

Exhibition Hall 14



The War of the Worlds

Exhibition Hall Issue 14

I've always loved War of the Worlds. I can't remember when I first read it, I think it would have been in High School, but I do remember the first time I ever heard the radio version done by Orsen Wells. I was 10 years old and they played it on NPR. I listened to the whole thing, rapt attention as if someone was jangling a set of keys in front of my face. It was amazing. I love radio drama, and this was the first one I can ever say I heard for sure. It was a gateway drug of sorts, as I found my gramma's old collection of radio shows on cassette. It was the start.

H.G. Wells was a major figure in the development of science fiction in English. While Verne was far more important to the world as a whole, the translations into English were seriously flawed, which allowed Wells to become the more important of the two for the development of the genre of Science Fiction. *The Time Machine* and *The War of the Worlds*, along with *The Sleeper Awakens*, were the books that influenced an entire generation, and War of the Worlds was even more important because it influenced a



huge number of early Science Fiction filmmakers, including George Pal, whose version of War of the Worlds is the second most important behind only Welles' radio version. Pal's take on the visual language of The War of the Worlds was impressive, and if you look at the art that's come after, all of them are influenced by Pal's vision.

This issue has been brewing for a while. as our London Bureau Chief is a huge fan of WotW, and I've got my years loving that radio drama. We've got some very good stuff on the subject.

In other news, if you're in the San Jose area, San Jose State University is doing a Steampunk version of Shakespear's The Tempest this November. If you're around, you should go and see it because if it's half as good as Butterfield 8's Hamlet, it's going to be good.

And, since nothing stands still, we're still doing the Exhibition Hall Review of Books. Blameless, another great Gail Carriger book, The Osiris Ritual, Dreadnought and Steampunk Prime all need to be talked about! Plus there's a look at The Asylum!

And a hearty congrats to Gail Carriger who will be the Guest of Honor at FenCon next year! My buddy Steven H Silver is the Fan GoH, too!

So now, here's our take on The War of the Worlds as Novel, Comic, radio broadcast and more!

Christopher J Garcia: Editor, James Bacon: London Bureau Chief, Ariane Wolfe: Fashion Editor
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WELLES', NOT WELLS', WAR OF THE WORLDS BY CHRISTOPHER J GARCIA

If I could choose any one American of the 20th Century to be, I'd choose Orson Welles. Magician, filmmaker, radio star, bon vivant, possible Black Dahlia murderer, Welles was an all-around genius. While *Citizen Kane* is the single greatest accomplishment ever made by a 25 year old, it is his legendary radio broadcast of *War of the Worlds* that is far more important.

The Mercury Theatre was likely the greatest ensemble working in radio or on the stage at the time. They were led by one of the greatest pairings in the history of film/theatre/radio: John Houseman and

Orson Welles. *Mercury Theatre on the Air* was their CBS radio show, and that was what the Mercury Theatre was best known for. There were some amazing actors in the group, including Agnes Morehead. They did radio plays based on popular books and plays, starting with an amazing version of *Dracula* and going through so many of the excellent pieces in the history of English language. My personal favorite was episode 16: *Around The World In 80 Days*. You can actually find the audio of many of these broadcasts at <http://www.mercurytheatre.info/>



It was 1938 and commercial radio was more than a decade old, but still, it wasn't that well defined. Everyone who had a radio knew that conventions of the various shows: you had music, announcers that played up the sponsors, a performance of the show and so on. This knowledge allowed writers and producers to play with the formats. In 1926, Father Ronald Knox made a very famous broadcast, *Broadcasting from the Barricades*, which was the story of London falling to rioters. It was in the form of a false series of news reports with music coming from the ballroom of the Savoy Hotel, which in the news reports was being destroyed by the rioters! Welles may have heard of this, and it may have been one of his influences. The broadcast does not exist still, though the script has been reprinted several times. It caused a minor panic on the streets of London, which is part of what inspired Morrissey to write The Smiths' tune *Panic*.

Welles was a great fan of Wells. The two met at least once and there is an existing radio conversation between the two of them (which you can find at <http://www.mercurytheatre.info/> as well) and it seemed a natural that for a Halloween performance, Wells' *The War of the Worlds* would make the perfect subject. Howard Koch, one of the great writers of radio and who would later be one of the many writers let loose on the script for *Casablanca*. Koch went with the news broadcast method, but it's not quite as sneaky as most people seem to think. Every episode opened with a bit of talk about the book that was being presented. Welles did this for *War of the Worlds* as well. He even explained that this was a broadcast set in the year 1939, a full year after the radio program's broadcast date: October 30th, 1938.

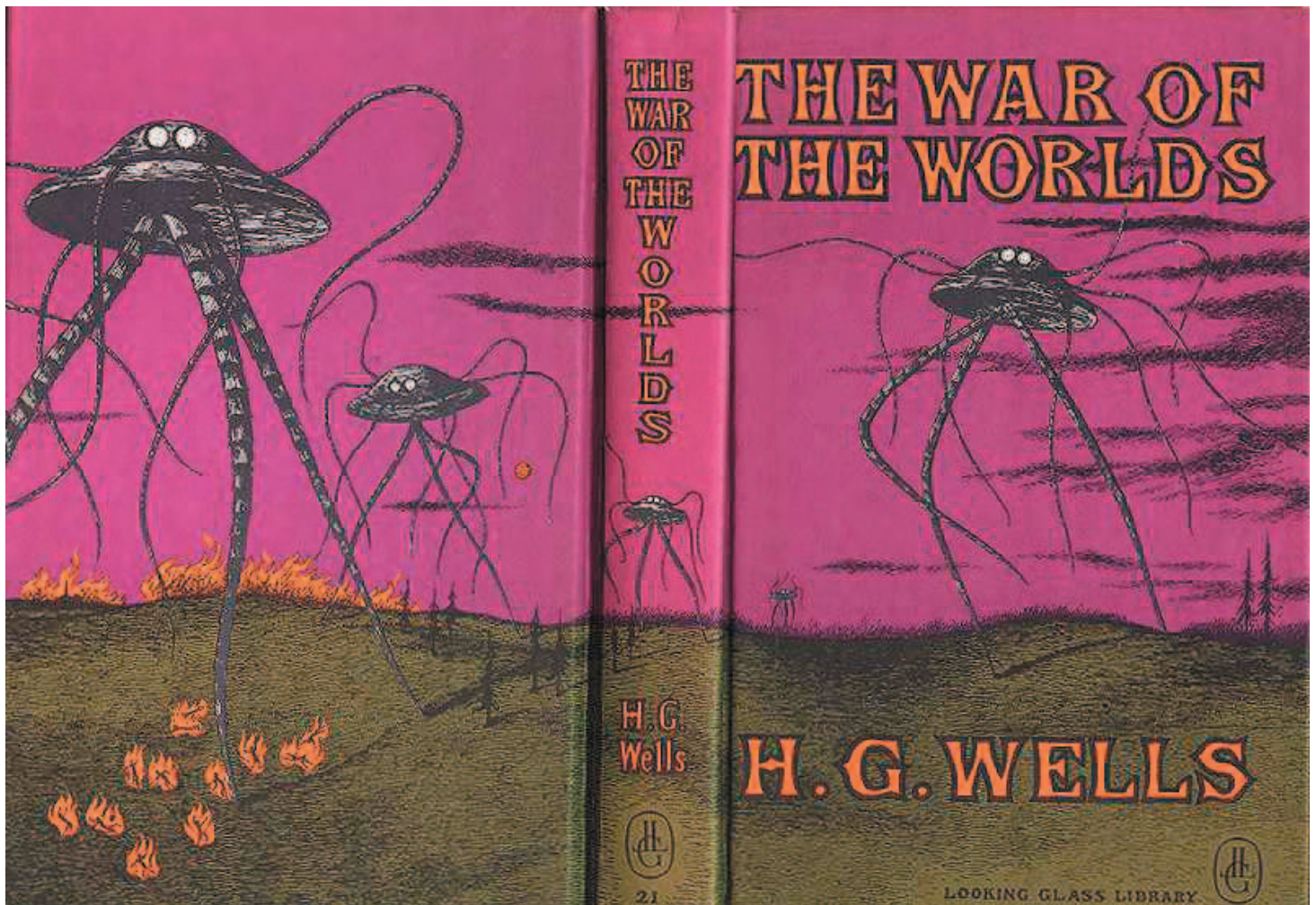
This was not heard by many folks because of the *Chase and Sanborn Hour*.

The Chase and Sanborn Hour was one of most popular shows on radio. Hosted by the very popular Don Ameche, it featured Nelson Eddy, a popular crooner, and Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy, the ventriloquist dummy act that somehow worked on radio. I still don't understand that one. They did fifteen minutes of schtick to open their show, and then they settled into music for a bit. Now, they were on The Red Network, part of NBC, which was the dominant radio network at the time. This meant that a large audience was listening to *Chase and Sanborn Hour*, and then when the music hit, it was frequent for listeners to zip around the dial and see what else was happening. Welles, a master of timing and obfuscation, would have easily been able to figure this out and that's certainly part of the plan.

This was smart because they played their music, but there were frequent reports from the newsroom to interrupt it. They kept adding a bunch of new reports, including interviewing a Princeton professor about the activities on Mars. It was all very smart. The music, including Stardust, was pretty much what you'd expect from many of the variety shows of the day.

