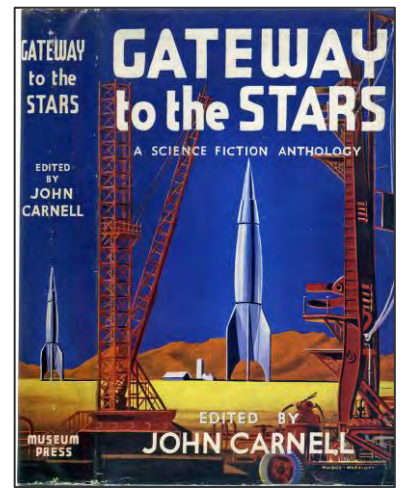
1955 continued the parade of strong titles: *WORLD OUT OF MIND* by J. T. McIntosh; *GATEWAY TO THE STARS*, another all-British Carnell anthology; *ASSIGNMENT IN ETERNITY* by Robert A. Heinlein; *ALIEN LANDSCAPES*, a first collection by Jonathan F. Burke; and *BORN LEADER*, another McIntosh novel, in September. But the end was in sight. Despite opening in February 1956 with *ONE IN THREE HUNDRED*, one of McIntosh's best novels, the year petered out in September with an obscure French translation, *THE TREMBLING TOWER* by Claude Yelnick. The dust-jacket was downgraded to two colours on non-glossy-stock, and the book (a quite interesting inter-dimensional thriller) was not identified as SF. The uncredited translator was John Burke.

Sidgwick & Jackson (1953); 13 titles

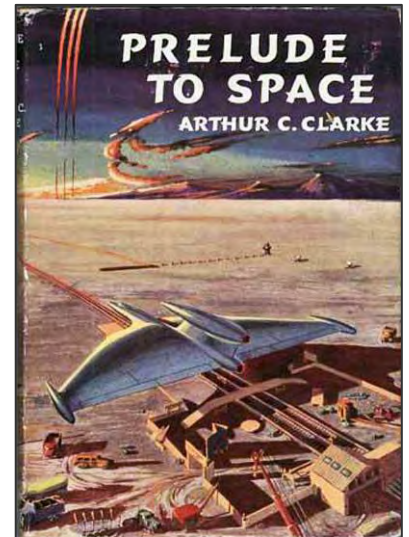
Sidgwick & Jackson gradually emerged as one of the leading quality SF hardcover publishers. After having great success in 1950 with the groundbreaking *THE CONQUEST OF SPACE* by Willy Ley and Chesley Bonestell, they turned to science fiction in November 1951 with *THE SANDS OF MARS* by Arthur C. Clarke, reprinting a plate of Mars by Bonestell as cover illustration. Whilst the publisher proclaimed Clarke's book as "A full-length Science Fiction Novel" they did not follow it up until September 1952, when they published his juvenile novel *ISLANDS IN THE SKY*, beautifully illustrated in scraperboard by *New Worlds* artist Gerard Quinn. But the success of other publishers served as a spur, and following consultations with John Carnell, Sidgwick & Jackson became a major player early in 1953.

Their SF programme led off with Clarke's *PRELUDE TO SPACE*, and the back cover featured trailers for two forthcoming SF novels; *THE DEMOLISHED MAN* by Alfred Bester and *THE MAN WHO SOLD THE MOON* by Robert A. Heinlein. The dust-jacket of the latter retrospectively claimed Clarke's three earlier titles as part of their ongoing series. When Bester's novel appeared in November it was accompanied by another American reprint, Judith Merrill's *SHADOW ON THE HEARTH*, a moving first novel telling of the effects of a nuclear holocaust from the viewpoint of an ordinary woman.

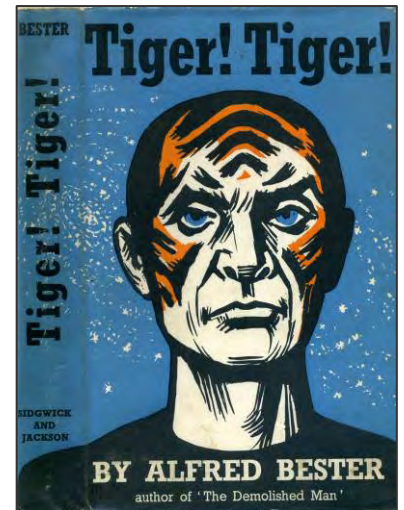
Mudge-Marriott again, with beautiful colours though slightly lacking in imagination with this view of an oversize V2 rocket.



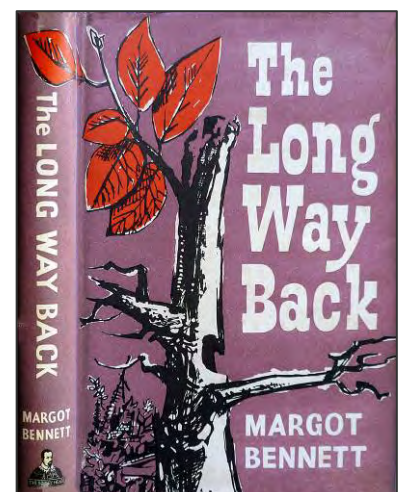
Gerard Quinn's painting is true to the novel and shows the 2-stage *Prometheus* on its launching rail.



Phil calls this one "arty"; I just think it's "nasty". Unsigned artist for S&J's half-hearted launch of Bester's magnificent novel



A 'mainstream' cover from the Bodley Head which cleverly avoids any mention of SF. Painting by James Boswell, scanned by John Eggeling.



April 1954 saw publication of Clarke's masterpiece CHILDHOOD'S END, with an accompanying title HOLE IN HEAVEN by F. Dubrez Fawcett. Astute fans would immediately have been alerted that the book represented a new departure because the attractive full-colour artwork that had hitherto characterised the series was replaced by an 'arty' design in just two colours. Sure enough, the inside flap announced: 'this book is the first of a series of Science Fiction novels by British writers edited by Angus Wilson'.

Wilson was a famous academic with a genuine predilection and liking for science fiction, who had commendably been doing considerable behind the scenes proselytizing for science fiction in literary circles. In his 'Editor's Note' introducing his first selection, Wilson argued that for all its many virtues, the chief fault that prevented SF gaining serious literary recognition was that most of its writers neglected the human condition and afflicted readers with poor characterisation and dialogue—with which few would argue!

Fawcett's novel, telling of a man whose body is 'possessed' by an extra-dimensional alien, 'Nemo', was presented as happily meeting this more exacting 'good human interest' criteria. Wilson was presumably unaware that Fawcett was one of the most prolific hack writers of gangster sleaze, churning out novels under a slew of pseudonyms such as 'Ben Sarto' and 'Hank Spencer' for the mushroom brigade. He or his publishers may have found out soon afterwards though, which might account for the fact that no more SF novels with his recommendation ever appeared!

Instead, Sidgwick and Jackson's next SF release in May was Robert Heinlein's famous American collection, THE GREEN HILLS OF EARTH, happily re-instating a beautiful full colour dust-jacket (by Gerard Quinn). It was followed in September by Heinlein's noted juvenile novel, STARMAN JONES. October saw a sparkling first collection of short stories by Arthur C. Clarke, EXPEDITION TO EARTH, which Clarke generously dedicated to his friend and first editorial mentor, Walter Gillings. Then there was a long hiatus and 1955 saw only a single title in October: Judith Merrill's splendidly hefty collection BEYOND THE BARRIERS OF SPACE AND TIME. A betraying sign that the publisher was about to withdraw (albeit temporarily) from the SF field was the book's dire two-colour billboard text cover. A final American novel, Alfred Bester's dynamic TIGER! TIGER! did not appear until June 1956.

The Bodley Head (1953); 11 titles

This venerable publisher entered the fray by labelling their selections as 'The Bodley Head Science Fiction Club', complete with spaceship logo. They opened in February with ADVENTURES IN TOMORROW and their list was dominated by reprints of recent American books with three more anthologies in the first year, and in November their first novel, Wilson Tucker's minor classic THE LONG LOUD SILENCE. In the UK Tucker was better known for his detective novels but the quality of his SF novel was recognised when the British Publisher's Guild issued it in a simultaneous paperback edition.

1954 brought only a single 'Science Fiction Club' title, another Kendall Foster Crossen-edited anthology, FUTURE TENSE (April). Evidently the Bodley Head's enthusiasm for SF was waning, because their next two SF titles, Bertrand Russell's original collection NIGHTMARES OF EMINENT PERSONS (May) and THE LONG WAY BACK, an original British novel by the noted mystery novelist and literary critic Margot Bennett, were published as mainstream titles with obligatory arty dust jackets.

Whilst Russell's collection was admittedly more properly fantasy—as had been his earlier 1953 collection SATAN IN THE SUBURBS—the fact that Bennett's fine novel was SF was demonstrated when it was subsequently selected for reprinting in Sidgwick and Jackson's Science Fiction Book Club, which made a nonsense of the publisher's caution. Its sale may have nudged Bodley Head into resuming their 'Science Fiction Club' imprint, as they issued another four books between March and May, 1955.

CATEGORY PHOENIX contained three stories but the remaining three 'Club' titles were all novels: Steve Frazee's THE SKY BLOCK was a US reprint, but ANGELO'S MOON was a British original, an ambitious if not entirely successful first SF novel by Alec Brown. The last title was another US reprint, HELLFLOWER by George O. Smith, which scarcely deserved its original printing in *Startling Stories*, much less reprinting in UK hardcover. Bodley Head thereafter folded their Science Fiction Club, which had not really brought anything innovative.

Michael Joseph (1953); 10+ titles

While some hardcover outfits had thrown caution to the winds and 'came out' as unashamed purveyors of science fiction, others could not quite bring themselves to overcome their long-ingrained wish to avoid such declarations. And, considering the opprobrium for the genre being generated by the low-class paperback publishers such as John Spencer, Curtis Warren and Gannet Press, this was scarcely to be wondered at! But they sensed there was a *market* for science fiction, so they were on the horns of a dilemma.

The august firm of Michael Joseph had been enjoying great success with John Wyndham's masterly novels THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS (1951) and THE KRAKEN WAKES (1953). They had successfully marketed them as 'mainstream' novels, whilst their blurb writers—faced with the inescapable fact that they *were* science fiction, had successfully disguised them by claiming them as a 'modified' form of science fiction, something that was somehow different and better than what was generally known, instead of admitting that they were simply *very good* science fiction novels, as distinct from very bad ones!

Given the prevailing publishing climate, the ploy was quite understandable, and one that Wyndham himself—having successfully shed his earlier SF-identified John Beynon (Harris) persona and 'reinvented' himself—was anxious to maintain. As a true literary craftsman, he was not happy to be identified with some of his lesser contemporaries—again, understandably.

