

More journeys into the history of science fiction fandom in Britain.

RELAPSE

Number 20:
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“Another totally absorbing issue full of fascinating information. I love it!” – Don Allen, e-mail comment.



INSIDE: ‘A Truly Generous Chap’ by Ian Watson; ‘New Worlds for Old’ by Charles Platt; ‘Out of this World’ by Mike Ashley; ‘Goodbye, Harry!’ by Tom Shippey; Bob Shaw – the family photographs; AND MORE.....



RELAPSE

Oh dear, eighteen months since the last issue. That's much too long, and just when I was generating a nice bit of momentum in my quest for stories about the people & places that have shaped British science fiction and its attendant fandom. Must do better! But please keep telling your tales to me, Peter Weston, at 53 Wyvern Road, Sutton Coldfield, B74 2PS; or by e-mail to pr.weston@btinternet.com. You can receive the pdf as issued (just ask) but for keen/dedicated types the exclusive paper edition is also available. Relapse goes onto the *eFanzines* website four weeks after publication day (5th December 2012).

“...the mixture as before, in the best possible way; history mixed with anecdote to result in a cracking read.” – Sandra Bond, LoC

You may be reeling in shock because for the first time since issue #3 there's no Giles cartoon on the cover. No, not a policy change but just my taking merciless advantage of something Ian Watson wrote in a brief LoC on the last issue:

“Not much of a send-off for ‘poor old Brunner’ what with your deciding that he didn't achieve all that much really, and some geezer calling him a pratt (evidently worse than your usual prat). However, in accordance with Brunner's will, because LiYi is selling *The Square House* she has just kindly returned a jolly good painting which my Judy did of John and Marjorie and me and her and Jess, at a CND march in London during the Seventies. (Brunner wrote the anthem of CND.) Heroic stuff. This now hangs at the top of my stairs, so each time I go upstairs I see Brunner at his best. ¡Viva Brunner! as Marjorie would have declaimed, with a great growl in her voice.” (17-4-2011)

I replied, “Sorry, the ‘pratt’ with two ‘t’s was my fault, not the geezer wot wrote it (Brian Aldiss). But rather you than me – for some reason I'm not sure I'd really want to see JB's happy smiling face looking down on me when I went to bed at night. Still, as something of a historical artefact (the painting, not you), it would be interesting to see it. Any chance you can use your digital camera to take a good shot for my next issue, please?”

A couple of weeks went by, and then Ian answered, “Just when you thought I'd forgotten, here's Judy's historic painting of our CND march through London in the 1980s, with Judy, Brunner, Marjorie, me, and Jess at the front. The chap on the right merely looks associated with us, but wasn't. Don't print the picture at all big because the quality mightn't be too good, though it's my best shot out of 10.”

I was deeply impressed; “That really is a cracking painting you know, I had no idea Judy was such an accomplished artist. In fact, it's so good I'm thinking of dumping the great Giles next time and putting it on the cover. See attached mock-up, which I've done to show you the idea. It illustrates your article next time very nicely.... Oh, sorry, didn't I mention that?”

“There's a certain fascination about John and Marjorie on the march, and not a lot is known – or at least, remembered – about what they did, and since you and Judy joined them at least once, I wondered whether you might care to jot down a few memories? You mention that he wrote the CND song, and David Redd has just reminded me that he also wrote a novel, *THE DAYS OF MARCH*, which I confess I've never seen, so it might be interesting to bring that in as well.”

Like a good ‘un, Ian readily agreed; “You cunning fiend! Okay I'll try to jot down something even though actually I don't remember any details brilliantly. What's the deadline? (Because I'm a bit busy finalising ‘*The Mammoth Book of SF Wars*’.) And daughter Jess is going to take a GOOD photo of the painting next week, having dismissed my photo as unfit for publication, even though it looks perfectly okay to me under repeated zoom.”

“Heh-heh, cackled the cunning fiend..... That's super, Ian, I do appreciate it. Just tell us what you can remember, accent of course on John & Marjorie rather than the politics. Those were great outfits, by the way, John in deerstalker, Marjorie in leopard-skin coat, and you in your Lenin-cap! The image of Judy is particularly striking, I thought, very much seems to capture her personality. And Jessica looks a mischievous little minx! The photo seems O.K. to me, but if Jessica can improve it, fine. I assume it was done in sepia, rather than this being any artefact of your camera? And I love that placard, ‘Remember to Dust Your Frogs’ (or is it ‘Oust your Frogs’ – what did they have against the French, I wonder?).”

Ian set to the very same morning (a true professional), though I expressed surprise at the result: “You cleverly thwarted my fiendish plan with the article; it's great, and very interesting in the way it describes how your friendship with the Brunners developed, but it wasn't quite what I was expecting. I'd envisaged an account of the march itself, maybe a couple of good stories about John & Marjorie en-route and something about the philosophical underpinnings which motivated you and Judy to join them.”

Ian replied, “I remember NOTHING about the march itself, or anything that happened during it. I clearly remember other CND demos I was on, such as taking a Slovenian visitor to RAF Molesworth, burning the American flag outside Upper Heyford, trespassing on a right of way across an airfield elsewhere, but none of these were Brunner-related. Apart from what the painting reveals I recall nothing about the Brunner-related one, alas. By the way, re. photo credit, Jessica's name is Black (not Watson) these days. None of that marrying stuff, but she & Kris both changed their name by deed poll to Black. Jess intends to exhibit the Brunner painting at the next Eastercon, and maybe some of Judy's other stuff, on a not-for-sale basis.”

And so I had both a cover and a nice little article, just like that, thanks to the kindness and patience of Ian – I wish it was always so easy! To complete the project I leaned-on David Redd in similar fashion and he came up with a splendid review of *THE DAYS OF MARCH* – a book I've not encountered myself. Together they add a little more to the Legend of John Brunner, a man who will not easily be forgotten.

Unanswered Questions

Last time I ended my preamble about the Wally Gillings feature with several unanswered questions; where are the Gillings sons (Ron & Anthony)? I asked, and were they still sitting on Wally's historic collection of SF material? While I was rather hoping that more information might eventually be forthcoming, I certainly wasn't prepared for the immediate reaction from Greg Pickersgill, who wrote:

"Are you actually asking at one point whether Walter Gillings' collection and/or possessions are still extant? Well, so far as I know they're not. In fact a significant amount of stuff was recently (within the last few years) found by accident (by someone who recognised what they were seeing) in a skip. I ended up with some of it, the rest either already dumped or in the hands of dealers (not much, as I recall). There's not a lot more to this story but perhaps the final facts should be ascertained."

"WHAT!!" I expostulated. "Why didn't anyone tell me about this? Who found what where and when?"

"Right then, this Gillings thing," said Greg. "This all happened back in 2007 when I had an e-mail from Graeme Roberts (bookseller, used to go to cons, you may remember him – one of the Gamma gang) operating at the time as 'Magpie Books'. He asked me to ring him about a collection of books and fanzines he had partially rescued from going to the tip.

"I phoned him as suggested and he told me that a quantity of material had been found in a skip by someone just wandering around, who was book-connected and identified it as Walter Gillings' material. The stuff was collected sharp-ish and at least some of it ended up with Graeme Roberts.

"It transpired that the house outside which the skip was parked had been more or less abandoned and was in the process of being cleared, probably for renovation or rebuilding. The house had apparently been derelict for some years but with the previous owner's possessions still inside. I no longer recall whether it had actually been occupied by Gillings, or by someone who had taken charge of some or all of his possessions.

"Eventually a box of material arrived, but despite saying there was probably more to send I never heard further from Graeme. I don't know whether he is still trading, as there are no positives on Magpie Books generally, and he is no longer listed in the iBook.net system. Asking other dealers like George Locke or John Eggeling may be productive."

George, for once, was not in the loop. No doubt smiting his forehead mightily he wrote, "Oh MiGhod! Chucked away as recently as 2007! Didn't know about it. I have a vague recollection of Graeme Roberts, many years ago, I'll see if memory brings him to the fore; he's bound to be on the net, somewhere." And then, "I did a spot of searching, and discovered that a dealer calling himself Magpie Books, of Halifax, is offering a number of SF books and paperbacks described as the 'Walter Gillings Collection'. No trace of archival material, however."

There the story languished until Eastercon 2011, and while making a brief cameo appearance I bumped into old pals Dick Jude and Dave Hodson in the bar. Dave promised to speak to Graeme Roberts, and subsequently wrote:

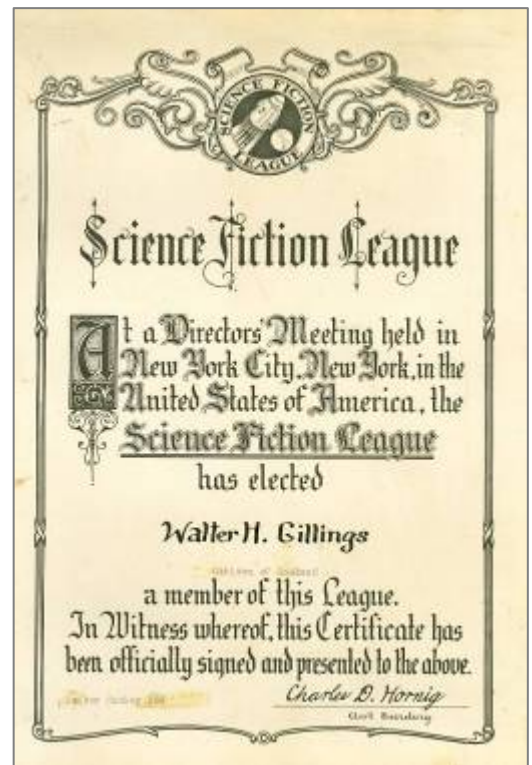
"The story goes thus: Graeme was contacted by a house-clearance friend of his and offered a load of science fiction books, these came from a property in Cranbrook Road, Ilford. The property had been locked-up and abandoned for about a decade at this point and the clearance guy was a little shocked because he estimated it was a £300k-£400k property at that point. Graeme bought the books and subsequently forwarded the material he did to Greg. The books he bought were nothing spectacular (probably the most notable thing in the collection was a first edition Zenna Henderson – technically a £100 book, but since nobody ever buys them anymore therefore worthless).

"Subsequent to this, Graeme discovered that another bookseller – Robin Summers, a mainstream first-edition dealer – had bought a sizeable collection from a property in Cranbrook Road. Whilst out drinking with Graeme, Summers told him that he had arranged to sell it to Fantasy Centre, but this fell through, possibly at the insistence of the family. It's not unusual for a family to not want big book collections to go on the open market."

About this time Andy Sawyer sent me a brief LoC and casually asked, "Did I ever send you a copy of this certificate, given to us by a book dealer who rescued some material from a skip?" Belatedly, I began to realise that everyone knew about this story except me. "Oh yes," said Andy, "It was Graeme Roberts who gave me the certificate (and, as I recall, Gilling's spectacles). John Eggeling wrote it up on the *Fictionmags* list back in 2007."

So here's the definitive version from John: "Graeme Roberts was a London book-dealer living in the East End and dealing to some extent in SF. He had built up a good network of contacts in the area who kept in touch with him when he moved up to Todmorden (my presence here had nothing to do with him coming to this location). Three or four years ago Graeme separated from his partner, moved to Hebden Bridge, and for reasons of space put a lot of minor items from his stock into a local antique centre. While I was browsing through that mass I came across a beat-up first edition of John Taine's *THE GREATEST ADVENTURE* bearing Frank Edward Arnold's signature on the front fly-leaf. That set alarm bells ringing in my mind; Frank's collection was supposed to have been willed to the SF Foundation so what was this book doing here?

"I e-mailed Graeme about it and he told me that it was actually from Walt Gillings' collection (presumably Frank had swapped it with Walt at some time). Graeme had apparently had a phone call from a house clearance dealer in London who had several bin-bags full of books from Wally's former residence.



From attic to skip to bin-bag to SF Foundation. Truly a marvellous survivor from the early thirties! Wally was member number 969.

“When Graeme went down to London to view the books he found they were all fairly low-key with nothing of any real importance among them. As there were no SF-press books or magazines Graeme asked if there were any other books and was told ‘No, but there was some paper material which we put in the skip.’ Which sounds bad but probably isn't so.

“Over the years I have often thought of Wally's shoe-box filled with letters from Olaf Stapledon, Ray Bradbury, Hannes Bok, and many others, a real treasure trove, especially the Stapledon in which he wrote about the inspiration for *LAST AND FIRST MEN*, but always resisted the temptation to write to Wanstead Park Road. However I did now and then check up in the telephone directory to see if a Gillings was still at that address, and until fairly recently there was; a woman, though I wasn't sure if it was Wally's widow or a daughter, or whomever. Looking up in the directory again I see there are a lot of Gillings living in the area, including an A. Gillings who may be his son [*He wasn't – pw*]. I think the collection would have gone to his son and whatever he didn't want remained at the family home until whoever was resident there died and the unwanted detritus was chucked by the next of kin before they sold the house.

“At least I'd rather believe that than think of the box of letters being chucked on a skip!”

No, John, the only person stupid enough to throw away a whole box of letters from famous professional authors (in this case people like Heinlein, Niven, Delany, Pohl, Moorcock, and so on), was me. Back in 1974 we were moving house, were desperately short of room, and since I was no longer doing *Speculation* I figured that all my old correspondence might as well go.... Don't tell me how stupid that was!

Anyway, I managed to speak to Robin Summers and while he was friendly enough he said he didn't remember anything about Gillings, a collection of science fiction books, or even Graeme Roberts, so that particular trail came to a dead end. I then wrapped myself around the '192' site and sure enough there are a *lot* of mentions of the Gillings name in the London area. Still, nothing ventured and all that, so I began to work my way through them, leaving messages on answering machines in a fair few cases. I was just starting to feel discouraged when on the Sunday morning, 24th July, someone called me back. “Hello Peter,” he said, “this is Ron Gillings”.

Hallelujah! I was elated, and we chatted amicably for ten minutes or so. Yes, he still had much of his father's collection – apparently he and younger brother Anthony had split it between them. I explained my interest and he even suggested I might like to visit. The very next day I sent him *Relapse 19* with the Gillings articles by Rob Hansen & Phil Harbottle, and sat back to await his comments. And I'm still waiting.

I've telephoned several times and only got the answering machine. I've sent letters, and had no reply. What went wrong? I don't know. But it seems Ron doesn't want to cooperate. Was it something I said? Was there something in the last issue he didn't like? I fear we will never know. What a disappointment!

More on Bob Shaw

Last issue I was particularly pleased to run Ian Shaw's touching tribute to his father, which Ian said he'd been inspired to write after reading Don Malcolm's earlier stories about Bob, although he had never attempted anything like this before. It took him a good few months to produce the manuscript since he was continually remembering other anecdotes which just *had* to go in – and this process has continued afterwards, resulting in a few further comments from Ian:-

“Aged 17, I started reading Dad's novels. I asked him which title would he recommend and he said he thought I would enjoy *MEDUSA'S CHILDREN* the most, and *TERMINAL VELOCITY* second. I had to laugh as after reading several of the novels in a row, he turned out to be exactly right! He loved asking me for feedback and I loved giving it. We would discuss story-lines and laugh together at what we felt were the funniest parts (or the bits I was amazed my father had written!!!). My two sisters and Mum never read any, but Simon, Claire's husband also read most of them.

“Regarding Bob's working with Kubrick; all I can remember Bob saying at the time was that he hated every single second of it. He said, from the very start, when he was flown from the airport to Kubrick's home in Kubrick's private helicopter, he was met by (greeted would not be the right term to use) bodyguards dressed all in black carrying sub-machine guns, who looked very menacing and didn't speak to him, and from there it went seriously downhill. He appeared elated to be safely back at home again after the working relationship collapsed!

“When Bob was in Warrington hospital I would go directly from Uni for a short visit and then return later in the evening for a proper visit. The day before one of Bob's big operations I entered the hospital and turned right onto a very, very long corridor that seemingly went on forever. As I walked along, way off in the distance I saw a tall well-built man striding along as confident as you like. I was sure it was Bob. On entering the ward I found him sitting on the side of his bed with a big grin on his face. His cheeks were ruddy red.

“He had only somehow managed to get his clothes and been across the road to the pub where he had demolished 14 pints of bitter and a large number of vodkas! I had to report this, which resulted in the op being put off for a few days. Bob was under 'house arrest' from then on, after I had lambasted the staff then on duty. The Surgeon came to see him and entered into the camaraderie of Bob's excursion. Both men were real characters and no mistake!

“In 1982, when we moved to Warrington, Bob bought a Survey map of Warrington and began to cycle all over the town drinking a half pint in each hostelry before venturing on to the next one. Within six months Bob had drunk in every pub in Warrington and the Survey map on the wall had red dots to show where each pub was, along with a star rating for welcoming atmosphere and quality of the beer.

“I don't mean this in a maudlin way, but rather in a really happy way; but I would love to have him back for another year. I read that someone asked Bob what he wanted most from his return to England after his long honeymoon in California with Nancy. At this point, Bob knew he had little time to live. According to the article, he said 'I just want to go for one more pint with Ian'. Much as I had the pleasure of having him as my Dad, I didn't know the Bob that SF convention attendees knew, but science fiction wasn't really my 'bag'. I had spent a lifetime trying to make Bob proud of me. This eventually happened after Sadie died, when the two of us became extremely close. What I would give to go for a pint or two with him this morning and enjoy his conversation.”

Ian was handicapped by a shortage of photographs – his sisters had inherited the family album – and he has only recently been able to go through the book and take some scans for us, as you'll see on the opposite page.

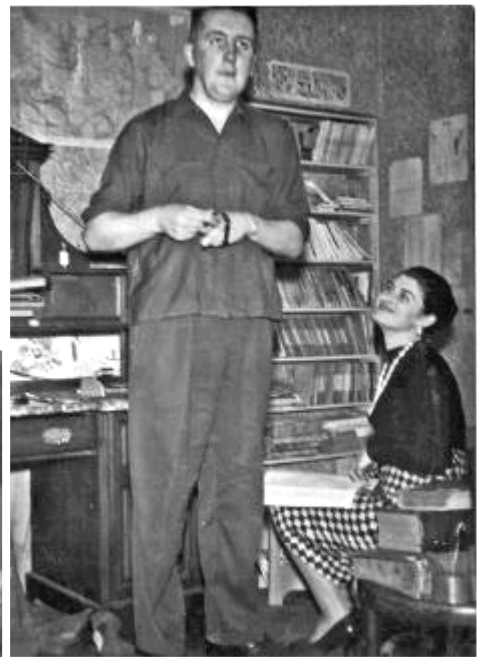


Top left; Drawing bored! (early 1950s at Shorts).

Top right; Picnic by the Lough, 1953 –Jim White & Peggy, Bob & Sadie, Chuck Harris & Madeleine, while Walt looks on.

Left; Probably 1956, before leaving for Canada. Sadie is clearly carrying baby Claire.

Right; Bob & Sadie back home, probably late fifties.



Right; Arrival in Calgary, Sadie is now very pregnant!

Below; The Great Outdoors – Bob with the Rockies behind, July 1957.



Upper right; studio portrait of Bob, probably late fifties.

Right; Bob, Sadie and Denise, 1966, at some heavily-defaced monument.



The Best-Ever SF-type Book Since 1971 [or so they say]

Talking about the 2011 Eastercon, as we were a couple of pages back, I dropped a line to Dave Langford after my brief visit to say that I was sorry to have missed seeing him. Dave quickly put me right; “Well, we did have a bit of a chat at Gerry Webb's bubbly party before you left. That was when I congratulated you on having written The Best-Ever SF Book Since 1971 (as per the *Novacon* poll) and discovered no one had bothered to tell you about it!” Dave then sent me a scan of the then-current *Novacon* PR with a write-up from Dave Hicks, from which the following is excerpted:

“In SECOND PLACE for the title of best SF book published since 1971 I am delighted that the membership has selected Christopher Priest's *THE PRESTIGE* (5 ballots received, scoring 14 points). Now the moment we've all been waiting for. The reason I'm wearing this sparkly dinner jacket and bow tie tonight...

“... in FIRST PLACE, the Best SF Book published since 1971, in the opinion of the membership of *Novacon* 40 is: STARS IN MY EYES by Peter Weston. 5 ballots received, scoring 15 points.

“To the keen fan-historian there is of course a fulfilling symmetry about this, even if one might take issue with the order of the top two. The young Priest wrote for the young Weston's *Speculation* back in the sixties – in the formative days of their careers in writing and editing respectively. To see them recognised jointly at a *Novacon* four decades later is pleasing. The more cynical fan might mutter that the Brummie block-vote remains a force to be reckoned with and they stuffed the ballot, but this was this was an option equally available to lovers of the literature of space exploration and the existential uncertainty of the future as well as lovers of anecdotes about odd people in basement flats in the 1960s.”

How eagerly we grasp at these few shreds of recognition! But what can I really say but, gosh, thanks chaps, good of all five of you to vote for me, it's never too late for an unexpected dollop of ego-boo!

All very odd!

While we were in Palma on holiday last year I discovered a rather splendid second-hand bookshop, just down a little alley from the Cathedral. It was a fascinating place, vaults and alcoves and little balconied galleries with some really interesting-looking stock, and remarkably, all English. So naturally I asked the proprietor if he had any old hardback SF and he pointed me to a couple of shelves at the back which had an almost complete run of early SFBC titles.

They were priced a bit high, mostly at 50 euros, and I couldn't find ALIEN DUST, which I particularly wanted, but the great thing is that they all contained the club bulletin, *SF News*, and I brought back a couple of issues for Greg Pickersgill. I also had an invoice from the book club for his Archive; it's dated 26 Nov 1957, for 6/3d for Grey Walters' FURTHER OUTLOOK, and is addressed to someone called P. Shearing in Bournemouth.

Hmm, I thought, in view of my seaside bolt-hole, that's interesting. And then the penny dropped. I realised this shop was being run by a chap I last saw in 2006 when he was crating-up the stock from his shop in Winton, Bournemouth, prior to moving to Majorca. Belatedly I also noticed the four-foot-wide notice over the desk, reading 'Bournemouth Books'. Anyway, I mentioned the magic words 'Bob Wardzinski' and he immediately became very affable and dropped his prices to 10 euros – 'I have to charge a lot', he said apologetically, 'because I can't replace my stock of English books over here'.

Apparently he went out to the island because his daughter married a Spaniard and he wanted to be near her. But it hadn't worked out very well – 'they don't like foreigners,' he said, and I think he'd rather have been back in Bournemouth. Still, feeling I'd better buy something I picked up #19, *MOMENT WITHOUT TIME*, a collection I remembered fondly from the past. (Unfortunately when I got home it turned out I already had it). But then I dropped Bob a line to tell him about this chance encounter, and he replied with rather a shocking story.

“Rod – the gentleman concerned – had a rough time over here also. If I said his partner, Heather Barnett, was brutally murdered with a knife by an unknown killer and initially Rod was arrested you will begin to get a picture. Recently an Italian man has been arrested and is being questioned about her murder.”

I checked on Google and the verdict of the trial had been announced on 29th June (2011). This was the 'hair murderer', a lunatic who killed a woman in his own country before fleeing to Britain and doing it all over again. Nasty!

As a final note I mentioned my visit to Greg, who made the expected remark that if our Spanish seller was short of stock he knew several British booksellers who would be only too pleased to replenish supplies at bargain rates. Greg also commented that this must be the same man who advertised a collection of SFBC editions on eBay some time ago, which were 'bought' (in principle) by our big friendly giant of the publishing world, MJE.

Sure enough, this was confirmed by our man; “Yes, those are (were) mine! It must have been at least four or five years ago, but I bought a whole set of SFBC editions from this guy, who turned out to have moved to Majorca and couldn't work out how to ship them. Why he didn't find this out before listing them God only knows. Maybe he hoped the winning bid would come from somewhere in the Balearics. We had a couple of desultory conversations which came to nothing. I hadn't paid, so nothing lost.”

And now for the tricky bit...