The time was supposed to be 1939, and it was set in the US, specifically in and around New York City. It was centered in the town of Grover's Mill in New Jersey. Moving the scene from England to the US was a good thing. The serious action of the supposed invasion started around 12 minutes, and after they described the cylinder and interviewed the owner of the farm where it crashed, the real invasion part started right about the time folks might have been switching around the dial. Timing.

The thing is, with the knowledge we have now about how reporting happens, this was far too neat, they would never have been able to have so much happen so quickly. There





were hundreds of people gathered less than five minutes after the thing touches down? It just doesn't work in real life. They played with little things like the various people being interviewed coming in and out, as if the microphone were moving.

At 15:16, the cylinder started to open.

Perfect.

The radio drama is legendary, perfectly done. The entire thing is just amazingly perfect. The reporter seems very calm, which was what everyone at the time expected. We have to remember that the Hindenburg disaster was just over a year old. That was the first disaster with serious radio coverage, though most folks saw and heard it from the Universal newsreel that went out over the following few days. The way that they played worked with that knowledge that people had from that moment.

There was also the panic. Or maybe not.

There was certainly some panic, or at least concern. Almost every police department in and around New York and New Jersey reported a swamping of their call boards. The stories of mass suicides and the like have never been proven. There were several traffic accidents that were directly related to people trying to get out of that part of New Jersey, but there was no massive panic. This is always a debate, and there are those that think that it was actually Welles trying to test the nations susceptibility to mass hysteria. Turns out that there wasn't as much to worry about.

CBS made Welles apologize. He did so, on October 31st, a Monday. This is important. This means something.



The key thing about the *War of the Worlds* wasn't how it changed the world of broadcasting, which it did, but how it influenced the people who heard it. It was replayed a lot, especially in the 1950s and 60s. One of the guys who re-created the radio drama was Steve Allen, who had heard it as a kid. So was Genen Roddenberry. In fact, many of the greatest SF writers of the 1950s and 60s listened and some of them even incorporated the show into their stories down the road. It influenced a lot of folks, one of which was J.D. Richter, a kid who would grow up to be a screenwriter.

Richter wrote a film called *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai Across the 8th Dimension!*. Buckaroo Banzai is a the story of Dr. Buckaroo Banzai, a surgeon/rockstar/theoretical physicist who deals with an invasion of 'Lectroids',

aliens who were banished to the 8th Dimension. One of the things is that the Lectroids arrived on October 31st, 1938, the day of Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds* broadcast. Yes, it was the Halloween special, but it took place on the 30th. The story goes that the Lectroids forced Welles to recant his story and then they applied for Social Security cards on November 1st. It's a great bit and one of my favorite references to WotW.

The other one that gets me is from one of the best stupid high school shows, *Head of the Class*. While starring the exceptional Howard Hesseman, it was pretty much one of the dumbest television shows of the 1980s. It focused on a group of gifted and talented students at a New York high school. While it did introduce the world to Khrystyne Haje, the beautiful redhead who was born in Santa Clara, CA, just like me! They did an episode surrounding the school's radio station, which broadcast in the halls between classes. NO one paid attention, thus the smart kids were the ones who took over the station in an attempt to make it cooler. In history, they were studying the *War of the Worlds* broadcast and the supposed panic. The group, when talking about how to improve the radio broadcast, come up with the idea to create a fake NPR feed of news about a Martian invasion. The plan works, except for the fact that no one still pays any attention. It's a neat episode, and being a thirteen year old who loved *War of the Worlds*, it quickly became my favorite episode, and one that I watched on video tape dozens of times.

War of the Worlds is on the National Recording Registry, the US's official archive of audio recordings of most importance. It's an important step in the evolution of US radio and tells a story of how people reacted to hoaxes at the start of a new medium.



WAR OF THE WORLDS: THE COMIC BOOKS

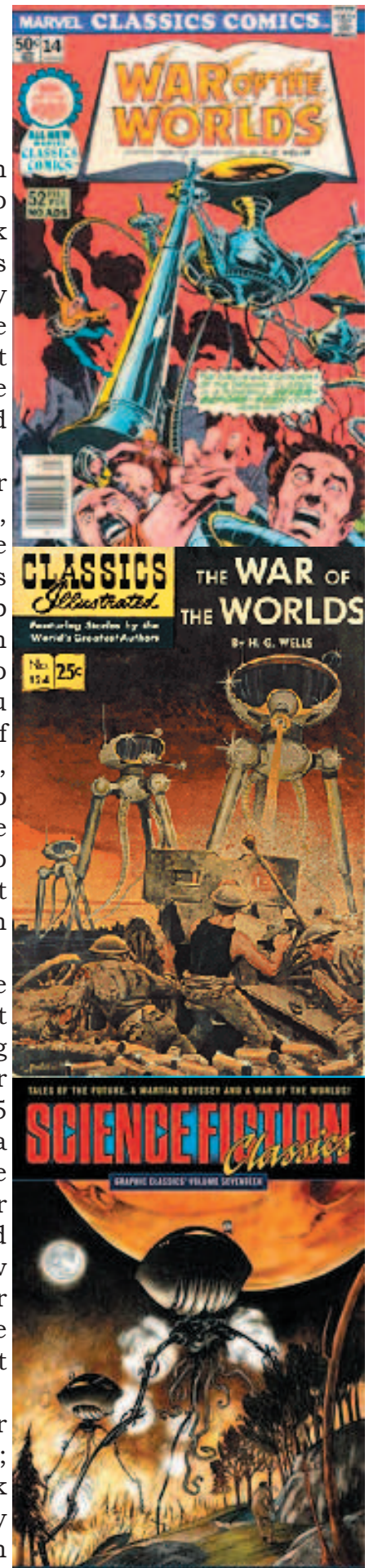
BY JOHN GOSLING

The War of the Worlds is an amazing novel that can conjure up all manner of imagery in the mind of the reader, so it is no surprise that it has inspired any number of comic book versions. Some have closely adapted the original novel, others have chosen to completely re-invent the story or spin off entirely fresh tales. Then there are those numerous examples that have referenced the infamous 1938 Orson Welles radio broadcast. Not every interpretation has been entirely successful, but all provide different and intriguing ways of looking at a well-known and infinitely adaptable tale.

Such was the influence of Welles' radio show on popular culture that an oblique comic book reference soon cropped up, in Batman number 1 no less! This inaugural April 1940 issue from DC Comics also features a first devilish turn from Batman's nemesis, The Joker, who vows to announce by radio each step of his nefarious criminal enterprise, but one listener is less than impressed, laughing it off as a hoax like, "...that fellow who scared everybody with that story about Mars the last time." You might think that the passing years would dim memories, but if proof was needed that Welles had created an enduring legacy, you need only turn to Issue 62 (Jan/Feb 1950) of Superman, also from DC Comics. In perhaps the oddest comic ever to reference The War of the Worlds, Welles himself pops up in person to help Superman avert a real Martian invasion, though his first attempts to warn Earth by radio fall (not at all unsurprisingly) on deaf ears.

As if this wasn't enough, the same year saw the publication of a particularly visceral homage to Welles' finest hour. EC Comics had a well-deserved reputation for pushing the prevailing boundaries of taste and decency, coming under regular fire for their violent and bloody stories. For issue 15 of Weird Science, EC stalwart Al Feldstein illustrated Panic, a loose re-imagining of the 1938 broadcast featuring a contrite broadcaster named Carson Walls. Years earlier, and to his bitter regret, he too had caused a radio panic, but is then persuaded to foolishly revisit the scene of his crime by producing a new version. Unfortunately, over-zealous caution is his undoing, for so effective is his publicity campaign to warn the public of the impending transmission, that real Martians use the broadcast as cover for a genuine invasion.

Easily the most famous comic book adaptation of The War of the Worlds was produced for the Classics Illustrated series; a particularly renowned and long running collection that took great pains to present well crafted adaptations of famous literary properties. Published between 1941 and 1971 by the Gilberton



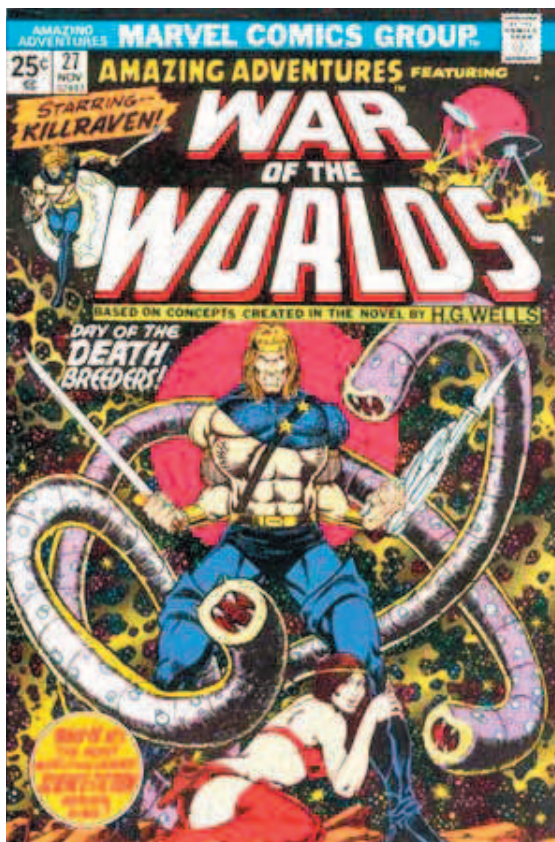
Company, *The War of the Worlds* was adapted in issue 124 (January of 1955). Written by Harry Miller and with illustrations by Lou Cameron, his amazingly vivid cover painting of advancing Tripods must rate as one of the most iconic ever *War of the Worlds* illustrations.

