

Hub

Issue 30
20th October 2007

Editors: Lee Harris, Alasdair Stuart and Trudi Topham.

Published by *The Right Hand*.

Sponsored by Orbit.

Issue 30 Contents

Fiction: *Chance of Rain* by Ken Goldman

Reviews: *Nemesis*, *Poltergeist 25th Anniversary Edition*, *Once Bitten Twice Shy*

Editorial: *The Banquo Effect* by Alasdair Stuart

Happy Half Birthday to Us!

It has now been six months since *Hub* became an online-only magazine, and much has happened in that time. When we moved away from the printed format we wondered how we would survive, and how many people would remain with us, coming along for a weekly ride of fiction.

I am absolutely thrilled to say that our readership has increased from a healthy sub-1,000 at the end of April to our current position of around 4,800. There are a number of factors that feed into this – firstly, we wouldn't have lasted six *weeks* without Orbit's kind patronage. Orbit pay us, so that we can pay our writers – and nearly 5,000 of you look forward to your weekly dose of genre fiction, reviews and features thanks to them! Also, we were pleased to accept an Arts Council award several months ago, which was given to us for one purpose only – to drive readership figures up. Through online and offline campaigns, this is well underway, as the figures above will testify (and the Arts Council grant lasts until next summer, so there's plenty of time to rocket those figures even further!).

One reason we mention these figures (in particular the fact that these figures are increasing dramatically) is because there has been a lot of debate in genre circles this week about the readership – and relevance – of short fiction magazines. Read Alasdair's take on this, later in this issue in *The Banquo Effect*. Al's editorial has been duplicated at our new editorial blog, which you can find over at hubmag.wordpress.com. Feel free to have your say.

About *Hub*

Every week we publish a piece of short fiction, along with at least one review and sometimes a feature or interview. We can afford to do this largely due to the generosity of our sponsors over at Orbit. If you like what you read here, please consider making a donation over at www.hubmag.co.uk. We pay our writers, and anything you donate helps us to continue to attract high quality fiction and non-fiction.



Supported by
The National Lottery[®]
through Arts Council England





Josephine felt certain her date was going to kiss her. A light drizzle thumped on the convertible's rag top, and "Little Darlin'" by The Diamonds had just come on the radio. The music sounded tinny from the speaker of Warren's new '57 Chevy, but accompanied by the rain drops it would do just fine for background.

Warren had that sheepish look a boy always gets in his eyes when he's about to do something both daring and foolish, as if he were preparing for a swan dive into waters of uncertain depth. Clearly he was weighing the consequences of the bold move required to press his lips to hers while trying to keep his Ricky Nelson aloofness intact. Josephine didn't know any guy who had been able to convincingly pull off that brand of cool detachment when it came time for 'the move'. She supposed such self-assured indifference was a province reserved for rock and roll singers, t.v. idols, and Elvis, who was, of course, in a class by himself.

*Hopefully Warren would not kill the moment by coming right out and asking if he might kiss her. That would mean she would have to play coy, then pull back as any decent girl who had agreed to park at the lake would do on a first date. But if he just reached for her and didn't hesitate long enough to give her time to think about it - or to **seem** to think about it - if he just lightly pulled her closer and made his move smoothly and cleanly, well then . . .*

*" . . . Well, my love-a
I was wrong-a
(LaLa LaLa
La Laaaa!)
To try to love two . . .
(A boop-a boop-a boop-a boop-a . . .)"*

"Josie . . ."

Warren spoke her name. The word was all she really required of him, all she needed to hear. Josephine closed her eyes and tilted her head towards her date. She knew the steady beat of the falling rain would take care of the rest, and with any luck Johnny Mathis might croon "Chances Are" from the Chevy's speakers during the next few minutes to capture this moment and hold it forever.

Kiss me, Warren . . . oh, please, kiss me, kiss me, kissmekissme . . .

"Gran'ma? Gran'ma, you all right?"

The old woman stood alone looking out the window smiling at the downpour. She did not turn toward Jeffrey when he spoke. Having gone into one of her funks again she disappeared to some other place deep inside her head, and whenever she did that her eyes rolled back like a corpse's. Jeffrey's mother had quit trying to bring her out when she got that way, allowing the old woman

to remain in the distant place she enjoyed so much to visit. His grandmother scared Jeffrey when she got like that. Lately it seemed she got like that more than ever.

