

WHAT'S ON IN HARTLEPOOL

Dates for your Diary :



Tickets now on sale for:



May 1st - Studio's 6th birthday - **Climax Blues Band** - £10 (£8)

May 12th - **Peat Bog Fairies** - £8 (£6)

May 22nd - **Charlie Speed Band** - £6 (£5)

May 27th - **Jim Mullen Organ Trio** - £6 (£5)

June 5th - **Snake Davis Band** - £10 (£8)

June 23rd - **John Otway** - £8 (£6)

September 12th - **Kathryn Tickell Band** - £12 (£10)

September 25th - **Pink Fraud** - £8 (£6)



24th April 'At The Drop of a Hippopotamus'

26th - 30th April **OKLAHOMA** - Hartlepool Stage Society

5th May **ZUBOP GAMBIA** £10.00 (£9.00)

May 7th - 15th **Hartlepool Music and Arts Festival**

May 12th **The Festival Final** £6.00 (£4.00)

11th June 'The MeatLoaf Story' World Tour £12.50 (£11.50)

18th June 'Mad About The Musicals' £12.00 (£11.00)

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THIS ARTS MAGAZINE



NO. 13, SPRING '04

FILM REVIEWS

ALBUM REVIEWS

THE BOMBARDMENT

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& MORE.....

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**HARTLEPOOL
VOLUNTARY
DEVELOPMENT
AGENCY**



Thinking about Summer Activities 2004?

The Local Network Fund could help!

The **Local Network Fund** has helped over 70 groups working with children and young people, to accomplish a range of activities and events, distributing nearly £250,000 in grants. The Local Network Fund supports small, community and volunteer led groups, who work with children and young people who are experiencing some form of disadvantage. Groups from Stockton, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Hartlepool have accessed the fund to support activities such as buying new instruments for a youth band; an adventure holiday for children with a disability; a sports club for traveller children; a dance club for asylum seekers; scouts groups; projects supporting sexually abused children and young people and children's counselling — to name but a very few.

The **Local Network Fund** meets regularly through the year, with the next meeting being on 6th April 2004 and the following meeting being in June 2004. Summer may seem a long way off as we shiver in the winter months but now is the time to be planning and applying to the Local Network Fund to support any activities that your group might want to put on over the summer months in 2004.

At **One Voice Tees Valley**, we can advise you about your eligibility for the fund, support you with your application and give other advice that hopefully will ensure your application is successful. To access this support just call 01642 240651, and leave a message for me, **Bernie Parks**, and I will arrange a meeting to come and see you to discuss your application. Alternatively, send me an e-mail on: bernieparks@hotmail.com

The COOL Project

The **COOL (Community Organised Outdoor Leisure) Project** is an initiative to reduce anti-social behaviour in the 8 — 14 year old age group by utilising school premises/playing fields and qualified youth workers and volunteers to provide a range of stimulating sports and recreational activities (e.g. football, cricket, basketball and indoor games).

COOL is keen to hear of any voluntary group, especially those operating in the NRF (Neighbourhood Renewal Fund) area - which covers the Stranton, Dyke House, Owton, Rossmere, St. Hilda, Brus, Jackson, Brinkburn and Park (part) wards - who would like to develop a scheme in partnership with their local school.

COOL will provide the expertise, help with funding bids and ongoing support. This is a good opportunity to apply to the NRF if you would like to address anti-social behaviour in your locality.

If you are interested, please contact **Peter Gowland** soon as possible for an informal discussion in order not to miss the application deadline.

Wagga Jawaka

Played The STUDIO on 15th November 2003 -

But here's a review from Nottingham



In addition to the Muffin Men and the Zappatistas there is another UK Zappa tribute band to check out. They're called Wagga Jawaka and are based in the North East (**Hartlepool**). I saw them at the Maze in Nottingham on Friday 15 March 2002 and I was very impressed. The band is a nine-piece: Mick Yare

(guitar), Liz (keyboards), Shoulder Hooks Graham Hardy (flugel), Bryn (tenor sax), (alto, soprano) Brock Sue Ferris (flute, piccolo). available - I the gig - which live in the



Carter Michael (bass), Dave (drums), (trumpet), Collinson Nick Kennedy (sax), Dave (trombone), (baritone sax). They have a CD bought mine at was recorded studio, and is a

pretty good representation of what they do. The overall sound of the band strikes me as being an amalgam of the 1988 band and 'Roxy and Elsewhere', with a hint of 'Lather'. I'm not sure how often they play; it's very much a labour of love, and given the economic realities of the music scene in this country they are unlikely to be making any money! If you do manage to catch one of their gigs, buy the CD; the money will be used to fund rehearsals, publicity etc.- the musicians won't be pocketing any of the proceeds.

It's interesting to compare the differences between Wagga Jawaka and the Zappatistas, which have broadly similar line-ups. The Zappatistas are mainly instrumental (I don't think John Etheridge regards himself primarily as a vocalist!), while Wagga Jawaka do more of the songs - at the gig I saw them, they did 'The Torture Never Stops', 'Bobby Brown', 'Son of Orange County', 'Yo Mama', 'More Trouble Every Day'. Also Mick Yare's guitar sound is much closer to Zappa's (he did a really nice 'Watermelon in Easter Hay') and there were times in his solos when I recognised some of Zappa's licks. John Etheridge sounds and plays like John Etheridge! (This isn't a criticism, I'm just highlighting the different approaches.)

All in all, I really enjoyed Wagga Jawaka a lot, and I'd recommend any UK Zappa fans to see them if at all possible. Check out their website www.jazzservices.org.uk, and find more information, at www.jazzservices.org.uk and follow the links to the bands database. - Cheers, Bob Meyrick

There's this guy who digs things up in his back yard and sends the stuff to the Smithsonian Institute, labelling them with scientific names, insisting that they are actual archeological finds. The really weird thing about these letters is that this guy really exists and does this in his spare time! - Here's a letter to him from the Smithsonian.

Paleoanthropology Division - Smithsonian Institute -
207 Pennsylvania Avenue - Washington, DC

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your latest submission to the Institute, labelled "211-D, layer seven, next to the clothesline post. Hominid skull." We have given this specimen a careful and detailed examination, and regret to inform you that we disagree with your theory that represents "conclusive proof of the presence of Early Man in Charleston County two million years ago." Rather, it appears that what you have found is the head of a Barbie doll, of the variety one of our staff, who has small children, believes to be the "Malibu Barbie". It is evident that you have given a great deal of thought to your analysis of this specimen, and you may be quite certain that those of us who are familiar with your prior work in the field were loathe to come to contradiction with your findings. However, we do feel that there are a number of physical attributes of the specimen which might have tipped you off to it's modern origin:

1. The material is moulded plastic. Ancient hominid remains are typically fossilized bone.
2. The cranial capacity of the specimen is approximately 9 cubic centimetres, well below the threshold of even the earliest identified proto-hominids.
3. The dentition pattern evident on the "skull" is more consistent with the common domesticated dog than it is with the "ravenous man-eating Pliocene clams" you speculate roamed the wetlands during that time.

This latter finding is certainly one of the most intriguing hypotheses you have submitted in your history with this Institution, but the evidence seems to weigh rather heavily against it. Without going into too much detail, let us say that:

- A. The specimen looks like the head of a Barbie doll that a dog has chewed on.
- B. Clams don't have teeth.