But in 1953 Michael Joseph bit the bullet and launched a distinctive SF series in an ingenious manner. The jackets of the books proclaimed them to be 'Novels of Tomorrow' and what was more, they were 'under the general Editorship of Clemence Dane', a respected literary figure. The jackets eschewed the 'Technicolor film poster' look of their rivals but were instead 'tasteful' two colour 'billboard' covers with a few arty graphics. Their books were higher priced than most, at 9/6, possibly indicating that they paid higher advances for their superior material. It was not just a cynical ploy, but a determined and sincere attempt to advance British SF publishing.

Top American authors such as C. M. Kornbluth (THE MINDWORM, 1955), Robert Shekley and William Tenn appeared alongside British talent like John Boland, Arthur Sellings (Arthur Lay), and most notably John Christopher (Sam Youd). Christopher's first SF book, THE 22ND CENTURY had appeared from Grayson and Grayson in 1954, but Michael Joseph secured his follow up novel YEAR OF THE COMET (1955).

John Christopher then shot to international fame and fortune with his next Joseph title, *THE DEATH OF GRASS* (1956), which many hailed as reading like John Wyndham — only better! Wyndham himself continued to write his masterly bestsellers, such as *THE CHRYSALIDS* (1955) and whilst his books were integrated into the ‘Novels of Tomorrow’ series by being advertised as part of it on many of the other books’ jackets (the blurbs of which by now were incautiously referring to some of their authors as science fiction writers) this label was conspicuously *missing* from Wyndham’s own books.

Michael Joseph’s commendable series was successful enough to outlast all of its competitors, running through to 1957, when it was quietly dropped. But they successfully continued to publish John Wyndham’s new novels on their own merits throughout the 1960s.

Heinemann (1954); 16 titles

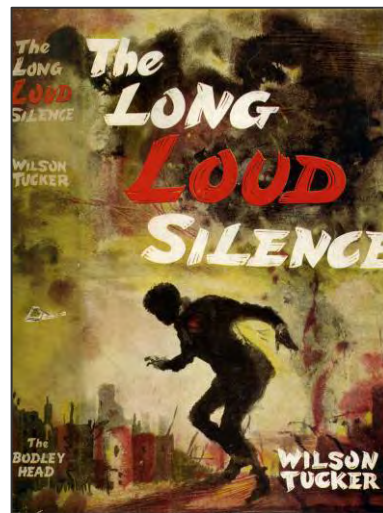
Apart from regular H. G. Wells reprints Heinemann’s most notable previous titles included the ‘Antigeos’ series by Paul Capon. He was better known as a detective novelist, but had switched genres with some panache, his first SF novel *THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SUN* (1948) having been serialised on radio by the BBC, with a sequel, *THE OTHER HALF OF THE PLANET* (1952).

But suddenly, in November 1954—when the hardcover SF boom was already starting to wane—they introduced a bold ‘Planet Saturn’ logo with the legend ‘Heinemann Science Fiction’, and promoted their books as part of a new SF series. The inside back flap of the attractive full-colour jackets by Mudge-Marriott (poached from Grayson & Grayson) set out their admirable manifesto:

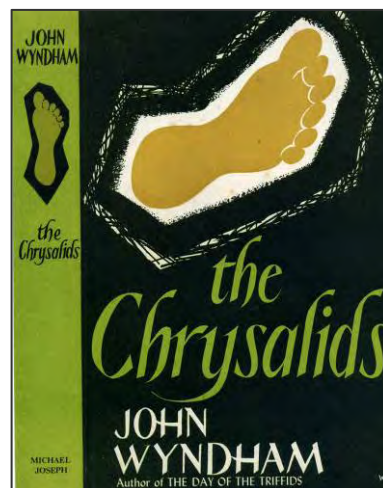
‘Science fiction has a long and mixed history. It has had one great master in Wells and a number of competent practitioners. Today it exists at many levels—a vehicle of pure escape and relaxation, of creative reverie, of social comment and reflection, of alert scientific speculation, and of excellent entertainment. It is as well written as any prose produced today. The purpose of this series is to present novels and short stories which will combine some or all of these qualities at a level thoroughly acceptable to any reader of good fiction. We can be certain of one thing about the future: it will be more various, more surprising, than the past has ever been. To that future science fiction presents a key.’

They opened their SF programme with the concluding part of Capon’s ‘Antigeos’ trilogy, *DOWN TO EARTH*, the dust-jacket of which announced three forthcoming titles, and surprisingly two were original British novels: *UTOPIA 239* by Rex Gordon and *DARK DOMINION* by David Duncan. Duncan was already an experienced novelist who had published some ‘borderline’ SF such as *THE SHADE OF TIME* (1948), issued as a detective thriller. ‘Gordon’ too was already a published author under his real name of S. B. Hough.

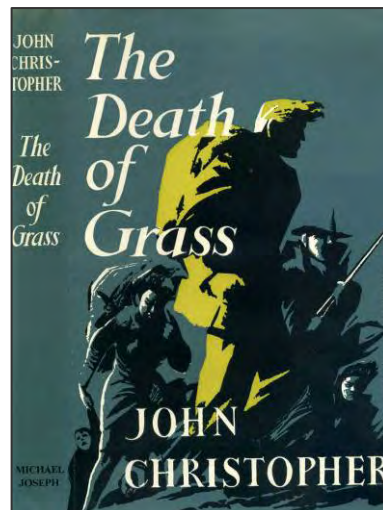
Heinemann followed this promising opening with a string of excellently varied American reprints: *BRING THE JUBILEE* by Ward Moore; *THE SPACE MERCHANTS* by Pohl and Kornbluth; and *LEST DARKNESS FALL* by L. Sprague de Camp. The publisher showed considerable enterprise by doing the first hardcover version of Poul Anderson’s minor classic *BRAINWAVE* (November, 1955) which made their edition an instant collectable. Another top-class US writer Clifford Simak appeared in January 1956 with *TIME AND AGAIN*, a masterly time travel story originally serialised in *Galaxy*. Sadly, it was the last in their labelled SF series which Heinemann abandoned thereafter, although they later published three further SF novels by Duncan, Capon and Gordon. *World’s Work*, part of the



A ‘distinctive’ series but the publisher lost his nerve and omitted any mention of science fiction on this dramatic cover, effectively rendered by David Walsh.



An effective illustration which captures the substance of what the book is about, again without mentioning ‘science fiction’. Artwork by Brian Wildsmith



Once again, to all intents and purposes an entirely ‘mainstream’ novel. Artwork by Trevor Denning.



Nothing coy about this wonderfully ‘fifties’ cover – though that’s the Mojave desert out there, not the Moon. Cover by Mudge-Marriott.

Heinemann group, also ran their 'Master Science Fiction Series' from May 1953, with four of John Russell Fearn's 'Golden Amazon' novels and three American reprints: DAVID STARR, SPACE RANGER and LUCKY STAR AND THE PIRATES OF THE ASTEROIDS by 'Paul French' (Isaac Asimov) and SEETEE SHOCK (Jack Williamson).

Even as the labelled SF series was breathing its last, Heinemann published a 241-page anthology of 21 short stories at the hefty price of 15/-. This was A.D. 2500, billed on the perfectly ghastly two-colour arty cover (surprisingly by Mudge-Marriott, but evidently 'painted' under instructions) as 'The twenty-one prize-winning short stories in the *Observer* Competition 1954.' It was introduced by Angus Wilson, who presumably had also judged the newspaper's competition. This had invited its readers to submit stories that envisaged life one thousand years hence.

In his long and earnest introduction, Wilson 'banged on' about the deficiencies of most SF genre authors in writing about 'the human condition' and creating believable characters and good characterization, etc, etc. All valid points, no doubt, but A.D.2500 was trumpeted as solving these deficiencies, and was "a collection of science fiction short stories by writers untouched by the stock conventions of the genre," which Wilson adjudged as "refreshing. It should convince many a superior reader that science fiction can be serious literature." Needless to say, the book—and its authors—sank without trace, apart from two writers who *had* been touched by the conventions of SF, namely Brian Aldiss and Arthur Sellings! - ph

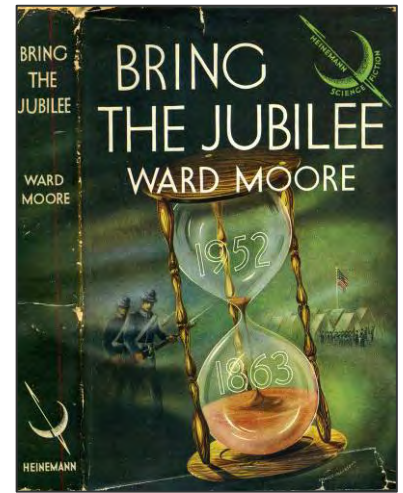
Rich & Cowan (1955); 9 titles

In March 1955 they launched their own SF-labeled series with a spaceship logo on the spine, beginning with SEEDS OF LIFE by the veteran American SF writer John Taine (E. T. Bell). This was followed by another American import of somewhat lesser standard, THE MAN WITH ABSOLUTE MOTION by 'Silas Water' (Noel Loomis) with a very colourful but atypically vague cover by Ron Turner.

Thereafter, Rich & Cowan appeared to use an admirable policy of issuing a British novel alongside each American import. Their next two titles were headed by Philip K. Dick's collection A HANDFUL OF DARKNESS, and an 'original' British title SCREAM FROM OUTER SPACE, a first novel by John Robert Haynes, a would-be space epic that harked back to the bad old days of Flash Gordon. Next was a new edition of Alfred Gordon Bennett's 1939 giant-ant classic THE DEMIGODS (with a striking cover by Eisner, who had done many atmospheric covers for their detective line) and John Taine's last novel, G.O.G. 666, with another fine Eisner cover. November 1955 saw just a single original British novel THE MAN WITH ONLY ONE HEAD by Densil Neve Barr, an imaginative take on the 'last fertile man' theme. Thereafter Rich & Cowan paused to take stock.

The long delay until their final two titles in June 1956, suggests that they had decided to end their SF line and were simply using the last two novels in their inventory. This was a great pity as the pair were of a good standard: Philip K. Dick's intriguing WORLD OF CHANCE, and a British original by S. Makepeace Lott, a first SF novel by an established detective author. His ESCAPE TO VENUS was a very dense and ambitious dystopian novel involving a colony on Venus, which strove a little too hard to be literate.

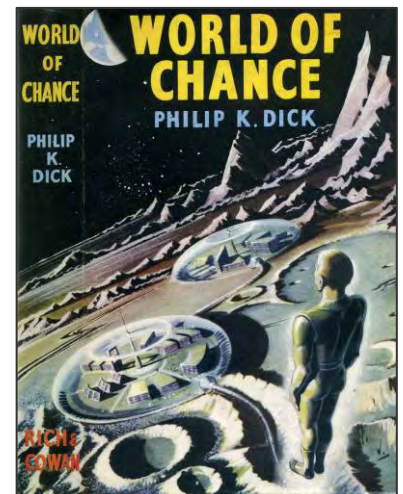
Evocative, eye-catching, accurate; definitely one of Mudge-Marriott's best efforts.



