


GATEHOUSE GAZETTE

21

EMPIRE REVISITED

*Astounding Tales
From The Colonies*



The *Gatehouse Gazette* is an online magazine in publication since July 2008, dedicated to the speculative fiction genres of steampunk and dieselpunk.

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A British flag flies from a fortress in the town of Wajir, Kenya, 1962 (*Life*)

FAREWELL TO EMPIRE

BY NICK OTTENS

Steampunk's Victorian roots mean that it cannot, as a genre or a culture, escape Europe's colonial past, wherever the adventure takes place.

Neo-Victorianism isn't imperialist revival but does recreate the style and storytelling of an era in which England ruled a quarter of the world's population. The romance of empire has been part of the steampunk ethos for more than a decade. Whether it's imperialist adventure in the colonies or megalomania in old Blighty, the empire is always there, prominently or lurking in the shadows, when you're entering the nineteenth century.

Rather than trying to hide it because we're anti-colonialists now, let's be honest and upfront about the fact that we admire the pomp and spirit of the globetrotting Victorians. Once we identify what we like, we can confidently either discuss or ignore what we don't. The Victorians perpetrated a lot of wrongs after all but it's ridiculous to pretend that steampunk wants nothing to do with empire because of it.

Consider this final print edition of the *Gatehouse Gazette* an encouragement as well as a guide to the many possibilities for steampunk adventure that the age of imperialism has on offer.

From short biographies of three Great White Hunters to steampunk fiction in Africa, this issue is designed to thoroughly entertain the nostalgic imperialists among us. We also have a review of two recent *Space 1889* adventures which clearly demonstrate that empire hasn't to be confined to this Earth. Of course, Hilde Heyvaert provides the necessary fashion advice for when you're planning an expedition to uncover whatever lost civilization while Marcus Rauchfuß explores the capital of an empire that's often overlooked.

We also have two interviews, one with Simon R. Green, author of the neo-noir *Nightside* novels that have been extensively reviewed in previous editions of the *Gazette*, and another with Allegra Hawksmoor, until recently the chief editor of *SteamPunk Magazine*. Enjoy! •



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR «

The twentieth issue has definitely taken the dieselpunk route and perhaps later, into the Roaring '20s and Dirty '30s. A little outside what I am familiar with, but it's worth a look.

As costumers in the past (and present, thanks to steampunk), we are fans of Art Deco and the designs of the great Erté. I am hoping that we can do more than beat the tough times but still aspire to some level of greatness, or at least that good job you've been looking for, for what seems forever.

The Golden Age of Radio is something else we enjoy. Perhaps our tastes are a little old fashioned and nothing much today really catches our eye, but radio was the first medium to tell a story directly to your imagination. I am still working to make a career for myself as a professional voice actor so oldtime radio has a lot of appeal. I met the guy who runs the website www.gdoradio.com and he's got a lot of old radio shows available on CD. I remember listening to the CBS Radio Mystery Theatre, hosted by E.G. Marshall. Radio has changed, and definitely not for the good.

The article on the Great Crash of the stock market, and the resulting Great Depression, also sounds quite modern. After getting through the huge financial problems of a few years ago, and countries nearly defaulting in this modern day, I'd wonder if we're all going to get a little depressed, in more ways than one. I know there is supposed to be legal mechanisms that prevent a depression from happening again but the banking and real estate mess from 2008 has left a lot of national treasuries depleted and one default could cause others. But then, the *Titanic* wasn't supposed to sink...

The megalomania of the Nazis could have provided us with some amazing architecture and perhaps the development of the Antarctic continent. but, not having those things is a small price to pay to avoid world domination. We might all be speaking a little bit of German today. No wonder there was so much attraction to the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* movies.

Hilde Heyvaert reviews one of my favorite movies of the last few years—*Up*. A wonderful story, great animation and perhaps the first animated movie that can not only make you laugh, as we assume cartoons will do, but also move you to tears. A wonderful film, and one of the few I have on DVD.

Yours,
Lloyd Penney

A special word of gratitude to Mr Penney whose kind letters have always been very much appreciated by the editor.

I want to express my admiration for the work you put into the fine publication you created. The *Gatehouse Gazette* has become a household name in the steampunk and dieselpunk community. I also want to congratulate you on the outstanding team of contributors you assembled. Ms Heyvaert and Mr Rauchfuß deserve special praise, both for the steady high quality of their contributions and for the sheer volume of the same. I also want to commend Mr Rauchfuß because he is not afraid to tackle difficult and sometimes controversial subjects.

Best regards,
P. Craig



Over the past years, some of you may have noticed, often featured in the *Gatehouse Gazette* pages or posted at *The Gatehouse* blog, French illustrator Stefan's images, most of them sceneries in the dieselpunk genre or posters and illustrations with a retro feel.

For the first time, gathering images from the past years as well as new visuals, his work will be available as a book. With a foreword by no other than Nick Ottens himself and titled *Diesel City, Fiction Reveals Truths Reality Obscures*, the book is an hypnotic dive into the dark, midcentury stuck world of a city empire on the brink of war.

Illustrations are collected and presented in a dozen of chapters, with themes such as Megalopolis, Bizarchitecture, Propulsion, Heroes and Bad Boys, Noir, etc... Texts by the author come along with most of the pictures, to complete this tour of a not-so-alternate universe. With a release expected for the end of the year, the book will be available in both French and English, and will offer several large size off-prints in it.

AFRICAN ADVENTURES

BY JAMES ROBERTS

USUALLY, WHEN PEOPLE SEEK a look for steampunk, or a setting for a character or story, their minds take them to the grimy streets of London or a city somewhat based upon that hub of Victorian life. Such is all well and good, with plenty of opportunity for urban adventure and the fantastical, technological elements which lend steampunk its science fiction heart. In *Grandville* the setting switches to Paris, and we can visually see Talbot's wonderful art work bring to life the *Belle Époque*-esque steampunk France but nevertheless the urban setting doesn't disappear.

However, that's not the sum of it. In S.M. Stirling's *Peshawar Lancers* (2002) we see a wonderful steampunk world mostly featuring agrarian northern India as the new seat of the British Empire after an apocalyptic meteor strike in the 1870s. Toby Frost's steampunk science fiction series *Space Captain Smith* takes his characters into the unknown frontiers of the British Space Empire including planets based on India and combines elements of steampunk science fiction and

frontier adventure. The comic series *Virtuoso* is the closest example which comes to mind; the story of a weapons manufacturer set in a part of Africa which becomes a steampunk technocracy. While it retains the cultural influences of Africa, is still a great comic series, it misses what I feel is part of the appeal of nineteenth century Africa; the rugged frontier element. This is a somewhat arrogant view—that while London can be a technologically advanced city of gears and steam power, Africa's cities and regions must remain the plains, jungle, veldt and desert with kraals and European settlement cities being the only good ones. Aside from this, however, there isn't much steampunk “stuff” set outside an urban scene and those which take a setting within the British Empire are often limited to London.