It is with feeling tinged with melancholy that we must deny your request to have the specimen carbon dated. This is partially due to the heavy load our lab must bear in it's normal operation, and partly due to carbon dating's notorious inaccuracy in fossils of recent geologic record. To the best of our knowledge, no Barbie dolls were produced prior to 1956 AD, and carbon dating is likely to produce wildly inaccurate results.

Sadly, we must also deny your request that we approach the National Science Foundation's Phylogeny Department with the concept of assigning your specimen the scientific name "Australopithecus spiff-arino." Speaking personally, I, for one, fought tenaciously for the acceptance of your proposed taxonomy, but was ultimately voted down because the species name you selected was hyphenated, and didn't really sound like it might be Latin.

However, we gladly accept your generous donation of this fascinating specimen to the museum. While it is undoubtedly not a hominid fossil, it is, nonetheless, yet another riveting example of the great body of work you seem to accumulate here so effortlessly. You should know that our Director has reserved a special shelf in his own office for the display of the specimens you have previously submitted to the Institution, and the entire staff speculates daily on what you will happen upon next in your digs at the site you have discovered in your back yard.

We eagerly anticipate your trip to the nation's capital that you proposed in your last letter, and several of us are pressing the Director to pay for it. We are particularly interested in hearing you expand on your theories surrounding the "trans-positating fillifitation of ferrous ions in a structural matrix that makes the excellent juvenile Tyrannosaurus Rex femur you recently discovered take on the deceptive appearance of a rusty 9-mm Sears Craftsman automotive crescent wrench.

Yours in Science, Harvey Rowe - Curator, Antiquities



The Studio, Tower Street,
Hartlepool, TS24 7HQ.
Tel 01429 424440
Gigs For April

Monday 19th	Showcase: 'Drenalyn	Free
Wednesday 21st	Roots Night: Martin Carthy	£7 (£5)
Thursday 22nd	Musicians Unlimited Big Band	£3 (£2.50)
Friday 23rd	Tyla Gang	£8 (£6)
Saturday 24th	Helvis + Signal Zero + The Kirkz	£3 (£2.50)
Sunday 25th	Noon - Musicians Unlimited	£1
Sunday 25th	7.30pm - Los Van Dog + Last Minute Decision	£3 (£2.50)
Monday 26th	Open Mic Night	Free
Wednesday 28th	FULC + support	£4 (£3)
Thursday 29th	Acoustic: Michael Chapman	£4 (£3)
Friday 30th	Cantaloop	£5 (£4)

What's on the STUDIO :- <http://kwharris.users.btopenworld.com/Studio/>



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*Babs
Hepworth*

**More Pictures
from Yorkshire
Sculpture Park
Garry Courtneil**

Lis Frink



Keep -Fit fanatics were worked into a sweat after a gruelling session with an **Egyptian Belly Dancer**. Perfectly-toned Kay Taylor visited the Burbank Community House, on Burbank Road, Hartlepool, to shake her hips with a new group of enthusiasts. Forty-year-old Kay, who has been teaching Egyptian dancing for 15 years, has brought her craze to Hartlepool to show the benefits the dancing can bring. She said: "It's very good exercise. It's not like aerobics where you are bouncing up and down all the time, it's good for people with lower back problems or those who can't put any stress on their joints." Fit Kay, from East Boldon, near Sunderland, goes over to Cairo, in Egypt three or four times a year to pick up new tips from skilled Egyptians. She said: "It's really easy to do because it's not like an aerobics class where you have to learn steps, you improvise and add extra bits on when you feel it's right." And the Egyptian wannabees seemed to enjoy themselves too. Julie Sidgwick, from the town centre area of Hartlepool, said she thoroughly enjoys the weekly classes and has been practising the art for a year. The 38-year-old said: "I absolutely love it, it seems to have got me fit. That's the idea anyway! I feel a lot better since I started doing it." Kay's hour long class at Burbank House, is on every Thursday at 1.45pm and are available free to people who live in the New Deal area. For further information telephone (01429) 285136



Middle east Meets North east!



Kelly Spoor (left)
Sylvia Karcsai (right)
Kay Taylor (centre)



"Fantastic" - "Spectacular Costumes" -- "Very Professional" ---- -

These were comments made by most of the 200 strong audience who watched the show on Sunday, 8th February at the Town Hall Theatre in Hartlepool.

The event, the first of its kind to be held in the North - East, featured students and teachers from Hartlepool & Redcar as well as dancers from as far away as Liverpool.

Professional dancer & actress Cathy Selford, known internationally as Vashti, was guest performer.

The show was organised by Lynn Flounders with help from Vannesa Zandani & Sylvia Karcsai supported by the Northern Arabic Dance Association; & proved to be a truly "Middle Eastern Dance Spectacular". *Written by Lynn Flounders*

EALING STUDIOS-A PASSPORT TO COMEDY - *Jennifer Linsel*

Ealing Studios was mostly known for its topical and highly-successful comedies of the late 40's and early 50's. The first studio, built in 1902, produced some very important films but was sold in 1920 then became disused. The building was bought by Associated Talking Pictures and new facilities were built there between 1931 and 1934. The company began to produce films for the domestic market and it achieved some of its greatest successes with stars George Formby and Gracie Fields. When Sir Michael Balcon was appointed head of production in 1938 he soon gained control of the company. Most of the decisions were made by the directors and producers who worked their way up through the ranks. Apart from Sir Michael Balcon, the most creative force in the company was the director Alberto Cavalcanti who joined the Ealing Studio in 1940 after being a member of John Greirson's renowned documentary film group. Ealing Studios favoured British topics and highly-original screenplays, often using a documentary-like approach to their stories. Even though the company employed a repertory company of character actors, none of these were on a permanent contract. The studio made five or six films a year on relatively small budgets of around \$420,000. Part of Ealing's success was due to an agreement that Sir Michael Balcon had obtained from the Rank organisation in 1944. During WWII Ealing produced some excellent war films which combined propaganda with realism. In 1940, Ealing made *Convoy* which was a fluent British film that starred Clive Brook as Capt Armitage and had an excellent supporting cast which included Michael Wilding and Stewart Granger. Many of the scenes at sea were shot under actual wartime conditions. *The Foreman Went to France* (1941) was a fact-based WWII tale that was adapted from a J.B Priestly story. The film told the story of a factory foreman (Tommy Trinder) who was sent to France to spirit vital machinery away from the advancing Germans. It was an even mix of comedy and drama with Tommy Trinder, Clifford Evans and Constance Cummings but critics questioned the efforts of Robert Morley posing as a Frenchman. In 1942, Ealing made *The Next of Kin*, a propaganda film with Mervyn Johns and Jack Hawkins. Ealing were asked by The War Office to make a feature-film for them about security but the funds were minimal. The Ealing Studio added to the fund with their own resources to make the film even better. *Went The Day Well?* (1942) (known in the U.S as *Forty-Eight Hours*) was a well-staged melodrama which made excellent wartime propaganda. The film starred Ealing favourite Mervyn Johns with a supporting cast of British actors who became household names including Thora Hird, John Slater, Patricia Hayes and Harry Fowler. In 1942, Ealing made *San Demetrio, London* which was a vivid and very effective propaganda piece which starred Robert Beatty (who would appear in later Ealing productions) as 'Yank' Preston. That same year, *The Bells Go Down* was a docu-drama that tells the story of an auxiliary fireman who finds himself having to put out a fire at a burning warehouse whilst his own home is burning down, and another fireman who perishes during an attempt to save his hated boss whilst his wife is giving birth during the blitz. The film boasted a strong cast led by Tommy Trinder and ably supported by James Mason, Mervyn Johns and William Hartnell. This film was knocked sideways as a touching tribute to the work of the Auxiliary Fire Service by Humphrey Jennings' 'Fires Were Started' which was released at cinemas in the same month. After the end of WWII, Ealing's productions included films made overseas including *The Overlanders* (1946), an easy-going semi-western which told the riveting story of the Australian cattle drov-