“Grandmom’s all right, Jeffrey,” his mother reassured him. “She’s just watching the rain like she does. She’ll come back to us when she’s ready.” Walking over to the old woman by the window sill, she placed her hand on her shoulder, and bent to lightly kiss her forehead. The woman seemed unaware of any of this.

Jeffrey came to his mother’s side. He stood there for a moment before he spoke. The rain showed no sign of letting up.

“Gran’ma doesn’t want to come back, does she?”

His mother said nothing, just shook her head as if she too had gone to some other place, her own place.

For more than an hour Newtown's curio shops held most of Gil's attention, and when he reached for Susan's hand it came as a surprise. Despite their recent engagement it was against Gil's nature to display his affections so openly in public. A June evening's cool breeze along the Newtown promenade had a way of making the passers-by disappear when twilight yielded to night, although thunder grumbles from the east threatened to bogus the mood. But the important thing was, if the man felt a sudden burst of romance after a three year courtship, this was good.

Susan felt encouraged enough to venture squeezing Gil's hand right back. He smiled one of his tentative half-smiles. A brief moment that bordered on magic passed between them.

"To what do I owe this sudden burst of affection? My God, here you are practically pawing me in public. If you only knew how long I've dreamed of you fondling me in front of an audience."

Gil stopped walking so abruptly that for a moment Susan was yanked back. "Let's just say that on a night like this I realize what a lucky guy I am, okay? And please wipe that shit-eating grin off your face. You know I don't do 'vulnerable' very well."

Susan yanked Gil's arm. "Oh, I don't know about that. You're talking to someone who's seen you naked. Can't get much more vulnerable than that."

Gil's arm slid around Susan's waist. "You want to place your bet on that? Watch me. I'm going to kiss you long and hard right here, right now, in front of all these people and God."

A light drizzle started. People darted past to seek shelter beneath the storefronts' awnings. Susan feigned a broad snarl, and the expression caught briefly in a flicker of lightning. Low rumbles of thunder followed.

"Damn. I knew something would spoil the moment."

The whole world strobed and the downpour came, but the couple made no attempt to get out of it. Instead the two stood on the promenade smiling at each other like a pair of idiots.

"The moment isn't spoiled. In fact, I couldn't ask for a better one." Susan could not help smiling at the man's uncharacteristic transformation.

"All right. Who are you and what have you done with my fiancé?"

He pulled her close and kissed her. He kept right on kissing her as thick dollops of rain pummeled their faces. Gil had been correct. Susan could not have asked for a better moment.

The old woman was softly humming a tune, smiling as she hummed.

“You remember that one, Susie?”

The question came so suddenly that Susan flinched. The other woman continued humming a few bars as if she assumed the daughter had been privy to her thoughts. Susan fast-forwarded to the present.

“Mom, I don’t know what you’re—”

The elder suddenly burst into song with a voice remarkably clear if not entirely melodic.

*“... Chances are ‘cause I wear a silly grin
the moment you come into view...’”*

Throughout this exchange the daughter watched the rain, hypnotized by its power to conjure stolen kisses along cobblestoned promenades on summer evenings.

Susan’s spell broke first. She turned to her son to see if her mother’s erratic behavior had distracted Jeffrey from his Dark Knight comic book. It hadn’t. Or maybe Jeffrey was pretending it hadn’t.

“That song’s a little before my time, Mom,” she answered, preparing herself for another Chevy-at-the-levee conversation with the old woman. “I grew up with lyrics like ‘Everyone Wang Chung Tonight.’ But you’ve mentioned that tune before. Johnny Mathis, isn’t it? Greatest make-out music to come out of the ‘50’s, am I right?”

Josephine’s smile broadened. “I insisted the band player sing it the night of my wedding. That was the song I’d hoped might come on your father’s car radio the first time he kissed me at Saw Mill Lake. But it didn’t happen that way. Things never happen the way you want, not exactly the way you want to remember them. But, you know, that was all right with me. I knew it the moment your father’s lips touched mine.”