This is a shame as the British Empire incorporated hundreds of cultures and spread across a third of the world. Whatever one's historical interpretation of the empire as good, bad or just neutral historical

institution, one cannot underestimate its influence throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. During that period of Victorian civilization, heroes were usually those which were away from the urban centers, performing daring do in the far flung corners of the empire. The same went for France and the United States; the frontiers of their respective empires naturally furnished suitable setting for adventure. Weird West tales are a good example of this employment of the rugged frontier, away from civilization, as a setting for adventure tales within the steampunk genre.

H. Rider Haggard's famous creation Allan Quatermain was the principle protagonist of the steampunk tales of *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* created by Alan Moore, a series which is much more far roaming than many steampunk settings, but nevertheless not so much set in the frontier realms of the British Empire which became the subject of so much interest toward the end of the nineteenth century—Africa.

As the imperial powers entered into Africa's interior in the famous “scramble,” their agents brought back tales of the “dark continent” which astounded and amazed readers and listeners. It was a golden age of exploration, much of it by private individuals less interested in imperial expansion than they were driven by the pursuit of fortune

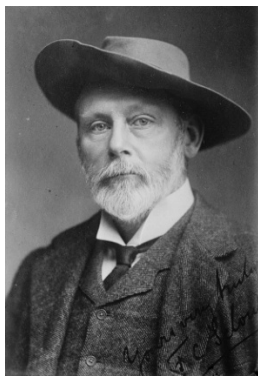




A float boat lands off Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanganyika (*Life*)

and glory. Such a man was the prime influence for Haggard's Quatermain, the great hunter, adventurer, zoologist and conservationist Frederick Courtney Selous.

Selous, born in 1851, set out from London at the age of nineteen to make his fortune in the Cape Colony, as it was then. Not long after his arrival he set out into Matebeleland (part of present day Zimbabwe) and gained permission to hunt ivory from its king, a rare honor for white men. During the course of his adventures, Selous rose in fame and published a number of books. He became a household name as an adventurer and explorer to rank with Stanley and Livingstone. His books on his travels in East Africa, and also his volume on his Canada hunting trip are glimpses into an age when some of the world's surfaces were still much unexplored and, to be mapped



would require the hard grit and tenacity of these tough but knowledgeable explorers who embodied the Victorian values of Anglo-Saxon stoicism and enterprise.

The Boer contemporary of Selous, P.J. Pretorius, was another great white hunter of the prewar era. Known as "Jungle Man," he lived deep in the Bundu and would go without contact with other Europeans for years at a time, hunting ivory in the Rufiji and further afield. When the Kaiser's *Shütztruppe* sought to confiscate his land, he defied and threatened to exhaust the region of its ivory; rendering it worthless to Wilhelmine Germany. He promised to resist arrest, even if the entire German army were sent to find him. However, he could not make true his claim and was shot in the legs and so began the remarkable story of how this adventurer journeyed over two

hundred miles to the nearest British outpost with bullets in his leg. On his travels, he came into knowledge of the locale of the German cruiser *Konigsberg*, hidden in the Rufiji delta and so for the first time in history an African big game hunter became a vital tool in cruiser warfare as Pretorius offered his services to the Royal Navy.

Years later Pretorius put the remarkable details (covered much better than here!) in the book *Jungle Man* at the behest of his friend Jan Christian Smuts, former Boer commander, prime minister of South Africa, General in the British Army and inventor of Holism, another of Africa's personalities seemingly imported from the pages of adventure fiction and whose biography is also well worth the read.

One must concede, however, that Africa is somewhat tainted. White heroes in Africa may seem to be heroes for some but it must be remembered that they can be interpreted as wicked villainous

imperialists or thieves by many others. Fortunately for Selous and Pretorius they are favored in history by and large and Tanzania's largest game reserve is named in honor of the former. J.C. Smuts, for his stand against the British is held as a Boer hero, later, as a general in British service he is respected by the British and for his stand against apartheid in the 1948 election, he is looked on as one of the better white rulers of South Africa. He is often voted by black and white South Africans as the second best prime minister in the history of that country. Nevertheless others, such as Cecil Rhodes, are somewhat rightly condemned by us today as exploiters.

We must judge the past by its own standards and not our own, this is true, but for the purposes of modern science fiction with a Victorian bent, it can seem very anachronistic to have white heroes in

Africa and one must look to indigenous Africans as well to furnish one's stories with great characters, past such caricatures as Rider Haggard's Umslopogaas; the Zulu warrior sidekick of Quartermain.

Africa's cultures furnish a large part of her setting for adventure fiction and anyone with an author's knowledge of that variety of peoples, languages and beliefs could craft a fine steampunk tale set there with the requisite respect and admiration for what they speak of, and not of a critical or arrogant leaning. It can be difficult to show another culture in fiction without seeming to patronize but when one sees what Africa can offer, particularly to Victorian science fiction, it is my humble belief that one should try. To ignore the setting in case of offense is to undervalue it for what it is; one of the most beautiful continents in the world possessive of a vibrant history, black, white and

Indian Asian, and to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Part of the issue in underappreciating Africa is that many if not most steampunk are white, very few of them black, even fewer actually in Africa. This subject was tackled in an article at *The Gatehouse* some months back when the subject of racial minorities and representation were addressed, unfortunately with backlash which only took the issue back into "we can't talk about that" territory.

So I appeal to any budding steampunk authors out there, should you want to, to grab the Impi by the horns and give Africa a fair representation within steampunk literature; utilize her history, cultures and characters to blend a great adventure yarn set either in the frontiers of the Rufiji or Masaai Maras, the veldt, or in African cities of wonder such as in *Virtuoso*. •



Victoria Falls,
Rhodesia (*Life*)

KITCHENER

BY MARCUS RAUCHFUß

FIELD MARSHAL HORATIO HERBERT KITCHENER is perhaps the best known of Great Britain's famous military officers. His face on the "I want You" posters, a staple historic image from the time of the Great War, makes him instantly recognizable, even if you don't know his name.

Kitchener was born in Ireland but spent part of his childhood in Switzerland where his family lived when his mother was dying from tuberculosis. Following in his father's footsteps, young Herbert Kitchener became a soldier and saw his first action, curiously enough, as a volunteer on the French side of the Franco-Prussian War, thereby breaching Britain's neutrality in the conflict.

Kitchener presents an interesting character for study. He was revered by his men as a capable and generous officer, spoke several languages, among them Arabic, fluently, implemented reforms in Egypt and the Sudan which improved the lot of the lower classes of society and also showed considerable foresight regarding the length and severity of World War I.

