

Outbreak of Heresy 88

June-into-July 2021

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NK: I'll probably include a CONTENTS list back page. In the end I couldn't manage a quick June issue before taking my (or rather our) slightly strange and Covid-precautioned break down in Lightest Cornwall (more on which in the lettercol). Thus you had to make do with the following, and so now reprinted, email:

"PIGS ON THE WING" (*Aquarius Football*) **Weeks 1 & 2** **(GM: Tony Ross)**

((**NK again:** The following results should be imagined in the time-honoured manner of radio (later TV), falling cadence for losing away team, rising and slightly surprised cadence for winning away team, even and fairly bright cadence where it's a draw. Extra bit of emphasis for four or more goals.))

(Week 1) League Division One...

Barrow Infirmities **four**, Newcastle Utd...one
Brentford **three**, Perfidious Albion...one
Burton Swifts **one**, Mankaster Ltd...nil
Pinewood Old Boys **three**, Ireteam of Overham **three**
Saffron Walden **three**, Hermits **three**
Shaddongate Utd **three**, Middle Piddling Rovers...one
Swaythlings Old Boys one, Nottingham Forest **THREE**
Wookey Wanderers **three**, New World Order...two.

(Week 2) League Division One...

Hermits one, Swaythlings Old Boys **THREE**
Ireteam of Overham **three**, Burton Swifts...two
Mankaster Ltd **one**, Barrow Infirmities **one**
Middle Piddling Rovers three, Pinewood Old Boys **FIVE**
Newcastle Utd **three**, Brentford **three**
New World Order **three**, Saffron Walden **three**
Nottingham Forest **five**, Shaddongate Utd...two
Perfidious Albion one, Wookey Wanderers **TWO**

((Full reports in Tony's *Royal Leamington Spa Gazette*. More "PotW" later as Wks 3/4 likely complete.))

Tony Ross: ...particularly like your cadence...

Andrew Fisher: *It was written Wookey Wanderers three, New World Order two, but in my mind I heard Woke Wanderers three, New World Order too. Great Global Reset, SCORE DRAW!*

Paul Regan: *I liked the fantasy football results. Reminds me of the old days when we actually had a "Division One" (and Divisions Two, Three, Four).*

NK: As you may have noted last issue, in particularly obstinate moments I still refer to the so-called Premier League as Division One (and thus the so-called Championship as Division Two, etc). I of course almost hail from a time when, for entirely sensible socio-economic reasons, we had a Division Three[South] and a Division Three[North], with local team Cov City FC mildly notorious for having played in both and indeed (by 1967-68) in every main English League division that had ever been (a record recently regained).

W Marcus Arnold: Dear Nick. Re your letter of the 18th March '21, your ref CV, it is with great regret that I must decline your kind offer of the loan of a 6ft shark pickled in formaldehyde as I find that my neighbours have not reached a suitable level of cultural appreciation. Yours sincerely, A. Philistine.

NK: Can't remember the context for this one but it seems an ideal way of getting on to the main part of the lettercol (though I shall continue to intersperse games throughout). Possibly it has something to do with Marcus' marvellous hand-crafted zine **Welcome** (circulation one, me, I really must reproduce more of it).

Marcus: After dropping off the "wild effusions" of **Welcome Mouse Mat**, I found on returning home that **Outbreak** had arrived. That's synchronicity, folks. Having exhausted my supra-liminal, out-of-bounds, beyond the pale (or is it pail?), self-satisfied obscure word play with much poor punning (I was brought up on **I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue**) on its never-ending pages ((it was indeed a circular, ho ho...)) – always time for one more motif – I shall endeavour heretoforth to avoid using eight syllables where two will do. And avoid convoluted over-bracketed gnomish multi-valent and pretentious sentence structure and whatever, i.e. wot I 'as just written.

NK: Wouldn't be the same, Marcus. And from a personal point of view I'm tickled pink (well, coruscating magenta shot through with green spots) that by comparison I come over as relatively plain-speaking.

Andrew Fisher: I was amused by Dane Maslen's incompatibility with the name of second-hand bookshops, if not the places themselves. Not sure why the need for a dash with the second-hand if you've glued together the books and the shops, but, well, okay. I was racking my mind for a literary instance of the phrase, to find comfort and reassurance in, and it came to me, albeit from 1969 and the excellent *The French Lieutenant's Woman* by John Fowles. For whom it had clearly caused paroxysms of verbal anxiety too, and who provides a marvellous solution to the conundrum, in one of his numerous authorial interjections on page 306 (1996 Vintage release):

"I was nosing recently round the best kind of secondhand bookseller's – a careless one."

...This is a peerless sentence. He uses the word 'round' in a manner that infuriates the pedants who insist on the insertion of a superfluous *a* in front of the word round and will sarcastically ask if it was not a square bookshop. And he puts the shop in the hands of its owner, who might often feel used, but would surely never be accused of being brand new. I was taught this novel for A Level English, and our tutor informed us he had once seen Fowles in a secondhand bookseller's (as I will from now always call it) and on realising he had been recognised, Fowles farted very loudly. They just don't make writers like that any more. And even though my email programme also wants a dash between second and hand, if secondhand is good enough for John Fowles, then it is good enough for me.

Marcus: Second hand bookshop is no less accurate a title than Antiquarian bookshop, many antiquarian books are not "antique" and most second hand books are multi-handed. Mr Dane sez second hand bookshops parses as a pre-owned bookshop, but parsing is for those who can't see what is plain before them, second hand bookshop conveys no ambiguity. Warwick still has one selling books that have more than one title of ownership post / a posteriori to their original merchandising to the general public.

NK: At this point in his letter Marcus weighed in on the usage of 'alternative' or 'alternate' history, claiming (I think) that the latter was fine *provided we insert a hyphen* – and that it was more unforgivable for me to have omitted such than it was to have committed a putative Americanism to paper *a la* ColinE's complaint. As I say, I think that's what he was claiming – there was, again ho ho, an alternative version of the argument, and then an alternative to the alternative, variously crossed out or overridden (if not overwritten) with the legends BORING, LET'S GO PARABLE and TOO LONG-WINDED. I tell you, Steve Howe would be turning in his sarcophagus here.

Colin Evans: Nick used the phrase 'On the gripping hand'. Is this a reference to the three armed Moties?

NK: Yep, though also a direct lift from the sequel to *Mote*, i.e. **The Moat Around Murcheson's Eye**, in which the protagonists (in government espionage mode) initially worry themselves paranoid about a Motie breakout when the phrase kept cropping up. So of use when there are three possibilities. More on this later.

Dave Berry: *So the 1st of May rolled around and I belatedly noticed that I hadn't sent you any comments on OoH86, but it was too late by then of course. As it happens, my suggestion for **The Narrow Way** would have been the landing site of Apollo 11 rather than Apollo 15. To be honest, I'd never heard of the Hadley Rille, so congratulations to Steve for guessing that.*

Steve Borndale: *Blimey, I won a game! After all these years too. Gotta thank the others (esp Dave) tho...*

NK: Besides “Narrow Way” you can also add the “Careful With That Axe Eugene” *Arkham Horror* to that list as well, you know, Steve. Cooperative or semi-cooperative games, y’see. Aggh, mentioned it! Onwards, quickly:

W Marcus Arnold: *QUICKSILVER Runs Like Hell at very low temps and temperatures. Hi Ho Silver! Nice try Mr Lone Ranger but it's supposed to cover the nose and mouth... now ZORRO gets it right but the Man in the Iron Mask is a bit too paranoid. ((And so:))*

“QUICKSILVER” (Just Who)

Turn 2

(GM: NickK)

Steve Borndale: *I suppose I'd better have a crack at the follow ups. For “Quicksilver” you’re suggesting a fictional character for each of us ((the six in NWay plus me)), but they’ve got to be guessable by anybody? Or at any rate any reader of OoH. The only way that could work is from what we’ve said in the lettercolumn? ((Absolutely, score one victory point)) SO, I suspect mine is from Dune ((and another vp)). If so, nominate Paul Muad'Dib himself!*

NK: Not quite, see John R’s entry below. And others have been thinking along the same lines...