All of the above was written and set-up nearly eighteen months ago, along with Ian Watson's article, when my enthusiasm was running strongly after good response to #19 and great fun at the Birmingham Eastercon. Among other things I was anxious to publish the next instalment of Bruce Burn's 'Wandering Ghu' (with some great unseen photographs) which had already been once-postponed. But then things began to get complicated. First, two special occasions were looming ever-nearer – the first one being the 80th anniversary of Britain's second SF group, in Liverpool, which as nearly as Rob Hansen could calculate was formed in the summer of 1931. (Well worth celebrating, since it would also have been on the run-up to the 60th anniversary of the post-war Liverpool SF society, founded in 1951 though a little later in the year).

I'd already been chasing material so was delighted to hear from Ramsey Campbell who had found several volumes of the minute-books of the LSFS (they did things properly in those days). He sent me a write-up of the first four years of club meetings which was a fascinating bit of fan-history, though I realised it needed photographs and personal anecdotes to make it come alive. Ina Shorrock wrote me several letters and Bill Harry promised a memoir, but then I became preoccupied with the other big occasion – the 75th anniversary of the world's first SF convention (in Leeds), which as Rob Hansen pointed out, was due to fall on 2nd January 2012. This was something we simply couldn't miss!

Rob suggested we should visit Leeds and scout-out the location at the Theosophic Hall, which he'd discovered was still standing. And we need to do it *soon*, he said, because there was an exhibition at the University ('Visions of the Future: The Art of Science Fiction') which closed on 11th June. Rob had supplied material for this, and had put the curator in touch with Jill Godfrey, daughter of Harold Gottliffe (who took the historic photographs of the 1937 con) and he was anxious to see how the promised panels on fandom had turned out. 'Yes', I said, 'and I'd like to visit Betty Rosenblum'.

We went on June 8th, and I have to say we had a great day out. We caught our separate trains from London and Birmingham respectively and met up within ten minutes at Leeds station. Rob was walking with a stick after a recent accident but fortunately it was only a short stroll across to Queen Square, a cluster of Victorian properties with an attractive garden in the centre. Everything seemed remarkably unchanged since the 1937 con pictures, although one detail didn't seem right. In the original shots the fans are standing outside a wide, pillared entrance to what was clearly the Theosophic Hall, whereas now their address plaque was attached to one of the smaller, terraced houses lower down the street. Rob guessed – and later was able to confirm – that there had been some sort of property-swap over the intervening years. Despite this, it was an odd feeling to be standing, more-or-less, in the exact spot where those young fans had assembled all those years ago!

Afterwards, we went to the University, also close to the city-centre, and after minor mishaps managed to find the exhibition, which I think was somewhat smaller than Rob had expected. But they'd done a nice job, producing a decent display on the convention, with Jill Godfrey's photographs (including one previously-unseen image of the young Arthur C. Clarke in his raincoat). You can see them on Rob's THEN website.

Finally, we visited Betty Rosenblum in her smart flat in the city suburbs. She has been out of touch with fandom for a very long time since husband Michael died in 1978 but was pleased to see us and made us very welcome. Betty told us about their whirlwind courtship – six weeks, I think, before getting married at the end of the war – and showed us a visitors' book full of signatures of various fans who had passed through. She would love to hear from some of them again!



Left: PW & Rob Hansen stand in the footsteps of giants in Queen Square, Leeds.



Right: PW & Betty Rosenblum in her flat, with a portrait of Michael on the wall behind. Photo by Rob.

Well, all of this was great fun but it wasn't getting *Relapse #20* done, and there were yet more complications. A month or so earlier I'd heard of another exhibition about science fiction. This was at the British Library in London, a much bigger production for which Mike Ashley had produced an accompanying book. 'Would you write something about it?' I'd asked him. Also, back in April, Dave Hodson had written to me with his plans for a revival of *New Worlds*, and suggested I should produce a special issue to accompany the re-launch (see Page 39). Since – quite independently – Charles Platt had offered to write about his experiences at *NW* in the late sixties, this also seemed like a good idea at the time.

You can see, I think, that by now I was starting to trip over my own feet, and to make matters worse both Mike and Charles sent in their copy embarrassingly quickly. What exactly *was* I going to put in the next issue?

In the end it was academic; a short time later I had to shelve fannish activities and attend to more immediate concerns. A new grandson had arrived on the scene, a minor medical problem put me out of action for a couple of months, and I became deeply involved with my other interests. Only now have I been able to pick up the pieces!

And so, finally, to the current issue. The fannish anniversaries have long since passed so for the moment I've put Ramsey's Liverpool piece on one side until I can do it justice, while Rob Hansen has covered the Leeds event in his THEN Archive. I'm running Mike Ashley's article now, before it becomes totally out-of-date, and Charles' memoir because this does roughly coincide with the equally long-delayed launch of the web-based *New Worlds*. And of course I had to include Tom Shippey's tribute to Harry Harrison, who died only three months ago. Add to that a whole host of letters, also getting on for eighteen months old and you'll see that I've quickly filled 40 pages.

That leaves some casualties, for which I apologise. I've had to hold back Andy Sawyer's take on the 'Out of this World' Exhibition, and once again postpone Bruce Burn's 'Wandering Ghru'. At 8000+ words plus photographs, this latest instalment of Bruce's British travelogue makes twelve pages alone. Next issue Bruce, I promise!

For the future? Well, George Locke promises 'Confessions of a Filthy Huckster', an account of his discoveries over forty years of dealing in SF materials, Sandra Bond may yet complete the first part of her survey of *Nebula*, and a wealth of correspondence between John Burke and Sam Youd has recently come to light. And to end on a positive note, Howard Rosenblum has very recently written, 'I've come across a box of my father's photos, looking to go back before the war. A good number of photos have subjects named. There is also a diary/visitors book for the Leeds SF League dating from the back end of 1936, a FAPA constitution from 1937, N3F stuff, press cuttings from pre- & immediately post-war. Fan historians need to form an orderly queue, & provide their own white gloves.'

- PW, 5-12-2012



And so the Brunner Legend continues.... with more stories from Ian, who was one of JB's closest friends for over twenty years. John sounds quite a decent sort (apart from the politics & the music); what a pity he felt it necessary to project a different, less agreeable persona in public. [pw]
Doctor Watson, I presume? Ian's picture

'A truly generous chap'

by Ian Watson



I'm looking at a painting by my wife Judy, who died in 2001, created as a Christmas present for John and Marjorie Brunner to hang in The Square House in South Petherton. And hang it did indeed for about 40 years until this Spring of 2011, when Li Yi Brunner, John's Chinese wife, went about selling The Square House, whereupon under the terms of John's will the painting should be returned. As it was, beautifully packaged, Li Yi being an artist with paper and card, and accompanied by a package of typewritten letters and carbons exchanged between John and me during the 1970s.

It was on a platform of Newcastle Railway Station following *Tynecon* in 1974 that I spied a solitary John eyeing Judy and me speculatively, a look in his eye suggesting that we might become friends. I'm not sure by now if we actually said anything to each other during the convention. *Tynecon* was my first Eastercon, following publication of my first novel, *THE EMBEDDING*, the previous July. (My first con ever was *Novacon 3* in November 1973, which I was well-

placed to attend, since I was working – in a manner of speaking – at the School of History of Art & Complementary Studies in a converted canal-side warehouse in Brum's Summer Row a mere stone's throw from Rog Peyton's *Andromeda*, which alerted me to the *Novacon*. I remember being impressed by GoH Ken Bulmer's speech commencing with "Friends and Fellow Fen!" and by young Chris Priest's long rock-star hair.)

And lo, friendship with the Brunners was to transpire, and quite soon too, because the first of those letters in the package, dated 27 November 1976, from St John Street, Oxford, where we then lived, has me asking Marjorie if I might dedicate my 4th novel, *ALIEN EMBASSY*, to her; as indeed happened. (The letters run from then until 22 March 1979, with 2 more letters a decade later.)

That first letter mentions us having been to a pub, then a caff that served delicious mash, probably in Somerset, and Marjorie applauding something I did in Liège (which has to be the Belgian national convention in July '76), and that John and I had both been at the '76 *Novacon*. The second letter (10 December '76) discloses that John and Marjorie had visited us in Oxford on Boxing Day 1975 on their way back from spending Xmas with John's mother in Watlington, Oxon.

The reason for letters, by the way, was that we had no phone in St John Street. "...telephones, how I hate them," I confided in a sort of pretentious aesthetic Oxfordy way. Alas, we couldn't accept a kindly invite to spend Xmas at The Square House in 1976 because the car hire company in Oxford (*the company*) had lost its Maxi, wrapped around a tree, and only a Maxi would accommodate a child seat for Jessica (born May 1973). So instead John and Marjorie must revisit us on Boxing Day '76 in company with the dogs, which apparently Jess was desperate to see. (Those dogs were Domino and Vriskite, both very amiable, having been trained by Marjorie –



On the panel at *Tynecon* – just not at the same time!

Photos by
Lars-Olov Strandberg

let's not go into their successors, the hounds from hell which John obtained much later from the Queen's breeder, "bred for beauty rather than brains". Oh really?)

I'm wondering if we'd already visited The Square House for Xmas 1975. John over-ovened something Italian for starters, and Marjorie's authentic local partridges rattled a bit with lead shot. Then a walk to the pub in the next village on Xmas day, to bring back a turkey cooked by the baker who devoted his ovens on Xmas morning to mass-roasting of fowls for the whole neighbourhood. John had laid on a pin of local real ale, which was excellent – apart from a pin being 4½ gallons, virtually impossible to finish off during 2 days and a bit when we were also going to pubs, causing on departure a minor strop: "Well, I'll just have to pour it away!"

But never mind a mild strop: John was a truly generous chap. I recall him telling me once, back when his fortunes were better, "You can tap me for a thousand if you ever need it." And he and Marjorie did set up and pay out of their own pockets for the Martin Luther King Memorial Award, for works likely to advance race relations. This certainly ran for quite a few years, and I think the prize was a hundred quid, a decent sum in those days.

In April 1978 we're about to attend the South Petherton Folk Festival, of which John and Marjorie were both on the committee; I think squabbles erupted in some other year. For folk music fans, Marjorie writes back to me that they're putting up in The Square House "the Ian Campbell Folk Group, Eric and Audrey Winter (mentioned by the Spinners last Sunday on radio) and Mark Childs with his west highland terrier, 'Alpina'".

I still recall a singalong outside The Crown, featuring 'All around my hat I will wear the green willow...' Marjorie anticipated that Frank Herbert might come to South Petherton for the folk festival, but he never turned up. And she was having some trouble with sciatica.

In October '78 a trip to Greece on the part of the Brunners to spend pleasant days with Judy Blish and Takis (her chap after Jim died) resulted in them selling THE SQUARES OF THE CITY, discovering the devious behaviour of German agent Gerd Plessl, getting irritated by the Master Race on the beach and swarming around Athens, irksomely having, in Marjorie's words, to "stress everywhere in Greek that NO we were not Germans WE WERE ENGLISH"

"Normally we just go around carrying our World Citizen passports," she wrote. "Then suddenly we are pushed into stating our patriotic status. It spoils things... We came home via Venice, Milan and Paris where we spent time with friends. [In Paris that would most likely be the charming Claude Avice and Mme Avice. Claude, who wrote SF as Pierre Barbet. Or maybe it was Gérard Klein, whose THE OVERLORDS OF WAR John translated.] We have more or less given up the idea of building John's dream house (after he has written his best seller of course) [that would be STEAMBOATS] in Greece. I am now settling down to learn Italian again. If we have the funds, we hope to go back to our little Italian beach next year."

After they got home, a friend's neurotic starved greyhound bitch cornered and killed their cat Suki right in The Square House, to be replaced by a redpoint Siamese tom called Puck.

In March 1979 we're due to rendezvous with the Brunners in Metz for a French con in May, and a PS handwritten by me on the letter says Card Just Came – Friday

for Lunch, *Fine!* Also in March '79 I notice that it was apparently Marjorie who turned us on to the idea of buying a house in a village. Moreton Pinkney in Northants as it turned out, because MP was quite close to Oxford as regards house-hunting. "Next stop maybe," say I, "in another couple of years perhaps, the West Country." To be closer to John and Marjorie, I guess. Here I am still. It's tedious moving house, and we only did it in the first place because... but that's a long story, involving myself defending myself eloquently in court on a charge of criminal damage (well, the Police Prosecuting Officer congratulated me afterwards on committing the crime), et cetera, and this is about Brunner, not me.

I'm sure we spent Xmas with the Brunners four times in all (twice in South Petherton, twice in Oxford). Which exact years, I'm not positive. However, the painting featured on the cover, displacing Giles gadzooks, must have been a present given in the early 1980s. That's because the CND march in question is visibly a pretty big one, to judge from just that one street in central London. Between 1979 and 1984 the membership of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament zoomed back from 4,000 to 100,000, rekindling the glory days of the Sixties. The October 1981 peace march through London numbered quarter of a million. Very likely the painting depicts 1981.

John had been active long before that. CND's marching anthem, sung on the first Aldermaston march in 1959, was written by John: 'Don't you hear the H-bomb's thunder/ Echo like the crack of doom?' What's more, he wrote a novel, THE DAYS OF MARCH, inspired by his earlier CND activities, travelling with CND caravans to propagandise, attending the Moscow Peace Congress of 1962 (where he met Yuri Gagarin) as a CND observer, much in company with Marjorie whom he married in 1958 after meeting her through the personal column of a newspaper. By the time we met John and Marjorie they were veterans of the struggle for sanity, although I believe the novel was only finally published in 1988 by Jim Goddard's Kerosina.

Judy's painting was based on a photograph, perhaps taken by Allan Boyd-Newton of South Petherton. I'm not sure if John and Marjorie joined a CND coach from Yeovil, or whether they tootled down to London in John's pride and joy, his yellow Triumph Stag sports car in which they also buzzed around Europe. The chap on the right was in fact a complete stranger, and young Jessica was added, but since she looks about 8 years old this also fits with 1981. From left to right: Judy, John, Marjorie, me, and the dog is Domino.

Finally the Triumph Stag became unreliable, causing John to replace it with a second-hand Lancia. "Very *you*, Mr Brunner," John related his local garage-man as having declared when John drove the car there to display it, or maybe just to get some petrol.

That was after Marjorie had died, by starving herself to death in hospital. A stroke paralysed her. Always she'd vowed that if she was reduced to a vegetable condition she wanted to have life support switched off. I think she had formally documented this. The hospital refused to go along with her wishes and when Marjorie realised – since she was still aware – she began refusing food and drink. According to John, the hospital retaliated by denying Marjorie pain-killers, until almost her final hour. I believe it took twelve days for her to die, paralysed and in pain, but defiant. Marjorie was very strong-willed, personally as well as politically, as befitted the consort of John Brunner. // ian watson 2011

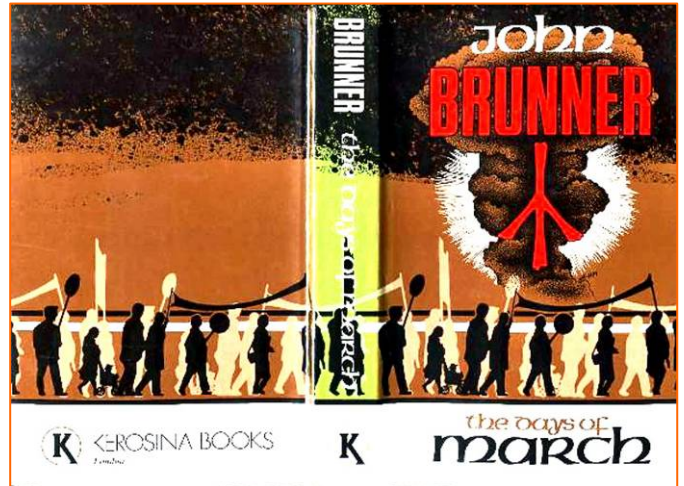


I hadn't come across JB's 'CND' book before David Redd inadvertently mentioned it in an e-mail, after which I just *had* to ask him for more details. Fortunately David is the most helpful and obliging of contributors and he quickly came up with this thoughtful review. [pw]

Photo from David

THE DAYS OF MARCH

Reviewed by David Redd



I've revisited THE DAYS OF MARCH by John Brunner (Kerosina Books, London, 1988) at the behest of Peter Weston, a mean man with a behest. Can this non-SF novel based on the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament provide any insights into Brunner himself? Not really, but perhaps...

Not really, because the protagonist is not Brunner. You follow twenty-two-year old Micky Daws through an early-Sixties London of coffee bars, sleazy digs, casual sex at parties, and occasional work. For "Liberty," a fictional equivalent of CND, Micky helps organise meetings and events which culminate in a massive protest march. Throughout, Brunner tries to avoid *roman à clef* elements, and keeps his characters (and incidents) fictional.

So the story is realistic but not real, commemorating CND through its authentic descriptions of the campaign effort, and through its portrait of Liberty people as fallible human beings just doing their best. Brunner is excellent on the nitty-gritty of office work: the harassed organiser, the psychology of handing out leaflets, the chaotic volunteer network, and many details normally omitted from the official record. I quote one typical document: "...this is a simple account that conceals an enormous amount of complex liaison and last minute hitches. As the launch neared, the work became fast and exhilarating..." (from *Natur Cymru* No. 38.) MARCH displays all this concealed work in close-up; a fictional mirror for seeing reality.

But perhaps... the novel reflects the author's life and beliefs, where such details help construct his portrait of the times. In discussions and actions you are shown a general left-wing philosophy and a wish to save humanity; you are also shown cast members losing it and doing totally the wrong thing. And one very minor character, not Micky, might be the author in a Hitchcock moment.

Ken Crystal is a "neatbearded" successful writer possessing "piercing insight," his latest TV play being *The Cure of Souls*. A theme of MARCH is that the world is sick. "Ken" means knowledge, and "Crystal" leads us to crystal ball. (Wordplay occurs in several character names.) Ken is downplayed, wisely, but if you recall Brunner anecdotes in *Relapse* you might detect a few echoes within MARCH:

"We will go live our lives with what little desperate love we can ... we want to be forgiven for the slights and the sarcasms and the cruel cold shoulder." – p. 208-9

"Hell of a thing to hate your relations. Only ... they taught us how." – p. 72

"This is what drives: the sense of purpose. This thing matters." – p.155

"The furthest conscious motive usually extends is this: it's the right thing to do in the circumstances." – p. 72

Overall, these resonances are few. Micky has fled a proposed army career, but Pilot Officer J K H Brunner was no conscientious objector to military service.

In style and content the novel is a mass of small interlocking details, like a jigsaw puzzle which you assemble only slowly. The choppy telling and Micky's unlovable personality do not make for smooth enjoyment. (The story unfolds in a third-person stream of consciousness: "Sudden thought. Anxious fumbling in jacket pocket. Quarter bottle of rum..."). Amidst such fragments there are few traces of the author himself, but a few short sentences do seem to indicate Brunner's personal views, whether on his campaigning or his writing or his life:

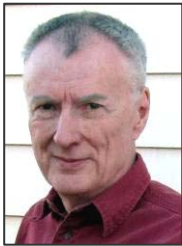
"This is the thing we do. This is the monument even if we achieve no more..." – p. 309

"All your actions have long-term results. It's to your credit as a human being if the good results outnumber the bad." – p. 121

"You out there! You can't hear me but it doesn't matter ... I LOVE YOU! All of you!" – p. 309

Brunner wrote MARCH at the end of his career as a novelist, with failing finances and failing talent closing in. You sense a rather lonely old man calling to "you out there." I've been trying to understand him for years. Brunner was composed of egotism and insecurity, intelligence and ordinariness, kindness and rudeness, success and underachievement. You can see all these qualities in the authentic, hideous, compelling, annoying, keenly observed flux that is THE DAYS OF MARCH. //

– David Redd, 30.5.2011



One of the best things about doing *Relapse* has been the way it's brought me back into touch with people I used to know, nowhere more so than in the case of my old sparring-partner, Charles Platt. We were good friends once but parted company long ago over irreconcilable differences in attitudes and life-styles; he was always far more willing to go for new experiences while I preferred to stay close to home. But more recently we've had something of a rapprochement and I'm delighted he has written this insightful account of a time when the world of British science fiction was shaken-up like never before. [pw] *Charles in 2011. His photo.*

New Worlds for Old, 1965-1970

by Charles Platt

'The Bellyflops'; front row has Mike Moorcock, Charles, Pete Taylor & Langdon Jones. Top row is unknown. Photo from Mike Moorcock, 1965

All photos & captions from Charles unless otherwise noted.



When my family moved to London, early in 1965, my first priority was to leave home. I signed a lease on a three-story furnished slum in a row of old terrace houses on Westbourne Park Road, in Notting Hill Gate, where rents were cheap because race riots between the Jamaicans and the Irish had stigmatised the area.

The house was Dickensian, with peeling damp-stained wallpaper, dirty rectangles of fraying carpet, cracked linoleum in the hallways, yellowed ceilings, and cobwebs everywhere. The furniture was falling apart, and when I switched on the light in the upstairs front room, the fixture exploded and the tasseled maroon shade crashed to the floor. I felt immediately at home there. It was the perfect antidote to my protected upper-middle-class childhood.

Sometimes I would drive my two-tone Vauxhall Cresta to the London College of Printing, where I learned about typesetting and sheet-fed offset presses. More often I stayed home and tried to write science fiction.

By amazing good fortune, Mike Moorcock lived a short walk away, at 8 Colville Terrace. He invited me to drop in, and I found myself sitting opposite a tall, bearded man in his twenties, fashionably dressed in a black leather waistcoat, tight black trousers, and pointed-toed boots with Cuban heels. He told me that in his new position as editor of *New Worlds*, he planned to break away from the old 1950s storytelling clichés and take science fiction in an entirely different direction, influenced by modern writers such as Jorge Luis

Borges. I felt intimidated by Mike's erudition, and utterly confused by his literary game plan. *Jorge Luis who?* The books I read had lurid covers depicting alien creatures, exploding planets, men with fanciful weapons, and giant cities that looked as if they were made from brushed aluminum. That was the kind of fiction I understood.

I confessed to Moorcock that I wasn't widely read, so he set about remediating my literary education. He loaned me a copy of William Burroughs' *NAKED LUNCH* and encouraged me to read J. G. Ballard's collection, *THE VOICES OF TIME*.

In my little room overlooking Westbourne Park Road, I opened the books and felt deeply disoriented. Burroughs' use of language, his scene-shifting, his telegraphic sentences, his evocative yet economical descriptions, his metaphors, his casual inclusion of explicit sexual content – I had never imagined that such prose existed. The book was like a physical blow to the head. As for Ballard, his book was published as science fiction, yet it wasn't science fiction as I understood it, because he violated one of its cardinal rules. He provided no rational explanations. He presented his surreal scenarios with casual indifference to plausibility, as if he could validate them merely by describing them. Still, there was no denying the power of his work, which fascinated and excited me.

A few days later, Mike Moorcock and Langdon Jones dropped in at my tenement. They found me in the middle of

working on a new story, which I confessed was influenced by my reading of Ballard. Moorcock seemed pleased, and said that he wanted to see what I wrote as soon as it was finished. I felt flattered, although later I realized that since he was instituting such a radically new editorial policy, he must have been in urgent need of appropriate material. Traditional science fiction by writers such as Ted Tubb and Ken Bulmer wasn't going to work anymore. To him, I was a potential resource.

The story became a novelette, which I finished within a couple of weeks. I delivered it by hand, went home, and waited with trepidation. Just a few hours later, the phone rang, and Moorcock told me he liked it and was going to feature it on the cover. A year previously, I had been in a pit of utter misery at Cambridge University, seriously contemplating suicide. Now in Notting Hill I seemed to have entered an alternate universe where I would be given whatever I most wanted.

I was still only 19 years old.

