

CELEBRATING 65 YEARS OF BRITAIN'S LEGENDARY SF HERO!

FANZINE



65<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

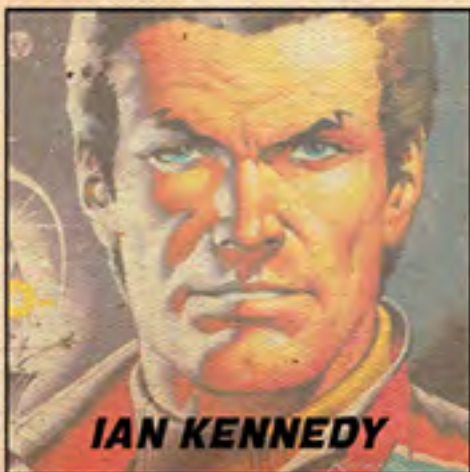
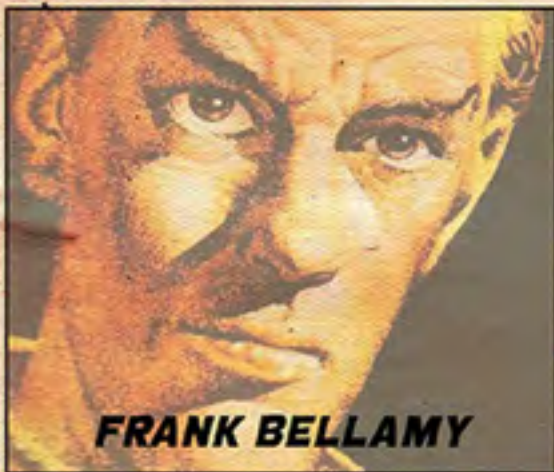
# Journey Planet

## DAN DARE

PILOT OF THE FUTURE



CELEBRATING 65 YEARS OF BRITAIN'S LEGENDARY SF HERO!



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JAMES BACON ~ MICHAEL CARROLL ~ CHRIS GARCIA  
EDITORS

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SOME YEARS IN  
THE FUTURE -  
AN EDITORIAL BY  
MICHAEL  
CARROLL

This issue of *Journey Planet* is, as you'll have surmised by now, all about Dan Dare. And that's because James Bacon asked me if I'd be interested in co-editing an issue about Judge Dredd.

I'm a huge fan of Judge Dredd but I declined the offer to work on an issue about him for several reasons. First, because I spent much of my working life writing Judge Dredd scripts, and, second, because Dredd is very much a current character and as such it's not hard to find good articles about him.

So I told James that I'd rather work on an issue about Dan Dare, a comic-book character I love just as much as Dredd but who isn't currently in the public eye. Also, this year is Dare's 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary, so the timing of this issue works out rather nicely (we're not ruling out the possibility of a Dredd-related issue at some point in the future, I promise!).

My own introduction to Dan Dare came from his incarnation in *2000AD* (also, of course, the home of Judge Dredd), but there's a lot more on that deeper inside this issue, so for now I want to talk about why I believe Dan Dare is one of the most important British comic-book characters ever to see print, if not *the* most important.

*Eagle* was launched in April 1950, which means that its first readers were born before the end of the second world war, and many of them grew up in cities littered with bomb-sites. They lived with ration books, a concept that subsequent generations find hard to grasp (and long may that remain true). They had lost friends and family members in the war.

But the war was over. The allies had been victorious, and for the first time in years the famous British sense of optimism in a crisis looked like it might actually be justified.

*Dan Dare* wasn't the first British comic-book strip to adopt a science fiction angle, but it was remarkably influential. Over a million copies of the first issue of *Eagle* were printed, and gracing the cover of that issue was the first adventure of a pilot of the future.

The artwork was gorgeous, the stories were smart and optimistic. With one foot firmly lodged in the stiff-upper-lippedness of the old Biggles stories, Dan Dare was clearly a *British* hero, arguably the *quintessential* British hero. An Englishman through-and-through, he was an idealised version of the polite, soft-speaking officer who looks out for the enlisted chaps and isn't afraid to get his own hands dirty.

“It’s my  
contention  
that Dan Dare  
cleared the  
path for  
Doctor Who,  
and 2000AD,  
and even  
Harry Potter...”

Dan would always opt to use his brains rather than his fists – though he was certainly familiar with the rules of fisticuffs if a situation required a more muscular solution.

So the post-war British kids grew up reading Dan Dare. Before long everyone knew who he was, even if they didn’t read the comic. He became part of the zeitgeist, and that – I believe – was an important factor in making science fiction more acceptable to the British public.

Yes, SF is still marginalised in British society compared to, say, the appreciation of that game where people kick a small sphere around a big rectangle, but it’s growing stronger every year, and for that we have to thank Dan Dare and Frank Hampson.


It’s my contention that *Dan Dare* cleared the path for *Doctor Who*, and *2000AD*, and even *Harry Potter*, not to mention being an inspiration to countless amazing inventors, writers, artists, musicians and film-makers.

Dan Dare helped people to understand that science fiction isn’t *just* about rampaging monsters or avaricious aliens. It’s about taking current situations and extrapolating from them. It’s about examining our own cultures from different angles, seeing ourselves through other people’s eyes. It’s about using the knowledge we possess as a tool to acquire *new* knowledge, and applying that knowledge in the best way possible.

Above all, science fiction is about hope.

And hope affords people – however downtrodden – the opportunity to raise their heads and look up. First to the horizon, and then to the stars.





DIG! STOP  
CLOWNING,  
WE'VE GOT  
WORK TO  
DO!

2

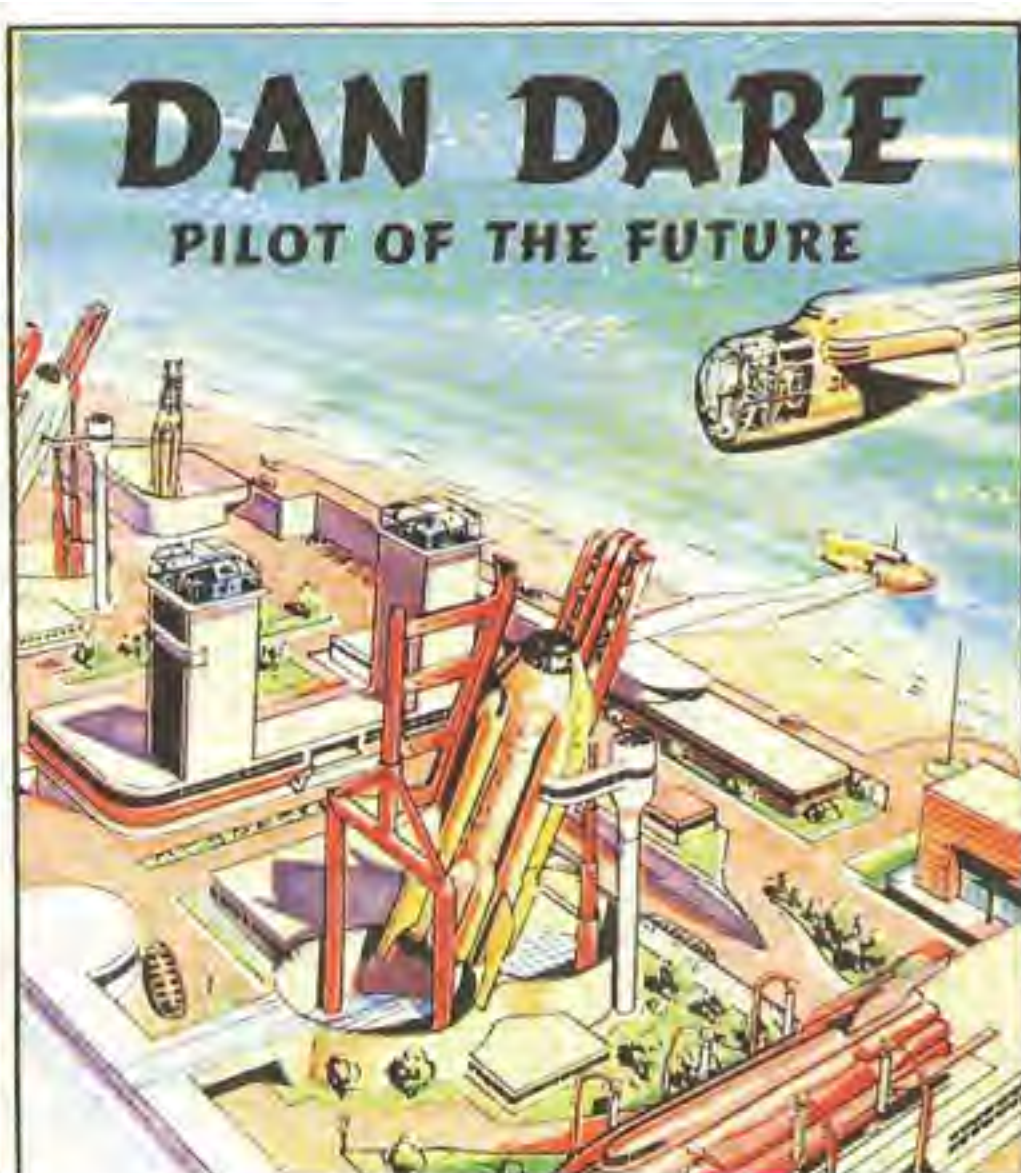
DAN DARE IN PRINT

EVERY FRIDAY



THREEPENCE

EAGLE



THE RISE  
AND FALL  
OF FRANK  
HAMPSON:  
A  
PERSONAL  
VIEW BY  
EDWARD  
JAMES

I confess I do not remember Friday 14 April 1950. I was exactly a month short of my third birthday. But my elder brother Stephen, who was then eleven, somehow persuaded our mother to give him threepence to buy the first issue of *The Eagle*. Or maybe, as happened later, it was just added to the weekly newspaper bill.

When I learned to read, I read *Eagle* from cover to cover. But it was always the first two pages, in colour, that really entranced me. My first science fiction. The first issues that I actually remember reading was early on in “Marooned on Mercury”, the third adventure, from some time in June or July 1952. But, the following year, disaster struck! Stephen, for some reason, lost interest in *The Eagle*. Just after the start of “Operation Saturn”, some time in spring 1953, my weekly fix of science fiction came to an end. I did not at first listen to *Journey into Space*, whose 54 episodes on the radio began in 1953; and the first science fiction on children’s TV was not screened until 1954: that was *The Lost Planet*, based on Angus MacVicar’s book from 1953, and I loved it!

I must have persuaded my mother that I could read well enough to appreciate *The Eagle* early in 1954: I can remember starting again on “Operation Saturn” in time to see “that apoplectic teddy-bear”, as the character Hank called the ruler of Saturn, be captured by Dan Dare and his buddies. (I wonder what I made of the word “apoplectic”?) And then I got *The Eagle* every Friday from then until some time in 1959. (The price had gone up from threepence to fourpence after 18 issues; it was fourpence-ha’penny from 4 May 1951 into the 1960s, at which point I lose track. And interest.)

My mother threw out all the *Eagles* sometime in the mid-1960s. But I had already dismembered them anyway: I kept just the first page, with Dan Dare, and discarded the rest. Yes, I was a vandal. But I didn’t lose my fond memories of Dan Dare. I bought the strange volume called *Dan Dare Annual 1974*, produced by IPC Magazines, which contained reprints of “The Red Moon Mystery” (originally 5 October 1951 to 30 June 1952) and “Safari to Space” (originally 3 January to 2 May 1959). In 1980 Dragon’s Dream, based in the Netherlands, issued three very nicely produced volumes of what I would argue were the three greatest Dan Dare stories: “The Man From Nowhere” (13 May to 25 November 1955), “Rogue Planet” (2 December 1955 to 15 February 1957) and “Reign of the Robots” (22 February 1957 to 24 January 1958). It was wonderful to be introduced to those stories again, even though I thought it a mistake to leave off the opening *Eagle* logo, which always stood on the top left corner of the first page of each Dan Dare episode, and to

“Well, there  
she goes, Sir -  
I wonder if  
she'll ever  
come back?”

from the first  
appearance of Dan  
Dare in *Eagle* #1



replace it by an enlarged version of the first proper panel; indeed, the panels were reordered on every page, and the scale of each of them altered to fit the new format. Some were redrawn by Frank Hampson himself, according to Alastair Crompton (see below). As a revival of Dan Dare, it was splendid; but I longed to have a proper reproduction of all the adventures.

The Dragon's Dream books reminded me that, for my whole childhood, I had wondered about what happened to Dan Dare in those six missing months of “Operation Saturn”, when no copies of *The Eagle* came into the house. Then, in 1985 or 1986, after I got involved with the Science Fiction Foundation, I discovered that the SFF Collection (then at the North-East London Polytechnic, in Barking), included complete copies of *The Eagle*. (As Chair of the Science Fiction Foundation now, I should point out that the Collection can now be consulted in Special Collections at the University of Liverpool: please do not take the District Line to Barking!) In the 1980s I was at the University of York. I went down early to one of the meetings of the SFF Council just so that I could read “Operation Saturn”. And I looked back at some of the pages of the first stories: “Dan Dare: Pilot of the Future”, “The Red Moon Mystery”, and “Marooned on Mercury”. What wonderful stuff it was!

In 1987 Hawk Books started printing proper facsimiles of Dan Dare (with the *Eagle* logo restored); and, of course, I bought them; at least up to the ninth volume, *The Terra Nova Trilogy*, which came out in 1994. In 1990, Hawk Books also published *The Dan Dare Dossier* (1990), a fascinating and well-illustrated book about the whole Dan Dare phenomenon; it reproduced some whole comic strips (from the post-Hampson era), but also talked about the characters, the artists, the hardware, and even the toys. (Ah yes, I had some of those once upon a time...)

I have just spent a week re-reading the first nine volumes of Hawk Books's “Deluxe Collectors Edition”, all that I own: almost certainly this was the first time I had read them from beginning to end in such a short space of time. I have a much clearer idea of the trajectory, from 1950 to 1960; I now recall why I gave up reading *The Eagle* towards the end of 1959; and “The Rise and Fall of Frank Hampson” seemed a suitable title for this piece.

Frank Hampson was, of course, the artist and writer who created Dan Dare, launched him into space, and into ten years of adventures on Venus, Mars, Mercury, Saturn, and outside the Solar System altogether. I dedicated my first book on science fiction to him, with these words: “To Frank Hampson (1917-1985), who introduced me to science fiction” (*Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford University Press, 1994). When I talk about his “rise and fall”, I am not talking about the man, or about his other artistic creations, just about his involvement with Dan Dare. The story has been told in Alastair Crompton, *The Man Who Drew Tomorrow* (Bournemouth: Who Dares Publishing, 1985).

It is easy to see now that the related trilogy of “The Man from Nowhere”, “Rogue Planet” and “Reign of the Robots” was the high point of Hampson's creativity. The stories ran from mid-May 1955 until the beginning of 1958. “The Man from Nowhere” was the shortest of the three, only lasting around six months: but, then, it was really only an introduction to the other two, showing how Dare and his crew managed to cross interstellar space for the first time. They thought they were travelling at the speed of light; the peaceful Crypts, desperate for help in their struggle with the warlike Phants, had lied to them. After Dan Dare successfully gets rid of the Phant problem (not through warfare, but by introducing a dietary change that made the Phants as pacific as the Crypts), the lie is revealed. They had travelled to Cryptos at under the speed of light, in suspended animation units; their outward journey had taken five years, and the return journey would be the same. When they *do* return, they discover that in those ten years, Earth has been taken over by his archenemy the Mekon and his Treens, with the help of highly efficient and lethal robots. “Reign of the Robots” is the darkest and most terrifying of all Hampson's stories. We see the concentration camps established by the Mekon—it was always clear that the Treens were really alien green Nazis, but this was the logical extension of that idea—and we are shown the sadistic “scientific” experiments being carried out on those humans who had survive the invasion.

Hampson's strengths are very visible in these three stories. His ability to construct plausible eco-systems of alien fauna and flora, evident in Dan Dare's first trip to Venus, was beautifully carried out for his creation of Cryptos; his skill in producing plausible systems of technology, again first seen with the technologies of the two Venusian races of the Treens and the Therons, reached a peak of perfection here. And, for the first time, each panel, even the minor ones, was created with equal attention to detail. One of the things that had shocked me on going back to the earliest Dan Dare adventures was the slapdash nature of the artwork on occasions. This was not only in “Marooned on Mercury”, much of which was entrusted to Harold Johns when Frank Hampson was ill; it was in the very first story too. That first story looks amateurish in several ways compared to what Hampson was doing in the mid-to-late 1950s: part of this is the result of the technically very much improved colour reproduction late in the 1950s. The improvements in technique and technol-



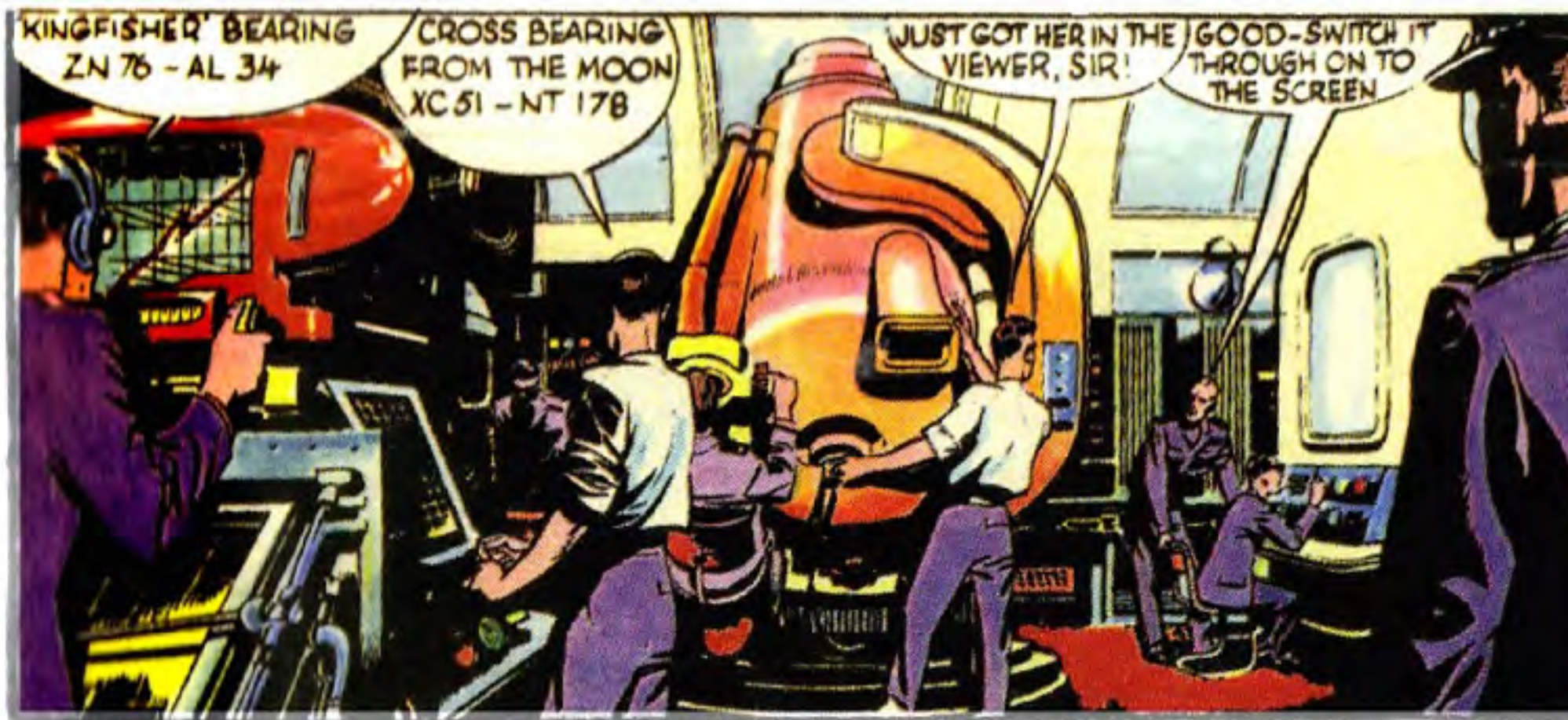
ogy can already be seen in “Prisoners of Space” (26 May 1954 to 6 May 1955), the episode that comes between “Operation Saturn” and “The Man from Nowhere”. It was always one of my favourite stories as a child; partly perhaps because of the way in which it introduced an element of the school story to Dan Dare (it starts with a group of school boys in the Astral Training College, and introduces a boy character, “Flamer” Spry, who becomes a fixture in Dan’s team), but partly because I was always fascinated by the closed environment of the space station, and a good deal of the action takes place there.

The “rise” of Frank Hampson in terms of his competence and imagination is clear as one progresses through the first five or six years of Dan Dare’s development. The “fall” is equally obvious, though much of it was outside Hampson’s hands. I was perfectly conscious of the “fall” as a contemporary reader. The episode that immediately followed “Reign of the Robots” was a sign of things to come. “The Ship that Lived” was really just an epilogue to “Reign of the Robots”; but it was presented as a short story, lasting less than three months (31 January to 18 April 1958), and there was nothing much new to it, just visiting again a locale on Venus that Dan had first visited back in the first adventure. That was succeeded by “The Phantom Fleet” (25 April to 27 December 1958), which had two new alien races (one friendly and one not) and some good features, but seemed very rushed compared to earlier adventures. The threat posed by the “Pesquods” was over in just a few frames; they were totally destroyed by an eruption of Krakatoa, that they themselves had triggered. And that was the end of the adventure: a damp squib.

The trend to shorter adventures continued in the last three linked adventures that I am familiar with: “Safari in Space” (3 January to 2 May 1959), “Terra Nova” (9 May to 21 November 1959) and “Trip to Trouble” (28 November 1959 to 12 March 1960). “Terra Nova” is actually much shorter than the dates above imply: there are only two issues between 20 June and 29 August, and both those are undated: Frank Hampson’s name, which had never been systematically listed each week, appears for the last time half-way through “Terra Nova”, in the second of the two undated issues. The hiatus was due, I now rediscover (in the text by Terry Doyle and Alan Vince, in Hawk Books’ volume 9, *The Terra Nova Trilogy*), to a long-running print strike. Maybe it was the realization that *The Eagle* would not appear each Friday with the newspapers (my parents took *The Daily Express* and the *Birmingham Post*), and that it was not the end of the world, which caused me to abandon my loyalty to *The Eagle*. But I think rather it was what happened to the art-work, which one can see very clearly in that volume.

*The Eagle* had been taken over by a new owner, one step in a whole series of Fleet Street takeovers. Odhams Press were keen to cut costs. Hampson recalled that “towards the end I was treated like an office-boy”. He decided to leave. For a while no other artist was named on the strip: until on 3 October 1959, the name “Frank Bellamy” appeared. Two members of Hampson’s team, Don Harley and Keith Watson, continued to carry on aspects of the Dan Dare “look” that Hampson had created; but the new senior artist, Frank Bellamy, imported new elements and new artistic techniques (shows provided by speckling rather than hatching, for instance). Don Harley noted that Bellamy “would come up to Hulton House, where we had our studio on the top floor, for a few hours twice a week to make sure that our work tied up with the part of the strips that he had done.” It didn’t. Dan Dare himself changed radically in appearance in some frames (but not in all). His jagged eyebrow (as familiar in the 1950s as Harry Potter’s lightning scar decades later) was sometimes all that told the reader who the man in the panel actually was: the facial features were unrecognisable. Doyle and Vince wrote “Readers, at the time, must have found the sudden change somewhat jarring.” Yes, indeed. Apart from the fact that I was now 12, and already reading “the real stuff”—Heinlein, Clarke, Wyndham, etc—I think that was what persuaded me to stop reading *The Eagle*, which was for me, then and always, Dan Dare. And Dan Dare was Frank Hampson.





# CRISIS OF MULTIPLE DARES BY DAVID MCDONALD

I can't exactly pinpoint which version of Dan Dare I encountered first. I think it was in my older brothers' 2000ADs, but even his collection was incomplete at best, so I had an idea of the character but not the storylines. By the time I had started reading the new *Eagle*, the gloriously printed photostripped version had passed, and while Dare was entertaining, *Doomlord* and *The 13<sup>th</sup> Floor* really took my attention.

My late uncle gave me copies of the original *Eagle*. The copies featured the "Man from Nowhere" storyline and I was simply amazed. Comics in the eighties were printed on paper not much better than toilet paper, and usually had just two pages of colour within them. The *Eagle* of the fifties was printed on excellent paper in a tabloid format - stories had artwork in full vibrant colour, and stories that looked exciting. I had to have more!

A year or so later I discovered Hawk books reprints of Dare's adventures. These reprinted the stories in chronological order, and were nearly the same size as had been originally published.

I was hooked. There was something about these Dare stories that acted as a counterbalance to the grim and gritty hard men characters of *2000AD* and the morally ambiguous superhero comics like *Watchmen* and *The Dark Knight* that I was reading at that time.

The *Dan Dare* stories were bright and optimistic. The characters were clearcut, the bad guys were bad and the good guys were definitely heroes. The artwork was excellent and the stories were great. "The Man from Nowhere" is still one of my favourite comics!

Having found an interest in the character I set about reading the *2000AD* version and soon realised that this version had very little to do with the original except in name and eyebrow! Excellently drawn by Massimo Belardinnelli and Dave Gibbons, the stories were a far cry from its original glory days, but still entertaining. Not entertaining enough though as the storyline was left unfinished.

“I imagine he considers it his duty... Dan was dedicated to the International Space Fleet. He saw it as everything that was best about us: Mankind United, no more wars on Earth. But when all's said and done, he's still an Englishman. When his country's threatened, he'll answer the call.”

Jocelyn Peabody



The new *Eagle* version did come as a big surprise on re-reading. It featured Dan Dare's great-great Grandson, handily called Dan Dare! The first story called “The Return of the Mekon” was written by Pat Mills and John Wagner, reusing a film script they had done for a proposed *Dare* film. The artwork was full colour by Gerry Embleton, Oliver Frey and Ian Kennedy.

Mills and Wagner really captured the spirit of the original 50s series but with a modern feel. The artwork is outstanding, a worthy successor to the fifties strip. After Wagner departs, Mills continues with the “Firefly” storyline and Ian Kennedy's art is the highlight, simply wonderful. “Firefly” is the peak of the new *Eagle* run. The comic changes format to the standard newsprint paper, the painted artwork is gone, but the story does continue with Mills writing and later Barrie Tomlinson taking over. Kennedy is joined by Carlos Cruz on art. Cruz would then go on to become the main artist over the following few years. The quality of these post full colour stories is generally good but there is a drift, and the character becomes a little directionless. He is then revamped as a ‘Space Marshal.’

Tom Tully is on board as a writer at this stage – and the art begins to suffer. John Gilliat, a fine artist, but maybe not suited to *Dare*, had a long run and then is followed for an extended run by an artist called Carmona. The stories are long and directionless, and it is eventually brought to an end when the original Dan Dare is brought back to the comic in all-new adventures by original 60's artist Keith Watson in 1989. Watson is joined by other artists, notably David Pugh who would become the main artist on *Dare* until the title folds in 1994.

This wasn't the end for *Dare* though. In 1994, he appeared in an American comic mini-series written by Garth Ennis and drawn by Gary Erskine and he also appeared on Television in 2002 in the *Dan Dare* animated series.

*Spaceships Away* has been published since 2003 and contains new stories featuring the 50's version of the character. *Dare* also featured in *Revolver* comic in 1990 excellently drawn by Rian Hughes, and scripted by Grant Morrison. An honourable mention has to go to the ‘Ministry of Space’, by Warren Ellis and Chris Weston. Not quite *Dare*, but close enough.

So all these versions of *Dare* have never really hit the heights that the original Dan Dare scaled. The absence of publication for a decade in the sixties and seventies never allowed the character to grow and evolve naturally like *Roy of the Rovers* and *Dredd* have. *Dare* remains stuck in the 50's and attempts to update him always feel forced. The exception to this is Mills', Wagner's and Kennedy's fantastic run in the new *Eagle* (which for me succeeded in getting the characters of *Dare* right in an updated setting, with artwork worthy of being included in the original run).



# DAN DARE

*A hero from the dawn of space exploration – Dare suffered terrible injuries in a desperate attempt to save the first Orbital Power Station. Unable to rebuild his shattered body, surgeons put Dare into suspended animation until the 22nd century.*

With the superior knowledge of that age, Dan Dare is now brought back to life . . . a man with a new body, a new face and a whole new Universe to master!



The original *Eagle* comic was canned in April 1969 (it was merged with *Lion*) and for the last two years of its life its once-lead story, *Dan Dare*, appeared only in reprints of earlier adventures.

But a little under eight years later, in February of 1977, the future arrived in the form of *2000AD*, and gracing its glorious colour centre-spread was *Dan Dare*.

I was ten years old, almost eleven. I'd known from a newspaper article that appeared shortly before *2000AD* arrived that this Dan Dare would be a new version of an existing character, and my dad confirmed that. Dad had been a reader of the original *Eagle* (which was launched when he was ten years old), and was very familiar with the character.

But this *2000AD* Dan Dare looked, well, very different to the original. In place of the slender build, prominent chin and "British WWII officer"-style uniform we now had a muscular superhero with a crew-cut (and a widow's peak pointy enough to open cans). The sublime realism of the original's artwork was replaced with Massimo Belardinelli's gorgeous, nightmarish and stunningly over-the-top designs.

In short, this character was Dan Dare in name only... He was not the chap my dad remembered from *Eagle*. The "Welcome To Your Future" two-page feature inside the first issue of *2000AD* (see pic on the left) told us that the original Dare had been seriously injured and placed in suspended animation, then revived almost two hundred years later. This wasn't a major plot point: it was an almost throwaway reference.

Nevertheless, I loved science fiction and I loved comics. In that first issue of *2000AD* we also had stories about the Russians (I mean, Volgans) executing a full-scale invasion of Britain, cowboys from the far future travelling back in time to hunt dinosaurs for their meat, a hyper-powered secret-agent with a computer in his brain, and a fantastic futuristic version of basketball where the players flew around using jetpacks.

A WHOLE NEW  
UNIVERSE TO  
MASTER! - MICHAEL  
CARROLL LOOKS  
BACK AT THE  
2000AD  
INCARNATION OF  
DAN DARE

Remember, I was *ten!* It really was as though the editors had probed my brain and crafted a comic specifically for me. How could I not have loved it? And with that beautiful new rendition of *Dan Dare* thrown into the mix, *2000AD* was an instant hit. (A hit that didn't diminish in the second issue when future cop *Judge Dredd* arrived.)

So, yeah, I loved it. And I loved Dan Dare in particular. It didn't matter to me that this wasn't my dad's Dan Dare. This was *my* Dan Dare. Giant alien creatures, tons of action, spaceships being torn apart, wonderfully inventive technology, heroes, villains, sacrifice... Thirty-eight years later, I still get chills when I re-read issue 11, the final episode of that first Dan Dare story.

Issue 12 saw Dan returning to Earth in a new story that reintroduced The Mekon, further cementing the strip's connection with the original Dare, and in the middle of that tale we had our first glimpse of Dare as he'd originally looked, thanks to a headshot-only flashback when The Mekon learns the identity of his adversary.

For these stories, *Dan Dare* was given the coveted centre pages of the comic, a sure sign that this was the lead story. Not only did the centre pages mean that the artist could indulge in a lovely two-page spread, they were in colour!

(For those unfamiliar with British comics of the 1970s: most titles featured colour on only the covers and the centre pages – plus they were printed on newsprint. In those days we didn't have the current culture of comic-collecting: you read 'em and then passed them on to your friends. Or – far too frequently – came home from school to find your

mother had done a clear-out and

donated them to the local children's hospital. Or, even more horrifying, to the bin. This is why it's so hard to find complete collections of titles such as *Tiger* and *Victor*. *2000AD* was one of the key titles to change that approach: the readers wanted to *keep* their issues!)

That said, we know now (from such sources as David Bishop's book *Thrill Power Overload* – a detailed history of the first thirty years of *2000AD*) that the most popular strip in those early days wasn't *Dan Dare*, or even *Judge Dredd*: it was *M.A.C.H. One*, almost certainly because the character was "inspired by" the then massively-popular TV show *The Six Million Dollar Man*.

Dan Dare took a break from *2000AD* for issues 24 to 27, and when he came back, he was, once again, different. This time, Dave Gibbons was on art duties, giving us a more realistic and grounded look to Dare and to the series in general. Dare was given control of a powerful starship and a crew composed mostly of redshirts and was instructed to investigate The Lost Worlds, a dangerous region of space where he could explore strange new planets and seek out new forms of life and previously unknown civilisations.

(From issue #46, the *Dan Dare* strip was moved from the centre pages – *Judge Dredd*, by now clearly the fan-favourite, took its place – but instead of lumping *Dare* in with the rest of the "ordinary" strips, it did receive a little boost: the episodes now started on the front cover of the comic, a delicious move that not only allowed for an extra colour page of comicy goodness in every issue, it also harked back to the days of the original *Eagle*. This experiment only ran until issue #58, after which it was indeed relegated to black-and-white-only status, not counting the occasional cover.)

But this Trek-like take wasn't to last either... After numerous exciting but by-the-book adventures (land on strange planet, get captured, escape, blow up something big, fly away) Dare's crew was wiped out, the ship was destroyed, and by issue #85 Dan was the sole survivor... drifting in space, facing certain death.

The strip returned with the story "Servant of Evil!" in issue #100. Rescued



“Because he holds something an earthman cherishes above all other things...  
 ... THE KEY TO MY FREEDOM!”



by The Mekon and now suffering from amnesia, Dare was led to believe that he was Marshal Varyan, an officer of the Galactic Police Network. Naturally, this meant that he was given a natty new uniform... Which effectively means that “Servant of Evil!” marks the *third* incarnation of Dan Dare in 2000AD. Looking back now, it seems obvious that The Powers That Be didn’t really know what to do with the character.

The last words in the final 2000ad Dan Dare comic

Luckily, Dare soon recovered his memories, as visualised in the gorgeous panel above by Dave Gibbons, who remained as the key Dan Dare artist for the remainder of the series (though Brian Lewis, Garry Leach and Trev Goring stepped in a few times)...

“Servant of Evil!” saw Dare acquire a very powerful weapon known as the Cosmic Claw, further reinforcing the idea that he had effectively metamorphosed into a super-hero. Though this storyline has been heavily derided by fans in the years since, I thoroughly enjoyed it at the time and it’s still a lot of fun.



The final *Dan Dare* story in 2000AD, "Traitor", began in issue #119. It reintroduced Dan's old Treen pal Sondar, and ran until #126, at which point we were told that Dan would be taking a break for a while. That was in August 1979. We're still waiting, guys...

The 2000AD *Dan Dare* stories will be reprinted later this year by Rebellion (now owners of 2000AD), so this will be the first chance many readers will have to experience that incarnation of the character.

