

FANTASYCON VII

10th - 12th July, 1981



PROGRAMME BOOKLET

THE BRITISH FANTASY SOCIETY

PRESENTS



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FANTASYCON VII

PETER TREMAYNE

GUEST OF HONOUR

ALAN HUNTER

SPECIAL ARTIST GUEST

KARL EDWARD WAGNER

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

GUESTS

JOHN BROSNAN

KENNETH BULMER

RAMSEY CAMPBELL

DAVE CARSON

DAVID CASE

FRANCESCO COVA

PHIL EDWARDS

LIONEL FANTHORPE

DOROTHY HOUGHTON

STEPHEN JONES

HUGH LAMB

DAVID LLOYD

BRIAN LUMLEY

JAMES MANNING

PAT MCINTOSH-SPINLER

ALAN MCKENZIE

PETER NICHOLLS

JIM PITTS

DAVID RILEY

DEZ SKINN

JOHN STEWART

DAVID A. SUTTON

PETER VALENTINE TIMLETT

TISE VAHIMAGI



Introduction

by Brian Mooney

TALKING of introductions...

Er, actually we weren't talking of introductions.

Sigh... I repeat, talking of introductions, have you ever stopped to consider all the implications inherent in that word? Have you ever sat back and thought of the effects on history, science and literature that introductions - with all of the nuances of meaning contained in the word - have had? Have you ever pondered on the sheer overwhelming... er, thingy of it all?

No, I don't think I have.

Look at it this way. Supposing that Cleopatra hadn't introduced herself to Caesar by disguising herself as a roll of lino - why, Richard Burton might never have met Liz Taylor. What if Elvis Presley had never been introduced to Colonel Tom Parker - pop music might never have been invented.

I must admit I hadn't thought of that.

So think about it now. There were some really interesting introductions in history, you know. There was the famous - nay, infamous - Borgia Introduction. Cesare Borgia would introduce an intended victim to a courtesan chosen for her amazing beauty, in particular for the luscious ripeness of her lips which no man could resist. However, her lips were coated with a rare and deadly poison, so that the woman's kiss was literally the kiss of death. Got rid of a lot of enemies that way. Come to think of it, he got rid of a lot of courtesans too...

I don't believe you.

Then there was the Grand Duke Heinz of Bienz, whose personal alchemist constructed a clockwork horse, a simulacrum so lifelike that all who saw it were convinced that it lived. The horse would be presented to a rival, who, when examining its mouth, would be blinded by two small spikes springing from the innards. That's how the expression "Never look a gift horse in the mouth" began to be used.

I think you just made that up.

Or there was the rather offensive young Arthurian courtier determined to gain a formal introduction to Merlin. The aging Merlin, who was becoming quite curmudgeonly, was equally determined that there would be no introduction. The young man tried subterfuges and Merlin countersubterfuges, and so it went on until members of the court were dizzy with wondering who was ahead in the contest. The bookies were making a fortune. One evening, the young knight was partaking of a swift mead in a local tavern when he overheard two stunted foreigners conversing in broken Latin.

It transpired that both were visiting sorcerers, and they carried with them a parchment which was nothing more nor less than



a letter of introduction to Merlin. As it happened, both had consumed vast quantities of ale and had to repair to the privy at the same time, carelessly leaving the precious document on the table. 'Twas but the work of an instant for our young hero to purloin the letter and rush to Merlin's laboratory. Enveloped in a voluminous cloak and affecting a limping stoop, he hoodwinked the major domo and was ushered into the presence.

"Welcome, welcome, my dear friend," warbled the wizard, "I am Merlin!" "And I am Sir Fitzroy the Unfit!" cried the young man triumphantly, flinging aside his cloak. Merlin's face turned purple, and it was obvious that he was taking a great deal of umbrage. Lashing out with his wand, he uttered a fearsome formula and Sir Fitzroy was changed into a spider, whereupon he was seized by an amorous lady spider who was scuttling by. She had her wicked way with him and then enjoyed him for supper.

I'm damned certain you made that one up!

How about the literary world? There was the letter of introduction that Jonathan Harker took to Castle Dracula, and but for that particular introduction the vampire might never have become one of our best-loved bugaboos. There was, too, the much-sung introduction to the seven dwarves, but for which we might never have heard of the Hobbit. Or am I thinking of Snow White... And remember how Edgar Rice Burroughs introduced John Carter to Dejah Thoris and turned all those Martians green with envy.

Publishing! There have been some connoisseurs' introductions in publishing. If August Derleth hadn't introduced himself to Lovecraft, would we have had Arkham House today? And look what whoever introduced Herbert Van Thal to Pan Books did for the horror story.

Consider the cinema. Imagine our loss if Bela had never been introduced to Lugosi, if Christopher Lee had never been introduced to Peter Cushing, if Peter Cushing had never been introduced to Ingrid Pitt. If Ingrid Pitt... Ingrid Pitt... Quick, pass me the tranquillizers!

Why this sudden obsession with introductions?

Me, obsessed?

Yes, you.

Well, you see, I've been asked to write an introduction for this booklet.

What on earth for?

To welcome all these nice people to Fantasycon VII...



Lan-Kern

Peter Tremayne

It is the world of the very distant future. Our civilisation has collapsed and mankind is struggling to build a new one. Dryden is a Twentieth Century man, a botanist, who goes through a form of cryogenic suspended animation and wakes up in this future world.

He encounters three very different types of society in various stages of development, from feudal to totalitarian.

The way in which the author examines these new civilisations through Dryden's adventures, romances and intrigues, lifts the work far above the normal Sword and Sorcery tale. As well as being pure escapist adventure, the three stories have a deeper, subtly unfolded meaning.

We won't make the usual clichéd comparisons with Tolkien: *Lan-Kern* is too individualistic for that. It could best be described as a modern rendering of the Celtic Odyssey, a work that can be read on several levels, each one thoroughly enjoyable and thought-provoking.

Book I - *The Fires of Lan-Kern*
1980
£5.75

Book II - *Destroyers of Lan-Kern* Autumn
1981

Bailey Bros. &
Swinfen Ltd.
Warner House,
Folkestone,
Kent.

B



Peter Tremayne

Biographical Notes

PETER TREMAYNE has emerged on the fantasy scene only in recent years. His first title was published in 1977 but since then he has built up a considerable following and list of titles. The New Jersey, U.S.A., newspaper ASBURY PARK PRESS, recently said of his work: 'Tremayne weaves no less engrossing tales than Edgar Allan Poe.' The British LITERARY REVIEW recently said of his work that 'he has the useful ability to meld gripping situation with solidly researched background detail without distracting the narrative flow' and, speaking of his horror fiction, the Dublin SUNDAY PRESS said it was 'an absolutely gorgeous read, especially on a dark winter's night, with the lightning flashing, the thunder rumbling and the rain scabbling at the window pane like anxious fingers.'



Peter Tremayne is the pseudonym of Peter Berresford Ellis, born March 10, 1943, at 25 Loudon Avenue, Radford, Coventry, Warwickshire. He was the youngest son of a journalist and, in view of his father's profession, received his education at a dozen different schools before the family settled in Brighton, Sussex. He studied at Brighton College of Art but then left to join the BRIGHTON HERALD as a junior reporter. He went freelance when the BRIGHTON EVENING ARGUS offered him a regular column and a chance to do by-lined investigative journalism, one article of which was an expose of modern-day Satanism in Sussex entitled Disciples of the Devil, ARGUS, October 20, 1961. He began to concentrate on writing a book and found that writing fiction was to the detriment of his journalism and he needed money to pay his rent. Still keen to finish the book he took an assortment of jobs just for the money, among which were washer-up and rifle range attendant. For a couple of performances he became 'Captain Death' on Brighton's West Pier in an act in which 'The Great Omani' (the escapologist) was blindfolded twice and then shot a bottle off his head with a .22 rifle using live ammunition. No company would insure the act and the West Pier authorities closed it because of the risk.

His first book did not sell and he took a job as a reporter on the CRAWLEY OBSERVER and then the WEST SUSSEX COUNTY TIMES. In April, 1964, he moved to London and became assistant editor on a publishing trade weekly magazine. This gave him time to pursue his writing interests and also to be involved in the book publishing world. About this time his first successful foray into serious fiction was a one-act play, THE BOURGEOIS GENERAL, which received its premiere in Beer Shiva, Israel, translated and produced by Israeli playwright and producer Shimshon Limon.