Soon I was hanging out in pubs with Mike and Lang (as I now thought of them). Lang served as assistant editor for *New Worlds*, lived with his parents in Ealing, wrote short stories, and had played in a military band. He was very serious about modern music. Mike had once played skiffle (a bastard English mix of blues and rockabilly), and I was playing keyboards in a band that did cover versions of American R&B. United by our disparate musical interests, Lang, Mike and I started hanging out at The Flamingo Club on Wardour Street, where the tiny stage was graced by Rod Stewart, Brian Auger, Cream, and Georgie Fame – and even the legendary Wilson Pickett, when he toured the UK.

So far as we were concerned, Zoot Money's Big Roll band was the major attraction. Some of the shows were all-nighters, from midnight to dawn. Typically I would get drunk and doze off around 3am. Mike kept himself awake with diet pills. Lang, at one point, attempted to get high by overdosing on aspirin. The drug culture had not yet washed ashore in Britain.

One of Mike's most impressive traits, to me, was his optimism. His wife was pregnant with their second child. They were planning to move to a larger, more expensive flat. He had phased out his remunerative comic-strip script writing. *New Worlds* seemed to be his primary, inadequate source of income, yet he was planning to transform the magazine into something that would alienate its writers and annoy its readers, while its cheesy paperback format almost guaranteed that it would be scorned and ignored in the larger world of literature. Did that sound like a smart business plan? A shrewd career move to maintain himself and his family in a state of security for the indefinite future?

Such questions seemed irrelevant. He was determined to pursue his vision of transforming science fiction, and his force of personality made his grandiose visions contagious. Everyone associated with the magazine developed a contact high.

A couple of months later, I summoned the courage to voice a word of criticism. In its paperback format the publication was not in any sense designed. It was just a plain, ordinary paperback book. "So maybe you can improve it," Mike said. He had seen my fanzine, which showed at least a rudimentary understanding of typography, and knew that I was attending the London College of Printing, albeit on a

lackadaisical basis. So here I was, confused again, to be told that I could dabble in book design, with only the most minimal training and no professional experience whatsoever.

I started meeting some of the contributors. Ballard impressed me so much I had difficulty talking to him, all the more because he wasn't a very social man. "Maybe we can go to my local pub and, you know, hoist a few," he would say. I think he indulged in this false bonhomie because he imagined that it was what "normal" people did. He had no real interest in doing it himself. He led a very private life in his little semi-detached house in Shepperton, where he sat at his cheap portable typewriter in his living room, surrounded by the noise of children.

I visited him there several times. On one occasion, 'Anywhere, Anyhow, Anywhere' had just been released as a single by The Who, and Ballard had acquired a copy. Normally he never listened to pop music, and he seemed excited by his sudden foray into youth culture. "Have you heard it?" he asked.

Well, of course I had heard it. The pirate radio stations were giving it a lot of airplay.

"But have you listened to it at 33?" Ballard asked.

In case he was unaware of it, I pointed out that a 7" single was designed to be played at 45 rpm.

"Yes, yes, but it sounds better at 33."

I laughed at that, but Ballard, as always, was very serious, and his response was inevitable. "Have you tried listening to it at 33?"

I had not, and so, for the next four minutes, I had to put up with the lugubrious mumbling noise as the disc turned slowly on his Dansette auto-changer.

"It sounds good at 16 rpm too," Ballard said, when the torment finally ended. To evade this ominous prospect, I went upstairs to use his toilet, only to find that I had trouble flushing it. Finally I went back down and asked if there was something wrong with it.

"No, no," he said, "it's fine! You just have to do it right." Then he seemed to take pity on me. "I use it as a kind of test," he confided. "I like to see how many times people will try to make it flush before they give up. And you know the person who tried the most times?" There was an expectant pause. "John Brunner! He was up there struggling with it for about fifteen minutes!" Ballard laughed happily.

In his Freudian view of the world, I wasn't entirely sure what conclusions he had drawn about Brunner from the toilet test, but I guessed they were not flattering.

Times with Brian Aldiss were easier, because Brian was always so pleasant and full of enthusiasm. It didn't start out that way, though. I had written a nasty review of his novel *EARTHWORKS*, for my little fanzine *Tomorrowscope*, which I maintained purely as an excuse to beg free copies of books from publishers. Brian is not the kind of writer who forgets a nasty review.

At the next science fiction convention, he and responded to my critique by seizing me by the arms and hustling me into a wardrobe in Brian's hotel room. Someone closed the door, and someone else then attempted to turn the wardrobe over on its face. I was drunk and barely aware of what was going on, and the revelers soon released me anyway. Having vented his grudge, Brian became a convivial companion. I never quite figured out why he was so friendly toward me, especially since I was incapable of participating in



Mike, Brian & 'Jimmy' Ballard at the Brighton Arts Festival, 1967. At top right is Mike Kustow. Picture origin unknown.

any wide-ranging conversations about books. But somehow I always felt comfortable with him and with Jimmy, even while I was intimidated by their talent.

Looking back, I wonder if it was partly a class thing. All three of us shared comfortable, upper-middle-class backgrounds, and lived in the South of England. If we sat down at a fancy dinner, we would know which fork to use. Ballard had studied at Cambridge, Aldiss had attended the upscale private Framlingham School, and I had been admitted to Cambridge, even though I didn't stay there. Conversely, I sensed that class was a problem when I spoke to Ted Tubb or Ken Bulmer, because I think they felt that I was pretentious, or had a condescending attitude. They seemed uncomfortably aware of their lack of higher education, and when I told them I was a dropout myself, that didn't seem to help. I had a special admiration for Ted and his work, but I don't think he ever believed me. We were on opposite sides of a cultural divide.

By the time *New Worlds* made its transition from paperback book to large, glossy format I was spending much of my life hanging out in the Moorcock living room, in the flat that he had moved to at 87A Ladbroke Grove. We would talk expansively about fiction, magazine features, and design ideas, while listening to the latest album by Jimi Hendrix or the Beatles. London had become a global cultural epicenter, as British music reached its peak of innovation, British art acquired a new, vigorous sense of identity, and British fashion became increasingly outrageous. And Moorcock's flat somehow felt like an epi-epicenter; an anarchic vortex of creativity.

Brian Aldiss had obtained an Arts Council grant for the magazine, and Mike felt sufficiently confident to re-make it with himself as the publisher. He told me that he wanted something of such high quality and ambition, critical skepticism or opposition would be neutralized by the very excellence of its content. The term "science fiction" would not even be used anymore. We would be publishing fiction that transcended categories, fiction that would sweep through the creaky British literary establishment like a tsunami. Plus, we would publish science and art, although Mike seemed a bit vague about that.

I was expected to come up with a design that would be appropriate. It never occurred to me that I might not be equal to the task. My main concern was that I couldn't

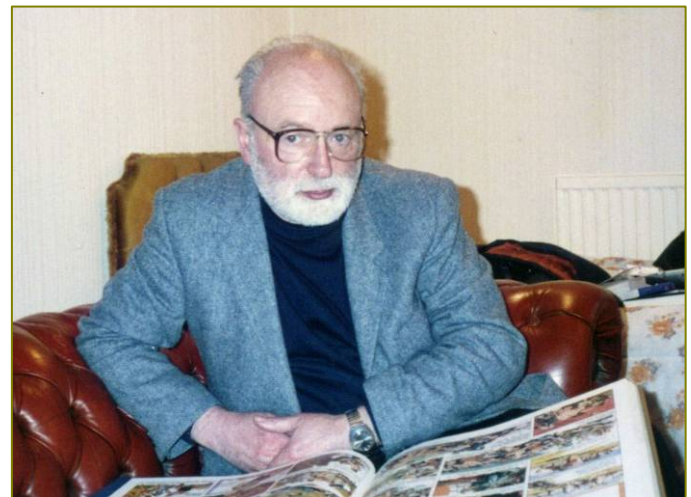
visualise exactly what Mike was talking about. Also, while he had strong opinions about design, he was unable to express them clearly. Again and again, I would present him with logos which he would study intently before setting them aside and saying, "That's close to what I have in mind."

Still, he had clear ideas on page count and cover price. We would print 64 pages plus cover, and sell for three shillings and sixpence. How he reached this conclusion was a mystery; he certainly didn't run any numbers. In fact, for the first two years of the large-size *New Worlds*, no one ever compared income and expenses to determine our break-even point. Such was Mike's air of charismatic authority, we just trusted his judgment.

It wasn't until 1969, when he went on a trip to America, that I spent half an hour adding everything up and found that even if we sold every copy that we printed, we would still make a loss, regardless of our Arts Council grant.

Hanging out in Moorcock's living room, I became familiar with everyone associated with the magazine. Jim Cawthorn always seemed to be there, sitting unobtrusively in the corner, sketching and saying almost nothing. Jim had a problem, as an artist: When he was commissioned to do something for publication, his style lost its spontaneity. The compositions were still good, but the drama was gone.

So Mike bought an artist's sketch book – just a bound volume of blank pages – and left it lying around, hoping that Jim would happen to draw something publishable. Sometimes this worked; more often, we harvested just a few fragments. Mike's friendship with Jim dated back to the days when Jim had painstakingly etched illustrations into waxed mimeograph stencils for reproduction in Mike's fanzine. Mike's efforts to find greater recognition for Jim continued throughout the rest of Jim's life.



Images of Jim Cawthorn are hard to find; this one is from later (in Dave Britton's house) but the essential loneliness of the man shines through [pw]. Photo by Harry Warren, March 1989.

I visited Jim's little flat a couple of times, in a lodging house off Ladbroke Grove. It was one small room, and utterly basic, with the bed neatly made and a few plain white dishes beside an electric hot-plate. It looked like the domicile of a military man, and indeed I think Jim had served in the armed forces. He was politically conservative, and utterly out of sympathy with everything "modern." He said little, and what he did say was hard to understand, as he spoke in a low monotone with a heavy North Country accent.



One of the few images to exist of youthful, happy Barry Bayley in the Globe, aged 25 [pw]. Photo from Bruce Burn. 1963.



“Evans had ambitions to become a celebrity scientist.”

Dr Christopher Evans, speaking at Sci-con. Photo from Bill Burns, 1970.

The Portobello Road flat, below: Charles comments: “Diane and I lived in the two floors above a betting shop. That's my car outside, a two-tone Vauxhall Cresta with panoramic windshield and tail fins, known affectionately by my friends as the Pimpmobile!” (1969)



I often wondered if Jim got lonely in his little room, but he was the kind of person who had made his choices long ago, and seemed reconciled and philosophical, although I don't know if he was actually happy.

Barry Bayley was another old friend of Mike's, also in the Notting Hill area, living alone in a flat that looked a bit more like a home because at least it had some books in it. Barry had written his share of comics for Fleetway Publications, but lacked confidence as a serious writer. I think he felt that *New Worlds* had gone in a direction which he was unequipped to follow. It published a few of his stories, but he told me he had many more that remained unfinished.

I admired Barry for his unfailingly inventive ideas, so I asked to see some of the incomplete work. I felt that with my journeyman skills as a writer I could at least complete a few of them, so that the ideas wouldn't be wasted. This is how I came to collaborate on a short piece titled 'A Taste of the Afterlife' (with a Cawthorn illustration that exemplified Jim's difficulty maintaining a loose style when he was drawing for publication).

As time passed, Barry moved out of London. His parents died, and he moved into their house in Shropshire, where he lived with a woman whom he had married impulsively. He said he didn't like family life, and he didn't like the house.* The one thing that had given him pleasure was to look out of his front window at a small flowering tree, but for no apparent reason, his wife cut it down. I could never decide if Barry was as miserable as he claimed to be, because complaining seemed to be a fulltime recreation for him. If he had been happy, I think he would have had difficulty admitting it.

Barry had very little formal science education, which was paradoxically helpful to him as a science-fiction writer, because it freed his imagination. Unfortunately it also tempted him into pseudoscience. One time when I visited him he told me about his theory that gravity might be a force of repulsion rather than attraction. In this cosmology, we were pressed against the surface of the earth by the cumulative repulsive force of all the stars in our galaxy.

Eventually I persuaded him to show me the fifty or so pages he had written as a serious treatise on this subject.

Through a friend, I found a physicist who was willing to do a short critique of what Barry had written. The critique got off to a grim start with the statement, "I hope Mr. Bayley realizes that this is not a new idea." It then went on to explain that for Barry to be taken seriously, he would have to do some mathematics that would show why his theory explained gravitational phenomena better than conventional science.

Barry did not receive this well. "It's just typical of the blinkered scientific establishment," he said, without any trace of humor or irony, as he tossed it aside. He pursued his theory, but I never found out where it led him.

Barry was a very good-hearted person, and amazingly tough. Initially when he left London and got married, he found work as a coal miner. One time Mike and I drove up to see him near Christmas, bringing a huge variety of food that

* I visited Barry around 1986, and he was in a run-down little council house on a dreadful estate in the backwaters of Telford. We spent a long philosophical lunchtime in the local (horrible) pub and that was probably the most fun he'd had that year! [pw]

Mike had bought, as if we were giving aid to a less-developed country. “You shouldn’t have done that, Mike,” Barry said, but there was no doubt that he was glad that we did, since he was going through a difficult period after losing one of his primary markets at Ace Books.

In *New Worlds*, to justify our claim to publish fiction, science, and art, we had to find some real science. Our primary source turned out to be Dr. Christopher Evans, a maverick scientist at the National Physical Laboratory. I visited him at his lab one time, where he was researching the well-established but relatively obscure phenomenon whereby segments of an intense after-image in the eye will disappear and reappear, as if nerve bundles in the retina “blank out” in response to sustained stimulation.

Evans theorised that all human senses might behave the same way, and was looking for volunteers who would try an auditory version of the phenomenon by listening to sounds on headphones. It was quite interesting, but totally inconclusive, and I ended up feeling that he was really just a dilettante – like Barry Bayley, but with a Ph.D., a research budget, and a more sensitive bullshit detector.

Ballard’s novel CRASH was largely written around a character named Vaughan, who is very clearly modeled on Christopher Evans. At the time he wrote the novel, Ballard referred to Evans as his closest friend, although I suspect that a “close” conversation between them would have sounded more like a strategy meeting. I once asked Jimmy how Evans had felt about seeing himself as the central character in CRASH, especially bearing in mind the scene where the narrator subjects Vaughan to anal rape. “I’ve often wondered about that myself,” Jimmy said, “but I never asked him. And he never said anything about it.”

This struck me as amazingly British: to write a novel in which you describe yourself inserting your penis in the rectum of your closest pal, and then continue your friendship without either person saying a word about it.

Evans had ambitions to become a celebrity scientist, and seemed to realize fairly quickly that *New Worlds* was not going to get him very far in that respect. After he stopped writing for the magazine, he got an entrée to the BBC and created some TV shows. But he died of cancer, quite young. So far as I know, his work at the National Physical Laboratory never yielded any significant results.

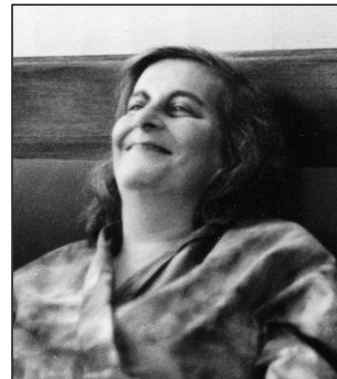
By the time *New Worlds* was reincarnated in its large glossy format, I was living in fractionally less primitive conditions in a flat above a betting shop at 271 Portobello Road. I cohabited with Diane Lambert, who had managed publicity for Sphere Books before she quit her job and embarked upon the unrewarding task of trying to sell advertising space in our magazine. She used the front room as her office, while I did the layouts and paste-up in the room above. A bedroom and a kitchen were at the rear, diagonally facing the Metropolitan Line, where red-painted trains made a whining, grinding noise that I found quite pleasant, as they trundled in and out of London.

In a building of this vintage, there was no central heating, and the fireplaces had been sealed up in conformance with the Clean Air Act of 1956. During the gray, damp winter months, we maintained a minimal amount of warmth with a couple of paraffin stoves. I had to thaw my ice-cold fingers over one of the stoves for ten minutes each morning, before I was limber enough to use a typewriter keyboard. But I loved

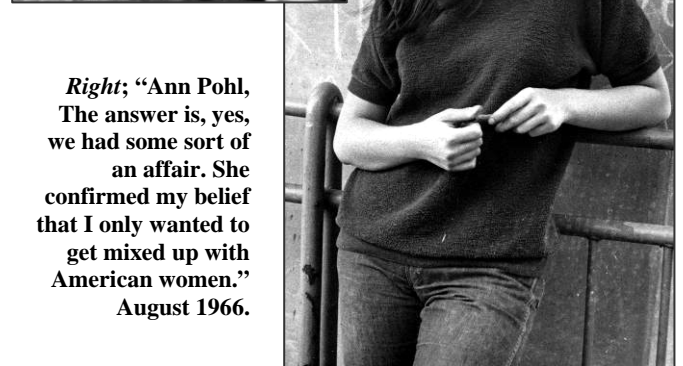
the location, overlooking the street market. We bought second-hand furniture from the market, bought our food from the market, and in the evening we took saucepans to a local pub, which filled them with draught bitter so that we could take them home and get drunk.

Diane also managed the subscriptions to *New Worlds*. I think at our peak we sent out about 500 copies a month. She typed address labels, put the magazines in envelopes, stacked them in a rusty baby carriage that she found in the street, and wheeled them to the local post office. Some of our subscribers were in the United States, and the handful of copies that crossed the Atlantic had a disproportionate impact.

I suppose to someone such as Judith Merrill, or Tom Disch, or John Sladek, or Norman Spinrad, when *New Worlds* underwent its metamorphosis from a British emulation of an American monthly science-fiction magazine to a book-sized monthly collection whose editor claimed a radical synthesis with modern literature, it must have roused curiosity, at the very least. And so, one by one, or sometimes in pairs, the Americans made pilgrimages to Ladbroke Grove.



Left: “Judy Merrill. She always made me nervous.” Buxton, 1968.



Right; “Ann Pohl, The answer is, yes, we had some sort of an affair. She confirmed my belief that I only wanted to get mixed up with American women.” August 1966.

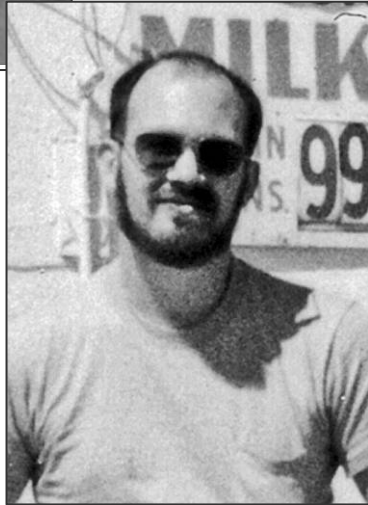
One of the first was Judith Merrill, an ex-wife of Frederik Pohl, who edited the highly influential anthology YEAR’S BEST SF. I found Judy quite intimidating. She had an assertive personality and a speculative way of looking at me which seemed to suggest that some kind of intimacy might be on her agenda. Rumor had it that more than one young writer had been told that the road to publication in Judy’s anthology led through her bedroom. I never uncovered conclusive evidence to substantiate this, but it seemed disturbingly plausible. Personally I was far more interested in her daughter, Ann (Pohl).

Judy methodically established a position for herself in the *New Worlds* social circle by organizing soirées at a flat that she rented on the edge of the Notting Hill area. I found these events disconcerting, because they were so unlike the scene that I had become used to in Moorcock’s living room.



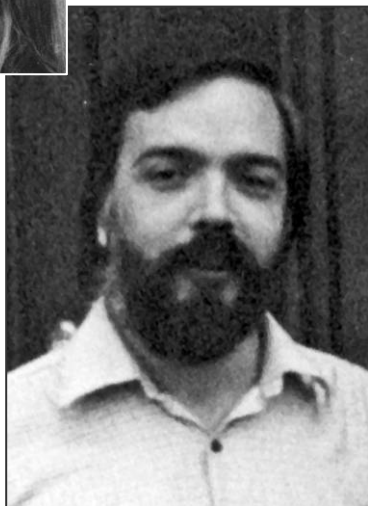
Tom Disch at Buxton. "I recall driving Tom around some local scenery, where he threw a big ball of greasy fish-and-chip newspaper out of the window. "Did that bother you?" he asked. "Yes," I said. Tom smiled cheerfully. "I thought it would." April, 1968.

"This photo of Tom Disch was taken outside a cheap gas station in New Mexico. I drove across the US with him and his friend Marilyn Hacker (who used to be married to Samuel Delany). This was after Tom decided to give up trying to be a straight guy, and moved in with his lifetime lover Charles Naylor. But Tom was nevertheless on intimate terms with Marilyn." May, 1970.



Charles writes, "I lived with my girlfriend Diane for about three years. It felt much, much longer. After I emigrated to the United States, I was told she became a radical socialist and expressed her solidarity with the working classes by getting a job as a baggage handler at Heathrow. Could have been true." 1967.

"John Sladek and his wife lived here in Kilburn in a rather miserable little flat, after they moved out of my miserable little flat. Later they relocated into a council flat in West Hampstead which Pamela, I think, managed to obtain through some kind of dubious plan." October 1970.



Instead of people wandering in and out at random, or sitting on the floor reading, or getting into arguments, or getting drunk and quietly passing out, we were expected to stand around chatting like mature, civilised adults.

Most confusing of all, Judy served food and beverages on plastic cups and paper plates. In the late 1960s, this was a rare extravagance. I wondered how much money she must have, to be willing to waste it on dishes that were used once before she threw them away.

Judy somehow convinced *Playboy* magazine that the New Wave was an important movement in modern fiction. She got them to sponsor a contest for New Wave writers, each of whom would create a story around a full-page illustration furnished by the magazine. The illustration was of a hideous piece of bad sculpture – a head and torso without arms, formed from what looked like magenta-colored mud. I wrote a serious story about a Vietnam war veteran whose arms had been blown off. Judy told me it would be unpublishable, because the Vietnam war was a taboo topic, but I was intransigent. After all, wasn't *Playboy* supposed to be a taboo-breaking publication? Of course Judy turned out to be right, and I had no chance of winning. Tom Disch received that honor, with a forgettable little story titled 'Fun with your New Head.'

Disch arrived in London with John Sladek while Judy was still there. Sladek was endlessly witty and entertaining, yet I sensed in him a kind of core melancholia, and indeed there was a half-hearted suicide attempt a year or so later, in Moorcock's bathroom. I never did find out why, and John rebuilt his facade almost immediately. Within half an hour, he had resumed entertaining people with jokes and anecdotes.

Disch had a more assertive, commanding presence, and made no secret of his high literary ambitions. He was a lapsed Catholic who seemed to have moved his idealistic focus from God to literature. I was of little interest, from his point of view, since I had never read Greek mythology or writers such as Thomas Mann, and had no interest in doing so. Nor did I share Tom's obsession with vocabulary. When I visited him once at the room he rented – in Barry Bayley's building, I think – I noticed a long, neatly typed list of long words that were unfamiliar to me, taped to the wall. Some of them had been crossed out. "Are those – real words?" I asked.

"Yes!" he said, obviously happy that I had asked. "I found them in the unabridged Oxford dictionary. Each time I manage to use one in a story, I cross it off the list."

Tom was astonished when he learned that Diane Lambert was my girlfriend. "You live with her?" he exclaimed. "But – she has – so much!" By which I think he meant that Diane was vivacious, smart, and sexy.

Thus it was clear from the start that Disch had little respect for me as a person, let alone as a writer. It's surprising, really, that we later became friends in New York, but of course that was after his nervous breakdown, which I was told occurred after he realized that he had fulfilled his ambition to visit every major cathedral in Europe. Maybe by this time he had also finished crossing all the obscure words off his list, leaving him with nothing to distract him from the essential emptiness of human existence (a common concern in his work). He shaved his head, grew a funny little beard, dyed it black, and became reclusive.

His major contribution to *New Worlds* was his novel **CAMP CONCENTRATION**. I remember wandering into

Moorcock's living room, where I found Mike with a stack of pages on his lap, and Disch sitting opposite him, watching him with grim intensity. I had some question about a design problem in the next issue, but Disch held up his hand peremptorily. "Mike is reading my novel," he said.