At the same time, he was known for his brutality when dealing with his enemies. After defeating the Mahdists at Omdurman in 1898, he had the body of the Mahdi exhumed, hacked to pieces and scattered.

In 1902, while in charge of British forces in the Second Boer War, he intensified the previously begun scorched earth campaign and had an unprecedented number of civilians incarcerated, more than the concentration camps could properly handle. As sanitary conditions deteriorated and the camps ran short on food supplies, 34 percent of people held there ultimately died.

When the Boers finally capitulated, his benign side came to the fore again and he negotiated a peace treaty that was far more generous than the humiliating conditions the British governor of the Cape Colony, Sir Alfred Milner, a conservative hardliner, had preferred.

Kitchener was an ambitious man. After a tour of duty in India and being promoted to field marshal, he used his political influence to be made Viceroy of India. This endeavor failed and possibly created some political enemies who would seek to tear him down in later years.

Kitchener's remarkable skill and foresight were probably a contributing factor in Britain's armed forces lasting through the Great War. Lord Kitchener was one of the few voices cautioning against hope for a quick victory and instead prepared for a long and costly conflict.

Maybe it was this pessimism regarding the war, envy by his aforementioned political rivals or a mixture of both that led to his political decline. He had the shortage



Lord Kitchener of Khartoum (Philip Tennyson Cole, c. 1911-1914)

and bad quality of British artillery shells blamed on him, along with a few other charges of mismanagement. Other men may well have been forced to retire in disgrace but the field marshal's status as a war hero in the eyes of the majority of Britons saved him.

Kitchener's untimely death in 1916 has sparked a number of conspiracy theories, some of which are not completely unhinged. *En route* to Russia for a diplomatic mission, his cruiser, HMS *Hampshire* struck a mine off the Orkneys and sunk within minutes. Only twelve passengers and crew survived, Kitchener perished.

I speculate his death had more dire effects on history than was apparent at the time. Given his previously humane treatment of defeated enemies, he might have pushed for less severe conditions for Germany after the first war and thus maybe even prevented World War II. This may require a stretch of the imagination but given Kitchener's previous record, I do not consider it altogether unlikely. •





GORDON

BY NICK OTTENS

THE SUDAN HAD BEEN conquered by Egypt's Muhammad Ali Pasha in 1820 in an effort to unite the Nile Valley and revive commerce along the river.

The possibility of recruiting Sudanese slaves for his Egyptian army certainly enticed the viceroy to undertake the endeavor as well. After a few years of tumult and resistance that followed the invasion, the Sudan was largely pacified for the next half century although dissatisfaction with Egyptian policy, in particular taxation, was boiling.

The British had been interested since Napoleon attempted to built an

empire in Egypt but the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 presented them with the imperative of safeguarding shipping through the Red Sea from and to India. In part because of the khedive's control of both Red Sea coasts by the 1830s, after his armies had forced the Saudi Wahhabis out of the Hejaz, Britain and other European powers began to fear his growing power and decided to remove him from office. His dynasty was allowed to continue to rule Egypt.

Not until the reign of Muhammad Ali's grandson Ismail Pasha (1830-1895) did Egypt venture southward again. The fifth khedive waged war against Ethiopia, extending Egyptian control over the Upper Nile to the Equatorial Lakes and the former sultanate of Darfur, but the enterprise left his government heavily indebted.

The Sudanese slave trade meanwhile became an embarrassment for the khedivial administration which was trying—and, to a considerable degree, at least in Egypt, managed—to westernize the country. Ending the slave trade wasn't merely a pretext for expansionism in the Sudan although the two went hand in hand. The Egyptians reorganized their government in the Sudan to limit the authority of remaining independent principalities and established a river police to intercept the boats of slave traders upstream. The force was susceptible to bribery however and the trade continued almost unabated.

The khedive's solution was to employ men who had no connection with nor interest in the slave trade—Europeans, for instance. The most notable of them was the British officer Charles George Gordon (1833-1885) who had made a name for himself in China and acquainted the Egyptian prime minister in Constantinople in 1872. He was appointed governor of the Sudan's southernmost of provinces which had most recently been conquered by Egypt. Though lacking the finances

and military support to effectively root out slavery, Gordon set about the task with enthusiasm.

Britain's agent in Cairo at the time, Evelyn Baring, later Earl of Cromer (1841-1917), regarded the whole affair rather warily, noting in his diary that even if the khedive was "sincere in his desire to suppress slavery and bring order to the Sudan, nothing is more certain than that he is powerless to do so." Gordon thought otherwise. Later made governor general of the whole of the Sudan, he roamed the countryside for slavers, freeing slaves and dispensing justice virtually on his own. All seemed to be going well for him except back in Egypt, Ismail Pasha's spending spree had finally caught up with him.

The country's total debt amounted to some £91 million at the time. Interest payments alone ate up two-thirds of state revenue.

The khedive suspended repayment of all foreign debts in 1876 in an attempt to extract more favorable terms from his European creditors. The British and French Governments, whose banks were most seriously exposed, rejected the notion of imposing a moratorium on debt repayments or accepting a restructuring. They started thinking of replacing Ismail with his son Tewfik Pasha (1852-1892) but neglected to consider how the rest of Egypt might react to such a blatant though far from unprecedented breach of a non-European country's sovereignty. It in fact prompted nationalists to rebel.

Neither Cairo nor the European powers paid much attention to the situation in the Sudan then where dissatisfaction with Egypt's maladministration and Gordon's antislavery crusade had been steadily increasing. By 1879, there was unrest in the provinces of Darfur and Kordofan, west and south of the Nile, while several outlying stations had been abandoned by foreigners altogether. Unable to convince his Egyptian masters that the situation

begged their attention, Gordon resigned in despair.

But there was first the revolt in Egypt to put down. William Gladstone's cabinet was reluctant to act, as were the French, who suspected that the Ottoman sultan had been conniving against the Westerners in Cairo, but pressure from the press, the military, the opposition and Queen Victoria herself culminated in a bombardment of Alexandria in the summer of 1882. Within a month, Britain had restored Tewfik to power and Gladstone's fears of permanent entanglement were starting to come true.

With Egypt, Britain also acquired the Sudan but it had no desire to become involved there too. Lord Cromer warned that the Egyptians were in no condition to hold the Sudan. He cautioned against a forward policy and London hesitated. Egypt didn't have the resources and Britain, as far as the Liberal Government was concerned, didn't have the responsibility to restore order in the country. Besides, Gladstone wondered, weren't the Sudanese rightly struggling to be free?

Egypt's hold over large parts of the western and southern Sudan was precarious at best, dependent entirely on a handful of administrators who had virtually no forces at their command. In 1881, the whole of the Egyptian dependencies, including the Eritrean and Somalia districts, were garrisoned by forty thousand troops with slightly more than seven thousand in the capital of Khartoum alone. Their predicament was confounded by the political paralysis in Cairo. Only when the insurgents in the Sudan had already won

notable successes did the authorities respond.