Being of Irish descent on his father's side, he travelled widely in Ireland, studying its history, politics, language and culture. His interest here broadened into an interest in all the Celtic countries. In 1968 he published his first book (under his own name), a political history of Wales: WALES - A NATION AGAIN. He met his wife Dorothy in 1966 and they went to live in Cornwall where he wanted to work on a novel; the novel was not written but he spent his time studying Cornish history, language and literature. He wrote a series of articles Our Language for THE CORNISH TIMES (June 14 - December 27, 1968), a pamphlet on the language written

by him was published in 1971 and finally a full-length book, regarded as the definitive history of the language by Routledge and Kegan Paul in 1974.

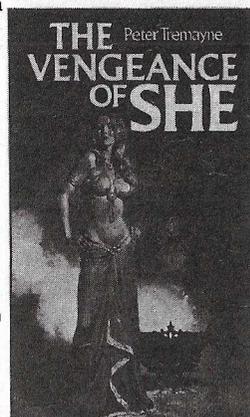
He became active in Celtic politics at this time and his views, three essays, were published in pamphlet form as *THE CREED OF THE CELTIC REVOLUTION* by Medusa Press in 1968. During the late '60s his articles on the problems of national minorities were appearing in the London *EVENING STANDARD*, *BIRMINGHAM POST*, *HERALD OF WALES*, *WESTERN MAIL* and *IRISH WEEKLY*. He was also contributing regularly to *PEACE NEWS* and the *SOCIALIST LEADER*. During the mid to late 1960s and into the 1970s he was travelling regularly to Northern Ireland and, as early as May 20, 1967, (before the emergence of the Civil Rights Association) was forecasting in the *HERALD OF WALES* of the coming of a bloody guerilla conflict in the north unless immediate steps were taken to redress the grievances in the country and grant full civil rights to all the people of Northern Ireland.

In this capacity he has lectured widely in Britain, Ireland, France and the U.S.A. His regular political column *Celtica Today* in the Scottish bilingual *SRUTH* continued for two years until the newspaper merged with *THE STORNOWAY GAZETTE*. His activities caused an invitation to be extended to become deputy editor of the *IRISH POST*, a weekly newspaper just being launched. He accepted but left the newspaper after a political disagreement in April, 1970.

Turning freelance again, he began work on his political magnum opus - *A HISTORY OF THE IRISH WORKING CLASS* (Gollancz, 1972).

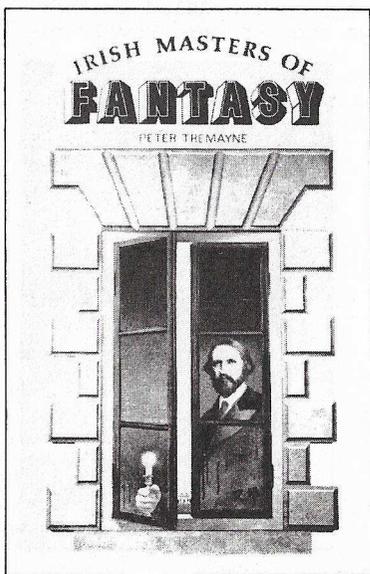
In April, 1974, he was invited to become editor of a new weekly magazine for the publishing trade, *NEWSAGENT AND BOOKSHOP*. He was editor over the period of the magazine's launch and remained so until October, 1975, when he gave up the editorial chair to concentrate on his writing interests again.

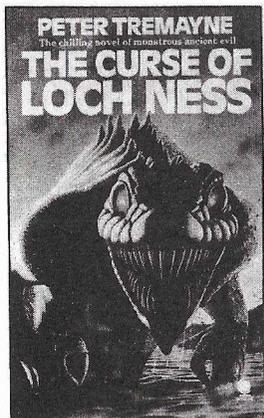
In 1977 *HOUD OF FRANKENSTEIN* became the first Peter Tremayne title to



appear in print, although it was actually the third Tremayne title to be written. It was published by Ventura Books on August 12, 1977. The first Tremayne title to be written was *DRACULA UNBORN* (published simultaneously by Bailey Bros. & Swinfen and Corgi Books in October, 1977). To date some ten Peter Tremayne titles have appeared, with three more scheduled for the end of this year alone.

DRACULA UNBORN (which appeared as *BLOODRIGHT* in the U.S.A., published by Walker in hardback and by Dell) was so successful (it has also appeared in translation) that the publishers asked him to create a Dracula trilogy. The result was two more titles, *THE REVENGE OF DRACULA* and *DRACULA, MY LOVE* (published in the U.K. by Bailey Bros. & Swinfen and by Magnum Books). His aim was to extend Bram Stoker's original Dracula concept but keeping firmly to Stoker's character definition and style. In this he apparently succeeded for The Count Dracula Fan Club, an international club with headquarters in New York, last year voted Peter Tremayne honorary membership for maintaining





the image of, and interest in, Bram Stoker's DRACULA. Peter Tremayne will be Guest of Honour at the annual dinner of the Count Dracula Fan Club in London on August 8, 1981.

The Tremayne Dracula trilogy received a warm critical reception among reviewers both in the U.K. and U.S.A. DRACULA, MY LOVE was this year bought for filming by Jerry Sherlock Productions Inc. Sherlock is the producer of the new Peter Ustinov Charlie Chan movie.

Keeping to the horror-fantasy genre, Tremayne has edited and introduced two anthologies: MASTERS OF TERROR: WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON (Corgi, 1977) - the introduction of which was published in the British Fantasy Society's centenary tribute pamphlet - and IRISH MASTERS OF FANTASY (Wolfhound Press, 1979).

Other novels are THE VENGEANCE OF SHE (Sphere, 1978), THE ANTS (Sphere, 1979), which has also been one of his bestselling tales not only in the U.K. but

the U.S.A. and Sweden; and THE CURSE OF LOCH NESS (Sphere, 1979).

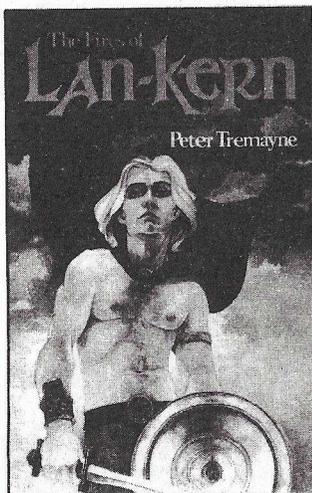
In 1980 Tremayne turned to a form of heroic fantasy with the publication of the first volume in a trilogy called THE FIRES OF LAN-KERN (Bailey Bros. & Swinfen and Magnum Books, also St. Martins in the U.S.A.). Using his considerable knowledge of the ancient Celtic world and Celtic mythology, the book is set in a once and future pre-Christian Celtic Cornwall. The PUBLISHERS WEEKLY called it 'a product of a keen and imaginative mind' and the COMMERCIAL APPEAL (Memphis) went so far as to say it was a 'story with insights into human relations that is miles ahead of anything Burroughs and his tribe ever wrote.' THE SUNDAY INDEPENDENT called it simply 'a masterpiece' while the reviewer in CORNISH LIFE said it was 'a fast-moving tale set against a background which meant more to me than anything by Tolkien.' The second volume of the trilogy - DESTROYERS OF LAN-KERN - is due to be published by Bailey Brothers and Swinfen in October.

The first volume is due out from Moeweg Verlag in Germany.

More horror-fantasy is due out with ZOMBIE! (originally entitled WHEN THE DEAD AWAKE) in August, from Sphere, who have just scheduled another title, THE MORGOW RISES (a tale of a Cornish sea monster erroneously referred to in newspaper reports as the Morgawr).

In an entirely different vein, from Magnum in October, comes THE RETURN OF RAFFLES, a sequel to E. W. Hornung's famous three books containing the adventures of the Amateur Cracksmen. Tremayne sets his story in 1904. At the end of Hornung's Raffles tales, Raffles is presumed killed in the Boer War. Not so, says Tremayne, and brings back the gentleman burglar in a series of breathless adventures to prove the point.