Contrary to some news articles on the upcoming volumes, this will *not* be the first time the strips have been reprinted... Back in 1991 Fleetway / Quality included the strips starting with "The Lost Worlds" in the fifteen-issue, US-comic-sized title *Dare The Impossible*, which featured all-new covers and, for the first time, recoloured artwork. Unfortunately (and in defiance of the publisher's name), the reproduction wasn't good.

On the whole, I believe that 2000AD's treatment of the character was positive. For a start, there was some cracking artwork and fun storylines. But it also kept the character alive, which is important. My fondness for the strip encouraged me to seek out everything I could find about the original, and I'm sure that I'm not alone there.

When *Eagle* was relaunched in 1982, Dan Dare returned again. Or, rather, *another* version of Dan Dare appeared. Featuring the great-great-great-grandson of the original, these new strips ignored the 2000AD version completely. Shame! But they were still very good stuff, a mainstay of the title pretty much throughout its entire run (which means it lasted a heck of a lot longer than the 2000AD incarnation).

In 1991 2000AD's short-lived sibling publication *Revolver* included *Dare* by Grant Morrison and Rian Hughes, a darkly humorous sequel to the original *Eagle* strips.

But will we ever see new adventures of the 2000AD version of *Dan Dare*? I'm guessing that's unlikely. But it sure would be nice to have that blasted cliff-hanger resolved after all this time!





# VIRGIN COMICS' DAN DARE! BY GARY ERSKINE

*A well-received seven-issue series of Dan Dare was launched in 2007 by Virgin Comics, with a script by Garth Ennis and art by Gary Erskine. Here, Gary has kindly provided his reflections on the series...*

The Virgin Comics *Dan Dare* was originally supposed to have had Chris Weston on the art duties with Garth. Chris was a huge Frank Hampson and *Eagle* fan but schedule difficulties meant he couldn't work on the series. I was recommended by both Garth and Chris and finally convinced Virgin Comics and Richard Branson, and the Dan Dare Corporation, that I was the right artist to continue the legacy.

Although I missed the original *Eagle* launch, I remember seeing old copies around marts and picked up some of the reprints: the Dragon's Dream editions were particularly inspiring, even with some of the bodged artwork patches. *Reign of Robots* – part of the *Man from Nowhere* Trilogy – was a favourite. Hampson's work and the later Bellamy, Harley and Watson really impressed. I also remember (and enjoyed) the *2000AD* re-imagining. The organic artwork by Massimo Belardinelli was astounding to look at. Later episodes by Dave Gibbons also made for a lasting impression. Then the Ron Embleton work in the rebooted *Eagle* was launched and harkened back to the early days of the *Eagle*.

When designing the vehicles for the new series, Garth wanted a very specific nuts-and-bolts approach reflecting the shipyard-built Hampson-era vehicles. Garth's re-imagining was that Space Fleet were pilots [the Royal Air Force] but then the Navy took over with the larger craft [exploring the galaxy] and the Marines would be the ground crew [investigating/protecting]. It was an interesting approach and we tried to show that clearly in the designs of the craft and the uniforms.

We also tried to keep a realistic look to the characters and environments shown in the art to better ground the series, and in part, keep it closer to Hampson's work than other versions. That said, we still kept Dare in an Air Force blue with his leather flying jacket. Basically a visual nod to all the classic WWII films like *633 Squadron* and *Reach For The Sky*. When designing the Treen craft, I tried to create something more alien and organic rather than the shipyard-built Space Fleet craft.

I feel proud to have worked on *Dare* and remain part of the character's legacy. There was a second series planned – and a script written by Pete Milligan – but sadly Virgin folded as a company and the property transferred to Dynamite, who printed the collected edition. There were no mentions of continuing the series and only the layouts of



part one and two remain. The script was good and had some very interesting twists with Dare and some other prominent characters. It is disappointing that no one will ever read this story. Pete did a wonderful job with his version of Dare and I would love to have the time to continue with and finish the story.

I am fairly open minded about the other versions of Dare. Hampson's original is my favourite, of course... but like *Flash Gordon*, it needs to move with the times – to a degree – to be relevant, but I can understand certain fans not responding to anything other than the *Eagle* version from the 50s.

That is understandable but who would imagine Batman still being played like the Pow Blam 60s version after seeing Tim Burton or Nolan's version? For everyone decrying *Man Of Steel* – I love Christopher Reeves' version – there would be little interest to return to the 50s serial. Characters have to adapt to some degree to remain relevant and I feel that Garth Ennis managed to find a good balance with the character. His Dare was stoic and full of the British resolve seen clearly in many classic British films.

I remember the Larry “Buster” Crabbe *Flash Gordon* serials from Saturday morning television [and children's cinema clubs] That would be a favourite to work on. *Jeff Hawke* too, if the opportunity presents itself.





# BRYAN TALBOT INTERVIEWED BY JAMES BACON

*Legendary writer/artist Bryan Talbot created the iconic cover for the first issue of Virgin Comics' incarnation of Dan Dare. Our roving reporter James Bacon caught up with Bryan on the Internet and bombarded him with questions...*

*Were you a fan of Dare before the Computer & Video Games magazine cover and Virgin Comics projects? Or, indeed, a fan of the strip's many artists and writers? (Frank Hampson, Frank Bellamy, Don Harley, Keith Watson, Bruce Cornwell...)*

I was too young for it in its glory days of the 50s and only first came across the strip in an *Eagle* annual at a distant cousin's house in the early 60s. *The Eagle* was definitely a middle-class comic, so it didn't really appeal to me at the time, though I did like this one glimpse of Dare. I only really read it, or some of it, when the *Dragon's Dream* reprints came out in the 70s. Still have those. Frank Hampson and Frank Bellamy were awesome artists.

*What was it that you liked and enjoyed?*

The artwork was so far ahead of anything else in contemporary English-speaking comics in the sheer quality of the illustrations. It completely eschewed traditional comic

“Bellamy's style was very innovative, incorporating 1960s graphic design style into his panel layouts.”



"shorthand" style. Bellamy's style was very innovative, incorporating 1960s graphic design style into his panel layouts.

*How much direction did you get from Garth Ennis for the Virgin Comics? Were there any particular elements that you knew you wanted to keep? How detailed was your research?*

Can't remember now. I did it very quickly. There were some character notes, I think, and I was sent files of some of Gary Erskine's sketches. I think Garth asked for the Spitfire-like spacecraft.

*How would you feel about returning to the character should the opportunity arise? If that's something you'd like to do, where would you like to see the character / story going?*

I really enjoy working on my own stories these days and would much prefer to concentrate on those.

*What are your feelings about the other incarnations of Dan Dare? Specifically, the 2000AD "reimagined" version, the version introduced in the new Eagle comic in the 1980s, and the Grant Morrison / Rian Hughes "adult" version that was published in Revolver.*

Not impressed at all by the 80s revamp, but I thought Grant and Rian's story was great – stylish and satirical, with a hard edge.

*Finally: Are there any other classic SF comic characters on which you'd like to work? Examples: Flash Gordon, Rick Random, Jeff Hawke, Buck Rogers...*

Nope, see above.





# MAKING THE OLD NEW AGAIN BY DAVE HENDRICK

I was fourteen years old when Dare was first published. It was the lead story in *Revolver* an anthology title published by Fleetway in 1990 that was something of a bigger, older college going brother to its anarchic back of the class stable-mate *2000ad*. It's talent roster read like a who's who of later DC/Vertigo creators with Brendan McCarthy, Pete Milligan, Peter Hogan and of course Grant Morrison. As a fan of *Eagle* as a child and later *2000AD* I was curious as to just what this version of Dare – written by the guy who brought me Zenith – was going to be like. As well as that I'd suddenly found my tastes radicalised moving away from the gaudy soap operas of *X-men* books in favour of what would become Vertigo titles, *Revolver* couldn't have come at a better time for me. And then as if thrown Nike's first into the eye of the most perfect of storms it was announced; *Revolver* would be celebrating its launch with a signing in The Forbidden Planet in Dublin and to this day I remember that wait on Dawson St, giddy at the prospect of meeting the people who made suburban adolescence tolerable, who understood what it was to be disappointed by reality so much so that they created their own and allowed us to visit (*I might just point out again here that I was 14 – I have many notebooks filled with terrible poetry that attests to the veracity of these thoughts, thank the stars you will never see them*). When I'd finally ascended to the top of the queue I had before me a leather jacketed, doc martin wearing brain trust of unimaginable talent. These were the guys who had and would shape

“Ultimately Revolver failed but for all of its seven issues it gave me a window into complex thought that I'd never seen represented in comics form before.”



my thinking on comics and to a certain extent the world, these were the gatekeepers to my dreams, this was my moment to discover all that they knew but when it came down to it all I could do was repeatedly ask them how they were and push my copy of Revolver issue 1 under their noses, as such I am more than likely the sole possessor of a copy of said book with two Grant Morrison signatures.

Ultimately Revolver failed but for all of its seven issues it gave me a window into complex thought that I'd never seen represented in comics form before. Within its pages were stories of eastern spiritualism, abstract biographies and of course post modern allegory, concepts mainstream American comics came to accept much later. The one story that would live on from its initial run in Revolver was Dare a story that's been repackaged and reprinted many times since its first run, an accolade it more than deserves.

*Dan Dare – Pilot Of The Future* – by the late 80's those words were about as cool and interesting as Angel Delight or Top of the Pops. Colonel Daniel McGregor Dare had had his day, if not days, in the sun and was by then decommissioned and defunct, enjoying an imagined retirement surrounded by friends and loved ones never having to do his duty again, but good characters rarely settle down and Colonel Dare was no different.

In Grant Morrison and Rian Hughes' *“Dare”* we catch up with the eponymous Colonel living a half life, self medicating with whisky and pain pills just to get through the day. He's a desperate character, pining like a lost dog for all that he was, mourning a past he can never return to.

This melancholy picture of a once great hero stuck in a world he no longer recognises is key to understanding Morrison's thesis. Dan Dare is all that was good about post war Britain, in the '50's he was a symbol of hope, a beacon lighting the way for a new generation from the terror of WWII. A new liberal version of Britain had emerged where the strictures of the old were loosening and the future could be shaped by anyone and Dan Dare was the physical embodiment of that movement. A new benevolence, one based on scientific progress not armed conquest motivated space fleet and sent Dan and Digby on their legendary missions.

Just as Hampson's Dan Dare mirrored the optimism of those times Morrison's Dare reflected the cynical reality of Thatcher's conservative Britain. A Britain that had eschewed its liberal values in favour of capitalist reward. A Britain that was fast becoming the property not of its citizens but of its corporations. Privatisation programmes had fleeced the public of their assets, the railways, the energy infrastructure all gone to the highest bidders and Dare is very much Morrison's essay on the consequences of selling ones people out.

Hughes' ruined deco aesthetic arrests the reader from page 1, his designs respectfully pay homage to the source while bringing his own stripped down essential style, a style not dissimilar from that of Bruce Timm's or Darwyn Cooke's. His clean lines jar against the filth of the streets in Dare's future. There's a classism in his skylines with the houses of parliament protected not from Treen invaders but from the general public with a giant glass dome. The tech is retro and clunky to the point of unwieldy but there's a comfort to seeing this re-representation of what the artists of the '50's thought the future would look like.

It's not without it's problems, there is “that” scene at the end where it's implied the Mekon believes he's fully subjugated Dare by employing a – what can only be described as – mechanical rape machine. I suppose it's purpose is to show the Mekon up for his total lack of empathy and compassion as the dome headed villain is naively convinced of Dare's fealty after it occurs – SPOILER ALERT – Dare doesn't submit and in one final act reminds Britain and the world that real change is only achievable through revolution.

Looking back on the story it's truly striking just how much of it resonates today. Britain has, since its publication in 1990, seen conservatism defeated and returned, the wealth gap has become a chasm, the public have continued to lose out and the powerful enemies of liberalism now count themselves among the friends of the lefts former leaders. Maybe it's time for the revolution to revolve once more and inspire the next generation of 14 year olds.

# DAN DARE

ANNUAL 1991



## 65 YEARS OF DAN DARE BY BARRIE TOMLINSON

As a boy, I was a keen reader of the original *Eagle*. It was something totally different and when I read the first issue, I was an immediate fan. I still have my Eagle Club Membership Card! *Dan Dare* was my favourite and I was intrigued with the storyline and the amazing Frank Hampson artwork. There is one picture that I always remember and surprisingly, it's not of some great space adventure but it is a picture of Dan with a mask clasped to his face, on which it said something like: 'Seven day shave'. I was fascinated that in the future it would be possible for a man to only shave once a week!

The Mekon was, of course, the greatest villain ever devised and Dan's battles against his arch enemy were always great reading. I little realised that in later life I would be the Group Editor who launched the new version of *Eagle* and one day I would appear on Breakfast Television along with a lifesize cutout of the Mekon!

When the first *Eagle* came to its sad end in 1969, I had been working in children's comics for eight years, working first on *Lion* and then on *Tiger*. I was determined that one day I would bring back *Eagle* and that was always my ambition as I became an Editor and later Group Editor of IPC Magazine's Boys' Sport and Adventure Department.

It wasn't until 1982 that my ambition was fulfilled. Of course I decided that *Dan Dare* would be a major part of the new comic and was fortunate when the management organised for Gerry Embleton to draw the first episode of the new *Dan Dare*. We tried all sorts of gimmicks with the Dan story but eventually had to revert back to the style of the original *Dan Dare*, which was a great compliment to the original Editor Marcus Morris and original artist Frank Hampson.

When I was a reader of *Eagle* one of my favourite *Dan Dare* artists was Keith Watson. I was absolutely delighted when he drew Dan in the new *Eagle*. I can recall Keith and myself appearing on a TV show, hosted by Frank Bough, talking about *Dan Dare*. Frank asked the right questions and the whole thing was good publicity for the new *Eagle*.

I had a lengthy spell writing the *Dan Dare* story. I really enjoyed doing that and was delighted when the popularity of the story increased during the time I was scripting the story.

“We tried all sorts of gimmicks with the Dan story but eventually had to revert back to the style of the original Dan Dare”



My time as the *Dan Dare* author came to an end when senior management found some faults with my scripting. They objected to Dan not appearing in the opening episode of a new adventure. This was something which happened in the original *Eagle* and I thought it was a script device which worked very well, building up for Dan to make his big entrance. There was also an objection about me setting some of the *Dan Dare* stories on Earth and not in outer space. Again, this is something that happened in the original *Eagle* and again, I thought it worked well, as a change from stories set on other planets.

I had to find a new *Dan Dare* author and handed the story over to Tom Tully, a top comics scriptwriter I had worked closely with on the *Roy of the Rovers* story and lots of other stories. He did a good job and we ensured that Dan appeared in every episode and we set most of the stories away from Earth!

David Pugh was another artist who worked on the Dan story in the new *Eagle*. His amazingly detailed colour work was well suited to *Dan Dare* and I felt he was right up with the very best of the D.D. artists. In later life, David and myself worked closely together on the *Scorer* story which appeared for 22 years in the *Daily Mirror*.

I shouldn't end without mentioning the spectacular launch we gave to the new *Eagle* in 1982. The launch was held at the Waldorf Hotel in London and it took me months of planning to make sure that everything went smoothly on the day. We invited the world's media to the launch and provided them with all sorts of electronic entertainment while they were waiting for things to get underway.

The Mekon suddenly appeared on a giant screen, threatening Dan Dare with all sorts of nasty things. But then a heroic figure strode forward, pointing a ray gun at the Mekon and opening fire. The Mekon disappeared with a shattering scream. Dan Dare had dealt with his enemy! Suddenly there was a fanfare of trumpets from the trumpeters of the Royal Artillery and a minivan burst through the screen on which the Mekon had appeared. Sitting on the bonnet was wrestling star Big Daddy, holding the very first issues of the new *Eagle*, which were distributed to all the guests. The new *Eagle* was well and truly launched!

Dan Dare was played by Tony Kelleher, an artists' agent who worked closely with the comics editorial teams. We had borrowed the ray gun from my son James, who later went on to write lots of scripts for the comics, under the name of James Nicholas.

The launch gained masses of publicity from the media and it was well worth all the effort which went into organising the event.

Dan Dare is one of the great characters of children's comics and I feel sure he still has a great part to play in children's publishing. Now he is approaching his 65th birthday. Only recently we celebrated sixty years of *Roy of the Rovers*, a title I launched in 1976 but the Roy character first appeared long before that, in *Tiger* comic in 1954. These events are starting to make me feel old but I'm still available to write the occasional *Dan Dare* script, if I'm ever asked!

Happy 65th birthday, Dan Dare, Pilot of the Future!



# JOHN HIGGINS ON DAN DARE

1. *When did you first encounter Dan Dare, and what does the character represent to you?*

Wow, that does go back a long way, when I was around 7 years old my Uncle Joe bought me one of the original *Eagle* comics on the way back home from church on a Sunday. The full colour depiction of aliens and alien worlds was life-changing – or certainly imaginative-life-changing – for me. Frank Hampson's Dan Dare showed me how Science Fiction had no boundaries and how a brilliant artist could bring to life impossible, imaginary worlds for everyone.

2. *You've cited Frank Hampson and Frank Bellamy as two major British influences... Though they have very different styles! What would you say you learned from each of them?*

Frank Hampson first and foremost for his colour sense and technical finish, then Frank Bellamy had a great sense of graphic design and his finish had a lovely wash effect that was different to Frank Hampson's finish, but comparing their Dan Dares they both created a consistent and recognizable future world.

3. *Are there any specific Dan Dare stories that moved you at the time, or indeed move you still?*

The Dan Dare story in the first *Eagle* comic that my Uncle Joe bought me stuck in my mind for over twenty years until I went to art college and, fortuitously enough, a vin-



“Frank  
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tage store opened right next to the pub we used to go to and they had a complete collection of the 1950s *Eagle*. I was browsing through them and found the issue I had first seen and it stood up to my memories of it. It was “The Man from Nowhere.” Being a poor broke student I could only afford to buy a couple at 30 pence each, and as a pint of Guinness was £1.20 there was a bit of a debate every time I bought another couple: beer or *Eagle*?

I did continue to buy the vintage *Eagle*, in dribs and drabs, but around 1974 IPC – just a few years before they brought him back in *2000AD* – produced a *Dan Dare* annual, and that is my next favourite story “Safari in Space” which led into “Terra Nova.” Frank Hampson started it and then Frank Bellamy took over.

What both stories had were wonderful depictions of imaginary worlds, but also very strong quest-type stories, full of intrigue, danger and exotic places all wonderfully defined. These you can read today and they still draw you in. They are modern in the way they tell and depict the stories. Both artists’ painted styles and story-telling techniques have still not been beaten for finish or imaginative depiction of exotic worlds.

4. You've painted a couple of *Dan Dare* covers (one *Eagle* Annual 1987, another for the Garth Ennis / Gary Erskine mini-series by Virgin Comics) – do you have a hankering to draw a *Dare* strip, and if so, with which of today's writers would you like to collaborate on it? (Present company included, of course!)

Mike, you memory devil, you! I had completely forgotten about the 1987 Annual. I would love to do a new *Dan Dare* story, but I think (allowing for how much I usually love Dave Gibbons, Garth Ennis and Gary Erskine’s work) he is a character that exists in his time-stream. You cannot update him without losing his strengths, in my opinion. Maybe I am too much a fan of what made *Dan Dare* work for me. If I did one, it would have to look as close to Frank Hampson’s Dan as possible and the story would have to be in that magical place that had stiff upper lips and a strong right hooks along with laser pistols and FTL drives. If it was done with the right approach I think it could be valid and might not be an abject failure. Does that approach have a mass market? I don’t know, but the other approaches did not.

I was invited by the Mirror newspaper to update another classic Frank Bellamy character, Garth, and the in-built problems with that would be the same for *Dan Dare* if you wanted to emulate the original character’s appeal. In some ways, you could look at the Disney movie, *John Carter (of Mars)*. I enjoyed it immensely but for the general public that had not grown up reading the books it all seemed over familiar, as most SF movies for 40 years had used the Edgar Rice Burroughs stories for many of their ideas, so it might have looked old-hat to any new audience going to the world of Barsoom and Deja Thoris.

Incidentally another reason I got into SF illustration along with Frank Hampson's *Dan Dare* was the book cover to *Princess of Mars*, illustrated by Bruce Pennington, one of my all time SF book cover artists, along with Frank Hampson. He had a colour sense that is visually exciting along with his depiction of strange creatures.

5. As a writer / artist yourself, and creator of your own universe of characters, you're in the rare position of knowing exactly what Frank Hampson was facing when he created *Dan Dare*... Discuss! :)

Oh, you smooth devil, Mike, as if I could be mentioned in the same breath as that giant of comic creators, but thank you! When I rediscovered *Dan Dare* while at art college, I did start to collect any new reprints of the original *Dan Dare* and one of the other annuals IPC produced was a set of stories from the first years of its publication, “The Red Moon Mystery.” The story was pretty sophisticated but the art technique was not so impressive compared to the art in “The Man from Nowhere.” Frank Hampson’s art technique and story-telling ability had grown exponentially, leading up to the excellence of the story arcs of such classics as “The Rogue Planet,” “Battle of the Robots” and many others once he had hit his creative stride.

I have been allowed to play in my world of *Razorjack* by a number of publishers and collaborators (present company included, of course!) whom have allowed me to grow as a storyteller, I know my learning curve from the first *Razorjack* story has shown a marked improvement and I think readers can see the different approach I took from the first episode to the last. That could a parallel to a creator learning curve with Frank Hampson.

The opportunity to be in a position to explore one’s own particular creative peccadilloes for a creator is sublime. The initial problems Frank Hampson and I would share would be to get our singular vision out to the public. I decided to go the self-publishing route but fortunately – after I lost the house and all my money taking time out to do this project – Com.x stepped in and invested in a further two issues, which became the completed graphic novel. It’s recently been col-



lected together in a hardback Graphic Novel by Titan comics with fresh dialogue and a new Razor-jack story by Mister Michael Carroll.

The only advantage of self publishing is to retained copyright – as we know, Frank Hampson lost his copyright whilst other people made money hand over fist. He was having to work as a technician in an art school to pay the bills rather than working as a brilliant storyteller. Sadly, a familiar story of creators losing copyright in our chosen field of comics.

6. *What are your feelings about the other incarnations of Dan Dare? Specifically, the 2000AD "reimagined" version, the version introduced in the new Eagle comic in the 1980s, the Grant Morrison / Rian Hughes "adult" version that was published in Revolver, and the Ennis / Erskine version? Which ones got it right - if any?*

None worked for me. The 2000AD version could have been any new SF character, it only retaining the characters' names. As a "new SF hero" it was not bad at all but not a *Dan Dare* for me.

The one that tried to recreate a sort of version of a recognizable *Dare* was Garth Ennis and Gary Erskine, and that failed for all the reasons I mentioned above: change him too much or update him and he is no longer *Dan Dare*.

7. *Finally: Are there any other classic SF comic characters on which you'd like to work? Examples: Flash Gordon, Rick Random, Jeff Hawke, Buck Rogers...*

Not really. I admired the artistry of them all, but each of them could only work in its time period of creation. All SF stories have a built-in sell-by date. The science always gets caught up with and overtaken, they become dated, and the only way to keep them relevant is if you contain them within their own bubble of time, ignoring all the science that had happened since the thirties, fifties and sixties of those particular characters.



# RICHARD BRUTON ON DAN

To me, Dan Dare was always more pilot of the past than pilot of the future, simply down to the timing of my childhood. Certainly I was aware of the proud symbol of British imperialism writ large upon the skies, all stiff upper lip, square jaw and received pronunciation. But the thing is, I was born post 50s/60s classic *Eagle* comic and then managed to miss out on the relaunch both in *2000AD* and *Eagle* Volume 2 due to a dedication to Marvel and only Marvel.

All this meant I considered old Dan an irrelevant antiquity until my late teens, when the poor old man was dragged, kicking and screaming, onto the revisionist comic bandwagon of the time. It was 1990, and grim and gritty was all the rage, the darker, grimmer and grittier the better.

Back then, every up and coming young comics writer was casting about for the next superhero to drag down to the gutter. The regular fishing trips from DC were a real thing, all looking to bag the next wave of Brit talent.

Alan Moore had already reworked *Marvelman* for *Warrior*, *Captain Britain* for Marvel UK, headed over the pond with *Swamp Thing*, and the Charlton heroes that eventually became *Watchmen* for DC.

Grant Morrison, never one to shy away from Moore's ideas, style, and tone, had already taken on *Animal Man* and the *Doom Patrol* at DC. When Rebellion[[?]] came calling for something cutting edge and British for new comic *Revolver* to run alongside a trippy Jimi Hendrix thing and the Milligan & McCarthy strip *Rogan Josh*, Morrison simply reached into the toybox of UK comic icons, a toybox he'd already dirtied up plenty in Phase III of *Zenith*, and pulled out good old Dan, ripe for reinvention.

Yes, my first real introduction to Dan Dare in comic book form came with the Morrison written, Rian Hughes drawn *Dare*. Not so much a reinvention, as a besmirching.

As Warren Ellis later said, through *Planetary* #7 (XXXX), when the dirtied up hero comes crashing back to Earth...

"I should have been noble! clean! single!"

"I didn't want to wake up in Soho with twelve valiumed-up Thai rentboys and terribles stains on my tights"

And that's just what Morrison did with *Dare*: took the clean-cut, square-jawed iconic character of old and brought him straight into the Thatcherite 90s. Morrison, along with Rian Hughes' perfectly retro visuals pulled the world of 'the pilot of the future' to



“To me, Dan  
Dare was  
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past than pilot  
of the future”



pieces with a devilish, exuberant glee, the idealism of Hampson's strips replaced with a fiercely anti-Thatcherite piece where every shining monument of future forward thinking was ground down, betrayed, spat out.

Everything begins with the dead body of Prof. Peabody - suicide - and a letter to Dan, old, limping, a mix of painkillers and whiskey seeing him through the long, sleepless nights dreaming of a past long dead, miserably failing to write his memoirs. When Gloria Monday, a very familiar looking iron lady PM, gets in touch asking for Dan's help with her election campaign, he steps back into the uniform one last time.

But as you'd expect, things are never as they seem, and Dan is plunged into a nation where the North-South divide is brutal, where the party in power have some very familiar bedfellows, and where simple politics is nothing of the sort..

"Oh Dan, isn't it obvious, even to you? We did it for power. Politics is about power and the more powerful one becomes the more one's aesthetic of power becomes - refined, shall we say? The more its pursuit becomes an end in itself."

I adored Morrison's writing at the time, and the younger me delighted in this cheerful destruction of such a monument to the past. Now, when I read it back, I can see the flaws, the younger Morrison's delight in trashing the character all too obvious, the broad strokes of anti-Thatcher rhetoric and character assassination too much, the reliance on a cliched ending all negatives. The Mekon's final punishment for good old, stiff upper lip, proud to serve, wears the uniform with pride. Dan seemed outrageous and reactionary then, now it just comes across as a sordid little moment of anti-establishment wish-fulfilment.

However, no matter how the story has diminished with the years, it's *still* a good read, flaws and all, still a good little potboiler, still an interesting idea, a what-if dear Dan would have lived to have seen the future, not of Hampson's dreams, but of our nightmares.

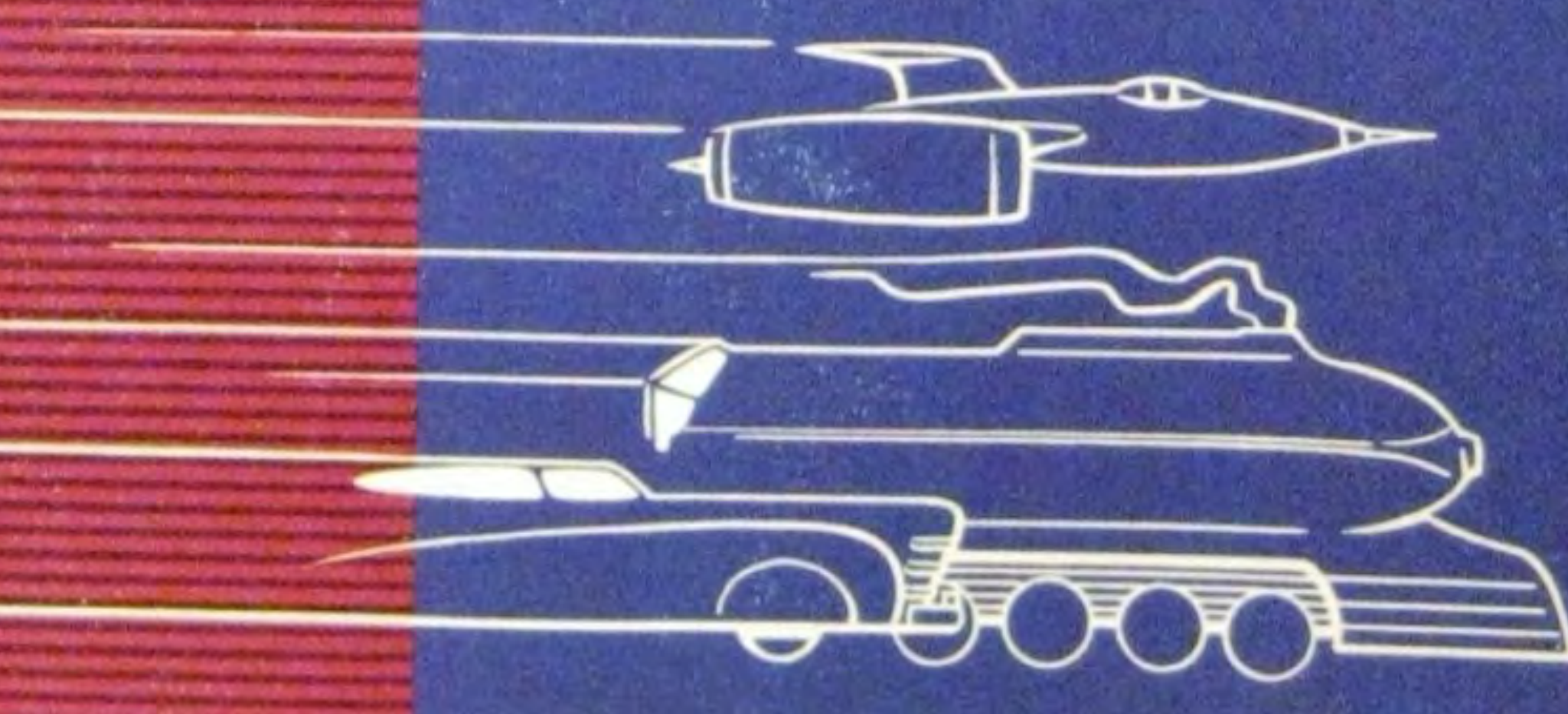
And one thing that certainly hasn't changed is my love of Rian Hughes' artwork. Where a lesser artist would have transformed *Dare's* glorious Britain of gleaming 50s style futurist Worlds' Fair beauty into a miserabilist slum of dirt and degradation, Hughes was careful to retain the iconic look, just turning down the shine, taking off the sparkle, imagining quite rightly what a few decades of neglect would do. There's still enough colour and style here to evoke the glory days, even if they truly only exist in *Dare's* memories now.

*Dare* is a flawed piece absolutely, but I still think it's also an important piece in the history of the character, Morrison on fine form, idealistic, full of all the piss and vinegar that comes with youth, and it's certainly one that continues the fine artistic legacy of Hampson *et al*; Rian Hughes' artwork so vibrant and forward thinking one scene and full of dystopian doom the next.

The only place you can get hold of the complete *Dare* now comes in Rian Hughes book, *Yesterday's Tomorrows*. It's got *Dare* and several other very beautiful Hughes pieces all inside a gorgeous hardback collection.

Richard Bruton: Started in comics retail aged 16 at Nostalgia & Comics, Birmingham. Now located in Yorkshire, he's a freelance writer about comics, usually found writing for the Forbidden Planet International Blog. Specialising in UK Comics and All-Ages comics, Richard's day job in a primary school allowed him to build the best children's graphic novel library in the country.

<http://forbiddenplanet.co.uk/blog>



## TRUTH OR DARE? BY PEPPARD SALTINE

As a kid I would read any comic I could put my hands on, but my least favourite were sports or military stuff. Because of this I rarely read *Eagle*, but when I did, Dan Dare would be the one story I would enjoy. Dan always appeared to be a sort of cheap, English Flash Gordon and The Mekon was this iconic alien in his hover chair. What's not to enjoy?

As I rarely, if ever, read two consecutive issues of *Eagle* I never followed a storyline or knew what was going on with the characters. It was space stuff and that's why I enjoyed it when I read it.

When *Revolver* came along in 1990, I was ready for *Dare*. I could recognise the characters but I didn't care so much for them that I could be offended by perceived revisionism.

In it, Dare is an old and injured veteran, who has spent some years in retirement. He has become a hermit, writing his memoirs in seclusion as the society he once fought to protect falls to ruin. He gets involved in a conspiracy and ends up having to make the ultimate sacrifice in order to foil the plot and save the human race. (There is a sub plot that, well... If David Cronenberg had made *The Stuff versus Soylent Green*, that's the kinda universe you'd find this subplot in!)

Both the story construction and the artwork are quite cinematic. The story flashes forward and back to at least four distinct points on the timeline as the plot is revealed. The flow of images within the scenes and the order in which the scenes are presented both closely mimic cinematic editing grammar. The images are quite static, like a series of freeze frames, and very rarely portray action. The design is a type of retro-futurism, lots of art deco design worn out, worn down and broken by age. The look of an empire in decline.

If you haven't read the book, I really recommend it. I also recommend you stop reading here now, and come back having (hopefully) enjoyed the many layers of art that *Dare* is made up of.

*Dare* opens with some police in a bank retrieving Dan Dare's diary from a safe deposit box. They bring the diary to a politician – Edmund Richmond – who starts to read the diary and we are transported back to the day Dan Dare received a letter informing him of Peabody's death. We see that Dan uses a cane, and find that Peabody committed suicide.

“You have  
amazing  
eyebrows.  
Anyone ever  
tell you you  
have amazing  
eyebrows?”



We then follow Dare as he attends the funeral where he is first snubbed by Digby, then introduced to the Prime Minister, Gloria Munday, by Sir Hubert. We learn that Peabody worked on a project called “pie in the sky” and that she is not the first member of this project who has died. Munday takes Dan aboard her aircraft where she offers him a job as a propaganda symbol in her upcoming election campaign. She deftly manipulates him into accepting the job.

Dan goes to a photo shoot where he is clad in a facsimile of his uniform spacesuit and meets Edmund Richmond, party chairman and spin doctor behind Gloria Munday’s campaign. There is a good example of the filmic nature of the images here, there is a page of eight close up “insert” shots as a pair of female hands prepare Dan for the photo shoot, followed by a full page reveal of Dan in “costume.” During the close ups, the make-up girl references Dan’s signature eyebrows. “You have amazing eyebrows. Anyone ever tell you you have amazing eyebrows?”