Moorcock spread his hands, looking helpless. Apparently he was not allowed to speak or move from his chair until he reached the end of this first of three parts. Later he told me he thought that *CAMP CONCENTRATION* might be the best science-fiction novel ever written. It was a tour-de-force, no doubt about that; but it retold the story of Faust, which I thought was archaic and irrelevant.

As the son of an engineer, I firmly believed that someone with hubris does not necessarily suffer grim consequences, and may solve problems beneficially to the human race. I rejected the fatalism which seemed so fundamental to Disch. But I lacked the vocabulary to articulate my argument clearly in those days, so I stayed away from the intense friendship that grew between Disch and Moorcock (later followed by intense animosity, at least on Disch's part, for reasons I don't remember).

Disch had written *CAMP CONCENTRATION* during a kind of summer retreat that he spent with Sladek, somewhere in Europe. Both of them returned to England with large manuscripts and a slightly smug demeanor, knowing that while we labored on the treadmill of a monthly magazine schedule, and idled away our free time in the anarchic vortex of Moorcock's living room, none of us could have completed any such works of high ambition.

Sladek's book was *THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM*, which was unpretentious compared with *CAMP CONCENTRATION*, and a lot more entertaining – to me, anyway. John sold his novel to Terry Carr at Ace Books as an Ace Special (where it appeared under the disappointing title *MECHASM*), while Tom sold his novel to Marc Haefele at Doubleday, after which paperback rights were bought by George Ernsberger at Avon. Both books sold poorly – an early indicator that the New Wave might never achieve its greater ambitions. But a couple of years usually elapse between the acceptance of a book by a publisher and the royalty statements providing incontrovertible proof that it is a commercial disaster. During this intermediate period, a writer's hopes and dreams can survive undimmed.

John Sladek eventually moved into our front room, to help us out with the rent, and Diane moved her office into the kitchen. John was a wonderful lodger, because he was so much fun to talk to. He seemed to view the British in general, and London in particular, as an endless source of amusement. I never heard him argue with anyone, and we shared a mutual weakness for games and puzzles that sucked up hours of our time.

I created a code; he broke it. He showed me the anagrams he had made from his name; I spent an afternoon coming up with Ralph T. Castle as an anagram of mine. He came up with the idea of a multiple-choice narrative (more than a decade before "Choose Your Own Adventure" books) and I wrote my version, which prompted him to write another version. I loved having him around, and it was a creative period for him.

He wrote his most experimental stories, including 'The General', combining seven or eight separate narrative threads, which I persuaded our unpaid printer to reproduce in

eight separate typefaces. John also wrote a kind of multiple-choice story consisting of, I think, 100 paragraphs that could be read in literally thousands of sequences. That was another design challenge that I enjoyed. I was so awed by his talent, I didn't care how long it took to do the layouts.

He had some kind of involvement with another visiting American, Pamela Zoline, during this period. We published a story by Pamela titled 'The Heat Death of the Universe', but primarily she was a gifted artist. She created illustrations for *CAMP CONCENTRATION* which were exceptionally beautiful, but I was concerned that pencil drawings always tend to lack contrast when they are reproduced in a magazine. Since we couldn't afford page proofs, we never knew what any artwork would look like until the copies had been printed. So, I erred on the side of caution. I adjusted Pamela's art before I sent it to the printer.

When the magazine was published, she looked at the pages with puzzlement. "Did you darken some of these lines?" she asked.

"I inked them in," I said.

She was too incredulous to complain. I think it was just too far beyond her comprehension that someone would re-draw her original art. As for me, I had a kind of naive arrogance. Anything that fell into my hands was fair game, as far as I was concerned. I routinely cropped photographs with a knife and ruler, and then if I felt like printing them in funny colors on the cover – why not? Mike never complained. I think he enjoyed my reckless and ruthless experimentation.

When we ran a feature on the artist Eduardo Paolozzi, some of whose work hangs in the Tate Gallery, I was supplied with one of his prints for use on the cover. "It leaves no space for the magazine title," I pointed out to Mike. "But look, it's a collage, so why don't we just cut the pieces out and move them around to make room?"

This was going a bit far, even by my standards of entitlement, so Mike contacted Christopher Finch, who had written the piece about the artist. Finch contacted Paolozzi and told him that the magazine wanted to rearrange his collage. Paolozzi was slightly stunned, but then in a fit of bravado said we should go ahead and do whatever we liked.

So I got to work with my utility knife, chopping up fine art without a moment's self-doubt. This lack of self-doubt was perhaps the most widely shared trait among the disparate people associated with *New Worlds*. We were all arrogant, in our way.

After his unhappy affair with Pamela Zoline, Sladek hooked up with another woman named Pamela, and they got married and moved out of our house. By this time I was fighting almost constantly with Diane Lambert, which must have created an unpleasant ambience. Still, we had acquired another lodger: Nigel Francis. The work of designing a 64-page magazine, including commissioning art, fitting text, and setting display type, using the most archaic tools, on a monthly basis, had become quite exhausting. Plus, I had to supplement the small wage that I received from Mike Moorcock by writing text for a soft-core porn publisher, and I was writing a novel.

Providentially, I received a copy of the student magazine from St. Christopher School, which I had attended between ages 5 and 18. The magazine was an unusually creative piece of work, produced by a sixth-form boy named Nigel Francis. I drove to the school and tracked him down

just before his final exams. "Do you have any plans after you leave St. Chris?" I asked him

"Not really," he said.

"How would you like to move to London and design a monthly magazine?" I suggested. I think I offered him £25 a month, but maybe it was less, because I included free lodging. The conditions were a bit primitive; he slept in a space about 3 by 6 feet under our stairs, just big enough for a mattress.

So began my long friendship with Nigel, who later renamed himself Simon when a guru told him that that was his "real" name. He took over the design work, became a member of our household, and stayed in the house (moving into my old bedroom) even after I emigrated to the United States. He was an avid cyclist, and died quite young in a bicycle accident.

At some point Norman Spinrad was another visiting American, who came over for a few weeks with his beautiful girlfriend, Terry Champagne. Norman had a kind of swashbuckling style, very bombastic, and we serialised his novel *BUG JACK BARRON* in the magazine, even though it was so long, we had to break it into far too many installments. Mike felt that any serial which we published should always be "accessible," meaning, not too experimental for our hypothetical science-fiction audience, whom we still hoped to retain and enlighten.

Alas the sexually explicit scenes caused trouble for us when a question was asked in the House of Commons regarding our Arts Council Grant. Was the House aware that public money was being used to subsidise this filth? Mike later became convinced that many W. H. Smith shops stopped stocking *New Worlds* as a result of *BUG JACK BARRON*. I argued for cutting it, and reluctantly, he agreed. Norman, to his credit, took it very stoically.

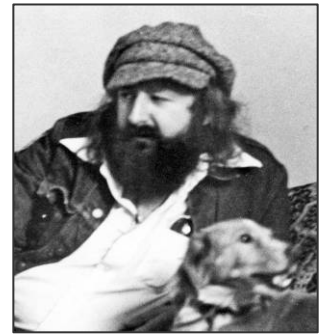
Late in 1968 the magazine acquired a co-editor: James Sallis. He was another visiting American excited by the literary possibilities, and he developed an intense friendship with Mike Moorcock that seemed quite similar to the bond which Mike had enjoyed with Disch, except that from my perspective, Sallis seemed more ambitious and manipulative. Privately, he told me that he thought Mike was a terrible editor. He also told Mike that I was a terrible designer.

I sensed that he wanted to divide and conquer, so that he could take over the editorial position completely and exert control over the design as well. He moved into a flat opposite our place on Portobello Road, and started writing Jerry Cornelius stories that I found incomprehensible. I made no secret of my irritation. "I don't even know what the title of this one means," I complained. "Jeremiad? What is it?"

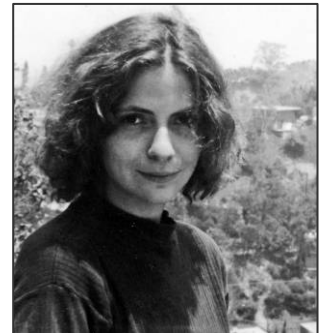
"Well, you can figure it out," he said. "From the roots of the word." And he proceeded to give me a little lesson in etymology. This did not placate me. I wanted to know why, as a reader, I should be expected to do that work. Why not just give the story a title that many people might understand?

Neither of us was very happy with our forced collaboration, and I was relieved when Sallis went back to the United States. In the summer of 1969 I visited him in New York with Diane Lambert, and we slept on the floor of his tiny apartment in the East Village. There I met his girlfriend, Christine Stanowski, who played a catalytic role in my life when she showed up in London about nine months later, asking for assistance regarding an unwanted pregnancy.

"By this time we were all veterans from the 1960s and feeling battle fatigue. When I first met Mike Moorcock he had a neatly trimmed beard and short hair. Returning from New York to London for a visit in 1970 I found that he had allowed everything to run wild, forming a kind of protective layer of wiry hair around his entire head." October 1970.



"Terry Champagne was Norman Spinrad's girlfriend, who accompanied him on his trip to England and sold a story to *New Worlds*. They lived near Laurel Canyon in the Los Angeles area. I visited them there after driving across the United States with Tom Disch and Marilyn Hacker." May 1970.



Norman Spinrad returned to the UK some years later and I enjoyed talking to him at *Yorcon-3* [pw] Photo by Arnold Akien April 1985.



Simon Francis 1970: "While he was designing *New Worlds*, Simon shaved off all his hair in a moment of depression, then wore a black Arabian head dress to hide his embarrassment. This picture was taken some time later, when the hair had re-grown and he was running a bicycle repair business from a squat in Kilburn."



“I visited the United States with Diane Lambert in 1969. Jim Sallis met us at Kennedy Airport. After welcoming us, he asked to borrow money. Jim never had a visible means of support. Note my very fashionable shirt, and less fashionable umbrella.”

Sallis, she said, had abandoned her, and since abortion was legal in the UK (but not yet in the US) she figured something should be possible. By this time I was even more exhausted from magazine work and from fighting with Diane, and I ended up having an affair with Christine, who persuaded me to run off to the United States with her. I suppose, really, I should thank Sallis for precipitating the series of events that led me to emigrate. My relationship with Christine didn't last long, but did enable me to establish myself in New York, and we remained friends until she died of a freak alcohol reaction in the 1980s.

Looking back, I think my argument about fiction with Sallis during 1969 showed the mental distance I had travelled since my first year in London, when I had felt intimidated and out of my depth among the literateurs. By the time I clashed with Sallis, if I didn't understand a story, I was unwilling to accept that it was my fault. If a scenario was unexplained, that was a problem for me. If I was accused of being literal-minded, I argued that most science-fiction readers shared my desire for a story to “make sense.”

Really, I was edging toward a realisation that while the New Wave had had a very wonderful, positive, transformational effect on science fiction, the fiction had lost something in the process.

This went back to my feelings about Disch's *CAMP CONCENTRATION*. A fundamental assumption of science fiction has always been that human beings can transcend their limitations through technology, so that society as a whole can come out ahead. Even in disaster novels, a plucky band of survivors will generally use their wits and strength to survive. (The exception, of course, is another work by Disch, titled *THE GENOCIDES*, in which humanity is pretty much exterminated).

Establishment critics often used to sneer at science fiction's “juvenile power fantasies,” but to me, that misses the point. Anyone can find historical examples where science has benefited humanity, from the discovery of antibiotics to the development of powered flight. Were the Wright Brothers guilty of “juvenile power fantasies”? Probably. But if such fantasies can yield such benefits, we should indulge ourselves in as many power fantasies as possible.

After my first reading of William Burroughs, I was intoxicated by innovation in form as well as content. By 1970, I was starting to sober up, and I saw indications that the party was over for others, too. By this time, fewer people were willing to write for us at our miserable rates of pay. They were beginning to realise that the magazine did not portend a revolution in the larger world of fiction after all.

The 1970s were a period when a lot of harsh realities became unavoidable. When the Beatles used string quartets in their songs, this did not portend a revolution in the larger world of music. Nor did widespread use of LSD portend a new era of global peace and enlightenment.

In the world of science fiction, Isaac Asimov continued to outsell all the New Wave novelists combined, and writers such as Disch, Sladek, Spinrad, and Sallis were never going to find a large audience so long as they persisted in writing “difficult” work. (In his inimitable fashion, John Sladek tried to deal with the situation by selling out. Under a pseudonym, he wrote a nonfiction book about “the missing 13th astrological sign.” Alas, that didn't succeed either. John always tended to be a little too smart for his intended readership.)

I do still regard *New Worlds* as a beautiful and wonderful experiment, and my five years near the center of Ladbroke Grove's anarchic vortex were a privilege for which I feel thankful. I became friendly with people who were far more talented than I could ever be, and I was given free reign to design the most recklessly experimental magazine in the history of science fiction. Indeed, I think it was the most bravely innovative and ambitious literary magazine that has ever existed (if it can be considered a literary magazine, since it had a monthly schedule and attempted to maintain a national circulation). Not many twenty-year-old college dropouts enjoy such a privilege, and I will always appreciate Mike's readiness to give me so much creative freedom.

The bonds of friendship that I established during those years remained deeper than most others that followed in my life. We were all quite unbalanced, somewhat dysfunctional, and moderately obsessed with our literary mission. We made many sacrifices (especially financial sacrifices) and became veterans of a campaign that inflicted substantial casualties. In fact, an astonishing number of the people I mentioned in this memoir have died:-

J. G. Ballard, Barrington Bayley, John Brunner, Jim Cawthorn, Tom Disch, Christopher Evans, Simon Francis, Judith Merril, John Sladek, Christine Stanowski, Ted Tubb.

I miss them all.

I must apologise for some significant omissions in this little memoir, which I wrote associatively, without any coherent plan. In particular, John Clute, Judith Clute, Michael Butterworth, Dave Britton, Hilary Bailey, Graham Hall, Christopher Priest, Graham Charnock, Mike Harrison, Richard Glyn Jones, Mal Dean, Bob Marsden, Keith Roberts, Gabi Nasemann, Vivienne Young, Roy Cornwall, D. M. Thomas, Samuel Delany, and probably several more. Perhaps I'll have an opportunity to write about them some other time, if I live long enough.

I should also add that I paid very little attention to chronology in this piece. I didn't even try to figure out the precise sequence of events, because somehow it didn't seem to matter.

– Charles Platt, 2011

Tom Shippey met Harry Harrison a long time ago – probably at the Brum Group or Novacon – and they ‘clicked’, with a continuing friendship that led to collaborations on the HAMMER AND THE CROSS trilogy as well as other projects we won’t go into here. I can’t think of a better person to report on Harry’s final appearance. [pw]



Goodbye, Harry!

By Tom Shippey

Two fine figures of men; in the Anza Borrego Desert, near San Diego, January 1994. Photo from Tom

Our old friend Harry Harrison, whom many of us remember not only from his novels and stories but also from his frequent attendance at fan conventions round the world, died on Wednesday 15th August in a care home in Eastbourne.

I went to see him the weekend before he died, and sat with him for a while on the Saturday and Sunday. Harry was very weak, not eating or drinking much, and he knew he was on the way out. Since he was a committed atheist it was no good offering him what used to be called “the comforts of religion”. Weak as he was, too weak to hit me over the head with a rolled-up newspaper, I’m sure any hints in that direction would have been rebutted with his usual force of expression.

Harry was by this time confused about many things, but on science fiction he was still perfectly clear. It was talking about this that was a comfort to him, as I hope it will be for all of us when the time comes. We talked about Philip K Dick. I told him about the recent book about the guys who made and programmed a Dick-android, until one of the creators left the android-head in the overhead bin of an airliner.

You’d have thought a talking head would have been recognisable enough even for the Lost Property department of a US airline, but no, it must have gone off to the great lost luggage dump in Memphis, Tennessee – which, coincidentally, is what happens to the copper’s identity in the Dick novel FLOW MY TEARS, THE POLICEMAN SAID.

I’m not sure whether it was Harry or me who commented that the verbal loop the android developed, so that it continued to grind on and on and on answering the same question no matter how you tried to stop it, made it more lifelike, not less so. But it sounds the sort of comment Harry would make.

We also talked about L Ron Hubbard, whom Harry knew from way back, and the pulp fiction era, i.e. the pre-1940s, which Harry remembered but I didn’t. One piece of good news is that Harry, much assisted by his daughter

Moira and by Paul Tomlinson, who brought out the big *Annotated Bibliography* of Harry’s works, including all the translations, has completed and handed in his memoir of a life in SF. TOR have got it, and Dave Hartwell likes it, so we can look forward to an account of the Golden Age by one who was at the heart of it.

The funeral took place on August 31st, at Woodvale Crematorium in Brighton, and there was a big turnout. One unusual feature was that the coffin was brought up not in a hearse but in an old camper van – tribute to the years Harry spent as a nomad, living in Mexico, Denmark, Holland, Italy and the Irish Republic before he ended up in England, all in pursuit of his lifetime determination, as a former sergeant and machine-gun instructor, NOT to pay taxes to any government which would only waste them on the military. The coffin itself was covered in maps of places Harry had been, making the same point. Not only was he a founder of World SF, he really was a citizen of the world.

Organising the service must then have been a difficult job for Moira, given Harry’s views, but this is how it went. First they played Gloria Gaynor’s ‘I Am What I Am’ (that’s Harry, as well as Popeye the Sailor-man, though there’s a considerable resemblance between the two). Then the ‘celebrant’ – I don’t think he was a padre – welcomed the mourners and read Joyce Grenfell’s ‘If I Should Go’.

Then we celebrated Harry’s life, remembering his work, his invention, and the predicaments he got us into (I remember those: like the time he baited far too many US Marines on the beach by that hotel where they shot ‘Some Like It Hot’. As Joan and I dragged him off on the choke-chain, I rebuked Harry for teasing the poor sods drilling out there on the sand, and Harry snarled defiantly, “I got no sympathy for those guys. You know what they are. volunteers!” Harry really did not like the military.) We remembered his courage and his friendship too.

Then, as a testimony to his long and informed interest in Old Norse, all the way from ‘Web of the Norns’, which he wrote with Katherine MacLean back in the 1950s, through to THE TECHNICOLOR TIME MACHINE and

beyond, I read some stanzas from the Old Norse poem *Hávamál*, which I shall append to see if Peter feels like printing them. *

They played Glen Miller's 'In the Mood', and then we had the controversial bit, or it would have been controversial if Harry had been able to make his voice heard. Moira, first apologising to her dad's beliefs, had her cousin Laurie Appelbaum lead her and another relative in reading the Kaddish, in Hebrew.

The last two events, as we let Harry go, were, first, we all had a drink – the bottle of whisky had stood on the coffin all through the service – and then they played the last movement of Beethoven's Sixth, the Pastoral Symphony, just as in the euthanasia scene of the movie 'Soylent Green', which was based, with disastrous changes – and there are stories about that too – on MAKE ROOM! MAKE ROOM!

As said above, there was a big turnout, 60 or 70 people. Among SF luminaries spotted at the reception at Stanmer House were: Chris Priest (who wrote an outstandingly good obituary in the *Guardian*, 16th August), Tim Aldiss, representing his dad, with whom Harry so long collaborated, on anthologies, on World SF, and on setting up the Campbell Award; Bill Sanderson, Harry's illustrator; Rog Peyton, Dave Langford, Malcolm Edwards, all bearing witness to the respect and affection in which Harry was held. We really will not see his like again. People have grown more circumspect – and that's an adjective never before brought into contact with Harry Harrison.

A thought I have, which I put to Peter's readers, is this: the Library of America has brought out several compendium volumes of Vonnegut, Dick, novels of the 1950s, etc. I think a volume of Harry's novels of the 1960s would make a good set. They were all short – written in the old magazine 3-part serial, 60,000 word format, so five of them would make a good LoA volume. For contents, I wouldn't pick one of the 'Deathworld' or 'Stainless Steel Rat' sequences, because they're well-known and multi-volume. Instead my choices would be:-

(1) BILL THE GALACTIC HERO (1965), also one of a series, I know, but damn funny, irreverent about SF eminences, you know who I mean, and also without a trailer ending. I would try to put back some of the jokes timid editors took out in the 1960s.

(2) MAKE ROOM! MAKE ROOM! (1966), Harry may have got the date of the Malthusian experience wrong, but he could be proved right yet about everything else.

(3) THE TECHNICOLOR TIME MACHINE (1967), also damn funny, but at the same time quite sensitive about the difference between a Dark Age ethos and a Californian one. It's very funny when the dumb actress calls her baby Snorey, after what she thinks was one of Disney's Seven Dwarves, only to have the name accepted and perpetuated as Snorri.

(4) CAPTIVE UNIVERSE (1969), one of the best variations on the "enclosed universe" plot, because it starts off with violent rejection of the SF revolutionaries-are-always-right cliché.

But then, what for number 5? IN OUR HANDS, THE STARS, aka THE DALETH EFFECT (1969-70), one of the 10 SF novels Ben Bova said every scientist should read? Or A TRANSATLANTIC TUNNEL, HURRAH! (fondly remembered in Kingsley Amis's alternate universe novel THE ALTERATION)?

Or something else? Maybe the first 'Deathworld' novel ought to be there after all, from 1960? Well do I remember the *Astounding* issue in which it started to appear.

Opinions and reasons to Peter, please!



Harry grappling with Joan, time & place unknown. Photo from Tom Shippey.

Well, it was a great pleasure and privilege to know Harry. The last time I saw him he bequeathed to me, with Moira's approval, his Irish granddad's shillelagh, a fearsome weapon of heavy studded blackthorn, must be 100 years old. I told him I would think kindly of him every time I went for a walk with it, and extra kindly every time I hit any aggressive dog, cow or annoying person with it, and the thought seemed to give Harry cheer. He hated the military, but he had a warrior soul.

I attach the Old Norse reading to see if it goes past the limits of Peter's patience:

"Remembering Harry's long and informed interest in Old Norse, I'd like to read a few lines from the Old Norse poem *Hávamál*, 'The words of the High One.' First, and with very clear reference to Harry, the far-travelled and multi-linguistic:

The one who travels widely
And has been in many lands,
He alone knows by what men's minds are ruled,
He who observes the heart.

And again, this time referring to my memories of Harry as a friend and collaborator:

All roads are good that lead to a good friend,
Far away though he may be.
If you have a good friend, go to see him often,
Exchange thoughts with him.

And finally, looking into the future, and this time in both languages:

Deyr fé, deyjja frændr,
deyr siálfr it sama;
ek veit einn, at aldri deyr;
dómr af dauðan hvern.

Pets die, friends die,
Likewise you die yourself;
I know one thing that does not die,
The word a man leaves behind.

Harry left many words behind, in his books, which we will not willingly let die. But he also left behind a good name, as a friend, as a father, as a *mensch*."