Susan’s mother had selected an interesting choice of words with this version, because the elderly woman had paraphrased a line from that Johnny Mathis oldie. The daughter managed a smile for the woman who probably didn’t realize she had made the subconscious connection. For someone whose memory had flown south, bringing the past into happy union with the present was really what rainy days like today were all about.

But then again...

That wasn’t quite accurate, Susan noted. Not any more. Maybe pleasant reveries were what rainy days *used* to be about before nitrogen oxides had worked their way into the two parts hydrogen/one part oxygen mix, before Uncle Sam realized that his amendments to the Clean Air Acts were a day late and a dollar short. A level five storm like this one was a different breed of animal. It was a regular potpourri of volatile organic compounds as Dan O’Brien on cable channel 38 had pointed out to Newtown County just this morning. Standing by the large bay window would make that argument abundantly clear. Susan and her mother had only to wait and watch.

The women did not have to wait long.

Three sparrows appeared, first one then another and another. With wings outstretched like feathered angels they were enjoying a cool shower beneath the rain drops. Each did its cute little bird dance in a small puddle.

Nothing out of the ordinary there. Just your basic garden variety shit-on-General-Lafayette’s-statue-in-the-park breed of sparrow casually having themselves a little bathe in the spring rain. Or so the three flittering birds might have appeared at first glance to the uninitiated observer.

But that was not what was happening here. Not even close.

The drama unfolding near the front lawn brought a quick halt to the elder woman’s reminiscing and to Jeffrey’s interest in *The Dark Knight*. Seeing any birds at all had become a rarity even this late into spring.

What had first appeared an exuberant dance for two of the sparrows rapidly transformed into fluttering convulsions. The third already lay motionless on its back in the middle of the puddle, stiff as a clock’s cuckoo gone belly up.

This had been one of those bad rainstorms, a genuine level five like the forecaster on cable had said. These sparrows, knowing nothing of meteorological warnings or acidification, were paying for their ignorance.

The two remaining birds twitched on the ground, then momentarily became airborne and crashed into one another as if one had waged a cockfight on the other. A tail feather flew off the smaller sparrow. Mottled by the rain the feather fell rather than floated to the ground. The birds collided

again mindlessly, then plummeted to the sidewalk like stones while the downpour continued to pelt them.

The sparrows were not really fighting. They could no longer see where they were going because the rain had blinded them, melted their tiny irises right inside their sockets. Black holes remained where eyes had been. In another moment this gully washer would sear the delicate flesh beneath their feathers as if the birds were bathing in battery acid. The small creatures' dance of agony would continue for several minutes until each was cold dead.

Susan drew the blinds before Jeffrey might see more. She wished she could also silence the rain pellets slapping against the window.

It might have been worse. At least this morning's cloudburst had not burned through the roof like the storm during the last level five. Of course there was still the extremely unpleasant task of cleanup ahead. Birds had originally been a major problem because there were so many of them.

Some had died on the roof and fell down the water spouts. But now not many were left, and their remains usually amounted to little more than a handful of bones.

Larger animals presented a greater problem because of new public health laws requiring them burned within twelve hours after a rainfall. That could prove an uncomfortable business with a child in the house. When this morning's rain stopped there might be a stray dog or cat, maybe a squirrel or a rat that had crept to Susan's lawn to die. Such animals normally avoided the rain and were caught unaware.

That wasn't so unusual. Many people in the beginning had also been caught off guard thinking an umbrella and a good slicker would keep the rain from their backs. Susan's young husband and her father had been among those people, caught unprotected in a sudden thunder burst when following a camping weekend, surprise surprise, the sky turned suddenly dark. Death was not as magnanimous with the two men as it had been with the sparrows. Rain death took its own sweet time with people, common knowledge now but unthinkable only a few months earlier. The older ones always went more quickly. Four days it had taken her father to die, more than a week for Gil...

Gil

"I realize how lucky I am," he had told her, and then "You know I don't do vulnerable very well."

*But he was wrong. He **did** do vulnerable well. He did it extremely well.*

And she had joked with him about the rain. She had said "I knew something would spoil the moment."

*Then he assured her that the moment had not been spoiled, **could** not be spoiled.*

And then he had kissed her right there in the rain . . .

Susan didn't realize that she was smiling. She did very little smiling lately, certainly not much that had come unforced and on its own.