ers, headed by Chips Rafferty as Dan McAlpine, transporting their herds across the continent during WWII. The film was made at Pagewood Studios near Sydney. In 1947, Ealing made the highly-endearing comedy *Hue and Cry* which was the tale of a group of rowdy youngsters who turn the tables on a gang of crooks whom they discover have been using their newspaper to pass on coded information. The film starred the inimitable Alastair Sim, Jack Warner and Harry Fowler (as one of the youngsters). Ealing also made a costume drama in 1947, *Nicholas Nickleby* which was directed by Alberto Cavalcanti. It boasted an excellent cast which included Derek Bond, Cedric Hardwicke and Sybil Thorndike (in her element as Mrs Squeers), plus a host of British stars who became household names;-Bernard Miles, Athene Seyler, Patricia Hayes, Cyril Fletcher and Dandy Nichols. *Against the Wind* (1948) was an above-average thriller with a plot similar to *13 Rue Madeleine*. The film was directed by Charles Crichton and produced by Sir Michael Balcon. Simone Signoret added a touch of class to the film but Jack Warner in the role of Max Cronk was cast against type. *Saraband for Dead Lovers* (1948) (known in the U.S as *Saraband*) was one of Ealing's most lavish period pieces. It was a romantic dramatic telling of the love-affair between the wife of the future King George I, Sophie Dorothea (played by the versatile Joan Greenwood) and Count Konigsmark (played by a well-cast Stewart Granger). This was a well-acted and beautifully produced film. In 1948, Ealing made the realistic true adventure film *Scott of the Antarctic*, which told the story of Captain Scott who led a doomed expedition to the South Pole. With John Mills in the title role and a supporting cast of James Robertson Justice, Derek Bond, Kenneth More and John Gregson this film was a very respectable account. The film was greatly enhanced by the atmospheric Vaughan Williams score and the wonderful acting of all concerned. *Whiskey Galore* (1949) (known in the U.S as *Tight Little Island*) was a laugh-a-minute fast-paced comedy about a WWII ship which sank while loaded with 50,000 cases of whiskey, and the antics of the local residents of the Isle of Todday who thirsted for its cargo when their wartime ration had ran out. The film was based on the novel by Compton Mackenzie who has a small role in it as Captain Buncher. The cast included Basil Radford, Joan Greenwood, Gordon Jackson and James Robertson Justice. Incidentally, fourteen bottles of whiskey, said to be the last surviving from the wreck of the SS Politician, the real-life shipwreck that inspired the film were sold in 1993 at a Glasgow auction for £12,012, with a bottle of Haig Dimple selling for £1,210. Also in 1949, Ealing made *Passport to Pimlico*, a film that was based on a genuine news item. The film was about an ancient royal charter that was unearthed in a London shell-hole that ceded Pimlico to the Dukes of Burgundy. The close-knit residents are "just British enough to fight for our rights to be Burgundians". The casting for this film was sheer brilliance; Margaret Rutherford revelling in her role as Prof. Hatton-Jones, a historian who quivers with ecstasy over the historical significance of the discovery of the charter, Stanley Holloway and Hermione Baddeley as shopkeepers, and Naunton Wayne and Basil Radford (together again) as bureaucrats trying to cope in a crisis. This film was British comedy at its best with a whimsical flavour, an amiable cast and a genial script. *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949) is now regarded as one of the greatest black comedies of all time. Dennis Price is in fine form as the ignoble Louis Mazzini, and Alec Guinness really excels in his playing of all eight members of the D'Ascoyne family who stand in the way of Mazzini taking the cherished D'Ascoyne family title. Joan Greenwood is well-cast as the minx-nemesis Sybilla and Ealing

photography is superb. *The Mummy* (1959) was followed by three sequels. *Curse of the Mummy's Tomb* (1964), *The Mummy's Shroud* (1966) and *Blood from the Mummy's Tomb* (1971) but this version surpassed the 1932 original with its excellent cast and updated storyline. *The Man Who Could Cheat Death*, also made in 1959, was a Paramount/Hammer collaboration with Anton Diffring in the title role and a supporting cast which included Christopher Lee. This was a colourful film adaptation of the play which had previously been filmed under its original title *The Man in Half Moon Street* in 1944. In 1960, Hammer made *The Strangers of Bombay* which starred Guy Rolfe, Allan Cuthbertson and Andrew Cruickshank, was directed by Terence Fisher and filmed in Megascope. *The Curse of the Werewolf* (1961) was Hammer horror in a Spanish setting with Oliver Reed and Clifford Evans. This film was more ambitious and complex than most of the other Hammer horrors in its portrayal of the opposing forces that dictate the life of the monster. It was a simplified adaptation of Guy Endore's *The Werewolf of Paris* but it provoked the audience's sympathy for the hairy hero. In 1960, Hammer made two more horror films *The Brides of Dracula* and *The Two Faces of Dr Jekyll*. The latter, known as *House of Fright* in the U.S and adapted from the novel by Robert Louis Stevenson, was a welcome variation on a much-filmed story with Paul Massie in the title role and Hammer favourite Christopher Lee. *Sword of Sherwood Forest* was very much a departure from the usual Hammer fare with a brilliant cast including Oliver Reed, Peter Cushing, and Richard Greene resuming his TV role as Robin Hood, though it received mixed reviews from the critics. In a master stroke, Hammer paved the way for the deluge of 'splatter films' which were prevalent in the 60's starting with George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*, a tale of flesh-eating zombies who ravage a countryside. During the 60's Hammer also produced films by Joseph Losey: *The Damned*, known as *These Are The Damned* in the U.S, and Freddie Francis who also directed *Paranoiac* (1963), *Nightmare* (1964) *Evil of Frankenstein* (1964) and *Hysteria* (1965). Other Hammer films from the 60's include *The Phantom of the Opera* (1962), *The Brigand of Kandahar* (1965), *The Nanny* (1965), *The Reptile* (1966) and *The Devil Rides Out* (1968). By the end of 1965, Hammer's era as a film studio was almost over. In the 70's the Hammer company decided to spice up their films to appeal to a different type of audience with *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1970), *Hands of the Ripper* (1971), *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* (1971), *The Vampire Lovers* (1971), *Lust for a Vampire* (1971), *Twins of Evil* (1971) and *Captain Kronos: Vampire Hunter* (1974). In the early 70's, Hammer tried its hand at comedy with the TV series *On the Buses* which spawned three movies. *On the Buses* (1971), *Mutiny on the Buses* (1972) and *Holiday on the Buses* (1973). On the Buses was the highest earning British film of 1971. Hammer's last horror release was *To the Devil a Daughter* (1976), adapted from the novel by horror writer Dennis Wheatley, it was an occult thriller with a sterling cast. The Hammer company has since produced hour-long horror stories for television but will always be remembered as the company who gave us some of the big screen's most memorable horror icons.