Ellis/Tremayne's diversity of interests was questioned by CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS, especially his interest in fantasy which seemed, to the questioner, opposed to his commitment to politics and history and his literary biographies. He answered: 'Popular literature fascinates me, particularly science fiction and fantasy, and its effect on creating and confirming the prejudices of people... My interest in science fiction and fantasy evolved from my interest in the mythologies of various nations. Sometimes it is easier to put over social concepts and ideas in the medium of a fantasy novel, even as



Burroughs did, and to do it with more clarity, than to do so in a realistic novel or a great sociological tome.'

As well as books under his own name and his pseudonym, he has written countless articles, book reviews and short stories, and of his published poems The Empty Glens was set to music by the Greek composer Christos Pittas, who wrote the musical setting for Tanith Lee's play BITTER GATE on BBC Radio.

PETER TREMAYNE-BOOKS

A checklist of 1st British editions only.

HOUND OF FRANKENSTEIN.

Ventura Books, London, August 1977.

DRACULA UNBORN (U.S.: BLOODRIGHT).

Bailey Bros. & Swinfen/Corgi, October 1977.

MASTERS OF TERROR: WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON (edited & introduction).

Corgi, November 1977.

THE VENGEANCE OF SHE.

Sphere Books, May 1978.

THE REVENGE OF DRACULA.

Bailey Bros. & Swinfen, November 1978.

THE ANTS.

Sphere Books, May 1979.

IRISH MASTERS OF FANTASY (edited & introduction).

Wolfhound Press, Dublin, November 1979.

THE CURSE OF LOCH NESS.

Sphere Books, November 1979.

THE FIRES OF LAN-KERN.

Bailey Bros. & Swinfen, February 1980.

DRACULA, MY LOVE.

Bailey Bros. & Swinfen, October 1980.

Forthcoming titles by Peter Tremayne:

ZOMBIE!

Sphere Books, August 1981.

DESTROYERS OF LAN-KERN.

Bailey Bros. & Swinfen, October 1981.

THE RETURN OF RAFFLES.

Magnum Books, October 1981.

THE MORGOW RISES.

Sphere Books, Spring 1982.

SWAMP!

Corgi Books, 1982.





THE FIRES OF LAN-KERN
Illustration by Alan Hunter

Alan Hunter

by Chris Hunter

BORN in Coventry in the same year as the first issue of WEIRD TALES, this magazine and its outstanding illustrator Virgil Finlay were the main influences in Alan Hunter's desire to be a fantasy artist. From childhood, an illustrated PILGRIMS' PROGRESS and a heavy, broken volume of 100 Gustave Dore engravings also remain strongly in his memory.

Due to enter a commercial art studio on leaving school, World War II started too soon so he was pushed instead into a drawing office. Throughout the war he was trained as a draughtsman. Illustrating became a hobby, sharpened by occasional evening classes at Art School.

Four years after the end of the war and two years after his marriage to Joyce, he had his first opportunity for professional illustrating. In 1950 he was commissioned by NEW WORLDS magazine, and later, SCIENCE-FANTASY and NEBULA. During those first years of success, Alan and Joyce became well-known figures at SF conventions.

At this time, the British fanzine was still in its infancy. Alan began producing lino-cuts or drawing direct onto duplicating stencils for fan editors seeking the cheapest forms of reproduction. He

soon became even more widely known in amateur publishing, and his art has been appearing in the amateur press ever since.

With the introduction of modern, cheaper forms of printing, there is now little difference between the professional and amateur press. There is no distinction in his attitude or quality of work for either. He has always had a deep regard for the fan editor.

As organiser of the Fantasy Art Society, back in 1952, he was responsible for introducing much new talent to both fan and professional publications. Sadly, this society no longer exists.

He has produced little colour work. Drawing time has to be snatched from other commitments and Alan claims that black and white drawing can be most easily left, to be picked up again later. This does not prevent him from experimenting widely in various pen, brush and crayon techniques on subjects ranging from straight illustration to symbolic design. Attention to detail and careful use of line shading derives more from Finlay and the Dore engravings than the artists in whose company his work often appears.

Although still earning a living as a draughtsman, he manages to produce an impressive number of fantasy drawings. His art appears regularly in such various publications as FANTASY TALES, NEAR MYTHS, ARENA, WHISPERS, STARSHIP, ALNITAH, DARK HORIZONS, WHITE DWARF etc. A FIEND FOLIO, for the use of fantasy gamers and featuring much of his work, is in preparation.

For many years now Alan has been an elusive character, preferring to let his drawings speak for him. FANTASYCON VII will be the first convention my parents have attended since those distant years of the fifties, before I was born.



DOVER FANTASY

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Doré's illustrations for Rabelais, £3.35

Karl Edward Wagner

by David Sutton



KARL EDWARD WAGNER is one of life's masochists: FANTASYCON VII will be the third time he has struggled with the rigours of jetting from his home in North Carolina to attend a British Fantasycon! His charming wife Barbara is afflicted too, for she accompanies him on these jaunts... Or perhaps there's something about our beer (or even our conventions!) that they really like.

In 1979 Karl was our Guest of Honour in Coventry; last year Master of Ceremonies. At this year's convention he is again M.C., a task he will similarly undertake at the Seventh World Fantasy Convention in Oakland, California in October. It could become a full-time occupation!

Karl's works are undoubtedly known by most of the attendees this weekend. Indeed, his anti-hero, 'Kane', has been thrilling readers since DARKNESS WEAVES was first published in 1970. More up-to-date news is that his long-awaited IN THE WAKE OF THE NIGHT is in the finishing stages. It will be the longest Kane novel and in chronological order, the earliest episode thus far. As co-owner of the value-for-money Carcosa Press (issuing jumbo-sized

volumes, profusely illustrated), LONELY VIGILS, a second Manly Wade Wellman collection, is one of the future projects. A collection of his modern horror novelettes, IN A LONELY PLACE, is forthcoming, and Karl is the current editor of DAW's THE YEAR'S BEST HORROR STORIES series, his second volume (number nine in the series) is due this summer.

Short stories from Karl's imagination have appeared in such periodicals as FANTASY & SF, WHISPERS (which published his British Fantasy Award-winning story, *Sticks*), FANTASTIC (*Two Suns Setting* - another BFS Award winner), FANTASY TALES, CHACAL and diverse small-press publications.

What English fans may not appreciate is that Karl happens to be our best promoter in the U.S.A. His regular column in FANTASY NEWSLETTER reveals our triumphs on this side of the Atlantic and additionally, THE YEAR'S BEST HORROR STORIES 9 will, I understand, contain several "shameless plugs for certain elements of the British small-press scene."

This laudable attitude is enhanced, for those who have sampled it, by his ever-willing hospitality. Karl's bungalow, set in a small wooded suburb of Chapel Hill, contains curios, fantasy artefacts and full confirmation of his cordiality.

Buy him a beer, somebody!

GUEST NOTES

JOHN BROSINAN: Regular and often controversial contributor to STARBURST and author of a number of books including THE HORROR PEOPLE (1976), FUTURE TENSE (1978) and a new novel, SKYSHIP (1981).

KENNETH BULMER: One-time president of the British Fantasy Society and prolific science fiction and fantasy author. Novels include CITY UNDER THE SEA (1957), KANDAR (1969), SWORDS OF THE BARBARIANS (1970) and the successful 'Dray Prescott' series from DAW Books.

RAMSEY CAMPBELL: Currently president of the British Fantasy Society and one of Britain's most talented horror writers. Besides his numerous short stories, his novels include THE DOLL WHO ATE HIS MOTHER (1976), THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (as 'Carl Dreadstone'), THE FACE THAT MUST DIE (1979) and TO WAKE THE DEAD (1980). Ramsey has also edited NEW TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS (1980) and two volumes of NEW TERRORS (1980).

DAVE CARSON: Horror and fantasy artist and designer of the new British Fantasy Award statuette. His eldritch illustrations appear regularly in FANTASY TALES, KADATH, DARK HORIZONS and FANTASY MACABRE, amongst others. A new portfolio, LOVECRAFT'S PANTHEON is premiered at Fantasycon VII.

DAVID CASE: Full-time writer with at least 17 different pseudonyms and more than 300 books to his credit. Collections include THE CELL (1964), FENGRIFLEN (1971) - the lead story was filmed by Amicus as AND NOW THE SCREAMING STARTS - and a recent volume from Arkham House, THE THIRD GRAVE (1981). A werewolf novel, WOLF TRACKS, was published last year.