No wonder the libraries were appalled, with this truly dreadful cover by someone called 'Haworth'. Even a 'juvenile' title deserves better!



Very little to do with the story, but a fine lunar colony from Ley Kenyon.



While this Mudge-Marriott cover is acceptable, it hardly compares with the superb Mel Hunter painting on the American edition.



Eyre & Spottiswoode; 6 titles

This publisher produced only six titles in the period, most of them very good ones indeed, but so widely spaced they made little impact. Their initial entry was a van Vogt collection, *DESTINATION: UNIVERSE* in May 1953, complete with a simple but eye-catching spaceship cover that left no doubt to its genre origins, and a rather pretentious blurb. But the publisher did not follow it up until August 1954 when the British original novel *SATELLITE E ONE* by Jeffery Lloyd Castle appeared, with a rather better space cover showing the then-popular conception of a wheel-shaped space station. The author was later identified as an aircraft designer, and a member of the B.I.S. The publisher billed it as “scientific fiction” and it was a sincere, if plodding, attempt to fuse human interest and the conquest of space.

Then came a long hiatus, punctuated only by the first UK publication of the American Jack Finney’s *THE BODY SNATCHERS* in September 1955, although this was presented as a ‘fantastic thriller’.

Several more months passed, and then the publisher really pushed out the SF boat with a large (476 pages) handsome volume, *STORIES FOR TOMORROW*, edited by William Sloane, an anthology with 22 of the original 29 American stories. It was copyrighted 1955, but released in January 1956. The stories were generally excellent but the book was grossly overpriced at 18/-. This led to its being remaindered and copies can still be found to this day as a result. It was quickly followed in March by a splendid Eric Frank Russell collection, *DEEP SPACE*, with an attractive jacket shamelessly pirating Heineman’s recently discontinued ‘Saturn’ SF logo with a cover by their former artist E. B. Mudge-Marriott.

But disastrous sales of the overpriced *STORIES FOR TOMORROW* appeared to kill off this promising line, although the publisher issued a last hurrah in November 1956 with the ambitious *SOMETIME, NEVER*, a collection of ‘Tales of Imagination’ featuring three original novelettes by the distinguished trio of William Golding, John Wyndham, and Mervyn Peake.

The Boom is over...

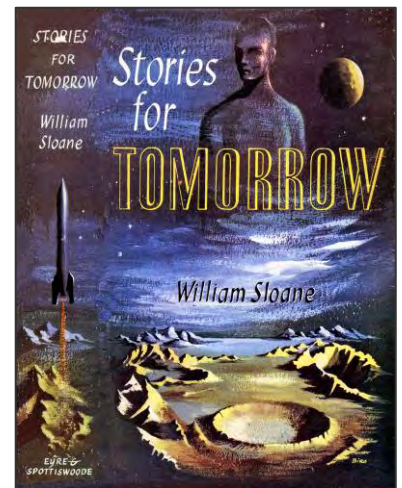
How quickly fashions change. Ted Carnell headed his March 1955 editorial ‘Graduation Day’ and went on to say that the destiny of SF was ‘no longer in the hands of the magazine authors and editors who shaped its formative years – High School is over and it has now entered the professional academy of the reputable publishing houses’.

Yet by the December issue he had to admit that ‘the Autumn announcements from most of the London publishers reveals a considerable change of policy in the presentation of science fiction in hard covers..... Let us face the fact that the hardcover SF novel as popularised in Great Britain two years ago when the first flush of enthusiasm for reprinting the American novel was at its height, didn’t pay sufficient dividends’

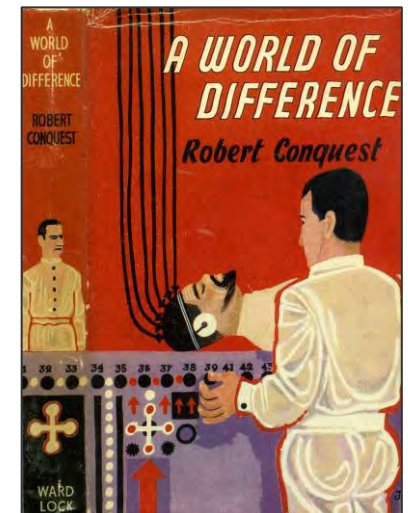
Some 140 hardcover titles had appeared from these ‘top ten’ publishers, all within less than five years, and other firms had dabbled in the market with some excellent titles. Considering the general high quality of the books produced during this period it’s difficult to pinpoint why the ‘boom’ came to such a sudden end.

It must have been a combination of several complex factors. Perhaps it was the lingering opprobrium against SF that had been generated by the ‘mushroom’ paperbacks, although these had peaked by 1953 and all but died out by 1955? Or had their output, by some perverse ‘reverse logic’ actually *sustained* the better SF hardcovers, and their

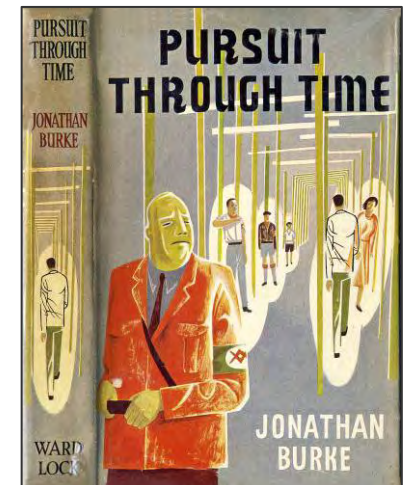
Sloane was more of an occult writer but this was a fine collection though he somewhat egotistically included a story of his own. The cover is an uninspired effort from ‘Biro’.



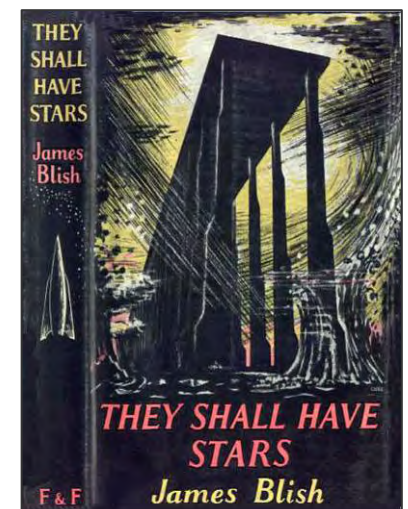
‘Aaaargh!’ might have been the author’s reaction when he saw this truly dreadful cover by ‘J.S.’ the deservedly anonymous artist employed by Ward Lock.



Another cover from ‘J.S.’ which you either like or hate; I think it quite nicely captures the theme of the novel.



Faber were the ‘class’ act, and they never withdrew from SF. This dramatic (though inaccurate) 1956 cover was the work of Peter Curl



disappearance caused a slump in sales? It seems unlikely. Quite possibly part of the answer lay in the gradual decline in the use of circulating libraries, which for many years had been the main purchasers of hardcover genre fiction. These were situated throughout the country, not only in big chains like Boots' famous Circulating Library, but in many High Street newsagents and small shops. With the easing of paper rationing and the vast increase in respectable paperback fiction becoming available from bookshops and other outlets, people ceased to use these libraries.

Another possible reason might have been the preponderance of American anthologies, all of them very much alike and with the same coterie of authors. It was too much of a good thing. The opportunity to encourage the better British authors to raise their game was mostly missed.

A more prosaic explanation is that publishers may simply have found their SF lines did not sell as well as their other genres staples: detective stories and westerns. SF publishing involved more trouble and expense – the need to employ outside editors and consultants to ensure quality, specialist cover artists, and possibly higher rates to reflect the fact that two lots of agent's fees had to be met for American material. If all these extra cost factors were not reflected in extra sales over and above their other genre products...then the game simply wasn't worth the candle!

But while appearing to end in failure the boom actually sowed the seeds from which a vigorous British SF publishing industry was to spring up, led by Faber and new-entrant Gollancz with others such as Dobson and Herbert Jenkins. Within a dozen years a majority of titles issued would be very successfully reprinted in paperback, as part of a steady presentation of SF by all major publishers that has continued to this day.

OTHER PUBLISHERS

Cassell & Company had been issuing the odd fantasy title since the 1940s. They entered the SF-label arena with three top-class American anthologies: *Great Stories of Science Fiction* edited by Murray Leinster (1953), *Looking Forward* edited by Milton Lesser (1954) and *Startling Stories* edited by Samuel Mines (1955).

Curtis Warren and **Panther** the 'pocketbook' firms began issuing their genre novels in 1952 – including their SF line – simultaneously in both paperback and hardcover editions. Curtis Warren's 'Lion Library' eventually issued over 50 hardcover titles while the 'Panther Library' hardcover SF series eventually ran to an impressive three dozen titles. It only came to an end in 1954 when Panther reverted to being a paperback publisher, and as a reprint operation they stopped buying new genre fiction, including science fiction.

Hodder & Stoughton were never really part of the 'SF boom'. Beginning in 1953 they published only one author, 'Charles Eric Maine', and only identified their books as stories "of the very near future". Hodder eschewed colourful illustrative dust-jackets for these novels, using arty two-colour graphic designs. Surprisingly, their strategy was very successful and because of this they continued to publish new SF books by 'Maine' well into the 1960s.

Robert Hale had published Lewis Sowden's *Tomorrow's Comet* in May 1951, an SF novel about the threatened destruction of the Earth, but this had been carefully labelled as 'A Tale of Our Own Times'. In 1954 they threw caution to the winds with spaceship dust-jackets and the bold label 'A Modern Science Fiction Selection'. Their selections were first-class: *West of the Sun* by Edgar Pangborn, and in 1955 *Planet of the Dreamers* by John D. MacDonald and *Mission of Gravity* by Hal Clement.

Ward Lock was an old-established British publisher who, in the immediate post-war years, had specialised in hardcover editions of popular "genre" novels – westerns, romances, and crime fiction. Until 1954, they had avoided science fiction, although a couple of their crime thrillers had borderline SF elements. Rather than reprinting American SF titles Ward Lock decided to stick to home-grown writers and issued nine novels, with Jonathan Burke's *PURSUIT THROUGH TIME* (January 1956) concluding the series.

Max Reinhardt were a late entry; they did everything right: attractive Mudge-Marriott dust jackets, their own distinctive SF logo and two superb American titles: *Shadows in the Sun* by Chad Oliver (October 1955) and *Born of Man and Woman* by Richard Matheson. But the line did not continue. A third title was announced, *A Woman's World* edited by Helen Winnick, but in more of than 50 years of collecting I have never seen this anthology—nor does it seem to have been recorded anywhere.