The 32nd International Magic Close-up Convention

The 32nd annual International Magic Close-up Convention took place on December 6th and 7th at the Holiday Inn Hotel, Kings Cross. This year in honour of the 20th anniversary of the Close-up Competition, and in memory of Hartlepool's Kevin Reay (the first ever winner back in 1984) who died tragically recently, organisers are introducing "The Kevin Reay Close-up Award." The competition has a £1,000 cash to the first prize winner and details of future events are to be found on their website www.internationalmagic.com

HAMMER HORROR : FROM THE FIRST FRIGHT TO THE LAST BITE

By Jennifer Linsel

Hammer, the foremost producer of some of the best Gothic horror films in movie history, was founded in 1934 by William Hinds. Hinds was a jeweller by trade who doubled as a theatrical agent. The name Hammer came from a comedy duo which William had once been a member of that was called 'Hammer and Smith' after the London area of Ham-smith. The first ever Hammer film was *The Public Life of Henry the Ninth* in 1935, it was a take-off of Alexander Korda's 1933 film *The Private Life of Henry VIII*. The film's running time was only sixty minutes and it was distributed in the UK by MGM. When Enrique Caneras joined Hammer Studios in 1937 as a co-director he was to play a major role in the running of it for many years. Enrique's son James later became a Hammer executive and James' son Michael became a director of the company. After the end of WWII, the Hammer Studio began to make a succession of low-budget films starting with *River Patrol* in 1948 then moved from a converted church which doubled as a film studio to a house named Dial Close in Berkshire. Dial Close became the first of Hammer's renowned 'house studios'. The Hammer Company was officially registered in 1949. With the onset of the 1950's, the Hammer Studio produced several low-budget crime thrillers such as *Blood Orange* (1953), *Wings of Danger* (1952) and *The Last Page*, the story of a bookseller who is framed for the death of a blackmailer, which starred George Brent, Diana Dors, Raymond Huntley and Eleanor Summerfield, in 1952. Many of these films were directed by Terence Fisher whose name became closely associated with Hammer for such films as *Dracula*, *The Revenge of Frankenstein*, *Dracula Prince of Darkness*, *Frankenstein Created Woman* and many more which are now regarded as cult classics. In 1955, Hammer tried its hand at another genre, science fiction. Two years earlier, Hammer had dabbled with the film *Spaceways* which starred Howard Duff and Eva Bartok and told the story of a scientist who was suspected of murdering his wife and her lover then sending their bodies into space in Britain's first ever satellite. The film was adequately directed by Terence Fisher. *The Quatermass Xperiment* (1955), the odd spelling of the final word of the title was in anticipation of the X rating it eventually received from the BBFC, was based on a highly-successful BBC TV serial and was released in the U.S as *The Creeping Unknown*. The film starred Brian Donlevy, Jack Warner, Thora Hird and Gordon Jackson and was directed by Val Guest. Two sequels followed, *X The Unknown* (1956) and *Quatermass II* (1956) which was released in the U.S as *Enemy From Space*. Much to the Hammer Studios amazement the three films were a great success and studio polls revealed that this was due to the 'horrific element' rather than the science fiction content which had most intrigued movie-goers. In 1951, Hammer really upped its production values with the making of *The Curse of Frankenstein* by shooting it in colour rather than monochrome. With this film, Hammer had brought together the actors and technical crew who would dominate the films of its most successful era: director Terence Fisher and actors Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. *The Curse of Frankenstein* was a box-office hit with its talented cast, strong script and atmospheric filming and it put Hammer on the map. In 1957, Hammer brought us *The Abominable Snowman*, directed by Val Guest with Peter Cushing heading a good cast which also included Forrest Tucker and Richard Wattis. In 1958, Hammer made *Dracula* (known as *Horror of Dracula* in the U.S) which starred Christopher Lee in the title role and Peter Cushing as Van Helsing. It was filmed in Technicolour and is the most faithful film to its 1931 original. *Revenge of Frankenstein* (1958) was a Columbia/Hammer collaboration with Peter Cushing once again in the leading role of Baron Frankenstein and was the sequel to *The Curse of Frankenstein* (1957) which set the tone for the rest. In 1959, Hammer made *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, a spirited remake of the 1939 version, with a strong cast which included Peter Cushing as Sherlock Holmes, ably following Basil Rathbone's signature performance, and Christopher Lee as Sir Henry Baskerville. This version is more richly textured with the supernatural than the 1939 original and Jack Asher's greatly muted Technicolour

pulled a masterstroke in casting Valerie Hobson as the high-minded Edith and Miles Malleon as the executioner. The film was based on the 1907 novel *Israel Rank* written by Roy Horniman and is a brilliantly cynical film full of accurate caricatures. In 1950, Ealing tried its hand at police drama with *The Blue Lamp*, an excellent manhunt thriller about Scotland Yard's search for the murderer of a well-respected local policeman. This film spawned the twenty-year TV series *Dixon of Dock Green*. Jack Warner is excellent in the role of George Dixon and Jimmy Hanley is well-cast as P.C. Andy Mitchell. The film was made with full co-operation from the Metropolitan Police and the car scenes were shot on location. *The Lavender Hill Mob* (1951) was the story of a timid bank clerk who conceived and executed a bullion robbery. Alec Guinness was in his element as Holland and Stanley Holloway was the perfect foil as Pendlebury, his 'artistic' accomplice. Alfie Bass and Sidney James deserve a mention for their rich characterisations as cockney spivs Shorty and Lackery. Audrey Hepburn puts in an appearance in the opening scene in *Rio* as Chiquita. Charles Crichton's direction and George Auric's music add to the magic of this charming film. In August of 1951, *The Man in the White Suit* gave us one of Alec Guinness' finest screen performances in the guise of laboratory dishwasher Sidney Stratton, Stratton works in a textile mill and inadvertently invents a fabric that never gets dirty or wears out. His invention angers both management and the workforce as it renders them redundant. The supporting cast are excellent, particularly Joan Greenwood as Daphne and Cecil Parker as Birnley. Incidentally, the gurgling, bubbles, squirts and drips of Sidney Stratton's apparatus were joined to a rhythm and released by Coral Records as "The White Suit Samba". The storyline is ingenious, brilliant and extremely funny, making this one of Ealing's finest. *The Cruel Sea* (1953) was adapted from the novel by Nicholas Monsarrat. It told the story of life and death on an Atlantic corvette during WWII. The film boasted a sterling cast including Jack Hawkins, Donald Sinden, Stanley Baker and Denholm Elliott. The competent transcription of the novel, the direction of Charles Frend and the great cast made this film a huge box-office hit. In 1954, *The Maggie* (known in the U.S as *High and Dry*) was the tale of an American businessman Marshall (Paul Douglas) who was tricked into sending his private cargo of furniture to a Scottish island on an old cargo boat called Maggie, a "puffer", that operates on and around the River Clyde. Paul Douglas is excellent, as are his co-stars Alex Mackenzie, James Copeland and Dorothy Alison. *The Ladykillers* (1955) was a frivolous and fun black comedy with a gem of a cast. Alec Guinness, complete with over-sized teeth, played the leader of a gang that included the inimitable Peter Sellers in the role of Harry, a plump nervous teddy-boy, Danny Green as One-Round and Herbert Lom as Louis. Katie Johnson is wonderful as Louisa Wilberforce, the cheery old lady who constantly thwarts the gang's fiendish plans to kill her, resulting in each of them being hoist with their own petards. All of the cast appear to be having great fun throughout, making this one of Ealing's most stylish and inventive comedies. Ealing Studios also made stars of George Formby and Will Hay with such films as *Trouble Brewing*, *Let George Do It*, *Spare A Copper*, *The Goose Steps Out*, *The Black Sheep of Whitehall*, *The Ghost of St. Michaels* and many more. In all, Ealing made 95 feature films and changed the face of cinema. The Ealing Studios were sold to the BBC in '55 but after an attempt to continue production at Rank's Pinewood Studios failed, the company sadly and finally went out of business in '59. The era of Ealing was over and moviegoers were the worse for it.