Jeffrey looked up from his comic book. He might have been watching his mother for some time, waiting for her to say something, anything.

"Were you away like gran'ma?" the boy asked.

She managed to turn her smile into something that fell just short of a grin. It made no sense to rage against the way things were like some demented King Lear trying his damndest to outshout the storm. What was done was done, and you don't bitch because you can't stop the rain. To select to do that was to select madness. And, after all, the rain called forth memories. Bittersweet memories, yes, but still they were wonderful.

Susan took the long walk across the living room and crouched to hug her son. "Yeah, my little pal. I was away, but now I'm back." She told him this with her cheek pressed to the child's because she preferred Jeffrey not see her while she lied.

Neither she nor the boy noticed the old woman as she opened the door and walked outside, arms outstretched, into the downpour.

"Josie . . ."

"I love the way my name sounds when you say it, Warren. Do you know that?"

"Josie Josie Josie Josie!" Warren repeated. "Kiss me?"

"Maybe I will," the girl teased. "Maybe . . ."

She added a well-rehearsed giggle.

"Not here, though . . . not here," she told him, then pushed open the Chevy's door. She ran outside, twirling and jumping in the downpour like a little kid.

"What are you do--?"

"Out here, Warren! Here's where I want you to kiss me! Will you come out and kiss me in the rain? Will you?"

She ran laughing from the car towards the lake waiting for Warren's footsteps to follow, knowing they would.

Turning to him, she opened her arms so that he might run into them.

As Warren climbed from his Chevy Josephine could have sworn she heard Johnny Mathis playing on the radio . . .

About the Author

Ken Goldman has published over 440 stories in the small/independent press since 1993. A member of the Genre Writers Association and the Horror Writers Association, his awards are too many to mention, Publications graced by his fiction include *SciFantastic*, *Andromeda Spaceways Inflight Magazine*, *Whispers of Wickedness*, *Post Mortem*, *Champagne Shivers*, and many, many more!

REVIEWS

Once Bitten, Twice Shy reviewed by Anthony Leigh

Nemesis reviewed by Alasdair Stuart

Poltergeist reviewed by Paul Kane

Once Bitten, Twice Shy

Written by Jennifer Rardin

Published by Orbit, £6.99

Vayl is the CIA's top assassin. A master of black ops, he has never failed. He's also a 291-year-old vampire. Assigned to protect Vayl, if such a formidable creature can be said to require protection, is Jasmine Parks - 'Jaz' to her friends. But Jaz has got problems - and not just the run-of-the-mill ones you'd expect from someone whose job consists of putting her life on the line for an undead assassin. She hasn't had sex in god knows how long, so Vayl's almost overpowering vampire charisma is making it increasingly difficult for her to keep their relationship ...professional.

You would be forgiven, after having read the back-cover blurb, for thinking that *Once Bitten* was a shameless rip-off of every other vampire romance novel you've ever read (or avoided). Indeed, the book begins with a plot that seems instantly predictable - the simplicity of the



writing, acting as camouflage for the diabolical plot that follows. You think you know where the story is heading, then you're suddenly driven down an unmarked sidestreet with nothing but your signal-less mobile phone for company, and there's something moving in the shadows...

Despite having an aversion to horror staples that don't take themselves too seriously, I couldn't help but enjoy *Once Bitten*. Rardin has a great career ahead of her – she's made vampires fun again!

The Complete Nemesis the Warlock, volume 2

Written by Pat Mills, Drawn by Bryan Talbot and Kevin O'Neill
Published by Rebellion

One of the most unusual and frequently grotesque of the classic 2000AD strips, 'Nemesis' embodies everything that the publication has done right over its lifetime. Challenging art, boundary pushing stories and a concept that feels genuinely alien, and at times genuinely disturbing. This is about as far from the desperately tired pop culture satire of slump period Dredd as its possible to get and the end result is something that's both difficult and endlessly rewarding.



The basic concept is this; in the far future, Earth is at the centre of a colossal and colossally xenophobic empire. Ruled over by Torquemada, the Terran Empire is horrified not only of aliens but of the contamination they bring. The ultimate embodiment of order, they are opposed by the ultimate embodiment of chaos. Nemesis is a demonic looking alien sorcerer who embodies chaos and, with the help of his assistant Purity, sets out to bring Torquemada down.