This is important because it references Dan himself as a fictitious character, he is essentially made dress up as himself from an earlier incarnation of the *Dan Dare* franchise. It is one of the early signs of the true nature of this narrative, with this meta-reference Morrison is bending the fourth wall just a little, to prepare the reader for later events.

For the shoot itself they are whisked away to the dilapidated building which was once Space Fleet Headquarters. We learn that space fleet was privatised, and we hear the photographer, production manager and Edmund Richmond organise a further shoot with the *Anastasia*, Dare’s former ship, which is now in the space museum. The photographer takes a valiant-looking picture of Dan which we will see in billboard campaigns later in the comic. During the shoot the photographer says “Can you look up and to the right? The whole idea is to suggest upward and forward motion. Rising toward the right. Understand?” “No. A bit more serious. Let’s get some commitment. Think of England. That’s it. Perfect.” the first line of this dialogue is telling you the reader to comprehend the politics of Gloria Munday’s Unity Party. The next line is for Dan. This is the moment when he damns himself, and when it is time for him to atone for this moment the dialogue will reoccur.

The very next scene is Dan at home, he is watching television and an advert for “Manna” food substitute is playing when he receives a strange phone-call, asking for a meeting. Dan goes to a parking garage where he meets a young female pilot, who tells him she was sent by Digby and that she has information on the murder of Peabody. The setting of this scene is important as it is a film trope, with its roots in reality (Deep Throat & Woodward), it tells you Dan is about to be let in on a secret of a potentially criminal nature.

The pilot takes him to Digby, on the way they see what has become of northern England, where poverty is rife, food-lines stretch for days and Treen citizens live in ghettos. This is part of Dan’s awakening to the reality he is living in.

Digby is hanging with some shady youths. He has collected news clippings about the “pie in the sky” scientists’ deaths. Dan appeals to him, asking what happened to their friendship. Digby accuses Dan of having killed children.

Dan and Digby take a walk together, they discuss the “pie in the sky project” and how the scientists involved developed “Manna”, just in time for the election. Digby wonders if it wouldn’t have been better if they had never visited Venus. We learn that on Venus the new cheap Treen labour force was used to produce food, the labour conditions caused a Treen uprising which sparked Treen riots on Earth. Space Fleet was sent into combat and it was in this action that Dan shot Treen children. Digby recruits Dan into some kind of counter-conspiracy.

Cut to Dan on the set of the advertising campaign video. During lunch break Edmund Richmond lets Dan go onboard *Anastasia* for old times’ sake. When sitting in the pilot seat Dan whispers “God Forgive Me.” This is a beautiful point in the narrative construction. On first reading you presume that it is part of Dan’s acceptance of his guilt regarding the Treen children shot in the uprising, however this scene will reoccur at the end of the book and we will understand the true meaning of Dan’s words. There is a strange green under-lighting effect on Dan’s face as he utters this dialogue.

Peabody’s house at night. Digby and Dan are breaking in but somebody is watching them with nightvision scopes. Once inside the house, Digby shows Dan a note from Peabody which leads Dan to discover a hidden video disc.

They watch the disc and find it is a confession by Peabody on behalf of herself and the other scientists about the “pie in the sky” and “Manna.” We learn that Gloria Munday’s government are in league with the Treen and in return for human lives they receive the solution to the food shortage problem. The Treen are breaking these humans down into biomass used to build Treen organic supercomputers. These supercomputers produce abundant sexual fluid which, when flavoured and branded, is “Manna.” There is a visual reference to the narrative structure here, a picture of a television screen on which Peabody is holding a photo of the supercomputer. This three-framed picture

is a reference to the layered nature of the narrative. The computer itself looks like four sets of male and female genitalia engaged in coitus. During the confession Peabody admits that she intends to kill herself and that she is pregnant.

While they are watching the confession, a soldier kicks in the door. Digby shoots the soldier, then is injured in return fire. He begs Dan to save the video disc and get the truth out. Digby gets into some action and takes out a couple more soldiers before he is killed. Dare escapes in Digby's flyer.

Dan takes a train into the city and attempts to get the tape played on television, but the news director refuses to view the disc, when Dan takes the disc to a duplication shop he finds that the news director has erased the confession. The text in the caption boxes becomes Dan's handwriting, it is used as his inner monologue over the frames like a voice-over. It reminds the reader of the diary which was being read at the start of the book.

At home Dan makes a phone-call to Sir Hubert. He writes in his diary, then sends it by courier to the bank deposit box. He puts on his dress uniform, then waits in the dark for the soldiers. The Soldiers take Dan to some governmental chambers where Edmund Richmond and Gloria Munday are drinking champagne with their cohorts whilst watching the ballot count. They make a toast to "Colonel Dare" then they bring in The Mekon.

On seeing the Mekon, Dan is shocked to silence, but he soon vows to thwart the Mekon's plans. The Mekon reveals the other properties of "Manna." It is addictive and has euphoric and aphrodisiac properties, it also causes serious birth defects which will cripple the next generation of humans. This scene is another great example of the cinematic quality of this book; the compositions are close ups, point-of-views and over the shoulder. The Mekon is shown as a powerful being, Dan must look up at him: in his gaze Dan is a small, puny creature. This is the psychology of composition at work.

On top of this the Mekon licks his lips and dips his finger into a pot of Manna, then licks the viscous white goo from his finger and lips in a very sexual manner.

Having revealed his plan, the Mekon orders his Treen guards to hold Dan down on the ground. His levitation chair extrudes a bunch of phallic devices and he tells Dan to think of England. Dan must now pay the price of having sold his image and soul to the Unity Party campaign. The Mekon rapes Dan and Gloria Munday wins the election.

His humiliation complete, Mekon orders Dan to be set free. Dan thanks his hosts and takes to the streets, where he is arrested by some policemen. We never see Dan again. It is immaterial to the reader if Dan lives or dies, he has been humiliated and broken, made to face the loss of all he held dear and his image has been defiled both within the narrative and in reality.

The following day Edmund Richmond is reading Dan's diary, it is the scene from the start of the comic. He is reading Dan's final entry and learns that on the day of the video shoot Dan placed a fusion bomb in the cockpit of the *Anastasia*. We see a green, up-lit, close-up of Dan. Though it does not have the dialogue, the meaning is now suddenly clear, this is the action for which Dan was asking forgiveness. The bomb is set to detonate in just a few moments' time. Gloria Munday and The Mekon come in and are protesting when the fusion bomb explodes killing them all. A white gradient is overlaid on the final frame of the Mekon.

The explosion vaporises the fourth wall, and blanks the page. We pull out from a blank page on a drawing desk. There is a sketch of classic Dan Dare and an *Eagle* cover on the wall behind the desk. The final caption is a Frank Hampson quote: "Although I often wished he would, Dan Dare refuses to lie down and die. But that's just what I intend to do now," This is an apt quote on which to finish the book, it tells us that Hampson would have liked to have been allowed to kill off Dan. That honour falls to Hughes and Morrison. They have killed Dare, and with this final act of Brechtian distanciation they tell you not to take it to heart it is only a story in a comic book.

Some might say that Dan Dare and the Dan Dare Universe are only a vehicle for Morrison's story about Thatcherite England, but I feel that Morrison has taken a logical approach to *Dare*. He has said if Dare was a product of the fifties, what would be the repercussions for that universe were similar events to take place as have happened in our timeline?

He has stayed true to the characters of Dare, Digby, Peabody and The Mekon and woven a story which is relevant to the time of its publication. Hughes has brought that story to life with beautiful images, colour and design every element of which fit so appropriately that you believe this "anti-hero in dystopia" could truly be the fate of this once melodramatic English space opera universe.

In my opinion, *Dare* is to Dan Dare what *The Dark Knight Returns* is to Batman. It goes further in terms of narrative structure, and is braver in terms of politics and art. If you *have* read it, I think it's worth another look.



THE BIDDING WAR  
FOR THE 1963 DAN  
DARE ANNUAL  
STEVE WINDERS  
RECALLS HIS  
BATTLE TO BUY A  
DAN DARE ANNUAL  
AT A SCHOOL  
AUCTION.

It was late October 1964 and I was in my first year at secondary school, when the class decided to hold an auction to raise money for charity. A wide variety of items were donated, including a nearly new pair of football boots, a collection of Preston North End programmes (my school was in Preston), a couple of *Jennings* books, a *Kodak Brownie* Box Camera, a 1960 *Wagon Train* Annual, a *Davy Crockett* Indian Fighter hat and a *View Master* with several film reels. However the item that took my eye was a copy of *Dan Dare's Space Annual 1963*. Actually produced for Christmas 1962, as all annuals carry the forthcoming year on their covers, this book was highly desirable for a fan like myself, who thanks to my father, had taken *Eagle* since the age of three. Unfortunately my best friend was also a keen fan and he was in the same class. I realised at once that I would face a fierce battle to buy the book.

Despite the title, *Dan Dare* books were not an annual affair. During the run of the original *Eagle*, there were actually only two: An extremely rare 1953 book called *Dan Dare's Spacebook*, produced by Dan's creator Frank Hampson and his studio team and the 1963 edition, which was produced by Don Harley, Bruce Cornwell and Eric Eden, all members of Frank's old team, after he left the strip. By the time it came out, they had all been replaced by Keith Watson and David Motton, in the radical changes made to *Eagle* in March 1962. For me, the *Space Annual* represented *Eagle's* better times, when Dan and





Digby had been aided by Hank Hogan, Pierre Lafayette and Commander Lex O'Malley in their exploits. Indeed all three characters appeared in the 112 page annual, which included two eight page colour strips and four text stories about *Dan Dare*. In the finest traditions of the early *Eagle*, there were also factual strips about Yuri Gagarin and Galileo and features on the reality of space exploration by Maurice Allward, a prolific writer of books about space and aircraft. Finally there were items about *Spacefleet* ships and uniforms, featured in the *Dan Dare* strip.

I was aware from the start that my friend had brought more money than I had. My only hope was that he'd buy something else first to give me a better chance of beating him to the *Space Annual*. First up were the football programmes and I knew that he wouldn't bid for those as he had little interest in soccer. I, on the other hand was a keen fan, but realised that if I bought them, I'd have even less money to bid for the annual, so I held back and watched them go for a shilling. Next was the *View Master* and I hoped that this might tempt him to bid. I had one myself and I knew he was impressed with it. Indeed I was delighted to see him enter the bidding at ninepence, but with several other bidders involved, he dropped out at two shillings and the *View Master* sold for half a crown. Other items followed, but the only one I thought might attract him was the camera. I hoped against hope that it would come up before the annual, but then came the fateful announcement from our form tutor:

"The next item is a 1963 *Dan Dare Space Annual*. How much am I bid for this desirable book in excellent condition? Do I hear sixpence?"

A third party immediately bid sixpence. I hadn't counted on another rival, but he didn't last long once the two *Dan Dare* fanatics entered the fray. My friend bid ninepence and I pushed it up to a shilling. The third party's last bid was one and threepence.

"Do I hear one and six?"

My friend raised his hand.

"Two shillings!" I called.

"Half a crown!" my friend responded. There was a steely determination in his eyes and gasps from the rest of the class.

"Three shillings!" I noticed several of my classmates looking at each other in astonishment. Clearly the unfolding drama had caught them by surprise.

"Three and six," replied my friend calmly. I looked quite deliberately at the camera on the teacher's desk, hoping to alert him to its availability if he dropped out of the bidding for *Dan Dare*.

I paused for a moment before calling "Four shillings."

But my friend was having none of it. "Four and six!"

Five shillings was all I had. I was briefly tempted to bid four and ninepence, but realised that this would alert him to my precarious situation, so I went straight in with "Five shillings!"

There was a long pause. I looked closely at my friend. I knew him well enough to know that he was contemplating.

"I have a bid of five shillings!" announced the teacher. "Is there any advance on five shillings?" There was something in the tone of her voice that suggested she didn't think there would be, but she hadn't bargained with the remarkable popularity of *Dan Dare*.

"Five and six."

Of course he lent me the book, which I read from cover to cover and he's still my best friend fifty years later. He's still got the book too. I didn't get my own copy of *Dan Dare's Space Annual* for another twenty five years. It cost me £8.95, which taking inflation into account was probably cheaper than five shillings and sixpence. The original price of the book was eight shillings and sixpence.





# DAN DARE - MY PART IN HIS REVIVAL BY PAT MILLS

Posted on October 1, 2012

This is an edited version of an article Pat wrote for *Spaceship Away* – the classic *Dan Dare* fan magazine – in March 2010, and subsequently published on his Facebook page. Reprinted with permission.

## **2000AD**

1. 1976. I realize that the science fiction comic I'm creating, *2000AD*, needs a space hero. I think about bringing back *Dan Dare* – the publisher, John Sanders, is agreeable, he tells me not to worry about the original fans and I study the bound *Eagle* volumes. I'm hugely impressed by the original Venus adventure. I commission writer Ken Armstrong (he wrote *Hook Jaw in Action*) to write a NASA-style version, with something of the realistic tone of the original.

2. By now it's clear *2000AD*'s paper won't be web offset, which takes 'fair' colour, it will be 'pulp' letterpress with rudimentary colour. This could be a real problem for *Dan Dare*. Ken designs a superb, authentic NASA style-spaceship with lots of projecting bits and pieces, based on modern orbiting spaceships. I commission an Argentine artist to draw it – in black and white.

3. Paul Da Savary has film rights to *Dan Dare* and shows me his fantastic artwork for a movie and also a retro TV series featuring the Treens. His producer, who has worked on *Space 1999*, thinks our spaceship would not make good merchandising because of all the projecting solar panels. I formed the impression they weren't keen on us reviving *Dan Dare*.

4. My publisher tells me that Da Savary might buy *2000AD* as an outside contractor to IPC Magazines. Me and John Wagner (*Judge Dredd*) will be creative partners in the enterprise and thus receive a share of the cover price. John Wagner creates *Dredd* with this in mind. IPC board of directors then say no, John Wagner withdraws from the project and *Dredd*, and I create *2000AD* for a fixed fee as a freelance.

“The basic character design is also wrong – an over-reaction against the old Dan images.”



5. 1977. The Argentine version of *Dan Dare* is very good – but only from a purist POV. (No visuals available, I'm afraid) It was in a semi- Sidney Jordan style with a cool inking style. I know SF fans will like it then (and now) – but I also know that it won't appeal to the mass audience I'm aiming for. The artist's figures are small, under-characterised, and his storytelling is hard work. Given that the story was also a realistic slow burn, I just know it won't appeal to kids. I decide to dump it. Awed by the Da Savary version, I decide to write a new, less NASA and more compelling version myself with my editor designate Kelvin Gosnell.

6. Kelvin and I write an exploration of Jupiter's red spot with astronauts wearing anti-grav suits and alien life forms based on microscopic life in the *National Geographic*. Story-wise I think its basic plot is valid in *Dare* terms. We try out one or two artists – I believe two Italian brothers, one of whom drew *Death Game 1999 for Action* – but their version looks dull to me and I turn them down. I want *Dan Dare* to be special.

7. Artist Bellardinelli submits a wild version on spec. At least it's exciting and eye-catching and – most important – helps us over the poor quality paper. A 'TV21' look won't work on bog paper. Bellardinelli's black line is the best in the business. I know his work from the past on *Battle and Action* and there his figure work is not bad. Distinctive but not weak anatomy. But on *Dare* his weak anatomy increasingly starts to show. This would get worse throughout his subsequent career (on *Slaine* etc) because of his origins as an excellent inker, not penciller.

8. The basic character design is also wrong – an over-reaction against the old *Dan* images. Kevin O'Neill, my art editor, points this out to me and I arrange a straw poll to see what everyone in IPC juveniles think: some thirty or more people. If they agree with Kevin, I'm still prepared to dump it – even at this horribly late date. But my straw poll (I was told by my pollster) really liked it apart from the managing editor who thought it was a bit “fantasmagoric”. It's now two weeks to press date and encouraged by the straw poll, I decide to go for it.

9. *2000AD* appears, it's a success and *Dan Dare* is popular – about 3rd or 4th in the popularity charts. Certainly not at the bottom in a comic where the readers liked all the stories. I don't recall any critical letters apart from things along the lines of “my dad doesn't like it, but I do”. And sometimes, “my dad likes it, too.” Lot of criticism in the press, however, but we don't care about annoying them. In fact we quite like it.

10. The first *Dan Dare* story concludes some 10 or 12 weeks later. By now, I've realized that the readers appreciate really wild SF which – most importantly – compensates for our poor quality paper. So I want the second story to be even visually wilder and this was written by Steve Moore. There was a great vertical opening spread showing *Dan Dare* arriving at a London teleport station.

11. It's now time for me to exit. My brief is to create comics and, once they're successful, move onto the next comic to start up (*Misty*). I see *Dan Dare* is still 3rd or 4th in the votes. *Judge Dredd* had similar votes but then – with the robot rebellion – in around week eleven *Dredd* went to number one. I wanted *Dan* to also increase its share of the votes and I therefore commissioned Gerry Finley-Day and Dave Gibbons to do a new incarnation of the character. I knew Dave's art would have the sf quality and realism that Bellardinelli's lacked and Gerry had a successful track record as a war comics writer because of his background in the TA. So I felt I was leaving *Dan* in safe hands, just as *Dredd* was safe in John's hands. People are divided on Gerry's writing – professionals didn't like it, but the readers often did and still do. (In the end, the professionals won and Gerry left *2000AD*)

12. After I leave, I hear Tom Tully has taken it over and given him a power hand and a superheroish costume. Neither of these moves would meet with my approval, but it's no longer my gig. I'm aware there are subsequent attempts to get it right, but of course the more you change writers, artists and realities, the more you can lose the readers' interest and I believe that's how *Dan Dare* eventually died in *2000AD*.

## **NEW EAGLE**

13. Perhaps a year or so later (I don't recall exactly) I hear from Tony Dalton, a film critic connected with the BFI, who tells me he now has the *Dare* film rights and would John Wagner and I

like to do a film treatment of the character? He has studio interest already. With *Star Wars* so popular, we agree.

14. We meet Gareth Hunt billed to play *Dan Dare* and also a great fantasy artist from the Young Artists group who has drawn some fantastic scenes. The brief clearly has to be *Star Wars* and we come up with a strong storyline (on spec).

15. We hear nothing more, months pass, and then we learn that *Eagle* is being revived with photostrip. But *Dan Dare* is to feature in a colour, fully painted strip by Gerry Embleton. Would John and I like to write it? Of course we do, it's a way of using our detailed film treatment.

16. Only there's a catch. Dan now has to be the original Dan's great grandson (!! ) and there's some story about him going through a time warp as a fighter pilot in the Battle of Britain. This is to tie in with a film version and we understand this is connected with Da Savary who now has the rights again. Loaded down with this awkward extra, we make the best of it and the story is number one. Readers like our sf ideas – such as aliens with flying sharks on leads. Very *Star Wars*.

17. But Embleton eventually leaves, Ian Kennedy takes over, John Wagner drops out and I'm left 'holding the baby'. By now, I'm so appalled by the numerous changes to Dan, both on *2000AD* and *Eagle*, I think – no matter how difficult – I have to 'get it right'. I begin by doing a grounded NASA style version which, because it's Ian, looks pretty good and stands up well today. I write man's first trip to the stars with authentic detail and some critical aspects based on *The Right Stuff* by Tom Wolfe which covered the appalling treatment of Ham, the chimpanzee. Ham 2 features in my story.

18. The story works and now I decide I need to get it back to as close to the original as is viable. I've made contact with a young astronomer and science fiction model maker Julian Baum based at Liverpool observatory. He has produced some excellent planetary photographic landscapes and models which were integrated into the strip, in the tradition of the original classic series. But as the story moved back towards science fiction I couldn't see how to use his great talents further.

19. While Dan had been away on his first star mission, the Treens had invaded Earth and the Grand Canyon was the rebel redoubt (useful for star fighter Death Star-style scenes). The head of the United Nations Space Force was British and everything was as close as I could get it to the original, despite the grandson tag.

20. I also wanted Dan to have a credible back story, so I looked back at the original classic series. I think it's a legitimate device to rationalise earlier notions with modern science, so I found NASA maps of the Venus continents under the cloud cover and used those as the basis for the classic continents of the Therons and the Treens. Heavy industrialisation by the Treens had caused a runaway Greenhouse effect which explained the hellish atmosphere of the fire belt.

21. Increasingly I was drawing on the past, not least because I was becoming more fascinated with Frank Hampson's original. Whereas later classic stories by other original associates of Hampson are sometimes somewhat dated in either story, art or character, I loved the vibrant energy of Hampson's original. So I worked some flashback scenes in with tremendous help from *Dan Dare* fan Alan Vince who sent me relevant images. I also tried writing the story in the minimalist style of the first *Eagle* adventure with its floating headshots.

22. Dan and co. were victorious at the battle of the Grand Canyon and I now had to consider whether I should continue. The story was still number one in the comic, but I felt I'd done my penance for reviving the character. Unless I could make it even closer to the original, there was no point in going on. This was not possible and I walked away from it. I believe Tom Tully took it over.

Subsequently there have been versions of *Dan Dare* by Grant Morrison and also Garth Ennis. No doubt there are others in the works.

Moral of the story? Stick to the original vision of the creator. Reinvent or re-imagine at your peril!

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# GREAT NEWS INSIDE, CHUMS – THE EAGLE FAMILY TREE

## JEREMY BRIGGS

“Remember when you were about seven or eight years old, and your weekly comic was delivered with the morning newspaper? Suddenly an issue would proudly proclaim in its cover top line “Great News Inside, Chums!” You’d eagerly turn to page whatever, to find out whether it was a prize winning competition or some other goodie. But the great news would be that “your favourite two comics are merging next week to give you even better stories inside the great new-look Jaguar and Crumbs”, or whatever. The fact that you couldn’t stand Jaguar, and only one strip out of Crumbs was being retained wasn’t supposed to matter.”

*Halls Of Horror*, Issue 30, November 1984

Editor Dez Skinn gently breaks the news that *Halls of Horror* would be merging into *Warrior*

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Comics don’t last forever. I don’t just mean that the paper yellows and the staples rust, I mean that as a publication they come to the end of their natural lives. The gap in the market that they were designed to fill no longer exists, or in the case of some short lived titles, never existed in the first place. Even long running titles need to evolve or they will die. The original *Eagle* ran for 19 years from 1950 to 1969 while the second series of the title, normally referred to as “new *Eagle*”, ran for twelve years from 1982 to 1994, and both versions of *Eagle* had other titles merged into them during their runs.

In the world of the British comic, mergers were a way of life, a way to bring some of the readership of the weaker title to the stronger one. Whilst the main comic may have lost some of its poorer stories, a few of the lesser comic’s stories normally survived the merger, at least for a while. Even the all-conquering *2000AD* has merged, first with *Starlord* and then *Tornado*. *Tornado* may be long forgotten, but those 22 issues of *Starlord* gave *2000AD* readers the characters of the “Strontium Dog” mutant Johnny Alpha, and, initially from “Ro-busters” and then “ABC Warriors”, the battle-droid Hammerstein. *Ranger* may be a virtually forgotten title but when it was merged with *Look and Learn* magazine it brought “The Rise And Fall Of The Trigan Empire” with it, and the idea of *Look and Learn* without Trigan Empire really doesn’t bear thinking about.

**Eagle**  
14 04 1950



**Eagle and Swift**  
09 03 1963



**Eagle and Boys' World**  
10 10 1964



**Lion & Eagle**  
03 05 1969



**Lion and Thunder**  
20 03 1971



**Valiant and Lion**  
25 05 1974



New *Eagle*, launched on 27 March 1982, got the merger treatment a total of five times with *Scream*, *Tiger*, *Battle*, *Mask* and finally *Wildcat*. Some of the merged titles were short lived. *Scream* only lasted 15 issues, unlike *Tiger* which, dating from 11 September 1954, had 1555 issues under its belt and a spin off in *Roy Of The Rovers* comic, a football title that would outlive new *Eagle* by over a year. *Tiger* had had its own fair share of mergers over the years, but it is *Battle* that is perhaps more interesting. *Battle* may be better known for merging with *Action* comic to create *Battle-Action* but just over a year before that it had merged with *Valiant*. *Valiant* was another of the old titles that was running out of readers but originally dated from 1962 and, like *Tiger*, had absorbed many other comics over the years.

So would it be possible to trace a merger link from new *Eagle* in 1982 back to old *Eagle* in 1950? Would a family tree of the various mergers over the years of the Amalgamated-IPC-Fleetway titles show a family relationship, albeit many times removed, between the two *Eagles*?

Let us start with new *Eagle*. Initially published in March 1982 as a partially photo story weekly, it became a more standard IPC artwork and newsprint comic in September 1983 before becoming *Eagle and Scream* on 1 September 1984. As with most of these mergers the secondary comic title would soon disappear from the mast head although in this case new *Eagle* would eventually be given the *Scream* character of Max the Computer as its editorial character who would remain in charge long after most readers had forgotten about his origins.

Max became editor when *Tiger* was absorbed on 6 April 1985. *Tiger's* own history of mergers included the relatively short lived *Speed* (31 issues in 1980), *Jag* (48 issues in 1968/69) and *Hurricane* (63 issues in 1964/65). Perhaps more interestingly *Tiger* had merged with *Comet* in October 1959. *Comet* had begun on 20 September 1946 and over a run of 580 issues introduced the character of space pilot Jet-Ace Logan whose adventures would continue in *Tiger*. With the link to *Comet*, the history of new *Eagle and Tiger* can take us back to one of original *Eagle's* early 1950's competitors.

The mergers of new *Eagle* with *Mask* in October 1988 and then *Wildcat* in April 1989 add little to this story, as the important merger is with *Battle* on 30 January 1988. 673 issues before on 8 Mar 1975 *Battle* began as IPC's competitor to DC Thompson's successful *Warlord* comic. However, rather than go backwards from *Eagle and Battle*, it may be easier go forward from the original *Eagle*.

The first *Eagle* began in April 1950 and was not immune to mergers itself. It would be merged with its own offspring, *Swift*, in Volume 14 Issue 10, 3 March 1963, and then with *Boy's World* in Volume 15 Issue 41, 10 October 1964, when the readership were bribed with "Great Free Gift! 4 Olympic Medals Inside." The *Swift* name did actually remain on *Eagle's* masthead for over a year before the comic became *Eagle and Boy's World*. *Swift* had a good run of its own of some 462 issues between March 1954 and March 1963, *Boy's World* less so with 89 issues between January 1963 and October 1964.

The original *Eagle* ran for 987 issues from 14 April 1950 until 26 April 1969. The next week it merged into *Lion and Eagle*, continuing the reprints of Dan Dare stories that had been already been running in *Eagle* for several years. Begun on 23 February 1952 with Captain Condor as another competitor to *Eagle* and Dan Dare, *Lion's* 1136 issues included mergers with the 12 year old *Sun* in October 1959, and the very short lived comic strip version of *Champion* which only lasted 15 issues before merging with *Lion* in June 1966. After its merger with *Eagle* in 1969, *Lion* was merged in March 1971 with *Thunder*, which had only lasted 22 issues, and then it went on to be merged into *Valiant* on 25 May 1974.

*Valiant* itself dated from October 1962 and over its 713 issues had merged with *Knockout*, *Smash*, *TV21*, *Lion* and *Vulcan*. Whilst the Gerry Anderson themed *TV21* name may leap out from that selection of mergers, *Lion* of course is the important one. *Vulcan*, which started on 1 March 1975, was merged into *Valiant* on 10 April 1976 a mere six months before *Valiant* was merged into *Battle* on 23 October 1976. *Battle* is better known for merging with the notoriously violent *Action* comic in November 1977 to create *Battle-Action*, and whilst it may have had many different variants of its title, *Valiant* and *Action* were the only true mergers that the comic, originally entitled *Battle Picture Weekly*, had.

So the merger connection between the original and new *Eagles* is there - on the one side:

*Eagle*,  
*Eagle and Swift*,  
*Eagle and Boy's World*,  
*Lion and Eagle*,  
*Lion and Thunder*,  
*Valiant and Lion*,  
*Valiant and Vulcan*,  
*Battle and Valiant*,  
*Battle-Action*, and finally  
*Eagle and Battle*.

On the other side:

new *Eagle*,  
*Eagle and Scream*,  
*Eagle and Tiger*, and finally  
*Eagle and Battle*.

Valiant and Vulcan  
10 04 1976



Eagle  
27 03 1982



Battle and Valiant  
23 10 1976



Eagle and Scream  
07 07 1984



Battle-Action  
27 03 1982



Eagle and Tiger  
06 04 1985



Eagle and Battle  
30 01 1988



Eagle and Mask  
29 10 1988



Eagle and Wildcat  
08t 04 1989



If you prefer, *Eagle and Battle's* paternal great grandfather was new *Eagle* and maternal great x7 grandfather was original *Eagle*.

One final thought on all these mergers: one of the very first British comics was *Comic Cuts* published on 17 May 1890. *Comic Cuts* continued through two World Wars until it was merged into *Knockout* and *Comic Cuts* on 19 September 1953. Almost 10 years later in February 1963, *Knockout* was merged into *Valiant* and *Knockout*. The *Valiant* name continued down to *Battle and Valiant* in October 1976, and the *Battle* name continued to *Eagle and Battle* in January 1988. The last issue of what was by then *Eagle Monthly* was published in January 1994, more than one century after the first issue of its ancestor.

*With apologies to Dez Skinn for stealing his title.*

*This article would not have been possible without Duncan McAlpine's Comic Book Price Guide.*

*Quoted dates are the issue cover dates which are rarely the actual dates that any given weekly issue was published on.*



BILL BURNS' DAN DARE LEAGUE BADGE!  
FRONT AND BACK!

**DAN DARE IS EVERYWHERE**





## MY BROTHER THE MEKON AND OTHER THRILLING SPACE STORIES BY HELENA NASH

When I was growing up, space was American. I was born the year of the Apollo moon-landing and in my childhood, all astronauts were American, both real and fictional. Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, the other guy, Steve Austin, even the Fantastic Four. It was years before I realized that for a time, at least in fiction, space had been somewhat British, in the form of Dan Dare and the Interplanet Space Fleet.

So I had absolutely no frame of reference when, on a family holiday on the Isle of Wight, my parents' friend Dave popped my younger brother on top of his new stubby surfboard, hoisted boy and board up high and proclaimed him to be 'the Mekon'. I had no idea what he was going on about, but apparently Dave was onto something because my dad seemed to agree that a skinny child in his swimming trunks sat atop an oval of toughened polystyrene was indeed compellingly Mekonish. I think, though memory may be betraying me here, that they got him sit cross-legged and drape his hands over his knees, just to compete the look. Certainly the two grown men then proceeded to parade him at shoulder-height across the beach, for we children were informed that this Mekon 'hovered on a sort of flying disc'.

This then was my first encounter, however bizarrely, with the world of Dan Dare, and just goes to show what sort of impression his original adventures in *Eagle* comic had had on my father's generation. As a sidenote to this I would recommend reading Eugene Byrne and Kim Newman's excellent short story *Teddy Bears' Picnic*, set in an alternate timeline where Britain rather than America fights the Vietnam War. In the story, the hapless soldiers - having grown up in 1950s Britain on a diet of *Eagle* comics - coin their own slang for the Viet Cong enemy - *Treens*. It makes sense that in an alt-history world where British lads are fighting in the jungles of Southeast Asia, that the Mekon's alien race would become a dehumanising word for the enemy.

But I digress. Growing up in the 70s, kids like me learnt a few things ass-backwards: Paul McCartney was that guy from Wings who we only later discovered had been in some pre-Mull of Kintyre group called the Beatles; World War Two was all the rage thanks to endless repeats of *Colditz*, *The Battle of the Bulge* and *Dad's Army* on telly whilst its predecessor World War One barely got a look-in; and Dan Dare was the widow's-peaked, luxuriantly-maned action hero of early *2000AD* progs - complete with a cool metal hand - rather than the clean-cut gent in a green uniform from our parents' *Eagle* comics.

The Dan of *2000AD* was a pretty cool character I thought, especially when the art duties had passed from Massimo Bellardinelli to Dave Gibbons, who gave him a much nicer haircut and that awesome metallic hand glove thing. As with the Mekon turning out to be a green dome-headed Treen, it was years before I found the metal hand glove thing was actually called the Cosmic Claw. Gibbons' Dan looked more than a little like Lewis Collins, riding high at the time as one of the action stars of *The Professionals* on ITV. But *2000AD*'s Dan stories didn't really grab me, not as much as the mayhem, lunacy and mega-violence of the comic's rising star Judge Dredd, and I don't think I blinked an eyelid when he faded away with prog 126. By the following week, I was too engrossed in the adventures of new character Black Hawk - a Roman gladiator forced to fight aliens - to wonder whatever happened to the Pilot of the Future.

Fast forward many years, much as Dan himself did between *Eagle* and *2000AD*, and I am now writing for Crooked Dice Games, founded by Graeme Dawson and my best friend Karl Perrotton. Their flagship game, a skirmish / roleplaying system called 7TV, draws on classic elements of cult TV and film, primarily British sci-fi, fantasy, and spy genres like *Dr Who*, *James Bond* and *The Avengers*. We used the conceit of a fictional television company that existed in the 60s and 70s to give the game both a rich shared universe between the 'shows' and to create an entertainingly tongue-in-cheek 'real-life' production history, where I indulged myself by casting actual actors, stuntmen and directors from the period to populate our made-up programmes. As an illustration, I cast hardman actor James Booth as the no-nonsense London copper Frank Skelton, and the boyish Hywel Bennett as DS Lenny Kennedy, in the Sweeneyish crime show *The Beat*.

In 2011, we started work on a chunky gaming supplement for 7TV called *On Location*, which would expand the core rules beyond the central settings which had tended towards extinct volcanic lairs and crime-ridden London streets. One of the new locations we would be covering was space, but from a strictly cult TV, pre-*Star Wars* viewpoint, so we needed to create a suitable show to personify the setting, which is where the spirit of Dan Dare re-enters the story.

Karl had already introduced the concept of A.R.C., the Albion Rocket Consortium, in the core rulebook, with an episode of our 'UNIT-without-the-Doctor' show *Department X*. In 'The Shadow Over Space', the department's star agents Dr Hugo Solomon (played against type by legendary actor David Warner) and Pandora King (Jenny Hanley off of *Magpie*) joined forces with A.R.C.'s Dr Melody Lake to investigate sabotage aboard the lunar shuttle's maiden voyage, uncover a secret cult and 'face an ancient horror from beyond the stars'. So when we got round to developing a space show for *On Location*, A.R.C. was a natural fit.