W Marcus Arnold: *“Quicksilver”, as I know of no Mercurial characters off hand (I decided myth/legend except when rendered visioliterately to be excepted) (mm, I have already changed my mind on the last, Gods def not ‘fiction’), I shall adapt my analytical slow-but-sure methodology and go for a pseudo serendipity approach:*

Is yours Frodo? ((No)) Is mine Science Fictional? ((Yes, 1vp)) Is Karen’s Penny from Big Bang? ((No)) NB if yours weren’t a character I might have thought it a Silver Machine... ((nice reasoning))

Dave Berry: *For “Quicksilver”, one question that could be asked of each player is whether the fictional character is comedic? ((Arguably No, for all of the seven targets)) Or heroic? ((Arguably Yes, for all seven, score 1vp)) I guess we could keep going with this theme but I should ration the questions a bit!*

Karen Day [text1]: *Fictional characters then. Books/films/TV. That’s not a question yet. This is: from Books? (Mine in particular, then again all seven of them.) ((Yes and Yes, all. Another v.p.))*

Karen Day [text2]: *OK. Me, from Jonathan Strange. Colin (my Colin), Dune. Steve, got to be Dune too.*

NK: Yes, No, Yes. Another vp. And I’m afraid you’re now too late for Steve’s (as is he), because...

John Riches ((reasoning along his fellow-obsessive’s line)): *DUNE. A character who appears in more than one of the books? ((Indeed yes, 1 vp)). Even a LOT of the books? ((uh, yes...)) Is it Duncan?*

NK: Not much chance of evading you! **Duncan Idaho**, Yes (even if he was variously a gholia or cloned). Another 3 victory points and so the lead. Which John promptly increased by guessing that ‘my’ character was from *The Lord of the Rings* (I wouldn’t be so cruel as to choose one from Stanislaw Lem’s works).

Scores on the doors: JohnR 5, Karen 3, SteveB 2, Marcus 2, DaveB 1, everyone else inc both Colins 0. Remaining targets are ‘tailored’ around Karen, Marcus, DaveB, ColinD, ColinE, me.

Paul Regan: *I’ll leave the fictional characters for the moment... ((...but see over...))*

Dave Berry: *For “Run Like Hell”, we have little to go on apart from the title, so I’ll start by asking, does the answer involve people running from some sort of monster: such as a dinosaur, demon, or predatory alien? ((No, but score 1vp anyway for eliminating this line of enquiry.))*

W Marcus Arnold: *“Run Like Hell”. The answer, as would be obvious to all who know it, must be such that it allows the possibility of an incident occurring that would relate to Running Like Hell.*

NK: Yes, 1vp: we wouldn’t describe the Who/What/Where/When/Why episode itself as Running Like Hell.

Marcus: *...Back to deductive/analytical methodology. On the basis of assumed probability that the answer could be fictional (50/50 level) and ruling out possible Depends, i.e non-actual but “historical” events and fiction based on fact, my first question is: Will Mr Kinzett on principle NOT use the Depends answer as a means of obfuscation?*

NK: I really will not. I’m tolerably sure I didn’t in “Narrow Way”, in fact my sole use of it led Karen to an all-important narrowing of the field.

Marcus: *Thou canst not lie so I assume the answer is Yes, with that possibility put behind I ask: Is the Answer in the realm of fiction?*

NK: No. And, as you suggested, it was a 50/50 chance. So, like Dave, score another vp for eliminating this line of enquiry.

Paul Regan: *...but the Who/What/Where/When/Why game has got me thinking. Each element must be relevant to the Answer, yes? ((Yes)) Meaning that we could narrow down the Answer through any of them. ((Yes)) So, was the answer pre-21st Century?*

NK: Yes: score 3 vp altogether Not that pre-21stC (Common Era) narrows it down much, but it’s certainly the most promising element to tackle.

Scores on the doors: PaulRg 3, Marcus 2, DaveB 1, everyone else 0.

The Kinzett Shameless Pink Floyd Reminiscence Files (18): RUN LIKE HELL. One of (for me) only two engaging tracks (there are a couple more I find fairly tolerable) on the whole extravaganza that is *The Wall* (1979) – Floyd, typically, waiting until well into the Punk era before getting their dubious double album out of their system (their peers had either done it much earlier or not at all*). And even “Run”, tripping guitar and insistent bass notwithstanding, is a bit pedestrian in its studio incarnation – live takes tend to be better, especially post-Waters (featuring Guy Pratt etc). Which in turn may raise in many minds an inference that I consider *The Wall* marks the end of ‘classic’ Floyd. You’d be right to so infer.

[* NB anyone who thinks that *Ummagumma* would in my mind qualify as a dubious double album has not been following the gist of these Shameless Reminiscences...]

Dave Berry: *On a related note ((to “Narrow Way”, Dark Side of the Moon etc)) , have you listened to the BCC podcast “13 minutes to the Moon”? It’s really good. It is based around the radio communications during the 13 minutes of Apollo 11’s final descent and landing, with interviews with several of the people involved and explanations of the background, both technical and social. // The second series tells the story of Apollo 13 in some detail. This has a similar format, of interviews and background explanation. It’s an astonishing story – both how the accident happened and how the team managed to get the crew back to Earth.*

NK: Will have to look these up (if that’s not a confusion of senses), thanks Dave.

Dave B continues: *Speaking of near-earth spacecraft, I have read that “Gravity” is often the one Sci-fi film that people in the space industry really don't like, because it's about our actual technology and gets the orbital mechanics very wrong. Not that the mistakes stopped me from enjoying it, but it isn't science.*

NK: Somewhere in his recent email ColinD reckoned Karen had slightly misquoted him – he'd actually remarked that *Gravity's* science might have appeared okay but (in search of dramatic effect) got muddled, e.g approach of other satellite. More on SF&F films later, sticking with games-related SF&F:

Dave: *Moving slightly further afield, I've played Terraforming Mars a few times and I'm gradually losing interest in it. I like the theme – given our previous conversation, I'm sure this is no surprise! But I think the game lacks interaction between the players. Each player draws their own cards and builds their own game engine. There are a few cards that let you pinch a few resources from other players, but these are few and far between. The map introduces some competition with four or five players, but with two or three players there seems to be plenty of space. Perhaps a game that is ripe for some heretical treatment? I could see a variant where players compete for cards to buy, and perhaps more points on the temperature / oxygen tracks that have addition effects, so that timing of these bonuses is important more often.*

NK: My chief idea for “Grantchester Meadows” was to introduce a non-player participant along the lines of the Outie in *Stroll Through the Galaxy*. This would in fact be the ‘Red Mars’ faction *a la* KSR, whose efforts would countervail those of the terraforming players, but at the same time have to be consistent with their own continued viability. (They too being of Terrestrial descent...)

W Marcus Arnold: *Postman Pat, Postman Pat, how I hated to see him get away with so many serious disciplinary actions...*

NK: I hardly dare ask.