The religious nature of the revolt soon dawned on the British in Egypt as it weakened the ability of the Egyptians to suppress it. Their Muslim soldiers, demoralized by the political uproar at home, regarded the military victories of the Sudanese who professed to be fighting in the name of the "Mahdi," or the prophesized redeemer of their faith, as bearing testament to their enemy's divine pretensions.

Britain had wanted nothing to do with the uprising and suggested that the Egyptians withdraw from the Sudan altogether but by a combination of confusion and circumstance, Gordon was eventually dispatched under public pressure, to do what exactly, no one seemed to be sure. The cabinet had sent him to report on the best possible method of carrying out an evacuation of the Sudan. Cromer understood that Gordon had actually been authorized to execute the evacuation. Gordon himself constantly changed his mind.

Almost completely ignorant of the nature of the uprising, he had drafted a plan of action to restore order to the Sudan before even arriving there in 1884. It would take



only a resolute commander to implement it and in due time, the Mahdist revolt would peter out. He hugely overestimated the effect of his personal authority however. Whereas he had been heralded at home as a liberator of slaves, to the northern Sudanese, he was the man who had sapped the foundations of their prosperity.

On his arrival, Gordon announced the dismissal of the Egyptian officials and soldiers and promised that in the future, the Sudan was to be governed by the Sudanese. It seemed as though he was preparing for a policy of evacuation. According to one administrator in the Sudan, Gordon's promises "precipitated matters to an alarming extent." It had made explicit the intention of giving up the country and gave the Sudanese no choice but to come to terms with the Mahdi.

Having witnessed the rebellion and learned just what were the Mahdi's intentions, Gordon, a fairly devout Christian man, determined that Britain had to do the very opposite of what he had announced and establish a successor government in Khartoum to quell the unrest. He appealed to Lord Cromer in Cairo for more troops and warned that although evacuation was possible, they would surely feel the "effect" of it and be "forced to enter into a far more serious affair in order to guard Egypt."

Lord Garnet Wolseley (1833-1913), the commander of British forces in Egypt, who had distinguished himself during the siege and relief of Lucknow during the Indian Mutiny, similarly

advocated decisive action. "It must not be forgotten," he said, "that the question of whether this war shall or shall not go on does not rest with us, unless we are prepared to give up Egypt to the False Prophet. We shall not bring about a quiet state of affairs by adopting a defensive policy," he warned. The Mahdi and his followers would not rest contented until they had driven "the infidels into the sea." Crushing his rebellion was the only policy "worthy of the English nation."

The government back home however, which had no clear grasp of the situation and was wondering whether Gordon's independent posturing there wouldn't eventually commit them to an armed intervention, denied the request for additional forces. The episode coincided with Russian military action in the far north of Afghanistan which ultimately posed no threat but convinced the authorities in London not to engage in a campaign in the Sudan in case the army would be needed elsewhere.

Gordon didn't share that view. As Mahdist forces descended on Khartoum, he intended to hold out and hoped that eventually, a force would be organized to relief him. "I am staying," he reported to Cromer in August 1884 despite orders to withdraw, "because the Arabs have shut us up and will not let us out."

It took months for public pressure in Britain to persuade the government to dispatch a "Nile Expedition" to save Gordon. It was not until January 1885 that it could commence its advance on Khartoum. As the Mahdists learned of the imminent assault, they decided to besiege the city and take it before the British could arrive. The exhausted garrison was overwhelmed. Gordon was killed.

The Nile Expedition failed to relief Khartoum and it is doubtful if it ever could have managed as the small fighting force was probably no match for the Mahdist army. The humiliation was a setback for the forward school in London where

parliament was tired of the whole affair and the cabinet determined on withdrawing from the business of Egypt altogether. Conservatives prevented that but even they had little desire to venture into the Sudan again for some years.

The Mahdi himself quickly died after the final battle. He was succeeded by his lieutenant, Abdullah ibn Mohammed (1846-1899), who came to be known as "the Khalifa."

The fall of Khartoum wouldn't end the fighting in the Sudan. Rather conflict along the Egyptian-Sudanese border continued until 1889 when Francis Wallace Grenfell (1841-1925), the British commander of Egyptian forces, defeated and annihilated the Mahdist army at Toski, thus ending the threat to Egypt from the south for some years.

Between 1890 and 1892, British and Egyptian forces recaptured many of the Red Sea areas, driving the Mahdists out of port cities in the northeast. Tribes on the upper White Nile rebelled against the Khalifa in the same year while discontent lingered in many of his outlying districts; a situation that had been exacerbated by widespread famine in 1890. The Khalifa grew evermore paranoid, dismissing chief officials and sentencing them to harsh prison sentences. No doubt his temper was effected by the growing awareness that his regime was not at all safe from foreign invasion. The European scramble for Africa was well underway and the Sudan became one of those few white spots on the map yet unclaimed by any greater power.

Eventually, Britain could not have another European country steaming up the Nile but for the time being, it was perfectly content to leave the Khalifa where he was and have him keep the Italians out. "Surely," the Conservative Prime Minister Lord Salisbury (1830-1903), ever the pragmatist, wrote to Cromer in 1890, "if you are *not* ready to go to Khartoum, this people were created for the purpose of keeping the bed warm for you till you can occupy it." •



Gordon's demise
(Life, 1885)

VON LETTOW-VORBECK

BY MARCUS RAUCHFUß

FROM A MILITARY HISTORIAN'S PERSPECTIVE, Germany's most capable commanders always seem to serve in Africa. The same are also always the most chivalrous and most respected by their enemies.

During the Second World War it was the *Wüstenfuchs* Erwin Rommel. During the Great War, it was *Generalmajor* Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck, the Lion of Africa. The latter bears the distinction of being the only commander of the Imperial German Army who did not lose a single engagement.

Like many Imperial German officers, Von Lettow-Vorbeck came from an aristocratic family, albeit a minor one. His first military assignment posted him to China. He was part of the German detachment of the allied forces sent to quell the Boxer Rebellion.

In 1904 he served in Namibia, which was then *Deutsch Südwest Afrika*. Although he was present in the colony during the Herero and Namaqua uprising, he did not participate in the atrocities committed by the German Imperial Army.

The outbreak of the First World War found Von Lettow-Vorbeck as the commander of a small, ill supplied garrison, facing a much numerous and better equipped British adversary.

In his first engagement, the Battle of Tanga, fought November 3-5, 1914, he successfully defended the eponymous port city against a British force, outnumbering his own eight to one. He also managed to capture a significant amount of valuable equipment, significantly bolstering the fighting ability of his troops and elevating his strained supply situation for a while.

The aftermath of the battle also showed chivalry on both sides, with the British sending medical supplies while the German medical personnel tended to the wounded in the city without regard to uniforms.