We already had the basic concept for A.R.C., taking *Quatermass*' fictional British Rocket Group and creating adventurous female rocket scientist Dr Lake for the starring role, played by the gorgeous Diana Rigg at the height of her powers. Now we set about fleshing out the show with cult sci-fi elements - from TV, radio and of course Dan Dare - to give it a unique blend that would feel not only like a loving homage to those influential sources, but also we hoped that would come across as a plausible - though sadly non-existent - show from the late 60s and early 70s.

Working with Karl and artist extraordinaire Wayne Peters, I had a fine old time creating a complete world, or more accurately solar system, for Dr Lake, Professor Kneale and the rest of the A.R.C. crew, from the lunar base Guinevere and rocketship Percival to alien threats like the sinister cerebral Venusian and his warlike Kreeg soldiers, and the faceless Martian force known only as 'the Enemy'.

To give the show just the right look and feel of the genuine article - maybe around the late 60s as with other 7TV creations - we went the extra mile to come up with authentic-looking TV listings, script excerpts and even an *Eagle*-style double-page splash of the Percival, complete with knowingly-named technical details. Thus I present to you these following selections from 7TV's A.R.C. series. Points will be awarded for every homage or shout-out you can spot.

# 5.45 *Colour*

## A.R.C.

starring **Diana Rigg**

*Darc Side of the Moon*

by KIT PEDLER

Melody's ship experiences a series of unexplained malfunctions whilst surveying a remote lunar region. Are they mere accidents, deliberate sabotage or the work of some sinister external force? When radio contact with Guinevere base is lost followed by a complete power blackout, tempers fray and suspicions grow that someone on board is not who they seem...

Dr Melody Lake

DIANA RIGG

Cpt Jock Hampson

PATRICK MOWER

Valentine

DAVID McCALLUM

Spinnaker

ANTHONY MARRIOTT

Fred Roberts

DAVID JACOBS

The Enemy (voice)

DONALD GRAY

Producer CHARLES CHILTON

Director GERRY ANDERSON

- A.R.C. -  
- Darc Side of the Moon -

SCENE 9. MERLIN, EXTERIOR

An A.R.C. Merlin class transport seen from directly above, against the Moon's hidden face, cratered, shadowy and inhospitable. The Merlin seems to hang motionless against the lunar backdrop, as lifeless as the Moon itself.

SCENE 10. MERLIN, INTERIOR

The ship's cockpit, in near total darkness, save for dim starlight from the cabin windows and that of an electric torch, currently waving around somewhere under the pilot's control panel. Intermittent grunting and muttered curses emanate from somewhere down in the pilot's footwell, near the torch's beam.

It is Jock HAMPSON, on his back as if inspecting the underside of a car, holding the light in one hand and unscrewing an instrument panel with the other. A pair of smart feet appear behind him out of the darkness, followed by the disembodied voice of security officer Mr VALENTINE.

VALENTINE (in a clipped tone)  
Haven't you finished that yet?

HAMPSON jerks with surprise, hitting his head on the instrument panel and swearing in equal amounts of pain and irritation.

HAMPSON (through gritted teeth)  
It'd go a lot bleedin' faster if you didn't keep creeping up on me like that!

VALENTINE's eyes narrow and he is about to issue an acerbic retort when Dr Melody LAKE emerges from the darkened mid-deck.

LAKE  
Enough, both of you. I can't worry about the ship and you pair at the same time.

She breaks into a smile and adopts a mocking, schoolteacherish tone.

LAKE  
Don't make me come over there and make you sit apart. Now, was there something you needed, Spinnaker?

She turns back to the mid-deck, where technician SPINNAKER is standing in the darkness, his back to LAKE. Obscured by SPINNAKER's head, there is a faint reddish glow.

LAKE  
Spinnaker..?

# 5.45 *Colour*

## A.R.C.

starring **Diana Rigg**

*Spaceship Venus*

by GERRY DAVIS

A spaceprobe inexplicably plunging into the Sun is the first indication that all is not well with the solar system's second planet, but soon Professor Kneale deduces that it is moving out of orbit, threatening to extinguish all life on Earth! The crew of the Percival, struggling to endure the fearsome heat of the Venusian desert, are mankind's only hope of survival.

Dr Melody Lake

DIANA RIGG

Professor Victor Kneale

JOHN MILLS

Valentine

DAVID McCALLUM

Zara

WENDY PADBURY

The Venusian

MICHAEL WISHER

Kreeg Overseer

PAT GORMAN

Producer INNES LLOYD

Director VAL GUEST

- A.R.C. -  
- Spaceship Venus -

SCENE 12. VENUSIAN DESERT, EXTERIOR

The Sun, so much bigger in the sky than they are used to, beats down upon the A.R.C. crew as they trudge doggedly on. As blinding sunlight reflects off the metal of their suits, Dr Melody LAKE, ZARA Kneale and Mr VALENTINE find themselves navigating a series of deep, dusty dunes, not unlike quarries found back on Earth.

ZARA (panting a little)  
Can't we rest a bit, Doctor? I'm terribly tired.

LAKE  
Just a little further sweetie, I think I spotted some sort of structure in the distance where we can have a sit-down in the shade.

Mr VALENTINE, walking ahead of the other two, gives the tiniest of sniffs at this. He knows as well as LAKE that shelter from the harsh desert is a long, long way off.

EFFECT: A distant high-pitched humming coming closer.

Mr VALENTINE turns to the approaching sound then drops to a crouch, motioning for the others to do the same. Both he and LAKE draw their pistols as they squint up the slope of a dune to where the humming noise now emanates.

EFFECT: Clouds of sand blow down off the top of the dune, as if a helicopter were landing somewhere out of sight.

The humming dies down as the three astronauts cautiously crawl to the top of the dune and peer over the sandy ridge. Not far away, a curious metallic platform seems to have settled on the sands. It is flat and disc-like, about the size of a car, with a single rail running around at waist height. It seems to have settled into a shallow dusty depression of its own making. Disembarking from the hover disc are four alien KREEGS - hairless, wide mouthed and devoid of expression. Each one unslings an odd lamp-like device as they fan out, searching the dunes.

ZARA (panicky)  
They're bound to find us! We've got to get away!

LAKE (laying a reassuring hand on ZARA's arm)  
Tish, but we haven't introduced ourselves yet! Mr Valentine, if you wouldn't mind..?

VALENTINE nods at her unspoken suggestion and scrambles back down the dune, circling around. LAKE straightens up, dusts herself down and begins walking over to the nearest KREEG.

How many did you get? Did you spot our nod to the Mekon, and who I cast as the actor to play him, and why?

As Dan Darish as A.R.C. is, our most obvious homage to the Pilot of the Future appears in another 7TV show altogether. Bluntly pitched as 'Charlie's Angels meets Thunderbirds', *The Daredevils* stars three sisters - glamorous Diana, roguish Katrina and tom-boy Charlie - who have inherited their father's love of high-flying adventures. Aboard their futuristic Dareplanes, these fearless female flyers respond to emergencies around the world at the behest of their perpetually off-screen daddy, who communicates with his 'devils' via long-distance speakerphone.

The family name? Dare, of course.

- THE DAREDEVILS -  
- Operation Skyhawk -

SCENE 1. DARE MANOR, INTERIOR. NIGHT.

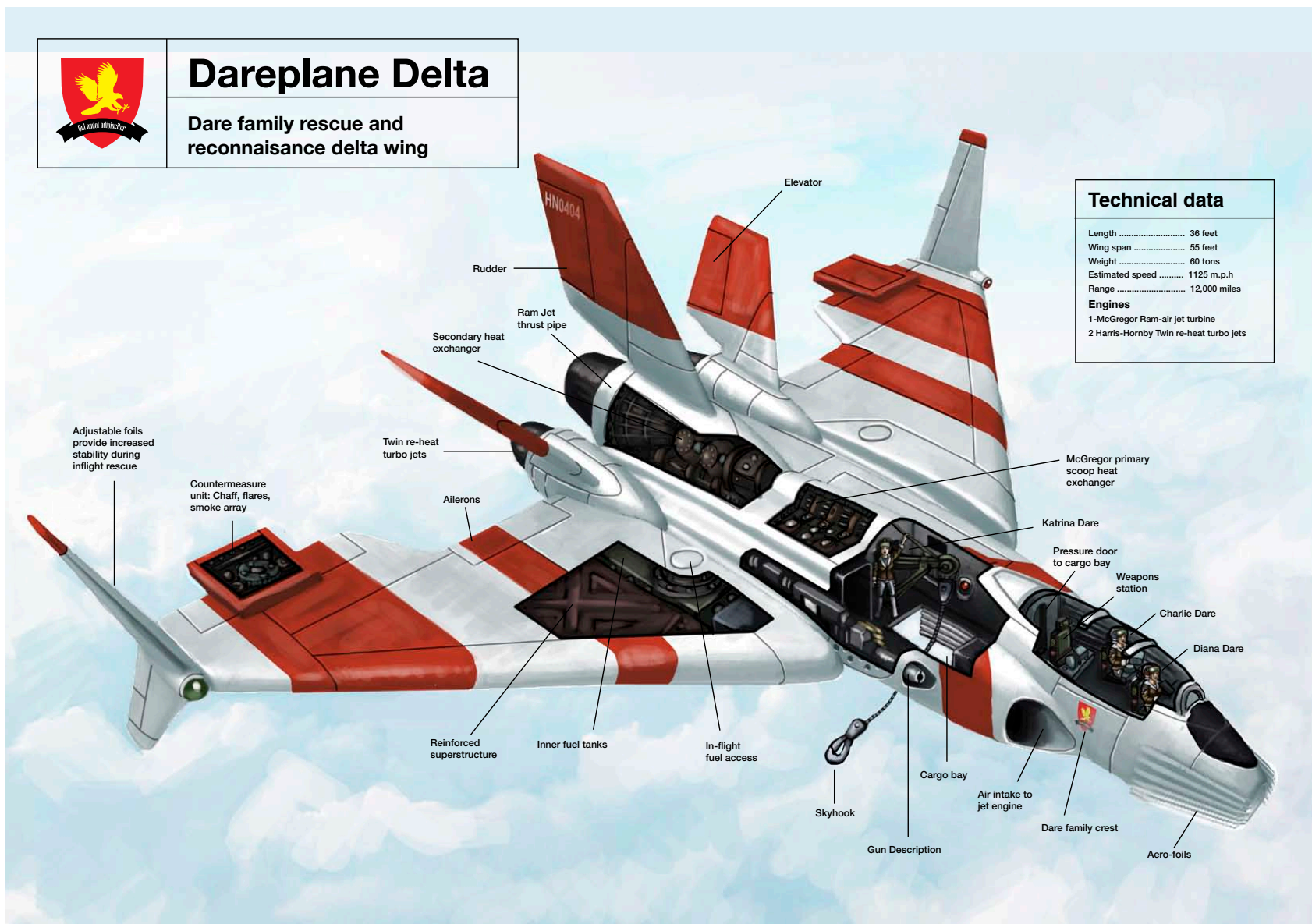
Night-time in stately Dare Manor.

PAN across the hallways, reception rooms and gallery and library.

Moonlight through tall leaded windows illuminates suits of medieval armour, stuffed animal heads, portraits and opulent furniture.

PAN past a framed photograph of three young girls grinning for the camera, a man kneeling behind them, his face obscured by a replica spacecraft standing in front of the photo.

...



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# DAN DARE

## RETURN OF THE MEKON



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## DAN DARE ON THE WIRELESS - STEVE WINDERS WRITES ABOUT DAN DARE'S CAREER ON RADIO LUXEMBOURG.



When *Eagle* was launched in 1950 it was a huge success and this was principally due to the popularity of *Dan Dare, Pilot of the Future*. Dan had no real rivals in comics for several years and the only character who matched him for popularity was the radio hero *Dick Barton Special Agent*, who featured in a daily serial on the B.B.C. Light Programme, which had begun in 1946.

B.B.C. radio's only rival was the commercial station Radio Luxembourg, which despite erratic reception in Britain, caused by the fact that it was broadcast from the Duchy of Luxembourg, was able to compete for audiences because unlike the B.B.C. at the time it was forced to court popularity as it relied on advertising for its revenue. Impressed by the B.B.C.'s success with *Dick Barton*, Luxembourg sought a similar property to appeal to Barton's huge young audience and chose the new hit *Dan Dare*. They acquired the radio rights from *Eagle's* publishers and engaged Barton's creators Edward J. Mason and Geoffrey Webb as writers. Noel Johnson, who had been the first actor to play Dick Barton, was hired to play Dan Dare.

Just to emphasise the B.B.C.'s diffidence and often disdain for providing popular entertainment at the time, they actually cancelled *Dick Barton* in March 1951, four months before Luxembourg launched *Dan Dare*, leaving the new serial without competition!

*Horlicks*, the makers of a hot drink, sponsored the serial and consequently owned it. They promoted it enthusiastically, creating a *Horlicks Spaceman's Club*, and sending *Spacefleet* cap badges to all who joined. Members also received exclusive offers of ties, periscopes, a *Horlick's Spaceman's Handbook* and a 'space' cup, which resembled a spaceship and was designed by a twelve year old boy called Rod Yarrow, who submitted the idea with his application for membership! He received a brand new bicycle and fifty pounds for his idea.

The first two serials were adapted from the original *Dan Dare* story from *Eagle*, where Dan travels to Venus in search of food for a starving Earth and encounters the evil Mekon for the first time. The Mekon was played by Francis De Wolff and Dan's friend and batman, Digby, by John Sharp. Another actor who appeared in the run of the series was Geoffrey Bond, who wrote the popular *Luck of the Legion* strip for nine years in *Eagle*. Later serials were usually original stories, although *Marooned on Mercury* was also adapted from *Eagle*.



*Dan Dare* was broadcast for five days every week, starting at 7.15 p.m. with each episode lasting fifteen minutes. The first serial ran for just eighteen episodes in July 1951, but the second series, which began in November 1951 ran continuously until May 1953. The third series, which began with a seventy-five episode adaptation of *Marooned on Mercury*, ran until May 1954 and the fourth and final series began in September 1954 and ran till May 1955. A series of repeats immediately followed and ran until the end of May 1956. By this time, radio was giving way to television as more people bought sets and the arrival of Independent Television, which began broadcasting in September 1955, led the sponsor to turn to television for its advertising.

I have never heard a single word of Radio Luxembourg's *Dan Dare*. For many years it was believed that only one episode had ever been kept and this was recorded 'off air' by a fan and was almost unintelligible. However the stories were not broadcast live, but recorded in weekly blocks in London and sent to Luxembourg for transmission, so enthusiasts have lived in hope of their being found as several B.B.C. radio and television shows believed lost have been recovered. In fact a single episode has been found in Australia, where the series was repeated in 1954. The scripts were also adapted into Spanish where Dan became Diego Valor, a Spanish space hero, who quickly took on a life of his own. His adventures later featured in original Spanish comic strips and in 1958, when his radio adventures ended, he appeared in his own television series!



Although old copies of *Eagle* can be expensive and hard to come by, they still exist for fans to read and admire the outstanding artwork of Frank Hampson and his successors. However the radio series, which had a huge following and ran for 764 episodes over four years excluding repeats, is all but lost. Nevertheless it is fondly remembered by many children of the fifties. A few years ago I was interviewed about *Dan Dare* for Radio Merseyside by an Irish presenter who had never seen *Eagle* but recalled listening avidly to Dan's adventures on Luxembourg every night. She did not recall having any difficulty with reception which surprised me, given that she had lived even further from Luxembourg than we did in England, but a friend of mine who recalled listening in Preston remembered how the signal could fade out at particularly exciting moments in the story. As a young boy he was allowed to stay up to listen to *Dan Dare* before having to go to bed.

*Dan Dare* returned to radio in 1990 in a weekly serial of four half hour episodes on B.B.C. Radio Four, again based on the original Venus adventure. It featured Mick Brown as Dan and Donald Gee as Digby. No longer aimed at children, it was broadcast at 10.30 p.m. but being thirty-seven at the time, I was allowed to stay up to listen.



LEGO DAN DARE  
BY JAMES  
SHIELDS



An orbital version of the

## THE SPACEFLEET PROJECT BY DR. RAYMOND D. WRIGHT



This is the account of a dreamer, with a touch of obsession and megalomania, too. Around about age five, in 1957, I became aware of the universe. I think that I have my father to thank for that; I remember watching TV programmes on space flight with him in the late 1950s. I'm not sure, but I think I watched, amongst other, the ones that Wernher von Braun did for Disney. Then, in 1960, I came across *The Eagle* and Dan Dare. I don't know why, exactly, but Dan Dare, more than any other science-fiction hero figure, has been an inspiration to me. It's probably something to do with the vividness and the quality of the artwork, and the sheer breadth of imagination of the stories. As well as that, Dan Dare and his fellow characters were more 3-dimensional than in other comparable adventure strips. They were more human, more believable.

I would like to have become an astronaut, or, at least, have had a close involvement with the space launch industry as I was growing up in the late 1960s and early 70s, but the myopic UK government of the day reversed the trend of its predecessors and turned its back on support for space launch at a time when aerospace companies could not hope to build launchers without government contracts. So, I needed a Plan B, and that was to work for the electricity supply industry for 31 years, and then retire early, which I did, four years ago.

Now, I'm back to Plan A. Some years ago, I set up Spacefleet Ltd as a private limited company, without any clear idea of how to proceed from there. It has taken me a while to find a way forward. Even now, what I'm doing could be described as no more than a moderately expensive hobby, but I'd like to convince you that it really is not necessary to be a millionaire to have a prospect of making a commercial return out of putting small scientific experiments, on behalf of other people and institutions, into space.

Going back to Dan Dare, for a moment, you'll remember that Spacefleet had no staged launchers that are used only once, to put things into space. That is a fiendishly expensive and wasteful way to proceed, but it is, indeed, how it is done with all space launches. The cost of the fuel, on the other hand, is a tiny fraction of the hundred million dollars or so that it costs to put a satellite into orbit. The only sort of space technology worth developing, therefore, is a launcher that can be used again and again, like a commer-



cial aircraft. Imagine how expensive an airline ticket would be if your plane were scrapped after its first flight!

My little hobby currently consists, so far, of the developing of a small rocket-powered unmanned aerial vehicle ("UAV") that can fly far higher than anything propelled by a jet or a fan. Two years ago, I went to a space conference in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, and gave a presentation on re-usable space transport. At the same conference, there was a guy from the Romanian Space Agency, also giving a presentation. I got talking with him and the result of that is that he is now building a triangular-shaped flying machine, according to a concept I came up with a few years ago. The end result will closely resemble the artist's impression, below, though somewhat smaller in scale, as it will be a sub-scale demonstrator. We have called the "EARL" - **E**xperimental **A**utonomously-piloted **R**ocket-powered **L**ifting body.

A small technology demonstrator has been built, the "EARL-D3" and has taken off vertically, flying up to 450m and then gliding itself back to the ground under automatic control. Now we are building the EARL-D4.

The EARL-D4 is 2.5m long and will ascend to 30km altitude, carrying a test payload, which will be ejected at that height, and it will then drop back, beginning to glide as it reaches the lower atmosphere, and will do a soft landing close to the take-off point. We hope to do several test flights with it, and if we are able to find a commercial application, e.g. atmospheric measurements at high altitude, then so much the better.

I can't afford to build one big enough to go into space, so we are hoping that we will be able to find a few more like-minded people to join in, to raise enough cash to build another one at larger scale. The development plan is to continue on to an arrangement where three EARL hulls are clamped together at launch, and the outer two separate in the upper atmosphere, leaving the middle one to carry on upwards. If we could build three EARLs and launch them in that way, then there is a good chance that we can get the inner one, the "ascender" one might call it, right up over 100km, into space, where it could start doing service as a carrier of scientific experiments. There is a worldwide market of around \$60M for such "sub-orbital" launches, and we would have got our feet on the first rung of the ladder, so to speak.

The triple-hull launch method could be used at larger scale, to end up with a completely-reusable orbital launch system; see illustration, below.

You'll be wondering, very reasonably, just how much this has all cost, thus far. Well, the project to get the EARL-D4 up to 30km and back, with two or three test flights looks as if it will end up costing around £40k. Cheap, wouldn't you say? I would guess that it would take another 80k or so, to get us the triple hull launch and get an EARL D4 into space, from which would follow some commercial operation, and, I hope, further investment to build again at larger scale to cover a larger part of the sub-orbital launch market, and then to be able to put small satellites into orbit. The plan is to advertise the results of the project, take stands at space exhibitions and conferences, next year, and start a crowd-funding effort, to raise some more funding.

As we are all Dan Dare fans, I guess you will be able to appreciate that, all along, my inspiration has been the Spacefleet organisation itself. It was set up in the mind of Frank Hampson, at least, to be a worldwide institution for transport to space for all nations, cutting across all of the wasteful national and commercial duplications that we see around us now. To build such a thing one would need to start with a band of people motivated not so much by money as by a shared aim to bring it about, and it would start with a small space launch company organised differently from all the rest. The chances of success are small, but not zero. As well as that, it is not necessary to start with a budget of millions.

If you would like to know more about the project, do take a look at the websites, [www.spacefleet.co.uk](http://www.spacefleet.co.uk), and [www.spacefleet.org.uk](http://www.spacefleet.org.uk). if you would like to be kept informed you can sign up on the latter site to receive updates on the project, or just email me at [rdw@spacefleet.co.uk](mailto:rdw@spacefleet.co.uk).



EARL Rocket-powered UAV



Spacefleet's first launch rail under construction



# MINISTRY OF SPACE™

ELLIS • WESTON • MARTIN

THROUGH A  
GLASS  
DARELY:  
MINISTRY OF  
SPACE BY  
HELENA  
NASH

*“MINISTRY OF SPACE is a fantasy - but I don't think it's an exclusively British fantasy. It wasn't important to me that Britain went to the moon. It was important that people went to the moon. I don't care what accent they speak or what colour they are. Making the world of Dan Dare real was my way into the story. But I think the story itself has universal currency. We're all stuck down here together. But the way out has costs. Was it worth destroying the great human enterprise of exploration just to score political points? That's what happened. What cost could be borne? Freezing Britain's social condition in to an eternal 1953? Killing allies? Taking gold stolen from the mouths of corpses?”*

Warren Ellis' Afterword in the Ministry of Space collected volume (Image, 2005)



If you were browsing a comic shop around May 2001, your eye might have been caught by a striking cover of three aeroplanes soaring above the clouds; two were WWII-era Spitfires whilst the third was a larger 1950s-ish aircraft which had more than a hint of Chuck Yeager's sound barrier-breaking Bell X-1, only this particular bird was decked out with the red, white and blue insignia of something called the Royal Space Force. The cover was of Image comics' *Ministry of Space* issue #1, by writer Warren Ellis, artist Chris Weston and colourist Laura Depuy.

*Ministry of Space* (MoS) is a beautifully conceived and lovingly executed alternate-history of space travel. The 'what if' in question being 'What if the British, and not the Americans, claimed the Nazi rocket scientists after the Word War Two, and went on to dominate space?' In three issues (the first two published in 2001, the last an agonising 3 years later in 2004), MoS crafts a plausible timeline of events, starting in the dying days of the war with an act of bravado and brutality that sets the underlying tone for the entire story of a British space programme that could have been.

At its heart is the fictional John Dashwood, an aptly-named former Hurricane pilot and Battle of Britain veteran. Dashwood is a magnificent bastard, a visionary monster who drives his country's space programme forward at breakneck speed with relentless determination and self-belief. There are elements of real-life RAF ace Douglas Bader to him (and not just because of his 'tin legs') as well as Colonel Dare of course (Ellis was inspired to create MoS when he came across an old copy of the Dan Dare collection *The Man From Nowhere* in his attic).

But Dashwood is much more than Dare with a Robert Donat moustache, or in his later years Sir Hubert Guest with spectacles. Nor is he simply the Evil Spock version of Dan. For the fifty-plus years that the story covers, he is the heart (if not the soul) of the Ministry of Space, a programme that not only puts Britain head and shoulders above both the Americans and Russians in the race to the Moon and beyond, but affects the country itself in numerous other political and social arenas, from rationing to the Suez crisis to the extended life expectancy of the British Empire. He does terrible things in his pursuit of his dream, but also performs magnificent acts of personal bravery along the way. Like a lot of real-life pioneers he is a monstrous hero, and in MoS a compelling protagonist.

Here then, is a brief timeline of *Ministry of Space*, somewhat redacted to avoid a major plot spoiler.

- **1945** - History takes a left turn when the American Operation Paperclip is gazumped by the RAF's Air Commodore John Dashwood. Dr Wernher von Braun and his German rocket science team are spirited away to Britain from under the noses of the Americans. The US Army extraction troops are killed when the Peenemunde rocket science base is flattened by Bomber Command.
- **1946** - Britain breaks the sound barrier.



“Ellis himself, a self-confessed space nut, demonstrates that he has the write stuff when it comes to space race stories, “

- **1948** - Victory, the world's first artificial satellite is shot into orbit. It broadcasts 'God save the King' in Morse Code.
- **1950** - Britain pioneers manned spaceflight with the rocketplane *Britannia*. Rather than a space capsule, *Britannia* has a reinforced, [pressurized](#) cabin and a leather seat. Dashwood, wearing his old pilot's jacket, becomes the first man in space, but he loses his legs when *Britannia* crashlands. Dashwood is knighted for his services to the Empire.
- **1953-56** - The *Churchill* space station is constructed.
- **1957** - The [National Service Act 1948](#) is not abolished, and instead now includes service in the 'The Royal Space Force'.
- **1960** - The Union flag is planted on the Moon. It is claimed in the name of Queen Elizabeth II and the British Empire.
- **1969** - An RSF fleet of nuclear-engine rockets establishes a colonial base on Mars.
- **1969-2001** - Britain's space stations and colonies on the Moon and Mars thrive, with mining operations in the Asteroid Belt. Certain irregularities concerning the original source of the budget for Sir John Dashwood's ambitious space programme come to light.

So that's the bones of the story; what of the look and feel? For my money, a series like this stands and falls on its art. It needs a certain sort of artist to bring the real-life aircraft and fictional space vehicles to life with equal authenticity. In his afterword, Ellis says that British artist Chris Weston was his only choice for MoS. Weston had already made his name for 2000AD and DC comics, and was a former apprentice to the legendary Don Lawrence of *Trigan Empire* fame. From Spitfires and Hurricanes to the experimental rocketplane *Britannia*, the Arthur C Clarke-inspired *Churchill* space station and massed might of the Martian exploratory fleet, Weston's renditions of the ministry's spacecraft are beautifully plausible-looking products of an alternate 20<sup>th</sup> century technology, like 1950s and 60s diagrams from *Eagle* comic itself or *Look and Learn*. Only in a single splash page in issue #3, a shot of young boys in shorts wearing heli-packs hovering over an alternate 1960s London, do the visuals of MoS stray into whimsy (this page looking a little of place, as if it has sneaked in from an issue of Alan Moore's *Tom Strong*).

Laura Depuy's sterling work as colourist is awash with bright sky blues, intense golden white rocket blasts, RAF serge deep blues, star-speckled spacescapes, grey lunar terrain and eerie Martian reds and oranges. Everything has a clean, bright feel, like paintings from an old Ladybird book.

Ellis himself, a self-confessed space nut, demonstrates that he has the write stuff when it comes to space race stories, peppering MoS with dialogue between Dashwood and (the never named) Dr Wernher von Braun that drips with aeronautic authenticity, as they argue over the pros and cons of three-stage launches, chemical engines, nuclear motors and space station construction. Ellis' dialogue sparkles in this story,





with the ever-quotable Dashwood - putting himself in the pilot's seat for Britain's maiden manned flight into orbit - getting all the best lines:

"Orbital-1 will go up in 1950. It will be a plane that can be flown. We're not in the business of catapulting potatoes over the horizon. And I will be flying her.

And I want the bloody cabin reinforced and pressurised! I am not going to space wrapped in tinfoil! I'm an English airman and I want to wear my bloody jacket and sit in a decent leather chair!"

MoS, issue #1

The series isn't perfect. The overall plot itself is fairly light, using an aging Dashwood in 2001 confronting his past as the skeleton for the flashbacks from 1945 to the present day. The individual episodes from each year are in themselves excellent vignettes, but the over-arching plot such as it is, is a little bland: old Dashwood gets into a spaceship, ponders the past, then argues with some people in a space station, the end.

And there is a somewhat heavy-handed final panel which unsubtly hits the reader in the face with one of the book's underlying themes, that being that the price Britain paid for its space supremacy was social stagnation and discrimination. Likewise, the shock revelation regarding the funding for Dashwood's 'black budget' seems to have been added to the story only to further confirm him as a terrible monster. Both storytelling elements feel like leftovers from overly-earnest, politically critical comics of the 80s and 90s and might have been better served with a lighter touch.

Enough of the literary criticism. What's cool about *Ministry of Space*? Here's a personal list:

- All of the craft, but especially the Martian fleet - if they did a comic of the classic 1950s *Journey Into Space* radio series, it would look like this.
- The Lowlands University shout-out to BBC comedy-drama *A Very Peculiar Practice*.
- A V-3 rocket launching from Essex.
- "...where the bloody hell are my legs?"
- Spaceships launching to a casual "Chocks away."
- The union flag on the Moon.
- Engineering product placement, from the Rolls Royce orbital shuttle to the lunar Shackleton Rover (complete with Rover badge on the bonnet).
- Every single page splash.
- Jodrell Bank and Woomera.
- The 5-page sequence of the Martian fleet.
- The Royal Space Force roundel.
- "You made us monsters." "I made you *great*."

For a three-issue comic series that came out with very little fanfare, MoS punches above its weight when it comes to its legacy, efficiently encapsulating the visuals and themes of an alt-history that fuses

1950s Dan Dare derring-do with *The Right Stuff's* rich grounding in science and politics. Its impact on the wider sci-fi/comics/gaming community can be measured by the fact that the oh-so useful term 'Ministry of Space' is now used to neatly sum up a certain sort of genre and setting, as if it has been with us as long as British sci-fi mainstays like *Quatermass* or *Journey Into Space*.

There is much to love in *Ministry of Space*, which for all its dark secrets and bloodied hands feels like part love letter to Dan Dare's stiff upper-lipped pluck, part wish-fulfilment for those who never wanted the sun to go down on the British Empire and part good old-fashioned space fiction.

Tally ho!

### Further reading

*Planetary* (Wildstorm comics), also by Warren Ellis, which also uses an alternate space program (this time a secret US Ares project, with an evil Fantastic Four).

*Journey Into Space*, by Charles Chilton. The British radio serial from 1953-58. *Operation Luna* (series 1) and *The Red Planet* (series 2) in particular have a marvellously authentic feel of space exploration, and are wonderfully atmospheric.

*Rockets, Rayguns and Really Nice Tea*. British-based live action role-playing system inspired by Dan Dare, *Quatermass* and *Ministry of Space*.



# DAN DARE

PILOT OF THE FUTURE



## DAN DARE - THE VIDEO GAME BY JAMES SHIELDS

I was already a fan of Dan Dare from the (new) *Eagle* comics when the computer game came out, so naturally I had to have it.

After weeks of saving, I finally had the princely sum of £9.99 (it was probably more than that in Ireland), and was able to buy the Spectrum version, which, of course, came on a cassette tape. Getting home, I started up the computer, inserted the tape, typed LOAD "", and pressed play on the tape recorder.

As with all software in those days, this was followed by an anxious wait of what seemed like hours, but really was probably only a couple of minutes. Loading on the Spectrum was always accompanied by a sense of nervous anticipation, as it was never certain to work, and most Spectrum users had a toolkit that included cassette head cleaning tapes and fluid. But soon I was staring at the menu screen of the game.

One thing I loved about the game is the way screens were designed to look like comic strip panels. It opens with Dan and Digby flying over the Mekon's asteroid base. They land and Digby remains with the ship (probably because the Spectrum didn't have enough memory for Digby to actually appear in the game). In my memory there was wonderful background music, but I replayed it recently, and





it turns out there actually wasn't any. Every so often the Mekon's head pops up in a panel to taunt you, adding to the comic book look.

The graphics were quite cool - for the time. A big limitation of Spectrum graphics was that each block of pixels could only contain 2 colours, so game designers had to carefully manage their use of colour. Most elements in Dan Dare are therefore a single colour on a black background. There are a lot of blues, greens and yellows throughout. Yet despite this, it captures the spirit of Dan Dare's adventures excellently.

You start on the surface of the asteroid, and have to find your way into the base while avoiding getting shot by Treen footsoldiers. Once underground you can explore the Mekon's base, eventually finding the communications hub, where the self destruct system is controlled from. It needs five keys to activate, however, so you must search the base for those five keys. Each key must be brought back to the self destruct device before the door to the next area is unlocked and another can be collected, so you learn to find your way around the base fairly quickly and there's quite a bit of toing and froing.

As you go through the zones, the defences get tougher, though one feature I like is the way you don't have a limited number of "lives", so if you get shot too many times you just wake up in a holding cell ten minutes later. The Treens seem to have a lax attitude to prisoner security, and your cell is unlocked and unguarded. You do have a limited time to complete the game, so if this happens too many times, you'll use up all your time and the Mekon wins.

I'm assuming thirty years is sufficient for spoiler warnings, so I hope the next bit doesn't ruin the surprise for anyone.