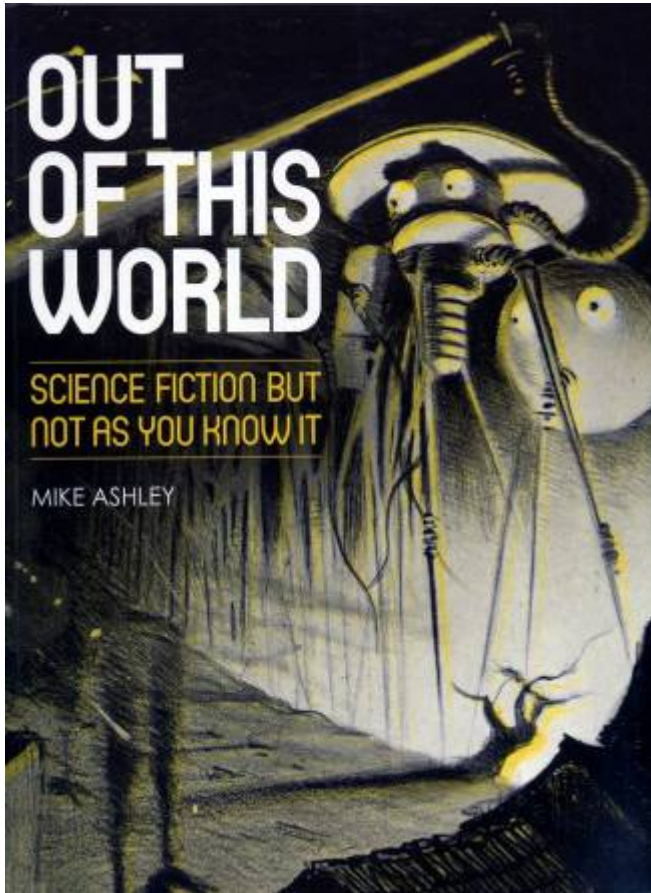
- Tom Shippey

* Old Norse in *Relapse*, Shippey! Whatever next? Give us a few verses of Egill Skallagrímsson's saga, why don't you? [pw]



Way back in October 1965 the 17-year-old Mike Ashley published *Xeron*, his first fanzine, containing mostly magazine checklists & similar material, shortly to be followed by *Plinth* (what Miranda calls ‘the king of words’) with more of the same and such other items as a biography of Robert E Howard. They were, as Greg Pickersgill says, “in some small part rehearsals for his later career”. After a few years Mike dropped out of sight of fandom but just quietly carried on, collecting and listing, until these days he has emerged as probably the foremost contemporary bibliographer of our field. He retired from Kent County Council in 1998 and has been a full-time writer, researcher and editor ever since. [pw]

Mike Ashley, 2010 (his picture)



‘Out of this World’ – the book

By Mike Ashley

From the jacket-flap:

‘Whatever you thought about science fiction, think again. And keep on thinking, because that’s what science fiction does. Science fiction makes us think, and helps us to prepare for the future, understand the present and cope with the unknown by posing such questions as “What if...?” or “Just suppose...”’

Great introduction, but I’m worried about that cover! See my comments!
[pw]

I’d already written one exhibition book for the British Library, *TAKING LIBERTIES*, and that had proved quite an ordeal, so I was rather wary when they asked me if I’d like to do another one – on science fiction. They originally asked me if I’d like to curate the exhibition, but after my earlier experiences I declined. In the end I did agree to write the book, and I was delighted when they appointed Andy Sawyer as the curator.

Why was I wary? Well, I later learned that the *TAKING LIBERTIES* exhibition had not been typical, and so the major problem – which was not really knowing what the exhibition was about – didn’t really surface with the science fiction one. But there are other problems which I think will always arise, and for which my past experience had now prepared me.

Let’s go through what happened and you’ll see what I mean. Although I was involved with one of the teams from quite early on, the onus fell on Andy to map out the exhibition. It was he who chose the six sections into which the exhibition was divided – Alien Worlds, Future Worlds, Virtual Worlds, Parallel Worlds, the End of the World and the Perfect World – and he also drew up an initial list of possible exhibits. This was a huge list and encouraged plenty of discussion to help shape, fine tune and focus the exhibition. Over time Andy’s list was whittled down.

Various factors played a part, not necessarily related to the importance or relevance of the exhibit. The British Library likes to be able to show the heritage of which it is the custodian, and so the emphasis of the exhibition – and likewise the book – was on material within the BL. This isn’t only books, but includes manuscripts, letters, film posters, sheet music and all manner of miscellaneous items. So one task was to identify what the BL actually had and was in a condition suitable for the exhibition. Two of the team at the British Library, Katya Rogatchevskaia and Janet Benoy did most of this delving, coming up with all kinds of interesting books and other material.

There were occasions when the items were not in a suitable condition, either because they were too old and fragile or simply because they didn’t look that interesting, no matter how historically important they were. If it wasn’t illustrated, or was printed in tiny old-fashioned type, or was badly faded or foxed, it didn’t lend itself either to the exhibition or the book.

There were also items that Andy thought would work well in the exhibition but which the British Library did not have, and this meant finding another source if it was definitely to be used. The Science Fiction Foundation in Liverpool, of which Andy is the curator, had plenty of interesting material, including the manuscript archives of

Olaf Stapledon and John Wyndham, so that was one obvious source, but the search was also on to find what other material might be sourced from elsewhere

One such problem was that at some time in the dim and distant, the British Library (then, of course, still part of the British Museum) had decided not to keep the dust-jackets on books. After all, these would soon be damaged if loaned out to readers, so it was decided for their safekeeping that these would be stored at the Victoria & Albert Museum. However, the V&A had treated these as items they were looking after for the British Museum, rather than their own stock, and so they were not fully catalogued.

Consequently, when we went hunting for rare dust-jackets for certain key books, like Huxley's *BRAVE NEW WORLD* or Philip Wylie's *GLADIATOR*, we hit another snag. Thankfully the *GLADIATOR* jacket was found, but many other items that would have looked wonderful in the exhibition and the book could not be found. Fortunately, John Clute offered the use of his own incredible private library of which the British Library took full advantage.

As you can imagine, all this meant that the fine-tuning of the exhibits went on for many months, and on occasions some items which remained in the list until nearly the end, dropped out at the last minute because of unavailability or cost. It would, after all, have been impossible to bring things over from the United States, because the cost of insurance and transport on any item of value would eat too much into the exhibition budget. So it was rather like wrestling with jelly. The exhibition shape remained roughly the same, but the content was fairly fluid.

While all this was going on, I was working up an outline for the book. Although it was to be a book in its own right, not simply a catalogue of exhibits, it was still important that the book followed the exhibition to a large degree, so that anyone who bought the book had something that could develop some of the ideas being raised in the exhibition and put them in context. Books and exhibitions may cover the same subject, but in entirely different ways. And the idea from the start is that each should complement the other.

But this is where one of those other snags enters the picture. The deadline for completing the book, to allow time for the picture researcher, the book designer and the printer (who was in China) to do their stuff, and for me to proofread and index it, was about four months ahead of the exhibition deadline. I had to be structuring and writing the book while all of the above research was still going on. Inevitably that meant that even though the two could share some common ground there comes a point where exhibition and book diverge. That's both in the text and the choice of illustrations.

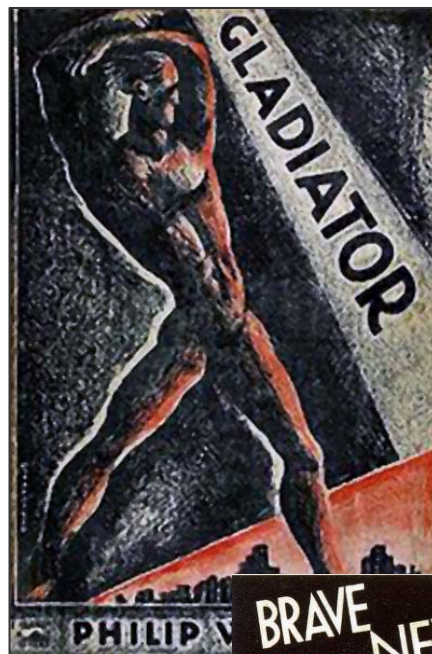
And here enters snag two. The British Library can exhibit items in their possession without having to seek permission or clear copyright, but to use any of those same exhibits in the book, the matter of permissions may well arise – especially for items in copyright, which is seventy years after the death of the author or artist. This is where the British Library's picture researcher, Sally Nicholls, was so invaluable. Not only did she have the expertise in knowing what looked good on the page, but also knew how to weave her way through a minefield of copyright and publishers' permissions.

The inevitable result, though, was that some items that could be used in the exhibition proved either too expensive to reproduce in the book, or permission was not granted. This is what happened with the manuscript by J. G. Ballard. The one displayed in the exhibition comes from an

early unpublished 'Vermillion Sands' story, but because it was previously unpublished the estate was reluctant to grant permission to use it in the book. So a different Ballard manuscript page was used which showed an early draft of what became *THE DROUGHT*. In the end this was probably a good result, because visitors to the exhibition who also buy the book get a chance to see two Ballard manuscript pages, both extremely revealing of his creative process.

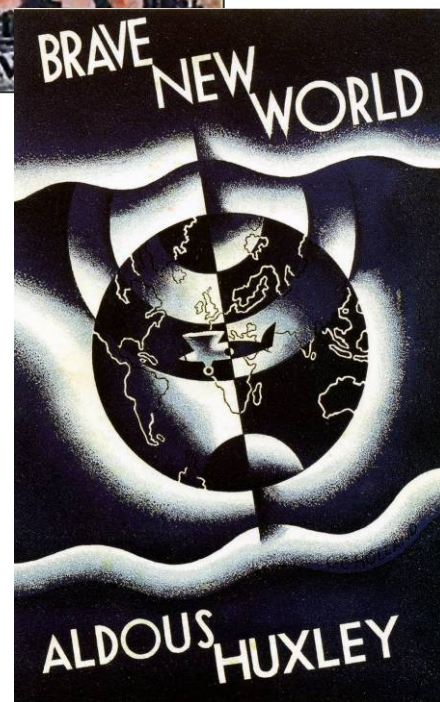
In order to avoid too much in the way of permission fees both Sally and I delved deeply into the British Library's possessions and my own library to find unusual and visually interesting items. Besides my own personal collection of science-fiction magazines I also have a large collection of early British popular fiction magazines like *Pearson's Magazine* and *Pall Mall*.

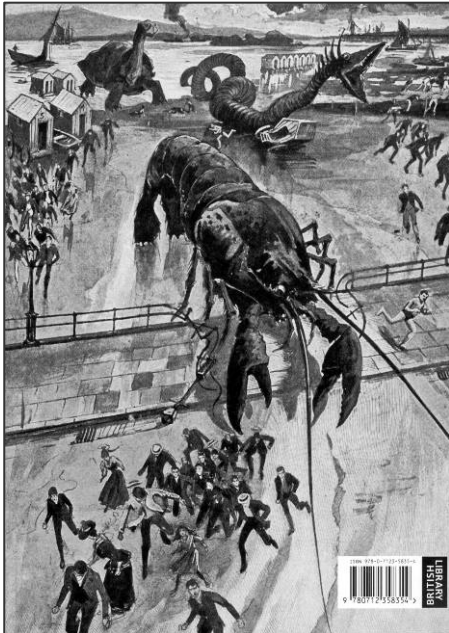
There were a number of illustrations, particularly from *Pearson's*, that worked well in certain sections, and everyone at the British Library seemed to fall in love with Warwick Goble's depiction of various ways in which the world might end: in particular one where monsters might be awakened from the deep and invade the land. The image of the giant marauding lobster and sea serpent not only adorns the back cover of the book but was also used as a postcard and poster.



Philip Wylie's *GLADIATOR* (1930) about a super-human hero named 'Hugo' (!) inspired SF-fan Jerry Siegel to create his own character, who became the Superman of comic-book fame in 1938. [pw] Courtesy of the British Library.

Dust-jacket of the first edition of *BRAVE NEW WORLD*, 1932. Design by Leslie Holland. Illustration courtesy of the British Library.

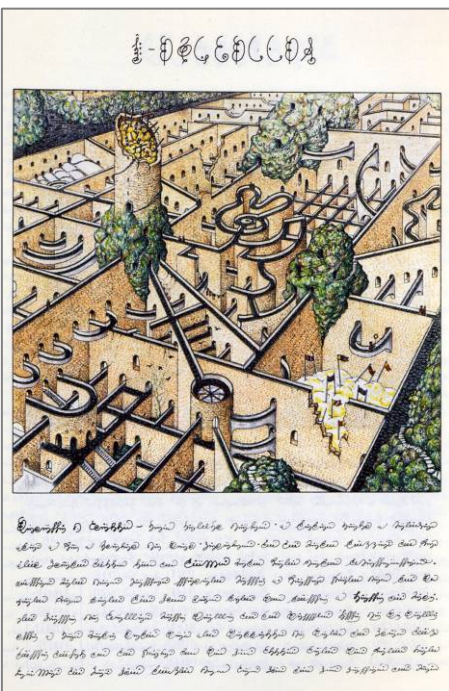




Left: In his article 'How Will The World End?' Herbert Fyfe suggested a 'sudden appearance out of the sea of a race of amphibious monsters'. Pearson's Magazine, July 1900. Illustration courtesy of Mike Ashley.



Right: The first time machine? 'Stunningly beautiful' cover in blue & gold – best viewed on the web-site! Illustration courtesy of the British Library.



Left: First published in 1981 and again, best seen in colour, the Codex Seriphinianus appears to be a natural history of an unknown world. Illustration courtesy of the British Library.

The choice of title for the exhibition (and hence the book) was down to a separate committee at the British Library, and it was also the subject of some consumer research. "Out of This World" was, perhaps, none too surprising or remarkable, but the sub-title, "Science Fiction But Not As You Know It" was. Leaving aside the obvious parody of the renowned *Star Trek* phrase about alien life, it opened up a challenge for the exhibition.

Firstly it raised the question of the public's perception of science fiction, and then the challenge that somehow the exhibition was going to educate them, or re-educate them, to show that however they did perceive science fiction, there was much more to it. Right from the start, with Andy's selection of suggested exhibits, the idea was to include unusual and unexpected items, and this sub-title emphasised that point even more. In addition, I had argued that the exhibition needed to show not only the antiquity of what we now call science fiction, but also its international scale, both currently and historically.

So, for both the book and the exhibition the search was on for the unexpected, and a number of surprises emerged. The one that seemed to catch the attention of the press at the press launch, and I must admit also intrigued me, was a hitherto untranslated work by the Spanish writer Enrique Gaspar y Rimbau, *EL ANACRONÓPETE*, published in 1887 and featuring a time machine several years before H. G. Wells's more famous book. What's more, when Katya tracked a copy down it turned out to have a stunningly beautiful cover illustrating the time machine. That was an instant "must be" for the exhibition.

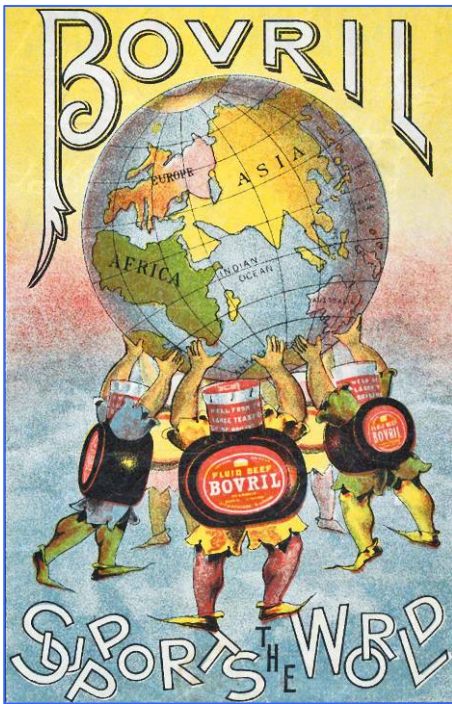
There were other items like this. Janet Benoy found a completely inexplicable book, the *CODEX SERIPHINIANUS*, by Luigi Serafini, written in an indecipherable language and full of wonderfully inexplicable drawings. Again, it's the kind of book you cannot ignore.

As you can see, much of the narrative of the book is dictated by the nature of the exhibits/illustrations, but over and above all this was the wordage restraint. The budget allowed for a book of about 144 pages, including the index and preliminaries. Since the book was also going to be very visual, you had to allow for roughly half of each page being taken up by an illustration, and enough white space so that the book didn't look cramped.

Once the format of the book was decided, including the fact that each subject would fit onto either one or two double-page spreads, it didn't take long to work out that I only had about 500 words to play with for each spread. I had calculated that in most cases each sub-theme needed at least two double-page spreads, meaning that I had to encapsulate that subject into about 1000 words.

I'm not known for my minimalism, as this piece probably demonstrates. For each subject I not only needed to discuss how that particular theme emerged and developed, but also link in a few key writers that people would know, in order to familiarise them with the subject, and highlight the unusual and unexpected. This was, for me, the book's biggest challenge, and just about every spread ended up having to be severely edited down and books I was keen to mention had to be dropped.

One way to get more out of this limited wordage was to use the captions for the illustrations, as they were in addition to the text. So sometimes I cut the book reference out of the text and only included it as an illustration, using the caption to tell the story. I also introduced a "Featured Author" box, which allowed me to focus on a particular writer closely associated with a certain subject and explore them in more detail. That way I could also list that author's



Left: Possibly not quite what Bulwer-Lytton had in mind when describing “a subterranean world occupied by beings who seem to resemble angels and call themselves Vrilya.” [pw]

Illustration courtesy of the British Library.

other works even if they weren't immediately associated with the subject in hand.

Many obvious writers were covered, like Isaac Asimov, Philip K. Dick and Ursula Le Guin, but I deliberately included less obvious names like James White (a much neglected writer) and Katharine Burdekin. Inevitably there were writers I wanted to cover who were squeezed-out, like Robert A. Heinlein, Harlan Ellison and James Tiptree, Jr. Heinlein receives a lot of coverage throughout the book, but it was difficult to incorporate Ellison and Tiptree where their strength is in the short story and much of the discussion was about novels and films.

There came a point when, in order to meet the publishing deadline, I ceased attending the exhibition team meetings and although Janet and Andy kept me informed of progress, I didn't get to see all of the final choice of exhibits.

I was both delighted and frustrated to see that they had found a beautiful coloured advert for Bovril, showing the power of *vril*, the energy force described by Bulwer Lytton in *The Coming Race*. I would so love to have included that in the book, but had no idea they had found it until I went to the press launch.

The obverse of this was also one of my best memories of the whole research on the book. My friend Michael Pointon knew Charles Chilton, the famous BBC radio producer and writer who scripted the *Journey Into Space* series back in the early 1950s. Chilton and his delightful wife, Peggy, are still alive and in their nineties, but Michael arranged for me to visit them. They were a most charming couple, and we had a memorable afternoon with Charles recounting anecdotes about the scripting and recording of the radio series.

I also obtained Charles's permission for the British Library to use the original of his script for the very first episode of *Journey into Space* which became a special feature of the exhibition. However, when I was drafting the book I struggled to find room to include a reference to *Journey into Space* and, in the end, I had to leave it out. So having met Chilton, and made the arrangement for the British Library, I couldn't take advantage of it myself!

Nevertheless, with perseverance and the support of my editor at the British Library, Catherine Britton, of the picture researcher Sally Nicholls and of the book designer, Andrew Schoolbred, plus of course Andy Sawyer, Janet Benoy and Katya Rogatchevskaia, the book eventually came together. What's more the book was finished sufficiently far in advance that I discovered they were able to use parts of it to help write the captions for the exhibits. So in the end there was real fusion between the book and the exhibition.

The end result was something for the reader and the visitor to the exhibition to decide. I think Andy and his team did a remarkable job in bringing together a host of unusual items which I hope will have widened people's appreciation, understanding and awareness of science fiction. And I hope the book added a little extra as well.

- - Mike Ashley, June 2011

My Take on Mike's book (Peter Weston)

Of course I didn't go to the exhibition but the way I see it, the organisers were faced with the familiar paradox that bedevils anyone who takes a stab at this sort of thing.

“Look,” you're telling the punters, “this is really serious stuff, honest!” But because the message of ‘cognitive estrangement’ doesn't easily lend itself to pretty pictures you need something more visually exciting with which to illustrate your book* or exhibition† or conference. And so you end up with rockets and ray-guns as usual!

SF has been head-butting this problem since 1939; while John Campbell might have presented literate, adult speculation about future worlds, the man-in-the-street would only register the killer word ‘Astounding’ and whatever attention-seeking cover painting was on that month's issue.

So while we ‘experts’ might think the dramatic image from WAR OF THE WORLDS on the front cover of Mike's book is both historically interesting and pays due homage to Wells as an original thinker, to anyone else it's “just more sci-fi.”§ The same applies for the back-cover; sea-monsters straight out of ‘Doctor Who’! To me they shout ‘sensational, fantastic, not-to-be-taken seriously’, which I'm sure is the very opposite of what was intended.

They kill your argument stone-dead before anyone reads a word of it. Which is a pity, because I don't think

I've ever seen such a well-made plea for SF to be taken seriously as in Mike's Introduction, nor such a well-chosen and ‘respectable’ set of images (with the particular exception of that on Page 38, and I don't much like those on 57 & 69!).

What would I have chosen instead? Well, that still on Page 34 from SOLARIS would have made a great front cover (attractive, futuristic, and plenty of plain black on which to reverse-out the titles). Or perhaps the one from METROPOLIS on Page 77?

The book itself is impressive, though it swiftly starts to become a bit of a compendium of everyone who ever wrote about the various themes under consideration, so not exactly easy reading. But a valiant and praiseworthy attempt to keep the flame alive! Well done, both! [pw]

* Mike's book is still available from Amazon, from £11.86

† Andy Sawyer gives his perspective in his article, ‘Out of this World – the Exhibition’, to appear in the next issue.

§ Interesting that I don't think Mike used that deadly put-down expression ‘sci-fi’ anywhere in the book. I'd like to have seen him try to explain the difference between this and ‘real’ science fiction!

The Melting Pot

Brad illustrates the Second Law of Thermodynamics – everything turns into a sticky mess!

Including my brain this time; what *were* we talking about, 18 months ago? Let's fumble through the undergrowth and see where we end up. I'll give a few *[prompts]* along the way.

Fan-artists, do please let me have your interpretation of the 'Melting Pot' theme!



"I most enjoyed Bob Shaw's claim to his son that he never sat on a toilet seat, as an explanation for his strong calves and thighs." – Murray Moore, LoC

[That caught your attention, didn't it! And it was just one of the many wonderful anecdotes about Bob that his son Ian recounted last time. I've just re-read his article and strongly advise you to do the same, although oddly, not many commented].

Jim Linwood
jlinwood@aol.com



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

Hi Peter,

The highlight of the issue was Ian Shaw's reminiscences of his father, Bob: a superbly well-written and affectionate memoir. It's a pity that such a prolific and skilled author like Bob isn't up there in popular esteem with his contemporaries Aldiss, Ballard, Brunner and Moorcock. I wish he'd been with us long enough to write "Stanley and Me" about his work with Kubrick scripting A.I. – perhaps Ian Watson can oblige for *Relapse*? The only error I think in Ian's piece was Bob idolising Robert Mitchum during the war. Mitchum only played a few bit parts in films during the war like 'Doughboys in Ireland' (1943) and it wasn't until 'The Story of G. I. Joe' in 1945 that he was noticed.

My own fond memory of Bob dates back to *SciCon 70* when, at a room party, I tried to sell him my idea of Slow Bheer. This was a bheer you could drink in excess at cons, become the life and soul of the party but with no hangover the next day so you could continue drinking – the hangover came several days later after the con. Bob didn't buy it.

Rob Hansen's piece on Wally Gillings and the Ilford Science Literary Circle set me thinking again about fannish history in my own locality and the history of the Cosmos Club. I was amazed to read in THEN, *Futurian War Digest* and Rob's piece in *Relapse* 16 that a stable, fully functional SF club should have existed in Teddington during the war (back then it wouldn't even be considered the London suburb it is today) which even ran a convention in 1944. I've speculated that it was the presence of the National Physical Laboratory (still there) and Paint Research Station (moved to Hampton) which meant that scientifically inclined youngsters were lodging in the area during the war. Other notables in Teddington during this period were Alan Turing, Barnes Wallis, Eisenhower and his staff planning D-Day and an earlier resident was Gerald Kersh.

I'd like to travel back in time to 1940 and join the Paint Research Station Science Fiction Library in Teddington. I'd chronicle its evolution into the Cosmos Club, hang out in Shirley's Cafe, attend the 1944 Eastercon and end up in the King's Arms (now The Clock House). Along the way (in contacts with wider London fandom) I'd meet up with Temple, Clarke, Gillings and neos like Vince Clarke. All would be written up, photographed and submitted to *Relapse* on my return. (18-4-2011)

[I should hope so, too! Me, I'd settle for a seat in the corner of the White Horse on a Thursday night in 1950 to just watch them talk. I might even have seen old-time fan Robert Conquest there!]