FRANCESCO COVA: Editor and publisher of Italy's foremost fantasy magazine, KADATH, and founder of the newly-formed Kadath Press publishing house.

PHIL EDWARDS: Regular film reviewer and feature writer for STARBURST.

LIONEL FANTHORPE: Said to be the most prolific of all science fiction and fantasy writers, using at least 21 pseudonyms. Almost single-handedly filled every issue of SUPERNATURAL STORIES from 1954-66. His publishing house of Greystoke Mobray recently published his novel THE BLACK LION, co-written with Patricia Fanthorpe.

DOROTHY HOUGHTON: Paperback editor at NEL for four years before going freelance. Became fiction editor at Magnum Books and is now Editorial Director.

STEPHEN JONES: 'Jack-of-all-trades' on the fantasy scene, working regularly as illustrator, editor, designer, reviewer and columnist in such magazines as KADATH, FANTASY NEWSLETTER, CHACAL, STARBURST, WORLD OF HORROR etc. One-time editor of DARK HORIZONS and co-editor of FANTASY MEDIA, now co-editor of FANTASY TALES and AIRGEDLAMH with David Sutton.

HUGH LAMB: Accomplished anthologist who specializes in unearthing long-forgotten stories. Collections include: A WAVE OF FEAR (1973), TERROR BY GASLIGHT (1975), STAR BOOK OF HORROR Nos. 1 and 2 (1975/6) and COLD FEAR: NEW TALES OF TERROR (1977).

DAVID LLOYD: Professional illustrator whose work has appeared in FANTASY TALES, DARK HORIZONS, MORE GHOSTS & SCHOLARS and the B.F.S. BULLETIN, to name only a few magazines. His comic-strip artwork has been featured in HALS OF HORROR, DOCTOR WHO WEEKLY, THE INCREDIBLE HULK WEEKLY, and the recent limited edition MONSTER CLUB magazine.

BRIAN LUMLEY: One of the more recent writers to follow in the footsteps of H. P. Lovecraft. Published extensively in America but mostly ignored in his native Britain (except for FANTASY TALES). His early short fiction was collected in THE CALLER OF THE BLACK (1971) and THE HORROR AT OAKDENE (1977). Among his novels are THE BURROWERS BENEATH (1974), THE TRANSITION OF TITUS CROW (1975) and KHAI OF ANCIENT KHEM (1981).

JAMES MANNING: Editor of AD ASTRA, Britain's only professional science fiction/science fact magazine.

PAT McINTOSH-SPINNLER: Author and poet, best known for her series of tales about the warrior maiden Thula (ANDURIL and YEAR'S BEST FANTASY).

ALAN McKENZIE: Editor of STARBURST, Britain's leading fantasy film magazine, published by Marvel.

PETER NICHOLLS: Editor of THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION (1979) and currently planning a companion volume, THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FANTASY. Also editor of FOUNDATION: THE REVIEW OF SCIENCE FICTION and SCIENCE FICTION AT LARGE (1976).

JIM PITTS: Britain's leading semi-professional artist in fantasy. As well as numerous magazine appearances (WHISPERS, FANTASY TALES, KADATH, CHACAL, NYCTALOPS, DARK HORIZONS etc.) his illustrated books include SAVAGE HEROES (1977), SPACED OUT (1977) and a new cover for MARIANNE DREAMS by Catherine Storr, published by Puffin in September.

DAVID RILEY: Short story writer whose work has appeared in WHISPERS, DARK HORIZONS, WORLD OF HORROR, Richard Davis' YEAR'S BEST HORROR collection etc. His novelette was the title story of David Sutton's anthology THE SATYR'S HEAD AND OTHER TALES OF TERROR (1975).

JOHN STEWART: Accomplished artist whose work has appeared in PHANTASY DIGEST, NYCTALOPS, WHISPERS, SHAYOL, MORE GHOSTS & SCHOLARS etc. He has illustrated a number of foreign edition of fantasy classics.

DEZ SKINN: One-time editor of STARBURST and HALLS OF HORROR, now managing director of Studio Stystem - total publishing design and art services.

DAVID A. SUTTON: Editor of the aforementioned THE SATYR'S HEAD collection, as well as NEW WRITINGS IN HORROR Nos. 1 and 2 (1971/72). One-time editor of SHADOW and co-editor of FANTASY MEDIA, currently editor of DARK HORIZONS and co-editor of FANTASY TALES and AIRGEDLAMH. Regular book and film reviewer, his own short fiction has appeared in COLD FEAR (1977), KADATH, MORE GHOSTS & SCHOLARS, CTHULHU and GOTHIC.

PETER VALENTINE TIMLETT: One-time jazz musician, but better known for his 'SEEDBEARERS' fantasy/occult trilogy. His Arthurian trilogy is still awaiting publication and short fiction appears occasionally.

TISE VAHMAGI: Regular television columnist for STARBURST.

Acknowledgments

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 Walt Disney Prod.
 and thanks to everyone who has helped make this
 the best Fantasycon yet!



CONVENTION INFORMATION

THE annual British Fantasy Convention is now a well-established part of the fantasy fan's calendar. This year's venue is the modern Birmingham Centre Hotel. The convention will be held in the MALVERN SUITE (second floor), with most of the programme items taking place in the ARDEN ROOM. Book dealers are to be found in the SHAKESPEARE ROOM and the Art Show (which will be open at various times throughout the convention) is in the LICHFIELD ROOM. Please remember that no drinks will be allowed into the Art Show.

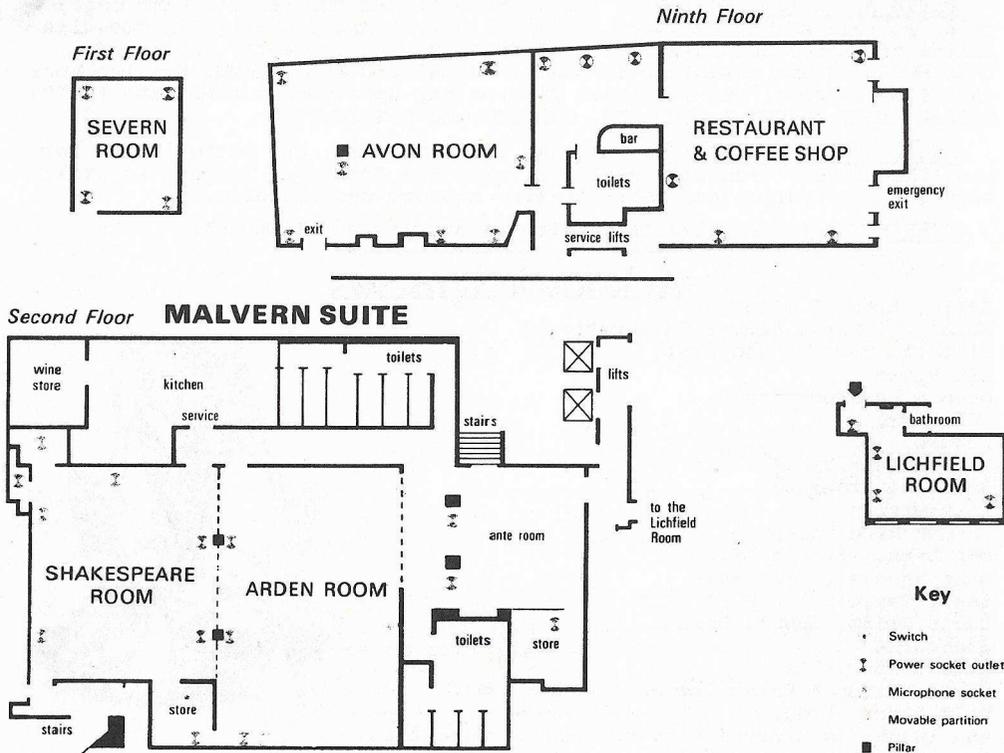
This year there are two convention badges, colour-coded as follows: White Badges are for convention members. Green Badges are for our Special Guests - don't hesitate to approach them and offer to buy them a drink! Gold Badges are worn by convention committee members, all of whom are there to help and advise you throughout the convention.