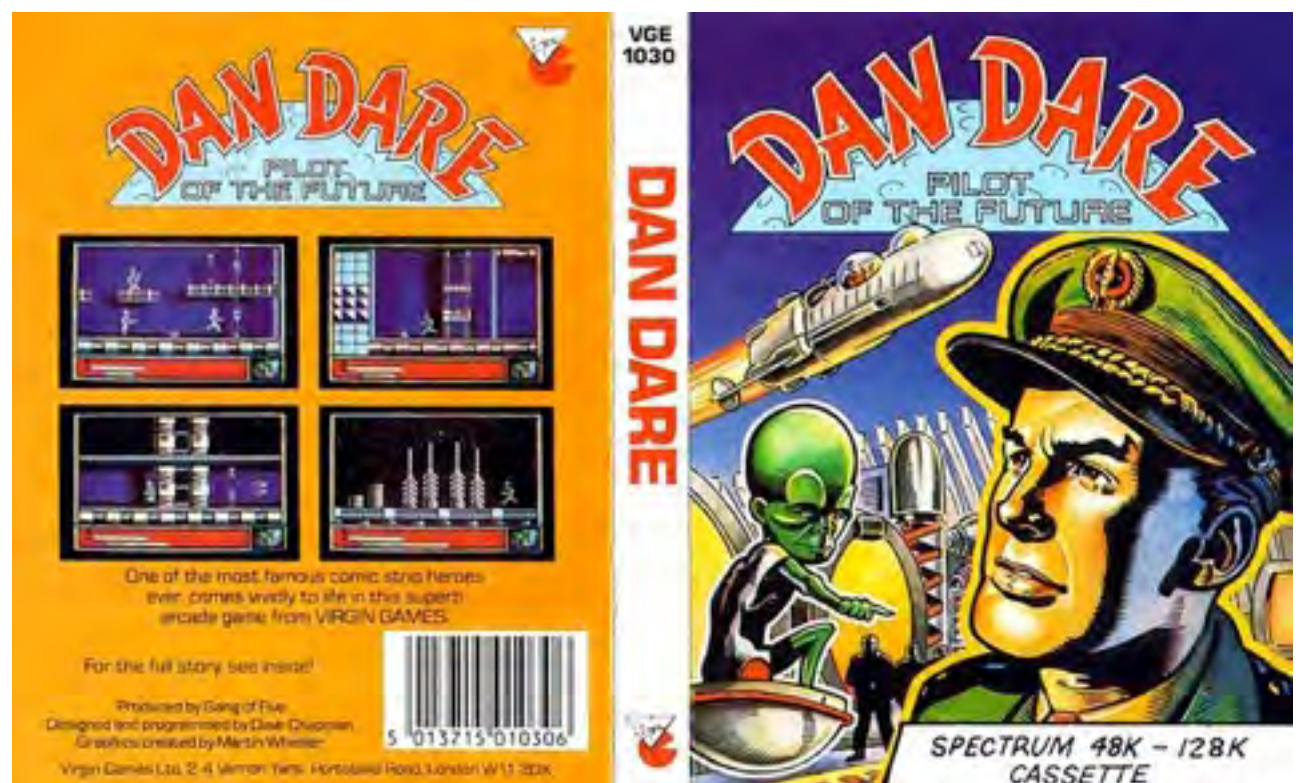
As you collect the fifth key, you suddenly come face to face with the Mekon, but your opportunity to finish him off turns out to be in vain, as it's a holographic decoy. The real Mekon is meanwhile making his way to an escape pod, so lives to exact his revenge in another video game.

Despite your failure to capture the Mekon, you now have the fifth key to the self destruct, so head back and set the final destruct sequence. You now have to beat a hasty retreat before the entire asteroid explodes. And explode it does, accompanied by one of the scariest noises I ever heard the Spectrum make, and some rather cool (for the time) explody graphics that blast out from the centre of the screen.

The game was well received and became popular among Spectrum fans, many of whom were encountering Dare for the first time. It was followed by two sequels, which added new aspects to the game play, but I don't think they achieved the same level of popularity.

Interestingly, there was also a version for the Commodore 64, which was actually a completely different game, ending in a grenade battle between Dan and the Mekon. I haven't played this one.

Perhaps the video game is not the most important part of Dan Dare lore, but an important part nonetheless





# DAN DARE VS. THE WOLD CRIME LEAGUE: SEASON SIX OF FOX'S WOLD NEWTON BY CHRIS GARCIA

The Lone Ranger - "Commander Dare is back, Buckaroo."  
Buckaroo Bonzai - "Then we get back to stopping him."

The explosion created by the massive success of the BBC's 2002 series *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* did not just change English television. It caused massive ripples throughout world television. From Danish television's six part mini-series *Annen Gang*, featuring the return of a dozen once-dispatched foes from Danish children's stories, to ABC's *Once Upon A Time*, 2004's biggest new series, metafictional shows began to ooze into the cracks that once belonged to Reality Television. These new series took characters from many different fictional histories and crammed them together. Philip Jose Farmer was contacted by Joss Whedon, one of his biggest-name admirers, to create a series using Farmer's most famous concept – The Wold Newton Family.

A cottage near the village of Wold Newton in Yorkshire, was the sight of a meteorite strike in 1795. Farmer postulated that this strike had to genetic mutations among those who were nearby, and their off-spring became extraordinary in nearly every way. This idea accounted for dozens of heroes of fiction, from Doc Savage and Professor Challenger, to Tarzan and The Shadow. These characters, from dozens of different authors, were unified in the Wold Newton theory. Whedon's series focused on eight members of the family: Savage, Challenger, Tarzan, Marlene Alraune, Bulldog Drummond, Buckaroo Bonzai (who Whedon had added to the WN family on a whim), Phileas Fogg, and Lady Rawhide, and their interactions with the major crime family, SPECTRAL. The show, which took place in an alternate present, brought hundreds of characters from dozens of different timeframes. These characters were charged with keeping order in the world, though they were far from the only heroes. Sherlock Holmes was encountered in each of the first three seasons, and an unnamed spy who was suspiciously like James Bond, whose own television program on the BBC was the highest rated program in more than twenty years. About half the weekly hours were solo adventures, and the rest team-ups by the Wold Newton family. The central question, *Why Are We So Special?*, was explored a few times a season, often leading to the season-ending cliffhanger.

Farmer and Whedon plotted the series through year five before Farmer's death in 2009, just six days after the debut of the first episode of *Wold Newton* drew nearly twenty million viewers. Whedon led the show through those five seasons, captaining the ship

“Dan Dare is the greatest pilot who has ever lived, Fantomas, and possibly the greatest all time. A worthy ally for us, I would dare say.”  
Fu Manchu



through the loss of four of its original cast (Doc Savage, (Dwayne Johnson), Challenger, (John Manganelli), Alraune (Carrie Stevens), and Fogg (James D'Arcy)) and replaced them with Buffy Summers (played by Kristy Swanson), Emma Peel (Hayley Atwell), John Shaft (Idris Elba), Scully and Mulder of *The X-Files* (Gillian Anderson and David Ducovney, respectively), and The Lone Ranger (Clark Gregg). The ratings were high, peaking as the third highest-rated television program of 2009, and spinoffs for Savage (in film) and Fogg (on television) did very well on their own.

A slight dip in ratings following Johnson's departure in the middle of the fourth season led to whispers of the network losing faith in Whedon, and even the addition of popular characters for season five did not bring ratings back up. While a humorous episode featuring the Ghostbusters ended up being one of the highest in the history of the series, the network nearly pulled the plug on the series. An executive who had worked on *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* on the BBC, Martill Corey, had been brought on-board the prior season and suggested renewing *Wold Newton*, but assigning a new showrunner. This seemed a good compromise, as the show was still doing very well in the ratings with 18-35 year olds. Corey was assigned the task of filling the showrunner position and settled on a producer he had worked with on the disastrous attempt to revive *Doctor Who* – Russell T. Davies.

Davies instantly snapped at the bait as showrunner and shook things up quickly. In his first five episodes, he killed off Shaft (Elba had asked for a release so he could pursue films), and Mulder (who had been cast in a new Showtime series), and then brought in Peter Capaldi as Carnacki. Davies also broke with tradition and focused an episode fully on the SPECTRAL criminal organization. SPECTRAL, led by Fu Manchu (who killed off the unnamed original boss standing in for Bond's Blofeld), the crime family featured at least a dozen major criminal figures, including Moriarty from the Holmes mythology, Fantomas, and once Davies took hold, The Master. In episode six of the sixth season, Fu Manchu is shown walking a young Englishman around the SPECTRAL airship. Played by Sam Worthington, the airman is shown to be Dan Dare of the Interplanet Space Fleet, brought back to early 21<sup>st</sup> Century Earth by SPECTRAL's Time-Dilator. Fu Manchu spent the episode convincing Dare that his place was alongside SPECTRAL because Buckaroo Bonzai's journey into the 8<sup>th</sup> Dimension had been an attempt to turn Earth over to the control of the Lecroids, who were aligned with The Mekon.

Davies had chosen Dare because of his fondness of the character from his run in *Eagle* when he was a kid, as well as the IDW comic series that had just found a massive audience. Fu Manchu paired Dare first with Fantomas (played by Nestor Carbonel), until the master thief died in a crash after four episodes. During that first arc, Dare and Fantomas had gone up against Buckaroo Bonzai, including destroying the headquarters of the Blue Blazer Regulars, and killing Pecos of the Hong Kong Cavaliers in a bombing raid. Bonzai had barely managed to escape an attack by Dare while he was performing an operation on a Navaho girl who turned out to be Naayéé'neizghání for the Buffyverse. Fantomas was replaced by Hanoi Xan, Buckaroo's sworn enemy. Upon discovering this (when Scully and Holmes teamed to infiltrate the WCL), Buckaroo called all the remaining members of the Wold Newton Family to get all to swear an oath: stop SPECTRAL once and for all, and most importantly, kill Dan Dare.

While ratings improved, the last to show before the holiday break drawing more viewers than any episode since the finale of the second season, critics and viewers alike were torn on the presentation of Dan Dare. Worthington played him with a sense of honor that was unbreakable, but he was often participating in bombing runs that pointed killed civilians, which had Dare fans in the UK up in arms. He was portrayed as exceptionally intelligent, but was easily broken by Fu Manchu to join SPECTRAL. These matters led to great debates on the internet. Episodes that told the story from Dare's point of view played much like those that showed Bonzai or The Lone Ranger dealing with their adventures, only the situations were working in the opposite direction. While the Wold Newton Family had always managed to defeat SPECTRAL in almost every previous episode, or at least score some measure of victory, Dare would take victories FROM the Family, and thus hand them defeat. It was no coincidence that Dare was the primary focus of six episodes, more than any other character in a single season, and was at least secondary in every other episode he appeared in.

When the series returned in early February, Dare was in command of a new, highly experimental ship designed by Dr. Moriarty. The rocket allowed Dare to go on a conquest of Mars, where he encountered John Carter. On his return, the rocket detected and attacked by Bonzai and his co-pilot, The Lone Ranger. This led into the next episode, where we see the same five minutes of events, in real time, from 7 different characters' points-of-view. The final segment, Bonzai's, shows the downing of his ship from the inside, and the death of The Lone Ranger. That episode, more than any other, divided critics. Many said that it was too much, that Gregg, one of the most beloved

“He’s with  
SPECTRAL,  
that’s all  
that should  
matter.”  
Buffy



characters on the show, was not to be used a sacrificial lamb, while others applauded Davies nerve in actually doing it. Ignored, perhaps, was the fact that Gregg had signed on for a show based on DC's Justice League of America. The next episode, the highest-rated in the history of the season, featured Dare being manipulated into leading an attack on The Lone Ranger's funeral. Bonzai (played by Scott Grimes) is injured, and whisked off by Scully to recuperate (while, in real life, Grimes was off filming *Down With Love 2: Love Harder*).

The following six episodes were nearly entirely absent of mentions of Bonzai, and full of Dare attempting to take out each of the Wold Newtonians. In particular, Buffy lost a hand, while Drummond was confined to a wheelchair. The episodes turned Dare into something of a specter, a looming presence who would pop in to either capture or injure the various opponents. The only one of the WNF to escape injury was Carnacki, who actually managed to rip the emblem off of Dare's uniform in the midst of their brawl.

Dare's portrayal in these episodes was even more criticized for the combination of violence he undertook, and the fact that it seemed as if he never even TRIED for a peaceful solution. The ease with which he was manipulated by the forces of SPECTRAL was also pointed out.

The second-to-last episode of the sixth season was perhaps the craziest in the history of the show. The beginning of the episode saw a SPECTRAL ship shot out of the sky by the team of Buffy and Sherlock Holmes, and as they search the debris for Dare's body, they find the wheelchair of Dr. Strangelove. Holmes recognized the wheelchair and could put two-and-two together and knew that they were planning on dropping the bomb on New York City. Buffy put out the call and gathered every Wold Newton character, including bringing back Savage and Fogg, as well as introducing The Last Three of Venus, who construct a ship to compete with Dare's. Notably in absence is Bonzai, who Scully says has slipped away over the last month. Piloted by Savage and Carnacki, the team engages in a dogfight using the ships, and Dare, when he is told to eject and set the auto-pilot to crash into the Capitol by Moriarty, Dare ejects all the SPECTRAL members and crashes the rocket into the Atlantic. SPECTRAL forces are engaged and attack Washington DC, while a robotic rescue team retrieves Dare from the Atlantic, bringing him to the Capitol as Fu Manchu announces himself as the new leader of the US. Dare arrives, and denounces SPECTRAL, and before Moriarty can drive the ceremonial dagger into Dare's heart, his thrust is deflected by Bonzai's katana as he announces “No one kills Dan Dare unless I kill Dan Dare.”

And the episode ended.

The response to the episode was insane, and the finale the next week drew a gigantic audience, the largest in series history again. Bonzai stands, crazed and quite the opposite of his normal stoicism, with a sword to Dare's neck. Dare turns his head, offering his neck fully to Bonzai, ready to accept his fate. Bonzai then draws back his sword, instead thrusting it through the chest of Moriarty, then turning and slashing across Cobra Commander's face. The soldiers present open fire, but everyone dives for cover.

Elsewhere, the team led by Savage fights Hanoi Xan, finally capturing him, but instead of bringing him in to the rest of the Wold Newtons, they take him to Berlin, where the Savage teams adventures are centered.

Fu Manchu yells for stillness, and every soldier ceases fire. Fu Manchu then steps forward to where Dare had dived, picks him up and thrusts a knife into him, which gives Bonzai just the opening he needed to run Fu Manchu through. Ending SPECTRAL. Every SPECTRAL soldier drops their weapons and walks out of the Capitol, and we see the retreat of all soldiers from DC.

Of course, at the end of that scenario, Bonzai takes his knees, pulls out his tanto and performs seppuku, with Carnacki delivering the final blow, cutting off his head. Carnacki then explains that he understood that Bonzai could not live with so much blood on his hands.

The team then gathers and buries Bonzai alongside Dare, with Holmes delivering his eulogy, and Carnacki placing the amulet he wore around his neck and breaks it in half, placing each piece on top of the dug earth of both graves. Buffy, Holmes, Peel, Fogg, Carnacki, The Green Hornet, and Drummond all declare that they will never give up on the cause of fighting for good. The Wold Newton team turns their back on the graves and begin to walk away when a voice calls “Hey!” The team turns and standing there are Hanoi Xan, Savage, Challenger, The Lone Ranger, Fantomas, Fu Manchu, Dare, and Bonzai, all clad in white with glassy eyes.

“Gentlemen, meet The World Crime League.” Xan says, and the screen goes black.

While writing the final episodes, Davies knew the show was not being renewed. This fact was kept from everyone except those returning for the single appearances. Capaldi had also been told on a night out with Corey, and he co-wrote the final episodes along with Davies. They were meant to be completely over-the-top, to give a flourish to the end of the series. Gillian Anderson caught on once she read the script. The reception of the episode was incredible, and much of the talk was about the series' rebound leading to more seasons. Fox's executives had been tasked with



“We all begin,  
and we all  
end. Seldom  
is our End our  
finish, though.”

Carnacki  
eulogizing  
Dan Dare



cutting costs, and *Wold Newton* was the network's second most expensive show. Almost all the contracts were up for renewal as well, and the brass saw it as a chance to launch characters from the show into spin-offs. The cancellation of *Doc Savage* meant that there were no other related shows on Fox, which was in desperate need of fresh new series.

While Carnacki was obviously getting his own show, it was Dan Dare who had the most potential. The exposure on *Wold Newton* was the first time Dare had been a focus character in America. The issue, of course, was that Dare had been a villain on *Wold Newton*. This would make it more difficult to present him on his own series. The solution to this was simple; they didn't give him a regular series, but instead did a web-based series portraying Dare as he was known to British readers of *Eagle* and *2000 ad*. The first series, *Voyage to Venus*, became one of the most successful web series, and was followed by *The Red Moon Mystery* and *Mission to Mercury*. After three seasons on Fox.com, *Dare* became a regular series, completely outside of the *Wold Newton* mythology. The re-invented series did well for three seasons, never achieving the audience that *Wold Newton* had managed, but built a massive fandom, particularly then went on to become a successful movie franchise with Worthington as the lead until he replaced Daniel Craig as James Bond.

While Dan Dare is now an American Cultural icon, it was as a villain that he first arrived in American Air Space.





## DAN DARE'S BACK IN SOUTHPORT STEVE WINDERS REPORTS ON A VISIT TO THE REFURBISHED ATKINSON CENTRE IN DAN DARE'S 'HOME' TOWN.

Early in 2015, the Atkinson Library and Art Gallery in Southport reopened after a long period of refurbishment, which included the creation of a new permanent collection of *Dan Dare* memorabilia on display. Both Dan and *Eagle* were created in the Lancashire town in 1950, which is now part of the Borough of Sefton in Merseyside, so this is an appropriate place for a tribute. Frank Hampson and his team first worked on the *Dan Dare* strip in a large 'lean to' studio attached to a house in the Churchtown district of Southport and *Eagle's* creator, the Rev. Marcus Morris was Vicar of St. James' Parish in Birkdale. As I was visiting Southport over the Easter break, I took my six year old grandson to see the new display.

The interior of the building has been significantly altered to include a museum, as well as a theatre, library and art gallery. The museum houses two interesting and well-presented exhibitions about Ancient Egypt and the history of Southport, which includes display cases featuring birds of the coast, popular toys and entertainment, in addition to a large case devoted to *Dan Dare*. This contains a small number of Frank Hampson's old reference models including a 'life sized' head of Lero the Crypt, from the *Dan Dare* story *The Man From Nowhere*. There are also small heads of various recurring characters and a space station. There are several copies of early *Eagles* on display as well as a few items of original art from the *Dan Dare* strip, although these are by Desmond Walduck and Don Harley with Bruce Cornwell, from *Prisoners of Space* and *The Earth Stealers*; which Frank Hampson did not work on. There is also an impressive newly commissioned life sized fibreglass model of the Mekon, by Kevin Harlow, hanging from the ceiling and the bronze bust of Dan Dare, presented to the town by the *Eagle Society* in 2000, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of *Dan Dare* and *Eagle*, which formerly stood by the entrance to the Cambridge Walks shopping area is now beside the entrance door to the exhibition. The bust was damaged by vandals several years ago and subsequently repaired.

Although the *Dan Dare* display is comparatively small, there are other interesting items for his fans to see. The entertainment case includes advertisements and a programme from the old Garrick Theatre, which was mentioned by Dan himself in the first *Venus* story, though unfortunately the programme is for Dick Whittington and not *Babes in the Wood*. There is also a display of Meccano models, Dinky cars and Hornby trains, made in nearby Liverpool.

As we left the museum, my grandson asked "Is Dan Dare dead now?"

"No. He's still alive," I replied.



## ATKINSON LIBRARY AND ART GALLERY





## WHY A DAN DARE FILM IS A REALLY BAD IDEA BY IAN WHEELER

Dan Dare, like any other successful comic character, has made appearances in other media as well as the printed page. He has been on the radio (a series ran on Radio Luxembourg for five years from 1951 and there was a four part adaptation on Radio 4 in 1990) and there have been a couple of (ultimately unsuccessful) attempts to make a live action television series. The first, intended to star actor James Fox as the famous space pilot, was mooted to be made by the now-defunct ITV region ATV in the early 1980s and would have been written by *Grange Hill* and *Brookside* creator Phil Redmond. It would have utilised (to quote the press release) 'new technology in video effects and computer graphics'. The second attempt would have been produced by the independent television company *Zenith* (the people behind hit ITV detective series *Inspector Morse*) in the early 90s for which a short pilot was made. Finally, a 26 part CGI children's series of *Dan Dare* was produced by the Dan Dare Corporation and appeared on Channel 5 in 2001/02.

More recently there have been murmurings of a Dan Dare film. In 2010 it was speculated that Australian actor Sam Worthington (who has appeared in high-profile productions such as *Avatar*, *Terminator Salvation* and *Clash of the Titans*) would be playing the role of Dan on the big screen.

At the risk of sounding like a grumpy old man, I think that a Dan Dare film has the potential to be a massive failure and that it could prove to be a case of be careful what you wish for. Whilst many DD fans were foaming at the mouth when word of this possible new movie first came out, I was shaking my head and thinking 'It either won't happen or if it does it won't be very good.'

Don't get me wrong, I have no objection to a Dan Dare film in principle. I'd support it and go to see it but I would do so with fairly low expectations.

Why the cynicism? Well, firstly, it's extremely difficult to define what Dan Dare actually is. Most people have a pretty good idea of what *Star Trek* should be like. Likewise, if there was to be a film of *Blake's 7* it wouldn't be too hard to decide what kind of movie, stylistically speaking, you should be making.

But Dan Dare has many different forms. The 1950s original. The funky 70s *2000AD* version. The 1980s re-launch. The 2008 Ennis/Erskine re-imagining. You would have to decide which of these versions would be your starting point. A faithful rendition of the 1950s version would certainly keep the members of the Eagle Society happy. But that version of Dan, superb though he is, is a very Battle of Britain type interpretation of the char-

acter. He's very British, very stiff upper lip, like a character from a black and white World War Two movie. And that works brilliantly within the context of those early strips. But would it resonate with a modern audience?

The 70s version was cooler, perhaps a little darker. But even that is dated now, as is the 80s interpretation which myself and others of my age grew up on and loved so much.

Do you cherry-pick the best of these different versions and create a hybrid? Or do you make something totally new and revisionist which risks alienating everyone? What about a black Dan Dare? Or a female version? (both of which could work very well incidentally). But do you then take the risk of straying too much from the original concept to the point that you might as well call it something else?

Look at all the other classic British characters which have been made into movies with a conspicuous lack of success. Think of *Thunderbirds* or *The Avengers* (I'm talking John Steed not the Incredible Hulk and Iron Man.) Both of these lacked any of the character and strength of the TV series on which they were based and were ultimately totally forgettable. The other risk is that you end up making something like the recent *Judge Dredd* film which was very good and very faithful to the original concept but ended up not being successful enough to justify its existence.

Perhaps the best comparison is the 1980s film of *Biggles*. It had its good points and has enjoyed something of a cult revival on DVD but at the time it was seen as cheesy and unmemorable and something of a betrayal of the original books on which it was (very loosely) based. Not even the presence of screen legend Peter Cushing could save it.

There is perhaps one glimmer of hope but in expressing my opinions I'm unlikely to endear myself to many hardcore *Dan Dare* fans. The way ahead would be to do something along the lines of the recent film version of *The Equaliser* starring

Denzel Washington. The film took the title of the popular 80s series starring Edward Woodward but little else. Yes, there needs to be some serious slaughtering of sacred cows. Take

the name Dan Dare (which is a pity cool name to be fair) and do a complete re-invention. Cast an actor from an ethnic minority as Digby. Or create a female version of Sir Hubert. And these things should be done not to shock or as a consensus to political correctness but to do something genuinely new and innovative. This should be a film not for fans of the 50s or the 80s Dan Dare but a modern worldwide audience. It's time to not just think outside the box but throw the box away and never look at it again.

In many ways, the fact that Dan Dare is relatively unknown to many people these days is an advantage - it gives any potential film producer or director the chance to start with a blank canvas. A Dan Dare film needs to be new with capital 'N'. It shouldn't even be self-consciously 'retro' in an attempt to be cool like *Flash Gordon*. It should be visually fresh and innovative like *Blade Runner* was when it came out. And if a few middle age British men get upset by the results so be it.



Trade magazine announcement, circa 1976



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## WORDS ON DAN DARE BY JIM BURNS

Well thank you for inviting me to make a contribution to today's event. Thanks in particular to Gerry Webb who felt that I had something interesting to offer. Gerry Webb for whom the words 'irepressible' and 'larger than life' seem to have been specifically coined! One doesn't easily say 'no' to Gerry!

My name is Jim Burns and I've been drawing and painting - let's call it 'spacey stuff' since I was first able to grasp a pencil. I remember being drawn to 'the weird' whilst still at primary school...strange machines and unlikely creatures inhabiting my infantile scrawlings from maybe 5/6 years old. I turned my hobby into something resembling a career...(if being paid to draw something that had previously been simply 'fun' can be called a career)...some 43 years ago in 1972 whilst still at St Martin's School of Art - when I was paid the princely sum of £13.50 for a piece of work I would just as soon not draw to your attention today.

That 'spacey stuff' gradually morphed into a more distinguished form called 'science fiction art' and more recently - to cover a wider gamut of weird possibilities 'The Art of the Fantastical'.

Currently the preferred term is 'Imaginative Realism' - yes, I'm an Imaginative Realist these days..suggesting I now possess a certain gravitas and an implied respect previously denied to spacey stuff artists..although I've yet to see that new higher regard materialise in any

meaningful way. By which I mean that I used to earn more when I was simply doing 'spacey stuff'! So for those of you who aren't familiar with my own work and to give you a bit of context as to where I'm coming from..and maybe to give a clue as to the place Dan Dare and his creator, Frank Hampson hold in my heart and in my imagination...I'll show you a few pieces of my own work. After these I'll move on with an overview of my careers...plural...there have been two although the first was very short lived.. and how in very large part it was that man Hampson and Colonel Dare who seemed to in large part choreograph my life for me, albeit probably unconsciously on my part it's only in more recent times that the clear truth of the Hampson/Dan Dare influence has become transparently obvious to me!...and they did this between them not once - but twice as I've made two big career choices in life and they both connect to the influence that comic had on my life.





So all this has its roots in childhood and the excitement and wonder I experienced each week as the *Eagle* comic plopped on to the doormat. If I was lucky I got to it before my father...who after all was the guy paying for it. Ostensibly he bought it for me...but he couldn't resist it either. Second World War memories for him perhaps - as he was ground crew on Spitfires at RAF Tangmere, Manston and North Weald - The Battle of Britain airfields - and the air aces whose planes he helped service inevitably connecting with the character of Dan Dare in his own imagination maybe.



They say as you get really 'quite old'...I was 67 last Friday and the bones are certainly informing me in no uncertain terms that I'm not that spry young fellow any more...yes as you get older the short term memory is no longer much to be trusted....it gets harder to recall what you were doing yesterday or even earlier this morning whilst the stuff that filled your time when you were young gains a new clarity. And certainly amongst my fellow pensioner artists, at least the British ones, as the light starts to dim and old memories flood back... Colonel Daniel McGregor Dare seems once again to have started to loom large in the casual conversations of interested artists of my own generation...and of course as witnessed by today's nostalgiafest! But then again maybe in part it's because some new visionaries have started to convince us that something resembling Dan's world isn't so far off after all. Probably minus the Treens and the Mighty Mekon. We've already heard from one such visionary...Alan Bond and his mighty Skylon project.





If ever a machine looked like the kind of vehicle we imagined back in the 50s and 60s would take us into space - it's Skylon. Uniquely British Romanticism in its lines (maybe that's just the irrational artist in me)...but so much more elegant than those utilitarian American and Russian chemical stacks they are still staking their space-going futures on. Even the shuttle looks like a work-horse machine...no concession to beauty in its admittedly impressive form. Skylon looks just a bit like something that Frank Hampson might have taken a hand in the design of. I imagine that the visions of Frank Hampson helped sow that seed in the young Alan Bond's brain!

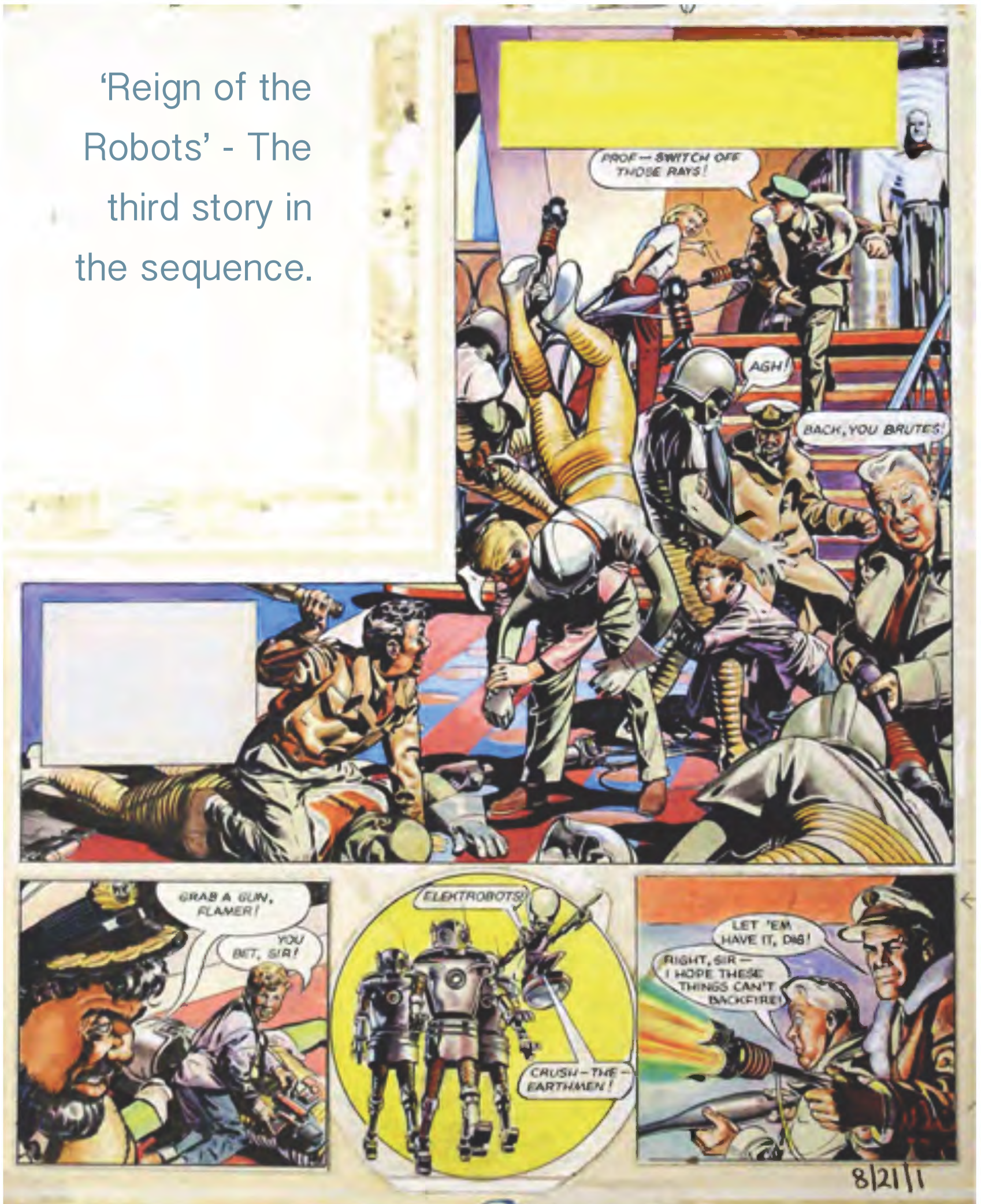


The ship flown by Lero the Crypt in the Story 'The Man From Nowhere'.. Don Harley was one of the credited artists alongside Hampson on this story...the 2 names bottom left

A favourite story of mine along with its two sequels, 'Rogue Planet' with its evil Phants determined to exterminate the Crypts... Here's Gogol the scary Phant chief manhandling the puny earthman, Dan....stripey just getting away in the nick of time.



'Reign of the Robots' - The third story in the sequence.



Whilst Dan has been away helping the crypts in their struggle against the Phants, the Mighty Mekon and his treens have conquered the Earth with an army of robots. I seem to dimly recall that this was around the time that the *Eagle* was first delivered to our house.... Late 1955 maybe. This frame seems to contain most of the main human characters from that time, Sir Hubert Guest top right trapped in some kind of suspended animation, Dan passing Professor Peabody on the steps, Lex O'Malley in the duffle coat giving a treen a well-delivered thump to whatever passes for a Venusian solar plexus whilst Flamer Spry brings the same guy down with a nice rugby tackle, Hank Hogan employing some kind of judo throw, Pierre Lafayette and Digby sorting out another pair of treens in the foreground.

I do definitely remember as a kid being mightily impressed by the Mekon's deadly army of 'electrobots'.