Marcus: *Gift: HALMA. This is your field (or close), not mine(field). A game of strategy, sort of Draughts/Go/Othello school. It has gathered dust at the bottom of a draw for probably the 20+ years I have lived here. Today for the first time I opened the box, it had been taped up, I must have acquired it in a charity shop and it looks like it has never been used. It is only of 1972 vintage and SHOULD BE PLAYED. I transmit it to you to use or transfer to the Games Community or gather more dust as seen fit... ((see on!)). I did not realise I had this when, in a previous OoH, I asked if any one knew what Halma was and got no response. Have an unsupported idea in the back of my head that it (or a form of it) was popular in Victorian times and mentioned in literature. Possibly it was “culturally appropriated”, even renamed, by Victorians?*

NK: By coincidence or maybe auto-suggestion here, I've got Hawkwind's *Yule Ritual* on the deck as I type this up and have just reached its manic rendition of “Flying Doctor” where the backing vocalists are chanting “JUMP” at the end of every Ron Tree line... the name *HALMA*, as it happens, is derived from the Greek for *jump*. Which is basically what the two/four players can do with their pawns as they (diagonally) try to manoeuvre them into the opposite corner or camp. I understand it was actually invented by an American (George Howard Monks) in the later 19th Century, albeit part-derived from an earlier English game (*Hoppity*), so Marcus' Victorian impression wasn't entirely misplaced and it evidently caught on quickly, even widely given later diversity of references in SF&F or related literary fiction (E.Nesbit through Mervyn Peake and Joan Lindsay to Douglas Adams himself).

Complexity level given modern Games Hobby standards probably 2/5, the two components representing complexity of rules / actually manipulating those rules meaningfully, where Dip is maybe 4/6, Chess 5/8 and something like *Campaign For North Africa* 9/4. (Note that *Snakes & Ladders*, the other pastime mentioned in Lindsay's *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, is a non-game because there are no decisions to make, so 0/0...) // Another part of this coincidence is that years upon years ago I regretted misplacing the family copy of *Halma*. Its 16 x 16 squared board with marked-off corner areas would have been ideal for the (relatively) simple tactical level battlefield I wanted for my putative and much-heresized version of a more strategic level boardgame. (Or, rather, what should have been a more strategic level game, SPI's *Sorcerer*, originally a 7/2 kinda design.) So now, if I finally get to retire... (and thus many thanks to Marcus for the donation).

still NK: Now, did I just mention Mr Adams?

Marcus: *Dear Mr Fisher, the thing is, the Radio Series of HHGG is the Only Real One, all the rest are interpretations. Bram Stoker's Dracula is the only Real Dracula. CS Lewis' Aslan is the real Aslan. Format matters. Audio books can add to the written form, but... When HHGG was converted from BBC radio play format to written format ((and even, I would argue, to TV format)) it was diminished. E.g the book version could not use the BBC Radiophonic Workshop, an integral part of the radio serial. And the radio series was episodic with cliffhangers, its seriality did not transfer to the book version. Imagine it was made up as it went along, almost as Dickens' serials.*

NK: Afraid I have to agree with Marcus completely, Andrew! And...

Colin Day: *I imagine Andrew's father must have been a Radio 4 buff, but you don't need to be an Oxbridge type for that – my folks weren't, me neither obviously. It was my Mum (an avid listener bless her) who alerted me to HHGG, first academic year you and I were at the Poly. Did I then alert you to it?*

NK: You may have been part responsible but my memory is more of Frank Burrow (active in the non-Poly Cov groups, Steve may remember him better), an older gamer who was no more an Oxbridge type than thee or me, who kindly got me 'caught up' (he'd cassette-taped the episodes) after I'd missed the first two.

Colin D: *But then I can't really buy Andrew's Oxbridge-humour-for-other-people theory that much anyway. Monty Python was even earlier; our schoolkid days, I remember going to school on the bus and overhearing two obviously working class blokes chortling about the previous night's episode – over which I myself had creased up. Though this time my Mum was less impressed, but my Dad found it funny too, particularly the animations: Terry Gilliam was and is a genius. And Gilliam's not Oxbridge either!*

NK: The rest were, though, albeit not from especially privileged backgrounds. Here I do kind of get where Andrew's coming from, folk only a few years younger than us got brought up on a slightly-different-again vein of of subversive humour and find a lot of Python dodgy if not completely unfunny. (Even to me they did drive a number of their sketches into the ground.) Additional to that, Andrew was thinking of the Pythons themselves as possibly-engaging – but more often not-so-engaging – individuals:

Andrew Fisher: *I'd almost grant you Terry Gilliam, but I'm not having Michael Palin. Two reasons: he bought one and then several terraced houses in a row with the intention of knocking them all together and was ((allegedly)) most annoyed when he couldn't pressurise the one owner left who didn't want to sell... ((think he was successful with the rest though it's still a dubious practice in our home-strapped era)). And he was really unfair to his interpreter when he went to North Korea. That could have had serious repercussions for her and showed such poor empathy, an impatient narcissism that I fear is his leading characteristic. And don't get me started on David Attenborough.*

NK: Here I had a sudden bizarre vision of Dear Old David in a guest spot on Monty Python (which would have been very ironic given his initial reaction to them back in his days as BBC2 manager). Point taken, I'd never claim these people were saints or role-models, though I think Palin (and Attenborough for that matter) must be credited for highlighting genuine HomSap problems and abuses in the World At Large. Or just for educating people about the World (if not Universe) At Large, this notwithstanding their own individual tics or prejudices which you just have to take into account (Brian Cox is a fair latter-day example). My own interest in Palin is that out of all the Pythons he was and remains the one genuinely talented actor, with a gen for roles ranging from outright buffoon to deadly serious.

And Gilliam of course, as methinks you were about to grant me, is likewise a director of genuine talent, indeed genius as Col puts it. Must do a retrospective of his many SF&F (but mainly F) movies some time. Of which the hilarious *Monty Python & The Holy Grail* (co-directed with Terry Jones) was merely the start, we have *Jabberwocky* (starring Palin), *Time Bandits* (Palin in cameo), *Brazil* naturally (Palin in a really sinister role), *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*, *The Fisher King*, *12 Monkeys*, *The Brothers Grimm*, *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus* and *The Zero Theorem*, amongst others. (Yet to see *Don Quixote*.)

Andrew again: *I'm really pleased you'd call *Threads et al* science fiction. The Western theme (and I always associate the Stetson hat with Texas anyway myself – about as far from the West as you can be in the States) mixed with sci-fi pushed me down yet another OoH film wormhole as I felt a sudden urge to watch *Westworld* (1973), a film I haven't seen for decades. It was far better than I remembered – lots of small little details left to the viewer to work out, a knowing self-parody throughout, and a paunchy fifty-three year old Yul Brynner as an indomitable robot gunslinger and absolutely irresistible. I would call that an American John Wyndham kind of stuff and very enjoyable.*

NK: Concur absolutely, now I think about it – another one for the list.