Your name badge must be worn at all times, as you may be stopped by both committee members and hotel staff if you are not displaying one. Your badge is your entry to all events and - most importantly - you may not be served at the convention bar without one!

The numbered ticket which you receive with this PROGRAMME BOOKLET should be guarded with your life, for it is your entry to Saturday evening's British Fantasy Awards Buffet and could win you one of the many exciting free prizes in the ever-popular raffle.

There will also be a number of giveaways for those who turn up early for Saturday afternoon's Autograph Party, where many of our guests will be signing copies of their work.

Enjoy this convention and we look forward to seeing you again next year!



FANTASYCON VII PROGRAMME

FRIDAY

- 7.00 PM REGISTRATION DESK OPENS/GENERAL RECEPTION (Arden)
An informal chance to meet Guests and the BFS Committee at the bar
- 8.00 PM FILM - GRIP OF THE STRANGLER (80 mins) (Arden)
 FILM - THE HANDS OF ORLAC (70 mins)
- 10.30 PM RECEPTION CONTINUES (Arden)
- 1.00 AM Close

SATURDAY

- 9.00 AM REGISTRATION DESK OPENS (Arden)
- 9.45 AM WELCOME TO FANTASYCON VII - Karl Edward Wagner (Arden)
- 10.00 AM DEALERS' ROOM OPENS (Shakespeare)
- 10.00 AM DEAR ED - Editors panel with Karl Edward Wagner, Ramsey Campbell, Hugh Lamb, Francesco Cova *An amusing Look at the job of being an editor* (Arden)
- 11.00 AM Break
- 11.15 AM THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FANTASY - Peter Nicholls (Arden)
The editor will talk about the chequered history of this project
- 12.15 PM Lunch
- 1.15 PM SPECIAL GUEST ARTIST SPEECH - Alan Hunter (Arden)
- 2.15 PM Break
- 2.30 PM WITH THESE WORDS - Authors panel with Ken Bulmer, Brian Lumley, Peter Valentine Timlett, David Case, Pat McIntosh-Spinnler *A lively and controversial look at world building in fantasy fiction* (Arden)
- 3.30 PM Break
- 3.45 PM AUTOGRAPH PARTY (Shakespeare)
- 4.30 PM DEALERS' ROOM CLOSSES (Shakespeare)
- 4.30 PM FILM - A FEAST OF HORROR (35 mins) (Arden)
- FILM - TIME AFTER TIME (112 mins) (Arden)
- 7.30 PM THE BRITISH FANTASY AWARDS BUFFET - Karl Edward Wagner, Peter Tremayne, Alan Hunter *A light buffet and presentation of the 1980 Awards plus the popular fantasy raffle. The high point of the convention!* (Arden)
- 9.30 PM GUEST OF HONOUR SPEECH - Peter Tremayne (Arden)
- 10.30 PM SONG, SONNET AND STORY (Arden)
An informal entertainment of folk songs, poems and stories, organised by Adrian Cole
- 1.00 AM Close

SUNDAY

- 9.30 AM DEALERS' ROOM OPENS (Shakespeare)
- 10.00 AM FILM - MARK OF THE VAMPIRE (61 mins) (Arden)
- 11.00 AM THE ALLEGORY AND SYMBOLISM OF DERL WOTHOR - Lionel Fanthorpe (Arden)
The author looks at the background to his book, The Black Lion
- 11.45 AM Break
- 12.00 SO WHAT'S WRONG WITH US BRITISH ARTISTS? - Artists panel with Stephen Jones, Alan Hunter, Jim Pitts, Dave Carson, David Lloyd *Why do book and magazine publishers continue to use inferior artwork?* (Arden)
- 12.45 PM Lunch
- 1.30 PM FANTASYCON VIII PRE-REGISTRATION (Arden)
- 1.45 PM IT'S ONLY A MOVIE! - Film panel with John Brosnan, Dez Skinn, Alan McKenzie, Tise Vahimagi, Phil Edwards *A lively discussion about the current fantasy cinema scene* (Arden)
- 2.45 PM Break
- 3.00 PM DEALERS' ROOM CLOSSES (Shakespeare)
- 3.00 PM FILM - DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES (107 mins) (Arden)
- 4.45 PM THANK YOU FOR COMING AND SEE YOU NEXT YEAR - Karl Edward Wagner (Arden)
- 5.00 PM Convention Closes



The British Fantasy Awards

MAIN NOMINATIONS - 1980



THE British Fantasy Awards are presented annually in five categories by The British Fantasy Society and members of last year's convention; a sixth - 'special' - award is presented by the Fantasycon committee. The author of the 'Best Novel' receives the August Derleth Award (a memorial to the late American writer who did so much for the cause of fantasy in his lifetime). Each of the winners receives a statuette designed by Dave Carson, which will be presented on Saturday evening. The editors of FANTASY TALES have officially withdrawn the magazine from consideration in the 1980 'Best Small Press' category. Below are alphabetically listed the main nominations:

Best Novel

FIRESTARTER (Macdonald Futura)
 KILL THE DEAD (DAW)
 A STORM OF WINGS (Sphere)
 TO WAKE THE DEAD (Millington)
 THE WOUNDED LAND (Sidgwick & Jackson)

STEPHEN KING
 TANITH LEE
 M. JOHN HARRISON
 RAMSEY CAMPBELL
 STEPHEN R. DONALDSON

Best Short Fiction

CROUCH END (New Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos - Arkham House)
 THE HOUSE OF THE TEMPLE (Kadath 3)
 THE LATE SHIFT (Dark Forces - Macdonald Futura)
 THE STAINS (New Terrors 1 - Pan Books)

STEPHEN KING
 BRIAN LUMLEY
 DENNIS ETCHISON
 ROBERT AICKMAN

Best Film

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK (Irvin Kershner - 20th Century-Fox)
 FLASH GORDON (Mike Hodges - EMI)
 THE FOG (John Carpenter - Avco Embassy)

Best Small Press

AIRGEDLAMH (Dave McFerran/Stephen Jones/David Sutton)
 FANTASY MEDIA Vol.2 (Jon Harvey/Stephen Jones/Gordon Larkin/David Sutton)
 FANTASY NEWSLETTER (Paul C. Allen)
 KADATH (Francesco Cova)

Best Artist

DAVE CARSON
 STEPHEN E. FABIAN
 JIM FITZPATRICK
 JIM PITTS



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can stop its savage, merciless drive.**

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ARE COMING!**

**And, don't miss ZOMBIE! also by Peter Tremayne-
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CONVENTION REGISTRATIONS