I've been told my own robots have a somewhat retro look about them and I suppose this one I illustrated for a Guy Haley story does have a little elektrobot DNA about it..if that's not a contradiction in terms



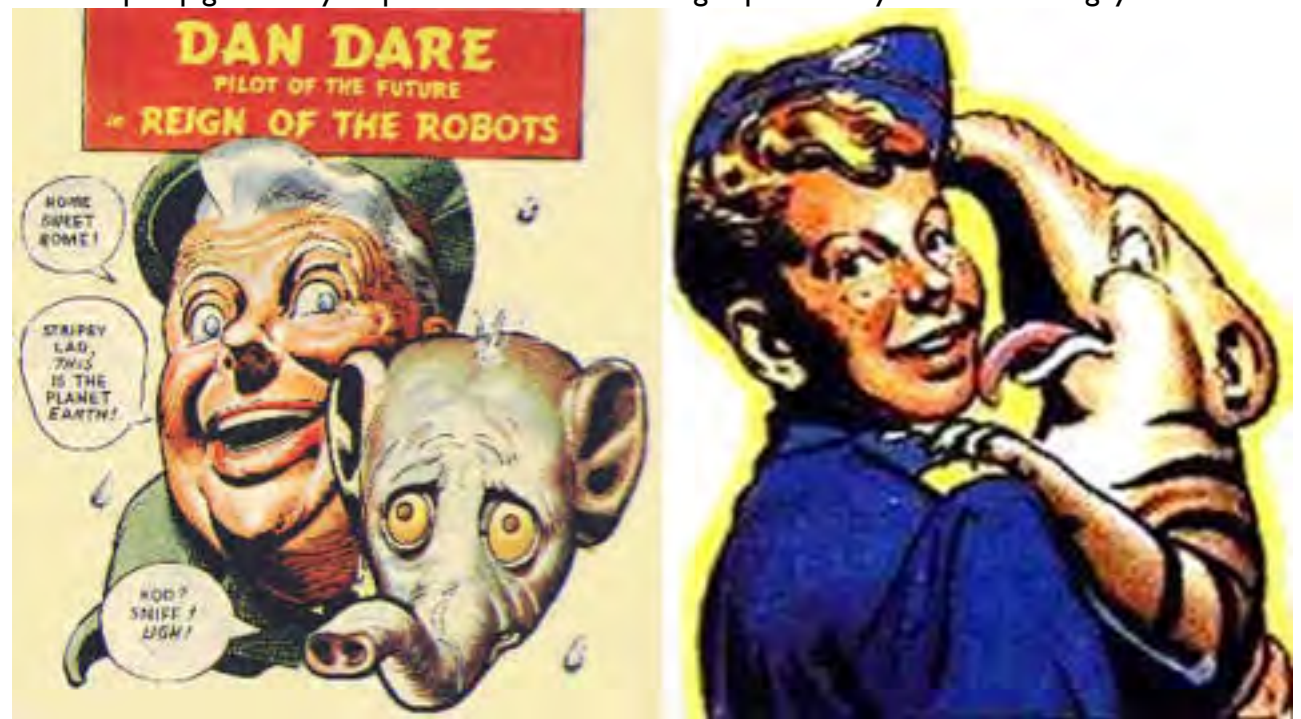
and then when the elektrobots fell short of expectations he brought on his 'selektrobots'



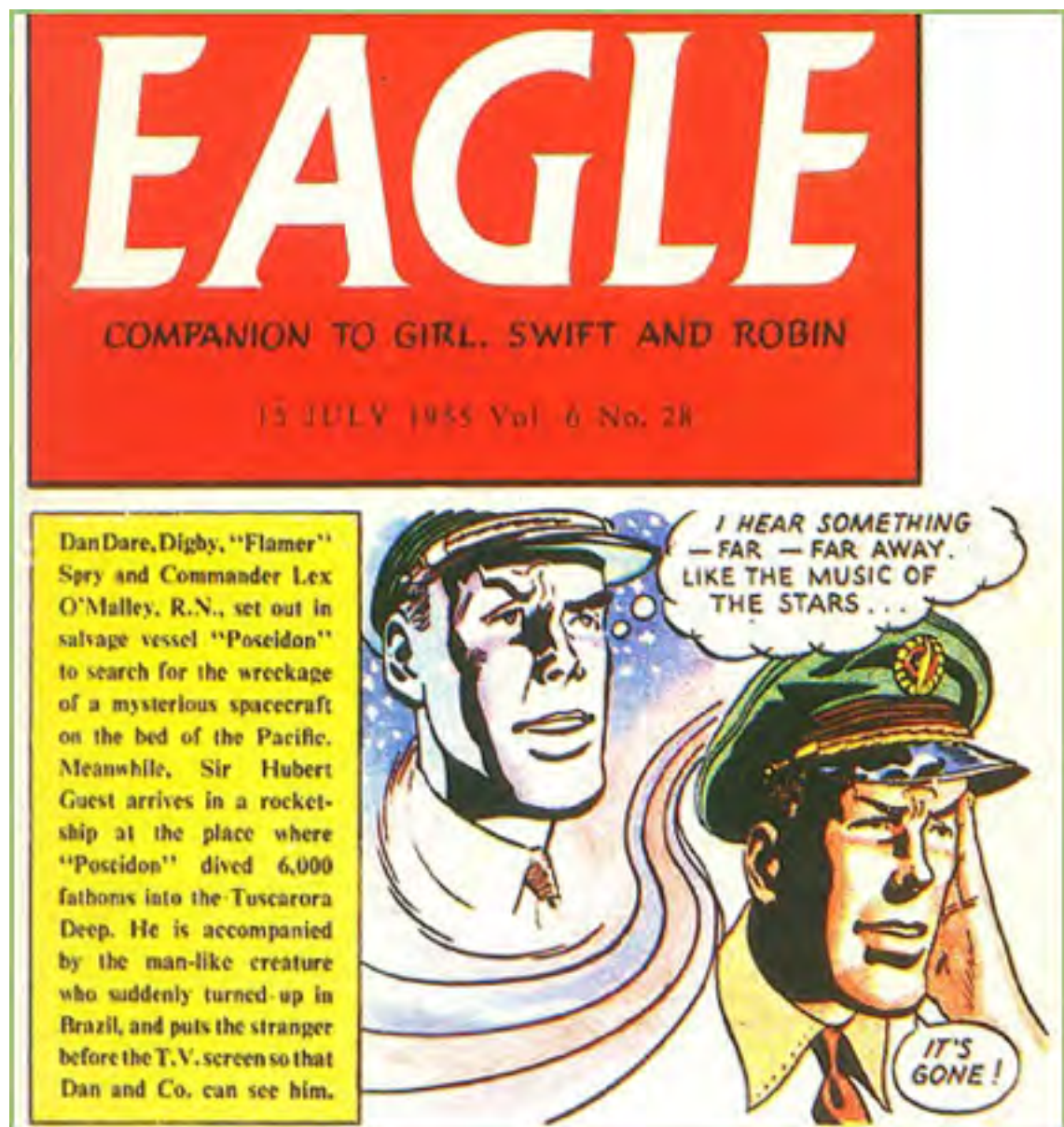
“But there Dan resided in the back of my mind urging me on to ... a mysterious something.”



Another endearing little character that appeared at this time was Stripey of course ..a little alien striped pig cum tiny elephant like creature that got particularly attached to Digby and Flamer.



So I was too young to have experienced the earliest Dan Dare stories. I think my dad started subscribing to *Eagle* supposedly on my behalf in late 55 by which time the first half of the golden Hampson years had been and gone...but I was in thrall to the character of Dan Dare through the late 50s and then also into the Frank Bellamy period.. before I finally started focusing more on those other things that preoccupy a teenage boy's hormonally driven imagination. But there Dan resided in the back of my mind urging me on to ...a mysterious something.



By my mid teens his voice was becoming really quite loud and insistent...and what that voice was saying at that time was nothing to do with art...which I was certainly very much occupied with...but more the huge interest I had in aircraft - I was a regular attendee of the St Athan Air Display in S.Wales drooling over the Hawker Hunters

Was there ever a more beautiful jet?  
and the more solid and less graceful Gloster Javelins

So how does this connect up .....

...an itch was starting that had to be scratched.

Let's be accurate about timelines...I was always going to be 19 years older than Dan Dare as the fictional Dare was born in 1967 whilst I was born in 1948. In the real world of the here and now men who would be Dan's current age.. 48 ...are already too old to be flying Typhoons, never mind Anastasia or Tempus Frangit. That amazing stuff didn't even really begin to happen in the real world..it's a long way off yet. So whilst the timelines are somewhat skewed when the real world and Dan's fictional world collide - for a young man like myself who might have entertained the idea that 'Space is Calling to me'...the realistic first step into emulating my hero was to join the RAF as a trainee pilot back in 1966..Dan's birth was still a year in the future....In 1966 that meant machines of a more mundane species...but exciting nonetheless. So I applied and successfully gained entrance into the RAF as a student pilot.



ACTING PILOT OFFICER BURNS AT INITIAL TRAINING SCHOOL, RAF SOUTH CERNEY IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE



DE HAVILLAND CHIPMUNKS AT RAF CHURCH FENTON AGED 18

From little acorns do mighty oaks theoretically grow. Today RAF Church Fenton, tomorrow Venus!

But as luck would have it I was really not a very good pilot. I was taking too long to train and in the cuts that the Defence White Paper of 1966 and then two further supplements to it over the next two years, as well as the famous cancellations of projects such as the hedgehopper bomber as it was called - TSR-2 (top) and P1154 supersonic VTOL development of the Harrier (middle) and the Armstrong Whitworth 681 vertical take off transport aircraft (bottom)



Hunting Jet Provost Mk 3 at RAF Acklington..soloing on jets whilst still only 18. I was able to take a jet up to 30000 ft, do aerobatics and all the rest of it..but couldn't drive a car. Around this time I failed my driving test at the first attempt.

A clamping down on other wasteful areas such as indulging slow-learning pilots with expensive extra flying training hours was imposed - which spelled the end for my short lived flying career. I would never be the real life Dan Dare! My last flight was with Squadron Leader Gathercole.

“I left the service with a view to going for a second career option..which also connected very much to that Dan Dare world.”



and everyone knew that a flight with him indicated probable permanent snatching away of the toys..unless one could pull some very fancy cats out of the bag.That last flight was a formation flight and when I nearly flew my Jet Provost up the jetpipe of the aircraft in front of me and Gathercole had to snatch the stick away with an urgent 'I HAVE CONTROL!' I knew the game was up. My goose was cooked.

During these years of course 'Real Space' had started and unfortunately it wasn't a Dan Dare who was up there possessing the Cosmos for Britain. No ...a brave man named Yuri was circling the Earth followed by others, both Russian and American. Britain had opted out.

There would be no Briton in space until 1991 when Helen Sharman

...who I had the pleasure to meet last year at the Loncon 3 convention along with Russian cosmonaut, Anatolii Artsebarskii...

...became the first woman to visit the Mir space station. This by the way was at one of Gerry's famous convention parties....where his legendary generosity with the bubbly, the scotch and the vodka is hugely appreciated..particularly the mornings after.



OK I won't linger on my rather enfeebled RAF career other than to say it seems now to have been a life lived by another man...I left the service with a view to going for a second career option..which also connected very much to that Dan Dare world. I knuckled down to getting some art work done. I also managed to collect work from my old Grammar school...Mrs Rowlands my art teacher had with some prescience actually hung on to my old stuff from a few years before....her comment 'This is what you should have been doing two years ago' were probably wise words but I was still passing through a phase of great disappointment...though not so disappointed as my father who did not like the idea of his eldest son going from smart officer material in the RAF to long-haired art college layabout in the 1960s (and our hair was pretty long back then!). It soured our relationship for a very long time I regret to say.



A further blow was that whilst I was in the RAF my parents moved house..an ill-fated decision to take a pub, the Green Dragon in Chepstow and as part of the move my mum decided that I clearly had no further use for my collection of hundreds of near mint old Eagle comics and without referring back to me chucked the lot out!...along with all my Airfix aircraft models dangling from my bedroom ceiling. 'They were only gathering dust James'....

So...cut a long story short..a year on a Foundation course at Newport and then 3 years at St Martin's School of Art in London.All that time I was - to the complete bafflement of my tutors allowing the siren voice of ...not so much Dan now perhaps..but his creator Frank Hampson - pull my interest further and deeper into the world of science fiction art.





My tutors saw no potential value in this business of spaceships and aliens and all that spacey stuff. But I persisted with it..one visiting lecturer in particular championing my cause...Fritz Wegener, the children's book illustrator who had been part of the Jewish emigration to the UK in the 1930s fleeing the Nazi threat in his native Austria. I noted the rise of artists like Chris Foss



and Bruce Pennington at that time...artists who seemed to convince me that there was a future in this stuff....not for me in the world of comics it seemed... my interest was drawn more to large single paintings - like the two guys just mentioned with the luxury of a bit more time to develop detail and design ideas..so back then the clear market was the world of book cover art. And that has been by far the larger part of my output over the years on both sides of the Atlantic working for most of the big publishers of science fiction novels.



I discovered recently that Frank Hampson was actually attending my first convention..the 37th World Science Fiction Convention...called Seacon, in 1979...and I curse myself to this day for not realising it at the time and introducing myself to my hero. I had a big show of my own work up and I think we might have had an interesting chinwag...at least if I had managed not to drift too much into gushing hero worship. I was introduced at that convention to Arthur C. Clarke..who made some nice comments about my *Rendezvous with Rama* paintings.

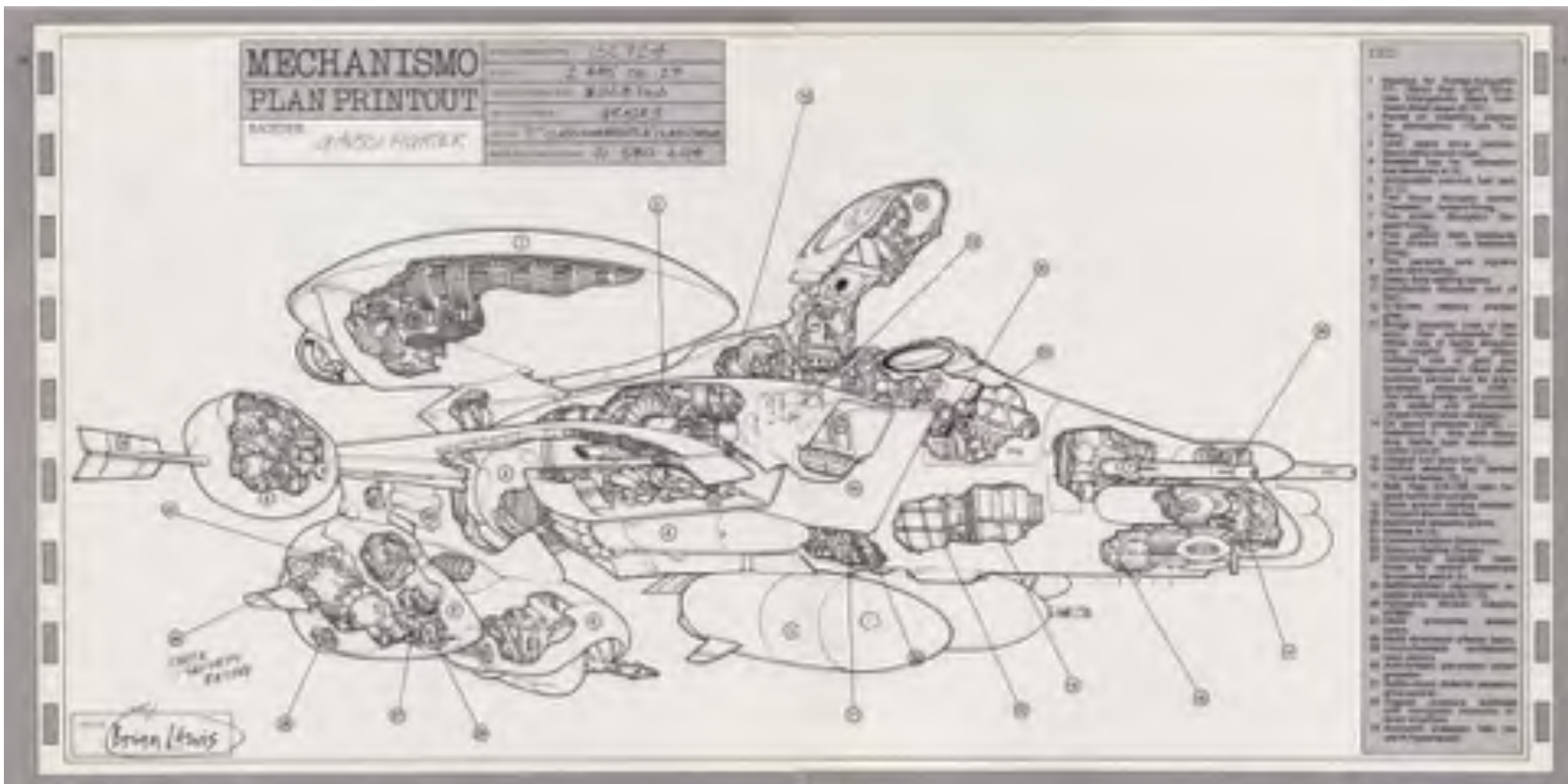


Those were produced for a book called 'Alien landscapes' published by Pierrot - for whom I also painted the cover for another book called 'Mechanismo'...a painting of a machine I called 'The Gaussi Fighter'. That piece of work did at least give me the chance to work briefly with a man named Brian Lewis..an artist of Frank Hampson's vintage and who too had worked on The Eagle but not as I understand it on Dan Dare. But Brian was the artist who created such magnificent work for the Jet Ace Logan strip in the Comet and later the Tiger...a variation on the *Dan Dare* style of space hero set a little further in the future. A similar vibe.

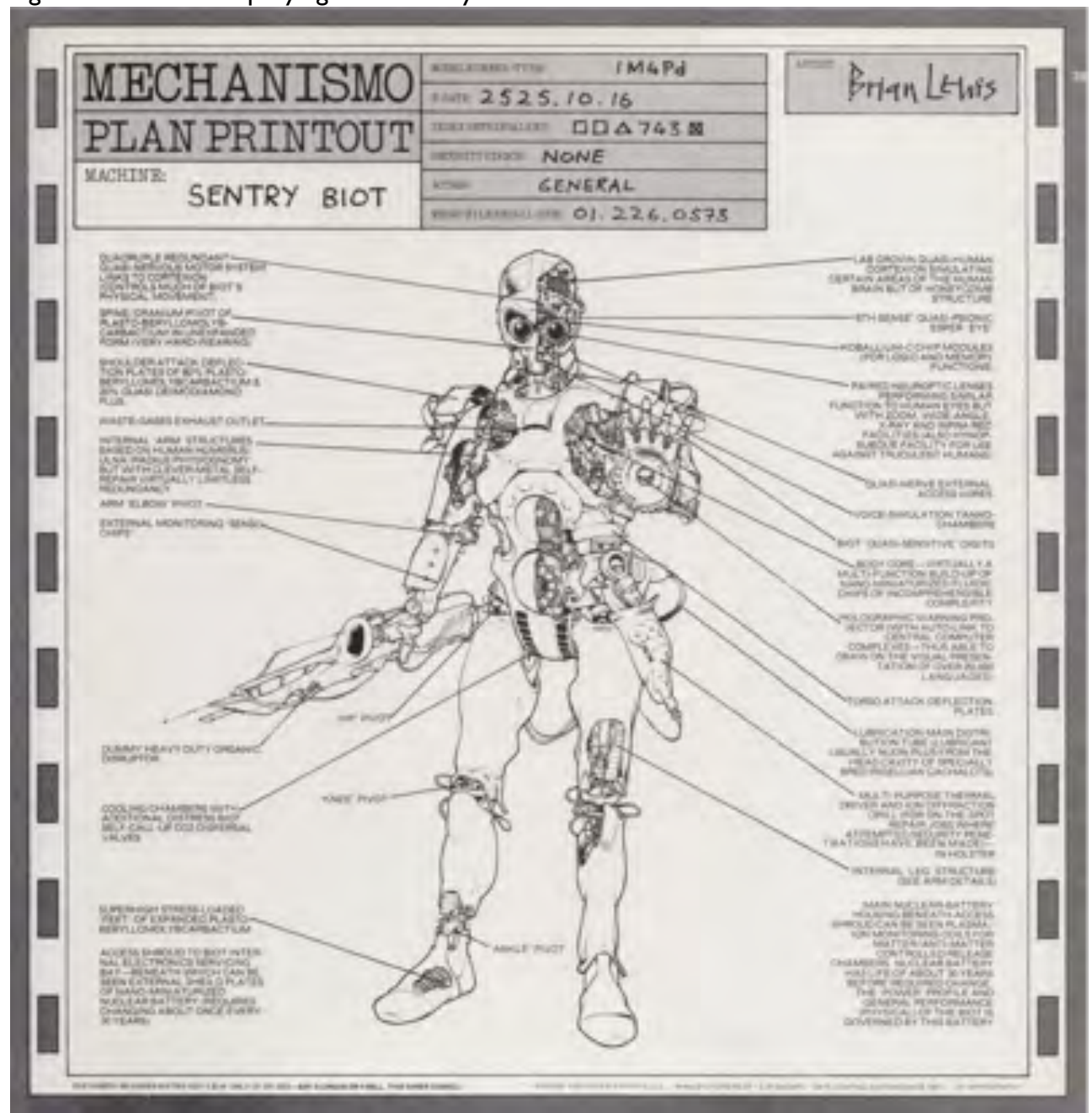
Brian contributed to the Mechanismo book a cutaway of my Gaussi Fighter. Very much influenced by the kind of cutaways that used to be such a feature of the *Eagle* centrefolds...including of course that famous one of Dan's personal ship, Anastasia - the one designed for him by the friendly Treen, Sondar.



This cutaway is uncredited but is reckoned to be probably by Eric Eden...who I read actually fell out with Frank Hampson..feeling that Frank was too hard a task master in the early days of *Dan Dare* and who then moved on to other projects...but did return later to contribute to both art and storylines.



Here's the cutaway that Brian Lewis supplied to show the inner workings of my Gaussi Fighter and it's accompanying robot sentry



And my original painting from which these derive





I only met Brian Lewis the once at Pierrot's office. I remember we were talking amongst other things about the business of staying fit in such sedentary work and how illustrators smoked too much, drank too much, got stressed out trying to meet absurd deadlines...and then die young.... He was talking about the passing of his good friend and absolutely brilliant comic artist Frank Bellamy just a year or two before at the young age of 59...and how we should find better ways of providing for our dependents...Brian told me that Bellamy in particular had left his widow in a fairly penurious state...that the non-return of artwork to the artist - a poor state of affairs - since rectified...much of it simply got destroyed or others kept the originals many of which subsequently became highly collectable.....yes we were in one of those morbid frames of mind for some reason. I was only 30 then but had just had a sort of phoney heart attack..a panic attack I suppose shortly after the birth of my first daughter. The business of parental responsibility and trying to maintain a living by ones daubs and scribbles had suddenly, I imagine, overwhelmed me in its sheer unlikeliness. I've read how this was very much the situation back in the 50s and 60s too...if not worse. A couple of weeks after this chat, the guy who was the proprietor of Pierrot Publishing, Philip Dunn..who as a writer of not very successful science fiction novels had operated for a short while under the nom de plume of Saul Dunne...because he told me when he finished the first of his Steeleye novels - for which I'd painted the cover art - threw down his pen and announced to his wife Jane..It's all done! Who said..that's your pen name....Saul Dunn!...Philip, Saul, whatever called me to say that Brian Lewis, like Frank Bellamy before him had died very suddenly of a heart attack..10 years younger than Frank had been. Brian was only 49.

I think we all agree that the GREAT *Dan Dare* artist was Frank Hampson. Most of the nostalgia resides around that 50s decade and with every justification. An atmosphere and mood, a bunch of elusive characteristics that are the SOUL of the strip. A number of artists contributed to *Dan Dare*..I'll mention some shortly...but maybe because I didn't really discover the Eagle comic until the second half of the 50s, a very considerable proportion of my *Dan Dare* appreciation does happily include the work of Bellamy...even though he only worked on it for about a year. I've read that he wasn't all that enthusiastic about doing the work and speaking to die hard Hampsonians, Bellamy is still regarded as 'the beginning of the end'...that his work was distinctly 'unHampsonian'.

I would say that the stuff he provided was distinctly his own work - with absolutely no attempt to try and emulate Hampson's style. In fact I read somewhere that this was probably a condition of his agreeing to spend that year working on the strip. I'll make the controversial observation..and it is just a personal one..that whilst for me Hampson was the definitive *Dan Dare* artist...Frank Bellamy was actually the more accomplished comic strip artist per se.

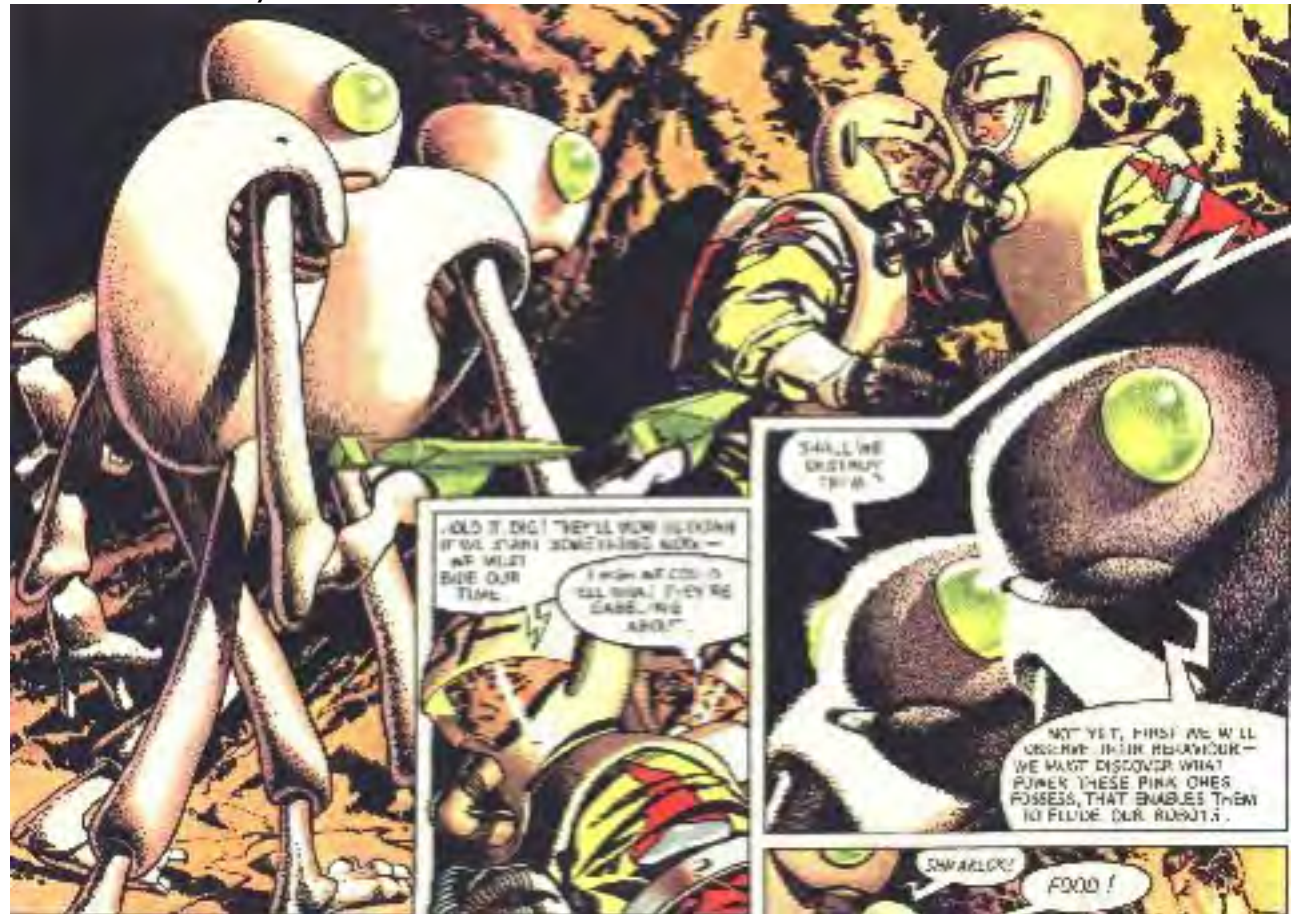


I suppose it all hinges on how our own visual imaginations work as 'Artists of the Fantastical'..and it seems to me that Bellamy could really do weird very well indeed. Check out these guys from the Project Nimbus story. The story dates from 1960..and yes the great days of

“Bellamy’s  
aliens are  
essentially  
unknowable”

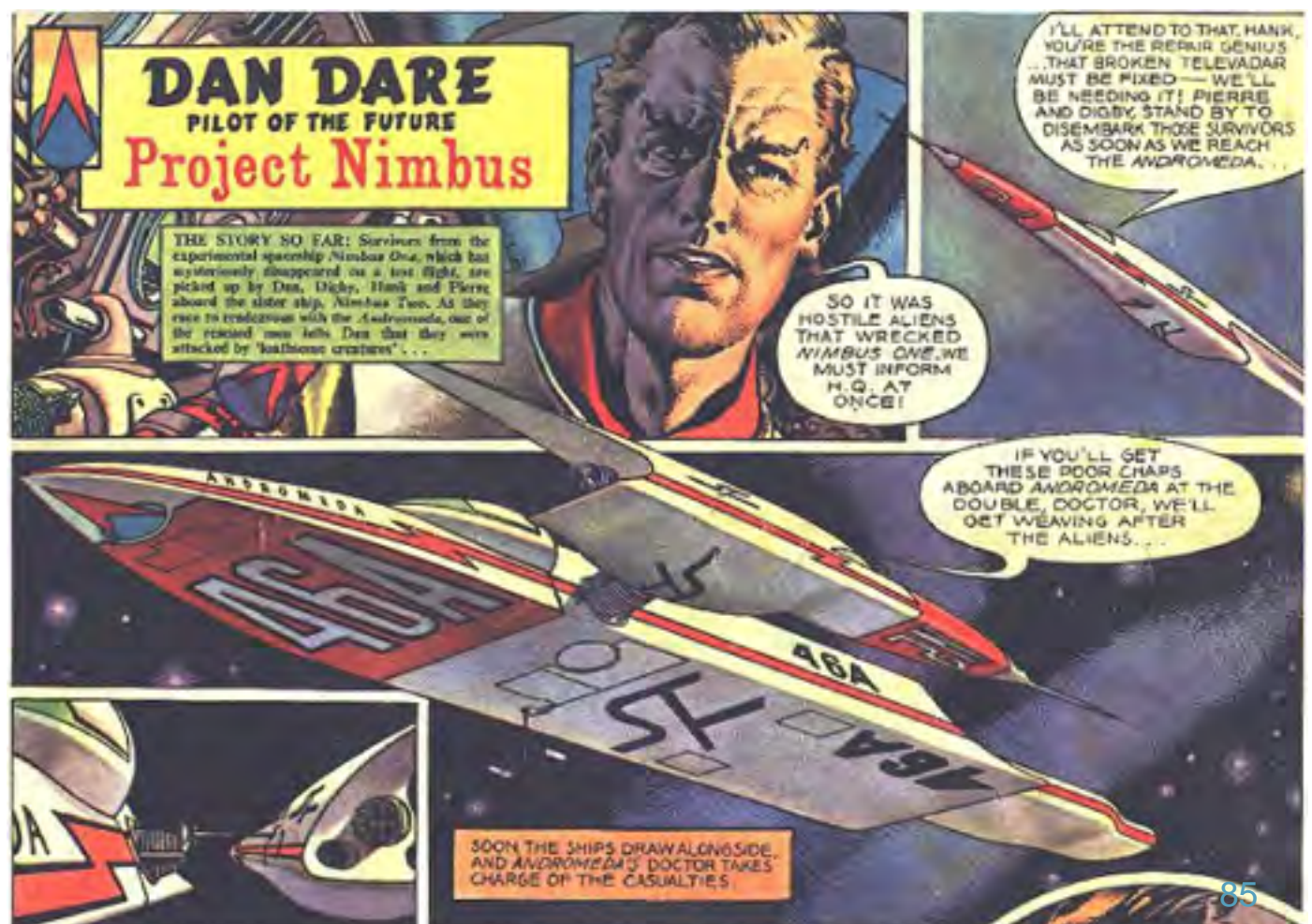


the Eagle comic are past and it is looking forward to its demise - at least in the form those of us of a certain age regard as 'The Real *Eagle*'. But there is still something so powerful in Bellamy's image making that can still resonate and I would say is infinitely stranger than most of the junk that the genre movies now chuck at us. We don't seem much to understand 'otherness' any more. Bellamy's aliens are essentially unknowable....



Then his ships....Hampson's ships are fab indeed..and Keith Watson, another *Dan Dare* artist was also capable of great work when dealing with machines...although his *Dan Dare* characterisation is often described as lacking something..

Look at the lines in this Bellamy ship..Nimbus 2 rendezvousing with the Andromeda. He brought a new, sharp edged snaziness to his vessels...somewhat removed from the cosier lines of Anastasia.



Lorem ipsum do lor sit amet, con sect etuer adipiscing elit. Morbi com modo, ipsum magna sed phar etra gravida, orci magna rhon cus neque, id pulvinar odio lorem non turpis.

Note also his dramatic use of light and dark and his incredible design sense. There's something very pleasing about the way Bellamy placed the elements on the page, drama revealed at every turn. Here's some more for him from the same story...here the very weird alien ship..no concessions to any kind of earthbound design conventions. Note also the redesigned Spacefleet helmets which I know pissed off diehard Hampsonians!



More great Bellamy imagery....

The story 'Trip to Trouble' and an excellent Lex O'Malley characterisation





Here's another *Project Nimbus* front page..I love Bellamy's tech.





EXTRA - BIG NUMBER + MODEL RAILWAYS + NEW LUCK SERIAL



His sense of drama was second to none. This is 1960 remember...55 years ago...it's as effective as anything from current cinema offerings

Bellamy's body of work including all the other stuff he did apart from Dan still has huge influence in the world of comic art. Hampson was perhaps more parochial, quintessentially English in his approach. Bellamy had a more global appeal and towards the end of his life was apparently thrilled at the invitation to work for DC Comics. Which didn't then happen due to his early demise.

Here are a few of my own pieces that I like to think pay homage to the great man I believe Bellamy to have been..at least in the lines of the vessels and the weirdness of the aliens...I wouldn't pretend to have his comics artist skills..the sense of spontaneity ...but I think he inspired me every bit as much as Frank Hampson.



“Here are a few of my own pieces that I like to think pay homage to the great man I believe Bellamy to have been.”





OK..let's focus a little more on the man who created the character of Dan Dare, Pilot of the Future in the first place...Frank Hampson... the earliest stories of which he wrote and created the art for entirely by himself - although the increasing workload that came with it's burgeoning popularity amongst the young lads and their dads of grey old austerity-driven post war Britain meant that others soon contributed to both story lines and art.  
 Here's the now famous cover Frank Hampson created for Issue no. 1 on the 14th April 1950



Just in passing it's interesting actually to compare this with his very last cover from Volume 10, Issue No. 7 some 9 years later in 1959. It really shows how over the space of a decade an artist's style can evolve and change in all sorts of ways...from the relatively simple ink and colour work of the first cover to a much more representational, sophisticated and richer style 9 years later. The left hand no. 1 story is variously known as 'Pilot of the Future', 'The Venus Story' or 'Voyage to Venus'. The right hand image is from the story 'Terra Nova'. Whilst these are of necessity pulled off the internet - so one can't be absolutely sure of the colour veracity, the quality of printing and in particular the colour saturation really picked up as the decade went by.



This is interesting too as it shows how pages develop between the rough and final stages.



The *Eagle* itself had been a collaborative venture on the part of Hampson himself and of course, *Eagle's* founder the Reverend Marcus Morris and its earliest incarnation came about in 1949. Morris had been an RAF chaplain during the war and after that time, amongst his other priestly duties he produced a widely circulated Christian magazine called *The Anvil* on which he had employed the aspiring illustrator, Frank Hampson...at the time one of his parishioners and looking for work. He had ambitions to publish something which delivered a Christian message to children through the medium of comic...(although he never referred to *Eagle* as a comic..it was always a magazine)...he having been very impressed with the high standard of artwork he discovered in American magazines and comics..but appalled by the storylines - to quote...'deplorable, nastily

over-violent and obscene, often with undue emphasis on the supernatural and magical as a way of solving problems’.

Morris envisioned a character called Lex Christian, ‘a tough, fighting parson in the slums of the East End of London’, whose adventures would be told in strip cartoon form, illustrated by Hampson. The two began work on a dummy of it. Eventually the name of the chief character was changed and Lex Christian became Chaplain Dan Dare of the Inter-Planet Patrol, and featured on the cover. This was the earliest incarnation in dummy form of the collaboration. I imagine the character of Chaplain Dare was loosely based on Morris himself.





Neat little gyrocar there...something I've occasionally had a crack at over the years... Here's one of mine for the cover of a book called 'The Man Who Melted by Jack Dann'



By 1950 they had a publisher in Hulton Press and the first issue was ready to go. Dan Dare had changed from being a chaplain into Colonel Dare, Pilot of the Future in Spacefleet, - the reasons why are not recorded apparently but presumably suggestions from Hulton were taken on board. *The Eagle* logo has yet to make an appearance..it too would be drawn by Hampson. We get a glimpse here of a slightly less characterful Digby and Sir Hubert Guest also makes an appearance..the character based on Hampson's father; Using family and friends as models was an important element in Hampson's technique armoury..something I do myself actually. I'll show you a few of mine shortly...one's family have distinct advantages...they are there, geographically handy...and they are cheap!.