The original novel of *The War of the Worlds* left many unanswered questions, most specifically what became of the Martian race and would they be back? In May 1973, Marvel Comics attempted to answer this vexing question by spinning off an entirely new story, set in the aftermath of a 2nd successful Martian invasion of Earth in the year 2001. The adventures of the freedom fighter Killraven began in the pages of *Amazing Adventures* issue 18, a title designed to showcase new stories. Created by Roy Thomas and Neal Adams, the character never really took off but has been revived a few more times, most recently in a 6 issue limited series (2003) and a single issue appearance in number 18 (2010) of *Guardians of the Galaxy*. Bizarrely, in the UK, the Killraven comic was doctored into a new version called *Apeslayer*, where it was used in 1975 as filler material in a weekly *Planet of the Apes* comic book.

A new straightforward adaptation of *The War of the Worlds* arrived in 1974, one of many books in a series made for schools by Pendulum Press. Their *Now Age* book version was a rather fast and loose retelling of the story, but boasted impressive art by the renowned artist Alex Nino. A particularly dull and perfunctory retelling of the Welles broadcast featured in the February 1975 issue of *Gold Key's UFO Flying Saucers* comic, but Marvel hit one out of the ballpark with their 1976 *Classic Comics* adaptation of the original novel, a more faithful (and uninhibited) version than that attempted previously by either *Classics Illustrated* or Pendulum Press.

At about this time, western comic book publishers were clearly losing interest in *The War of the Worlds*. Warren publishing splashed a Martian Tripod on the front cover of *Creepy* magazine 87 (1977) but the only other comic book of note in this period was published in communist Poland, with an intriguing adaptation appearing in the pages of *ALFA Magazine* (1978). This impressive colour production is certainly striking in design, but it would be interesting to learn if East-West politics intruded on the narrative.

Almost ten years would pass before the *War of the Worlds* would be revisited again



by an American comic book publisher, but the wait was well worth it, when Roy Thomas (co-creator of Killraven) brilliantly resurrected an obscure 1930's crime fighter in an affectionate and highly effective story set on the night of the Orson Welles broadcast. Issue 5 of *Secret Origins* from DC Comics (August 1986) retells the origin of *The Crimson Avenger*, but weaves the broadcast into the very fabric of the story with great deal of panache and confidence, cleverly utilizing original dialogue from the radio script.

The Crimson Avenger was clearly one of those lovely vanity projects that occasionally slip between the cracks at big publishers, but if DC and Marvel were still cool on *The War of the Worlds*, the same could not be said of the burgeoning small press scene of the late 1980's. Eternity Comics then produced two series, one of which rather shamelessly rode the coat tails of the *War of the Worlds* TV series that was in production at time, (reference was made to it on the covers) even though there was no apparent connection. This 1988 Eternity *War of the Worlds* series stands as perhaps the oddest and most off-the-wall version of the story yet

created, with a setting on a Scottish island and the invaders coming from underground in a co-incidental precursor to the Spielberg War of the Worlds movie.

Eternity returned briefly to The War of the Worlds in 1990 with the intriguing Sherlock Holmes in the case of the missing Martian, a very well realised sequel to the War of the Worlds set in 1908 that catapults Holmes and Watson into a race against time to discover the meaning of a bizarre theft from the British museum. Also in 1990, a clever reference to The War of the Worlds was worked into issue 7 of The Shadow Strikes (DC Comics.) This intriguing tale brings the Shadow (whom Orson Welles had played on radio) into bruising contact with a theatre impresario named Grover Mills (a neat reference here to the hamlet of Grover's Mill where the 1938 broadcast set the beachhead for the invasion) and ends on a highly entertaining note as Mills begins to hatch a plan for a new radio play featuring Martians! Not to be left out, Marvel also made a brief foray back into the imagination of H G Wells in 1990, with the single issue special Adventures in Reading. This comic saw Spiderman himself battle Martian Tripods, as the webslinger is blasted into a number of literary worlds, including into the midst of the Martian invasion.

In 1996, Arrow Comics (under the Caliber Comics banner) produced their series The War of the Worlds: The Haven and the Hellweed, a particularly good story that pitches the reader straight into a modern day battle between the Martians and an embattled resistance. This is a complete reinvention of the story, but retains (and updates) all the iconic imagery of the original novel to strong effect. A second series from Arrow Comics was begun in 1998, called The Memphis Front, but regrettably the intended 5 part run came to an abortive end after only 2 issues.

Caliber Comics had also produced another series in 1996 that owed much to The War of the Worlds. The Searchers was a mash up of literary giants including H.G Wells, Charles Fort, Jules Verne, Edgar Rice Burroughs, H Rider Haggard and Arthur Conan Doyle. These famous names become embroiled in an adventure that brings their fictional creations to life, including a Martian Tripod. A second series of The Searchers, subtitled Apostle of Mercy opens with a superbly realised Tripod attack on London.

1998 saw the triumphant return (yet again) of Roy Thomas (clearly a huge fan) to The War of the Worlds universe in the DC Elseworlds series, which in a single issue pitted Superman against the Martians in a stunning tale set in the year 1938. It stands as one of the very best comic books ever written about The War of the Worlds, and as befits the time it is set in, works in plenty of sly references to the Orson Welles broadcast.

There have been a number of other attempts to re-imagine the War of the Worlds in new and novel ways. One of the most intriguing must be The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen (1999), a splendid reinvention of the story from writer Alan Moore and artist Kevin O'Neill that mingles a veritable who's who of fictional characters including Jules Vernes' Captain Nemo, Wells' Invisible Man and Rider Haggard's Allan Quartermain. In the second volume of their adventures, the team of adventurers go up against a Martian invasion that rewrites the original Wells novel in supremely bloodthirsty fashion.

Also in a similar vein to The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, writer Ian Edginton and artist D'Israeli have provided their own audacious spin on the original story.



Scarlet Traces (2003) is a well thought out steampunk sequel to The War of the Worlds, which postulates what might have happened to all that abandoned Martian hardware. An equally well-produced sequel, The Great Game (2006), sees a resurgent British Empire launch a counter-invasion to the red planet.

With the release of the 2005 Steven Spielberg version of The War of the Worlds, some old (and new) comics saw the light of day. The original Classics Illustrated comic was re-issued, but best of all fans were treated to a number of new adaptations. Best Sellers Illustrated came up with an interesting retelling of the story that makes a reasonable attempt to fit a Martian invasion into modern times, while from IIDW Publishing (under their Little Book of Horror banner) came an extensively abridged and rewritten treatment of the original story, which nonetheless boasted some stunning illustrations. However, it was Dark Horse Comics who in 2006 stole the show, re-uniting the team behind Scarlet Traces for a very faithful adaptation of the original novel.

Eureka Productions have published two collections of science fiction stories of interest to War of the Worlds fans. Graphic Classics: H.G. Wells (2005) features an interesting (if slightly inaccurate) retelling of events during the 1938 Orson Welles radio broadcast while Science Fiction Classics adapts The War of the Worlds itself along with several other excellent science fiction tales including Stanley Weinbaum's A Martian Odyssey.

The always intriguing possibility of a 2nd Martian invasion fuelled a new take on the story from Boom comics in 2006. Their War of the Worlds: Second Wave is similar in style to the Steven Spielberg movie, with an everyday average Joe character caught up in the insanity of an alien invasion. The art by the enigmatically named Chee is of a high standard, with the opening colour spread of the first issue proving particularly effective.

But there is still more to come. A new comic book that blends the Martian adventurer



Lt. Gulliver Jones with the Mars of H.G Wells is on the way. Writer Mark Ellis and artist Preston Asevedo look to be on to a winner with this intriguing mash up. Gulliver Jones is the original Martian hero, predating the more famous John Carter by a number of years. In bringing the two books together, Ellis is imagining a post invasion earth traumatised by the Martian onslaught, a situation he postulates would, "make the fear the US experienced in the wake of 9/11 seem like concern over a hangnail." Jones is back on earth when we rejoin him, a hero of the war against the Martians, and now ready to take command of a new space vessel based on Martian technology that has been reverse engineered by none other than Nikola Tesla. Nice to see Tesla get a shot at taking on the Martians, as his great rival Thomas Edison had a similar opportunity in the 1898 newspaper serial Edison's Conquest Of Mars. Early indications are that this will be something to look forward, though if this short history proves nothing else, this surely won't be the last time we'll see The War of the Worlds return to the comic book world.

You can read more about War of the Worlds at John's site, <http://www.war-of-the-worlds.co.uk/>



WELLES AND WELLS DISCUSS WAR OF THE WORLDS

Wouldn't you love to hear what H.G. Wells had to say about the Spielberg version of War of the Worlds? Or even the George Pal version? Sadly, Wells died in 1946, so there was no way. But Wells had heard about Orson Welles's radio drama from 1938. While he probably never heard it himself, Wells was a fan of Welles, having enjoyed some of the radio work that had made it across the Atlantic and had heard much of his work while in the US. Wells came to America in 1940, just as the war in Europe was getting nasty, ostensibly to visit the World's Fair in New York, which he rather enjoyed and claimed that it showed much of his book's influence. There was a great admiration for Wells in the US, and the famous Welles radio broadcast helped drive sales for almost a

decade. Wells even joked that Wells' radioplay had re-launched sales of one of his 'more obscure' titles.