It's an iconic story in almost every sense with Bryan Talbot's precise, at times elegant art and Kevin O'Neill's nightmarish, insectile characters somehow meshing perfectly. This is a world of skin crawling terror, sexual repression, big swords and an alien with a beaky nose who looks a lot like the devil. It's the perfect combination of the insane, over the top action that 2000AD does at its best (Nemesis' son resurrects Satanus the T-Rex, star of a minor 2000AD strip. As a pet.) with some remarkably well handled character moments (Most notably in 'The Two Torquemadas' which sees the far future dictator meet his namesake.)

However, what really works here is the nightmarish tone of the world. From the containment suits married couples wear when they sleep in case they touch or have...feelings...in the night to Torquemada himself, a towering and oddly insectile figure of spiky edges and desperate intellect, this is a story which reads like a waking nightmare. It's a point driven home by the fact that Nemesis, unusually, has no problem concentrating on the big picture. He's quite happy to sacrifice lives in order to get the job done and this, combined with his somewhat eccentric take on the truth marks him out as a far more interesting, far more ambiguous character than the standard square jawed (And less beaky nosed hero). This is a story, as is noted in the after word about race and prejudice and it's dealt with in remarkably smart, elegant terms. Which given the amount of dogfights, swordfights and dinosaurs on display is no small achievement. Whilst the Monad stories which see a guest appearance from the ABC Warriors (To say nothing of a story which is finished IN ABC Warriors) are a little clunky, the rest of this volume is an elegant and at times very disturbing look at a broken world and the closest thing it has to a hero.

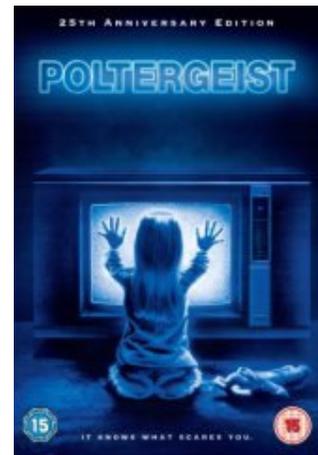
Nemesis is a relentlessly spiky, difficult story and it doesn't have any of the cosy, jack booted familiarity of Dredd, or Rogue Trooper or Strontium Dog. There haven't been endless rehashes of the story, haven't been any 'lost tales', just a single run of books exploring the conflict between order and chaos, human and alien. Difficult, hugely ambitious and jam packed with cheerfully horrific violence, these are some of the best stories 2000AD have ever published. Be Pure! Be Vigilant! Behave! Or go against the flow, and pick up the story of Nemesis. You won't regret it.

Poltergeist 25th Anniversary Edition

Directed by Tobe Hooper

Starring Craig T. Nelson, Jobeth Williams, Heather O'Rourke

Cert 15, Warner DVD, £16.99



Can it really be 25 years since **Poltergeist** came out? Now that really *is* scary. For many, this remains the most popular ghost movie to come out of the Reagan era, taking the disturbing family horror trend of **Rosemary's Baby**, **The Texas Chainsaw Massacre** (ironic for reasons you'll see below) and **Halloween**, then boiling it down for the masses. Responsible for this were producers Steven Spielberg (who came up with the story and co-wrote the screenplay), Frank Marshall and Kathleen Kennedy. Hired as director was the aforementioned **TCM's** Tobe Hooper, though many have argued that Spielberg was so hands on that it might as well have been his film. And, indeed, I defy anyone to watch it and not sit there thinking: this is a little like **Close Encounters** or **E.T.**, just with a supernatural flavour.

The film begins by setting up the all American family's cosy life in suburbia – we even get the Stars and Stripes at the beginning. Dad Steve Freeling (Nelson) sells houses in this new property development, Mom Diane (Williams) is a homemaker for three cute kids, including little Robbie (Oliver Robins) and blonde-haired Carol Anne (O'Rourke). Life is fine until Carol Anne begins to act oddly, becoming obsessed with TV static and claiming that "They're here." When Diane finds that her kitchen chairs are moving of their own accord and the cutlery is bending, even though Uri Geller isn't her neighbour, they begin to suspect there might be something supernatural at work.