PORTTRAITS: Pastel Drawings Exhibition - English Martyrs Gallery.

This successful exhibition by local artist Garry Courtneil which was held in the English Martyrs College Gallery in November/December 2003. The event which was well attended was one of the many exhibitions now held in the Gallery.



HARTLEPOOL SINGS

Fancy singing your heart out? Haven't sung since school days? Like to sing but nervous about joining in? - **Hartlepool Community Choir** is a totally new venture open to all - not just "good" singers.

What's more there are no charges: the singing leader is **George Colley**.

The group meets at the Grand Hotel every Tuesday evening.

Interested contact **Linda Morley** by e-mail at: hartlepoonsings@aol.com

Sound Waves a national project focusing on six areas - and Hartlepool is one of them. This two-year project is designed to show how singing can make a difference to the lives of young people and their communities.

Again contact **Linda Morley** for details.



Local artists pay tribute to Kevin Reay at The Studio's Charity Gig



Thoroughly Modern Mivvi

Well, he was way back in the '60's when he was a Mod

What did the '60's mean to you? Trimphones.. white dog-poo?h?

The astounding music? The drugs..? Oh dear, maybe not. But people of a certain age remember those years, that era, very fondly I'm sure. And I'm one of them. It seems a most apposite place here to discuss or remember the sixties, it purportedly being an arty, if not crafty little publication.

The music of that age stands out, stands up well today, and I don't think we realised at the time how good it was. One never does; although people writing on their school haversacks - 'Clapton is God', seems a pretty fair tribute. Musically we were spoilt rotten, one could say.. everywhere you looked there was a blues band; an iconic guitarist; a new LP. People wrote stuff, could play stuff.. they weren't just pop idle.

But my abiding memory of the sixties, is Lambretta scooters, and my being something of a Mod. From the age of sixteen I had three Lambrettas in succession; one being something of a special, and even then quite rare. Oh, the cachet of that machine.. with everything on it - mirrors; chrome.. a cool little windscreen with my name crassly plastered on it; whitewall tyres.. and even the occasional dolly bird on the pillion. Sixties hog-heaven. I was sixteen and didn't give a damn. And I had one the best Lambrettas in the town. I had to be worth knowing for that alone - apart from the fact that I had sta-pressed mod trousers, a long parka with a cat's arse as a fringe for the hood, and my hair was better than Paul Weller's.

To the cognoscenti the name was Innocenti - the Italian company that made Lambrettas, and they were cool, and so were the lads in the Hartlepool & District Scooter Club. Dead cool. We used to meet up twice a week in the evenings, and then on Sundays where we'd go off for the day, often as far as Northumberland; which was adventurous when the weather was cold enough to make brass monkeys take out personal insurance.

The club would meet originally in a café at Seaton, then known as the Rainbow, I think; and subsequently we would meet in 'Michelle's Coffee Bar' in York Road. I can remember sitting drinking coffee and listening to Jimi Hendrix on the juke box - 'All Along the Watchtower'. Next minute we were off, in a cloud of two-stroke exhaust fumes and dazzling chrome images; green parkas with fake fur and shiny shoes; and we wouldn't be back 'til teatime.

Those Sunday runs were always a great event for the scooter club. And on Mondays we'd go to the little scooter shop - Bruce Moore's in Thornton Street - to buy new bits that might have fallen off (the machines, not the members).

The Mod thing suited me down to the ground. I liked the clothes, the hairstyle, the scooters.. the image, which then seemed cool. 'Course now you can't even buy new



Lambrettas, although I'm told they still make them in India, when they're not answering their trimphones in call centres.

The Sixties - you had to be there, where it was at. Even if that meant ending a sentence on a preposition. But yeah, I was there, and this is just one mechanical memory of it. The music was of course, something else. Someone else might write that bit. Me,

I'm off to try this new-fangled internet thingie... and now it's where it's @.com

Hartlepool broadcaster wins award

Hartlepool-based broadcaster Garrison Radio has won a broadcasting award at its first attempt. The company which operates both Hartlepool FM and the British Army's own radio service, won a creditable third place at the 2003 Jerusalem Radio Awards. Chris Marsden produced the programme "The Meaning of Easter" with Padre Grant Ashton, the senior Padre with 19 Mechanized Brigade who are currently serving in Iraq.

The Easter on ILR (Independent Local Radio) Award encourages radio stations to broadcast a special feature on Good Friday, highlighting the meaning of the day. Since it began nine years ago, the award has generated 2500 minutes of contemporary Easter broadcasting across the commercial radio sector. This year saw 152 entries.

Chris Marsden and Padre Ashton were at the Royal Society of Arts in London to receive the 'bronze' placing, with Big Brother winner Cameron Stout presenting the awards.

This is the first time the Hartlepool broadcasting company has entered for an award since its formation in 2001 when it created a British Army radio network for the first time. Since January 2002 it has been broadcasting to garrisons in Tidworth-Bulford, Catterick, Aldershot and Colchester, covering an estate in which 65% of British soldiers live. The company this year launched the town's first professional radio station with both Pool and Hartlepool FM stations.

md@garrisonradio.com



JENNI'S MUSIC REVIEWS

THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH - GAZE - MERCURY RECORDS

'Gaze' is the latest offering from The Beautiful South and fans will be more than pleased with this upbeat follow-up to Carry On Up The Charts. The opening track 'Pretty' is extremely catchy with its ignore-me-not chorus and tuneful vocals of Paul Heaton. 'Let Go With The Flow' is a chart-worthy song with great backing vocals from the rest of the group. 'Sailing Solo' is a wonderfully languid and lazy song with witty and acerbic vocals. Tracks like 'Angels and Devils', 'Spit It All Out' and 'Get Here' demonstrate the creative energy that the band still possess, while slow, melodic numbers like 'Sailing Solo' prove that 'the South' can still both sing and play with incredible talent. Excellent stuff.

BON JOVI - THIS LEFT FEELS RIGHT - MERCURY RECORDS

This album is classed as 'The Greatest Hits...with a twist' and it really lives up to its name. The opening track 'Wanted Dead Or Alive' is Jon Bon Jovi at his very best with his raw vocals making the song sound brand new. 'Livin' On A Prayer' with Jon duetting with Olivia D'Abo is a revelation with its bold acoustic guitar accompaniment complementing the lead vocals. The new arrangement of 'It's My Life' is a vast improvement on the original with the band venturing forth into mellow, laid-back territory. Stand-out tracks are 'Livin' On A Prayer', 'It's My Life', 'You Give Love A Bad Name' (with its great guitar instrumentals) and 'I'll Be There For You'. Die-hard fans may balk at this collection of revamped classics, but it's difficult not to be drawn in by Jon Bon Jovi's voice - at its best on the two live tracks 'Always' and 'Joey'. Powerful stuff and highly recommended, even if you're not already a fan.