Andrew continues: *The next recommended film was *Soylent Green*, a film I'd heard of (also 1973) but never seen and so watched. I regretted it for at least forty minutes – a miserable vision of New York in 2022 and a sub Raymond Chandler plot of gumshoe-like police solving a murder. But by the end, with Edward G Robinson (who had been in all the thirties gangster films) on a hippie wish-fulfilment trip with Beethoven's 6th symphony was so delicate, so almost *Wild Strawberries* with Victor Sjöström relaxing in bed at last, it was very moving.*

*So enjoyable, and so relaxed by it I was, that I saw that there was a sequel to *Westworld* from 1976 called *Futureworld* and though knowing that it would be awful couldn't stop myself watching. Well. It was really awful. I felt... soiled... after watching it. But it was much more *Soylent Green* than *Westworld*, which I now saw was just a haunted house horror film. *Futureworld* was Raymond Chandler crossed with some screwball comedy about a plucky female reporter of dog shows finding a hard news story at the Heart of Government, or at least Governance. But awful and twisted around into Peter Fonda instead. With Gwyneth Paltrow's MUM! The awful memory of Roger Corman. All of these things roasted on a barbecue of cheap plots and desperate notions and Yul Brynner appearing again but in a DREAM SEQUENCE in an erotic fashion (this was the Gwyneth Paltrow's Mum bit). I had to get it out of my system, I had to go and lie down in a darkened room. It was more sci-fi than *Westworld*, but so much worse.*

*Surely there was somewhere I could go, to flush Peter Fonda out of my mind? And there was. 1979 – three years later. Sci-fi - check (sort of). Raymond Chandler and government or governance corruption - check. A Fonda, but an infinitely superior one to Peter - check. Plucky female reporter who no longer wants to do dog shows - check. Jack Lemmon in a serious role but also in an old brown BMW in a car chase - tarnation yes, CHECK! It was *The China Syndrome* and it saved me. Now, would you call that science fiction? ((Hm, marginally)) It led me, finally, to its probable source, *Network* (1976), surely the least science fiction film ever but also the most totally prescient.*

NK: But as sociological comment, also arguably marginal science fiction? *Soylent Green*, meanwhile, was rather loosely based on the overpopulation novel *Make Room! Make Room!* by Harry Harrison in one his more serious roles, notable for defying the types of ending then conventional to written (let alone filmic) SF.

Dave Berry: *In a recent-ish OoH, someone, possibly you, mentioned that *A Fall Of Moondust* would make a good film. I don't have a view on that as such, because it's a very long time since I read the book; I'm more interested in the idea that this would now be an alternate history because we know more about the moon's surface. It wouldn't be in the same style of alternate history as Harry Turtledove, of course, but it did remind me of another alternate history of the space race – *Voyage*, by Stephen Baxter. Baxter's alternate timeline starts with the supposition that JFK survived the assassination attempt in 1963, which gives him a position of influence to declare a mission to Mars following the *Apollo 11* landing. The book tells the story of the preparation for this mission, told in flashback from the mission itself.*

*The BBC did a radio adaption of the book in 1999, which Alex Z recommended to me, and I did enjoy it. It may be of interest to other OoH readers. It may even make a good film! // I guess that if a studio ever did make a film of *A Fall Of Moondust*, they'd change the setting to another solar system in the future. But would that work with the corresponding advance tech level?*

NK: Probably not if we're looking for plausibility. But then how many SF movies seriously sought that?

Marcus: *Science Fiction Films.* To me a modern classic is the anime film GHOST IN THE SHELL, there are not many SF films I would evangelise but this is one. I have evangelised it by supplying you with a copy. To me the combination of Japanese morality tale, loyalty to the group and clan warfare gives it a distinct Japanese Noir style. Its combination of “Real Politic”, inter-departmental rivalry and commercial corruption is reminiscent of The Ipcress File. Almost it asks do cyborgs dream of being human, it is a whydunnit howdunnit with just enough shoot'em down game type play to keep the real plot going. I find I want to watch it again and get more out of it from knowing how it shapes out. You can judge for yourself. The sound track is also Dam good and helps maintain the paradoxical sense of the familiar weirdness found in dreams.

NK: New to me and, having now watched it through, I can fully endorse Marcus' every word. This is one that not only explains why many folk will watch certain films (or, indeed, read certain books) over and over despite knowing the outcome, but justifies it. Such films/books seem to hint, against all common sense, that things might somehow turn out *differently* the nth time around. Cf later comment on those that fail at this.

Marcus: *While I'm on Soundtracks, think on these very different Western Genre Classics:* The Big Country, The Magnificent Seven, High Noon and The Good, The Bad and the Ugly. Part and parcel of them all is the musical soundtrack that sticks in the memory and merges with the visuals. ((TGTB&TU especially.)) Shostakovitch, Vaughan Williams and other respectable almost contemporary “Classical” composers were not ashamed to score films... // Barring 2001 itself, I find it hard to think of Science Fiction/Fantasy films which upon hearing one mentally images the film. (OK, Star Wars but that was an annoying advertising jingle.) I challenge you to remember let alone hum anything from LOTR.

NK: Challenge accepted, because in that particular case the soundtrack has become a genuine suite in its own right. And there are at least two movements from the first film alone that stick in my head (the opening theme which is then varied throughout and the magnificent Dwarvish chant when the Fellowship reach the main under-city of Moria). Indeed, to my mind the only problem with the *Rings* soundtrack is that there was and is a little too much of it – a number of scenes could have done with an orchestral reticence broken only by the desperate sounds of the characters' progress. (Compare again 2001.) // Many of my other fave SF&F movies also have defining soundtrack/sound FX moments. The tinkling bells in *Solaris* as the protagonist gropes towards some understanding of what's going on, the abrupt drama of the *Brazil* fantasy sequences, *Watchmen's* chilling Philip Glass accompaniment to the Martian backdrop when Dr Manhattan exiles himself there, the uneasy build-up and terrifying climax as Rutger Hauer's simulant confronts his maker in *BladeRunner* (inexplicably omitted from every CD version of the soundtrack so far as I'm aware).

All that said, I'd absolutely agree that the Westerns you cite (and, again, *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* in particular) have the edge. I'd add *Once Upon a Time in the West* (natch), *For a Few Dollars More* (though not *A Fistful of...*) and *Hang 'Em High*. Amongst non-Westerns, *The Godfather* (particularly the first movie but there are some very effective bits in *II*, e.g when Michael's enforcer is stalking Hyman Roth), Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia* (evoking the desert etc) and, of course, *The Great Escape* (merely whistling its theme conveys volumes, cf my favourite *Red Dwarf* episode). Perhaps also, now we're mentioning music..?

Colin Evans: *Thank you Marcus for the synopsis of the original 'Day the Earth Stood Still'. It does sound a lot better than the remake and not really the same story.*

Andrew Fisher: *Klaatu were one of (many?some?two?) groups assumed to be pseudonymous Beatles concoctions, I suppose mainly through the Goodnight Vienna cover connection. One wonders if rumours of such associations were manufactured or at least amplified by the people concerned... // My favourite was The Moles, a short-lived group who produced one single in early 1968 on Parlophone (the Beatles' record label at that point). We Are The Moles (parts one and two) is a low key classic and surely a contender for your mythical ((apocryphal, surely?)) progrock singles top six thousand. Part One is a doomy little number with distorted vocals and a stab at musique concrete (well, they found a crowd sound special effect to play on it anyway). Part Two is my favourite, a waltzy acoustic guitar and mellotron number with the single line “We are the Moles” repeated until it fades to somebody manically clapping and shouting for more.*

Andrew continues: *It wasn't the Beatles, it was actually Simon Dupree and the Big Sound, who had a small hit with Kites (one to bracket with Dandelion Seeds by July and Aeroplane by Jethro Toe as they were incorrectly spelled on their first single) and eventually became Gentle Giant in the seventies. As 117 magazine (a specialist of this sort of nonsense) said: "Simon Dupree - who didn't exist - created a psychedelic group - which also didn't exist: but then what does?" They just don't do stuff like this any more.*

NK: Yes, both Marcus and Kev Moore had reminded me of Simon Dupree (and thus Gentle Giant, see some earlier *OoH*). I keep seeing snippets like this, bits of half-forgotten Music history, in *Prog* magazine, which thus reminds me of how much I'd more or less completely forgotten, or which had completely passed me (even me) by. But getting back to the theme:

Marcus: *I suspect that anyone not raised on Black and White Television cannot fully appreciate any films, SF or otherwise, that were not filmed in colour. Similarly, I know that I do not appreciate "Silent Classics" as audiences contemporary with them did. ((Point.)) I have watched (and own on DVD) The Hunchback of Notre Dame and The Sheik – and cannot escape from watching them as period pieces. I expect more than they can give me while knowing that what they gave to their original audiences (just think sexy Valentino) is denied me...*

NK: Here Marcus checked himself on suspicion of getting a tad OTT, if not round the (U)bend...