After another successful engagement at Jassin, Von Lettow-Vorbeck came to the conclusion that he could not afford another head-on engagement as the attrition threatened to disintegrate his forces completely. So, he staged an impressive guerilla campaign with the aim of tying down as many Commonwealth forces in Africa as he could, preventing them from fighting in Europe.

Interestingly, Von Lettow-Vorbeck had some remarkably progressive views. During his military operations he promoted several of his native African soldiers to officer rank, something that would not happen



Paul Emil von Lettow-Vorbeck
(Heinrich Hoffman, 1933)

in other armies for years or even decades. He was also fluent in Swahili which earned him the respect of many tribes and contributed greatly to the loyalty of his Askari and also helped in recruiting fresh volunteers.

After his surrender to Commonwealth Forces he did his best to improve the conditions of his African troops in the British Empire's prisoners of war camps.

He also used his influence to have pensions paid to his African soldiers, first by the Weimar Republic and later by the Federal Republic of Germany.

His attitude is perhaps best surmised by his own quote: "*Wir sind alle Afrikaner.*"

Returning home in 1919, he received a hero's welcome as the empire's only undefeated general. During the turmoil of the early Weimar Republic, he sided with the monarchists and participated in the failed Kapp Putsch. In the aftermath of this incident, he had to retire from the army and became a businessman.

In 1929 he was invited to Great Britain and met his former adversary General J.C. Smuts for the first time in person. The two officers formed a friendship for the rest of their lives.

After the Nazis came to power, Hitler courted Von Lettow-Vorbeck for a while, even offering to make him ambassador to the United Kingdom. The old general was

less than impressed with the Nazis. His answer to Hitler's overtures is unknown, but apparently, it was rather direct and the wording not quite in line with what you might expect of a gentleman. After this refusal, he was kept under surveillance and harassed, although his reputation protected him from serious reprisals.

The end of World War II found the aging general in dire straits. His house had been bombed, his sons had been killed in action and he had to rely on food parcels sent by his former adversaries in Britain. He recovered his fortunes during Germany's postwar economic revival and campaigned again for compensation of his former troops in Africa.

Despite his opposition to the Nazis and his high regard for his African soldiers, Von Lettow-Vorbeck was

by no means a democrat or a liberal. His loyalties lay with the abolished monarchy and his patriotism leaned toward nationalism. On several occasions, he demanded the return of Germany's colonies by the allies.

When Paul Von Lettow-Vorbeck died in 1964, aged ninety-three, he was buried with full military honors. His coffin was carried by high ranking officers of the *Bundeswehr* and the German Government had surviving Askari flown in as state guests so they could attend.

Today, the Lion of Africa remains one of the most renowned of Germany's generals although far less known by the general public than are Rommel, Von Richthofen and Von Stauffenberg. He is also one of the handful of twentieth century officers to have streets and barracks named after him.

REVIEW « GHOST OF A SMILE

BY HILDE HEYVAERT

THE FIRST INSTALMENT IN SIMON R. GREEN'S newest Ghost Finder series *Ghost of a Chance* didn't exactly leave me very enthused (as you can read in Gatehouse Gazette #19). Despite the experience of the first novel, I decided to give the second one a go, on the account that Mr Green generally writes fantastic books (series such as the *Deathstalker Saga*, *Forest Kingdoms*, *Tales from the Nightside* and *Secret Histories* are also from his pen).

And lo and behold, *Ghost of a Smile* is nothing like its predecessor. The characters have all come into their own, J.C. Chance no longer feels like John Taylor 2.0 and the setting has developed its distinctive own feel and identity, much like the characters.

While generally one doesn't need to have read all the books in a series to follow the story, nor does one need to read them in the right order, with series from this author I would really recommend reading the first in the series before starting this book. You can get on without doing that but there are quite a few references to the first one that might make you feel like you've missed out if you don't. I personally was glad I had read it (even though I didn't like it much) because I could follow what was going on to the fullest.

The story goes as follows: our four heroes are now the youngest A team of the Carnacki Institute, which means bigger and more prestigious cases. So this time team leader J.C. Chance, techno queen Melody Chambers, telepath "Happy" Jack Palmer and the ghost girl Kim are

thrust into a mission to find out what exactly happened in a state of the art and high tech medical research facility in the better corners of London. What they discover is nothing anyone possibly had been able to prepare them for, nor is the outcome anything they'd expected. To find out exactly what happened, reach the villain, and hopefully save the proverbial day, they need to fight a way through the floors of a building distinctively not like any building in our world should be.

I would love to say more about it but I don't want to spoil it for those that have not read it (yet). What I will say, however, that this book is a perfect balance between horror and suspense with the exact right dose of added (personal) drama. It's not over the top gruesome but it's just scary enough to keep it pleasant. Even people that generally aren't into ghost stories will be able to enjoy this. One of the strong points of this series is that it's not just about ghosts, it's as much about the people trying to deal with them, and it's about other things that go bump in the night often controlling these ghosts or messing them about just as well leaving for a good variety in villains so it never gets boring.

It's fast paced, keeping you glued to the pages till you suddenly realize it's late at night when you've finished it. And the ending will likely have you craving for more. With the turning of every page you are as expectant as the characters to find out what will lie in wait for them this time.

References to the *Nightside* and *Secret Histories* series are few and far between, which will no doubt keep the fans of these series wonder just how it all connects. Whatever it is, it's building up to be epic, so I can't wait for the next instalment.



INTERVIEW «

SIMON R. GREEN

BY HILDE HEYVAERT

Simon Richard Green is author of the successful *Deathstalker* and *Nightside* series. This summer, the second novel in his new *Ghost Finders* adventure was published. He previously wrote the novelization of Kevin Costner's 1991 film, *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*.



The Nightside series are coming to a close after twelve books. How do you feel about saying goodbye to this series? And is there any chance you'll start the series again?

It does feel a bit of a wrench, to say goodbye to characters and a setting that I'm very fond of. But I'm a great believer in not letting series go on too long, past their prime, to the point where both the writer and the fans get tired of them. Twelve is just right; the overall story arc has reached its proper conclusion. That said, I have no doubt I will be writing more short stories set in the *Nightside*, in the future. I've just sold a story to P.N. Elrod for her new anthology, finally telling the Secret Origin of Dead Boy.

You often use pop culture references in your books. What inspires you the most for your stories?

Whatever I'm reading, watching, listening to at the time. It's all grist to

the mill.

What could you tell the readers of the Gatehouse Gazette about The Bride Wore Black Leather as sort of a preview from the author himself?

John Taylor and Suzie Shooter are getting married. But there's still time for one last case for J.T. as a P.I. It's all get me to the Church on time... complicated by the fact that someone is trying to destroy the *Nightside* once and for all, one of J.T.'s oldest friends has just been murdered, everyone thinks he did it, and he's on the run from everyone...