Faber & Faber published *Best SF* in 1955, edited by Bruce Montgomery (under his famous detective-novel pseudonym of 'Edmund Crispin') the first in a series of annual anthologies which would run for over ten years. Faber wisely decided to simply go their own way and as a result they were able to attract some of the best emerging British writers in the late fifties who, whilst always writing within the SF genre, sought to improve upon it and would continue their careers in the decades that followed. The most important such writer was Brian W. Aldiss, whose first collection *SPACE, TIME AND NATHANIEL* came from Faber in 1957. Aldiss was preceded on the list in 1956 by the American writer James Blish with *EARTHMAN COME HOME & THEY SHALL HAVE STARS*. - ph

[Brian Aldiss has an instructive account of his early dealings with Faber and their genuine affection for science fiction in his book, *BURY MY HEART AT W.H. SMITH'S* – PW]

Passing mention should be paid of how the sudden boom in SF attracted the attention of established authors from outside the genre, who were tempted to 'get in on the act'. The most notable of these was Dennis Wheatley, who had been a bestseller thriller writer for Hutchinson since the 1930s. Although best known for his supernatural horror novels such as *THE DEVIL RIDES OUT* (1935), many of his titles actually blurred into science fiction, such as *THEY FOUND ATLANTIS* (1937) and *SIXTY DAYS TO LIVE* (1939). But all of his SF and weird novels had been confined to Earth, and it was not until August 1952 that he ventured into outer space with *STAR OF ILL-OMEN*.

The naïve blurb writer proclaimed the book as "another of those fine feats of imagination, rivalling the stories of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells" i.e. code-speak for "this is SF but we can't bring ourselves to say so in case it puts you off!" The book was SF, and of the most blatant kind. The author had evidently hastily swotted up on popular astronomy and the many 'revelatory' so-called non-fiction books about Flying Saucers, especially Frank Scully's *BEHIND THE FLYING SAUCERS* (1950).

The result was ludicrous. Amongst Wheatley's 'fine feats of imagination' was the idea that Martians would have evolved to be three times bigger than human beings because their planet's gravity was only a third of Earth's! The blurb went on to reveal that the book dealt "with the greatest mystery of our age—and one for which the world's most brilliant scientists have so far failed to offer any concrete explanation—the appearance, origin and purpose of the Flying Saucers." The less said about this book the better! -

On 13th September I heard from Phil Harbottle that Ted Tubb had died a few days earlier. It was not entirely unexpected because I knew he'd been ill for some time, and he was after all nearly 91. However, he did at least see my 'Tram Driver' piece in the last issue (which he liked), and I was glad that I'd sent him an advance copy of this little 'tribute' from Charles Platt (written, remember, in July). Charles also wrote; "Ted has been underrated because he was always so modest. Others have been overrated because they have been so arrogant. A sad fact of life. In addition, Ted's actual writing is unassuming and unpretentious, like Barry Bayley's. People who shout louder get more attention, even when the shouting is within the context of a short story." Cartoon by Jim Barker from WITH STARS IN MY EYES; Photo of Ted auctioning at *Chessmancon* by Mike Meara.

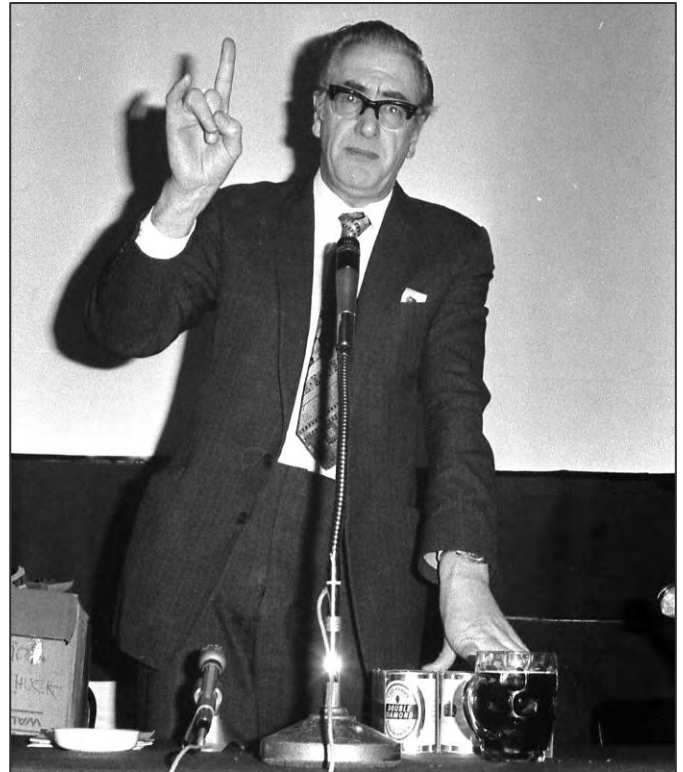
My Debt to Ted

by Charles Platt

When Peter asked me to contribute something about Ted Tubb, I thought I would have a lot to say. Now, I'm not so sure; because my feelings are very simple. I enjoyed Ted's fiction, and I loved listening to him speak. He associated me with the so-called new wave, and therefore seemed sceptical when I told him that I was a fan of his work. But it was always fluent, always fun and full of drama, and always satisfying.

The first time I saw Ted in person was at my first Eastercon. This was an utterly traumatic event for me, because I had expected a conventional conference format, with serious presentations and discussions. Instead I saw Ted Tubb and Ken Bulmer auctioning old fanzines, and in the evening was the "hum and sway" event, where Ted presided over the simulated sacrifice of an alleged virgin in front of a drunken audience, followed by her subsequent resuscitation—at least, I think that's how it went. The event was ridiculous, but Ted's verbal cadences were amazing. I was still a teenager and tended to be tongue-tied in any attempt at public speaking. I also had difficulty writing with a fluent, compelling style. This was the area in which Ted excelled, and as I listened to him, I realized that despite his lack of pretensions, he could do something that I couldn't do, and might never be able to do.

Shortly before I emigrated from England in 1970, I attended a Brighton arts festival at which various writers, who were mostly associated with *New Worlds* and *Ambit*, made



statements about their work. I was up on the stage with 15 or 20 others, and was horribly embarrassed, because I felt like an imposter. My primary work for *New Worlds* had been as its designer. My one novel, at that time, was a heavy-handed satire. Ted had not been invited to participate with the rest of us, and was down in the audience. This was a professional insult which I thought was inexcusable.

For more than an hour he listened to a long succession of rather pretentious claims from literateurs such as Disch and Brunner, until finally he couldn't stand it any longer. He stood up, strode to the stage, seized the microphone, and started making a fairly compelling case for traditional storytelling values. Somewhere in his monologue he mentioned the minimalist sculpture in the lobby outside the auditorium, and as I recall, referred to it as "bloody rubbish". He was right; it was bloody rubbish. But Brian Aldiss interceded, requesting that the event should not degenerate into yet another conflict between proponents of the old and the new, and his tone was so reasonable, Ted gave up and returned to his seat. In retrospect, I wish I had taken advantage of the moment to stand up and defend him, but I felt too intimidated.

I never saw Ted intimidated by anything or anyone. He was always himself, always genuine, always compelling, and even though I haven't seen him in almost 30 years, the cadences of his speaking voice are still fresh in my memory. He may find this hard to believe, but his command of language was a significant influence on me, and I'm glad to have this late opportunity to thank him for that. //



The Melting Pot

We don't usually start off with something as hard and indigestible as these two....

But you know Steve Stiles, a man of good taste. Wonder what he'll cook-up for next time? Irresistible editorial interjections in *italics* and [brackets] in the usual way.



This is *not* how I envisioned "an early retirement."

Fan-artists, do please let me have your interpretations of the theme!

"Relapse still has the capability of wasting a day for me when it arrives" – Bob Parkinson, LoC

[I visited Ted Tubb several times in the last few years and spent hours talking, though I could never get him to write anything about himself – what he did in the War, for example, remains a mystery. And now he's left us. As Phil Harbottle titled his obituary, 'A giant passes...' Ted seemed to enjoy the stories about old times we've printed in *Relapse*, though he frankly confessed that his memory was not what it was. This is his last LoC, written on 28th June.]

Ted Tubb,
London

Dear Peter,

Belated thanks for *Relapse 17* – belated because though it arrived last month I've been tied up with Hospital visits which means long waited for transportation, appointments, returns. Much time to spend, reading but not the best place to do and enjoy it. Personally I get very depressed and needed cheering up and *Relapse* did the job.

I liked your editorial – it set the mood and Phil Harbottle emphasised it. 'Come and meet the Wife' twanged more of the old memories. While I must have seen the lady in question I can't remember what she looked like. I remember Bill Temple's comment when he asked Arthur C. Clarke about how they had met, "She just took to me", Arthur said. "She didn't know me from Adam and had no idea I wasn't on the poverty level." To which Bill replied, "you were living in a 5-star hotel and walked around with an expensive Licar around your neck and you want me to believe she didn't spot you had to be far from the poverty line?"

Arthur C. Clarke had made a mistake and later paid for it. But there was something else which bothered me – Arthur was the only man I ever met who carried a briefcase full of clippings around with him. If he caught me alone, in the White Horse, for example, he would unload his case and display the clippings which were all about him – books he had sold, comments from critics – details as to his movements, etc. As if he was trying to impress me or something.

A mystery – there was no need for him to want my admiration. I held him in respect and envied his achievements. Later, I figured he might have been using me for practice – the papers he carried could have been to advertise himself to potential markets. Not that it matters now.

But while on the subject of oddities I can't forget a habit of John Brunner which always annoyed me. John had a most endearing manner, talked well and interestingly on a wide variety of subjects and, whenever he got bored or lacked an audience he would pick on someone like me and act the very close intimate.

Until, that is, someone else entered the room. A publisher, an editor, a critic, anyone who could be of use to aid John in his ambitions. When they did John would abruptly leave the person life he was talking to in order to cuddle up to the newcomers. I've even known him when in the middle of signing a book for a fan, abruptly to hand it back and leave without a word.

Anyway, my back is killing me, I've to get this to a post box, my typing is all to hell, but thanks again for *Relapse 17* and the pleasure it's given me.

All the best, as ever.

Syd Bounds, John Birchby, Phil Harbottle and Ted share a mellow moment at the London Book Fair, 2002. Photo from Phil.



Bob Parkinson
bobparkinson@ntlworld.com



Bob's 'official' photo, from his website.

Hi Peter,

This is something that I meant to do about the time I received the last *Relapse*, and then the Future got in the way (in the form of doing some design work for a future project) and the Past got put aside once again. Except that future projects these days seem to involve re-inventing the past. I even have a film crew interested in doing a documentary on the early days of the BIS, so I am hanging on to my copies of *Relapse* because some of it is relevant. I even found out where 88 Grays Inn Road is (although this was triggered by the fact that I needed to go from the British Library down to meet a friend in Holborn and had to pass by – but I have photos now).