By coincidence, both H.G. Wells and Orson Welles were speaking around San Antonio, Texas on October 28th, 1940. Wells had left The Campbell Playhouse (the Campbell Soup-sponsored version of The Mercury Theatre on the Air) and Wells had been doing a long tour around the US.

They briefly talked about War of the Worlds and then they spoke about Welles' then-upcoming film Citizen Kane. It was excellent stuff and I spent a few hours transcribing it here for our gentle readers.

Announcer Charles Shaw - But first, could I interest you gentlemen in a discussion of Mr. Orson Welles' broadcast of Mr. H.G.Wells' book *The War of the Worlds*?

H.G.Wells – Well, I had a series of the most delightful experiences since I came to America, but the best thing may be meeting my little namesake here, Orson. I find him the most delightful carrier, he carries my name and an extra 'e' and I hope he drops it someday. I see no sense in it. And I'd known his work before he made this sensational Halloween spree. I'm assured there was such a panic in America, or wasn't it just your Halloween fun.

Orson Wells – I think that's the nicest thing a man from England could possibly say about the man from Mars. Mr. Hitler made a good deal of sport of it, you know, actually spoke of it in the great Munich speech, you know. And there were floats in Nazi parades.



H.G. Wells – He hadn't much else to say.

Orson Welles – that's right, he hadn't much else to say. It's supposed to show the corrupt condition and decadent state of affairs in democracies that *The War of the Worlds* went over as well as it did. I think it's very nice of Mr. Wells to say that not only I didn't mean it, but the American people didn't mean it.

H.G. Wells – That was our impression in England. We had articles about it and people said 'Have you never heard of Halloween in America, when everybody pretends to see ghosts?'

Charles Shaw - Well, there was some excitement caused, I really can't belittle the amount that was caused, but I think that the people got over it pretty quickly.

Orson Welles – What kind of excitement? Mr. H.G. Wells wants to know if the excitement wasn't the same

kind of excitement you extract from a practical joke in which somebody puts a sheet over his head and says 'Boo'. I don't think anyone believes that individual is a ghost, but we do scream and yell and rush down the hall and that's just about what happened.

Charles Shaw – That's a very excellent description, but-

H.G. Wells – You aren't quite serious in America, yet. You haven't got the war right under your chins, and the consequence is you can still play with ideas of terror and conflict.

Charles Shaw – You think that is good or bad?

H.G. Wells – It's a natural thing to do until you're right up against it.

Orson Welles – So it ceases to be a game.

H.G. Wells – Then it ceases to be a game.



Charles Shaw – Now here's a thought; some of Mr. H.G. Wells' writings are termed 'fantastic' and a few years ago they well might they have been conceived such. In the *The Shape of Things to Come* which told of a long and unceasing war was such a fantasy. Mr. Orson Welles, do you think that's it so fantastic in view of today's events?

Orson Welles – It's certainly not so fantastic. The one question that Mr. Wells has spoken of not only in *The Shape of Things to Come* but as hinted at or directly prophesized such a state of affairs following a wasting war and the return to a feudalism from which the world would find itself in again. Today, in Mr. Wells' lecture, he said quite the most interesting thing that I've heard in a long time. He said that he commenced just recently to ask him if there was any reason why mankind should so emulate the phoenix and should so get itself out of its mess. He proposed a couple of solutions, but he did admit that there Was a possible excuse for a gloomy point of view and that it would be good to be realistic about it and not to dismiss the gloomy point of view anymore. Perhaps the time had come to look ahead since the future, Mr. Wells future which we've always adored and never really understood, is suddenly upon us. We are living right now in that famous H.G. Wells future which we all knew about.





War of the **WORLDS**

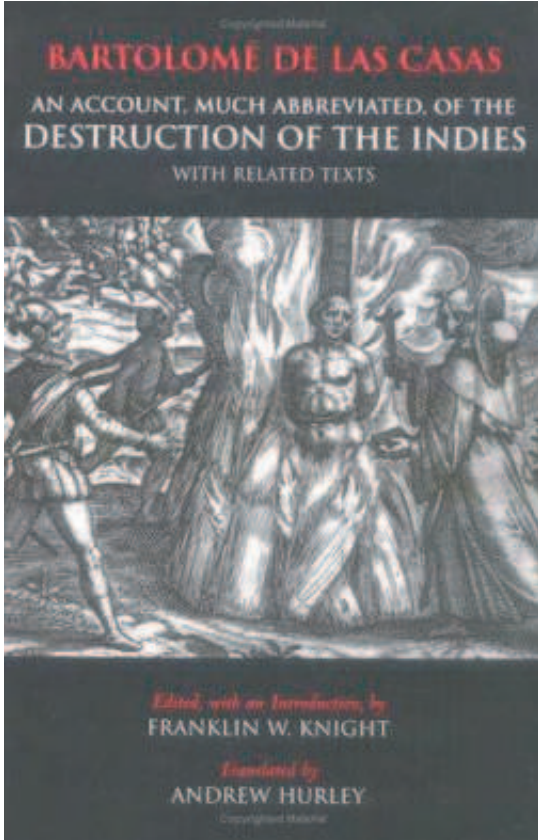
COMIC PAGE BY WILLIAM HARRIS (C) 25.06.2009

War of the Worlds's steampunk intersections.

by

Mike Perschon aka Steampunk Scholar

While I'd love to be giving Exhibition Hall readers an insightful, close-reading of War of the Worlds, I'm too swamped with teaching it to devote that sort of writing time. What I'm going to do instead is effectively a "syllabus" for an imaginary course where we'd study Wells's original text, followed by a million intersections into steampunk literature, film, and even music.



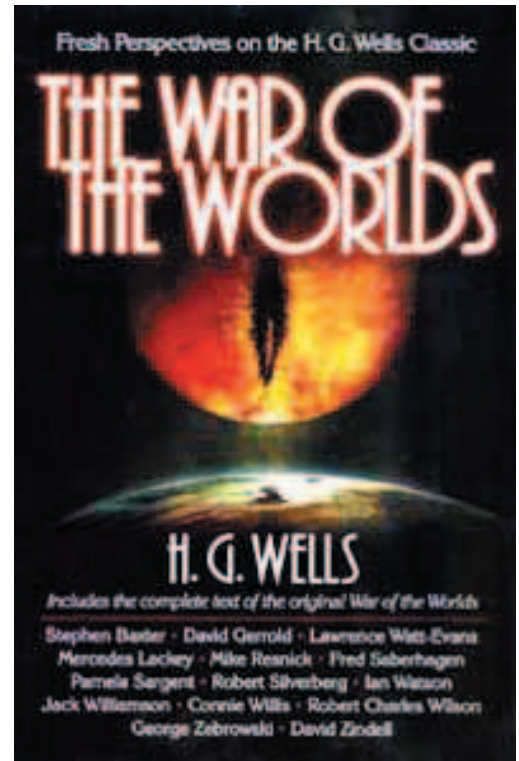
Beginning with the original novel, I'd assign the delightful *The War of the Worlds: Fresh Perspectives*, which includes the original Wells text along with incisive, though-provoking essays by SF giants such as Stephen Baxter, Mercedes Lackey, Fred Saberhagen, and Robert Silverberg. We'd discuss the soft SF approach Wells often takes, eschewing the infodumps of Verne for social commentary buried in speculative connotations. We'd discuss how War of the Worlds acts as colonial criticism, and in addition to reading Las Casas's *Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, view the last half-hour of *The Mission* with its bloody extermination of indigenous peoples by the technologically superior colonial powers. We'd compare Jeremy Iron's priest with the curate of War of the Worlds, and ruminate on how Wells's novel builds upon the Biblical apocalyptic tradition, as well as prepares the way for a modern apocalyptic bereft of gods. On that subject, I'd compare the destruction and unraveling of humanity in War of the Worlds Part I, Chapters 16 & 17 with the web-comic *Apocamon*, which employs an Anime-style to satirize right-wing Christianity's literal interpretation of the book of Revelation.

We'd move on from there to the various pastiches of War of the Worlds (they are numerous), focusing on a select few (we only have a semester, after all!). There's the excellent anthology *War of the Worlds: Global Dispatches*, edited by Kevin J. Anderson, which includes a short story also found in *War of the Worlds: Fresh Perspectives*: Connie Willis's

clever satire, "The Soul Selects Her Own Society: Invasion and Repulsion: A Chronological Reinterpretation of Two of Emily Dickinson's Poems: A Wellsian Perspective." Poking fun at Dickinson's poetry and academic scholarship, this particular intersection utilizes all the whimsy of many of Blaylock's steampunk works. Willis's story is indicative of the approach all the writers take in *Global Dispatches*, engaging in a sort of recursive fantasy where writers and historical figures such as Edgar Rice Burroughs, Winston Churchill, Jules Verne, and H.G. Wells himself are faced with the Martian invasion.

This would dovetail nicely into a look at Joe Lansdale's highly irreverent but hilariously funny *Flaming London*, which chronicles the adventures of Wells, Verne, and Mark Twain in a London besieged by the Martian tripods—and we wouldn't have any trouble tracking this rare book down, since it's about to be released in a collected edition along with its prequel, *Zeppelins West*, aptly titled *Flaming Zeppelins*. Obviously we'd turn our attention to the second volume of Alan Moore and Kevin O'Neill's *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, which cleverly allows the human race to defend itself, without subverting Wells's ostensibly *deus ex machine* ending.