Colin E: *SPACE: The Final Toilet (aka Captain's Log) ((...)). Concerning toilets, kitchens etc in Star Trek etc: We may find this interesting occasionally but it would be tedious to include in every episode, similar to my previous comments on translating. I don't think a TV series which explores these aspects would be sufficiently interesting to the general public which wants drama.*

NK: It's absolutely impossible for me to tell how tongue-in-cheek Colin is being here.

Colin pursues the theme: *I don't think we need to worry about sewage being dumped into interstellar space. Where do you think the food replicator gets its raw material from? Plus, the chances of hitting human (or alien) sewage in space is tiny. Space is big. No, I mean BIG! NO, BIGGER than that. NO, EVEN BIGGER! ...*

...Perhaps this is where the material for panspermia comes from. Are we descended from alien poo?

NK: In the Hoyle/Wickramasinghe scheme and in essence (though with no intent or carelessness involved), Yes, for all 'present' life throughout the Galaxy (if not Universe). Where there are significant and evolving gravity wells combined with sufficient time, the BIGness of space would itself be no barrier. Incidentally, there's a Stanislaw Lem tale, the Eighth fit of *The Star Diaries*, in which it humorously transpires that in the case of the Earth there was intent/carelessness, if not outright criminality (on the part of Lod and Gord). // Still on SF takes on human development:

Steve Jones: *On the continued subject of science fiction / fantasy, consider Cordwainer Smith. I have been re-reading his entire canon; have finished "The Best of Cordwainer Smith" and "The Instrumentality of Mankind", and have nearly finished "Norstrilia". ((Quest of The Three Worlds next?)) I have much pondered the timeline of The Instrumentality of Mankind compiled by J. J. Pierce (similar to the timeline compiled by fandom for Heinlein's Future History) and have discovered a few inconsistencies. According to the time line, "Mark Elf" is set in 4000AD, 2000 years after the present; however, in this story, it states that Carlotta vom Acht returned from orbit after sixteen thousand years! Then, in "The Queen of the Afternoon", the time line has it set in 5000AD, after another 1000 years. When Juli vom Acht comes down from orbit, Carlotta tells her that it is 200 years after her own return. And yet, in **Norstrilia**, it is clear that it is set correctly in the time line at 16000AD. How did Mr Pierce make these clear errors about the return of the vom Acht sisters? It makes one wonder how many other errors are in this time line.*

NK: Didn't take the putative dates seriously myself, the timeline was useful mainly for shuffling Smith's tales into approx order. Smith himself evidently didn't worry about exactitude – merely dropping references to previous tales was enough to lodge the idea that here was a continuity (even consistency) of vision.

still NK: Which thought (continuity, consistency or just sheer breadth of vision) assures me that, despite last issue's momentary doubt, there is some 'classic' SF well worth the term and well worth the re-reading – Smith(C.) as above, Mark Geston, Lem as always, a surprising amount of Clarke and Ballard (short stories anyhow) or John Wyndham (novels) and more. Nevertheless:

W Marcus Arnold: *Along with Simon Langley-Evans and Dane, I find that much SF that I once enjoyed in my youth does not stimulate me into re-reading past a chapter or two – mainly out of sheer lack of Reward. When younger I was not as critical or demanding as I am now. Also I know how they end and lack the Shock and Awe and Wow factor when living in NOW...*

A lot of SF has dated, unlike the Fantasy side which at its best stands outside of Time (LOTR). Conversely I find some authors that I read through the "I really ought to" principle (Wells, Orwell, Huxley) contain so much more that I missed first time round. I venture to suggest that Science Fiction that is (intentionally or not) "Literature" stands the test of time and will put up a good fight in the battle to stay in publication. DUNE is a case in point, it is perhaps capital L Literature despite PEDANT NARROW-MINDED BIGOTS who would deny it. Why should not Dune or LOTR feature in Eng Lit GCSE ??

NK: Well it's been observed before that they are "rarely taught", though in part that's due to sheer length, *TLotR* in particular. Unlike say a Dickens classic like *David Copperfield*, which (long tale though it too is) readily yields its first section as an oven-ready course novella complete with denouement (*Boyhood of DC*). Might just get away with the first part of *Dune* in similar manner (up to **SPOILER ALERT** Paul & Jessica's escape into the deep desert), but you could never do that satisfactorily with *TLotR* notwithstanding its original division-of-convenience into three volumes. (Or even its six constituent 'books', each of which ends on a cliffhanger with the obvious exception of the last.)

Dave Berry: *On the topic of fiction, I haven't read many Booker prize winners, but I would recommend Hilary Mantel's "Wolf Hall" and "Bring Up The Bodies". I found them gripping, both in terms of story and character, and they gave a convincing picture of life in Tudor London. They do have literary elements, and they're quite long, but may be approachable if you like historical fiction in general. The BBC made a rather insipid dramatisation of Wolf Hall which was more like one of their Victorian costume dramas than the more visceral atmosphere of the novel.*

NK: There were some such bits in the TV drama (can't get much more visceral than being boiled to death).

Colin Evans: *Reading History. We need to be careful in reading historical documents, they do not always mean what they seem to. The Magna Carta includes the phrase 'free man' but this had a specific meaning at the time, it did not mean everybody. Freeman in medieval England were privileged men, it did not include the mass of people, the peasants, known as villeins. The Magna Carta did not, and was never intended to, include everyone.*

*Anyway King John repudiated Magna Carta almost before his seal had set (the equivalent of signing in those days, he never actually signed it). Thus Magna Carta was not considered so important in Medieval times. The later Provisions of Oxford in 1258 seem more significant. This made the barons a part of the government, effectively forming a permanent Parliament. // However it is the ideas and myths **now** held about Magna Carta which are important today not the actual words used.*

The American Declaration of Independence states that 'all Men are created equal' but 'Men' here in reality did not include American Indians, blacks or even women...

On seeing St Paul's Cathedral for the first time Charles II declared it to be 'awful'. So he didn't like it? No, 'awful' has changed its meaning since then, today we would probably say 'awe inspiring'.

NK: All of which is a preamble for Colin's main **What If** for this issue: other and gripping hand scenarios re World War Two, were the USA *less involved*. First, though, another games break (our other/gripping hand take on World War One)...

“ONE SLIP” (Still Less Intimate Diplomacy)

(GM: NickK)

Spring+Sum 1902

((The two-step deadline proved handy here: got Spr/Sum done & back, reprinted here, see Fall below.))