Hampson's wife, Dorothy had come up with the name 'Eagle' inspired by the design of her church lectern. The comic was heavily publicised before its release; copies were mailed direct to several hundred thousand people who worked with children, and a "Hunt the Eagle" scheme was launched, whereby large papier-mâché golden eagles were set on top of several hundred thousand people who worked with children, and a "Hunt the Eagle" scheme was launched, whereby large papier-mâché golden eagles were set on top of several Humber Hawk cars, and toured across the UK. Those who spotted an eagle were offered tokens worth 3d, which could be exchanged at newsagents for a free copy of *Eagle*. The first issue sold about 900,000 copies... and the rest is history.



A joint portrait here of Frank Hampson and The Rev. Marcus Morris either side of their creation, [Colonel Daniel McGregor Dare](#) ...this one painted by one of the regular artists of *Dan Dare*, Don Harley.



“Hampson could handle a whole page, strong, free figure-drawing, full of dynamism and the promise of action to come.”

Here are some of the interpretations by the various artists of Dan from the 50s and early 60s. Hampson's is the definitive of course and the others are largely attempts to emulate his style...something Bellamy refused to do, insisting on his own interpretation. The degrees of success are somewhat variable it has to be said.



Towards the end of the first *Dan Dare* story, the exhausted Hampson fell ill and took a break in northern France to recuperate. In the Hulton offices, Marcus Morris was hunting for ideas for the next *Dan Dare* story, worried that once the *Venus Story* ended readers would fall away. They had to lock a million schoolboys into Dan's next adventure.



They decided to advertise, but not having a story to promote, what could the advertising be about? Hampson came up with this illustration, which appeared in *Picture Post* on 29th September 1951. (It ran on page three, probably the best space in the magazine, but because the space was free, not because it would reach the schoolboys). You see how Hampson could handle a whole page, strong, free figure-drawing, full of dynamism and the promise of action to come.



“They had to lock a million schoolboys into Dan’s next adventure.”



Hampson posed himself for a lot of the character shots along with family members and fellow artists. Apparently and as I mentioned before he relied heavily on photo referencing for his characters. Here’s an interesting pair of images showing how Hampson would set up a reference shot and the frame resulting from it. This is a technique used by many artists both commercial and these days, fine art too..often to fix things like light sources and get shadow areas correctly placed.

From the left here you have Hampson himself then Greta Tomlinson as Professor Peabody, Robert Hampson, Frank’s father in his role as Sir Hubert Guest, fellow artists Harold Johns being Digby and Eric Eden as a Venusian blue skinned Atlantine..descendents of humans taken from Earth 100,000 years before...



And here too another featuring Robert ‘Pops’ Hampson, this time as Theron President Kalon. And sometimes dad was called on to help out as Dan...here getting the pipe-smoking bit accurate...



“Comics are a demanding business requiring extremely intense periods of work long into the nights...”



I, like many of my fellow artists use photo reference for a great deal of my figure work. Hampson and his team did not have the luxury of time I have on single images which can take sometimes days or even weeks to complete. Comics are a demanding business requiring extremely intense periods of work long into the nights - something that was certainly true of Hampson and his team. So mine incline more towards a photographic rather than a line and colour approach. But the principle is the same.





“I, like many of my fellow artists use photo reference for a great deal of my figure work. Hampson and his team did not have the luxury of time I have on single images which can take sometimes days or even weeks to complete.”



Frank left the comic as I understand it when the working conditions imposed by Eagle's new owners impressed him not one bit and the workload was taken on, chiefly by Frank Bellamy for a year with assistance from Keith Watson, Don Harley and occasionally freelancer, Bruce Cornwell. Watson and Harley had had some input through the 50s also, particularly when Hampson was suffering from ill-health...along with some other artists..Greta Tomlinson, a Slade graduate who we have the privilege of having with us here today of course, plus at various times and varying degrees of success, Desmond Walduck, Harold Johns and Eric Eden. There may be others..it's a complex story. Various writers took on the storylines through that period too. Hampson sounds to me like something of a workaholic and the demands of getting the weekly issue out plus the punishing work régime he set himself - and expected of others didn't always make him the easiest guy to work with.

Hampson was without doubt the foremost comic artist of his time in the UK through the decade of the 50s. In fact Hampson was voted Prestigioso Maestro at an [international convention of strip cartoon and animated film artists held at Lucca, Tuscany in 1975](#). A jury of his peers gave him something called a 'Yellow Kid Award' and declared him to be the best writer and artist of strip cartoons since the end of the Second World War.

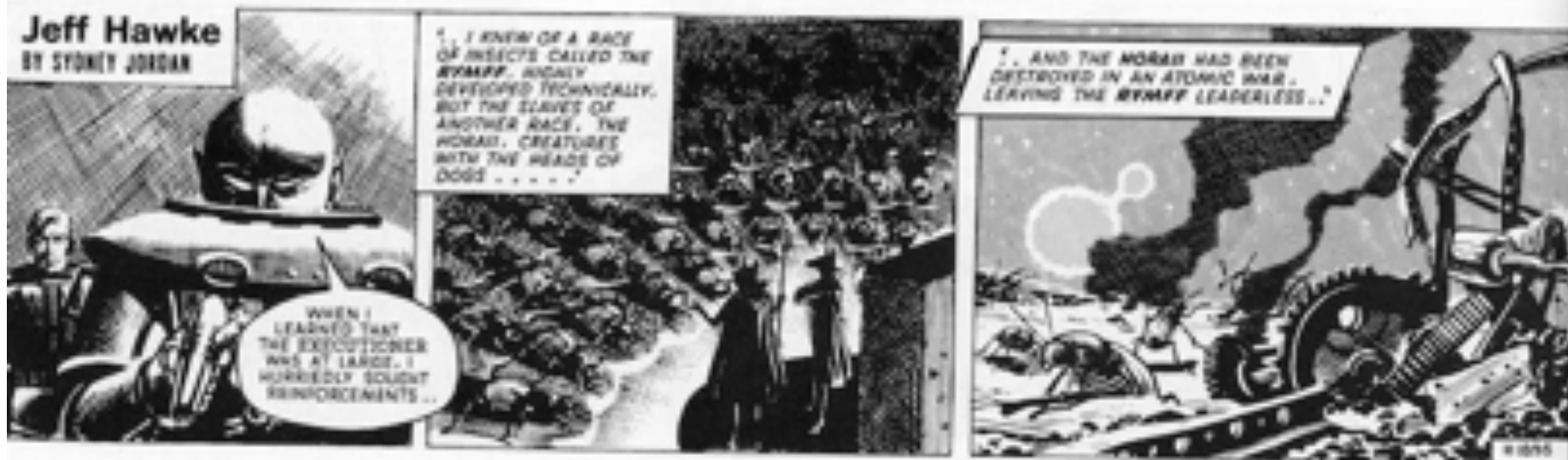
I should finish perhaps with some spreads and iconic pieces of Frank Hampson but given the nature of today's gathering there are a couple of other artists from that time I feel I should mention before we finish - who were also heroes of mine. My dad was an avid reader of the *Daily Express* back in the day and every single day after he'd read it I would grab it, ignore all the latest Cold War news and zip straight to a black and white strip..Jeff Hawke, impeccably drawn by the great Sydney Jordan. I would very carefully cut that strip out and the one after that and the one after that and glue them end to end until I had complete stories which would unroll like some sort of tiny arty farty toilet roll. I had the great good fortune to meet

“...until I had complete stories which would unroll like some sort of tiny arty farty toilet roll.”



Sydney Jordan a couple of years ago at a small convention in Bristol. He seemed not all that much older than me...which surprised me somewhat given that I was a kid when I was cutting *Jeff Hawke* out of the newspaper...but that's how the weird compressability of time seems to work. His work seems to fit right into that uniquely British zeitgeist of the time.

Here he is in Brighton in 1985 with Harry Harrison..a man who was to prove important in my own career in the late 70's when we collaborated on an illustrated novella called *Planet Story*.





Jeff Hawke  
BY STUART JORDAN

...THE GIANTS  
HAD COME AMONG  
MEN BEARING  
GIFTS. VISNIINA,  
ALSO CALLED  
PROMIETHNEE,  
BROUGHT FIRE  
IN A HOLLOW  
TUBE ...

... BUT THEIR  
TRUE PURPOSE  
WAS TO WATCH  
THE SEASONS,  
AND THE SUN,  
MOON, AND STARS.  
THEY TAUGHT  
MANY ARTS TO  
MEN ...

Jeff Hawke  
BY STUART JORDAN

THIS GUTTERHEAD  
WAS THE STAR KNOWN  
AS PROCRON IV? AND  
WHEN IT EXPLODED, AN  
ENTIRE PLANETARY POPULATION  
TRIED TO FLEE FROM THE  
DEATH IN SPACE, OO  
YOU SEE ...

THEY ESCAPED?

THEY DID  
NOT ESCAPE! /  
THE DEATH WAS  
OUTRAGING AT HALF  
THE SPEED OF LIGHT ...

... AND IT WAS YOU,  
KARNE, WHO EXPLODED  
THE STAR! IT WAS  
YOUR CRUELTY THAT  
KILLED THAT WHOLE  
POPULATION! LOOK  
ON YOUR CRIME,  
AND TREMBLE!

Jeff Hawke  
BY STUART JORDAN

THIS IS  
RIDICULOUS!  
SIMPLY RETURN  
US TO EARTH  
IMMEDIATELY!

WAIT!

I MAY BE  
ACCUSING YOU  
OF THE DEATHS  
AND HORRIBLE CRIME—  
BUT THAT DOES NOT  
MEAN I BELIEVE YOU  
DID IT! I ASSURE  
YOU ON MY OATH AS  
AN OFFICER AND A  
GENTLEMAN—

THAT'S  
THE STUPID,  
KORRORIN—  
NEAR FELONY  
UPON OATH  
WITH A TRIPLET!  
NOW EVEN I AM  
BEGINNING TO  
DUB YOU TRAITOR!  
PROCEED!  
PROCEED!

Jeff Hawke  
BY STUART JORDAN

IT WAS NOT YOU,  
PROMIETHNEE, WHO MADE  
A MISTAKE OF PROCRON IV.  
BUT YOU STAND  
ACCUSED OF THE CRIME  
BECAUSE YOU ARE  
APPOINTED PROSECUTOR  
FOR THE DEFENSE!  
THAT IS INTER-  
GALACTIC LAW...

JUST  
WAIT! I WAS  
TERRIFIED!

CONSIDER  
THE PRINCIPLE  
OF THE BILLING,  
TO REPRESENT THE  
GUILTY PARTY  
EFFECTIVELY, YOU  
MUST TAKE FULL  
RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR THE CRIME,  
BUT YOU ARE NOT  
GUILTY OF IT,  
UNTIL FOUND  
GUILTY!

AND THEN  
YOU WILL GO TO  
THE PROCRONION  
TOGETHER?

BEHOLD,  
KORRORIN, FOR A POLICE  
OFFICER YOU  
HAVE A MOST  
CRUEL FUTURE  
IN THE  
PROCESS OF  
JUSTICE!

Jeff Hawke  
BY STUART JORDAN

BUT  
SUPPOSE  
I DON'T WANT  
TO BE OBTAIN  
THE DEFENSE?

YOU HAVE  
NO CHOICE, YOU  
WERE APPOINTED  
BY THE ACCUSED.  
IT IS HIS RIGHT  
AT LAW, AND I  
AM HERE AS A  
PROSECUTOR TO  
ENFORCE THAT  
RIGHT!

BUT I KNOW  
NOTHING OF  
YOUR LAW—!

IGNORANCE  
OF THE LAW IS  
NO EXCUSE,  
AN OLD SAYING,  
AND A GOOD  
ONE!

YOU ARE NOW  
AWARE OF THE CRIME,  
TO WIT, THAT YOU DID, UPON  
A CAPITAL OATH, ARREST,  
DETAIN, AND DISRUPT  
THE STAR CALLED  
PROCRON IV. NOW  
LET ME SHOW YOU  
THE CRIMINAL!

NO  
DOUBT,  
BUT YOU  
MEAN ...

SHUT  
UP!



There is more from this time in my life...Captain Condor in the Lion comic for a start, Some very good black and white work from Keith Watson, fresh over from the Eagle in the Lion



The human race was threatened with destruction by a huge mechanical brain which was in orbit round the Earth. Captain Condor was ordered to smash the brain, but when he tried to attack, his nuclear rockets exploded harmlessly before they could get anywhere near their target.

CONDOR RETURNED TO EARTH TO REPORT HIS FAILURE TO THE ADMIRAL OF THE SPACE FLEET

THE BRAIN IS MORE INTELLIGENT THAN WE THOUGHT, SIR. IT MUST HAVE FORESEEN OUR ATTACK, AND SURROUNDED ITSELF WITH SOME KIND OF FORCE SHIELD

IT WAS THEN THAT A NEARBY TECHNICIAN UTTERED A YELL

SIR! THE SCANNERS SHOW A WHOLE FLOCK OF ROCKETS OF UNKNOWN DESIGN HEADING THIS WAY

THE BRAIN IS STRIKING BACK!

ACTION STATIONS! LAUNCH OUR GUIDED MISSILES TO INTERCEPT THEM!



BUT WE'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY OF DESTROYING THIS MONSTROSITY, OR ALL MANKIND WILL BECOME ITS SLAVES!

CONDOR WATCHED THE APPROACHING ROCKETS ON THE SCANNER, AND STARTED THE COUNT-DOWN WHICH WOULD UNLEASH THE MOST MIGHTY DEFENSIVE WEAPONS KNOWN TO SCIENCE

CONDOR WAITED FOR THE EARTH-SHAKING TREMOR OF TAKE-OFF — BUT IT DIDN'T COME. HE STARED, DISBELIEVING, FROM AN OBSERVATION WINDOW

FIVE — FOUR — THREE — TWO — ONE —



-ZERO!

THEY HAVEN'T MOVED! THERE MUST BE A BREAKDOWN IN THE FIRING CIRCUITS!

AT THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON, MISSILES OF IMMENSE DESTRUCTIVE POWER ROSE FROM THEIR HANGARS INTO THE FIRING POSITION



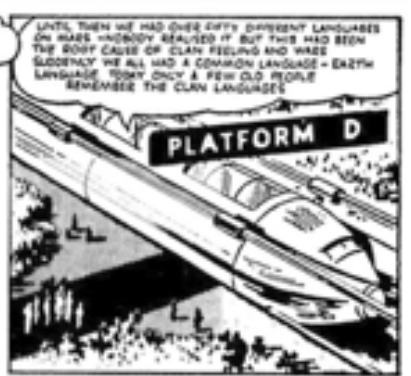
THEY ARE RETURNING TO THEIR SPACE SHIP, MR. DEERMOT.

ATTACK!

LOOK OUT!

ROCKET MISSILES! AND ALL WE'VE GOT TO DEFEND OURSELVES WITH IS A DRY PISTOL — AND A SINGLE GUN IN THE SHIP!

**ACE O'HARA** By Blackaller



ALL YOUR PEOPLE SEEM NOT ONLY TO BE ABLE TO SPEAK EARTH LANGUAGE BUT TO USE IT AMONGST THEMSELVES I DON'T UNDERSTAND THEM AND YOUR ADVERTISEMENTS —

WHEN WE FOUND OUT OF YOUR EXISTENCE YOUR LANGUAGE WAS TAUGHT AS A COMPULSORY SUBJECT THAT WAS SIXTY OF YOUR YEARS AGO

SEEING YOU ON YOUR TV TRANSMISSIONS THROUGH A NEW HOPE THAT WE MIGHT IMMIGRATE FROM THE DYING PLANET OF MARS TO EARTH ALTHOUGH YOUR PLAN HAD TO BE ABANDONED YOU DO US ONE GREAT SERVICE

UNTIL THEN WE HAD OVER FIFTY DIFFERENT LANGUAGES THROUGHOUT A NEW HOPE THAT WE MIGHT IMMIGRATE FROM THE DYING PLANET OF MARS TO EARTH ALTHOUGH YOUR PLAN HAD TO BE ABANDONED YOU DO US ONE GREAT SERVICE

UNTIL THEN WE HAD OVER FIFTY DIFFERENT LANGUAGES THROUGHOUT A NEW HOPE THAT WE MIGHT IMMIGRATE FROM THE DYING PLANET OF MARS TO EARTH ALTHOUGH YOUR PLAN HAD TO BE ABANDONED YOU DO US ONE GREAT SERVICE

and Ace O'Hara, *First Citizen of the Space Age* which I discovered in my dad's evening paper ...the *South Wales Echo* - art by Basil Blackaller at the top here and then Tony Speer below who took over the strip when Blackaller died at the very young age of 36.

I mentioned much earlier the name of Brian Lewis..the only one of this generation of highly influential artists I met apart from Sydney Jordan. Look at this lovely bit of black and white work from Lewis.



# Jet Ace Logan

and the

# MISSING SPACESHIPS

Spaceship Zed is on its way to find out why several ships have recently disappeared in a distant sector of space. When radar detects five unidentified objects, Squadron-Leader Cobb sends Jet-Ace Logan, Plumduff Charteris and another man, Dickinson, out in their single-seat fighters to investigate. Suddenly Plumduff claims he has seen an enemy target . . . and for no apparent reason blows Dickinson's fighter to pieces!

JET-ACE HELD HIS CLOSE ORBIT AROUND Z-4, AND WATCHED THE FAST-SCATTERING WRECKAGE OF DICKINSON'S INTERCEPTOR. PLUMDUFF'S EXHAUST TRAIL CUT THROUGH THE FIREMENT LIKE A LONG WHITE FURROW



I WONDER WHERE PLUMDUFF IS RUNNING TO NOW!



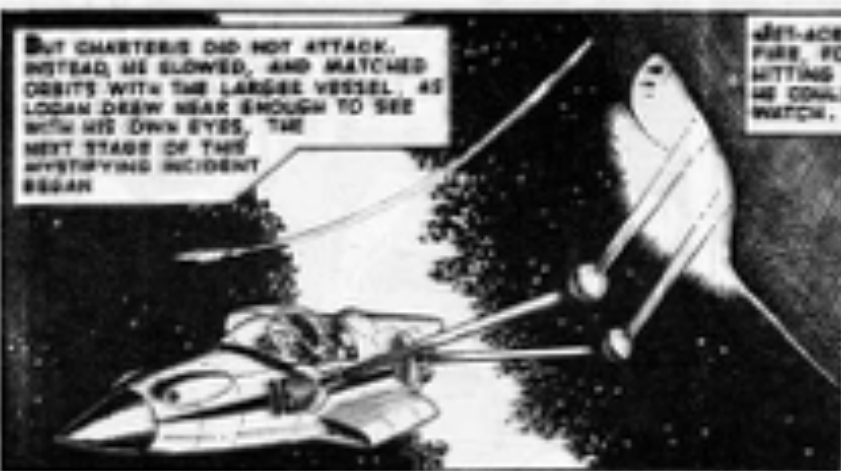
LOGAN HIT A BATTERY OF SWITCHES WITH THE NEEL OF HIS HAND, AND FELT HIS INTERCEPTOR SHIP SHUGGER AS ITS ATOMIC MOTORS SPURTED FLAME AT FULL BOOST

I STILL CAN'T CONTACT Z-4 BECAUSE OF THE RADIO BLACKOUT, SO I'M ON MY OWN! BUT I'D BETTER KEEP TRACK OF PLUMDUFF WHILE HE'S RUNNING WILD!



JET-ACE'S RADAR PICKED UP PLUMDUFF'S SHIP, THEN ANOTHER OBJECT GREW FROM AN INDISTINCT BLOB INTO SHARP FOCUS

WE'VE FOUND ANOTHER SPACE-SHIP! IF HE'S GOING TO ATTACK IT... HOW DID HE KNOW IT WAS THERE? I'VE ONLY JUST BEEN ABLE TO SEE IT!



BUT CHARTERIS DID NOT ATTACK. INSTEAD, HE SLOWED, AND MATCHED ORBITS WITH THE LARGER VESSEL. AS LOGAN DREW NEAR ENOUGH TO SEE WITH HIS OWN EYES, THE NEXT STAGE OF THIS MYSTERIOUS INCIDENT BEGAN

JET-ACE COULD NOT FIRE, FOR FEAR OF HITTING PLUMDUFF. HE COULD ONLY WATCH. . . .



PLUMDUFF! CAN YOU HEAR ME? CAN YOU HEAR ME?

THEY'VE BLACKED OUT MY RADIO, BUT ONE THING'S CERTAIN. . . HE DOESN'T WANT TO GO IN TO THAT SHIP!

“Hampson’s influence is clear through all this material.”



I myself only ever had one brief professional brush with *Dan Dare*-related material. Back in the 80s there was a projected live action *Dan Dare* series for TV. I and other artists contributed some work for this..I did a couple of otherworldly backdrops against which live action would be projected, or blue screened or whatever the term is. Unfortunately this series went down the toilet and I was left with a couple of big oil paintings with nowhere to go. Not really useable in any other commercial context...although a collector eventually bought them from me. I’ll sell anything, me.



Those other artists - they all had their place feeding my imagination..but in the end Frank Hampson tops them all for me. Hampson’s influence is clear through all this material. His success spawned many in his own mould but he is absolutely King of this Domain..no-one can ever take that from him.

We’ve barely mentioned Dan’s arch enemy the Mighty Mekon or the Capital City of the Northern Hemisphere of Venus, Mekonta...home to the humourless reptilian Treens and their huge brained leader the Mekon





Writers of a certain age found themselves maybe unconsciously referring back to the Mekon in some of their own outlandish characters. A cover commission that came my way was Colin Greenland's *Seasons of Plenty*. Here's Extasca...a bizarre being indeed - exactly as Colin describes he/she/it in the novel. Definite hints of the Mekon here!



Mekonta..a famous front page spread from issue 15 in July of 1950.



**EAGLE - THE NEW NATIONAL STRIP CARTOON WEEKLY**

**THREEPENCE**

**DAN DARE**  
PILOT OF THE FUTURE

**EVERY FRIDAY**

The ever-growing population of Earth lies under the threat of starvation. As a last resort, the Spaceship Ranger heads towards the planet Venus to find food. Three thousand miles from Venus, three Rocket Ships are launched towards the planet from Ranger. Two are still journeying towards Venus: No. 1, with Sir Robert Guest and Professor Peabody on board, and No. 3, manned by Hank and Pierre. But No. 2 has already landed on Venus, where its crew, Dan Dare and Digby, has been picked up by the green Venusians, and taken to the city of Mekonta.

JULY 1950 No. 11

HERE WE ARE, DEVLIN, THE FINEST CITY ON VENUS!

**MEKONTA** *Capital of the Northern Hemisphere of Venus*  
A CITY BUILT UPON PLANTING ISLANDS IN AN ARTIFICIALLY CREAMED LAKE, AND FRESH-FRISHED BY CRYSTAL BEAMS WITH THE CARBON-DIOXIDE WATER OF VENUS. THE HOME OF THE TREMBLE - INDIVIDUAL SCIENTIFIC ALGORITHMS WHO RULS THE NORTHERN HALF OF THE MISTERY PLANET.

“The world renowned architect Norman Foster grew up with the Eagle and he has freely admitted to the influence of the architecture of Hampson’s *Dan Dare* in his own mighty and futuristic constructs. The Gherkin is, to my eye, pure Hampson

You can see it too in Renzo Piano’s Shard,

of the architecture of Hampson’s *Dan Dare* in his own mighty and futuristic constructs.”

The world renowned architect Norman Foster grew up with the Eagle and he has freely admitted to the influence of the architecture of Hampson’s *Dan Dare* in his own mighty and futuristic constructs. The Gherkin is, to my eye, pure Hampson



You can see it too in Renzo Piano’s Shard,





# EAGLE



4<sup>1d</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

Published by Dell, Inc., New York, N.Y.

## DAN DARE

PILOT OF THE FUTURE

## TRIP to TROUBLE

THE STORY SO FAR: While searching for Dan's father on the planet Terra Nova, Dan Dare and Digby see Lex kidnapped. Cole, leader of a friendly people who are fighting ruthless invaders from Cos, tells Dan that not only is Lex their prisoner, but that Dan's father was killed fighting against them. Dan then asks Cole to lead him to the enemy H.Q. at Lantor, where Lex is imprisoned . . .

THERE IS LANTOR — THE CITY OF THE FIVE TOWERS. YOUR FRIEND LEX IS IMPRISONED IN THE GOLDEN ONE . . .

Richard Roger's Millennium Dome



and Nicholas Grimshaw's Eden Project.



Hampson's machines are amazing. It's hard to believe that this stuff goes back to the early-to mid 50s.

The first human built ship capable of interstellar flight. That still looks cooler than most stuff being turned out by today's artists. It is I think a particularly nice Hampson spread.





“HAMPSON’S MACHINES ARE AMAZING. IT’S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THIS STUFF GOES BACK TO THE EARLY- TO MID 50S.”

# EAGLE

EVERY WEEKEND



4 1/2

COMMITMENT TO GIRL, SWIFT AND DEEDS

MAY 1950

## DAN DARE PILOT OF THE FUTURE SAFARI IN SPACE

TALK ABOUT A SUTHERLAND!

A FLYING TORTOISE & WING LINE IT!



Called 'Whodunnit'...

THE STORY SO FAR  
Dan Dare and Co. are  
strapped and taken to a  
new asteroid base, where  
Lester Miller, the chief  
boss, says he believes that  
Dan's father is still alive  
on Terra Nova - a new  
world. As Miller is about  
to take the spaceship  
Columbia to Terra Nova  
- a fleet of spaceship  
orders arrive, so Miller  
makes the jet airplane  
escape. He is to  
return to the asteroid  
base. As the jet airplane  
takes off, the spaceship  
order arrives from the  
other planet...



ORDER 'ORDON'  
TO 'MCHOD  
DIP'...

YOU HAVE  
NO CHANCE TO  
ESCAPE - RETURN  
TO THE ASTEROID!



YOU DON'T SHAKE THEM,  
SHIPS OFF, MURDO - THEY'RE  
NO-NO... THE FASTEST SHIPS  
IN SPACE!

THESE BOYS WILL  
CARRY BLOWING  
YOUR ROCKET  
WALLED OFF,  
IF THEY HAD...

YOU'D BETTER THROW IN YOUR HAND!



YOU'RE A WEE BIT OVER-CONFIDENT,  
DE JURET. MY 'GALLEY'  
GIVE THREE & LITTLE  
TIME TO BUILD UP,  
BUT WE'LL BEGIN  
TO FEEL ITS  
EFFECT IN A FEW  
SECONDS.



LOOK AT THAT TAIL SLASH - IT'S WHITE HOT NOW!



SHE'S DRAWING AWAY - FULL THROTTLE!

# EAGLE



4 1/2



Of course the definitive Dan Dare ship is Anastasia, described earlier.  
I always liked these treen ships seen here pursuing Anastasia.





IT'S JUNE - ALL IN ONE PLACE!  
 WITH YOUR CONTROL -  
 DR. BULL DOG IN THE  
 PLANE GET!



I'M ALREADY HAVING TOOK THE BEST PLACE AND YOUR  
 DOWN, LAST - BUT AT LEAST IT'S COMING THE WAY

THE LAST MAN, BUT THE  
 HAD SOME OF THIS BEFORE  
 WITH PROBABLY REASON  
 LET'S HOPE THE FLAME  
 WARD CAN'T FEELING  
 HONEST!



WISDOM! THE GREEN LIGHT  
 SHOWN! IT WAS DARK IN  
 THE BROWN LIGHT!

BE SUREST AND  
 CREATED FROM THE  
 BROWN LIGHT  
 YEARS AGO!

LET'S MAKE SURE  
 REPORT FEELING, WITH  
 SET UP FOR SOME  
 USE OF TELETYPE  
 MOUNTAIN!

ELSE, JOHN -  
 WE HAVE NO  
 SUCH TRAFFIC!



THE PRESENTS AND  
 YOUR JOURNALS IN -  
 SEARCHED ALL OVER JOHN  
 WE HAVE NOTHING BUT  
 THE SMALL FLAME - COME  
 - YOU CAN BE LOST  
 ONE OF YOU?



LEND US TO THEM! WITH  
 HONESTY!

91912



# DAN DARE

PILOT OF THE FUTURE

in

## THE SHIP THAT LIVED

EDWARD WHEATLEY



# EAGLE

EVERY WEDNESDAY



4<sup>1d</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

CLIMAXING TO GIRL, SWIFT AND ROBIN

11. 1955. 1956. 1957. 1958. 1959. 1960. 1961. 1962. 1963. 1964. 1965. 1966. 1967. 1968. 1969. 1970. 1971. 1972. 1973. 1974. 1975. 1976. 1977. 1978. 1979. 1980. 1981. 1982. 1983. 1984. 1985. 1986. 1987. 1988. 1989. 1990. 1991. 1992. 1993. 1994. 1995. 1996. 1997. 1998. 1999. 2000. 2001. 2002. 2003. 2004. 2005. 2006. 2007. 2008. 2009. 2010. 2011. 2012. 2013. 2014. 2015. 2016. 2017. 2018. 2019. 2020. 2021. 2022. 2023. 2024. 2025.



QUEST - 95 - POLYSTAR  
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED  
DARE - IN - BEST - DAY - QUARTER

W E T E I - TO - BRILLIANT - DISCOVERY  
UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT - VELOCITY 200 THOUSAND  
LIGHTS RADIO WAVES - AREA M23/ M48/ M50  
INVESTIGATE

MR FREEDMAN THROUGH M. E. K. I  
BREAKING THROUGH ENEMY DEFENSES  
THEY SUSPECT WE'VE BEEN TRACKED



APPROXIMATE COURSE TO M. E. K. I - BEAR  
ONLINE IN SCREEN - MR. GALT'S SHIP!



CALL MR. MURPHY - INFORM THE MEMBERS  
MEDIA THAT WE HAVE SOLVED THE MYSTERY  
OF SAGE'S ESCAPE!



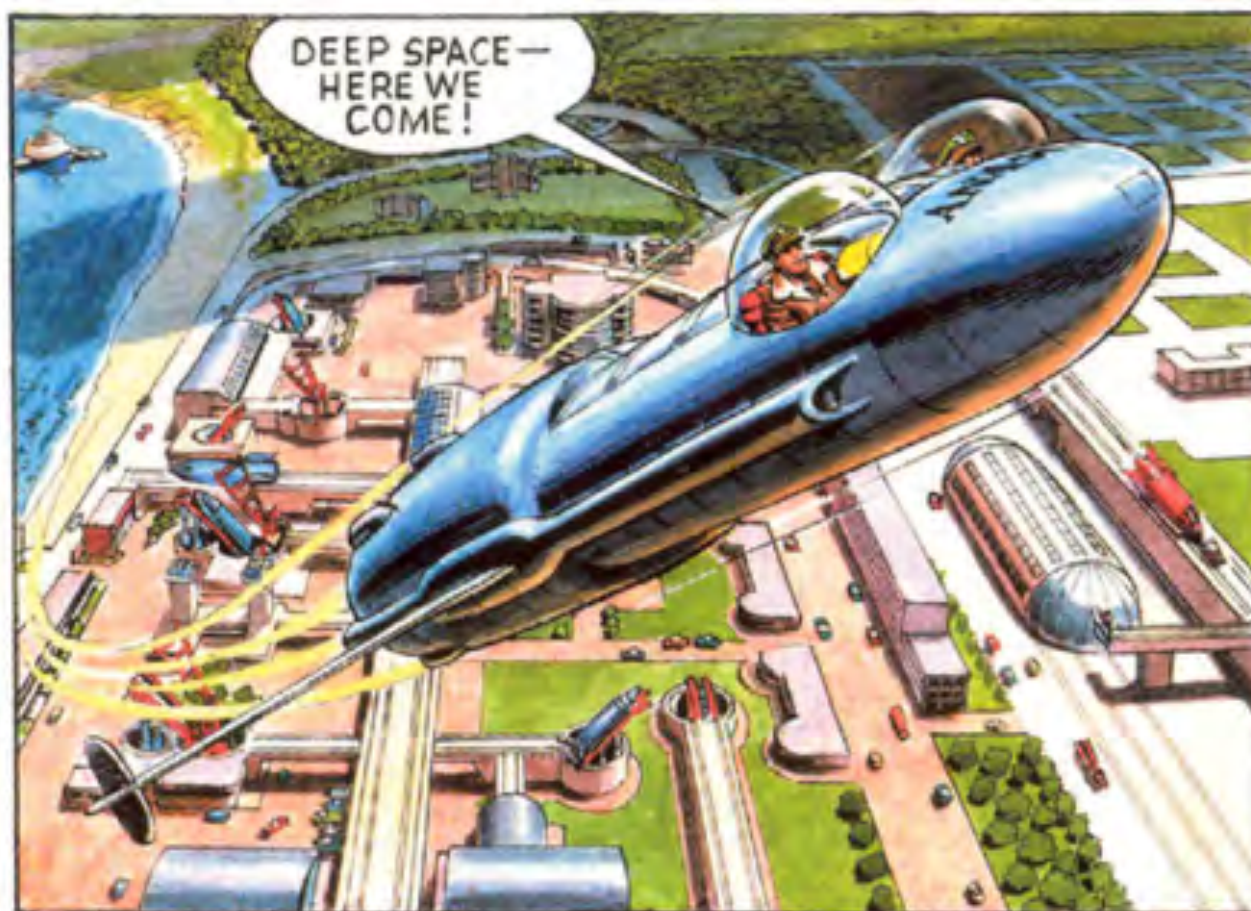
PREPARE TO APPROACH



“If only it could be like this!”



If only it could be like this!



To momentarily pop back over to one of the other artists...I always really liked this Keith Watson take on Anastasia



“As it says in the yellow box..’Anastasia was a super spaceship was a super spaceship”



As it says in the yellow box..’Anastasia was a super spaceship, named after Digby’s Aunt, and presented to Dan Dare by the grateful Venusians when he had brought peace to their troubled planet. The Anastasia, with its four methods of propulsion, incorporated the foremost advances of both the Treens and the Therons, the once warring inhabitants of Earth’s sister world!’



“When I look at my own vessels I cannot but see the influence of Hampson in some of my retro forms. Most modern artists working with this material tend towards an angular, utilitarian look, a complex collision of elements, strangeness implied in their unlikely non-logical structures. I prefer the look of machines that suggest a different aesthetic but quite clearly a sense of design behind the mindset. Frank did this and I hope I do...I never grew away from that way of thinking..something Frank Hampson did to my brain a half century and more ago.”