SHANIA TWAIN - WHEN YOU KISS ME - MERCURY RECORDS

'When You Kiss Me' is the new single taken from Shania Twain's 'UP' album and it's the ideal chill-out song for this time of the year. Shania's mellow vocals are ideally suited to the lyrics and the sweeping guitar accompaniment is an asset to the song. Ballads are Shania's forte and this is one of the best tracks on the album that is certain to win her new fans. With such a worthy back-catalogue of hits Shania really can't go wrong, buy this and chill-out.

Reviews copies kindly provided by Mercury Records. Jennifer Linsell

Strangers on a Stage - Free to Good Home

Strangers on a Stage (SOS), those well known local musical performers (of all styles) are looking for gigs in 2004 - they play for voluntary groups free of charge! There's no catch; if you want to raise cash for your group and have a good time in the process SOS await your call. The group have gone through a radical face-lift of late and now offer a sick, virtuoso and highly polished show, ready to unleash their "unique brand of entertainment on the unwitting public".

Contact Jimmy McKenna on 01429 262642 to make a booking / for further information.



THINGS I HATE By Mivvi the Martian

I hate wasps. I hate things that fall out of magazines. I mean, think about it, you've bought a magazine..set aside some leisure time to sit down and read it; you open it and all manner of spam falls out of it. Now, that means you have to get straight back up again to consign the unsolicited material to the bin.

Annoying.

Wasps are a similar inconvenience really. You sit down to read a magazine, and then a wasp appears, almost as if by magic. Especially if it's in the middle of Winter. But it can happen. So, just after you've sat back down to read the now-cleared-of-spam-magazine, you have to get up again to deal with the wasp. Even more annoying.

I also hate Aldi. Maybe not as much as I hate wasps, but a hatred does flourish, for various reasons. The worst scenario for me then, would be to sit down to read a magazine; a leaflet from Aldi falls out, closely followed by..a wasp. Fortunately that's never happened.

For a long time now I've also hated Anthea Turner. Why was she, at one stage, the highest paid female presenter on television? I find that even more annoying than Wasps, Aldi, or things that fall out of magazines.

I also, and this might seem unfair, but lately I've started to hate Ant and Dec. And Cat Deeley, who seems to have no top lip. What I hate about Ant and Dec is that they're neither one thing nor the other really. Not funny, so not quite a double-act then; not talented. They're like Anthea Turner, in that they're just 'there' whenever you turn on the telly.

I hate people who go ski-ing. In fact I'm sure that people actually hate ski-ing, but they go because they think it's cool. I even hate the terminology and jargon of ski-ing, and won't endure any talk about it. Words like 'salopettes' - I really hate that word.

I hate vegetarians; although one of my best friends is one such. I suppose I'm not saying I actually hate the people, just the idea. And I'm sure that if I got to know the odd wasp, they're probably quite amusing when they've had a drink or two.

I hate joggers, and people on bikes when I'm trying to drive past them.

I hate packets that are difficult to open. In fact, if I was hanging off a cliff edge, and was in need of something to cling on to to drag myself back up, I would use the wrapper from a bar of chocolate or any convenience food. That definitely wouldn't snap or break.

Furthermore, I hate people who drive too fast. Taxi drivers are largely appalling.

BOMBARDMENT OF HARTLEPOOL by *Bill Hunter*

This year will see the 90th anniversary of an event of a grey December morning – the 16th December, 1914. The First World War had been declared a few months earlier. Many of the townsfolk had volunteered to fight the Germans – for this War was a battle of great armies of men. But to the folk of Northern England the troubles in Belgium seemed so far away.

That particular morning (it was a Wednesday) a mist hung over the sea. Hartlepool was awakening to another day. Already the shipyards and Engine Works had started their day's production; the children were preparing for school – just what seemed an ordinary day.

It was approaching 8 o'clock when, suddenly, just off the Heugh, out of the mist appeared 3 great German battleships. Shortly after 8 o'clock they opened fire on the Town. The Bombardment of Hartlepool had begun. Shell after shell was pumped into the town and the neighbouring West Hartlepool and nearby villages.

The obvious targets of the gun batteries on the Heugh; the shipyards and works were a well-timed naval exercise. But this was War with a difference – it was now War on civilians. One can imagine the surprise, the confusion and shock as screaming shells whistled overhead and exploded indiscriminately. People ran into the streets and were killed or maimed. Others remaining indoors took the risk of damage to their homes. Many houses in both towns were severely damaged and the occupiers killed. This was something for which they had not been prepared.

A hit on the local gasometer caused an explosion and fire and scores of people, using whatever means of transport they could muster, hurried out of Town as far from the horror as possible. Rumour was rife. There was talk of invasion. No one knew what was happening. No one, that is, other than the military who manned the 3 x 6" guns on the Heugh and Lighthouse batteries. The night before, their Commanding Officer had been warned that German ships were in the North Sea. One of the first shells to find its target damaged the gun emplacement and killed a sentry nearby. But the Durham Royal Garrison Artillery (Territorial Army) Regiment gave as good as it got and scored many direct hits on the German battleships. An eyewitness at the time recalled that the 3 warships were originally flying the White Ensign and the Union Jack. These were soon hauled down and the German flag fluttered in their place and the battle began.

The 3 ships kept up a constant barrage of fire and one of them - the Bleucher - manoeuvred into position where she was in direct line of the lighthouse. As a consequence the shore gun was unable to fire because the lighthouse structure was in the way. Royal Navy ships from the port played a great part too in the battle until finally the German ships steamed speedily away whilst other German ships further down the coast were bombarding Whitby and Scarborough.

In all, the bombardment lasted just under an hour. Silence again fell over the towns and the Hartlepoons began to count the cost in lives and damage. In that one tragic hour, over a hundred civilians alone had been killed and a score of military and naval personnel. Some families suffered the loss of two or three of their members – many of them children.

The event is recorded for posterity in the plaque near the present Heugh Lighthouse. But the painting, which I believe, is now kept in the Museum illustrates most vividly the scenes of that grey December morning, the Bombardment of Hartlepool.

Their task is made more difficult by the existence of King Ra, the sun god (Jaye Davidson). In 1979, George Miller showed us the darker side of sci-fi with Mad Max which starred Mel Gibson in the title role. The film was a great success and two sequels followed: The Road Warrior ('81) and Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome ('85). The success of these three films made Mel Gibson an international star. In 1982, Ridley Scott, the creator of Alien, brought us a new post-apocalyptic hero in the shape of Rick Deckard with the film Bladerunner. Also in the 90's, Brett Leonard brought us The Lawnmower Man and Virtuosity, both films wowed the cinema-goers with their stunning visual effects. Cyberpunk movies became the in-thing in 1995 with the release of Tank Girl and Johnny Mnemonic but they weren't to everyone's taste. Alphaville ('65) was one of Jean Luc Godard's more enjoyable films which successfully combined film-noir with sci-fi. Lemmy Caution (Eddie Constantine) turns futuristic agent to re-enact the legend of Eurydice and Orpheus in conquering Alpha 60, a strange city in which the emotions: love and tenderness have been banished. Raoul Coutard's excellent camera work turned contemporary Paris into a cold dehumanised city of the future. Andrei Tarkovsky, the renowned Russian director, made two films which were philosophical portrayals of the decay of the world as we know it: Solaris ('71) and Stalker ('79). It has been said that Solaris, recently remade with George Clooney, is what Stanley Kubrick intended his 2001:A Space Odyssey to be. In his films, Tarkovsky seems to be telling us, the viewer, that it is not technology that can save us but our spiritual intensity that holds the key. Sci-fi continues to be a popular genre whether in a book or on celluloid but the earlier examples are the measuring rod against which all modern movies are compared.