FRANCE (Tony Hedges) F(Bre)-ENC, A(Bel)sA(Par)-Bur, A(Par)-Bur, A(Mar)-Pie, F(Por)-Spa/sc, A(Spa)-Tun.

...Italy... F(WMS)cFreA(Spa)-Tun, A(Nap)-Rom.

...England... F(Lon)-NTH, F(Edi)-NWG, A(Lvp)-Cly.

GERMANY (Neil Carson) F(Swe)-Nwy, A(Kie)-Den, A(Hol)sA(Mun)-Ruh, A(Mun)-Ruh, A(Ber)-Mun, A(War)-Mos.

...Russia... F(Stp/sc)-Lvn, A(Mos)-Stp, A(Sev)-Arm [stood off by superior force].

AUSTRIA-H (Paul Regan) A(Ven)-Apu, A(Tri)-Ven, A(Vie)-Tyl, A(Bud)-Rum, F(Gre)-ION, A(Ank)sTurA(Syr)-Arm.

...Turkey... A(Syr)-Arm, F(BLA)sAusA(Bud)-Rum.

Summer: FRA & GER each grant 1cr to Turkey (3cr/6cr left); AUSTRIA-H 1cr to England (7cr left). [Merc credits then half, odd halves lost: remaining credits Eng 7, Rus 8, Tur 7, Ita 8]

“ONE SLIP” (Still Less Intimate Diplomacy)

(GM: NickK)

Fall 1902

FRANCE (Tony Hedges) A(Tun)holds, F(Spa/sc)-GOL, A(Pie)-Ven [stood off], A(Bur)-Mun [fails], F(ENC)-Lon, A(Bel)-Edi.

...Italy... F(WMS)-TYS [stood off], A(Rom)sFreA(Pie)-Ven [fails, dislodged*].

...England... F(NTH)cFreA(Bel)-Edi, F(NWG)cA(Cly)-Nwy, A(Cly)-Nwy.

GERMANY (Neil Carson) F(Nwy)-Stp/nc, A(Den)holds, A(Hol)-Bel, A(Ruh)sA(Mun), A(Mun)holds, A(Mos)sRusA(Sev).

...Russia... A(Stp)-Fin, F(Lvn)holds, A(Sev)holds [dislodged*].

AUSTRIA-H (Paul Regan) F(ION)-TYS [stood off], A(Apu)sA(Ven)-Rom, A(Ven)-Rom, A(Tyl)-Ven [stood off], A(Arm)-Smy, A(Rum)-Sev.

...Turkey... F(BLA)sAusA(Rum)-Sev, A(Arm)sAusA(Rum)-Sev.

***retreat phase:** Italian A(Rom) and Russian A(Sev) both disband, no retreats ordered!

Adjustments

FRANCE:	Bre Par Mar Por Spa	-Bel	+Tun,Lon,Edi	(8 but 6un) bd As(Par,Mar)
England:	Lvp	-Edi,Lon	+Nwy	(2 but 3un) disb F(NTH)
GERMANY:	Kie Mun Ber Hol Swe War		+Den,Mos,Stp,Bel	(10 but 6un) bd As(Kie,Ber)^
Russia:	...er...	-Stp,Mos,Sev		(0 out!) rem F(Lvn), A(Fin)
Turkey:	Con	-Smy		(1 but 2un) disb A(Arm)
AUSTRIA-H:	Tri Vie Bud Ven Gre Ank		+Smy,Sev,Rom	(9 but 6un) bd As(Tri,Vie,Bud)
Italy:	Nap	-Rom		(1 and 1un) no adjustments (3 still neutral: Ser,Rum,Bul!)

Cred: FRA 3+9=12; Eng 7+3=10; GER 6+11=17; Rus 8+1=9; Tur 7+2=9; AUS 7+10=17; Ita 8+2=10.
Russia in exile. ^^Germany two units short no further builds possible. **DEADLINE(s):** front & back.

American non-involvement in WWII (by Colin Evans) This was postulated in OOH86...

Where would the Iron Curtain have fallen? The English Channel? The Atlantic? An all-too-possible Alternative History. Churchill wooed Roosevelt and the US Congress and was able to persuade the US to fight with us in Europe and Africa instead of fighting only Japan. This has inspired me to write the following possible alternative histories:

The USA fights Japan but stays out of Europe and Africa.

There would have been no American invasion of Africa (1942) and no subsequent invasion of Sicily then Italy (in 1943) and France. At best we could have held onto Egypt, fighting would have continued in North Africa into 1944 at least.

Could Germany have defeated Russia? After the battle of Kursk in 1943 the Germans were grudgingly retreating from the Russian juggernaut. Without Allied invasions of Sicily, Italy and France more troops would have been available to fight the Russians. However would this have been enough to turn the tide, particularly considering Hitler's ludicrous no-retreat orders? Even the Soviet Union was running out of resources by 1945. The defeat of Germany would have meant the Russians overrunning Europe, stopping only at the Mediterranean and the English Channel.

With more resources in the Pacific the US would have been at Japan's doorstep by 1944 but with no atom bomb until 1945 would have been faced with a stark choice: Invasion or starvation. Either would have caused far more Japanese deaths (millions) than the two atom bombs (about 250,000 including from the after effects). Invasion would also have involved huge American casualties over the only possible invasion routes against fanatical military and civilian resistance.

There would be no assistance to Britain in Africa or Europe until at least 1945, if ever.

Could there have been a negotiated peace with Japan? The Tehran conference (1943) between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin would never have taken place. Would Roosevelt have still uttered his ludicrous 'unconditional surrender' demand, which probably prolonged the war?

The USA stays out of the war entirely.

If the USA was more (truly) isolationist there may have been no economic blockade against Japan, the main motive for attacking the USA. Japan is allowed free rein in the Far East. The possible targets could have included Australia, India and the Soviet Union.

If the USA was isolationist why did it interfere with Japanese trade? It seems the isolationists were happy to interfere in Asia but didn't want to interfere in Europe. This seems to be hypocrisy.

If Britain had to devote more resources in the west there would have been no rush for Japan to conquer Britain's land in the east though a southern thrust would have been more profitable than an attack to the north. However attacking the Soviet Union while it was still reeling from the German invasion would have been tempting. In reality the Soviet Union was able to strip its far east of troops because spies had assured Stalin that Japan did not plan to attack the Soviet Union.

Assuming the Japanese kept to their (more lucrative) southern strategy, the entire Japanese navy would have overwhelmed British resistance in the Indian Ocean. Australia would have been practically cut off and then easily conquered, also denying Britain's armies in the west of valuable Australian troops.

In reality we barely halted the Japanese invasion of India. With greater resources, and the ability to land troops behind the main lines (in 1943?), Japan would have conquered much, and possibly all, of India too (by 1944?). Resistance probably continuing in the western provinces with native Indians realising that Japanese occupation would be worse than British rule.

With the demoralising loss of most, if not all of, the 'jewel in the crown' even Churchill may have sought terms. We could possibly hold onto Egypt at least until 1944 while Germany was probably struggling against the Soviet Union by then so Hitler would have been inclined to offer acceptable peace terms. Japan may also have been amenable to a cease-fire faced with a huge restless population in occupied India and stiffening resistance in the remaining western provinces (what is now Pakistan etc) still held by the British.

What if Germany then started to lose seriously against the Soviet juggernaut? Perhaps it would appeal to its ally Japan who could then invade the Soviet Union (in 1945?). Even the huge Soviet Union was running out of resources by 1945 so this would probably have been enough to turn the tide.