I don't have much to add about the 1950s, but I was very interested in Sam Youd's article and the stuff about Joy Gresham. This was another (unexpected) piece to the jigsaw puzzle. While I was researching INTERPLANETARY I had known that there had been a meeting in Oxford about 1954 between Arthur Clarke and C. S. Lewis – seconded on Clarke's side by his friend Val Cleaver and on Lewis' by J. R. R. Tolkien. This is a bit of – I was going to say BIS "mythology" but it really happened; Lewis having dismissed 'Interplanetary Societies' as the work of the devil in his OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET trilogy. Anyway, in the course of my research I discovered that the go-between had been Joy Gresham who I already knew about from the Lewis connection (*Shadowlands* and all that) who had known Arthur before she knew Lewis. I assumed that the connection was Kings College where they had both been after the War. I also assumed that only people (nerds) like myself who knew about ACC and the Interplanetary Society and Lewis, etc, would find this as fascinating as I did, and so the incident only has a line or so in INTERPLANETARY.

What I had not realised was that the connection was fandom and the White Horse. (Incidentally, I also gather that what was instrumental in getting C. S. Lewis to meet up with Arthur was the publication of CHILDHOOD'S END – which I guess was more in line with Lewis' predilection for philosophical rather than 'hard' SF.) It looks like this is another thread, like that for Leslie Johnson, which – once tugged – will go on and on.

I'm also getting the feeling that London fandom (possibly through Arthur and Kings) was actually very well "connected" at the time, beyond the strictly SF world. When we talk about SF living in a ghetto, I get the feeling that in those days it wasn't as far excluded from the rest of the world (certainly in London) as later. This is going to have to be a very short LoC this time, but *Relapse* still has the capability of wasting a day for me when it arrives. Keep it up!

[Thanks Bob. By chance something new came in about Les Johnson, which might just fit in here....]

Bob

Wardzinski
wardzinski@hotmail.co.uk

Dear Peter,

Thanks for *Relapse 17* – just my kind of magazine. Tony Glynn talks in his letter about L. J. Johnson's efforts to set up a fan group in Liverpool. By some incredible coincidence, just a few days after reading his letter about Johnson's appeal in *Astounding* in 1931, I happened to be thumbing through a 1932 copy of *Wonder Stories* and found a flier slipped in from the very same L. J. Johnson. Here is a scan of the professionally printed sheet. A keen and pioneering fan indeed!

[A great find, Bob! Look at that quaint phrasing... but of course in 1932 Les Johnson was only eighteen years old!]

Jim Linwood
JLinwood@aol.com



Jim at Cytricon V, 2008. Photo by Mike Meara.

Hi Peter,

Relapse #17 sent me back to my childhood when I read Sam Youd (as John Christopher) and John Burke's novels and stories with pleasure. It was great to see them writing here although *Corflu Cobalt* attendees must take issue with Sam for referring to his home town, Winchester, as "ugly".

Phil Harbottle's piece on the post-war publishing boom nicely complemented my recent reading of Steve Holland's 'The Trials of Hank Janson'. Stephen D. Frances comes across as an even more intriguing character than his creation, Hank Janson. He was born in 1917, brought up in a South London slum, left school at 14, joined the Communist Party and was later expelled for questioning the party's devious role in the Spanish Civil War. Frances was first arrested in 1932 opposing a Mosely rally in Trafalgar Square by police sympathetic to the Blackshirts. During the war he was a conscientious objector writing for *Peace News* and founding Pendulum Publications, the company which published the first issues of *New Worlds*.

On the launching of *New Worlds* Holland writes: "Carnell was on demob leave when he met Frank Edward Arnold, a journalist who was also a long-standing science fiction fan and occasional writer, well-known in science fiction circles. Arnold had just sold a collection of stories to Pendulum and informed Carnell that Frances was interested in launching a science fiction magazine with Arnold as editor. Arnold, however, insisted that here was an opportunity for Carnell to re-launch his pre-war fan magazine on a professional basis." Carnell recalled "I spent an entire afternoon telling [Pendulum] how impossible it would be for them to produce a regular science fiction magazine – shortage of paper, shortage of authors, difficulties of distribution, lack of artists – and, in short, that they were raving mad! The outcome of this meeting was that I was given 100% control in producing the first professional issue of *New Worlds*!"

TO THE READER OF THIS MAGAZINE.



DON'T you think it would be a good idea to meet some of the other fellows who are interested in Science, Fiction, Wonder Stories, Science v Mechanics, etc., etc., so that you could talk about the stories, exchange ideas and also back numbers of the magazines. If you do drop me a line at #46, Mill Lane, Old Swan, Liverpool.

I am interested in forming a Club for these purposes, and if I can get sufficient fellows to help me will do so.

L. J. JOHNSON.



Stephen
Frances,
photo from
website.

Holland: "The first issue appeared in April 1946 and was a flop, selling only 3,000 of its 15,000 print run. Still Frances was convinced that it would be a success, and went ahead with a second issue. Carnell took control of the cover illustration this time, and when the issue appeared in October it sold out. The first issue was stripped of its original, uninspiring cover by Bob Wilkin and reissued with a new one reusing the illustration from the second issue. It too sold out."

Being told by a distributor in 1946 that crime and gangster fiction plus sex were what really sold on the market, Frances wrote a 15,000-word thriller with a first-person narrative called 'When Dames Get Tough'. The hero needed an American name, "Hank" rhymed with "Yank" and "Janson" carried over the same sound – Hank Janson was born and was the "author" of over 300 books that followed, written by Frances and others including Mike Moorcock. In 1954, Frances, by then living in Spain, fell foul of the establishment witch-hunt in the 50s against "obscene" books but escaped imprisonment on a technicality saying, truthfully, that he hadn't written the Janson books – he'd actually dictated them into a dictaphone. According to Holland the paperback mushroom jungle boom ended because of printers' strikes and the lifting of import restrictions in 1959 allowing US paperbacks and magazines into the country.

Joe Patrizio refers to 'The Perfect Woman' which has similarities with Bill Temple's 'Four Sided Triangle'. It was a comedy play written in 1939 by Wallace Geoffrey and Basil Mitchell which was filmed by Two Cities in 1949 and produced as a BBC TV Sunday Night Theatre presentation in 1956 starring Brian Rix. The plot involves a scientist creating a synthetic woman, Olga, who is considered the 'perfect woman' because she will do anything she is told. The hero and his valet are hired to take Olga out for a night on the town but the scientist's niece decides to have some fun by posing as the android and they all end up in a hotel bridal suite. Although both stories first appeared in 1939, the similarities with Bill's novel are coincidental.

Incidentally, I was at the newly renovated Museum of London yesterday and came across a bell made by one Peter de Weston. He was a famous 14th century bell-maker who unfortunately died during the time of the Black Death. The exhibit was labelled "For whom the bell tolls".

Peter,

You mention how Ted Carnell might have financed the trip to *Cinvention* in 1949 and say "there's a suggestion in A WEALTH OF FABLE that the trip was financed by a fan-fund". That seems to be correct. I have a copy of the *Cinvention* Memory Book which includes the text of Carnell's speech to the convention in which he says:

"Before I get off the thanks, I would like to say, now, that I personally am grateful for the Big Pond Fund; which was at least sponsored by Forry Ackerman on my behalf, in the long run. Although it wasn't intended that I should come, to everybody who donated something to that fund I would like to say thank you. I would thank Forry Ackerman, also, for his support; and to Alfred C. Prime, Lloyd A. Eshbach, and all the people I'm constantly in touch by mail in a various number of ventures in Stf. Every one of them has contributed in some small part to my trip; and I deeply appreciate it."

The speech also makes clear that Wally Gillings was supposed to accompany him on the trip, although it's not apparent whether the fund was supposed to sponsor them jointly or whether Gillings was going to pay his own way. Carnell says: "Now while I'm discussing other people, I would really like to talk to you for a few minutes about Walter Gillings, who is undoubtedly the greatest Science-Fictionist in Great Britain. Walter should have been with me on this platform tonight, but when January came around and the tickets for the trip had to be booked, Walter was expecting to change his job from an editor back to Fleet Street, where he really belongs, and he held up on deciding whether to come. At last he took the job which was offered to him, and that cut off his time so he definitely couldn't come over with me."

It's a generally interesting speech about the state of SF in Britain in the late 1940s. I particularly like: "And as you know, we haven't a great many authors in Great Britain who can really write the right stuff. If my memory is correct, I think we only have about nine." There's a little test there for somebody...

[*Hmm, that was in 1949. So let's see, Russell, Harris, Clarke, Chandler, Temple, Fearn, maybe Syd Bounds, Francis Rayer, Maurice Hugi... nine was probably about right!*]

Dear Peter,

I have long admired the quick agile wit of Eric Frank Russell and never received the impression that his prose was now out of style. I know nothing of his private life, and I don't think it really matters, in assessing his vast body of work. He may have been ill mannered, misbehaved and thoroughly unhygienic. As long as these qualities did not hinder his imagination and inventiveness, then I can easily overlook them. Are we now inching painfully into John Brunner territory? I can well recall the transcendent bliss generated by SENTINELS OF SPACE ('The Star Watchers') in an early Ace double. And some of his shorter pieces caused equal bursts of ecstasy.

I met E. J. Carnell briefly and fleetingly. It would have been in the early or mid 60's. I guess he was touring the States. Sam Moskowitz brought him as a guest to a monthly ESFA (Eastern S.F. Association) meeting in New Jersey. Carnell recapitulated the status of British prozines. Unfortunately, he ran broadly into SaM's well-meaning compulsion to clarify every statement he uttered. "Magazine sales are not doing too well..." he'd offer, and then before he could elaborate, SaM would step in with: "Ted, tell us about..." So Carnell would obligingly comply, and manage to squeeze-out a stream of words before SaM would boldly venture: "And Ted, what about...?" On and on it proceeded, parrying and thrusting like a team of coordinated fencers. Despite this, Carnell was very gracious throughout his ordeal. This, mind you, was in the famed booming Moskowitz delivery, which caused unsecured windows to rattle and small animals to frantically dive for cover. Ironically, decades later throat cancer robbed him of his distinctive speech, replacing it with a tinny larynx speech amplifier.

Mark Plummer

[mark.fishlifter@g](mailto:mark.fishlifter@googlemail.com)

[ooglemail.com](mailto:mark.fishlifter@googlemail.com)



Young Mark at
Novacon-37.
Photo by PW

Mike

Deckinger

[mike2004@](mailto:mike2004@aol.com)

[aol.com](mailto:mike2004@aol.com)



Mike in 2008.
His photo

I fear Harry Harrison misremembers the Roger Corman/Ray Milland film which he calls 'The Invisible Man'. Neither Milland or Corman ever released such a title. Perhaps Harry is thinking of 'X-The Man with X Ray Eyes', a very creditable feature, which did offer some primitive human transparency effects. In his waning years Milland could not longer score a desirable leading-man role, and had to accept secondary parts.