At the time of going to press, the following are registered members of Fantasycon VII:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Peter Tremayne | 57. Robin Hill | 118. David Callow |
| 2. Dorothy Berresford Ellis | 58. John Hudson | 119. Richard Dalby |
| 3. Alan Hunter | 59. Gez Kelly | 120. Richard Van Der Voort |
| 4. Joyce Hunter | 60. Charles Noad | 121. Marion Van Der Voort |
| 5. Karl Edward Wagner | 61. Simon Bostock | 122. Ted Ball |
| 6. Barbara Wagner | 62. Chris Morgan | 123. Andromeda Bookshop |
| 7. Peter Coleborn | 63. Pauline Morgan | 124. Norma Carson |
| 8. Mike Chinn | 64. Pete Watts | 125. Paul Haynes |
| 9. Carl Hiles | 65. Mike Watts | 126. Sam Green |
| 10. Ken Cowley | 66. Hugh Lamb | 127. Katherine Dewey |
| 11. Jim Pitts | 67. Nigel Summerton | 128. Jon Harvey |
| 12. Ramsey Campbell | 68. R. Griffin | 129. Fiona Harvey |
| 13. Dave Reeder | 69. Dorothy Houghton | 130. John Squires |
| 14. Adrian Cole | 70. M. Ashworth | 131. Graham Downing |
| 15. Stephen Jones | 71. Malcolm Furnass | 132. Gary Trapp |
| 16. Jo Fletcher | 72. M. Kilpatrick | 133. C. S. Williams |
| 17. Ken Bulmer | 73. Janice Arter | 134. Andrew Holyer |
| 18. Peter Valentine Timlett | 74. David Row | 135. Colin Wightman |
| 19. Wayne Cassar | 75. Les Chester | 136. Tise Vahimagi |
| 20. Nicholas Jones | 76. Steve Skwarek | 137. Jeff Willis |
| 21. David Parkins | 77. Marily Wade Wellman | 138. Carla Skwarek |
| 22. Nigel Smith | 78. Frances Wellman | 139. Stephen Guildford |
| 23. Jill McCaul | 79. Michel Feron | 140. Lindsey LeDaix Paton |
| 24. Christine Jennings | 80. Chico Kidd | 141. J. Williams |
| 25. Rob Butterworth | 81. Daphne Castell | 142. Phil Edwards |
| 26. Paul Dorrell | 82. Al FitzPatrick | 143. P. Constable |
| 27. David Bath | 83. Janet Ellicot | 144. R. H. Thomas |
| 28. Maureen Porter | 84. Tory Chester | 145. Sheila Jones |
| 29. Stephen Davies | 85. Chris Beaumont | 146. Christopher Hall |
| 30. Martin Helsdon | 86. Roland Adair | 147. Patricia Hall |
| 31. Nyki Blatchley | 87. Jeanne Youngson | 148. Dez Skinn |
| 32. Mike Grace | 88. Earle Callender | 149. Keith Walker |
| 33. Hussain Mohamed | 89. David Riley | |
| 34. Martin Pay | 90. John Brosnan | |
| 35. Koen Olie | 91. Desmond Bull | |
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| 37. Linda Watt | 93. David Case | |
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| 39. Madawc Williams | 95. Richard Davis | |
| 40. Martin Todd | 96. Lionel Fanthorpe | |
| 41. George Budge | 97. Virce Mattocks | |
| 42. L. E. Taylor | 98. Ian Davis | |
| 43. L. D. Cotterill | 99. Brian Lumley | |
| 44. David Peak | 100. David Lloyd | |
| 45. Pat McIntosh-Spinnler | 101. David Sutton | |
| 46. Ted Garside | 102. Alan McKenzie | |
| 47. Mike Wathen | 103. Naveed Kahn | |
| 48. Diane Wathen | 104. Francesco Cova | |
| 49. S. Booth | 105. James Manning | |
| 50. Geoff Cox | 106. John Stewart | |
| 51. M. Bywater | 107. Anna Stewart | |
| 52. Nic Howard | 108. N. J. Burgess | |
| 53. Jeff Myers | 109. Dave Simmons | |
| 54. Rosemary Pardoe | 110. Kirsty Simmons | |
| 55. Andrew Whitfield | 111. Peter Relton | |
| 56. Penny Hill | 112. John Mottershead | |
| | 113. Peter Nicholls | |
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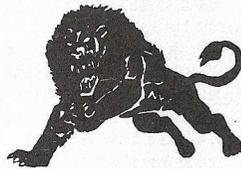
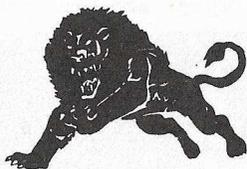


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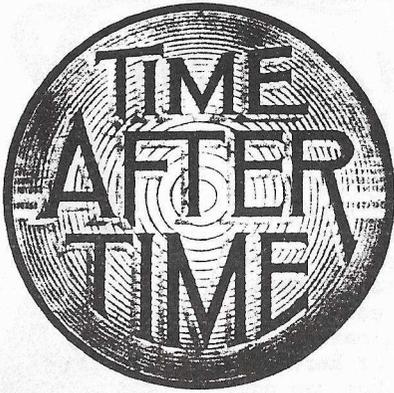
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ASK YOUR BOOKSELLER FOR
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BLACK LION

By: PATRICIA and LIONEL FANTHORPE



U.S.A. 1979. Directed by Nicholas Meyer. Starring: Malcolm McDowell, David Warner, Mary Steenburgen, Charles Cioffi, Joseph Maher. Orion Pictures/Warner Bros.

"TWO ALL-BEEF patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions, on a sesame seed bun?" That's a mouthful for just about anybody, but it is a really special and outlandish order from someone suddenly transported from the order and decorum of late-Victorian England to the bustling centre of 1979 San Francisco, as is H. G. Wells in the romantic thriller, TIME AFTER TIME.

As portrayed in the film by Malcolm McDowell, the noted 19th Century author, prophet and pundit Wells has to utilize his fabled Time Machine to travel 86 years

into the future - in hot pursuit of Jack the Ripper, the criminal genius who has used Wells' invention to escape from the clutches of Scotland Yard. When he finds early on, that merely attempting to order a "Big Mac and fries" can be a Herculean struggle, the tone is set for the unusual adventures the unsuspecting Wells will encounter throughout the film.

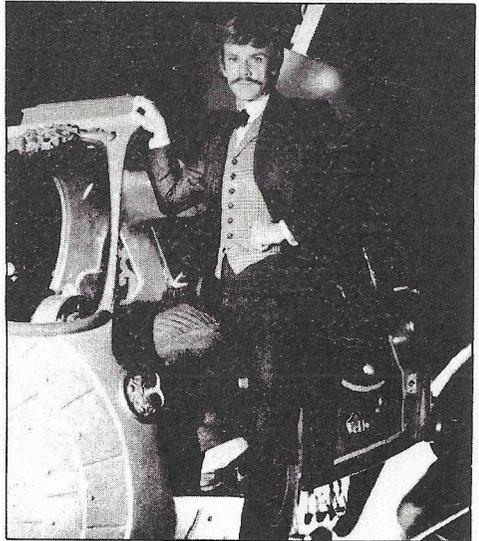
A confirmed romantic with the natural curiosity of a scholar and an abiding faith in the Utopian future, Wells is nothing short of overwhelmed by his startling new surroundings. Arriving in the middle of a museum exhibit on his own life and accomplishments, Wells tries to take stock of the situation, making a vain attempt to simply determine where he is by the unfamiliar dress and dialect - which seems vaguely like a form of English!

Firmly bent on tracking down his one-time friend, Dr. Stevenson (Warner), who happens to double as the infamous Ripper, Wells meets, and falls in love with Amy Robbins (Steenburgen), a prime example of the "liberated" career woman of the '70s - intelligent, accomplished, outspoken and independent.

Set against Wells' dangerous pursuit of Jack the Ripper are his frequently comic confrontations with the "strange" ways of modern life, including an exhausting race up a down escalator, and hastily mimicked gesticulations otherwise known as hailing a cab.

Perhaps it's true that the Victorian age, which takes its name from the dour queen who set strict social standards of the day, was essentially a humourless chapter in history. But in TIME AFTER TIME, a guileless H. G. Wells certainly proves that discovering a "brave new world" is not without plenty of laughs.

TIME AFTER TIME, a romantic thriller, was produced by Herb Jaffe and written and directed by Nicholas Meyer from a story by Karl Alexander and Steve Hayes. The music is by Miklos Rozsa. We think you'll enjoy this exciting and underrated fantasy /S.F. classic that was given a very poor release in this country.



Have a fantastic time.



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Convention Film Notes

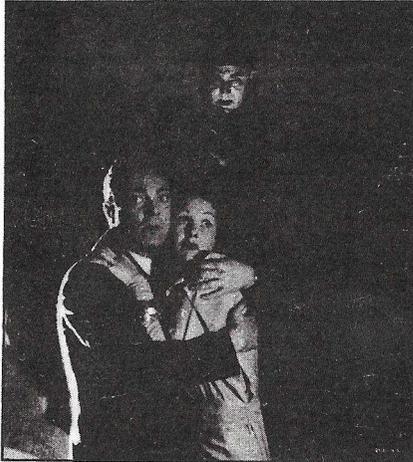
by Ramsey Campbell

THIS year's themes are vampirism and possession. The two vampire films are unexpectedly atmospheric - unexpectedly, that is, for a comedy and a hoax.

Mark of the Vampire

U.S.A. 1935. Directed by Tod Browning. Starring: Lionel Barrymore, Elizabeth Allan, Bela Lugosi, Lionel Atwill, Jean Hersholt, Carol Borland, Henry Wadsworth, Donald Meek. M.G.M.