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TEAM

Graham Broughton

Garry Courtnell

Jennifer Linsell

John Winstanley

FROM SCI-FI TO CGI-MELIES TO SPIELBERG By Jennifer Linsell

In the early days of film-making Georges Melies discovered that amazing things could be done with a simple hand-cranked camera and a little imagination. You could turn back time, make time appear to stand still and make people appear and disappear, fantasy could be made a reality. One of Georges Melies' first films A Trip to the Moon (1902) was a 16 minute long combination of H.G. Wells and Jules Verne. The special effects were very amusing and the film was full of inventive charm. Melies made several other films that would now be classed as science fiction including 'The Impossible Voyage'. It was a charming silent adventure which took the cinema-goer on an 'impossible voyage' to the Sun. The extremely primitive special-effects were surprisingly effective. In this age of high-tech special-effects and CGI, Melies' films look a little old-fashioned but their charm and wit is still evident upon viewing. Rene Clair's silent feature film The Crazy Ray (1923) also looks dated now but it was very much ahead of its time. The film was a delightful silent comedy about a mad scientist who sets off a ray in Paris that freezes all of the population except for one solitary person, the watchman on the top of the Eiffel Tower. Only the watchman can put things right and restore normality. It had great effects and an original storyline. In 1926, Fritz Lang's Metropolis was science fiction of a much darker sort. The story was set in the year 2000 where the workers in a futurist city live underground and unrest among them is quelled by a young innocent girl Maria: but a mad inventor creates an evil version of the girl who incites the workers to revolt. The film was visually stunning with its scenes of rioting and disaster, and put a whole new slant on the frankenstein theme. Fritz Lang made one more sci-fi feature film in Germany, 'Woman in the Moon'. He abandoned the science fiction genre when he moved to the US but returned to it for his final film. The Thousand Eyes of Dr Mabuse, in 1960, which he filmed in Germany. The film told the story of a dedicated detective Commissioner Krauss (Gert Frobe) who must vanquish the infamous criminal Dr Mabuse (Wolfgang Preiss), who after coming back to life is on the loose again. This was the third part of Fritz Lang's trilogy and was effectively chilling. Many of the earlier American talkies that had sci-fi elements-the Frankenstein and Dracula films by Universal Studios, and the Warner Bros releases 'Doctor X' and 'The Mystery of the Wax Museum', are now classed as horror films. Doctor X (1932) was followed by a sequel. The Return of Doctor X in 1939. The Return of Doctor X was a brisk B-movie that was not so much a sequel as a poor imitation of The Walking Dead (1936) with Humphrey Bogart playing the Boris Karloff role as the executed man brought back to zombie life, this time as a lusty vampire. Bogart was made up to look like Leslie Banks in The Most Dangerous Game (1932). Another sci-fi film that could be classed as horror was Island of Lost Souls (1933) which was a chilling version of H.G. Wells' 'The Island of Doctor Moreau' in which Charles Laughton played an evil scientist whose experiments turned jungle animals into horrific human-like creatures. One of the most entertaining 'mad scientist' films of the 30's was The Invisible Man (1933) with Claude Rains in the title role. The special-effects were amazing and the script showcased James Whales' off-beat humour. The 1936 film Things to Come was way ahead of its time. This sci-fi of epic proportions was set during the aftermath of war in 1940 where the end result is plague, rebellion, a new society and the first rocket to the moon. The film boasted a strong cast of Raymond Massey, Sir Ralph Richardson, Edward Chapman and Cedric Hardwicke. Some of the miniature model work and effects look primitive but the film still has a certain charm. In 1953, William Cameron Menzies, the director/designer who designed Gone With The Wind (1939), directed one of the scariest sci-fi thrillers of the 50's, Invaders from Mars. The film was a cheaply-made chiller and

the storyline was told from the point of view of a 12 year-old boy David Maclean (Jimmy Hunt) who sees a flying saucer landing but nobody believes him. Pretty soon, aliens are possessing his friends, family and neighbours. The film features actual shots of tanks and troops amassing as the earthlings prepare to fight their alien visitors. It was originally shown in 3-D and featured very satisfying special-effects for its year. This film featured elements of the brilliant 'Invasion of the Bodysnatchers', directed by Don Siegel. Invasion of the Bodysnatchers (1956) told the story of small-town doctor Miles Bennell (Kevin McCarthy) who discovers that his town, Santa Mira, is being taken over by aliens who make their move while the residents are asleep. It was based on Jack Finney's The Body Snatchers and has been remade several times in various guises, but this is the definitive version and rates as one of the best 1950's genre films ever made. Incidentally, the late Sam Peckinpah appeared in a cameo role as meter reader Charlie Buckholtz. World War II presented the world with devastation more terrifying than either Jules Verne or H.G. Wells could ever have imagined and during this time, sci-fi films were conspicuous by their absence. After the war had ended, with the destructive new technology of atomic weaponry, the film-makers flocked back to the sci-fi genre with a vengeance. The 50's were the golden age of sci-fi in America. Films made ranged from the laughable and ridiculous Red Planet Mars (1952), a film in which the Americans and the Russians make radio contact with the planet Mars and discover that God lives there, to the sublime with Forbidden Planet (1956). Forbidden Planet, the classic of the 50's sci-fi, was based on William Shakespeare's 'The Tempest', with Commander Adams' (Leslie Neilson) US spaceship discovering a remote planet that is deserted except for Dr Morbius (Walter Pidgeon), his daughter Alta (Anne Francis), plus their automaton assistant Robby the Robot. It had an inventive script, excellent cast: Walter Pidgeon, Anne Francis, Earl Holliman, and superior special effects. A common theme of almost all of the 1950's sci-fi is Cold War paranoia and fears of the powers that be or the unknown. There was an irony in the last line spoken in the film The Thing, "Watch the skies! Keep watching the skies!" The Thing (1951) told the tale of scientists in the Arctic who dig up an alien life-form and defrost it, only to discover that it is an unstoppable predatory creature. The "thing" of the title was played to great effect by James Arness. A remake was made in 1982 and directed by John Carpenter. With a cast consisting of Kurt Russell, Wilford Brimley and Richard Dysart, it was as suspenseful, thrilling and genuinely frightening as the 50's original. Sci-fi films such as Invaders from Mars play on the cinema goers paranoia and set them thinking. What if their family and friends aren't really their family and friends but actually replicants made by an alien force? Of course, an "alien" force could just be a metaphor for communism, but it is up to the viewing public to decide. Some of these films are relevant even now. In 1951, The Day The Earth Stood Still was a classic science fiction story with an ambitious plot that conveyed a pacifist message. When a flying saucer lands in Washington DC, a ten foot tall robot, Gort, emerges from it, accompanied by a humanoid alien Klaatu (Michael Rennie). Gort obliterates tanks and guns before being immobilised by the alien. Klaatu later delivers an ultimatum to all of the world's leaders: stop the wars or face the devastating consequences. The scenes between Klaatu and the young widow Helen Benson (Patricia Neal) are very effective. The film's most poignant scene is the one in which the boy prevents Gort from destroying all mankind by uttering the immortal words: 'Gort! Klaatu barada nikto!' Bernard Hermann's haunting music score added to the atmosphere of impending doom. At the other end of the spectrum were the A-bomb inspired creatures of those wonderfully entertaining B-features such as Godzilla, King of the Monsters and Beginning of the End. One film that