While Connie Willis's short story referenced poems, it requires a foray into pop culture to get a study of lyric onto our syllabus, but thanks to Jeff Wayne's epic prog-rock adaptation from 1978 we have an option. An analysis of both lyric and musical representation would be engaged, studying



how Wayne masterfully connotes the Martians and their heat ray in musical themes. We'd take some time to study the spectacular stage-show, available on DVD, with the entire cast, orchestra, musicians, and singers in "steampunk" attire.

Since this course is being taught *next year*, we would hopefully have a copy of *War of the Worlds: Goliath* to allow us a film study. While numerous film adaptations have been made, few are period, and none of those are worth studying, save as examples of poor adaptation. We can't know the quality of *Goliath*, but it's certainly playing in the liminal spaces of steam and diesel fictions.

Our year-end party would involve live readings of Orson Welles's infamous radio broadcast, with dance remixes of Jeff Wayne's concept album (yes, they really do exist) to help us party like the world will end tomorrow, in an onslaught of chaos and terror beneath the Martian heat rays.



THE EXHIBITION HALL REVIEW OF BOOKS

REVIEWED: BLAMELESS BY GAIL CARRIGER

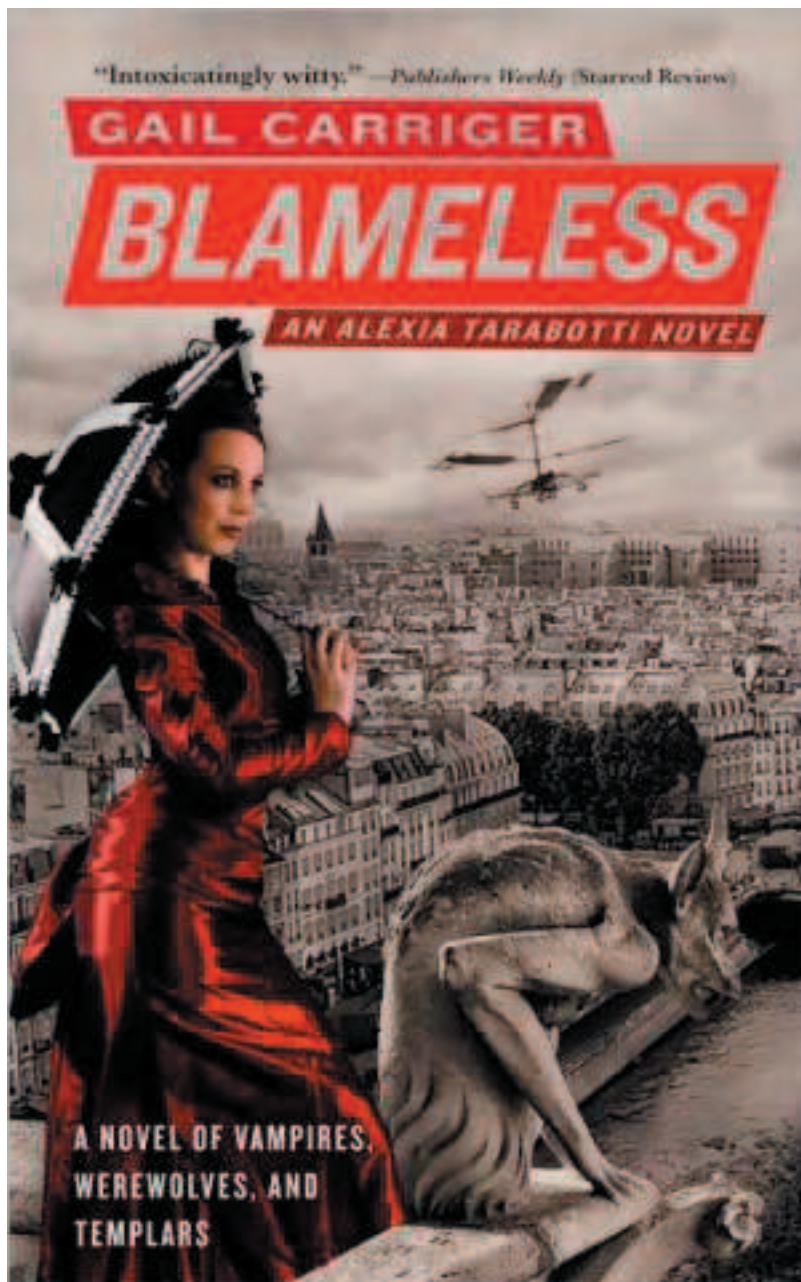
Gail's at it again, and after a previous novel that was good, but not quite great, I was happily blown back by the third novel in the Parasol Protectorate series.

Let us start with the story so far: Alexia Tarabotti has no soul, possess an exceptional figure and a too-long nose, and is Queen Victoria's top advisor on all matter supernatural. Vampires and Werewolves are all a part of regular society, if not the favored part of it. The last time we saw Alexia, she had just announced that she was pregnant and her husband, the werewolf Lord Maccon, cast her out since it's impossible for a werewolf to father a child and thus, she must have been stepping out on the guy.

That's where we stand.

Blameless starts off with a woman who is troubled more by having to return to her family than by the predicament she has found herself in. After a newspaper article reveals her pregnancy and casting out to the world, she is relieved of her duties and heads off across Europe in search of answers.

This one is much different than the second book, *Changeless*. For one



thing, it feels less like a second in a series. There is more closure, less open ends, save for one big one. It doesn't feel like a set-up for another novel, my biggest problem with *Changeless*, but it actually feels like a complete story. That makes me happy. I'm not much of an open-ended series guy, and when a novel feels more stand-alone, the better I like it.

The story is a fast-paced racer. It's Alexia trying to get to anybody who can answer her questions about how she managed to get pregnant by a werewolf. It's so smartly done and the traveling is exciting as she's being pursued by vampires who are trying to kill her. That always makes for an exciting story. Imagine James Bond with no one trying to dip him into a shark-invested pool. Alexia and her crew go from assassination attempt to assassination attempt with mysterious assistance and some dumb luck. Every attempt is well-placed and wonderfully written.

Gail's greatest asset is her writing style. Not overly-flowery, which is often a danger for writers who tread in the Victorian Era, but it's also not too plain. She drops some lovely modernist touches, and there are a couple of in-jokes that made me giggle, but that's just

BY CHRIS GARCIA

because I got them. I love that!

There are a couple of problems. A few key plotpoints are a little too well-telegraphed, and what is supposed to be a surprise with a mysterious character has slapped us in the face a few too many chapters in advance. We can see some things before we are supposed to, which is always bound to happen, but we also have a light twist thrown at us and it works very well. We're denied my favorite character in the entire series, Lord Akeldama, for much of the book, but once he arrives, things get great. The way this novel is laid-out makes much more sense than most of its kind, playing right and well with the characters and the path of their choices, but it does suffer a bit from 'Well, I saw that coming'.

One thing that is fun is how Carriger plays with her characters and expectations of the world of the novel and the world of the reader. We're given a female character who wears male clothing who is always mildly hitting on Alexia. Alexia, for her part, seems to think that this is simply a part of her being French. I like the way she played with her and the ways these play into whether or not she's some sort of spy and where her loyalties lay. I love it. There's also a whacky German scientist who is living in disgrace. If there's one thing I love, it's German scientists, especially ones with outrageous accents!

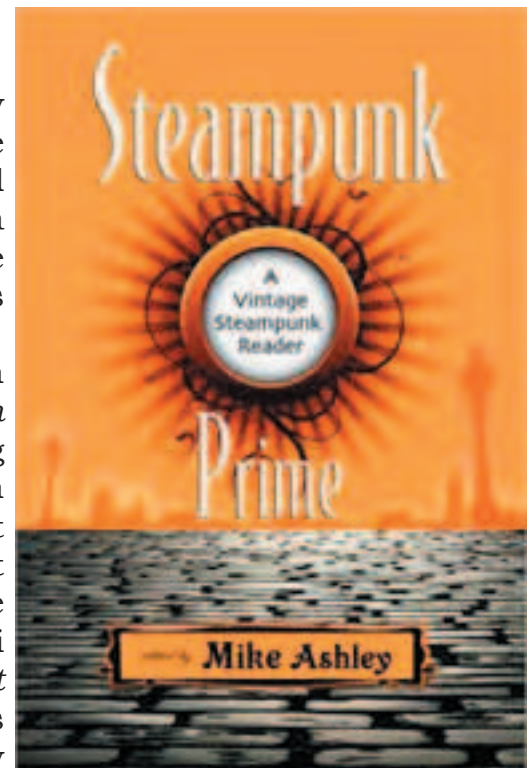
And, of course, there's the kid. Much of the novel is dealing with Alexia dealing with, or more accurately not dealing with, the kid she's pregnant with. It starts to play a major role in the story, and especially in that one major, open storyline, but it's interesting to show the character of Alexia and her dealing with this inconvenience in a very 'stiff upper' English sort of way.

This is a very fun novel, and I'd go so far as to say that it's the best of the three so far as far as the fun quotient goes. I thought *Soulless* was one of the best novels of 2009, and *Changeless*, while flawed, was still a very entertaining read, but *Blameless* is a fun slice of adventure, with just a dash of romance. Maybe the lessening of the romantic aspect was what made me happier with *Blameless* than *Changeless*, but the action and adventure was fantastic. I think the comedy is good here, the action is great and the fun is everywhere. *Blameless* may not be *Clementine*, but it's still the most fun you'll have reading a Steampunk novel this year.