Greg Benford
xbenford@gmail.com

Peter,

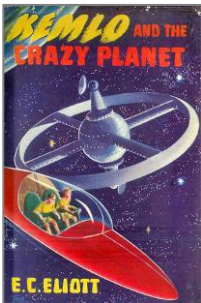
Ian Shaw's piece shows he's inherited his father's gift with the language. Beautifully written, he shows us a side of Bob we didn't know. Bow & arrow man, company flak, funniest man I ever knew – indeed, he and Sadie made my visit to Belfast in 1969 a rare moment. I can echo Ian's mention of Arthur Clarke standing in line to get BoSh's signature; Arthur told me when I visited him shortly before he died that Bob was one of his favourite SF writers.

Robert Conquest was equally scornful of lefty cant and literary cant – which made him a perfect ally of Kingsley Amis in the admirable SPECTRUM series. He's still a quick, incisive character, as I found visiting him at the Hoover Institute. (12-5-2011)

David Redd
dave_redd@
hotmail.com



Youthful David
at Cytricon V,
2008. Photo by
Rob Hansen



Mission creep it
is, then; here's a
cover from the
dopey Kemlo
series (I didn't
bother with them
even when I was
twelve) and
contemporary
Von Braun/
Bonestall concept.



"No you can't
read that book,
it has to be
burnt!"



Dear Peter,

Well, I wasn't going to say much on *Relapse-19*; meant to leave room for other people. The contents are so rich that a reader with time could jot down reactions almost indefinitely – not as a LoC, but simply showing what thoughts come to mind. (But I won't jot down my reaction to the photo which Catherine so wickedly supplied. Pity my only recent alternative is no more convincing). [See Page 10]

Look at your editorial and (yet again) John Brunner. While I'm undecided about your having published his picture, in the story review you've given another nice example of Brunner becoming relevant to later times. (Wasn't there a letter in *New Scientist* years ago appreciating a detail in BORN UNDER MARS?). In one fairly recent best-seller, I noticed a reference to his song 'Can't You Hear the H-Bomb's Thunder?' and thought, he's back into our lives again by a different route. A pity John's CND novel, THE DAYS OF MARCH, was written in such an unlovable style, it should have been a much more important novel. [This was my cue to get David to write his review on Page 10 - pw]

Rob Hansen and Phil Harbottle on Gillings are terrific and enlightening, as is Ian Shaw with 'My Dad, Bob'. Again the interface with real life brings home the human situations. Reading how Bob was sucked into a betting scam by his Uncle Norman, I'm reminded of an incident in the life of the late artist Maxwell-Jones of Fishguard (like Bob Shaw, someone I met far too briefly). In childhood the future artist was warned to stay away from certain relatives of his, but one day was talked by them into squeezing through windows and opening back doors so that they could empty the gas meters. He ended up in approved school for eight years; the more streetwise relatives escaped lightly. Same story as Bob's really: a hard-to-resist proposition from dubious family, unpleasant consequences. Now I can understand the move to Cumbria emotionally as well as factually.

And Tom Shippey, excellent as always. To my "outside-of-literature" viewpoint Tom is Establishment (although with a few maverick ideas) and the major iconoclast here is Robert Conquest. Rightly or wrongly I enjoyed the fireworks without feeling threatened by them or gleeful either. The SPECTRUM books get a mention. Never saw them, but you demonstrate that in content at least they were clearly a step up from Edmund Crispin's pioneering BEST SF, without compromising the drive for SF respectability. These little sidebar items of yours do help the *Relapse* flavour, which of course is why you add them.

Anyway, I repeat that a lot of good things in *Relapse* deserve to be commented on or followed up a lot more than they are. For example, someone ought to do a retrospective TRILLION YEAR SPREE (but with too much else in my life already I know that someone won't be me). Another example: the two-line David Hardy WAHF – now there's a man who knows his Fifties concepts of space travel.

[It was a bit more than a 2-liner, originally; I cut David's comments considerably and am making good the omission on the next page! - pw]

Some years ago I suggested that Rafe Bernard (WHEEL IN THE SKY) might also be E. C. Elliott (KEMLO series) on the grounds that both used details such as "diathene" and a four-spoked wheel design of space station. Dave Langford pointed out that both might have got the details from some common popular sourcebook, which neither of us then could identify – but which, I now notice, David Hardy might possibly be familiar with. Oh well. As *Relapse* is about SF fan history rather than SF history, further enquiries in your pages might be mission creep. Similarly, I wouldn't add anything to Mike Deckinger's nice concise note about Murray Leinster. But the various mentions of the British Library stripping dust-jackets were enlightening, useful, and dismaying.

Forgotten Fan Groups – Ian Millsted's piece on the Clacton group – ah, now this is the heartland of *Relapse* territory, much as I love and appreciate all the filthy-pro Fifties stuff. More please! Although in singling out this one article I may be unfair to the others, and should point out that I did really enjoy the Gillings collection, etc. But to me it's the lettercol which dazzles. Aldiss! Baxter! Langford! Moorcock! (On his sartorial elegance, I seem to recall a brief but magnificent kaftan phase). Patrizio! Walker! Guiltily I wonder what treasures my letter might have crowded out. (I still remember how you abridged a D West epic issues ago). Nit-pick of the month re. Ian Watson's letter: ANTRO THE LIFE-GIVER was actually an early Hamilton's (Panther) rather than Digit.

Another pure-gold letter from George Locke confirms that the old library policy of book-destruction seemed absolutely inflexible, as the late Jack Trevor Story discovered. He described an incident in the Swiss Cottage library:

"I had just found a copy of GREEN TO PAGAN STREET, which I wrote in 1951 and which has been out of print for years. The publishers couldn't give me one, an advertisement in *Clique* yielded nothing, and the British Museum had lost theirs – then suddenly there it was.

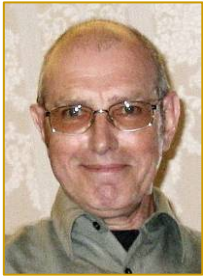
"You can't have that," the librarian said. 'All those books are waiting to be pulped'.

"I explained the circumstances, that I would like just one copy of my own novel, might even sell paperback rights, was willing to pay the full new-book price. It went for pulping."

Which exactly parallels your experience as told in *Relapse* 18. Do you suppose that Swiss Cottage recruited their staff from your old Yardley & Sheldon library? In gloom moments I see such times returning; I've known Good Old Stuff refused by Oxfam simply because it's not new and shiny, and Greg has rescued ditto from the local recycling centre as I'm sure you remember.

So, this isn't a LoC, although as usual when I set out not to write one a lot of words seem to tumble out anyway. The point I'm trying to make with all these examples is that life is too short to actually convey to you the full reading experience we fans get from *Relapse*. Only a Dave Bridges in his heyday might have attempted that! (29-4-2011)

David Hardy
Dave@
astroart.org



David in 2003 at
the BSFG.
Photo by PW

Last time I said it was 'at least arguable' about what had most influenced the book cover. At the time I was thinking of the poster for DESTINATION MOON (centre) although David is correct that it's probably closer to the Bonestell interpretation, right. [pw]

Hi Peter

Another excellent ish (#17). I suppose that really it's of interest only to people who were around for at least some of that time – but at least quite a few of us were! I'd also guess that most readers find that they can dip into the great ocean of SF, here and there, and find something that relates to them. . . In this case, the name Phil Harbottle struck a chord, because Phil could be said to have kicked off my career as an SF artist. In 1970 he was editing a new magazine, *Visions of Tomorrow*, and he asked me to do a cover for it. Illustrating a story called 'The Phoenix People' by Richard A. Gordon, it shows the Sun as a red giant, and a desiccated Earth with a ring – our broken-up Moon.

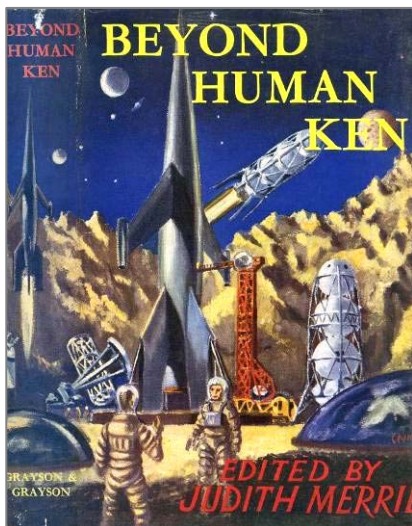
My second cover for *VoT*, in 1971, was a more typical scene of Jupiter from its icy moon Europa, and it also started a series of factual articles which I wrote for the mag, the rest of the illos being inside the back cover. Emboldened, I contacted Ed Ferman at *F&SF* to ask if he'd like to use a painting I'd done for *SciCon* in London (which had no Art Show because the Portal Gallery put on an exhibition of SF art). I had sent him a 35mm slide, and he said he'd use it if I'd do a vertical version, which I duly did. It showed Saturn from its moon Titan, but a duplicate of the Sphinx at Giza sat in a lake of liquid methane (prophetic or what?!), instantly converting it (I thought) from space art into SF. Well anyway it became the first of 60-odd covers I've since done for *F&SF*. . . So thanks, Phil!

One question: in Bill Temple's diary, on page 11 I read: 'At the BIS Brains Trust . . . Smith defending the rocket researchers, & very well too.' I may have missed it, but I can't find in the rest of the text who 'Smith' is. Could it be Ralph (R.A.) Smith, who illustrated Arthur C. Clarke's early books?

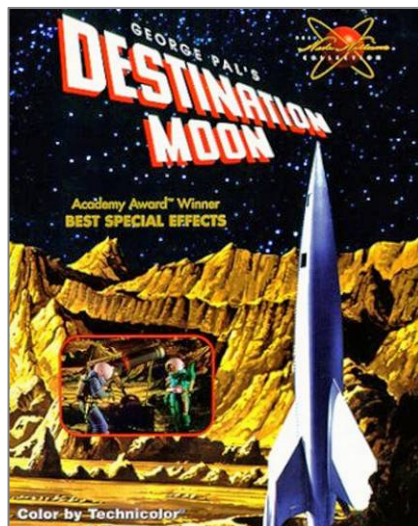
Oh yes, on page 38 you have a photo of ACC shaking hands with one of the astronauts from *Destination Moon*. Now I've mentioned (p.43) how I met Arthur at the College of Technology in 1952. At the talk he gave he showed a slide of himself in the middle of all four of the *Destination Moon* astronauts; them in spacesuits and him presumably breathing space (which doesn't surprise me, somehow). This made me think "Ah – I could do that!", and I did: for the jacket photo on my book, CHALLENGE OF THE STARS (1972) I doctored a photo taken against a black background to show Patrick Moore and myself standing on Titan (me sketching), with Saturn in the background. Of course, it would be much easier today, with digital techniques. . .

In issue #18, I would argue with your caption to the Mudge-Marriott painting on page 26. That cover is NOT 'clearly inspired' by DESTINATION MOON, to which it bears little resemblance, but IS clearly influenced by the Bonestell/Ley CONQUEST OF SPACE (1949/50 in UK). It uses the V2-inspired spaceship with wings – and you can even see the Palomar 200-inch telescope on the left, for some reason! Plus the Moon-orbiter, which has somehow landed on its tail, from ACROSS THE SPACE FRONTIER on the right. . .

Take a look at this website, whose owner -- one "Dan" -- has built dioramas of scenes from various novels ranging from Heinlein juveniles to Moby Dick. He's put a lot of thought into the details of each piece.: <http://picasaweb.google.com/sfscalemodels>



The Bonestell cover first appeared as early as July 1948 on the cover of *Astounding*. See Fred Smith's letter on Page 32. [pw]



The highlight of #19 for me was Ian Shaw's piece on his dad. I met Bob on numerous occasions, both at cons and 'outside', and he was always a pleasure to be with. But my main connection with him was doing GALACTIC TOURS in 1981 (I chose him as author, overriding the publisher's choice of Patrick Moore, and of course I was right, for this book!) He came over from Northern Ireland to do some TV publicity, which we combined with a talk to the Brum Group, but I had to drive us from BBC's Pebble Mill Studios to the ITV ones in town (was it in Alpha Tower in those days?), with only minutes to spare before we went live – and without either of them knowing that we'd done the other! One of them tried to use a blue screen to make us look as if we were on another planet – with one of my paintings, of course! (11-4-2011)

[Thanks, Dave, and I think I've at last caught-up with your various LoCs! As regards the mysterious 'Smith' I think we can safely assume it was indeed old-time BIS member Ralph Smith – pw]

Mike Deckinger
mike2004@
aol.com



Mike in 2008.
His photo.

Bill Harry
BillHarry@
aol.com

**Bill with
unknown SF fan
(just kidding!),
1980. His photo.**



Dear Peter:

I'm positively shattered: there's a sopping wealth of anecdotage in *Relapse* #19, and I can contribute only a wee bit to it.

John Baxter mentions E. J. Carnell's almost permanent placement in the UK. Well, "almost" would be the key word here, since he did get around a bit. In the early 60's, Sam Moskowitz introduced him at a meeting of ESFA (Eastern S.F. Association), gathering monthly in NJ. Carnell was very pleasant, attentive and spoke about the British SF scene at the time, with insights that few attendees were aware of. He gamely parried Sam's frequent attempts to elaborate on a subject he had just devoted a considerable amount of time to. "Tell us more, Ted", Sam would playfully prod in a voice that resounded in the next county. So with great good nature and not a hint of regret, Carnell would unearth even more details for the delight of his audience.

Afterwards, I spoke with him privately and arranged to meet him the next day, to usher him around, regale him with East Coast sights. I was looking forward to it; I rarely had the company of a visiting professional and vowed to run him ragged. Then late that evening he phoned most regretfully and announced that he had just secured a meeting with a nearby editor the next day (Don Wollheim, I think it was) and would have to break the appointment. I understood and insisted I took no offence. Then he left for some lengthy travelling and we never were able to consummate the rendezvous.

Sean Wallace mentions Bryan Berry, a name I haven't heard in ages. I recall when he first began writing and was described as "a new Bradbury", which was hyperbole elevated to a stratospheric level. *Planet Stories* published either two or three stories by him in a single issue and none of them were much above slush-pile level. Then suddenly, he was gone, with no epitaphs, other than a hurried reference to "the unfortunate Bryan Berry", whatever that meant. So I encourage Sean Wallace to do what he can to unearth this enigma. (3-5-2011)

[From some photos I've found it seems Ted Carnell went across for the 1963 Discon. That was the year 'Dr Who' began (see below), with William Hartnell (not Norman) in the lead... - pw]

Dear Pete,

I've been recalling the links between SF and rock music. I remember *Space Diversions* sported Little Richard on the cover and when Richard appeared at the Tower Ballroom with the Beatles, the Liverpool Science Fiction Society were in attendance. That was the time I got the Beatles and Richard together and had my photographer take a photo of them.

Ringo was, of course, a major science-fiction enthusiast. When Frieda Kelly, their fan club secretary, moved into an office next to me, I noticed several tea chests completely stacked with science-fiction paperbacks, literally thousands of them. Ringo had mentioned he liked science fiction and the books started pouring into the fan club. I asked Frieda if I could borrow some to read, but the answer was – no!

You may recall Ringo's solo album 'Goodnight Vienna' in which he recreated the scene from 'The Day The Earth Stood Still' with himself as Klaatu. He even paraded through L.A, dressed in the Klaatu space suit. Then, when the Beatles disbanded, an album was issued by a group called Klaatu, with the rumour going round that it was the Beatles!

When the first episode of 'Dr Who' was screened, Virginia and I, together with Gene Vincent's manager, Henry Henroid, rushed to a nearby hotel in central Liverpool to watch it. I remembered the Dr. Who soundtrack music. When I was representing Pink Floyd, I knew of their interest in unusual sounds, so I took them to the radiophonics workshop in Maida Vale and they were shown how to create sound effects. I remember one demonstration concerned the noises which could be made from a dripping tap!

Virginia and I used to spend time with Chas Chander and Jimi Hendrix at their flat near Marble Arch. We were chatting one night and I mentioned my favourite book was EARTH ABIDES by George R. Stewart. Chas was amazed. He said he'd just bought the film rights. He'd sent a copy of the book to Terry Nation and asked if he'd write the script. Nation didn't get back to him – but came up with the TV series 'Survivors.'

I used to take Carl Wilson around the bookshops in London – he particularly liked Cecil Court where there were several occult bookshops. I gave Mike Love a copy of 'The Morning of the Musicians.' When one of my pr partners represented 'Reperata & the Delrons', an American female trio, they were so excited about a TV series called 'Star Trek', that we just had to watch it when it was screened over here (I would have watched it anyway).

At one time I took Mike Moorcock with me to Apple and the Beatles made a contribution to *New Worlds* magazine. I must ask Mike if he recalls the visit.

Finally, John Lennon was also a science-fiction enthusiast and his particular interest was Philip K. Dick. When he was in his 'Bed-In', he phoned Dick to say how impressed he was by THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH and he wanted to buy the film rights and produce the movie. Another of his favourites was Dick's EYE IN THE SKY. Incidentally, Stephen King was so impressed by John's song with the words "and we all shine on" that he decided to call the novel he was writing THE SHINE. Told that such a title might be objectionable to ethnic minorities, he then renamed it THE SHINING. (26-4-11)

**Bob
Wardzinski**
Wimborne

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your much-loved magazine. Great reading as usual! I was very interested to see mention by George Locke of a man selling rare pulps in the West Country. There is a fascinating story here I think. In the mid-1980's Dave Gibson and Ted Ball from Fantasy Centre were contacted by an antiques dealer in Honiton to view a collection of pulp magazines. When they arrived, they were shown to a barn outside the town which contained an extraordinary accumulation of nearly 10,000 pulps from the 1920's to the 1950's and covering most popular genres; SF, Detective, Thriller, Weird, Western, etc.



I've said before that Bob Wardzinski doesn't mess about – he buys the lot! Here he is, loading up pulp magazines in industrial quantities, some time in the late-1990s. His photo. [pw]

George Locke
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hotmail.com



*George at
Cytricon V, 2008.
Photo by John
Dalman*

Sandra Bond
sandra@ho-
street.demon.
co.uk



*Sandra at
Cytricon V,
2008.
Photo by
Mike Meara*

Dear Peter,

The man's name was certainly Mr Bigg, and I first contacted him in the 1970s through an ad in *Exchange & Mart*. I remember him quoting me some magazine which didn't interest me, but a little later I visited him, in company with a detective-fiction collector. He was located in a smallish house on the northern slopes of the Blackdown Hills, surrounded by a damp, dank forest of trees. I viewed a wall of ex-library books, all resplendent in their dust jackets, but the books within were almost invariably well-read and beat-up copies. I gathered he was in the process of selling these books to a local library.

He also brought out some magazines for us to look at; I remember my friend buying a set of the Ellery Queen mystery pulp of the early thirties, and I treated myself to a fine set of *Scoops*. Also, over a period of two or three visits, I acquired a complete set of *The Spider*; I remember them costing 50p each - ah, those were the days! *Scoops* was a bit more expensive, but still a bargain.

I certainly remember him running a rental library before the war, a fact confirmed by the stock of books, but don't remember the old boy saying anything about having a magazine stall. I also had the impression that he wanted to share his treasures among as many buyers as possible; two or three visits were my limit. (13-6-2011)

[Next is what's known as a 'teaser' to whet the appetite of people in Haverfordwest who've been waiting for the past five years for Sandra to produce her threatened 'Requiem' for Nebula. It might also be considered a prod in the right direction! Last time I heard Sandra had actually located Peter Hamilton despite rumours of his demise, but she'd better get on with it before we lose him again! – pw]

Dear Peter,

You'll be pleased (I hope) and surprised (I'm pretty sure...) to learn that I'm actually doing something about *Nebula* again. I'm in correspondence with Mike Ashley, who is going to dig out and send to me some interesting stuff about Hamilton (and some of his writers) resulting from correspondence with them in the late 70s -- including, if he can find it, an actual cassette tape Hamilton made for him. And Andy Sawyer is copying for me from the Eric Frank Russell collection a whole slew of letters to Russell from Hamilton.

Likewise, I really ought to have a pop at some of the remaining authors before I lose the chance like I did with Ted Tubb. There's Brian Aldiss, Robert Silverberg, Don Malcolm, Dan Morgan, Harlan Ellison... well, maybe I'll not bother Harlan...!

Speaking of Silverberg, I've already dug out the details of how the first story of a hopeful young American writer came to be sold to a magazine in Scotland rather than somewhere more local, but I'm sure he can provide further information on his later *Nebula* stories too. He may even be able to provide me with a back-door route to his old pal Harlan!

It is definitely going to be a multi-part job, as indeed A REQUIEM FOR ASTOUNDING was in Bill Donaho's zines and ONCE THERE WAS A MAGAZINE was in *Banana Wings*. The title I'm intending to use, incidentally, is 'For Reading That's Different', taken from the strap-line on *Nebula*'s front cover. (11-4-2011)

[Must be nearly finished by now, Sandra!]

Fred Smith
f.smith50@ntl
world.com

Hi Peter,

Thanks for #18, which was as engrossing as ever. Mention made of the three-colour process used on *New Worlds* prompts me to wonder if it wasn't the same thing that happened with the BRE ASF and *Unknown*. My impression was that the colours were more garish than they appeared on the U.S. issues. Could it be? [Sorry Fred, but *Atlas* used 'proper' 4-colour printing on all their titles. - pw]

Mike Ashley's article on Peter Phillips was very interesting. I remember his story 'Dreams Are Sacred' very well as being one of the best and certainly one that would have fitted nicely in *Unknown*. But wasn't there another story using much the same idea printed around the same time, no question of plagiarism, both writers having hit on the same theme simultaneously? And no, I can't remember the title or author of that other story. Maybe somebody else could come up with it? Seems to me that a case could be made for a collection of Peter Phillips' work, if someone was willing to undertake it.

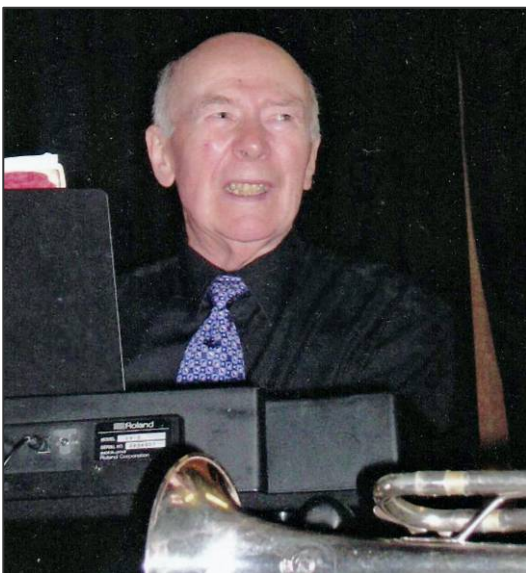
I also enjoyed Phil Harbottle's 'The Hardcover Explosion' which certainly appears to cover all the British hard-cover books published at that time. Phil might have commented on Grayson & Grayson's pernicious habit of cutting the size of anthologies, particularly ADVENTURES IN TIME AND SPACE, although even the U.S. publisher Random House cut the number of stories in a second printing to 30 (from 35, not 33). By the way, you state that the cover of BEYOND HUMAN KEN was "clearly inspired by 'Destination Moon' when I would guess it was more likely to have been inspired by the cover of the July '48 ASF which purported to illustrate Russell's 'Dreadful Sanctuary'.

[An unheralded Campbell scoop - an early preview of Bonestell/Ley's CONQUEST OF SPACE. Strangely, it was unremarked-upon inside the issue, though it also carried an article by Ley about the problems of launching the V2. The prominence given to the title of Russell's story was, I suspect, an expedient to make a horizontal painting fit onto a vertical cover format without trimming. - pw]

As for the 'steamy' picture of Sophia Loren by Jim Cawthorn mentioned in Andy Sawyer's letter (and graphically reproduced by your goodself!), it makes me wonder if Jim had ever seen the topless photos of La Loren that were printed in an early *Playboy*. They were stills from a Roman epic in which she had a bit part at the beginning of her career.