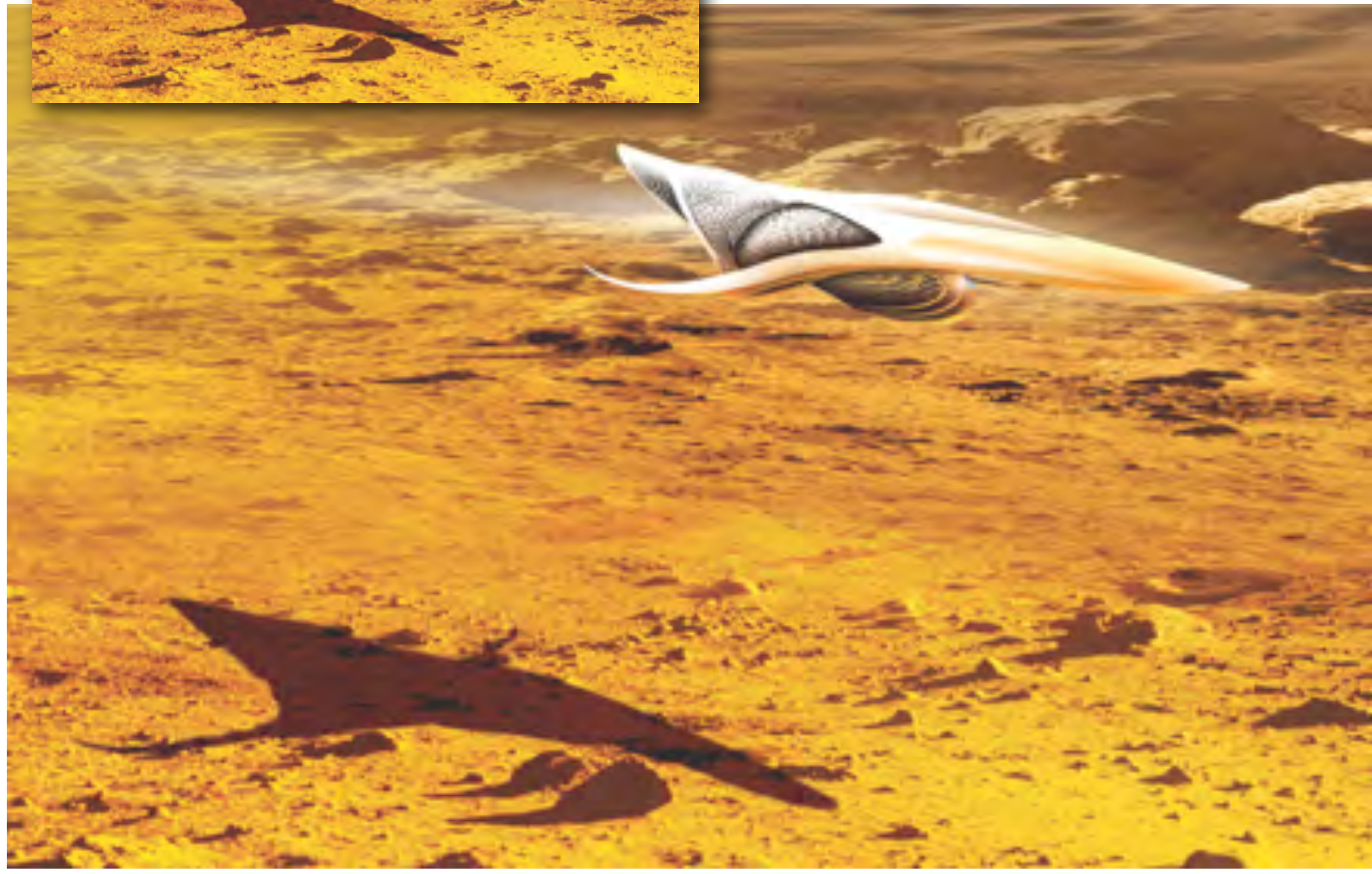


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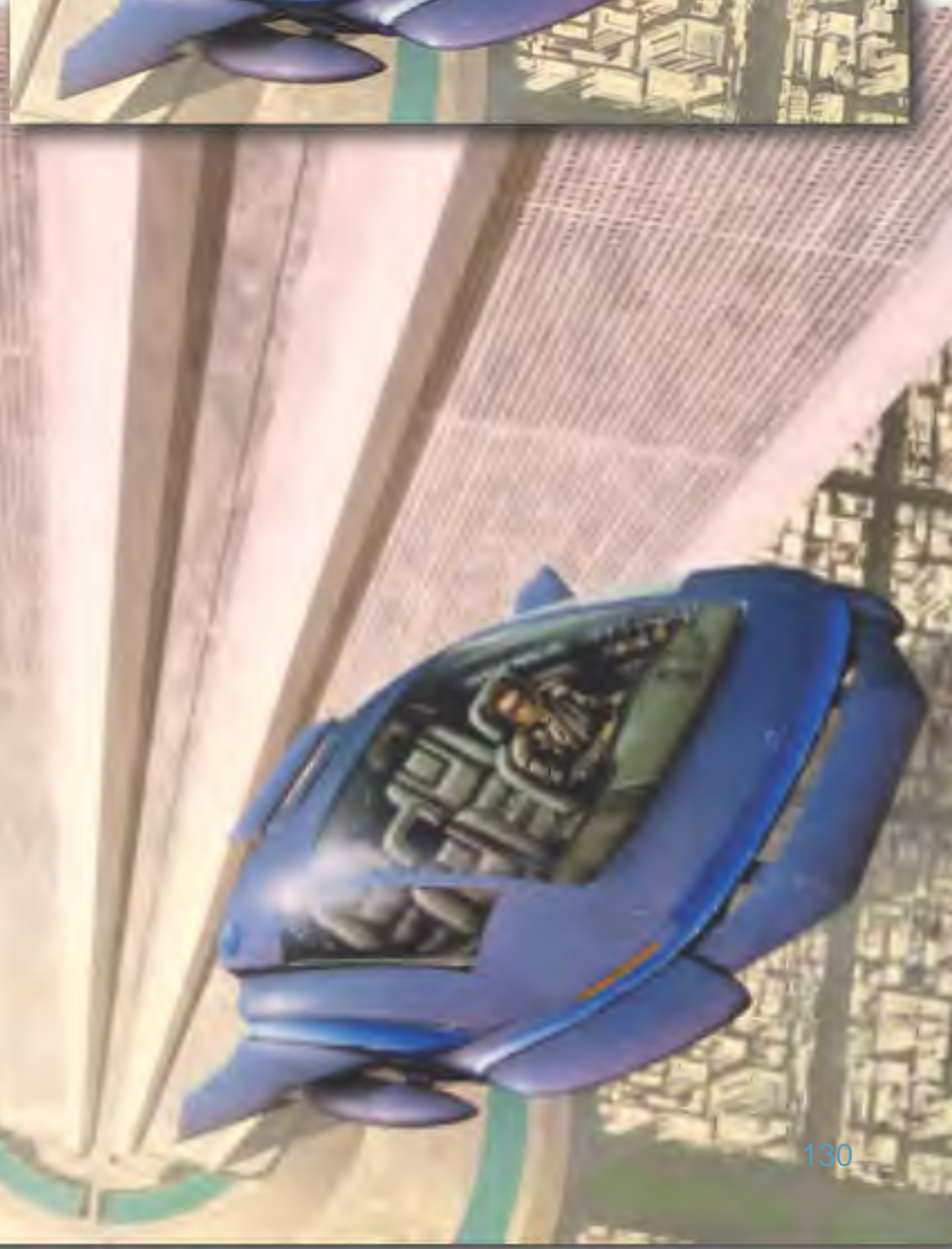














“The  
power of  
great  
comics  
on a  
young  
mind.”

Finally here's one of my favourite panels from the *Dan Dare* strip showing Anastasia..as she comes into land on the wonderfully exotic surface of Terra Nova. I believe this is one of the last panels Hampson provided for the Dan Dare Strip..but it has so much in it that for me sums up the genius of the Dan's creator.Wonderful detail, a real sense of the exotic, total conviction. I for one will forever live with the fond boyhood memories of the work of Frank Hampson and Colonel Dan Dare. It was food to an imagination that craved strange stuff, otherworldly stuff...and I'm not sure that it's the case that if Dan Dare hadn't have existed that I would be living the same life I'm living now.The power of great comics on a young mind.





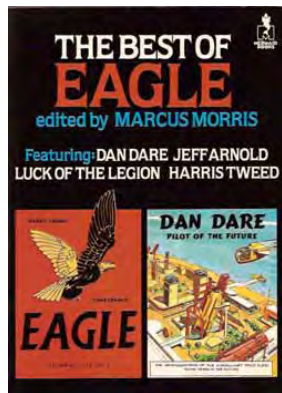
# FURTHER READING



# Further Reading

It's relatively easy to find the reprints of the original Dan Dare stories from *Eagle*, a collection of the 2000AD strips will be published later this year, and the Virgin Comics' series is widely available, but here are some other *Dare*-related publications that are well worth seeking out...

|   |   |
|---|---|
|    | <p><b>Spaceship Away</b><br/>by Rod Barzilay (editor)<br/><a href="http://www.spaceshipaway.org.uk">www.spaceshipaway.org.uk</a><br/>An ongoing magazine (currently up to issue #35) dedicated to Dan Dare and the original <i>Eagle</i>, featuring articles, rare reprints and brand-new strips.</p> |
|   | <p><b>The Dan Dare Dossier</b><br/>by Norman Wright &amp; Mike Higgs<br/>Publisher: Hawk Books<br/>978-0948248122</p>   |
|  | <p><b>Dan Dare: The Biography</b><br/>by Daniel Tatarsky<br/>Publisher: Orion Books<br/>978-0-75288896-5</p>  |
|  | <p><b>Dan Dare: Spacefleet Operations Manual</b><br/>by Rod Barzilay (Author) &amp; Graham Bleathman (Illustrator)<br/>Publisher: J H Haynes &amp; Co Ltd<br/>ISBN-13: 978-0857332868</p>   |



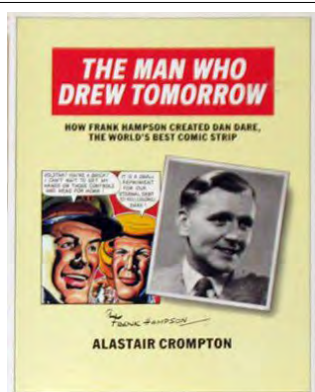
**The Best of Eagle**  
by Marcus Morris (editor)  
Publisher: Michael Joseph  
ISBN: 978-0718115661



**Eagle Annual: The Best of the 1950s Comic**  
by Daniel Tatarsky (editor)  
Publisher: Orion  
ISBN: 978-1407231242



**Eagle Annual: The Best of the 1960s Comic**  
by Daniel Tatarsky (editor)  
Publisher: Orion  
ISBN: 978-0752888958



**The Man Who Drew Tomorrow**  
by Alastair Crompton  
Publisher: Who Dares Publishing  
ISBN: 978-0948487019



# ***The Annoyingly Incomplete Dan Dare Story Guide!***

This Dan Dare Story Guide has been carefully but inadequately cobbled together from multiple sources... As the title suggests, it's incomplete. Partly, this is because older stories (in the original *Eagle Annuals*, for example) did not always include the creators' credits, but mostly it's because your humble author doesn't have access to a full set of the 80s *Eagle* comics and was unable to track down a complete episode guide on the Internet. (There's probably one out there somewhere, but it sure eluded *me*.) Apologies for any errors or accidental omissions!

Note 1: Omitted from this list are related items such as the *Dan Dare* video games and radio shows. Quite likely there's even been some comic-strips that we've missed. Sorry about that. It might be best to consider this your Dan Dare Episode Guide "Starter Pack".

Note 2: The Dan Dare magazine *Spaceship Away* (see below) is still ongoing – back-issues, binders and subscriptions are available from <http://spaceshipaway.org.uk> – and as such some of its stories have yet to be concluded.

## **Original Eagle:**

| <b>Story</b>         | <b>Published</b>    | <b>Author(s)</b>                             | <b>Artist(s)</b>   |
|----------------------|---------------------|--|--|
| Pilot of the Future  | V.01 #01 - V.02 #25 | Frank Hampson, Arthur C. Clarke (consultant) | Frank Hampson  |
| The Red Moon Mystery | V.02 #26 - V.03 #11 | Frank Hampson, George Beardmore              | Frank Hampson, Harold Johns, Greta Tomlinson                     |
| Marooned on Mercury  | V.03 #12 - V.03 #46 | Chad Varah                                   | Frank Hampson (3/12-3/13), Harold Johns, Greta Tomlinson         |
| Operation Saturn     | V.03 #47 - V.05 #21 | Frank Hampson, Allan Stranks                 | Frank Hampson, Harold Johns, Greta Tomlinson and Desmond Walduck |
| Prisoners of Space   | V.05 #22 - V.06 #18 | Frank Hampson, Allan Stranks                 | Desmond Walduck  |
| The Man From Nowhere | V.06 #19 - V.06 #47 | Frank Hampson, Allan Stranks                 | Frank Hampson, Don Harley  |
| Rogue Planet         | V.06 #48 - V.08 #07 | Frank Hampson, Allan Stranks                 | Frank Hampson, Don Harley  |
| Reign of the Robots  | V.08 #08 - V.09 #04 | Frank Hampson, Allan Stranks                 | Frank Hampson, Don Harley  |
| The Ship that Lived  | V.09 #05 - V.09 #16 | Frank Hampson, Allan Stranks                 | Frank Hampson, Don Harley, Desmond Walduck (9/10)                |
| The Phantom Fleet    | V.09 #17 - V.09 #52 | Frank Hampson, Allan Stranks                 | Frank Hampson, Keith Watson, Desmond Walduck                     |
| Safari in Space      | V.10 #01 - V.10 #18 | Frank Hampson, Allan Stranks                 | Frank Hampson, Keith Watson                                      |
| Terra Nova           | V.10 #19 - V.10 #40 | Eric Eden                                    | Frank Hampson, Frank Bellamy, Keith Watson, Don Harley           |
| Trip to Trouble      | V.10 #41 - V.11 #11 | Eric Eden                                    | Frank Bellamy, Keith Watson, Don Harley                          |

|                                |                     |                              |                            |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Project Nimbus                 | V.11 #12 - V.11 #28 | Eric Eden                    | Frank Bellamy, Don Harley  |
| Mission of the Earthmen        | V.11 #29 - V.11 #52 | Eric Eden                    | Don Harley, Bruce Cornwell |
| The Solid Space Mystery        | V.11 #53 - V.12 #23 | Eric Eden                    | Don Harley, Bruce Cornwell |
| The Platinum Planet            | V.12 #24 - V.12 #47 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| The Earth Stealers             | V.12 #48 - V.13 #09 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| Operation Earthsavers          | V.13 #10 - V.13 #23 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| The Evil One                   | V.13 #24 - V.13 #32 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| Operation Fireball             | V.13 #33 - V.13 #42 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| The Web of Fear                | V.13 #43 - V.13 #52 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| Operation Dark Star            | V.14 #01 - V.14 #09 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| Operation Time Trap            | V.14 #10 - V.14 #38 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| The Wandering World            | V.14 #39 - V.15 #13 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| The Big City Caper             | V.15 #14 - V.15 #22 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| All Treens Must Die            | V.15 #23 - V.15 #42 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| The Mushroom                   | V.15 #43 - V.16 #06 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| The Moonsleepers               | V.16 #07 - V.16 #29 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| The Singing Scourge            | V.16 #30 - V.17 #06 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| Give me the Moon               | V.17 #07 - V.17 #26 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| The Menace from Jupiter        | V.17 #27 - V.18 #01 | David Motton                 | Keith Watson               |
| Prisoners of Space [Reprint]   | V.18 #02 - V.06 #51 | Frank Hampson, Allan Stranks | Desmond Walduck            |
| Underwater Attack              | V.18 #52 - V.19 #03 | ---                          | Eric Kincaid               |
| The Man From Nowhere [Reprint] | V.19 #04 - V.19 #32 | Frank Hampson, Allan Stranks | Frank Hampson, Don Harley  |
| Rogue Planet [Partial Reprint] | V.19 #33 - V.19 #17 | Frank Hampson, Allan Stranks | Frank Hampson, Don Harley  |

#### Original Eagle Annual

| Story                | Published | Author(s) | Artist(s)                   |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------------|
| Untitled (Mars 1997) | #1        | ---       | Frank Hampson, Harold Johns |

|                          |          |            |                               |
|--------------------------|----------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Mars 1988                | #2       | ---        | Harold Johns, Greta Tomlinson |
| The Double Headed Eagle  | #3       | John Myers | Donald Harley                 |
| Operation Triceratops    | #4       | ---        | Harold Johns, Greta Tomlinson |
| Operation Plum Pudding   | #5       | ---        | Desmond Walduck               |
| Operation Silence        | #6       | ---        | ---                           |
| Space Race               | #7       | ---        | ---                           |
| Operation Moss           | #8       | ---        | Frank Hampson, Don Harley     |
| The Vanishing Scientists | #9       | ---        | ---                           |
| Moon Run                 | #10/1961 | ---        | ---                           |
| The Solid Gold Asteroid  | 1962     | ---        | ---                           |
| The Robocrabs            | 1963     | ---        | ---                           |
| Operation Crusoe         | 1964     | ---        | ---                           |
| March of the Ants        | 1965     | ---        | ---                           |
| Fire in the Sky          | 1965     | ---        | ---                           |
| Space Rocks              | 1966     | ---        | ---                           |
| The Men from S.T.E.A.L.  | 1967     | ---        | ---                           |
| The Unseen Enemy         | 1968     | ---        | ---                           |
| The Moon-Eaters          | 1969     | ---        | ---                           |
| The World of Thought     | 1970     | ---        | ---                           |
| Funfair of Death         | 1971     | ---        | Eric Eden                     |
| The Mekon Menace         | 1972     | ---        | ---                           |
| The Planet of Peril      | 1973     | ---        | ---                           |
| The Space Poachers       | 1974     | ---        | ---                           |
| Untitled                 | 1975     | ---        | ---                           |

**Other Publications:**

| Publication         | Story                        | Published  | Author(s)     | Artist(s)  |
|---------------------|------------------------------|------------|---------------|--|
| Dan Dare Space Book | Dan and Donanza              | 1953       | Frank Hampson | Frank Hampson, A. Bruce Cornwell, S.G.A., Desmond Walduck, Henry Barnett |
| Dan Dare Space Book | Aunt Anastasia Comes to Stay | 1953       | ---           | Text   |
| Dan Dare Space Book | Raiders in Space             | 1953       | ---           | Text   |
| Dan Dare Space Book | Digby the Guinea Pig         | 1953       | Frank Hampson | Desmond Walduck  |
| ABC Film Review     | Spaceship Away               | Oct 1954   | Frank Hampson | Frank Hampson  |
| Eagle Novel         | Dan Dare on Mars             | 1956       | Basil Dawson  | Text   |
| Anastasia Presso    | Pipsqueak and the Anastasia  |            | ---           | Text   |
| Dare Dare Annual    | The Planulid                 | 1963       | ---           | ---  |
| Dare Dare Annual    | The Planet of Shadows        | 1963       | ---           | ---  |
| Sunday People       | Mission to the Stars         | 20/04/64 – | William       | Don Harley   |

|                      |                             |          |           |      |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|------|
|                      |                             | 04/10/64 | Patterson |      |
| Eagle Summer Special | Peril from Outer Space      | 1966     | ---       | ---  |
| Lion Summer Special  | Untitled                    | 1969     | ---       | Text |
| Lion Annual          | Games of Doom               | 1971     | ---       | Text |
| Lion Annual          | Planet of the Bee Creatures | 1972     | ---       | Text |

### 2000AD Weekly Issues

| Story            | Published                | Author(s)  | Artist(s)   |
|------------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| The Biogs        | #01 - #11                | Ken Armstrong & Pat Mills (#1), Kelvin Gosnell             | Massimo Belardinelli                                      |
| Hollow World     | #12 - #23                | Steve Moore  | Massimo Belardinelli                                      |
| Legion           | #28 - #33                | Gerry Finley-Day   | Dave Gibbons  |
| Greenworld       | #34 - #35                | Gerry Finley-Day   | Dave Gibbons (#34), Dave Gibbons & Brian Bolland (#35)    |
| Star Slayer      | #36 - #51                | Gerry Finley-Day   | Dave Gibbons  |
| Doppelganger     | #52 - #55                | Chris Lowder   | Dave Gibbons  |
| Waterworld       | #56 - #60                | Chris Lowder   | Dave Gibbons  |
| Nightmare Planet | #61 - #63                | Chris Lowder   | Brian Lewis   |
| Ice World        | #64 - #66                | Gerry Finley-Day   | Dave Gibbons  |
| Garden of Eden   | #67 - #72                | Gerry Finley-Day   | Dave Gibbons  |
| Mutiny           | #73 - #78                | Chris Lowder   | Dave Gibbons  |
| Doomsday Machine | #79 - #85                | Roy Preston (#79-#81), Nick Landau & Roy Preston (#82-#85) | Trevor Goring & Garry Leach (#79-#84), Dave Gibbons (#85) |
| Servant of Evil  | #100 - #107, #109 - #118 | Tom Tully  | Dave Gibbons  |
| Traitor          | #119 - #126              | Tom Tully  | Dave Gibbons  |
| [Untitled]       | #1034                    | David Bishop & Steve McManus                               | Kev Walker  |

### Other 2000AD Publications:

| Publication           | Story                     | Published | Author(s)  | Artist(s)            |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------------|----------------------|
| 2000AD Summer Special | [Untitled]                | 1977      | ---        | ---                  |
| 2000AD Annual         | The Curse of Mytax        | 1978      | ---        | Massimo Belardinelli |
| 2000AD Sci-Fi Special | Visco                     | 1978      | Gary Leach | Gary Leach           |
| 2000AD Annual         | [Untitled]                | 1979      | ---        | ---                  |
| Dan Dare Annual       | [Untitled]                | 1979      | ---        | Ian Kennedy          |
| Dan Dare Annual       | The Invisible Death       | 1979      | ---        | Text                 |
| Dan Dare Annual       | untitled (old to new)     | 1979      | ---        | Trevor Goring?       |
| 2000AD Sci-Fi Special | The Planet of Frozen Fear | 1979      | ---        | Text                 |
| 2000AD Annual         | [Untitled]                | 1980      | ---        | Rod Vass             |
| Dan Dare Annual       | [Untitled]                | 1980      | ---        | Dave Harwood         |

### New Eagle:

|                                      |                 |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--|--|
| Return of the Mekon                  | #01 - #33       | B.J. Tomlinson (1st episode), Pat Mills, John Wagner | Gerry Embleton, Oliver Frey, Ian Kennedy               |
| The Dare Report                      | #34 - #38       | Pat Mills  | Ian Kennedy (Frank Hampson reprints in episodes 4 & 5) |
| Fireflight                           | #39 - #54       | Pat Mills  | Ian Kennedy  |
| untitled ("Young Dare")              | #55 - #73       | Pat Mills  | Ian Kennedy  |
| untitled ("The Battle for Earth")    | #74 - #83       | Pat Mills  | Ian Kennedy  |
| untitled ("The Timads")              | #84 - #93       | ---  | Oliver Frey  |
| untitled ("Prisoners of Space")      | #94 - #116      | ---  | Ian Kennedy  |
| untitled ("Renagol")                 | #117 - #130     | ---  | Ian Kennedy  |
| untitled ("The Pleasure Planet")     | #131 - #155     | ---  | Ian Kennedy  |
| untitled ("Minefield")               | #156 - #158     | ---  | Ian Kennedy  |
| untitled ("The Flesh Eaters")        | #159 - #172     | D.Horton   | Carlos Cruz  |
| untitled ("Animal Army")             | #173 - #187     | D.Horton   | Carlos Cruz  |
| untitled ("The Bubble")              | #188 - #199     | D.Horton, later Tom Tully                            | Carlos Cruz  |
| untitled ("The Crystal Spores")      | #200 - #209     | Tom Tully  | Carlos Cruz  |
| untitled ("The Two Dan Dares")       | #210 - ??       | Tom Tully  | Carlos Cruz  |
| untitled ("Dargath, Prince of Evil") | ?? - #258       | Tom Tully  | Carlos Cruz  |
| untitled: (Marshall)                 | ---             | ---  | Carlos Cruz & Jesus Redondo                            |
| untitled: (QT)                       | ---             | ---  | Carlos Cruz  |
| untitled: (Drakken)                  | ---             | ---  | J.Gilliat  |
| untitled: (Resignation)              | ---             | ---  | ---  |
| Untitled                             | ?? (6 episodes) | ---  | Keith Watson   |
| Beauty Contest                       | ?? (6 episodes) | Tom Tully  | Jon Haward   |
| Return of the Mekon                  | ?? (6 episodes) | Tom Tully  | Jon Haward   |

**New Eagle Annual (and Related Publications):**

| Publication              | Story                   | Published | Author(s) | Artist(s)    |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Eagle Annual             | Menace of the Mekon     | 1983      | ---       | Ian Kennedy  |
| Eagle Annual             | The Invisible Assassin! | 1983      | ---       | Text         |
| Eagle Annual             | [Untitled]              | 1984      | ---       | Oliver Frey  |
| Eagle Annual             | [Untitled]              | 1984      | ---       | Oliver Frey  |
| Eagle Annual             | [Untitled]              | 1985      | ---       | Oliver Frey  |
| Eagle Annual             | [Untitled]              | 1986      | ---       | Keith Page   |
| Eagle Annual             | [Untitled]              | 1987      | ---       | J.B. Higgins |
| Dan Dare Annual          | [Untitled]              | 1987      | ---       | ---          |
| Eagle Annual             | [Untitled]              | 1988      | ---       | Redondo      |
| Eagle Annual             | [Untitled]              | 1989      | ---       | Redondo      |
| Eagle Annual             | [Untitled]              | 1990      | ---       | Keith Page   |
| Dan Dare Holiday Special | [Untitled]              | 1990      | ---       | Keith Watson |
| Eagle Annual             | [Untitled]              | 1991      | ---       | David Pugh   |
| Dan Dare Annual          | [Untitled]              | 1991      | ---       | ---          |

|                          |                         |      |     |                            |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|------|-----|----------------------------|
| Dan Dare Holiday Special | A Scouran's Best Friend | 1991 | --- | Jon Haward (illustrations) |
| Dan Dare Holiday Special | Digby                   | 1991 | --- | Jon Haward                 |
| Eagle Annual             | [Untitled] (blue tone)  | 1992 | --- | Jon Haward                 |
| Eagle Annual             | [Untitled] (colour)     | 1992 | --- | Jon Haward                 |

### Spaceship Away:

| Story                                 | Published     | Author(s)                     | Artist(s)                         |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| The Phoenix Mission                   | #1 - #4       | Rod Barzilay                  | Keith Watson & Don Harley         |
| Project Pluto                         | #2            | Nicholas Hill & Martin Baines | Martin Baines                     |
| Spaceman Digby's After Dinner Dream!  | #2            | Ray Aspden                    | Ray Aspden                        |
| Rocket Pilot                          | #3 - #18      | Keith Page                    | Keith Page                        |
| Mekki                                 | #4 – ongoing  | Ray Aspden                    | Ray Aspden                        |
| Green Nemesis                         | #4 - #22      | Rod Barzilay                  | David Pugh, Don Harley, Tim Booth |
| Dan Dire                              | #4 - #19      | Eric MacKenzie                | Eric MacKenzie                    |
| Our Bertie                            | #4 – ongoing  | Ray Aspden                    | Ray Aspden                        |
| All Change                            | #5 - #7       | Simon Garrett                 | Andrew Skilleter                  |
| The Gates of Eden                     | #9 - #21      | Tim Booth                     | Tim Booth                         |
| Parsecular Tales                      | #22 – ongoing | Tim Booth                     | Tim Booth                         |
| Dan Dare: Pre-Emptive Strike          | #23, #26      | John Freeman                  | Mike Nicoll                       |
| Dan Dare: Digby's Bad Dream           | #24           | Tim Booth                     | Tim Booth                         |
| Dan Dare: Missiles & Mistletoe        | #25           | Sydney Jordan                 | Don Harley                        |
| Dan Dare: Dan & Digby's Happy Landing | #25           | Don Harley                    | Don Harley                        |
| Dan Dare: Amberlink                   | #27           | Nick Spender                  | Nick Spender                      |
| Dan Dare: The Tannenbaum Caper        | #28           | Sydney Jordan                 | Don Harley                        |
| Dan Dare: Mercury Revenant            | #33 – ongoing | Tim Booth                     | Tim Booth                         |

### Other Publications:

| Publication              | Story                | Published                    | Author(s)         | Artist(s)     |
|--------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Revolver                 | Dare                 | #1-#7, plus Crisis #55 & #56 | Grant Morrison    | Rian Hughes   |
| The Stacks               | Dan Dare in Somerset | 1998                         | Anthony Appleyard | Text          |
| Daily World Post         | Project Pluto        | --                           | Nicholas Hill     | Martin Baines |
| Dan Dare (Virgin Comics) | Dan Dare             | 7 issues, 2007-2008          | Garth Ennis       | Gary Erskine  |

# EDITORIAL BY JAMES BACON

Gerry Webb of Commercial Space Technologies asked me to give a talk at The British Interplanetary Society in London. Gerry and myself had chatted in February about the impending Dan Dare anniversary and *Journey Planet* issue and he himself, being a huge fan, had planned a gathering of a wonderful variety of persons to talk. These included Alan Bond of Reaction Engines, and perhaps the star of the day, Greta Tomlinson, artist for the original *Eagle*.

Greta was wonderful. While she had worked at *Eagle* as an artist, she, like many of her colleagues, were used as models for the comic by Frank Hampson. Greta was the model for Professor Peabody, but her own artistic skills were on display and her recollections were wonderful.

I was a *Battle* reader, but *Eagle* entered the consciousness – mostly because Dad had a *PC49* collection and I picked up the *Eagle Book of Trains* – and then was clearly visible when it amalgamated with *Battle*.

I was a committed *Crisis* reader by the time *Dare* by Grant Morrison and Rian Hughes appeared in *Revolver*, and so I bought that comic too.

How would this audience react to hearing about Grant Morrison's start to *Dare*, with Peabody having committed suicide? Or Garth Ennis' Peabody embroiled in politics? The group were definitely interested in *Dan Dare*, in any incarnation, but their initial disdain and unhappiness with how the character was portrayed by modern writers was apparent. There was indeed a gasping sound of shock, when it came up. Although I had primed the audience a bit, with the description of Dan Dare as 'Child Murderer', explaining the Treen revolt that Dare and Digby had been sent to suppress.

*Dare* was clearly a satire of the politics of the early 1980s and yet can also be seen today to have meaning and traction given our current society and how the societal vision of the 1950s – the care and welfare of all – have been so horrendously eroded away. As was pointed out at the *Dare* event, betrayal could be the main theme running through it. The dreadful vision of the future... Spacefleet privatised, the headquarters dilapidated, while Treens are racially abused (called Goblins, forced to live in ghettos and deal in drugs to get by), the north-south divide is now a chasm, queues for food lasting for days.

I mentioned the visceral and revolting nature of the Mekon's plans as stomach-turning. In many respects fifties Dan Dare fans may have – and possibly did – feel that this work was disrespectful (I did not ask for a show of hands!), but the good side of Dare – the fight for the good – is reflected in the story, as Dare himself questions first whether he should be the Poster Boy, and then – when he realises the situation – looks and finds the answer to the problem inside himself. This questioning and subversive viewpoint is fabulous, and ultimately Dare makes an incredible sacrifice for the good of all.

I mentioned to all the lovely reference to a Spitfire in Garth Ennis version as Dare notes that his grandfather had served in the Battle of Britain; a connection to the Pat Mills iteration in the 80s *Eagle*.

Garth Ennis is a consummate war story writer. His knowledge of history and the workings and mechanics of war are inspired. His research is legendary in the business and here he put Dan Dare in a good old fashion war story with an excellent supporting character in Lieutenant Christiansen. Traditions of the Royal Navy, a healthy sense of humour and the blood-pumping pace of a war comic combined to make this a solid war story. I could see that this piqued interest in those gathered.

The new Smasher from Marvel's *Avengers* – revived a couple of years ago (and more recently written by Jonathan Hickman) – included a delicate and beautiful set of references to Dan Dare. A young astronomy student called Izzy finds herself inducted to the Shi'ar Imperial Guard. The reader learns her full name name is Isabel Dare, and while on Earth her granddad shows her a note, to him – it is 'To Dan from Captain America, Steve Rogers.' Her name: Izzy Dare.

Unfortunately, things change and Marvel have already said that Izzy was *not* Isabel Dare – she's Isabel Kane – but for these few comic panels, the moment was fleetingly created and, like so many moments in comics, lost, but remembered.

I also saw Jim Burns give a talk and I am incredibly indebted to him for permission to include this – along with all the images – in this issue. It's a huge body of work, as one can see, and something that really adds. As ever, I am grateful to all our contributors, and our co-editor Michael Carroll.

We are working on two other issues, as I type this:

*Letters in Absentia*, about Mail Art, Fountain Pens, Epistolary works, letters of import and postage. This issue is going very well, but as ever we welcome contact about submissions or ideas.

*Richard III* will be out in July, I reckon, and again we have had some amazing contributions and more are coming in, which is encouraging.

Then of course we will have the Hugo Awards. It is always an honour to be a nominee, and I am still feeling incredibly positive about that. We had a couple of stunning issues last year. I hope many people read and see what we do.

I am unsure how that is going to go. I have such a huge respect for the voters and nominators that I cannot really contemplate all the outcomes or predict the consequential emotions or feelings from them.

While there has actually been an incredible amount of fan writing about the Hugo situation – from the likes of Eric Flint and George RR Martin – fan Mike Glycer has been doing a wonderful job trying to report on all comments and utterances on File 770. There have also been words of such hatred that, up to now, I would never have associated with my hobby, and levels of dastardliness that, well, stun me. To be honest I would not mind no Hugo news on File 770 for a week. But more recently a harder thing happened.

An art editor, Irene Gallo, referred to some of the antagonists in the drama as Neo Nazis. These comments, on her own Facebook page, were used sometime later quite purposely to attack Gallo and embarrass her employers. The outrage felt staged, and her company made an apology. This then made some unhappy, as they felt Gallo was not being supported. I do not know what happened in conversations in her workplace and I hold my thoughts on that. The current two-pronged attack could never have been orchestrated but it is no doubt making many antagonists very happy.

What I do know is that I am grateful to Gallo for speaking her mind honestly, and I am sorry that others used her words in such a tactical attack, and hope that she and her employers understand that the empty vessels making the most noise are vacuous and vain and only want upset.

How much upset there will be at Spokane remains to be seen. I am not at all afraid, and The Hugo's and Worldcon will continue and we, fandom can handle this situation and will do. I still feel very honoured. It is an honour to be a nominee.

To end on another wonderful note, Chris had twins with his wife Vanessa, so to JohnPaul and



Ben, I wish the stars.





**A Note from editor Christopher J. Garcia**

During the creation of this issue, my wife gave birth to twin boys, JohnPaul Merlin Garcia and Benjamin Kyle Garcia. They were born at 28 weeks, but they're doing great. I knew nothing about *Dan Dare* until I started working on this issue. Now, I am psyched to get to read more... between changing diapers and feeding the ravenous beasts my wife brought into this world.