was a cut above the rest was Them (1954) This must rate as one of the best 'creature features' of the 1950's. Its storyline of a nest of radioactive ants lurking in the sewers of LA has a relevance even today. It has all the prime ingredients of a good sci-fi film: the marvellous scenes of the massed troops making their way through the eerie storm drains of LA and the biblical connotations about the effects of radioactivity on mankind. It is something of a docu-drama but has amazing special effects and a truly enthralling ending. Joe Dante, whose films include Gremlins and Explorers, parodied a lot of the early sci-fi films in his excellent Matinee (1993), a film which told the story of a B-movie maker, who at the time of the Cuban missile crisis, arrives at an American naval base to stage the premiere of his new movie about a half-man, half-ant. This was a reference to the film Mant. Incidentally, the character played by John Goodman was based on producer/director William Castle who, in the 50's and 60's, made the films House on Haunted Hill (1958), The Tingler (1959) / Macabre (1958) and Thirteen Ghosts (1960). In 1957, The Incredible Shrinking Man told the story of a man who is exposed to radiation and gradually begins shrinking. Pretty soon he finds himself face to face with once familiar objects that are now terrifying and dangerous to him. The battle with the 'giant' spider is one of the best scenes in the film. British sci-fi from the same era was far more subdued but somewhat scarier. The Hammer Studios revitalized the sci-fi/ horror movie in the late 50's with The Quatermass Experiment (1955) (known in the US as The Creeping Unknown), Quatermass 11 (1957) (known in the US as Enemy from Space) and Quatermass and the Pit (1967) (known in the US as Five Million Miles to Earth). Hammer may have lacked the technological special effects of the American films but this was compensated for with top-notch acting and intelligent dialogue. In the Hammer films, the enemy is often portrayed as being within us or lies within our own past, and as in The Quatermass Experiment is more to be pitied than feared. In 1962, These Are The Damned must rate as one of the strangest and most unsettling Hammer films ever made, combining sci-fi with teen rebellion. It was set in Weymouth and the plot starts with a rather humdrum romance, then livens up when a violent gang of motorcycle thugs clash with scientists when a group of local children are discovered sealed in a cave and are found to be radioactive. This film, also known as The Damned, featured a strong cast including Oliver Reed, Shirley Anne Field, McDonald Carey and Kenneth Cope. Films began to have a moral to their story and none more so than 'X-The Man With X-Ray Eyes' in which Ray Milland played a scientist who eventually destroyed himself with forbidden knowledge. In 1968, 2001: A Space Odyssey played for the cinema-goers sympathy with its likeable characters. By the mid-1970's the sci-fi genre was becoming dormant but Steven Spielberg and George Lucas gave it the kiss of life with a vengeance. George Lucas' Star Wars trilogy were box-office hits with vast budgets and astounding state-of-the-art special effects. Steven Spielberg produced two of the most successful sci-fi fantasies ever: Close Encounters of the Third Kind ('77) and E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial ('82). These films are as popular now as when they first hit the big screen. With 'The Terminator' ('84), Terminator 2: Judgement Day and Aliens ('86), James Cameron, alongside Spielberg and Lucas, brought a new modern approach to the sci-fi genre. Taking advantage of the renewed interest in sci-fi, movie-makers revived the 1960's cult favourite Star Trek and put it on the big screen. So far there have been 10 Star Trek movies with the most recent one, Nemesis, rumoured to be the last ever. The movies set out to show that humans and aliens could live and work together, and achieved their aim. In 1994, Stargate pitted Anthropologist Dr Jackson (James Spader) against the American military led by Colonel O'Neill (Kurt Russell) to decide the fate of a slave kingdom of inhabitants who are descended from the ancient Egyptians.

BIG FISH

Ewan McGregor, Albert Finney, Jessica Lange, Helena Bonham Carter, Danny DeVito.

Tim Burton is, and always has been, the master of the tall tale. By shunning realism, he has created some of the most original and imaginative films ever made such as *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *Pee-Wee's Big Adventure* which were veritable funhouses of pure fantasy. The latter was heralded by critics as the most entertaining childrens' film ever made. Tim Burton's latest offering, *Big Fish*, tells the story of myth-maker Edward Bloom (played by Ewan McGregor as a young boy and Albert Finney as an older man) who with every rendition of his stories makes himself appear larger than life. His rocky relationship with his son William (adequately played by Billy Crudup) being his only failure in life. William finds it difficult to distinguish between the man and the myth but gradually discovers that they are one and the same. *Big Fish* is a film of epic proportions set in the same vein as *Forest Gump*, portraying a modern-day odyssey through several decades and filled with an assortment of larger than life oddball characters and endearing tall tales. The tales are interesting and inventive: -When a giant unwittingly terrorises a small town he is invited to join the circus, a group of children catch a glimpse of their future deaths in a witch's glass eye and Siamese twins help Edward to escape combat during WWII. Burton shows the power of love at first sight to be strong enough to make time literally stand still. Alison Lohman and Jessica Lange play Edward Bloom's wife at different ages, Steve Buscemi shines as a poet-laureate of questionable talent and Danny De Vito acts his socks off as a circus conductor. Helena Bonham Carter is wasted in the role of an old acquaintance of Edward's and her plotline is so poorly written that it could have been omitted from the film. Tim Burton's films are mainly well-loved because of their human warmth and often dark undertones. *Big Fish* which was ably-penned by John August and based on the original novel by Daniel Wallace rates as one of Burton's frothiest and most heart-warming films he's ever made. This film about the relationship between fathers and sons, despite its 12A rating, is one that will delight families of all ages and is a cinematic testament to good storytelling and excellent filmmaking.

Highly recommended.

The winners of last issue's **Warner Wordsearch Competition** were:

1st Prize-**May Rogers**, Marine Drive, Hartlepool who received a family pass for *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*, a Lord of the Rings hooded sweatshirt and a goodie bag with Lord of the Rings Top Trumps collector cards.

2 runners-up prizes went to **Joanne Hodgeson**, Warrior Park, Seaton Carew and **Daniel Gibson**, Laburnum Street, Hartlepool who both received a pair of cinema tickets plus LOTR goodie bag and Top Trumps.



Daniel Gibson

All prizes were kindly donated by Warner Cinema, Hartlepool.

VUE CINEMA PRIZE WORDSEARCH



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I, ROBOT
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The First correct entry drawn after the closing date will receive film goodies and a VUE Cinema Family Pass - plus 2 runners-up will receive a pair of Warner Cinema tickets.
Closing Date :- End of March

Send completed Wordsearch to 'THIS' Magazine.
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