Bob Silverberg
California

Peter,

Yes, a lot of this is before my time, but not really unfamiliar, because I acquired Norman Ashfield's file of *Futurian* and *Futurian War Digest* and became thoroughly well-versed in British fan personalities as a result. And then I spent a lot of time in London in and around the 1957 worldcon, was an overnight guest at Ted Carnell's place in Plumstead, got tipsy at the Globe in Hatton Gardens, went to Les Flood's bookshop, met people like Frank Arnold and Sam Youd (I note he has a Silverberg anecdote in this issue) and Bill Temple, etc., etc., etc. So I always read stuff about that era with interest. Youd notes that I wanted very much to go to the White Horse, but my recollection is that the gatherings had moved on to the Globe by that time – though of course I might very well have told Sam that I wanted to go to the White Horse, not knowing that things had changed.

I remember his picking up a cheque for five or six of us at some pub – the bill must have come to several pounds, at least. Of course he had made a lot of money out of DEATH OF GRASS but the gesture made him seem like an utter plutocrat to 21-year-old me

Dear Pete,

Another splendid issue of *Relapse*, I have to say, particularly the way you've persuaded Sam Youd and John Burke to contribute – interestingly enough, I've recently been cataloguing books by John Burke for the SFF collection; not only his early SF but the novelisation of the film *Privilege* starring Paul Jones ex-Manfred Mann; one of those films which I really cannot remember whether I've seen it or not. The Temple diaries are adding more to our knowledge of the period, and I'm looking forward to see how Phil Harbottle expands VULTURES OF THE VOID. Though I'm sad to see the letter from John Birchby and realise that there'll be no more Tales from the White Horse from him.

Where to start for comment? Well, it's all so good that there's little to focus on in a way, but I was probably most fascinated by the piece on Ted Tubb, who has always interested me. I misread the last sentence in the left-hand column on p. 27 at first, so let's look at it again: "... since turning eighty ten years ago he has had over fifty books published in the US and UK ..." That's pretty astonishing. Not "he has had over fifty books" but *over* fifty books in the last ten years. I went through a phase of reading Ted Tubb some time back, and never felt disappointed in anything.

I probably like his work more than I would have when I was younger, as I can see the professionalism and care in it, and appreciate the rather grim atmosphere about a lot of it. I gather that he once wrote the entirety of an issue of *Authentic*—you have to admire someone like that. I must track it down and read it. I suspect there is some very good stuff in it. (As there often was: *Authentic* was not at all a bad magazine; I prefer it to several American magazines of the period).

Yes, I'm aware that most if not all of Ted's "fifty books" are re-packagings but it's still pretty impressive that there is the interest, even if it is in obscure markets which (as you say) don't pay much, probably.

I've written to John Burke telling him how much I appreciated his contribution to *Relapse*, and that I hope he'll do more. I've also, by the way, inspired by that, tried to email Bill Harry (via his *Merseybeat* website). I've been looking at their fanzines (we have *The Satellite* from Jan 1939) and it's interesting to read – one issue (1940) contains Arthur C. Clarke's Lovecraft parody 'At the Mountains of Murkiness' which made me giggle: talk about two very different writers!

And Harry's *Biped* has a *very* steamy picture of 'Sophia Loren as Dejah Thoris' by Jim Cawthorn, as well as illustrations by Bill Tidy which are not in the style I remember his cartoons. In fact as I look at his website to see how old he was in 1957 I've found that he was born in 1933 (which makes him 24) and that he was born in Tranmere, Birkenhead, not Liverpool (as I thought) and the solution to something that puzzled me when I had earlier looked him up in Wikipedia.



Right:
Norman
Ashcroft and
Ted Carnell
at a London
bus-stop in
early 1960.
Photo from
Don Ford's
album.

Andy Sawyer
A.P.Sawyer@liverpool.ac.uk



These weird
academics -
Andy at
Novacon-37
Photo by PW

Jim wrote;
"Admittedly the
costume would
never get past the
censors, but it's still
a good deal more
than Burroughs
allowed her. For
the original see the
cover of this
month's *Photoplay*"
(May 1957)



Bill Harry introduces his portfolio by saying that Tidy “has now emigrated to Canada” (about which there was no mention of in Wikipedia), but the actual Bill Tidy website says that: ‘In 1957, after plans to emigrate to Canada fell through, he became a professional cartoonist’. So at the time he was obviously just about to emigrate. Although the Bill Tidy illos in *Biped* are science fictional, I didn't know that Tidy was a fan and can't think of any particular SF themes in his work.

I'm unable to write a long loc at the moment as I'm trying to finish off something that I'm writing for the H.G. Wells conference next weekend – over the weekend it rather oddly slipped from something about how flight, like with space travel some decades later, sort of “stood for” the future because everyone knew it was going to happen in some way, to showing how it all got mixed up with sex, collecting examples of songs celebrating ‘A Honeymoon in the Sky’ and a wonderful example of how a woman from Miami in 1929, as soon as her labour pains came upon her, rushed to the airport with husband, doctor, two nurses, and a pilot, and eventually gave birth to baby Aerogene (or Airlene: the sources vary) 1200 feet up in the sky. And they think SF fans are weird!

[Not so weird, Andy, just someone who wanted to get into the record books.... The next one (in space) will be harder to achieve. I loved those Bill Tidy illos you sent – would like to use them next time but had better ask permission – and now it looks as if you've woken another sleeping giant....

Bill Harry
BillHarry@aol.com

Dear Pete,

My return from gafia has taken place after 50 years now that Andy Sawyer has got in touch with me and sent me a copy of my original 50's fanzine *Biped*. In the same post was your welcome package of goodies, including the latest issue of *Relapse*. I'm getting out my SF journal to make notes of the memories I have of 50s' fandom.

Andy's e-mail also brought the sad news that Jim Cawthorne had passed away. A couple of years ago Mike Moorcock sent me Jim's address and I had intended getting in contact, but never did. I have very fond memories of him and a great respect for his talent.

From the late 60s, each year Jim and Eric Bentcliffe would turn up at our London home with a bottle of Scotch and we'd chat until the early hours. The annual occasion had to do with Eric's company holding a stand at Earl's Court. The visits ended when the exhibitions moved to the NEC in Birmingham.



Bill went from SF fanzines to *Mersey Beat* and helped to discover the Beatles. Here he is with John Lennon in the sixties. Bill's photo.

I see Don Allen is still around, and in his letter he mentions Alan Dodd. I always liked Alan's *Camber* and contributed to it. Some years ago I happened to see a colour feature in the *Sunday Times* magazine about a trip on a boat on the Thames which had nude models posing for amateur photographers. One of those photographers interviewed was Alan. I phoned him up and had a chat, but I didn't mention his adventures in nude photography as that was his own business!

Is John Burke the author of the paperback edition of ‘A Hard Day's Night’?

I go to four or five conventions a year – but they are run by my son Sean. He's been running them for 14 years and I sometimes get the blame for switching him on to science fiction! They are not the traditional SF conventions but are basically for fans of the sci-fi shows *Babylon 5*, *Star Trek*, *Farscape*, *Serenity*, *Terminator*, *Battlestar Galactica*. You name it and he's promoted a convention around the series. He books a hotel and flies the stars of the series over from America. His website is: www.starfury.co.uk

[Ah, Bill, but that's sci-fi, the evil mutant spawn of SF which has devoured its parent. Whatever would Les Johnson have said?]

John Burke
Kirkcudbright

Dear Peter,

Having finished extensive rewrites on a horror novel which is at last complete and in the hands of my agent, hoping she can persuade some adventurous publisher to take it on in spite of the general decline of the printed book in favour of handheld gimmicks, I have been relaxing with the memories stirred up in this last issue of *Relapse*. The quality of the production, and the sheer hard work which must have gone into collating all the material, make me realise just how amateurish *The Satellite* must have looked.

I was glad to see references to Les Johnson, with whom I lost touch during the war and of whom I heard nothing afterwards. As well as his work for the BIS and SFA, he ran a small magazine-importing business in Liverpool for those who could afford current issues of *Astounding*, *Amazing*, and other US magazines at full price rather than wait for them to show up at unpredictable dates for a few pence, mainly in Woolworth's. I recall that he had an attractive blonde assistant whom I took one evening to see a double bill of *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*. One thing which I've never forgotten was the scene where *Dracula's* fiendish daughters hover above the prone figure of Jonathan Harker, and suddenly a curtain is swept aside and *Dracula* stands there with arms outstretched. A good thick Liverpool voice in the row behind us yelled: “Get back - I sawr 'im furst!” which rather spoiled the tension.

When I worked as European Story Editor for 20th Century Fox in Soho Square, our American boss, a delightful man called Elmo Williams, commented to me one day that we could do with a lot more horror films. “With the kids nowadays, they want to get out of the house and go to the movies, away from their parents and the television. The boy wants an excuse to put his arm round the girl, and she wants him to have an excuse to put his arm round her. Give me a scream every two minutes, and we've got a winner.”



John in 2007.
His photo.

And speaking of 20th C-Fox, I am pretty sure that the date 'around 1970' for the photo on p.23 is quite a few years out. The pub is 'The Crown and Two Chairmen', whose side door opened on to the yard immediately behind our office, and I must have met Ron and John Harris there during that period. But I had left the company and gone freelance by the time we went to Southwold in 1967. *[I explained that I'd dated the picture by comparing it with the 1976 shot in which Ron appeared to be wearing the same spectacles. John replied that "in all the years I have known him he has worn exactly the same sort."]*

On that same page, I was about to contact Ron and point out a blunder in his piece, referring to 'John C' when he obviously meant John Beynon Harris, i.e. John Wyndham when Ron got in touch with me to say he had spotted, the slip, too. *[I saw it – too late! – the moment I opened one of the printed copies!]*

One name which cropped up a great deal in *The Satellite* days was that of D. R. Smith, who carried on a number of arguments with Sam Youd – though when I mentioned this to Sam a few years ago, he had no recollection of the name at all. I actually made contact with Smith during the war when I was stationed on a gun-site near Nuneaton, where he lived. I was invited to his place and made very welcome by his mother and younger brother. Don – the 'D' in D. R. Smith – was a fanatical cyclist, and insisted on picking me up from the bus-stop with a tandem, and whizzing me on the back saddle round the countryside. It was much more hair-raising than what I underwent in the Liverpool blitz or the V1s and V2s on Antwerp later. Does anybody else remember him?

In Sam's piece I think he makes an error when on p. 17 he writes of The White Horse "eleven o'clock closing time". In those days pubs south of Oxford Street and Holborn closed at 10.30 pm, while those to the north stayed open until eleven. Those who could afford it and were anxious to carry on drinking would make a northward dash up Fetter Lane to the nearest pub on the other side. Once we moved to The Globe, of course, there was no need for this unseemly sprint. I was delighted to see the picture of the unforgettable Lew Mordecai – whose name I for some unaccountable reason mis-spelt, in my own piece, as 'Lou'. *[Again, an error I missed. Must be more careful – can't trust these writers!]*

I was amused by a wonderful understatement on p.9 about distribution problems in 1947 being possibly 'caused by bad weather in the early part of the year'. That was the year of the most appalling freeze-up which brought the whole country almost to a standstill. Trains were stuck in snowdrifts, roads were blocked. Living in a cottage in North Wales, while I was working at Monsanto Chemicals, we were fascinated by the regular sight of helicopters – or autogiros, I think was the word then – dropping food supplies on to the hills around Ruthin.