The war could have ground to a grudging and uneasy end with an exhausted Third Reich, an overextended Japanese empire and a greatly diminished Soviet Union and British Empire. The USA remaining in its splendid isolation.

NK: Thanks for that, Colin. As always, interesting and intriguing and perhaps arguable, but I'll leave others to do the arguing! Onto more history, or rather geographical history if not outright geography. (Always liked the T.Pratchett threat in *Guards! Guards!* "You're geography!", not as malapropic [?] as it may seem because it does suggest spreading one's opponent across the landscape.)

Colin Evans: *WALES... Has more castles per square mile than any other country in the world. Had the first suspension bridge in the world. Has four times as many sheep as people.*

Apparently there are only ('only?') just over half a million Welsh speakers in Wales (Richard Osman's House of Games 1 Apr 21). Out of a total population of just over 3.2 million. So for only one sixth of the population we English visitors (and most of the Welsh) have to suffer confusing signs and unintelligible tannoy messages. Both of these need to be understood quickly and accurately when travelling and decisions need to be made quickly. It takes much longer to be certain we understand signs and time is wasted waiting for an English version of tannoy messages. // ... No offence intended to the Welsh, note that my surname is Evans.

NK: Ah now Col, don't be a spoilsport. Welsh, bloody difficult language though it usually is (to anyone not born to it or anything similar), is sufficiently lyrical and lovely and robust (half a million speakers is more than merely significant y'know) to be well worth the effort, everyone else should just slow down, drink it in (which is often how we pick up languages anyway). I think the same about Cornish, a much more marginal tongue – but not the lost cause that (whisper it) Scottish Gaelic has become, largely because Scots proper is in effect an English dialect anyway. In fact in my usual burst of linguistic over-optimism (past inadvertent manglings include French, German, Dutch, Italian, Maltese and Icelandic in approximately that order of chronology and enthusiasm), while I was down there I picked up a couple of guides to Cornish. These to go with my Welsh ones for the purposes of my putative and intermittent fiction, and under the mistaken impression that it was a much simpler form of Olde Celtic (it isn't).

Karen Day: *How went the break? Get any rambling done? (Both kinds...)*

NK: To the first question, surprisingly well in spite of the (necessary) Covid precautions everywhere and anywhere. And despite the disaster of the first day: I left behind my utility bag containing shaver, toiletries, specs case, stationery, ongoing notebook (cf fiction above, also zine material), current reading and most vital of all *mobile charger* – it's astonishing how dependent even a semi-technophobe like me has become on the Smartassphone, I ran the wretched thing flat just checking the road conditions 70 miles into the journey (this before reaching for the utility bag and discovering it was not there). Happily we managed to purchase replacements or otherwise improvise, the latter thanks to big bro Steve who happened to be in the region. Didn't get any writing done though, I was lost without the drafts I'd already written.

As for the other type of rambling, sorry to disappoint you here Karen (looking forward as you were to our little forays) but when opportunity came neither Lorraine nor I were really up to it, and a mere half-mile of the Coast Path is our tale. This was mostly because all the other things (Eden Project, Lost Gardens, Lanhydrock, merely progressing through Polperro etc, all again as uni-directional and Covid-precautioned and generally distanced as could be contrived) themselves involved a LOT of (albeit fascinating) walking. Leaving us... knackered. It was meant to have been a much-needed relaxing break, and don't get me wrong it was – for the mind. And gratefully received, believe me, after all this time. I even managed to properly swim in the sea for the first time since the stroke, at a sparsely-populated beach called Polkerris. Using a clean microwavable lidded dish as an improvised specs case (see above), no one-use plastic if I can help it..

Speaking of which: one of the things I picked up at the Eden Project was a neat little volume by the founder of #2minutesolution Martin Dorey, entitled *No.More.Plastic.*, full of neat little practical hints on how we can cut down on or just DO something about our use (especially our one-use) of the sodding stuff. Now I was aware of quite a bit already but more advice always welcome in the fight against the Long Defeat. But it's sobering to note how some of that advice (the book being published in 2018) has now been countervailed or even completely stymied by the advent of Covid. Complete with such things as the ghastly self-assessment kits in their plastic billions (and in theory biologically hazardous even if negative).

Karen, resuming after that long interruption: Anyway we're back too. Sorry we missed the guessing game last time! Wouldn't have beaten Steve to it anyway, well I wouldn't, Colin might kick himself as he's an astro-buff. I like your replacement games, look out for a text or two. ((See earlier)) The first one is really another book game, I'm thinking, so we'll both have fun with that. The second, not necessarily so.

NK: I was almost tempted to sneak this last comment into the "Run Like Hell" game but in the end have left it as an ideal link (as Karen mentions books) back to the other Colin:

Colin Evans: Nick asked the meaning of 'Locations' in my list of books available. It is to inform me where I can find the books, the one book in 'Location 3' is in a different place to those in 'Location 2'. Sorry you can't copy across a normal Word table ((still unsure why this mucked up my layouts)). By all means inform other readers of my email address ((colin_evans25@hotmail.com)). You can have dibs on any of my books. BUT...

...*Manorcon Cancelled.* ☹ Alas, will we have to wait another year until we can exchange books? It's understandable that it had to be cancelled but it is still a disaster. (So many games, so few opportunities to play them).

NK: I got the confirmation just too late for my interim email, literally the morning I went away. But guessed it must come to that anyway – the organizers would have had a immense (and largely unrewarding) task even had many Covid restrictions been already lifted. And there is now much doubt about the wisdom of such lifting. Can't help but contrast the astringent precautions we took (or which were imposed upon us) with more recent caution-to-the-wind mass-events.

Colin E: 'Reverse shoplifting' would be an interesting way of getting rid of unwanted books (but in good condition). This could assist one's local book shop. But what would happen when the bar code of an old book is read? That could disconcert the shop assistant.

Colin Day: Yes me too, I look at all the books I've collected over the years (fiction, non-fic, technical) and wonder about a cull – and then can't bring myself to do it. Karen's the same, so between us we've quite a library. With all the other stuff we've collected in, err (quick calculation), thirty-six years of married life it's almost at the stage we were considering moving just to accommodate it all. Suppose when I get to 'proper' retirement, as opposed to the present half-on half-off existence, I might have some sustained time (and the right attitude, and I trust the stamina) for a 'proper' clear-out. Couple more years yet, Covid willing. Longer for Karen but she might take early ret anyway, won't you dear?

NK: Stamina you'll have no trouble with, He-Man. (Mind, I thought this of myself but the past few months of running my Dept virtually single-handed – Covid restrictions and all – has somewhat taken it out of me, happily I now have some help and very welcome he is too.) It's the mind-set that might be the real problem. A minor unlooked-for consequence of reviving *OoH* as a public zine is how much nostalgia we've all indulged in. Making it even harder to get rid of the things that give rise to that nostalgia!

Colin D: Hope you don't mind, but I don't quite feel up to a Game-End Statement for "Fearless" just yet. Still getting over the fact that I made it over the line before blowing it to Steve or Neil. Or that it's the first Dip or Dip-like game I've ever won outright (18+ centres).

NK: As opposed to all those short games where you topped the board ahead of me... But no trouble, Col. I need to remind myself how to put together a game-end table anyway. (Been years.)

Karen D: Also sorry we don't have any more on the **Jonathan Strange** game for the moment. It's fun though, and I'm really glad Colin decided to join in! The way we've approached it, as you've probably guessed, is as a mock-stiff rivalry which we'll almost certainly have to put aside in order to beat the Gentleman With the Thistledown Hair.