Will we ever find out what happened to Hadleigh Oblivion that made him give up his position as Walker, go to the Deep School and how he became the Detective Inspectre?

I have a story in mind for Hadleigh; but really, you've already got all the necessary clues...

How would Julien Advent react if he suddenly found himself in a room full of steampunks?

He'd interview them, and then probably bore them rigid with tales of his adventures in the Swinging Sixties.

The Ghost Finders, the Drood Family and John Taylor are all parts of settings that often intertwine in one way or another. Will there ever be an epic crossover story featuring the Droods, J.C. Chance's team and John Taylor and his usual motley?

Yes.

And last but not least: what would your advice be to the aspiring authors out there?

Advice to aspiring authors; be a plumber instead. The work's regular, the money's better, and you don't have to answer questionnaires. •





**AUSTRALIA
CANADA
INDIA
NEW ZEALAND**

All answer the call.

*Krithen
Ward*

**Helped by the YOUNG LIONS
The OLD LION defies his Foes.
ENLIST NOW.**

REVIEW «

MRS DARCY VS THE ALIENS

BY HILDE HEYVAERT

WHEN I FIRST GOT THE REVIEW COPY OF this book in my hands and read the back cover I thought it was going to be a brilliant and hilarious read. I will happily admit that I'm a fan of the original *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen and that I'm always open to a good humoristic approach to sequels.

But this, this was not what I expected, and not in a good way either. While the approach to the story, aliens trying to screw over civilization as we know it in Regency England, is a stroke of genius, the execution is terribly disappointing.

The author throws around pop culture references like there's no tomorrow but most of the time they're not really entertaining. Some cracked me up, most just made roll my eyes. As with most things "less is more" would have been the correct application of them. At first it's all funny (and sometimes frankly hilarious) but after a couple of chapters they become downright annoying and do little to advance the plot.

I did like the mix of several literary settings and supernatural phenomena thrown together but while I understand that some leeway with the original characters is necessary in a story like this, I feel that sometimes they are a little too out of character. Thankfully this doesn't happen all that much so I'm sure that fans of the original won't feel the need to inflict their copy to (too many) flying lessons.

I'll say this much: if you like total parody type sequels and silly stories featuring aliens you'll love this. If the total mutilation of literary classics for humor's sake makes your hair stand up straight then avoid this book like the plague. If you're somewhere in the middle then I suppose it depends on your tolerance of often rather bland puns.

Personally I didn't think it was nearly as funny as the back cover tried to make me believe but I don't think it was rubbish enough not to go near the announced sequel with a ten foot pole, I'd still read that just to see where they're taking all of this as the idea behind this silly plot is really original. I just hope that there will be less bad puns because I don't think I can sit through another entire book of those. •



PROXIMA CLASSICS

JONATHAN PINNOCK

Mrs Darcy versus the Aliens

REVIEW «

THE TYBURN JIG

BY MARCUS RAUCHFUß

IT IS GETTING HARDER AND HARDER TO IMPRESS ME when it comes to steampunk related music. After being honored with reviewing such notable works as *Steampowered Stories* by The Cog is Dead and the works of Abney Park and Veronique Chevalier in general, I always worry a bit I could get my hands and ears on something garnering a less favorable review.

This time my worries were once again unfounded.

The Tydburn Jig by Ghostfire is another outstanding example of the steampunk scene's creativity. Steampunk is very likely the only label you can put on this band and this album. The range of different musical styles makes it impossible to fix the album to a genre and testifies to Ghostfire's combined talent.

The track "Smoke & Mirrors" is finest Goth Rock, reminding me of the works of Fields of the Nephilim and The Marionettes back in the early 1990s.

"Book of Dust" is one powerful ballad and "Vaudvillain" is a delightful piece blending ska and Goth elements to something I would expect in the soundtrack of *The Adams Family* or a B-horror.

Ghostfire's overall sound is rough, edgy and unpolished. In a steampunk context this gives Ghostfire some additional charm. You can hear the grime and coal dust on Mister E's voice and the instruments. This is nothing like the über-produced bands being churned out by record companies by the dozen and vanishing after their first single. •

REVIEW «

SPACE 1889

BY MARCUS RAUCHFUß

THE E-BOOK SERIES *SPACE 1889 & BEYOND* IS OUT and I have already been lucky enough to get a review copy of *Journey to the Heart of Luna* and *Vandals on Venus*. Both are relatively quick reads which is why I am going to review them in one go.

Journey to the Heart of Luna by Andy Frankham-Allen was quite a refreshing reading experience. The closest thing to military steampunk fiction I have thus far encountered. Military is maybe too heavy a term, more naval steampunk fiction. Andy manages to convey the atmosphere of a British airship *en route* to the Moon in a way that makes you feel you are on board. I was under the impression that he had probably served with the Royal Navy himself.

The story itself is fairly predictable if you are familiar with the *Space 1889* setting and the few adventures set there in the first edition. Since this is something I have come to expect in RPG related literature, I do not mind at all.

Some of the characters may be a bit flat, especially the Russians, but since this is a short tale, character development cannot really happen. The story is also not quite free of old, stereotypical tropes, in particular the strong, independent female who is not quite in keeping with the time. However, this is one of the staple adventurer classes of *Space 1889*, so it is completely in keeping with the setting.

All in all, I really enjoyed *Journey to the Heart of Luna*, and can fully recommend it!

Now for *Vandals on Venus*. Quite a different reading experience but we get to meet some of the protagonists of *Journey to the Heart of Luna*. It is not quite the same caliber, though. I actually stumbled over one of the first sentences:

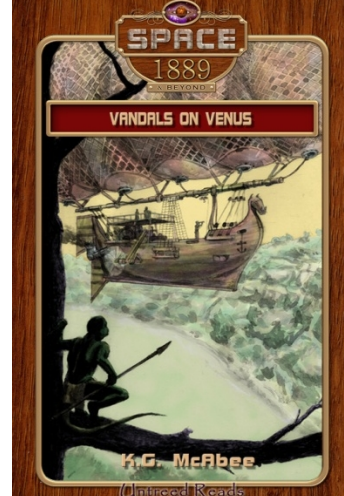
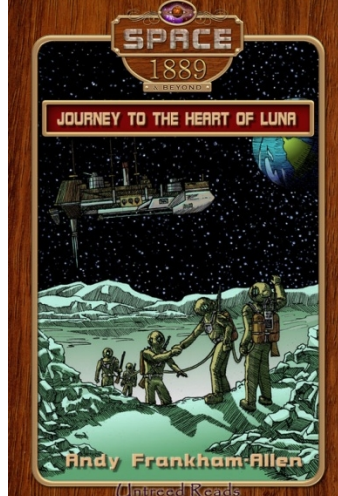
William White woke instantly, his brilliant mind alert at once.