Above: You might have seen this picture before, recently!



Tony Glynn tells the story of Gene Lees at *Supermancon* but gets a couple of facts wrong, I'm afraid. Lees was not sent to Manchester by his paper. He was, in fact, sent to London and only travelled to Manchester to catch up with his old friend Kenny Wheeler, a musician who was on tour with the Carl Barriteau Orchestra. It was pure chance that he booked into the Grosvenor Hotel, and neither knew that there was a convention on, nor that Ted Carnell was staying there.

I explained all this in the second half of my article 'Parkinson and Me' in *Banana Wings* #20, gleaned from Gene Lees' essay in his book ARRANGING THE SCORE. He had stated, incidentally, that his SF short was published in "Nova" which I corrected to *New Worlds*. I now stand corrected myself that it was *Science Fantasy*! Gene was certainly a wonderful writer on music of all kinds and I was saddened to learn of his death. Having read his stuff for years and acquired half a dozen of his books it was a great surprise to me to learn that we had once stayed in the same hotel, as you might imagine. As a matter of fact that *Banana Wings* article of mine is all about coincidence.

For your pleasure (!) here's a photo of me at the Roland electric piano taken at some gig, hence trumpet in the foreground. (13-6-11)

Joe Patrizio
joepatrizio@
blueyonder.
co.uk

Hi Peter.

The highlight in #19, for me, was Rob's piece on Wally Gillings. I can't remember ever meeting him, but Bill [Temple] talked about him quite a lot. Somewhere, I have a letter from Wally to Bill, on which he scribbled a note that says it was his (Wally's) last letter, and Bill says that it was written just a few hours before he died. I have a copy of Bill's reply (dated 29 August 1979) again with a note that Wally had died about a month before, without Bill knowing. Anyway, it was right and proper that the 80th birthday of fandom should be celebrated, and well done Rob, Sandra and Caroline for doing it.

Bugger, it's happening again. I start to look for something to comment on, and just get absorbed again; but in the Melting Pot, David Redd says he would like to see a 'Best Of' Bill's collection one day; well, there are plans afoot for a collection of his short stories to be published in two volumes, which we are quite hopeful will happen. Of course, this has come up before with nothing coming of it, but at least, Anne has signed the contract. I'll let you know when we get more details.

One last point; I still haven't finished the later years of Bill's journals. When I do, I promise to send you anything of historical fannish interest. (2-8-2011)

[Joe, you've already sent me Bill's diary covering 1 Jan 1944 to 8 May 1945, the day after the war in Europe officially ended. You said, "I transcribed the complete period which ran to 26 pages; I've removed a lot of stuff about books he read and films he saw, and trips to Rome, Florence, etc. Also quite a bit about getting drunk and the consequences. At times it reads like a holiday diary, but I'd say that the fun bits didn't make up for the rest of it, quite a lot of which I've left in because I think you will find it interesting (I certainly do). In a way it surprises me that Bill never talked about it to me, and we had a few heart-to-hearts. And the physicality of it is most un-Bill like."]



Joe at Cytricon
V. Photo by
Keith Freeman.

**Darroll
Pardoe**
pardos@global
net.co.uk

**Peter Davies,
Jim Linwood &
Ken Cheslin,
with Tony in
front row,
around 1960.
Photo from
Mike Kilvert.**



Hi Peter,

You asked me a while back about the history of SADO, the Stourbridge & District SF Circle, but I don't honestly think there's enough history to make an article. Ken Cheslin and his two mates attended the 1959 Eastercon, as you know, and got so enthusiastic that they immediately constituted themselves as SADO and laid plans for a fanzine (which emerged as *Les Spinge*). Ken put an advert in *New Worlds* which drew in Dave Hale and me. SADO used to meet at Tony Hill's house in Amblecote. I went to a few meetings, but Dave was taken to task at one meeting (which I wasn't at) – I think it may have been over dropping peanut shells all over Tony's sofa – and had a row with Tony so was banned from SADO. After that I felt it politic not to go again. So SADO reduced to the original three friends, who continued to meet (mostly in the pub) on and off until Ken died, but not with any particular skiffy connection.

The more interesting period, in my opinion, was the 'Ken and Dave' era when Dave was the 'managing editor' and Ken 'publisher' of *Les Spinge*. The fan activity of the early sixties in Stourbridge such as the firework parties, visits by travelling fans, etc. came under this umbrella, rather than the ephemeral SADO, which had gone by 1961. I kept in touch but I was away at university a lot of the time so I don't feel particularly qualified to talk about this period. Much of it was written up in one fanzine or another, I think. We did keep up a notion of SADO as the overall organisation for Stourbridge fandom, but by then it existed only as a name.

Certainly in the third phase of Stourbridge fandom, 1965-66, when I was at Birmingham University and living at home, Ken and I saw quite a lot of one another. Dave had gafiated by then. As you know, in 1966 I bought the Cheslin Gestetner and Ken threw in the rights to the *Les Spinge* title along with it. We had a merry time with the 'Strength Through Chaos - Viva Pablo!' motto and even had some enamelled lapel badges made in vivid red and black to publicise it. I departed for the USA in September 1967 and Stourbridge fandom after that was just Ken.

I don't think I've commented on the last *Relapse* (19) yet. Certainly the most poignant thing in the whole issue was that photograph of John Brunner, dying all alone in the midst of the bustle of a convention. But as Sam said, how could you distinguish Brunner in his cups from Brunner suffering something more life-threatening? (24-7-2011)

[Thanks Darroll. You'll recall that Rog & Cliff were frequent visitors to SADO, although just before my time so I never met Dave Hale. But both Bruce Burn and Wally Weber have sent me Stourbridge photographs which I'll be using in the near future. However, a few months ago I heard from someone signing himself 'Harry Warren'. On investigation this proved to be an alias for Harry Douthwaite, the 'other' artist I'd rather admired in Spinge, along with Jim Cawthorn. It turns out Harry knew Jim quite well and has provided probably the best images we have of him. See Page 13.]

Harry Warren
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@btinternet.com



*Harry in 1988.
His photo.*

Hi Peter,

I'd forgotten about Dave Hale until you mentioned him, though Ken Cheslin's name had stuck in my mind for some reason.

My early memories of fandom are very fuzzy, I'm afraid. I think it all began when I was 14 (1959/60) and joined the BSFA. I sent off for various fanzines that I'd seen reviewed in the magazines of the day and offered to do drawings for them as I couldn't afford to buy them. In that way I ended up doing stuff for *Les Spinge*, *Eldritch Dreamquest*, a Pat Kearney fanzine, *Amra*, Jack Chalker's *Mirage*, and another of his publications. There might have been others that I've forgotten about.

By 1963, I was corresponding with my hero, Jim Cawthorn, and I attended the 1962 Eastercon in Harrogate especially to meet him. He told me he'd been doing some work for Mike Moorcock's *Ergo Ego*, and suggested I offer some of my own work to Mike. It turned out that, apart from that one issue of *Ergo Ego*, Mike had stopped publishing fanzines, but he offered to give me a professional critique of my artwork, and also showed it to people he knew at Fleetway.

Later on, I visited Mike in London and carried on a correspondence with him, and when he took over *New Worlds* he gave me a try-out. I did quite a few illos for the mag between 1965 and '68, and also the cover for Mike's THE FINAL PROGRAMME.

After that I quit the fantasy field, and stayed out of it until my interest was reactivated by Dave Britton at Savoy Books. You can find out more about this period from the bits and pieces that will come up if you Google 'Harry Douthwaite'. I did a bit more work for Savoy over the years, with long gaps in between, the last job being a Punch-like head I did for the cover of their SIEG HEIL ICONOGRAPHERS in 2004. That was the first painting I'd done in 25 years.

In the mundane world, I freelanced for educational books after I left art college in 1968, worked in the Post Office finance branch for a while and, from 1984 onwards, worked as an archaeological illustrator for Manchester Museum, Greater M/C Archaeological Unit and Manchester University, and then as a graphic designer/illustrator for Manchester City Council for many years. Latterly, I worked for a team responsible for listed buildings and conservation areas, until I retired in the summer of 2011.

I looked through some *Relapse* back issues recently and was pleasantly surprised to come across something about artist Brian Lewis. Apparently he used to be an active fan, though I don't remember reading anything about him in the fanzines I used to get pre-1964. I used to really love his work for the Nova magazines, but never thought anything he did subsequently had the same magic. Gerard Quinn was my other hero amongst British magazine artists. (11-6-2012)

**Brian Lewis, aka
Captain Whizzbang,
at the 1954
Supermancon,
Photo by Eric
Bentcliffe.**



Mark Plummer
mark.fishlifter@
googlemail.com



Mark in 2008.
Photo by
Rob Hansen



**Bob was Knight
Armourer of St
Fantony at the
1957 Loncon.**
Photo from
Norman Shorrock.

**Howard
Rosenblum**
Harosenblum@
uwclub.net

**Who is that long-
haired fan
behind Asimov?
Any ideas?**



Peter,

Back in November 2007 in #9 you were talking about the Knights of St Fantony. You mentioned Cheltenham stalwart Bob Richardson, and that 'Keith Freeman says Bob also fought in the Spanish Civil War'. I did at the time check the few books we have about the War and specifically the International Brigades, just to see if he appeared in the index, but no luck.

But then today the BBC reported that the National Archives have released the MI5 files about British and Irish volunteers who travelled to Spain during the Civil War. The records show that there were far more than had previously been thought, about 4,000 rather than 2,500, and MI5 was interested because aside from participation being illegal under the Non-Intervention Agreement in 1936 many of the volunteers were communists.

Anyway, I remembered what you'd said about Bob and so I called up the file for 'R'. There are nine pages, typed with sometimes extensive manuscript annotations, and not always entirely clearly scanned, and about 20 names to a page. One that immediately leaps out at me is Esmond Romilly, later husband of Jessica Mitford. Oddly, the entry doesn't mention that he was Churchill's nephew.

Several Richardsons are listed, possibly as many as nine although some may be repeat entries, the same person returning to the front. Is the Benjamin Richardson of Darlington who left Folkestone for Boulogne on 27 January 1937 and returned to the UK on 9 November the same Benjamin Richardson for left for France on 28 January 1938? This possible duplication also makes me wonder whether this may in part explain the unexpectedly high number of British and Irish volunteers, although I'm sure the historians have thought of that.

Even so, unless Bob's first name was something other than Robert – which isn't inconceivable – there is only one contender. On page seven there's an entry for 'RICHARDSON, R. S., 9.9.36, departed from cargo ship to join Spanish Govt. Forces. April 37. Is believed to be in the UK.'

It's very indistinct, not helped by the fact that for no obvious reason the entry has been crossed out in manuscript. I couldn't absolutely swear the initials are R.S. but that's my best guess. So is this our man? And why were his details recorded and then crossed out?

Looked at again, and particularly comparing the text with the entry above, I think it may say '*deserted* from a cargo ship' rather than 'departed'. And of course we know that Bob had naval experience during WWII; having pre-War merchant navy experience would make sense, although not so much if he was known to have deserted...

But I see from *Prolapse* #7 that Bob was only 42 when he died in 1963, which would make him about 15-16 in 1936/7. Is it plausible that he would be serving on a cargo ship at that age? (28-6-2011)

[Very mysterious, Mark! I made an attempt to trace the Richardson family at Bishops Cleeve, a village near Cheltenham, but it was all so long ago that I didn't get anywhere. Still, as one mystery opens, so another gets answered. Here's the final word on an earlier conundrum...]

Hi Peter,

At Easter [2011] you asked me about Asimov's visit to London in 1973, and I thought he had been to the 'Globe' even though meetings had by then moved to the 'One Tun'. However, I can now prove that it was the Globe, Rog Peyton notwithstanding. I have found photos showing Isaac outside the Globe, showing things like canopies over the windows that the Tun never had. The pictures were developed and printed by me rather than professionally, hence the dark & grainy nature. I was probably blowing them up as much as possible, and exposed the paper a little longer than necessary. As I said in a previous email, if I can locate the negative (all I need to do is look in my negative files), we can get better images with more detail. (26-9-2012)

[And still the old pictures keep coming to light! Great stuff, Howard! And this is the perfect opportunity to show a recently unearthed external view of the Globe, sight of which caused Rob Hansen to utter little squeals of delight! This is one of a short series taken by Arthur Cruttenden at some time in the early seventies. Darroll has no idea what was so fascinating about the wall!]



John-Henri Holmberg
jholmberg@gmail.com



John-Henri at Interaction, 2005. PW photo

Below: Peter Roberts at the 1975 Eurocon. Photo by Lars-Olov Strandberg



Andrew Dibben Norfolk

Dear Peter,

Many, many thanks for wonderful issues of *Relapse* that keep appearing magically in my post office box, now in fact a box at the local incidentals shop, since the post office long since cut down on its actual offices to the extent that the one closest to where I live is in central Helsingborg, some 15 miles away, leaving a half dozen small communities entirely without. This, I understand, is an effect of cost-cutting necessitated by the bad investments made by the previous CEO of the Swedish postal service in London's Docklands. But of course we all give thanks for efficient public services, don't we!

Anyway, I owe you a large number of letters of comment. They will, I hope, be forthcoming real soon now. The financial crisis of 2009 sadly pulled the rug out from under the business I'd been living fairly well from during the last dozen years or so, that is, the production of Swedish print-ready originals for multinational co-editions of books published by non-Swedish companies. Most of them either cut down severely or dropped Sweden entirely, and so, nearing my dotage, I have been forced to fall back on freelance translation and writing. I still make a decent living – two anthologies, a book and a half of my own, and a dozen translations contracted for in the last year and a half, some of them already published – but it takes an enormous amount of time compared to living off the surplus value of the work of others. Consequently my fanac has diminished alarmingly, and the next issue of my hobby semi-professional SF magazine is now almost two years overdue.

However, if nothing else, over the last weekend I was the Swedish GoH at *Eurocon 33*, the first one to be held in Sweden. Actually it was an impressive and very well-run con, with more than 700 in attendance (breaking the Swedish record of 480, set by *ScanCon '76* only 35 years ago, a con co-chaired by myself and Per Insulander, which does to some small degree detract from my warm feelings for this year's organisers). And if nothing else for your possible amusement, I enclose the short essay I contributed to the convention booklet, a brief memoir of the very first *Eurocon* in Trieste in 1972. Who knows; maybe you'll even think it's amusing.

I could add to it, at least a little, since I also attended a slightly later *Eurocon* in Bruges in Belgium, memorable primarily for most of us being housed in a girls' convent where the doors to the rooms were cut off both on top and bottom in order for the nuns to be able to check that their wards did nothing sinful; for my spending most of the con drinking beer while going on canal boat trips with Peter Roberts, who sported a fabulous lilac suit; and for me and Pete one late night saving renowned Swedish SF collector Ake E. B. Jonsson from drowning when other drunken fans had thrown him dead drunk into the pool outside the main convention hotel – Jonsson, in Sweden, was known for not being able to swim. Oh well. So it goes in this relentless microcosm of ours. And Ake Jonsson later died anyway, and his gigantic collection disappeared. (22-6-2011)

[Nice to hear from you again, J-H. I thought your Trieste report was hilarious! With some good John Brunner stories, too, which, in view of our general obsession with JB mean it will probably show up in the next issue, especially since I have pictures of the great man and his entourage.]

[Regarding this next letter, Andrew is son-in-law of 50s writer Peter Phillips, and helped Mike Ashley to compile his splendid article in #18. He wrote to me last year with this discovery:]

Hello Peter;

I am attaching an old photograph that Peter has found in a drawer; he wonders whether you might be able to identify the characters therein! On the reverse is the caption "London S-F Convention May 52". Obviously, it is Peter standing 3rd from left, and he says it is Frank Fears at far left, but he cannot remember who the other people are...

Another little snippet of interest: he has also come across a piece he wrote for the October 30th 1959 issue of the *Daily Herald*, just after Sputnik, entitled 'Space has something for you'. I shall e-mail this to you also; I hope your in-boxes don't instantly become clogged up!



Amazingly, Peter is currently quite eager to do some writing; the only problem is that he just cannot get on with any kind of electric or electronic typing machine! (We have bought him 3 variants). He told me yesterday that what he would really like is a *Remington Quietriter* typewriter. Looking on E-bay last night, I came across the very thing, and managed to get the winning bid for the princely sum of £6.50! Apparently it is mostly functional, but just needs a bit of lubrication!

Now, don't hold your breath, as this could be just another false dawn, but, you never know...! (7-6-2011)

[Sadly, Peter died on 28th March this year without ever writing anything. The photograph shows Walt Willis at second left, and (looking remarkably like a young Rog Peyton) at far right is Peter Hawkins, who wrote a few SF stories for New Worlds. The others are unknown.]

Brian Aldiss,
O.B.E.,
Oxford



Brian's 'official' photo, 2006.

Brian broke Bob & Sadie's bed at their room-party during the 1974 Tynecon! This is Harry Bell's memorable illo from Maya-7



Dear Pete,

You ask me to contribute to *Relapse*, which I had better do in order to get the next issue. So I will rehash some of my old stories about Robert Conquest. That's quite the right thing to say because Bob Conquest is old, too.

The first time I met Conquest was in the basement of Les Flood's Science Fiction Emporium in Sicilian Avenue, London. Les allowed me to go down into the basement where all the treasures were kept. A young man was down there examining an early copy of *Amazing Stories*. He looked up at me and, lightly thumping the magazine cover, he said, "This was Frank R Paul's pink period."

We used to meet in the Travellers Club or – bugger, I've forgotten the name, but it was an elegant precursor of the Groucho Club. While Harry and Kingsley Amis and I were chatting, I believe Conquest was trying to make it with Harry's wife Joan. He seemed to be a bit of a lad for the ladies. I do recall that when he was getting married for the fourth time to an absolutely charming girl called Caroline (to whom I used to sing in what I dare say in those days would be called a Nigger Minstrel accent). 'South Caroline am a sultry clime, used to go dere in de summertime', I asked, "Bob, why are you getting married yet again?" to which he replied in his nonchalant way, "Well, I look at it like this – 'one for the road'...."

As I hope these rather limited recollections may recall, Conquest was a man of a good spirit and good spirits. In the 60's, he, together with Kingsley and Edmund Crispin, were soldiers of the popular literati who could always be relied upon to fight the battle for science fiction in places of culture such as the *New Statesman* and the *Daily Mail*.

Isaac Asimov claimed that science fiction was a literature of prediction; but to my mind, the only prediction that ever came true was the one in Conquest's science fiction novel, *A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE*. In that novel, if you remember, he predicted that Arthur C. Clarke would be knighted. This indeed came about, whereas all those infinite ranks of science fiction stories where Earth is invaded by aliens of some colour or other have failed to be actualised by anything of any size, colour, or morality. It seems that the best we can do in that sort of style is to elect a coalition government.

Everyone liked Bob Shaw. He had a great wit and his Serious Scientific Talks were the joys of many a SF con. At one period, he and I and some other chaps whose names I don't remember were doing a lecture tour of Northern sites and classrooms. We were good at it; often the school classes were hostile when we went in but they were always friendly by the time we came out.

So Bob and I were taking a stroll in some town near the Scottish border. We were quite serious and I was saying, "You know, I keep thinking about time – long doses of time." And Bob said, "Yes, that's odd, I've also been thinking about playing with time. Have you got any ideas?" "No, but you know how something will come up when you're not looking." "Like a bus, you mean?" said Bob, not grinning.

And in both our cases something did come up. Bob started to write his 'Slow Glass' stories, which appeared in *Analog* with great popularity. I kind of envied him, since I'd never been published there. Then I came up with the basic notion for *Helliconia*, where the year was not our paltry 365 days but six thousand years [or whatever it was]. Like many of your readers, I miss old Bob. Not lost, but gone before. Before we were ready... (28-4-2011)

[Bob died terribly early, at only 65. I can't help thinking of the stories he might have written, the fun we might have had if only things had worked out differently. By contrast, John Burke reached almost ninety although I only made contact with him quite recently. He passed away last autumn.]

John Burke
Kircudbright



*John in 2007.
His photo*

Dear Peter,

After reading Tom Shippey's article I was unable to resist tackling him on the subject of Henry James. I have always been a great Jacobite, and will have none of Shippey's blasphemy in this household! After telling him a few details about my early interest, I now wonder whether I ever got round to writing to you about what might reasonably be called an SF involvement.

As a teenager early in World War II I was shown round Lamb House in Rye by the late E.F. Benson's caretaker, including the garden room in which Henry James dictated nearly all his later works. The room was bombed in an air raid the following year. When, after the war, and I was living in Rye, Lamb House was taken over by the National Trust who misguidedly allowed all the contents to be sold off. Gilbert Fabes, one of the country's most distinguished antiquarian booksellers, at the time settled in Rye, got HJ's copy of Holloway's *HISTORY OF RYE* for me.

Now a couple of SF contacts come into the picture. The writer of sickly-sweet verse, Patience Strong, bought HJ's inkstand, an impressive wooden piece with a bison stooping over the inkwell, and sent it as a present to her friend Neil Bell in Southwold. Bell, who had been a best-selling historical novelist before the war, wasn't doing too well, but had tried his hand at a couple of SF novels for Robert Hale, which somehow brought him in touch with Bill Temple. He told Bill about the gift and said that he detested Henry James. Bill commented that his old friend John Burke, living in Rye, was a great fan of HJ . . . whereupon Bell generously packed it up and sent it off to me. When I wrote to thank him and expressed my liking for *The Master*, I got a very snotty reply; and it must have been shortly afterwards that I believe he committed suicide.



Jean Burke very kindly sent me “the only picture I have of John and Sam Youd together (with our son David). It was taken in 1967.”

Mark you, I am also feeling very smug about Mike Moorcock's flattering reminiscences of me – though they have already aroused flippant remarks from my daughter Bronwen, reading this latest issue. Bron's younger sister, Jenny Hadfield, runs Jeake's House B&B in Rye. She has appeared in the ‘Three in a Bed’ TV series, has won Michelin, AA and goodness knows how many other awards. The rooms in the house are named after distinguished locals such as Conrad Aiken, the one-time owner, and the lesbian novelist Radclyffe Hall. Also, to my embarrassment, there is the John Burke room. I might suggest extracts from Mike's enconium be printed and framed within the room. Less of a draw, maybe, than the obscene Beardsley print in the Radclyffe Hall room. Several enquirers for accommodation after watching the TV programme have coyly asked if they could book “the room with that picture”.

Most delightful bits in the current *Relapse* are those concerning dear old Peter Phillips. Hilarious stuff! Peter always gave my early thrillers glowing reviews in his days as a *Herald* reviewer. One which I mistakenly cherished referred to “Jonathan Burke, who never writes the same book twice”. I took this as a compliment. In later years, sadly, I have learnt that it was a mistake. To be really successful, one should establish a stock character and rewrite the same book over and over again.

Jean has been reading the various articles and marvelling about the world in which I lived long before I met her. She asks me to tell you how much she enjoyed the cover. (12-4-2011)

[Ah, that cover.... Glad someone liked it. It was only meant as a bit of innocent fun, though I wonder now if it might have annoyed the Gillings family. But much more importantly, Bronwen wrote to me on 21st September last year, with the sad news...]

Our dear Pa died yesterday evening in Kirkcudbright Hospital. There will be a cremation sometime soon - we hope in a Scandinavian crematorium nearby: very appropriate in view of his great fondness for Denmark. It would be perfect if we could send him off across the loch in a longboat, but..... Later on, we will scatter his ashes in Rye, of course. A year ago *The Independent* did their weekly 'Forgotten Authors' column on him (I told him at the time that it read like an obit!).

[I missed my chance to visit John in Scotland, and unfortunately also had to miss his send-off because at the time I was recovering after a short stay in hospital. But I checked the Indie piece which appeared on 13 February 2011. It was quite short, and written by former SF-fan Chris(topher) Fowler. I don't know who else might have been covered in that series but a good candidate would have been Ted Tubb, as Phil Harbottle explains below. This correspondence was prompted when I recently bought the Boardman edition of his ALIEN DUST and suggested to Phil that without too much difficulty it could be up-dated in line with modern discoveries...]