The list of Patrick Moore's youthful 'books for younger readers' on p.4 reminds me of an incident when I was a Council member of East Anglian Writers, based in Norwich. At our annual lunch the guests were Lord Longford and Patrick. It was a custom instituted by Bill (Correlli) Barnett, our chairman, that one of the committee should give a brief introduction to each guest speaker. I said "Bags I do Patrick", who over the years had completely forgotten me until, introducing him, I spoke of bygone days when he wrote science-fiction for youngsters for the publisher for whom I then worked.....and from his end of the table came a hollow groan, "Oh, no. . .!"

Thinking of Eric Frank Russell, I have just remembered a little wartime incident when he was chatting with Sam Youd and me shortly after the Liverpool blitz. This must have been one of the times when Sam was paying me a visit in Liverpool before either of us was called up. Eric complained that at home all the lights had gone out as bombs fell dangerously close, and he had to finish an urgent job for *Astounding*, I think it was, with an electric torch under the table – "And I'll bet some fussy bastard will complain that there's a rather confused bit in the middle of the story."

Skimming through some bits of No.16 which I hitherto hadn't read in full, I found some references to John Aiken. I vaguely remember meeting him once – pretty sure it was in the Globe – and reviving memories of Rye, where I was born and where his father, the American writer Conrad Aiken, lived in Jeake's House. Conrad Aiken wrote some very weird things, including a verse play with a fantastic theme which I saw during the war at the King's Theatre, Hammersmith. Later I met one of his daughters, Jane Aiken Hodge, when we were judges for the Romantic Novelists Association Award of the Year. Later still, my daughter Jenny bought Jeake's House and the two adjoining properties to set up one of the smartest B&Bs in the country, winning awards all over the place. Each of the bedrooms has the name of a local notability, including Radclyffe Hall and . . . spare my blushes! . . . John Burke. *[Dr John K. Aiken was active in the 1944 Cosmos Club, and went on to write four long novelettes for the early New Worlds.]*

You ask about possible reasons for the sudden upsurge in interest in SF in the early fifties and its later decline. I can remember it all happening – dammit, I was there! – but like Phil Harbottle I can't really explain the phenomenon. I think that possibly some successful films and early TV series with SF themes awakened a wider interest, and for a while SF hardbacks became a possible money-maker. Hence the different so-called 'clubs' like the one we had at Museum Press, whose relevant editors met for monthly lunches. I recall Bertie van Thal from his own rather tottery firm Home & Van Thal, and a very young Antonia Fraser (at the time with Weidenfeld) being present, though I never got the impression that the rather snuffy young lady had the foggiest idea what it was all about. Anyway, the fad – if that's the right description – faded when sales didn't justify quite such concentration. *[I asked John a question...]*

You stagger me with 'Who was Bertie van Thal?', about whom I have had to answer innumerable questions from a young fanatic called Johnny Mains, and whom I would have thought you'd have come across . . . but then, of course, I realise there is the distinction between SF fans and devotees of weird tales. You may be shocked to hear that I have always had more of a leaning towards the latter.

Herbert van Thal was a partner in the short-lived publishing firm of Home and van Thal, where he relied on his colleagues to do all the work while he lunched out on expenses. He also started the 'Pan

?

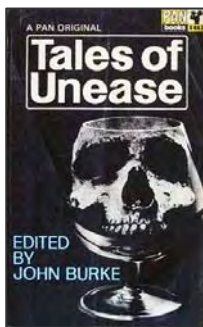
No picture seems to exist of the notoriously hermit-like D.R. Smith



Lew – for 'Lewis' – not Lou – Mordecai!



It was 'Antonia Pakenham' back then. This is an image from 1959.



Book of Horror Stories' series, which ran for years – and about which the aforementioned Johnny Mains is so obsessed that he produced a recent hardback called 'Back From the Dead' containing stories of old contributors, and is at this moment, with Pan's permission, working on a new compendium of tales and factual articles, including one on Bertie van T, with whom Johnny is misguidedly fascinated, never having known him in the flesh.

If you can stand the shock, Johnny Mains has for some reason set up a flattering website about me, stimulated by volumes of 'Tales of Unease' I edited for Pan. You'll find it on: www.talesofunease.co.uk Don't believe every word of it . . .

Now I must turn my attention to a projected flippant autobiography which began taking shape in my mind while I was still in hospital and being sent lots of current books, so many of which rambled on about miserable childhoods, cruelty, incest, rape and so on. Couldn't one write a cheerful autobiography, I thought? So every now and then I have been jotting down reminiscences of absurd and funny things which happened to me over the years. Two predominant threads will inevitably be SF/horror and music – both jazz and classical. At least I shall enjoy digging through my memories.

[Thanks John, and I hope we'll be able to read the SF bits in Relapse. Antonia Fraser, eh? Wonder if she'll remember her days at Weidenfeld? Can't hurt to ask, anyway. And as I've already mentioned to you, I once attended an 'SF Luncheon' club in the late sixties where I got gloriously drunk in the company of Brian Aldiss and Mark Adlard. It met in Bertorelli's Italian Restaurant, north of Oxford Street, and all the agents and publishers of the time were there – I don't know if this was a continuation of the same club or not. Maybe someone else will remember more about it?]

Tony Glynn
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*Tony in 2009.
PW photo*

Dear Peter,

Memories of the great *Supermancon* of 1954 were revived a few weeks ago when I was watching a TV programme, 'The Great American Songbook', a study of popular music and those who created it with contributions from several musical specialists. I almost jumped out of my chair when one of them was flagged up as Gene Lees, a man with a long and varied connection to music of all kinds and, as my later research by Google revealed, a TV and radio presenter, composer, lecturer, journalist, novelist, recipient of various awards and much more. Although said to be living in California, he was stated to be acknowledged as one of the most widely accomplished of Canadians. His Google list of achievements might have also have included 'science fiction writer'.

Memory took me back to the Grosvenor Hotel, Manchester, that Whit week-end in 1954 with the *Supermancon* in full swing. My sister, Fran, and I were walking along an otherwise deserted corridor having just visited Ted Carnell's room when there appeared before us a slim and smartly dressed young man who stopped us and asked if we happened to know which was Mr John Carnell's room. We walked him back to Ted's room and he told us his name was Gene Lees and he was a reporter on the *Montreal Star*. He had been sent to Manchester to cover some event of particular interest to Canada and, by the sheerest chance had learned that there was a science fiction convention going on in town. He said he wanted to find Ted Carnell because he had lately sold him a story. I recall that he said the story had some connection to music.

When we brought them face-to-face, Ted showed astonishment because he thought 'Gene Lees' was female. Possibly there was mis-spelling of his name somewhere or maybe Ted had in mind the beautiful film star Gene Tierney, who spelt her name in the masculine form.

I never did see Gene's story but, at this late date, I would like to know something about it. Maybe, I thought, if we introduce him to *Relapse* he might be persuaded to record his memories of the *Supermancon* which he discovered by chance that long ago week-end. However, on further checking I've found that Gene Lees died in April. He lived at Ojai, California and for many years up to his death, among his many other activities, he produced a regular and widely regarded jazz newsletter.

[I bet Ted Carnell was surprised; the story is 'Strangers from Space' and it appeared in Science Fantasy #7, with an introduction which said, "Miss Lees, a Canadian, captures the feminine angle in a manner no masculine author can hope to emulate"! It's a first-class story, however.]

Don Allen
Newcastle-upon-Tyne



*Don in 2010.
His photo.*

Dear Peter,

I was fascinated by all the articles about early fandom. I am familiar with most of it but revising and updating my memories is no bad thing. A lot of the stories of those golden times were told to me by Fred Fairless (whom I spotted in one of the photos). Fred had many a captivating tale to tell. He was also one of the founder members of the North-East Science Fiction Society. There is so much brilliant stuff here. But then I can connect with the names of that time period so that's why it is so appealing to me.

I have been to both the White Horse and the Globe. I can't really remember the White Horse visit as I was very young at the time. Still at school, I spent my holidays staying at my Uncle's pub in Victoria. American airmen were regulars at the pub and they brought with them comics (*DCs*, *Superman*, etc) and SF prozines (*Amazing*, *Fantastic*, etc). So, naturally, I started to read them and so was hooked. Couldn't get enough!

It was then I found out about the White Horse and I pestered my uncle to take me one Thursday night. Kids could not go into pubs then unless food was being served (and it was, good old London pie 'n' mash) so that's probably how I got in! Don't remember much about it though I did get autographs of all those I met such as Arthur C. Clarke, Ted Tubb etc. Also, around this time period, I went to a London con, probably the *Festivention*. Not as a registered attendee but just went in as a day visitor. I knew it was on and so decided to go along to see what it was all about. Also took some of my American SF prozines and flogged them to the prozines-starved fans! Quite enterprising for age 14!



Paul Enever was certainly at the 1957 London worldcon. Photo from Vince Clarke's album.

Going to the Globe was more memorable. I made several enjoyable visits there and met most members of London fandom. It was a busy pub with fans coming and going all the time, great atmosphere, nice people, and never a dull moment. Apart from all the BNF's and trufans there were quite a few who were not into SF but just came along for the ride so to speak! They enjoyed fanzines, the spirit of fandom and all that went with it. I suppose it was an appealing 'club' to be a member of; I mean there was no compulsion to read SF, and how many fanzines ever contained anything remotely connected to SF? I was invited to 'Inchmery' but somehow never got there, but did visit Paul Enever in Hillingdon and helped with printing *Orion* on his famous flatbed! I think Paul emigrated to Australia about '57.

Your remark that I vanished into Her Majesty's Forces isn't quite true. During my time in the RAF I stayed in touch with fandom and on returning to civvy street in 1958 continued to publish *Satellite*, and also contributed to other fanzines with articles and illos. I used to get many visitors over from Europe arriving by North Sea Ferries – Germany had a thriving bunch of fans then. Jim Cawthorn and I and other local fans continued to meet in Newcastle, and I remained active until the early 60's then went gafia. There were a few squabbles, feuds, etc, going on and I couldn't be bothered with some of the petty things, just stayed in touch with fans who were real friends. That's the thing about fandom, some fans are just names while others become real friends.

I had a brief flurry of activity in the 70's and started to contribute again. After the 1984 Newcastle con the NESFS was sort-of revived again. Jim was in London quite a lot and so kept me up to date with fannish activities there. So I've never really been away from fandom, just hovering on the fringe. My main contact was Jim, but alas, since he has gone, I do miss him and all the gossip he would relate.