STEAMPUNK PRIME: EDITED BY MIKE ASHLEY

Steampunk ain't new. Or maybe it is. It's hard to say if we should consider science fiction written in The Before Times as Steampunk. It certainly qualifies as influential and important. While there are lots of folks who profess a Steampunk lifestyle who don't read much of the stuff, Mike Ashley's *Steampunk Prime* anthology is a place where folks who are just easing in might want to start.

Mike Ashley has edited some great anthologies in the recent past, and his Edgar-winning *The Mammoth Encyclopedia of Crime Fiction* and the Stoker Award-winning *The Supernatural Index* are both works that everyone with any interest in genre writing should pick up. Mike put together a host of fine stories from the 1880s though about 1910 for our reading pleasure, prefacing it with a fine foreword by the author of *The Steampunk Trilogy*, Paul Di Filippo. Nonstop Press, who released the exceptional *Cult Magazines: A-to-Z*, gave Mike a great presentation for his book, with illustrations by Luis Ortiz that are perfectly

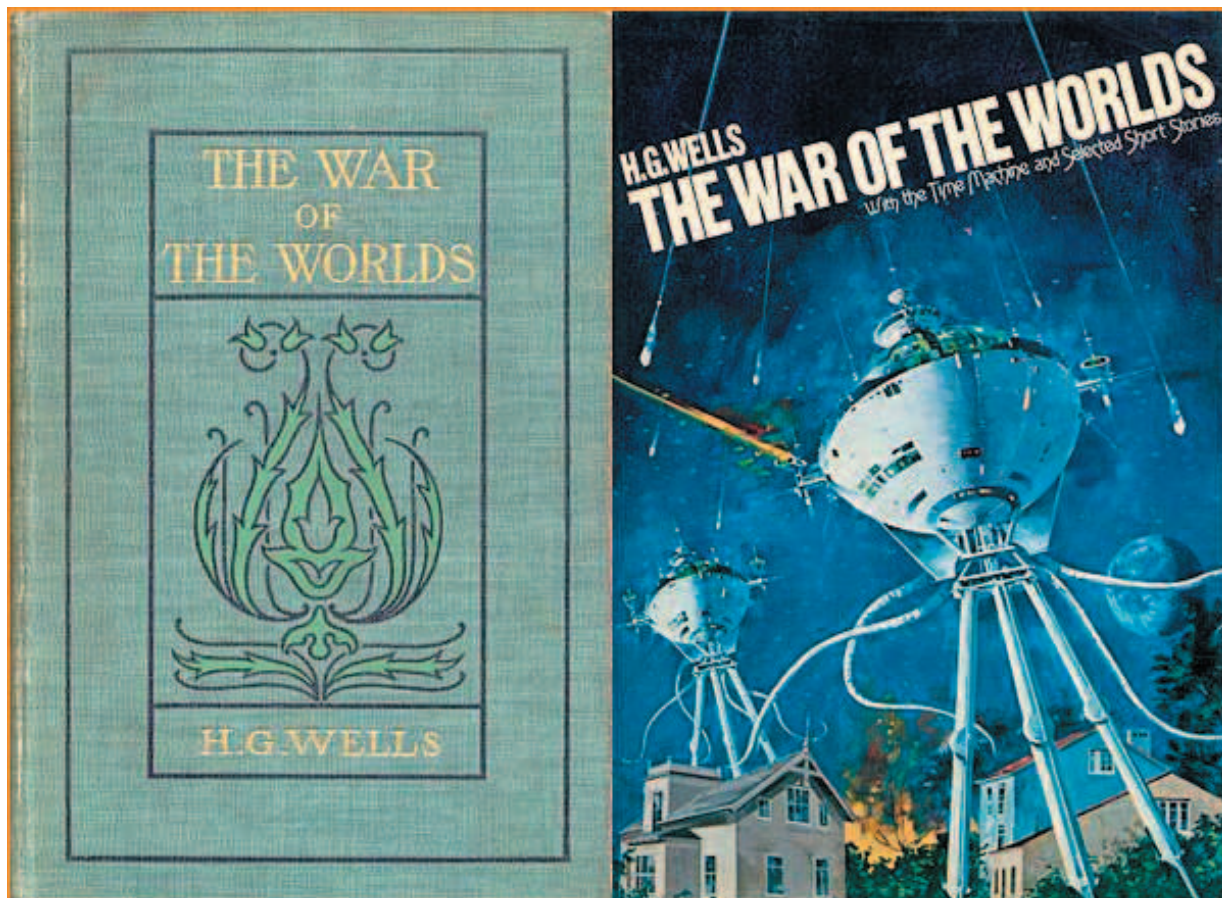


balanced. There's a lot of ways you can go with illustrating an anthology like this and Ortiz did a perfect balancing act.

Of the stories, there were only two I'd read before: *In the Deep of Time*, a particularly intering Futurist look by the great George Parsons Lathrop, and *The Last Days of Earth* by George C. Wallis, a story of the end of the world...maybe. The selection of pieces passes by those folks we've come to expect in these kinds of anthologies (*Future Perfect*, perhaps the finest anthology of 19th Century SF, provides most of those) and gives us folks who we might not think of. I was shocked to see the name George Griffith and his story *From Pole to Pole*. That story of a Hollow Earth and a very Victorian romance, is one I hadn't read and I thoroughly enjoyed. This is the kind of adventure romance tradition that writers like Gail Carriger are keeping alive. Griffith was a leading SF writer of the time in the UK, and a real-life explorer. His work *A Honeymoon in Space* is a classic and well-worth searching out.

The Plague of Lights was a very *War of the Worlds* story by Owen Oliver, an author I somehow missed. Not simply an invasion story, but a powerful tale of romance and attack. It's good stuff and it certainly feel Wellsian enough to mention in an issue about *War of the Worlds*. *The Automaton*, a story that is a well-wrung suspense piece, was a fave, largely because it was a fictional treatment of The Turk; a sham Chess-playing machine of the 18th and 19th century. I worked on an exhibit about the history of computer chess and The Turk was one of our reference objects. *The Gibraltar Tunnel* was a fast-paced little piece about a tunnel from Europe to Africa. While slightly reminiscent of *A Trans-Atlantic Tunnner, Hurrah!* by Harry Harrison, it was still a very fun piece and one that I dug into heavily.

There are a couple of clunkers, but that's to be expected. I like a lot of Herman Hering's works, especially *Cavalanci's Curse* which I remember from some anthology ages ago, though *Mr. Broadbent's Information* is far from that piece. I did see what Ashley was going for in it's inclusion, it does have a feeling of quick introduction to it, but it was far from my fave. *The Great Catastrophe* by George Davey is a weaker story than the rest in the anthology, but it does demonstrate an anti-technology vibe, here represented by anti-electricity, that makes

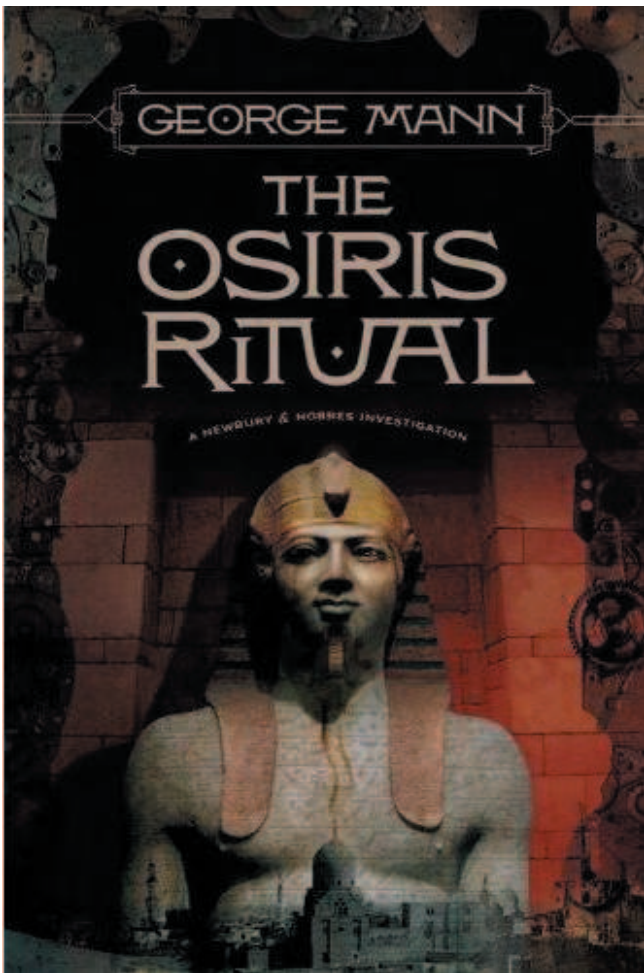


me happy.

There are fine stories dealing with space war (*An Interplanetary Rupture* by Frank L. Packard), a simple adventure story featuring funky technology (*The Abduction of Alexandra Seine* by Fred Smale) and a very good disaster piece that purports to be a history text (*Within an Ace of the End of the World* by Robert Barr), which is a technique that the Victorians were very fond of.