Dear Peter,

You make a very valid point. When I took over Ted's representation in 1999, I found that as a result of the Carnell Agency's neglect for a full ten years (after Les Flood retired) the big publishers didn't seem to know (or want to know) who Ted was, and all doors were effectively closed to us. I then had to start at the bottom and try and rebuild his career. I did so by re-opening overseas translation markets, and with small-press fan publishers who were delighted to reprint older material as classics, with my ‘historical’ introductions – so the question of revision simply never came up.

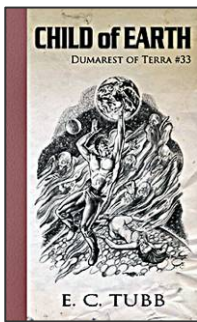
Then I published THE TALL ADVENTURER, which opened the door a crack. I followed this with two major ‘Best of’ Collections, SF and supernatural. But the success was limited. Some grudging approval, followed by ‘don't call us we'll call you’. Eventually I said to hell with it, ceased sending reprint material to the small presses (whilst continuing to sell material abroad, much of it well-paying, such as the Dumarest titles in Holland) and investigated entirely *new* markets, which had no connection with the SF Establishment.

I'd earlier re-sold all his westerns, and then, after selling his single detective novel (the Raymond Chandler pastiche, ASSIGNMENT NEW YORK) to the large print ‘Linford Mystery’ series, I set about establishing Ted in this new market, where he was unknown – and welcomed – by editors with no in-built prejudice against him. Many of Ted's SF novels had always had strong mystery, even detective, elements, and so I was able to sell Ted there. With continuing library royalties, Ted earned more money from his large-print books than he ever earned from many of the so-called ‘big’ SF publishers in his 70s heyday, and his heirs will continue to benefit for years to come.

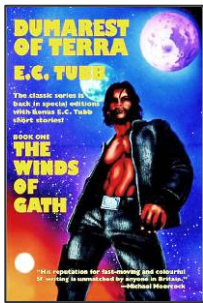


Phil at London Book Fair, 2002

Phil Harbottle
pjhar@global
net.co.uk



Popular in Europe – Ted's 'Dumarest' series.



Don Allen
don-allen@bushinternet.com



Don in 2010.
His photo

Below; rare image of Bryan Berry, at the 1952 Loncon. Photo by Ted Carnell.



But to sell to this market I worked with Ted to revise his old novels and scientifically and astronomically up-date them, just as you surmise. Unfortunately ALIEN DUST was not one of them, because it had been reprinted as it stood by Wildside and was still in print from them. Their contract has since expired, but so, unfortunately, has Ted. So, when Gollancz/Orion came calling after seeing my *Locus* obituary of Ted, I suggested they used the newly revised material, but they expressed a preference to reprint the old historical texts

That deal was concluded, with a nice payday for Ted's estate. They wanted ALL his hundred-plus SF novels, his entire backlist (except for the 'Space 1999' series, where they anticipated problems in negotiating separately with the TV franchise rights holders). They bought E-rights only on every other novel, with first-option on paper editions – with the exception of three titles which they plan to issue as a paperback omnibus plus what will be first posthumous publication of Ted's last novel, FIRES OF SATAN, an apocalyptic near-future end of the world novel).

To date they've issued about half his (mainly) later novels (including the Dumarest saga) as E-reads, but relatively few of his early novels – as yet. Presumably the earlier novels will follow in due course. They preferred to go with the original 'anachronistic' versions (didn't want to even consider the updated versions). One exception to their using original versions is DEAD WEIGHT (2007), an extensive rewrite (not just updating) of DEATH WEARS A WHITE FACE (1979).

One significant fact in the Orion deal is that they were not interested in any of the collections of Ted's short stories, nor apparently in any future new posthumous collections. So I have linked-up with a USA pod-paper and E-publisher, Rob Reginald's Borgo Books. For them I have been compiling new Tubb collections that include a sprinkling of unpublished short stories. Borgo also do Double books like the old Ace series, and so I'm bringing out World First Book Editions of some of Ted's novellas such as STAR HAVEN. Several of these new Tubb collections have also been done quite recently by our UK large-print publisher F.A. Thorpe (Linford), who earlier issued first editions of two posthumous novels STARSLAVE and TO DREAM AGAIN, which Ted sent me shortly before he died. (13-11-12)

[And to think, it so nearly was 'Ted Tubb, Tram-driver' - see *Relapse* #17. Now here's someone else from Phil's part of the world who remembers all this old stuff...]

Dear Peter,

R-19 was another fascinating issue packed full of nostalgic information, and I've read it from cover to cover. The format is so good it makes it easy to read and it flows together beautifully. Every page is full of interest and even right up to the last page I find something intriguing! There's a reference to Bryan Berry and his apparent 'suicide' in 1955. I'm puzzled about this because I was corresponding with Bryan in the early '50s and he had an article in my *Satellite-2* about writing SF. I lost contact with him round about 1955 but can't recall anything to make me suspect something was wrong.

In that same issue of *Satellite* was an article by Jon J. Deegan (his Old Growler series was very popular), and I remember Eric Bentcliffe, who was involved with the *Vargo Statten* magazine, asking me for Bryan's address. He was doing a feature on popular authors and was convinced that Berry, Deegan, Roy Sheldon and a few others were all the same person.

I enjoyed Phil Harbottle's piece on Wally Gillings. It's so sad to know that all his life-long collection has probably been scrapped. How many more items of SF and fan-history like this have gone into the skip? [Don, by now you'll have seen my editorial note that all is (probably) not lost!]

My favourite part of *Relapse* is usually the letters, and rightly so, but in R-19 I really warmed to Ian Shaw's article about his Dad. Wonderful stuff! I was laughing out loud at some of the anecdotes. Bob and I were in regular contact and I first met him in Belfast at Oblique House. He later paid me a visit at my home in Newcastle. I found him to be a wonderful, easy-to-talk-to person, full of Irish charm. That pic of him, Walt and James (wearing Beanies) also shows the famous enchanted duplicator! GoshWow! I've actually cranked that famous machine and helped to print a few pages of *Hyphen*, although I was a bit dismayed on my first visit to Walt's house on Newtownards Road. It was a huge Victorian terraced house with lots of big rooms and a large staircase leading up to the famous fan-attic where Ghoddminton was played. 'O'Bleak House', I used to call it. However, the warm hospitality prevailed and I had some really happy times there.

It's strange that the Globe's visitor's book has gone astray! One would think that such an important item would be in somebody's care. I find it hard to believe that it would be just thrown away. I think I can recall Jim Cawthorn and Arthur Thomson drawing a cartoon together when signing in. Jim had a spell of looking after Mike Moorcock's flat in Ladbroke Grove when he was away. Then we would meet in the Globe and at closing time, usually 10.30, a few of us would go Lyons Corner House in Piccadilly for something to eat.

All in all, Peter, another totally absorbing issue full of fascinating information. I love it! (1-6-11)

[Thanks, Don. Phil writes, "Bryan Berry dropped completely out of sight in 1955. He had quite a following, and the rumour started immediately that he had committed suicide. Ted Tubb heard it that he'd died in a motorbike accident. But that's all it was – a rumour. That's why I was very careful in my book to write obliquely 'which led many to believe he'd met an early death'. That, at least is factually correct. About 12 years ago I got to know famous comics guru Dennis Gifford, and Dennis was a personal friend of Berry in the early 50s (Berry started as a commercial/comics artist before turning to fiction) and Dennis told me he knew nothing of a suicide. He thought it unlikely."

[Phil has 'a small cache of signed copies' of his superb, 400-page book, VULTURES OF THE VOID, about early SF publishing in Britain, available from him for £10.00 in the UK, post-paid.]

[Don mentioned the fan-room at Oblique House, and John Berry was the last survivor of those happy days. Sadly, he passed away on 25 November last year, after a long fight against illness. Fortunately I had visited him a year or so earlier, and he sent this item with a note, "Since 1954 I have written over a thousand articles for fanzines. Unfortunately this is my finale." The story of the typewriter has appeared previously (and how Geri Sullivan finally fixed it), but John's final anecdote about Bob Shaw has never been told before. John's wife Diane has now returned to Northern Ireland.]

John Berry,
Hatfield

Dear Peter,

The excellent potted biography of Bob Shaw by his son in the last *Relapse* revealed things about Bob which I had not known before. For several years I met him and the other members of Irish Fandom at Oblique House (the Walt Willis residence) on Tuesday nights and Sunday afternoons, and discovered he was a wonderful man, whimsical, witty, shrewd, thoroughly likeable.

I have written thousands of words about Bob and the rest of Irish Fandom, but I reveal herewith the circumstances of how I came to possess a typewriter that had belonged to a 'vile pro'.

In the fifties I was producing humorous articles for many fanzines, but my typers were always breaking down, understandable, perhaps because I had purchased them from junk shops. (Bob once said, "You knocked the *L* out of them!"). I was bemoaning my lack of typer facility to the Belfast fans, and I saw Bob's eyes flicker in triumph for a brief moment.

The following Sunday afternoon he crossed the room and sat next to me. He held out his hands in supplication, a wide beaming smile bisecting his face. He explained that he had purchased a new typer, and was prepared to make a sacrifice and sell me his old machine. To a new-fan, as I was at that time, it seemed an extraordinary stroke of luck that a vile pro was offering his typer. We discussed financial terms and agreed to a figure to my disadvantage.

"Delivered Monday night" he laughed

There he was at the front door of my house 'Mon Debris', staggering under the weight of a large rusting machine. He followed me up to my fanac room, sweating profusely.

"Put it on my desk, Bob." I indicated.

My desk was the object of scorn and ridicule in fandom, and in my stories I was accused of exaggeration. It consisted of two empty tea chests, one bearing the legend 'PRODUCE OF CHITTAGONG' with three thick planks placed on top.

Bob deposited it, I handed over the fee, we shook hands (his right hand was rather limp) and he departed, leaving me to survey my latest acquisition. It was very old, of crude manufacture... the keys were placed either side, half on the left, half on the right. I put in a sheet of paper and typed in my test piece, 'antidisestablishmentarism'. Crikey, the type face was perfect, just what I had always wanted!

On the third night of active fanning, the platen refused to function.

I am not known for my mechanical skill, but I pondered ... rushed down to the kitchen, selected a large tin of beans and a length of strong twine, took the stairs three at a time, sat down, tied one end of the twine to the left side of the platen and let the beans dangle over the side.

I pressed a key... brilliant! the platen moved ... it worked superbly (Willis later referred to it as a 'can- of-beans-drive').

Bob Shaw was a remarkable man, one of the nicest chaps I've ever met. After 50 years I think about him every day. This is not hyperbole. One day, rummaging in an old storeroom at the aircraft factory where he was employed, he found a small box in an alcove, brushed away the dust, and opened it to reveal two Wedgewood blue and white wall plaques, depicting Alcock and Brown, the first aviators to fly the Atlantic.

Bob knew I was an aviation buff and presented them to me. They are mounted on the wall behind the TV set. Every time I switch on I note the aviators and utter a quiet "Thank you" to Bob Shaw. (April, 2011)



John Eggeling
todmorden
books@ndirect.
co.uk

Hi Peter

I've been having this niggling feeling for the past couple of months that I had been dropped from your mailing then in comes No. 19 to distract me from my work. Unfortunately I got side-tracked when I reached the bottom of page four and ended up scanning my copy of Jean Luc-Goddard's *Sympathy For The Devil* instead.

Although the 11-minute-long episode Malcolm described begins with the camera slow-panning across a display of soft-core men's magazines, the sequence is actually called "Hi-Fiction Science." Which implies it was intended that the men should be looking through the SF section of the shop, though what relevance that has to the film as a whole escapes me. As for the two older men, I didn't recognise either and don't believe they have any connection to fandom. However I could be wrong so I have pasted some screen shots into the attached Word document. And yes, although the trees outside the door reminded me of the Camberwell Plus Books, all the stamps visible on magazines in the shop bear the Norwood Road address which I never visited.

Now to get back to Rob Hansen's article on page 5 . . . (9-4-2011)

[Sorry, John, I had intended to run a couple of your photos, but space ran out. They don't show anyone we know but are interesting to those studying the denizens of second-hand book emporiums!]



*John in 2009.
His photo.*

David Pringle
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Peter:

Thanks for *Relapse 19*, which is as interesting as ever. I see Mike Moorcock says: "The picture of the audience on page 6 in the last issue [#18] definitely shows Jimmy and Mary Ballard."

Oh, dear. No, it doesn't. I never thought the woman was Mary (and I told John Baxter so), but I just got around the other day to making sure by asking Ballard's daughter, Fay. After I'd sent her the 1957 Worldcon photo, she kindly e-mailed me back to say she was delighted to see the picture of her dad, but no, that was definitely not her mother in the picture with him. Since her father died two years ago, Fay has been studying old photos of her mother that she found among her dad's things, and she says she's absolutely certain the woman sitting next to JGB in the Worldcon photo is *not* her!

Fay was born in August 1957, by the way, about a fortnight before that Worldcon snap of her father was taken. She would have been just past her seventh birthday when her mother tragically died of pneumonia in September 1964 – so, Fay is old enough to remember her mum, quite apart from the recent discovery of that cache of photographs showing her.

I asked her if she might let us see a scan of a genuine picture of her mother, perhaps one from those she found among her father's belongings (it seems he kept photographs of Mary pretty secret after her death), but she seems uneasy about doing that. She doesn't want them to enter general circulation; and these days, with scanning and e-mailing, it's risky. But she has offered to show me some of the old photos some time – perhaps when I visit the British Library in London to see her father's archive there.

So we're thrown back on the one photo of Mary Ballard which has been made public. It was published in *Re/Search 8/9: J. G. Ballard* in 1984. Now, it occurs to me that since you're not exactly a Ballard fan yourself you may not have seen this so I have just scanned it here. I don't know exactly when it was taken, but my own guess is circa 1960. Compare it with the 1957 photo, and you'll see that Mary Ballard had a much smaller chin than the woman in the photo, whereas the strange woman in the '57 photo is rather large-chinned, in my estimation. (17-4-2011)

[The next one is a bit out of date, now, but Dave's invitation to do a 'special' on *New Worlds* was the inspiration for Charles Platt's article this time.]



Dave Hodson
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Hello again Peter,

I have some news for you and, hopefully, something you might find interesting. Dick Jude, Dave Tamlyn, Roger Gray, Felix Jude-West and I have reached an agreement with Michael Moorcock to recommence publishing *New Worlds*. This was initially to fund an award, The DnA Award, in memory of Gamma [Paul Gamble, who died 15-11-10]. The magazine will be published as both an electronic and traditional print-on-paper title. It will have an extensive website behind it as well which should be updated with interviews, news and the like.

I was wondering if you'd be interested in doing a special 'New Worlds' edition of *Relapse* for us to help promote the magazine and to show the heritage we're hoping to continue?

Regarding *Relapse*, I bought a nice new laser printer not too long ago and printed out the pdf's of all the issues when I finally succumbed to reading glasses so I could read them all more easily. Some of the letters in various issues and the correspondence between yourself and Charles Platt kind of sum-up why I think someone should try and revive *New Worlds*. I've always loved fantasy and horror (as another example) as much as Science Fiction but, as much as I'm enjoying the George Martin's 'Game of Throne' series for example, I feel short-changed when I read something that's meant to be SF and just isn't, or something that is meant to be horror but isn't. I want *New Worlds* to make a clear distinction with what it publishes and under what labels, which clearly influence how the reader receives the piece.

I'm 50 on Friday. Strangely, this and the *New Worlds* project have made me think a lot about the past recently. Your comments in #16 about Arthur Thomson 'never having made any money' hit home a bit. I never really got to know him but I enjoyed his work and when the news came about his family's hardships after his death it seemed like the obvious thing to do was to try and help. Arthur should have been more widely published and, I'm sure, he could have made a living from his work but maybe it was a mixture of generational and class 'issues'.

I come from a similar background, although left school in 1979 to go to college. I like to think I'm reasonably bright but it's strange how that real, nailed-to-the-spine confidence is never there like it is in people from more middle- and upper-class families. Maybe Arthur never felt he could move into a career as an illustrator because that confidence wasn't there and his generation didn't have the educational opportunities available a decade or two later. Regardless, it's a great shame he isn't lauded by more people.

Mike Moorcock talking (I can imagine his voice as I read his letters) about Vinç Clarke also brought back pleasant memories; Vinç was always a gentleman to me and always seemed to have time for me in a way that others of later generations never seemed to. It's strange how you can suddenly start to miss people who you've been out of contact with for so long and when you find they're no longer there it's heartbreaking. Maybe this anniversary is making me a little maudlin. (4-4-2011)

[I just now checked and 'Michael Moorcock's *New Worlds*' has recently been posted on the web. It says, "the result of 18 months work by a group of people who should have known better." But this is once again getting into the realms of 'mission creep', so I'll let someone else finish that story!]

Arthur Thomson
with artwork,
mid-sixties.
Photo from Ethel
Lindsay's album.



WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

Paul Barnett, who was not amused by my quick summing-up of John Brunner's career: "I'd kind of disagree with you quite a lot about that. Three of those 'four hefty door-stop novels' you so disparage are each worth more than the entire lifetime output of many skiffy writers, and there are other goodies (admittedly among some awful stuff) elsewhere in the Brunner catalogue." [*Not fair, Paul, I said he 'peaked' with those four books!*] While **Arthur Cruttenden** recalls "I was part of the green room crew at Intersection and noticed various con-com members were congregating in corners discussing something in serious tones. Then, at shift-end, they told me that John Brunner had died during the night – and I sat there and cried. I liked John, but until then I hadn't realised how much." And **John Hall** noted: "Sam Lundwall's pic of JB at the 1995 worldcon was very affecting. I wouldn't have recognised John if you had printed it without any clue. How sad. In another pic of JB (page 39) which you say is late 80's, he is still wearing that god-awful jacket he bought at Saks in NYC in nineteen seventy something, on probably the only occasion during his marriage to Marjorie he was allowed to buy clothes unsupervised. But mostly I wanted to point out that the quote you give from Mike Meara in the WAHF says basically the same thing I said many issues and moons ago, for which you remonstrated with me for some long time afterwards. How come Mike gets off so lightly?" [*Who says I let him off??*]

Harry Harrison added: "I thought the Brunner story had been told in full. But Sam Lundwall's pix in #19 stirs up one unrecorded memory. In the summer of 1995 the World Fantasy Con was held in Canary Wharf in London. I was living in docklands at the time so I looked in. John was there as well as lots of publisher and editor friends. One such confided that John had given him three book proposals, all worthless. The con hotel had a large lobby littered with fen drinking, reading and such sport. I sat and rested my feet for a moment, when John drifted by. Or floated or shambled by. His face was ghastly and drawn, his eyes empty. As he passed he said hello. In the spirit of whimsy I said; 'John--you look like a lost soul.' In a voice as empty of feeling as his eyes he said, 'I am a lost soul, Harry.' Those were the last words he spoke to me. A few months later he was dead."

Steve Jeffery writes on a completely different tack: "Brian Aldiss wonders if one of your readers would say a kind word about BILLION YEAR SPREE. This was the first work of SF non fiction/criticism I bought, in one of those paperback Corgi SF Collectors Library editions with those odd textured covers. Rather startling cover image, too, of a phalanx of burning candles, each with a single staring eye. Given that from that single purchase I now have some fifteen foot of shelf space devoted to books of SF and related criticism, Brian must have done something to spark my interest in learning more about what makes SF tick."

Robert Lichtman said "John Baxter's reference to pulps as 'usefully absorbent ballast on cargo ships, to be dumped on the dock and subsequently sold off in chain stores like Coles and Woolworths' gives rise to mental images of soaked prozines being left to dry before sale and never quite losing the puffiness such paper attained when wet! Further in John's letter you comment that your choice for a filmable SF novel would be Tucker's THE LINCOLN HUNTERS. Although I stand by my choice of WHAT MAD UNIVERSE, I agree that the Tucker novel would be equally good filmic fodder. And it *must* be a typo where James Gunn writes that he first met John Brunner 'at the Worldcon in Berkeley in 1958.' The two Bay Area worldcons were both in Oakland, in 1964, and 1968 (at the Hotel Claremont, which is on the Berkeley/Oakland border). The 1958 worldcon was, of course, 'South Gate in '58.' [*Oops, should have spotted that!*] While **Andy Sawyer** enthused, "I loved the piece by Ian Shaw -- brilliant idea! I never knew Bob well – only really had one conversation with him and that was towards the end of his life, when he was in hospital, so a lot of this biographical material was new to me. I never knew he was an archer (a hobby I've recently taken up), and the stories about Northern Ireland sound scary. The boomerang anecdote sounds, somehow typical: a wonderful story."

Bob Silverberg's server wouldn't accept the pdf file, so I had to send him an advance link to Bill's website. He replied, "And so, after all these years of hard work, I have finally qualified for the Secret Peter Weston Website! A great thrill indeed. And another splendid issue. Every time I read it, I feel as though I'm back in London in 1957, meeting all the gang and drinking too much beer. That was a wonderful introduction to British fandom, and somebody always brings it back to life in each issue." But **Fred Smith** complains, "Brian Aldiss in his letter seems to imply that only his and Mike Moorcock's contribution brought literacy to *New Worlds*, Ted Carnell having retarded its development till then! In my opinion the so-called 'New Wave' was a disaster for science fiction: "Alive and kicking" is not necessarily good, nor is novelty for novelty's sake. However, since Brian asks I will put in a 'kindly word' for TRILLION YEAR SPREE. I've owned and enjoyed it for years now and still dip into it now and then."

Peter Stevenson writes, "I recently stumbled across the on-line version of your magazine and whilst I have only ever skirted around the edges of SF, I picked my way through the back-catalogue in a matter of days. Some fascinating reminiscences from people who were previously little more than just names. My own research interests lie with John Wyndham and Sam Youd, so I was particularly drawn to #17. Due to his illness, Sam seemed to have gone quiet over the last four or five years, so that may well have been his last piece of serious writing before his sad death earlier this year. Good to see some photos of both individuals as well." And **Philip Turner** encouraged my regrettable tendency for 'mission creep'; "Between starting and finishing the ish, I skimmed through THE NEW SF, an anthology of 'modern speculative fiction' from 1969, and a bigger load of tosh you'd be hard pushed to find. The 'fiction' is just words thrown at the page, and not very interesting sets of words. Some of the authors don't bother to try to tell a story. Others offer a dull saga with big chunks from an encyclopaedia and textbooks thrown in to pad it out. No wonder the British SF mags croaked at the end of the 60s. Did SF fans of the time appreciate this stuff? Or did they manage to divorce SF fandom from the tripe being served up as SF at the time? No doubt this topic will be explored in a future issue of *Relapse*." [*Ah, Philip, those were the days! You should have seen me battling through that era with Speculation!*]

Response was also received from Graham Bates, Leslyn Belsey, Rob Hansen, Donald Malcolm, Farah Mendlesohn, Ian Millsted, Murray Moore, Lloyd Penney, Greg Pickersgill, John Purcell, Fay Symes & Peter West. Thanks, all!

All together now, "*Relapse is nothing without Response*", so do please keep sending your anecdotes, memories and insights about past times in British SF fandom (and don't forget the old photographs). You can receive the pdf as issued (just ask) or read issues on the *eFanzines* site four weeks after publication day (in this case 5th December 2012).

BACK ISSUE DEPARTMENT:

I still have a small number of copies of the exclusive paper edition, issues 16,17,18,19. They're available at £5.00 each including postage, payable through PayPal. The main object isn't to get my money back so much as to get the magazines out of my cupboard and into the hands of people who might appreciate them. Let me know what you want and I'll advise if they're still available, and how much (combined postage on multiple orders of course). pr.weston@btinternet.com