MARK OF THE VAMPIRE is a Tod Browning film: Browning was best known for his vampire movies, specifically the Lugosi DRACULA, but his preoccupation was with deformity, often in the form and indeed forms of Lon Chaney. He worked out this theme to the full in the notorious and admirable FREAKS, a film so unpopular that his A. Merritt film, THE DEVIL DOLL (little people, big sets, little menace), almost looks like a bid to make amends. One of his Chaney films was LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT (all that survives of it seems



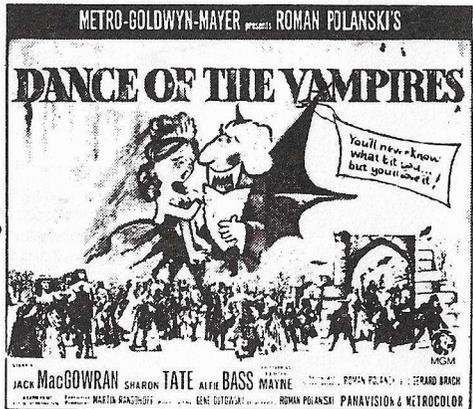
to be toothy goggle-eyed stills and rumours of the pains Chaney went to) and who better, after the success of DRACULA, to play in a sound remake of this tale of phoney vampires than Lugosi? The irony is that, Castle Dracula apart, MARK OF THE VAMPIRE has more atmosphere and menace than DRACULA. If we apply Lovecraft's principle that terror is to be respected even when it's explained away at the end, MARK OF THE VAMPIRE is the more successful film. It also has Carol Borland as an unforgettable vampire, the subject of dozens of stills in the textbooks.

Dance of the Vampires

G.B. 1967. Directed by Roman Polanski. Starring: Jack MacGowran, Roman Polanski, Sharon Tate, Alfie Bass, Ferdy Mayne. M.G.M.

DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES, by contrast, is

a comedy. However, it's directed by Roman Polanski, some of whose jokes would be too gruesome for most straight horror films. Polanski has never been predictable; for instance, while controversy was raging over Peckinpah and Russell and Kubrick's worst film, Polanski sneaked by with an 'AA' certificate on the most violent film of them all, his MACBETH. His sense of humour was clearly not to the taste of his producer, who cut fifteen minutes from DANCE OF THE VAMPIRES to make room for a cartoon prologue, in case the audience failed to realize it was a comedy. This is the version that turns up on British TV. A pity, not least because most of the cuts involve Polanski's wife, the



late Sharon Tate. If his TESS is a tribute to her (and a very moving one), DANCE gives us some idea of his loss. As for the film overall, it is (unsurprisingly?) less successful as comedy than as an essay in the macabre, and as such it is often both chilling and beautiful.

The Hands of Orlac

U.S.A. 1935. Directed by Karl Freund. Starring: Peter Lorre, Frances Drake, Colin Clive, Ted Healy, Sara Haden, Isabel Jewell, Edward Brophy, Cora Sue Collins, Keye Luke. M.G.M.

And so to possession. Before THE EXORCIST, THE HANDS OF ORLAC was surely the most famous film on the theme, but only the last (and according to commentators, least) version, with a dubbed Christopher Lee, has been seen for years. Now the Peter Lorre version is available once more, and here it is. Its director, Karl Freund, also made THE MUMMY, one of the great fantastic romances on film. His ORLAC is described by Carlos Clarens as "piling on absurdities and macabre touches." It sounds very like the book, now available in English. Stills of Lorre look especially enticing.

The Haunted Strangler

G.B. 1958. Directed by Robert Day. Starring: Boris Karloff, Jean Kent, Elizabeth Allen, Anthony Dawson, Vera Day, Tim Turner. Eros/Producers Assoc.

THE HAUNTED STRANGLER, alias GRIP OF THE STRANGLER, is one of Karloff's last good films, and one of the few films that gave him a chance to be frightening. Despite his reputation ("Karloff the Uncanny") as surely the actor most famous for his horror films, it is worth remembering how frequently his roles were sympathetic, if not downright touching. However, there is Ulmer's BLACK CAT to prove that he could be thoroughly chilling, and THE HAUNTED STRANGLER has the wit to show the kindly Karloff, everyone's favourite uncle, turning into a twisted killer. Not since Fredric March's Jekyll and Hyde has transformation on the screen been so distressing. More power to Robert Day, an under-rated director when he worked in British horror films, for giving Karloff the chance.





The Lane

by Peter Tremayne

IT IS Christmas Eve again. I can hear her soft melodious voice calling me, echoing across the sea of time, imploring me. "You will come back, won't you? You will come back?" I know that this evening, this very evening, I will go. I will be unable to resist the uncanny, unnatural powers which are drawing me back to the lane.

It had begun on a previous Christmas Eve. My car was being repaired but I had been out late visiting friends in the tradition of the season. The last bus had deposited me in Pond Square, Highgate, and I found myself walking down Swains Lane in a homeward direction. Swains Lane, in north London, twists gently down from Highgate Village, its eastern side entirely bounded in the dark greenery firstly of Waterlow Park and then the modern section of Highgate Cemetery, before arriving at Holly Village. On its western side it is bordered by the sinister expanse of the old Highgate Cemetery, a popular resort for would-be vampire hunters and eccentrics of that ilk. The western border eventually reaches a spacious housing estate set well back from the roadway. It is a very ill-lit and deserted thoroughfare which has a reputation for being haunted, I suppose it is because it passes through the two sections of the cemetery.

Well, haunted or not, I was in a hurry to get into my bed that night. The moon was up, its white light bathing the lane in an eerie silver glow despite the tall trees shadowing expanses of the thoroughfare along its gloomy borders. Now and again the bright moon would hide behind the trees, silhouetting the branches that reached out in an effort to canopy the lane, causing their winter leaflessness to stretch like black gnarled

fingers across the blue-black sky. There was not even the cheerful twinkle of a star that night; nothing save the crunch of my footsteps in the snow and slush and the constant sighing of a cold wind through the creaking branches.

I had reached the section where the lane started to pass through Waterlow Park on its eastern side and the old Highgate Cemetery on its western side. Here I encountered a strange phenomenon, although it did not register at the time as such. A mist - no, more than a mist - a fog, started to swirl across the lane. It was an uncanny, luminescent, green-coloured fog. The type of fog that used to be part of pre-1960 London, the smogs that were so common before such things as smokeless zones were brought into being. Even the smell of it caused me to cough and splutter until my lungs adjusted to its coarse odours.

I continued on a little while. Then there came to my ears the faint tap, tap, tap of a walking stick hitting the curb. Abruptly, out of the fog, I saw that I was overtaking the bent back of an aged woman, shambling forward in the same direction. Every now and again the woman paused, her breath coming in rasping wheezes. Even as I drew abreast of her, she stumbled on an uneven patch of pavement and would have fallen had I not caught her arm.

She gave a gasp as she swung a wizened face to mine.

"Sorry if I startled you, madam," I said, forcing a smile. "You would have fallen had I not grabbed you."

"Likely enough," she muttered; her bright eyes, sunk deep into the sockets, examined me closely.

I noticed that she was dressed in a rather old-fashioned mode; long black skirts and shawl and a large black hat of the sort usually associated with Eliza Doolittle. In spite of her odd appearance she looked frail and tired and had difficulty in catching her breath.

"Can I be of some assistance to you?" I offered.

She stood leaning on her walking stick, examining me in silence. For a moment I wondered whether she had heard me. I was about to repeat myself when she nodded.

"I could do with the support of your arm until I reach my cottage. It's only a hundred yards further on."

I frowned. I had passed down Swains Lane many times in daylight but could not recall a cottage in the spot which she indicated. So far as I knew only the grim, grey walls of the cemetery lay there. Unsure of myself, I let the old woman lead and sure enough, after a little time, we reached a small brick cottage which stood a few yards back from the lane and - lo and behold! - a young girl was hanging over the gate apparently awaiting the old woman's arrival.

"Mother! I was worried about you."

Her voice had a soft melodious tone. She opened the gate, came forward and took the old woman's arm.

I swear I have never seen a girl as attractive as she. Raven black hair tumbled around a heart-shaped face. Her eyes were large, dark and solemn, yet her mouth, naturally red, was made for laughing and dimpled deliciously.

"You need not have worried, Mary. This young man helped me along the road."

The girl turned and smiled at me.

"Thank you, sir. Would you like to come in and have some tea with us? It is a cold, pitiful night, and something warm might help alleviate the chill."