Well, a bit overkill, is it a sign of genius if you “wake instantly” and are “alert at once”? There are a few more sentences like this—powerful but somewhat off descriptions for characters and scenes.

Another description that’s odd:

Though Nathaniel Stone was a brilliant inventor and spent a great deal of time bent over a desk, he had a tall, lean and athletic appearance and was in excellent health.

This implies inventors are usually not tall and athletic but small, shrivelled and frail? Tell that one to Edison or Benz.



The clichés continue, especially when it comes to characterizing the German officer (who I think is meant to be representative of the German military as a whole, if not even the empire).

Where to start? I can accept the stupid name, Otto Kurt: Just take two names you connect with Germany and slam them together. Then the use of “token German”. Otto Kurt uses “*Verdammten Englisch*” on and for every occasion. The phrase does not make sense. It proves that he might be an illiterate Russian spy posing as a German officer and getting away with it because the Venusian swamp gases have made everybody else deaf. The correct phrase would have been “*Verdammt Engländer*” or “*Verdammt Briten*.” “*Verdammten Englisch*” makes as much sense as “Damned France” in “The damned France have beaten us at football.”

Curiously enough, according to the short story, his English is excellent!

Oberst Kurt displays none of the characteristics of a Prussian soldier. What he displays are the characteristics of a Waffen SS *Sturmabführer*. Next time you want to portray a Prussian soldier, please take into account there was more to them than just military efficiency, otherwise, the incident involving “The Captain of Köpenick” could never have happened. And do not mix them up with Nazis.

As for the German Zeppelin... Oh yes, the *Rheingold*. Another stereotypical German word, probably lifted from a Wagner CD. Just a few minutes in the Wikipedia would have revealed what German Zeppelins were actually named after (if they had names at all).

And best of all: Although the story focuses on the British, supposedly, it is the Americans who provide the key actions necessary for victory. So what old, worn out tropes do we find:

All Germans are Nazis? Check!

Everything sounds more evil in German? Check!

America saves the day? Check!

Vandals of Venus is not badly written. In fact, it is a fun read but it is totally predictable as soon as the villain is introduced, right down to the humiliating defeat he will eventually suffer. It shows a laziness or an unwillingness on part of the author to get a few basic facts straight. •

REVIEWS «

THREE MUSKETEERS

BY HILDE HEYVAERT

LET ME START BY SAYING THAT THIS VERSION OF *THE Three Musketeers* may very well be the definitive clockpunk movie.

Those who saw the trailer already knew that this was no canon Dumas movie version of the classic tales. The airships, explosions and battle scenes gave that away pretty clearly.

Now we all know that when Hollywood gets involved it's either going to suck so badly you wish you could get your time and money back or it's going to be epic. Thankfully this movie is the latter, and lo and behold, this retelling of Dumas' story rocks the airship like you wouldn't believe.

The story starts with a little background on exactly what the deal is between our well known trio of Porthos, Aramis and Athos, Milady De Winter and Buckingham. I won't go into too much detail as I don't want to spoil it for anyone. Let me just say: expect some epic scenes.

We then focus on young D'Artagnan, traveling to Paris to become a musketeer, a part which remains in spirit quite loyal to the original story. And of course, just like in the story, he ends up with our three heroes, goes off to save the day and queen and country. It's just that how they do it involves finicky royals (the King), lots of plotting on Richelieu's side and well, airships.

Visually it is very well done. At some points it is quite obvious that the surroundings are graphics that have been done with computer animation but I think that in the 3D version (I saw it in 2D) that won't be such so noticeable. The costumes are exquisite. They aren't historically accurate but they are definitely historically inspired and very easy on the eyes.

The actors are all playing their parts rather perfectly and I'm happy to see them return for the sequel hinted at right at the end of this movie. It has even *more* airships.

I know that a lot of people will frown on the added airships and it is a fact that everything has been tweaked to accommodate them, but it doesn't matter, because it just works so well.

The one downside is that you probably should have read the book to really follow the plot. Without prior knowledge of the story and setting, some of the events may seem a bit random and confusing.

If you love the clockpunk and swashbuckling genres then this is definitely your thing though. If you're a literary purist then stay away from this as far as possible because chances are you'll hate it.

In any case, it's at least a genre movie that you can go see with the kids, so that's an added bonus. •



REVIEW «

BY BERT VAN DEN WYNGAERT

I WANT THE DURATION OF THE MOVIE BACK because it was an utter and total waste of my time and the money I paid for the ticket.

I choose the 2D option and I'm glad for it, for I feel that the airships would be even more obnoxious bursting out of the screen in 3D.

The only thing I actually liked about this movie was that it's visually pleasing but other than that, it makes me truly depressed.

The plot is nonexistent and probably only those that have read the book will find it at least remotely recognizable. The original story, however, has mainly been brutally raped Hollywood style to make way for, yes indeed: airships. I'm pretty sure Alexandre Dumas is twisting and turning like mad in his grave.

I could have lived with the entire blockbuster style format of this movie if they had at least worked out a proper plot. If they had at least made it slightly more realistic. But no, they went all out with unrealistic explosions, airships that in reality wouldn't fly no matter how hard you tried, and characters that get on your nerves. It's not that the actors didn't do a fine job, it's just that the writers did a really bad job at putting them together. This entire movie does nothing but scream "we have put airships in *The Three Musketeers*, see how awesome we are!" And frankly it has nothing else going for it at all.

I know I won't be seeing a sequel and I wouldn't recommend anyone seeing this one either. •

Penny Dreadful

When the *Venture* did land in far-off Cathay,
Intent to smuggle good, fine silk and wool,
Her gasbags did vent to the heat of the day
When I'd play the innocent fool
to a girl called Penny Dreadful

I set off alone for Dmitri of Russia,
My contact in the Old Market Square,
When I spied a young lass struggling in vain
'Gainst many a burly corsair...
a lass named Penny Dreadful

My raygun, it verily flew from my hip
And atomised the nearest dark foeman.
His comrades dispersed as he fell to the earth,
And her grin was a small and quiet omen.
Said her name was Penny Dreadful

To the *Foolhardy Venture* we flew in our haste,
And she flew up to the sky!
Leaving our cargo, our trip gone to waste
As the *Venture* made speed and did fly,
for the sake of Penny Dreadful

A beautiful girl with raven dark hair,
And a wit that was sharp as a blade,
With eyes like the sky and a pout and a word,
My bunk she also hers made.
Oh, beautiful Penny Dreadful

A fortnight aloft found us facing French guns!
Three frigates with calm steady aim!
Hailed, boarded with papers to search and to seize,
The made a legitimate claim
for alias: "Penny Dreadful"