[Gosh Don, that's really starting young! Lucky you had a relative in London.]

Steve Baxter
Northumberland

Dear Pete,

Thanks very much for sending me *Relapse 16 & 17*, which I found absolutely fascinating.

You said you were prompted to contact me by my introduction to Pete Crowther's new edition of Clarke's TALES OF THE WHITE HART. Yes, even though it was all over before I was born, I find that bit of history on either side of the war quite fascinating, the White Horse bunch a sort of 'Inklings' of the genre. *[An informal 1930s literary discussion group associated with the University of Oxford.]* Clarke and I also produced a new 'Hart' story for the new edition – a modern-day reunion of Harry Purvis and the boys, meant as a tribute to the old days – Arthur enjoyed the exercise, I think, and it was the last piece on which I worked with him. Mind you, Pete mercilessly made him sign the usual hundreds of sheets!

I enjoyed Temple's diaries – charming – and your piece on E.C. Tubb. The travails of a would-be writer trying to kick-start a career don't change much! I really haven't read enough Tubb, but as it happens I recently read a couple of his early 50s 'pocketbooks', as he refers to them. You'll recall I wrote to you trying to find out about John Jennison, another writer of that era who came into my own life through his 1960s novels for 'Thunderbirds' and 'Captain Scarlet'!

With a lot of help, mostly from Steve Holland, I learned that alongside heaps of western and gangster novels, Jennison produced eight SF pocketbooks in the 'mushroom' period, for Curtis Warren and other publishers under various house-names. I tried tracking down the books by all the other writers using the same names – one was Brunner's first effort, GALACTIC STORM as by Gill Hunt (1951), very juvenile but crackling with energy and ideas – and two by Tubb, SATURN PATROL as by King Lang, and PLANETFALL as by Gill Hunt. And I'd say that SATURN PATROL is by far the best of this set of 30-odd books I've read so far.



A Curtis book, cover by Ray Theobald.

It's set in a colonised galaxy become stagnant because of a kind of protection racket run by 'Warbird' spaceship crews – war has become too dangerous to unleash on a mere planet. A rogue figure called Gregg Harmond is recruited from a colony world, quickly rises up the ranks amid plenty of fisticuffs and space battles, ends up attacking the rich, decadent empires of the galactic centre, and crashes the whole system. You've got fast-paced action, escalating narrative scales, themes of power, corruption and economic exploitation, and a complicated, conflicted, guilt-ridden character in Harmond. PLANETFALL has somewhat similar themes, set on the scale of the solar system, and is almost as good.

This is hugely impressive stuff, especially when you consider Tubb had to bash each book out in a week or so to make it pay. I don't know how I'd fare working under conditions like that. I might manage one week's output, but then the next, and the next? ...

I liked Phil Harbottle's comment in *R17* that in the 1950s "British SF publications went through a 'boom' period while simultaneously hitting an all-time low in academic esteem". Makes you proud! I'm very glad that chroniclers like you, and Steve Holland, Phil Harbottle, Mike Ashley and others are ensuring that the period isn't forgotten; *Relapse* is going to be an essential resource for future scholars. Now all we need is for somebody to digitise all those yellowing, rusty-stapled, lurid-covered, never-reprinted pocketbooks before they're lost forever.



Right; Also starting young; Steve with telescope, aged sixteen! His photo.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM:-

Ned Brooks, who wrote: “The man in the top photo on P.3 does NOT have a typewriter on his knees! Nor would anyone use one of those heavy old office machines on his knees for long – they weighed over 30 lbs and did not have smooth bottoms. The makeshift desk he has the machine on looks doubtful – there is considerable side-loading as you do a carriage return.” [Tell me about it! When I was doing *Speculation* I had to balance an office typewriter on my knees, usually on a tray or plank of wood, as described in ‘STARS..’. Young Carnell was doing something similar.] **Peter Crowther** recalled *Seacon 79*: “One memory which makes me wince is my standing with Bob Silverberg as he signed my programme book. I was saying how much I enjoyed his work (*yada yada yada*) and, nodding graciously, he looked up to see R.A. Lafferty enter the room. “Ah,” Bob said, “here comes one of the most under-rated writers in the world.” Unable to come up with any truly worthy *bon mots*, I said, simply, “You can say that again.” As he handed me back my booklet, Bob said, frowning, “Oh, okay: here comes one of the most under-rated writers in the world.” At which point everyone else standing there with their booklets and pens at the ready burst into guffaws of laughter. My ears are turning beetroot-red at the very thought of it. Bob, I still owe you for that one!” **Alistair Durie** noted: “I was born in 1944 and we went to Australia in 1954 for two years. The interesting coincidence was that we went by boat – as you did in those days – on the *SS Himalaya*. I noticed that Arthur C Clarke states in *CITY AND THE STARS* that it was completed on the *Himalaya* so I assume he must have been one of the other passengers. What a pity I never met him.” [Yes Alistair, but you were only ten at the time!]

Chris Garcia observed; “Those are amazing pictures in ‘Come and meet the Wife’, especially the large one at the top. I’m actually more interested in that typewriter than I am in the globe or the rocket. That’s a Remington, but not a regular machine. It has the back portion which was standard on Remington teletypes, but not often on their typewriters. I’m wondering what it is, exactly.”

Rob Hansen wrote, “Just found this in an old letter from Vince: ‘There was some muttering in the ranks due to *Science Fantasy* being aimed at the average fan-in-the-street – by that time mature fans had had wartime *ASF*’s. Apparently, this caused some dissatisfaction and Wally was eased-out of the editorial job, mostly by Frank Cooper who was providing business know-how and holding the purse strings.’ At the time *Tales of Wonder* came out, Gillings stated that it would contain simple stories to ease people into science fiction rather than the more challenging fare those reading the US pro-mags were accustomed to. Even at the time, I’m sure a lot of British fans disagreed with his ‘baby steps’ approach. After the war it would’ve been intolerable.” **David Hartwell** asked, “Whatever happened to Marilyn Clarke?” while **David Langford** remembered: “I think you’ve killed off Richard Evans rather early in ‘Who is Ron Hall?’ which has him editing your 1976-1978 *ANDROMEDA* anthologies at *Futura* “before he moved to Arrow and died a few years later”. In fact he moved again to Gollancz in 1983 and was a senior editor there for another thirteen years before his death (too young, even so) in 1996. I remember the business lunches when working – with a very light editorial touch from Richard -- on my Arrow novel *THE SPACE EATER*. Richard would invariably order hummus and a bottle of retsina for starters, and repeat ad lib until one or other of us lost count. We never seemed to reach the intended main course, but neither participant was in any condition to complain. Happy days!” [Huh; all I ever got at *Futura* was a cup of tea!]

George Locke wrote, “I was very impressed by the reminiscences about Joy Gresham and C. S. Lewis, especially the bit about her being a pushy Yank. Not the only one; I remember Belle Dietz at the London 1957 Worldcon as being the ultimate in pushy Yank females. And of course, the famous Helene Hanff of 84 CHARING CROSS ROAD was hardly a shrinking violet. A picture seems to be building up of the London Circle being a soap opera – I wonder if the Globe wasn’t the inspiration for the ‘Queen Vic’ in *EastEnders*? Yes, Peter, free (from the shop) at last and I’ve started watching *EastEnders*...” **Sam Long** reminisced about *TALES OF THE WHITE HART*, “I once asked ACC whether he’d considered a follow-up collection called ‘Tales from the Sphere’ and he said ‘No’... but chuckled as he said it.” **Ian Millsted** agreed, “A year or so ago I found a second hand copy of *MARTIN MAGNUS, PLANET ROVER* and concur with your assessment. Remarkably singular characterisation of the lead. Certainly not your standard square-jawed plank.” Then **Alexei Panshin** corrected me about Heinlein’s marriages: “Leslyn was his second wife. Elinor Curry was his first wife. One of John Campbell’s daughters was named for Leslyn, too.” And **Bob Parkinson** added, “I always feel a bit of a traitor to the cause when I point out that the pre-war *BIS Moonship*, trumpeted widely as the first serious engineering design of such, was (even by the standards of the day) not very sound.” Good old **Lloyd Penney** wrote: “On page 34, there is one person I’ve met in my own travels... Georges Gallet. We met him at our only overseas convention, the 1990 Worldcon in The Hague. There were fans from so many countries there, and M. Gallet was pleased to meet Canadians, although he was a little confused when I said I spoke only a little French...he had thought that all Canadians spoke French!” [*Sacre Bleu!*!]

David Redd wrote, “It was amusing to discover that ‘my’ publisher’s editor on *ANDROMEDA 3* wasn’t Richard Evans but Ron/Andrew Hall. Reminds me that Richard tried his hand at writing himself and work-shopped a manuscript ‘Ghost Solent’ one Milford – what happened to it?” **Fred Smith** wondered, “Surprised, though, to hear that EFR was “an absolutely vile man” since his letters to *Hypfen* gave me the impression of a busy and kindly pro taking the time to write to humble fans. Maybe Willis edited out the rude bits!” While **Ian Sorensen** answered Mike Deckinger about fan-films: “In the 80’s Glasgow fandom produced many fan productions in Super 8 which have since been transferred to VHS and now DVD. I’m sure that, with the wave of a techno-finger and muttering of techno-babble, they could appear somewhere on the web as a video stream. But who would want to see *Raiders of the Lost Con*, *Bar Trek II - the Wrath of Cans* and *Conrunner* (a loving pastiche of *Bladerunner* in which some gophers need to be tracked down and retired by the BSFA’s top hit man)? For my own part, while no video record exists of my fannish musicals, I do have video recordings of the seven *Reductio Ad Absurdum* shows I’ve done with Phil Raines and, in the 90’s, Jackie McRobert. Performance didn’t die with Don West’s magnum opus!”

Response was also received from John Baxter, Leslyn Belsey, John Berry, Pat Kearney, Rob Latham, Ian Peters, Greg Pickersgill, Tom Shippey, & Philip Stevenson-Payne. **LoCs held-over** from Brian Aldiss, Dave Britton, Ted Forsyth, Bryn Fortey, Dave Hardy, Keith Freeman, Christina Lake, Farah Mendelsohn, Joe Patrizio, John Purcell, Ina Shorrocks, Philip Turner, & Keith Walker. Sorry everyone, ran out of space this time. I’ll try to do better with the next issue!

One last time and I’ll shut up; *Relapse* is nothing without your *Response*, so please do write to me with your memories, anecdotes and insights about British fandom (and old photos, please) and I’ll gladly send the printed version if you want. Otherwise, I’ll be happy to put you on the list for the pdf, e-mailed to you on publication (my preferred option for overseas readers). This issue went to the printer on 27/9/2010, was mailed a week later, and will be archived on the *eFanzines* site after a further four weeks.