NK: Essentially the way I've redesigned it, yes: an outside chance of a solo win during the middle game but you're more likely to do so as a cooperative effort at the end. RIGHT, final game-report break:

((still in radio announcement mode))

(Week 3) League Division One...

Barrow Infirmities **four**, Ireteam of Overham...two
Brentford **three**, Mankcaster Ltd...one
Burton Swifts **four**, Middle Piddling Rovers...one
Newcastle Utd **two**, Perfidious Albion...one
Pinewood Old Boys two, Nottingham Forest **THREE**
Saffron Walden **three**, Wookey Wanderers...two
Shaddongate Utd **three**, Hermits...two
Swaythlings Old Boys two, New World Order **THREE**

(Week 4) League Division One...

Hermits one, Pinewood Old Boys **FOUR**
Ireteam of Overham **five**, Brentford...three
Mankcaster Ltd **four**, Newcastle Utd...one
Middle Piddling Rovers two, Barrow Infirmities **FOUR**
New World Order **seven**, Shaddongate Utd...two
Nottingham Forest **four**, Burton Swifts...one
Perfidious Albion **two**, Saffron Walden **two**
Wookey Wanderers two, Swaythlings Old Boys **THREE**

Table after four games:

		W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nottingham Forest	(Paul Ratcliff)	4	0	0	15	6	12
Barrow Infirmities	(Steve Titterrell)	3	1	0	13	6	10
New World Order	(Mike Parnaby)	2	1	1	15	10	7
Pinewood Old Boys	(Andy East)	2	1	1	14	10	7
Brentford	(Richard Breese)	2	1	1	12	10	7
Ireteam of Overham	(Nick Kinzett)	2	1	1	13	12	7
Saffron Walden	(Brian Henstock)	1	3	0	11	10	6
=Swaythlings OB	(Graham Staplehurst)	2	0	2	9	9	6
=Wookey Wandrs	(Andrew Harding)	2	0	2	9	9	6
Burton Swifts	(Simon Drew)	2	0	2	8	8	6
Shaddongate Utd	(Ian Wilson)	2	0	2	10	15	6
Mankcaster Ltd	(“Ginger Solcounty”)	1	1	2	6	6	4
Newcastle Utd	(“Ken Bruce”)	1	1	2	7	12	4
Perfidious Albion	(“Sam Rollderdyce”)	0	1	3	5	9	1
Hermits	(“N Peety”)	0	1	3	7	13	1
Middle Piddling Rvrs	(“Ecks the Unknown”)	0	0	4	7	16	0

NK: The current bottom five are Non-Player Teams, theoretically still up for grabs Tony? If any incentive the best of them, Mankcaster Limited (sic), face Ireteam twice in the next fortnight, once in the League and again in a cup competition, so if you want your chance of beating up the ed... tonyross746@btinternet.com

NK (again, heretical aside): Generally, the individual matches have been high scoring and entertaining! Were the league assessed on my notion of bonus match point for 3+ goals (regardless of result) but only two match points for a ‘bare’ win 1-0 (only had one of those so far) while scoreless games are treated as a joint defeat (haven’t had any so far), the table would then read:

NForest **16**, BarrowInf **13**, Brentford **11**, NWOrder **10/+5**, Pinewood **10/+4**, Ireteam **10/+1**, SWalden **9**, Swaythlings **8/0**, Shaddongate **8/-5**, WookeyW **7**, BurtonSw **6**, Mankcaster **5/0**, Newcastle **5/-5**, Hermits **2**, PerfidiousAlb **1/-4**, MPR **1/-9**. Just a thought...

FINAL PAGE: starting with CONTENTS now I know what they are, yes know I still don't have page no.s:

One: “**Pigs on the Wing**” wk1-2. Letters start into Two/Three where “**Quicksilver**” (all welcome) resides followed by Four and “**Run Like Hell**” (likewise all welcome) Lettercol (**games/FILMS/books/music**) then resumes through to Ten and so Eleven “**One Slip**” Still-Less-Intimate Dip, backed by Twelve with **Colin Evans** on **Alternative WWII**. Thirteen/Fourteen bit more lettercol featuring **break in Cornwall** and so the **virtues of Cornish/Welsh**. Fifteen sees “**Pigs on the Wing**” wk3-4 including **league table** while Sixteen is this...

NK: to finish, our customary dose of random comments from Marcus and ColinE and one or two others:

W Marcus Arnold: *Dickens works well as TV serials but then it was mostly written and published as serials in magazines.*

Colin Evans: *It's Like Watching Paint Dry. Just been watching a repeat of a QI episode which mentioned the most boring film ever made. It consists of 10 hours and 7 minutes of white paint drying on a brick wall, nothing else. The British Film Board has to watch all of every film in order to classify it and charges for that privilege. 'Drying Paint' was crowdfunded and is only the length it is because that was how much money was raised to pay the Film Board.*

...QI Again. Question: How many popes are there per square mile of the Vatican?

Answer: I think the answer is about 2. The Vatican is very small.

Andrew Fisher: *Two YouTube prog recommendations if you need cheering up for any reason – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VD_mytxCdeg and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVf7SGI-DGg>. The latter has Ric Parnell drumming, who would later have his brightest hour in the sun playing Rick Shrimpton, the drummer (at the time) of Spinal Tap in the 1982 film. This cannot happen anymore. You lament modern science fiction, and maybe it was ever thus, but I quote the top Amazon review of Westworld (1973) ((see Andrew's bit earlier)):*

'As firstly a fan of the new, 2016 to present day TV series of Westworld, I got into the fan theories of that show deeply, and a major recurring train of thought and inspiration on various group chats etc was echoing plot points from this original, 1973 Michael Crichton film and its sequel Futureworld. First of all, it's important to note this film isn't the same HBO Westworld on the TV – that no doubt many of the people suddenly interested in this film have been inspired to seek out. It has similarities and the same basic premise...but that's about it. Themes of what it means to be human, what is consciousness etc are merely hinted upon here, as opposed to delved deeply in detail as the Nolan and Joy version is/has.'

I really don't find myself chomping at the bit to look at the modern TV programme – I find the hinting to be more attractive than the deeply delved.

Colin E again: *Horror or Comedy? Like 'Theatre of Blood' I mentioned earlier, the Japanese film 'Tokyo Gore Police' I also found quite funny. In this case the copious amounts of spraying blood was so ridiculous I laughed. But was it intended to be frightening instead?*

Steve Jones: *I have just finished reading a very interesting book called "The Invention of Science" by David Wootton; I feel another review coming up, but I'll leave it until another time.*

NK: That'll hold us for now. MAIN DEADLINE, as front, 1st August. “**One Slip**” Wint03: 18th July.

Besides all in the games / lettercol **WE ALSO HEARD FROM:** Sandra/Andy, Janey Cage, Kath Collman, Mark Nelson, Bob Gingell, Tony Wardlow and NigelT, plus (via their zines) Alex Richardson, Alan Parr, Neil Duncan, John Marsden, Dane Maslen, Simon Langley-Evans and Paul Evans (who is back, most gamely, and we trust the chemotherapy goes well, Paul). One last word from...

W Marcus Arnold: *Apropositionalism of how green is my Black Country, this pic is the long disused Doultons Fireclay quarry right in the heart of Mordor between Stourbridge and Dudley ... cheers.*

((From which I gather Marcus has made it back to our now Covid-precautioned Central Library. Cheers))