My favorite story of the bunch also happened to be the one I read in perhaps the most ironic of situations. I was flying to Raleigh, North Carolina, for ReConstruction, the North American Science Fiction Convention. I started the story as we were passing to the south of a major thunderstorm. The story, *The Plunge* by George Allen England, told the tale of an airship crash and a woman and a man in an almost *Titanic*-like romantic situation. The story, which closes the anthology, is a strong adventure-romance and plays the crash fantastically. As I got to the part where the serious crashing begins, the plane started to buck and dip and dive in some of the most frightening turbulence I've ever encountered. I read the story as we careened through the air, taking only small time-outs to breath deeply and recount the various ways in which planes are designed to withstand such situations. The story actually kept me going, and two minutes after I finished it, we were comfortably on the ground in Raleigh.

This is an anthology that even folks who haven't read a lot of Steampunk will enjoy. It features so much good material that it can only open eyes to what's out there. Each story has a follow-on in the history of the sub-sub-genre and can certainly be counted on to provoke thought and interest in them. Ashley also did an excellent job in choosing stories that readers today can connect to. There's no lie in the statement that Victorian writing can be difficult, but these are some of the most readable pieces you're likely to find.



THE OSIRIS RITUAL BY GEORGE MANN

The Affinity Gate wasn't great, and so I had middling expectations for George Mann's *The Osiris Ritual*. A Steampunk detective novel which managed to be too predictable and overly-mushy at the same time. The expectations I had for the sequel weren't high, but alas, it managed to surpass my expectations... but not by much.

The book is listed as a Newbury-Hobbes Investigation, though mostly it's a Newbury Investigation and an Hobbes Investigation, and we get a bit of them back as a team, but it's not nearly the focus, which is part of the strength of the book. The first novel dwelled on the Will-They-Won't-They-Can't-They romance between the two detectives, and without that as pronounced over the entire novel, it improves the entire feel.

The adventure aspects are much like the previous novel, with Newbury being a manly-man all out to run and jump and careen through the streets of London on various modes of transport. Hobbes, the lovely young investigator who was revealed as a secret agent of the crown, follows her own path doggedly, and the attention she gets,

along with her own dust-up which is really entertaining, also raises the novel ahead of its predecessor. The treatment of Hobbes at the last third of the book is questionable. While I am seldom one to point out turning female characters into the 'weaker sex', here, once Newbury and Hobbes are thrown back together, we are treated to her as a lesser sort of investigator, though I'm sure Mann's intent was that we see it as her age and not her gender that leads her slightly astray. Still, it's there and it is even a bit troubling to me, which is saying something.

The story twists and turns and sadly I had to do a background check to see if the eventual villain had been previously mentioned. That's slightly worrying, but the real problem with the ending was that things were telegraphed a bit much, save for a decent surprise from a secondary character. The thing is it all falls in so nicely and we quickly discover things that are fairly obvious very easily. We know about twists and turns and can see where it's all leading. Still, it's a decent adventure.

I'm hoping that we get more out of this series. There's a lot of potential for good stuff, though as many have pointed out, the Supernatural Detective stuff has started to become a played trope. That said, Mann gives it enough flavor to keep you reading, but maybe not enough to make you itch for the next edition.

DREADNOUGHT BY CHERIE PRIEST

I wasn't a huge fan of *Boneshaker*. It was good, well-written, but far from the kind of horror novel I hoped it would be. These things happen. *Clementine*, on the other hand, was a very good adventure story that played Steampunk from the first sentence and never let up. There were also no real zombies to be seen. That was the big problem with *Boneshaker*; the zombies were initially freaky, but they didn't seem to be anything more than a shambling impediment that could be somewhat easily pushed aside. *Dreadnought*, the third novel in the Clockwork Century series, is an absolute blast and this is the one that deserves to be on the Hugo ballot without question.

Dreadnought is the story of Mercy, a Confederate nurse who happens to be the widow of a Union soldier. She's a damn fine nurse, a healer who has become hardened to the horror but still cares enough to give care, even when others would not. It's the kind of character you expect from hour-long hospital dramas. Mercy is called to Washington state to visit her father, who is probably dying. Mercy takes off after confirmation of her husband's death.

The story starts there, a dash across the country on various forms of transport. This is a very good concept, giving us a view of an airship (something that Cherie writes really



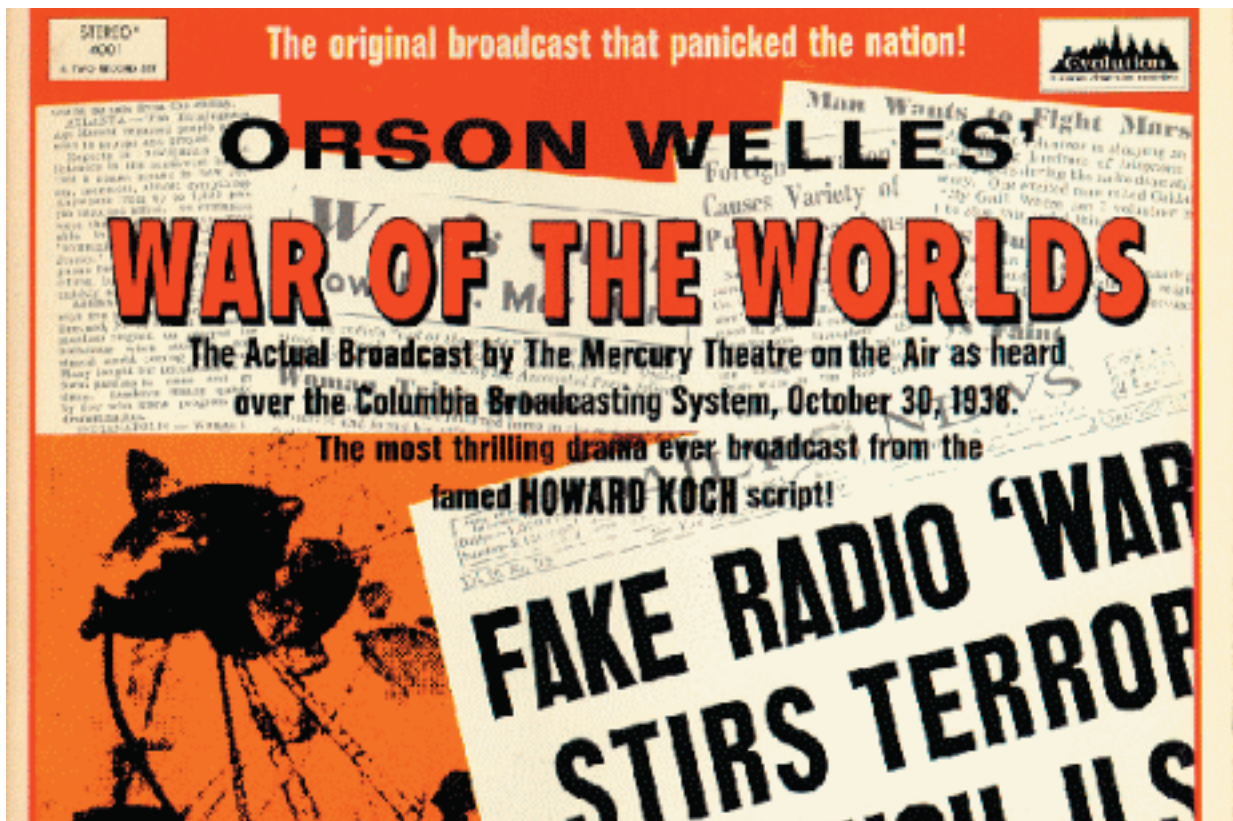
well), and then a riverboat, and finally, the eponymous Dreadnought, a Union train that represents the most powerful mobile weapon possessed by the North, but also, apparently, carries civilians. The trip on the train is the meat of the story. Train stories have a certain place in my heart and there's no mode of transport that feels more like the 19th century than a train.

What's impressive is that the story manages to give us a view of a world that is so completely realized that rolling through the country. We see a battle in Priest's Civil War that had ground on for more than 20 years and how Mercy and co. go about their lives during wartime. We see some spywork and a lot of fighting.

The time on the Dreadnought is great, full of intrigue, guile and, action. We get a glimpse of the zombies again, but they are so much better used in this book than in *Boneshaker*, possibly because they are so much more judiciously used. There are a few characters who are tied-in directly with the zombies and they're a lot of fun. There's a Texas Ranger character who I love. There is a long tradition of Ranger characters both making and breaking novels, and this one helps a fair way towards the making. It's a solid story.

Dreadnought is not a horror novel the way that *Boneshaker* was. It's an adventure story, and a strongly-paced one. Priest works at her characters profusely and it pays off when she slides off the character-building goes in for plot. She knows how to balance and even more how to push the right things to the front. More than once I was struck by something I felt I should have known was out there, but found myself so tied-up in the story that I had no clue. It was that kind of book.

I would certainly say that *Dreadnought* is the Steampunk novel of the year, though with the highly-anticipated *Behemoth* from Scott Westerfeld and Felix Gilman's *The Half-Made World* on the horizon, that might change. Even stacking it up against everything I've read this year, only *Kraken* by China Mieville tops it. This is a book that should perform well in awards season, and even more importantly, reward any reader who takes the journey on.



WEEKEND AT THE ASYLUM

10TH -12TH SEPTEMBER 2010

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS

BY MR PETER HARROW, ESQ

The Asylum, once again held in Lincoln attracted some 900+ steampunks from the United Kingdom, the USA and the rest of the World, making it the largest Steampunk event in Europe and on the largest Science Fiction Conventions in the UK.