When things take a turn for the nasty – Robbie is almost eaten by the creepy living tree outside his window and Carol Anne is sucked into the television – it becomes a case of 'Who ya gonna call?' when three intrepid parapsychologists from a nearby University run tests on the house. When they too witness a light show the likes of which would make Jean-Michel Jarre feel humbled, and the spirits begin picking on them too, it soon becomes clear that they need to call on a true psychic medium to cleanse the house and bring back Carol Anne. But why have the dead come back and what exactly does it have to do with the graveyard at the top of the hill...?

If it's excitement, spectacle and lightweight chills you're looking for, then **Poltergeist** should already be on your list of 'to buy' DVDs (this is the first time it's been released, even though the second and third instalments have been out for ages). To be fair, the film does contain some extremely creepy moments – who could forget the bubbling steak, or the clown under the bed (enough to give anyone a case of caulrophobia)? But, as with all Spielberg family fare, the safe line is virtually always taken and it is very rarely crossed. The acting, though, is exceptional – particularly from the late O'Rourke, who sadly died after making **Poltergeist III**. It's a testament to her that she will always be remembered for this role and will always have a place in horror film history.

Extras in this anniversary edition, which is only a single disc version, include a two part 'They Are Here' documentary which examines the real-life phenomenon of poltergeists from a scientific and a psychic standpoint, much like the film itself does. There's some interesting material here (I especially like the parapsychologist who was inspired to go into this line of work because of the cool equipment used in the 1982 movie), though the shows put together only add up to about half an hour. I could have sworn I'd seen it advertised somewhere that we'd get a 'making of' featurette as well, or at the very least some commentaries?

These criticisms aside, the film is still worth picking up and can still hold its head high in this age of CGI effects. A classic and deservedly so.

The Banquo Effect by Alasdair Stuart

The last ten days have seen, as they frequently do, a minor ripple go through the internet. Astonishingly though, this ripple has had nothing to do with Optimus Prime's colour scheme or the latest chapter in the rolling fight between the Science Fiction Writers of America and, amusingly, several American science fiction writers.

No, this one hit closer to home. Specifically, this one was about science fiction magazine circulation. But don't worry, those of you already skipping to the reviews, or the internet, or going to staple things to your forehead, this article ISN'T. At least, not directly.

Long story short, every year Gardner Dozois' Year's Best Science Fiction anthology runs the distribution numbers for Analog, Asimov's Science Fiction, Fantasy & Science Fiction and Interzone and every year, frankly, it makes for pretty depressing reading. Numbers are down, in one case circulation has dropped by 13 PERCENT since the previous year and it's hard not to look at those figures and feel like there's little point in going on. If those figures are to be believed, we're a dying breed, literally. Genre readers and writers are getting old and new people, according to those figures at any rate, aren't coming in.

Comic author Warren Ellis dropped the pebble into the pond on this one, posting the figures up on his website early last week. Ellis is an agitator without peer a man who is fully prepared to throw a grenade into a room and then watch the results and this was no exception. Within days, several authors had broken cover and started discussing ways the figures could be raised, the magazines saved. Cory Doctorow, on boingboing.net went as far as effectively laying out a survival strategy that would not only put the magazines' content in front of more people but raise their profile and bring them, from Doctorow's point of view at least, into the closing decade of the 20th century. We live in a world where copyright is no longer mandatory, where podcasts (More on those in a moment) and rss feeds and pdfs can reach HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS of readers and for magazines not to take advantage of that sort of technology, Doctorow argues, is not only foolish but potentially suicidal.

He's hard to disagree with on this one too. Doctorow's a passionate, articulate and phenomenally talented writer who has made his bones, by and large, by giving his books away. If you've not read his stuff, then beat a path to his website and start with *Down and Out In The Magic Kingdom*. One of the finest science fiction novels of the last twenty years and you can read it, for nothing, legally. Tens of thousands of people did and a lot of them went and bought it anyway.

But that's a whole different ballgame. What these figures have shown, what the people who broke ranks to discuss them have demonstrated is that we live in a world where there is nothing BUT alternative content models, nothing BUT, to use a profoundly offensive phrase, paths to market. An author can build their fan base without going NEAR a publisher at this point, and then, go to that publisher, or that magazine with thousands of people in tow.