She had an odd, almost archaic mode of speech. I thought at first, that she was not English-born but I recognised she had a well modulated English accent.

I swallowed and blushed like a teenager.

"I would appreciate that very much."

Inside the cottage a log fire crackled in the hearth like a scene out of Dickens. The old lady placed herself in a high-backed chair opposite me to one side of the fireplace while the girl went into another room

and soon re-emerged with a tea tray on which was laid the most splendid old-fashioned china tea service that I have ever seen. I complimented them on it and was about to point out that its value must surely be antique when my silver Hunter pocket watch chimed the hour. My pocket watch is the subject of merriment amongst my friends who claim that it is an affectation. I demur and see it only as a piece of sentimental eccentricity on my part.

Observing the old lady looking at me in surprise, I drew out the watch somewhat self-consciously and explained the reasons for the chimes. I also mentioned that it had belonged to my great-grandfather. The old lady took the watch from me, turning it over in her thin hands, peering at it.

"Surely it is not as old as that?" she asked in apparent surprise.

I assured her that it was.

The girl, Mary, came and sat near me, asking how I came to be walking down the lane at such an hour. I forgot all about my watch, which the old woman had placed on the mantleshef. We spent a most pleasant hour talking of nothing in particular. Then I stood up, observed that the hour was late and that I had to leave.

"You must visit us again, young man," wheezed the old woman.

The girl nodded eagerly.

"I, too, would like you to visit us again. It can be so lonely here. You will come back, won't you?"

I smiled, wondering how a person so young and attractive could be lonely living in such a busy part of London. She asked me where it was that I lived and when I told her she reflected that it would be better if I took the Highgate Road.

"You can take the footpath at the back of the cottage. It runs only a hundred yards or less before it comes out into Highgate Road."

I was astonished.

"I didn't realise there was any footpath which connected Swains Lane to the Highgate Road. I thought there was no way through the cemetery and that the other side was mainly built up."

She laughed, a soft chuckle.

"Why no, this area is not built up at all."

She conducted me to the back door of the cottage and pointed down a narrow snow-strewn pathway. It was light enough with the moon's reflection on the snow to see along it without the aid of a torch. And so I bade them both farewell and, in reply to the girl's insistent question, promised that I would soon be back to visit them.

As soon as the cottage door shut on me a feeling of intense cold closed around me. A strange feeling of evil permeated the air. I had not gone but a few yards when my hands began to feel clammy and a sweat broke out upon my forehead. I suppressed a shiver and pulled up the collar of my overcoat as if this action would protect me from the evils of the night.

Head bent forward, I hurried along. The only sound I could hear was the crunch of my shoes on the snow. Then, with a growing unease, I began to pick out the sound of a second pair of footsteps. I stopped, peered back and listened. Nothing! A creaking of a branch overhead made me look up. A cry welled in my throat. For a split second I thought I saw the body of a man hanging grotesquely from a branch. I cursed myself for a fool when I realised it must have been a trick of the light, a shadow dancing among the gloomy boughs. I turned and hurried onwards. Yet again I was sure that a second pair of footsteps was hurrying after me. Once more I peered round but could see nothing. The sweat began to ooze from my body and drip off my face, running between my neck and collar. It began to run into my eyes and cloud my vision. I put up a trembling hand to brush the sweat aside.

Strange, isn't it, how at such times one thought seems to register in your mind? My one thought, one obsession, was that if I could reach the end of this pathway all my fears would cease. Somehow this pathway represented evil. Its musty odour seemed to spell fear.

I began to hurry on; the steps behind me sounded louder, nearer. I

began to run. The steps behind me quickened. Faster! Faster! The wet sweat of fear was running freely from my body.

Have you ever dreamed that you were running down a never-ending corridor and your one thought is to get to the end? That is exactly how I felt. I was running down a never-ending path trying vainly to get to the end and the safety which it represented.

I had almost given up hope when I saw it. The welcoming signs of the main Highgate Road. Houses stood with homely lights, comforting, protective. It was only another few yards. I saw the gate at the end of the path and I knew that once over it I would be safe.

The footsteps were just behind me now. A sudden burst of speed and I was at the gate. Without pausing I leapt for the top rung. As I did so I distinctly felt a hand claw at my coat, try to haul me back. There was a tearing sound as the cloth gave. Then I was over; over and running down the well-lit main road. In my wild dash I collided with a blue-clad figure and we both went sprawling in the snow.

"Now then, now then," came an aggrieved voice. "Where's the fire?"

"Sorry, constable," I gasped, recognising the majesty of the law. "I've just had a bit of a scare. I came along the short cut from Swains Lane."

The burly constable regarded me in silence for a moment.

"Short cut?" There was suspicion in his voice.

"Yes, by the brick cottage along the path which comes out by the gate a few yards back."

The policeman sniffed pointedly, obviously trying to assess how much I had to drink.

"Well, sir, it is Christmas Eve, I suppose," he smiled a little pointedly. "To be correct, it's Christmas Day now. Short cut, indeed! You watch out for trespass laws, sir. Merry Christmas!"

He turned and walked away, leaving me puzzled.

I shrugged, turned for home and was soon sliding between the sheets of my own bed feeling somewhat childish and foolish.

It was not until Boxing Day morning that I missed my silver Hunter pocket watch and decided to take a walk back to Swains Lane to pick it up. I smiled happily because it was an excellent excuse to see the girl, Mary, again and perhaps make a date with her. I walked with an eager stride up the lane and passed the entrance to the old cemetery. It was open that day. Usually it is shut except for certain days, like bank holidays, when it is open to the public or when volunteer workers from the Friends of Highgate Cemetery arrive to keep the old Gothic graveyard in good repair. I strode on, expecting any moment to come across the red brick cottage, but yard after yard of the high, grey boundary wall met my puzzled gaze. I walked all the way up to the village before retracing my steps to the entrance of the cemetery.

An elderly man stood by the gate selling literature to visitors. He saw me looking up and down with obvious perplexity.

"Can I help you, sir?" he called.

I felt foolish, yet the cottage was there. I knew it."

"Er, I... I was told there was a brick cottage standing somewhere near here. I was trying to find it."

"No," began the old man positively. "There's no brick..."

He caught himself and then stared at me with narrowed eyes.

"Who told you about a brick cottage?"

There was something in his voice which made me uneasy.

"Oh... er, a relative of mine."

The old man pursed his lips.

"Your relative has a long memory. There's been no brick cottage standing here for fifty years. Why, I can only just remember them pulling it down."

My jaw gaped.

The old man screwed up his eyes, delving the depths of his memory.

"As I recall, the cottage used to stand up the hill a little way, towards the top of the old cemetery. It belonged to an old lady. She used

to live there with her daughter. They were both murdered in 1927 or was it 1928? One of the gardeners from Waterlow Park had taken a fancy to the girl but she had rejected him. He went berserk and killed them both with a sickle. Then he hanged himself."

The old man scratched his head.

"That's right. There used to be a little pathway which ran behind the cottage. The man hanged himself from one of the oaks that used to stand there. No one wanted to buy the cottage afterwards, so it was pulled down and the area bought by the cemetery authorities."

He turned curious eyes on me.

"Strange your relative remembering the cottage. Didn't think anyone knew about it these days. I say, you don't look too well..."

Numb, yet drawn by some strange fascination, some force over which I had no control, I followed the other visitors as they trooped into the old cemetery. My footsteps were turned along the overgrown pathways to the spot where the old man had indicated that the cottage had once stood. I paused there a moment, mentally visualising where I had entered the front door, where the hearth had blazed so warmly a few nights ago. It must have been some hallucination, some strange dream. Yet, as I reluctantly turned to go, I heard the distant chimes of the hour.

There in the grass lay my silver Hunter pocket watch. I bent down to pick it up. As I did so I heard a soft rustling, a sighing sound and the girl's soft, melodious voice: "You will come back again, won't you?"

With a cry of terror, I turned and rushed from the cemetery.

Now it is Christmas Eve again. I can hear her soft, melodious voice calling me, echoing across the sea of time, imploring me. "You will come back, won't you? You will come back?" I know that this evening, this very evening, I will go. I will be unable to resist the uncanny, unnatural powers which are drawing me back to the lane.



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