This year the event spread beyond The Lawn Conference Centre (the former Victorian Lunatic Asylum which hosted the day programme and main evening entertainments and next door Charlotte House/Victoria Public House (secondary evening entertainments) to include the Grounds of the adjacent Lincoln Castle and the disused Victorian Men's Prison which housed the Bazaar Eclectica and the Hendrick's Gin Experience.

In the Steampunk Quarter of Lincoln you had all the shops beloved of the steampunks selling antiques, fossils,

period sweets, second hand books, whiskey, and antique electronics as well as the pubs, tea shops, pie shop and ice cream parlour. An added bonus this year was that The Collection Museum at the Foot of Steep Hill hosted a formal exhibition of the art and sculpture of Commodore Robert Rankin, FVSS, organised by Mr John Naylor (aka Major Tinker) of the artwork put together for his various book covers, as well as his award winning raygun.

This year included an early bird meet-up on the Thursday evening at the Widow Cullens Well public House, where myself Herr Doktor and Dr Quack, the three of us the most prodigious punsters in steampunk were on fine form. I quipped "Half the wits on the Brass Goggles Forum are in this pub". Quite a few of the other patrons agreed with this statement, although most thought I had transposed 'half' and 'the' in making it.

Friday saw me undertake a quick trip down Steep Hill to the Steampunk Quarter, where I bought a fossilised fish, a Full Albert Gold Plated Watch Chain from the horologists workshop, and a couple of Victorian coins as well as a couple of scarlet tassles for my Clockwork Sporrán. A quick but thorough visit to The Collection had me admiring the Commodores handiwork.

Back to the Lawn it was unpacking and setting up Registration and getting the Goody Bags ready. Orbit had kindly donated a copy of Gail Carrigers 'Souless' for every Member, (AlternateVictorian/Steampunk/Adventure/Dark Fantasy/Romance) and had them done up in a ribbon with a lovely brass button on the front. Not a book I would normally buy, but I am currently reading and enjoying it and I will be buying the sequels.

Friday afternoon led to a large amount of informal socialising with the new arrivals and old friends in the Lawns and Charlotte House before going to the Commodores launch of 'Japanese Devilfish Girl' in the early evening, the first programmed event of the weekend which





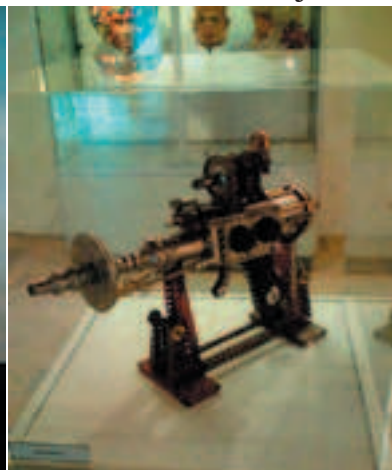
was truly packed out. I treated myself to a copy of the Novel as well as a bit of the free wine. Myself, the Commodore, his good Lady Raygun and Herr Doktor then took ourselves over to the Indian Restaurant next to the Victoria for our evening repast in preference to the advertised Hog Roast at the Victoria. This was a very wise decision by all accounts. We did however not miss the music at the Victoria, clearly audible inside the Restaurant. 'Louder' is not a synonym for 'better'. In a lovely surprise for Lady Raygun, the Commodore had commissioned Herr Doktor to custom build a raygun a boxed and displayed Raygun specifically for her, the lucky girl! Diamonds may be a girls best friend, but a steampunk lady would prefer them as an integral part of the beam focussing mechanism of her very own raygun.

We then rushed across to the Little Theatre at the Lawn to catch the Major's Soiree, an Old Fashioned Music Hall, with everything from to comedic, charismatic, cheeky chappies to voluptuous, versatile, virtuoso vixens. Jack Union an artist of some repute, showed he could be an artiste

of some disrepute with style and panache. The Cogkneys music and humour, especially Mimsy Beaucoupe's 'Tilly Mademe's' rendering of some of the fine old standards of the Music Hall brought a tear to the eye. I am not ashamed to say I heckled with the best of them, catching Mr Andrew O'Neill off his stride.

Afterwards we caught the end of the music in the Main Hall and chatted into the small hours, drink in hand.

Saturday Morning saw the set up for the Great Exhibition, this year extended to include 2D Artwork as well, thanks to the lending of the Novacon Artboards (Novacon 12th – 14th November 2010, Park Inn Nottingham). Aside from helping Arkwright setting it up I had a couple of exhibits in myself, Martian Insects (The Eaters of the Red Weed), and my Steampunk Shrunken Head). The Artwork was a very strong showing despite being a new addition this year, and I especially



liked PhantomSirens 'Raggydolls'.

All in all it was a lovely collection, less emphasis on rayguns and more on other areas of steampunk artisanship from a miniature tea service chatelaine to a steampunk cryo chest full of specimens and

Left: Winner: Grand Exhibition Martian Insect, Mid: Rankin's Raygun in collection at Lincoln, Right: Grand Exhibition Winner Darth Vapour by John Naylor

Herr Doktor had out of competition brought a large selection of his excellent work which has previously featured in the pages of this periodical. My own favourite was Darth Vapour, a representation of the Dark Lord of the Sith in steampunk. This won the Rossetti award, and transpired had been entered anonymously by Major Tinker himself. My own Martian Insects faux taxidermy display won the Pugin award for craftsmanship, which I accepted in my own usual modest way.

The surprise category this year was the Steambear, the steampunk teddy bear which had a 1400% increase in entries this year and was very hotly contested from the cute to the grotesque, and that was just the owners.

I broke off from working on the Great Exhibition to enter the clockwork racer competition, with two entries this year, the Number Six Special and the partly completed Eleventh Hour Entry. I won both heats finishing both Winner and Runner up and would like to thank Greensteam, Rockula, Captain Dirigible etc for being such good losers. It makes up for me being SUCH a bad winner. Eat my dust!!!.

Next was my own Programme Feature, the snuff tasting Up To Snuff in the Drawing Room, (this year laminating materials to make them sneeze resistant). Wilhelmina Frame was a co-Winner, taking away a number of small tins of Fruit flavoured snuff, and she went on to also win the very hotly contested costume competition in the Main Hall, the lucky girl!.

I ducked out to go over to the Castle to visit the Bazaar Eclectica, admiring and partaking of the Hendrick's Gin Experience set up outside, a free shot of Hendrick's Gin



WINNER: CLOCKWORK RACERS

and a much larger glass from the Gin Bathtub. Gin is not my normal tippie, but I do like the cucumber flavour of Hendrick's, it reminded me of Pimms. I do understand that the following day this was the location of a truly disgraceful incident where two bathing belles (Lady Elsie and Lady Raygun) seduced a young chap in uniform (Herr Doktor) to cavort in the bath of gin with them. Disgraceful. That I missed it that is.

Into the Prison itself you had three floors of cells selling, hats, clothing, jewellery, gewgaws, canes, lingerie, art, gadgets, etc, well over thirty establishments. In a short matter of time I was spent, in every sense of the word, purchasing a rather nice saucy picture from Dr Geof and vowing to come back the next day with more money, after a pair of cog in amber cufflinks. Sadly the local cashpoints let us all down and that was not to be. Not being able to afford to go back and get them was the one big disappointment of the Convivial.

Getting ready for the Ball (full toastmaster uniform plus white pith

and steampunk megaphone) we were delayed by a number of ladies not being quite ready in time (which is their prerogative). There was some wonderful clothing on show, especially Emily Ladybird's 'Green Fairy', and I ended up on a table with Sam Stone (her first Asylum) The Rankin's and Herr Doktor amongst many, many others. Highlights of the music were The Men up to their usual japes, but also the inestimable MC Elemental, whose rendition of 'Cup of Brown Joy' was most welcome. The cup that cheers.

The Ball is where new Fellows of the Victorian Steampunk Society are inducted. Art Donovan the organiser and exhibitor in the Oxford Competition had been inducted earlier in the year as he was unable to attend The Asylum. This left one more Fellow to induct, and I was standing behind him, making sure he didn't bolt, it was Herr Doktor, now Herr Doktor FVSS, a worthy addition to the Fellows. Myself and the Commodore welcomed him to our number. The rest of the evening is a blur of alcohol and hi-jinks with witty companions.

Sunday zipped by, more chat and more programme including airships in the Main Hall, the first muster of the 3rd Foot and Mouth and its new Regimental Band playing in Sax at the Asylum led by Lady Raygun on the saxophone. I picked up a copy of 'Tales from the Asylum' from Arkwright, the collection of steampunk short stories arising out of last years Asylum. The closing ceremony had us all a bit teary but some nice fun and games with the Major getting us to make new friends. Prizes were awarded and the Raffle (raising over a thousand



guineas) for Help For Heroes drawn. The end?, very nearly, Charlotte House had organised a Champagne Reception and canapés for steampunks to meet the local traders and civic dignitaries. After this the tired and emotional FVSS, MVSS and a few others went for an excellent Chinese meal, and then back to the dead dog, to day goodbyes and faretheewells with Monday for breakdown and clear out.

The future, well there will of course be weekend at the Asylum 2011, bigger than even this year, likely to easily exceed the 1,000 mark by a considerable margin. However some of us are having a little shindig over New Year in Corby. Check the VSS website for both events.

Mr Peter Harrow, Esq