It's a point that John Scalzi, author of *Old Man's War* and *The Ghost Brigades* (Again, beat a path to this man's door. The website will be at the bottom of the page) made later in the week. Scalzi steered the middle ground between Doctorow's passionate triage and Ellis' sniping by pointing out that of the last seven Campbell Award winners, precisely ONE was published in the 'big three' US magazines prior to winning the award. Scalzi's point is both simple and devastatingly effective. Take a step back and it becomes clear that these magazines are just part of a larger picture, a richer, more vibrant and healthy picture than those sales figures ever begin to demonstrate.

Which brings us back to podcasting. I'm going to put my hands up here and say I'm a huge, huge podcast fan. I'm lucky enough to work for a podcast I've followed since the beginning (Pseudopod.org) and I'm a huge fan of authors like Scott Sigler, Matt Wallace (Again, *Failed Cities Monologues* is something you need in your life.), Matthew Wayne Selznick and many more.

Every, single, one of these people have thousands of listeners, many are now making the jump to mainstream media (Wallace is screenwriting, Selznick's first book is out with his second to follow, Sigler regularly dominates the Amazon pre-order charts) and they all, almost without exception have done it themselves.

And yet for many podcasting is still a dirty word. One of my abiding memories of the last year is the response several people had to the word 'podcasting' at a BFS meeting in London. Varying from disinterest to outright disdain, it was something which hadn't seemed to register, a nebulous concept with nothing to back it up and a vague sense of the cheap and cheesy.

Tens of thousands of listeners. In some cases hundreds of thousands. A building block to a career, and all you need is dedication, the cost of website hosting and a thirty pound headset.

And that's even before we get to livejournal, or the success of sites like 365tomorrows who do one flash piece a day and have done so for the last three years. There are as many ways to get your work out there now as there are authors and yes, all of them require application of effort, and yes, all of them require moving outside your comfort zone but IT'S TIME TO DO THAT.

We have never been in a better position than we are now. Genre fiction is mainstream fiction and anyone who argues that point clearly doesn't own a TV. Lost and Heroes are the two most successful TV shows of the last four years, one a superhero series, the other a piece of philosophical science fiction/horror. Look at the critical success of graphic novels, of science fiction and fantasy movies (And dull as the SAW films may be, they take three times their budget every, single, time.) of the return of Doctor Who to the TV and it's massive success. Look at Primeval, at Cape Wrath, Stephen Moffat's Hyde, Jed Mercurio's Frankenstein even the BBC's Robin Hood. This is OUR time, WE are the mainstream now and there has never been a better time to take advantage of that fact.

So if you've got an idea, do it. Make a podcast, start an LJ novel, hell produce tiny pieces of fiction on twitter, I know people who do. Stop worrying about how small the campfires are getting and go and make one of your own. Because this is our time, our chance and we will never have a better opportunity than the one we have now.

LINKS

www.warrenellis.com –Warren Ellis

www.boingboing.net – Rolling science culture blog to which Cory Doctorow contributes.

www.craphound.com Doctorow's website

<http://scalzi.com/whatever/> - John Scalzi's blog

Podcast Authors

<http://www.scottsigler.net/> - Scott Sigler's homepage.

His new novel, NOCTURNAL, launches on Halloween.

<http://matt-wallace.net/> - Matt Wallace's homepage with a link to The Failed Cities Monologues, his superb piece of science fiction noir.

<http://www.mattselznick.com> - Matthew Wayne Selznick's homepage

www.escapepod.org – Steve Eley's science fiction anthology podcast

www.pseudopod.org – Its sister show Pseudopod, fronted by yours truly.

www.podcastle.org – The fantasy show, launching soon

Technical Links

Podcasting DIY

See Hub's own podcast tutorial in issue 3 available from
<http://www.hub-mag.co.uk/backissues.html>

Audacity

audacity.sourceforge.net/

The industry standard audio utility. So easy even I can use it and available for both Mac and PC.

Twitter

<http://twitterfic.googlepages.com/> - 140 character fiction produced through micro blogging utility.

www.365tomorrows.com – One piece of 600 word flash fiction a day. EVERY day.

If you have enjoyed this week's issue, please consider making a small donation at www.hub-mag.co.uk. We pay our writers, and your support is appreciated.