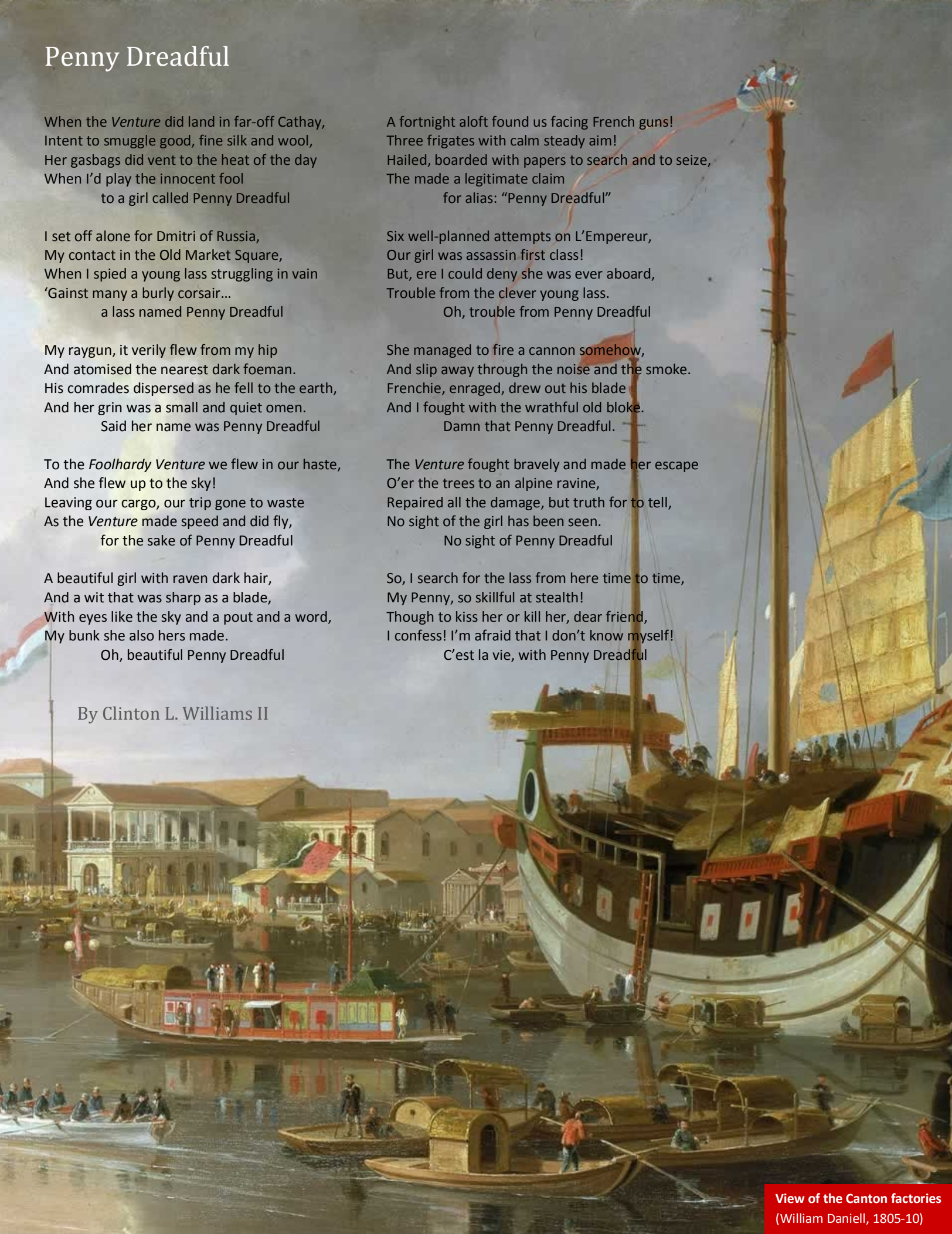
Six well-planned attempts on L'Empereur,
Our girl was assassin first class!
But, ere I could deny she was ever aboard,
Trouble from the clever young lass.
Oh, trouble from Penny Dreadful

She managed to fire a cannon somehow,
And slip away through the noise and the smoke.
Frenchie, enraged, drew out his blade
And I fought with the wrathful old bloke.
Damn that Penny Dreadful.

The *Venture* fought bravely and made her escape
O'er the trees to an alpine ravine,
Repaired all the damage, but truth for to tell,
No sight of the girl has been seen.
No sight of Penny Dreadful

So, I search for the lass from here time to time,
My Penny, so skillful at stealth!
Though to kiss her or kill her, dear friend,
I confess! I'm afraid that I don't know myself!
C'est la vie, with Penny Dreadful

By Clinton L. Williams II



INTERVIEW «

ALLEGRA HAWKSMOOR

BY NICK OTTENS

Allegra Hawksmoor was chief editor of *SteamPunk Magazine* between 2009 and 2011. She talked with the *Gatehouse Gazette* about her time at the helm of one of steampunk's premier magazines, the politics of steampunk and her future projects.



You recently resigned as editor of SteamPunk Magazine. Can you tell us why?

Oh, I've not resigned! I've been involved in *SteamPunk Magazine* for about three years now. It's been a wonderful and life changing experience, but running a magazine takes up an awful *lot* of your time.

In February this year, I was made redundant from the job that was paying the bills while I was working on *SPM*, and made the decision to go into business for myself making upcycled steampunk clothing. I knew there was never going to be enough time for me to fit both those things in my life, but fortunately Magpie Killjoy (who edited the magazine before me) was interested in coming back on board. So, I handed the role of editor-in-chief back to him. I'm still going to be contributing, and in the future I may end up editing another couple of issues. It's just a matter of there not being enough hours in the day!

How did you become involved in SteamPunk Magazine and what made you accept the position of chief editor in the first place?

This is a fun little story, actually. I was researching steampunk for a story I was working on (this would have been in 2007, I think) as part of a *Dr Who* fanzine I was working on. I ended up reading through some

issues of *SteamPunk Magazine*, and emailed Magpie after I fell in love with his Yena of Angeline stories. At the time, I had no idea that Magpie was editing the magazine, but I soon found out, and after a few weeks of chatting he told me that he was planning on winding the magazine up. Anyone that knows me will tell you that I have a tendency to jump in with both feet before I start worrying about whether I can swim or not—I asked Magpie if he'd consider letting me edit the magazine for a while, and the rest is history!

What was your vision for SteamPunk Magazine while you were editor? What role did you want it to play in the steampunk community?

I'm not sure I had a vision when I took over. I knew almost nothing about running a magazine, let alone about things like editing, commissioning artwork, printing, promoting and layout. I had to learn on my feet, and mostly I just made it up as I went along. I knew I wanted to stay loyal to the political voice that *SteamPunk Magazine* has always had, but I was even newer to anarchism and activism than I was to steampunk or editing magazines.

However, I did know a little bit about writing. I've been writing all of my life, so I guess if I had any kind of "vision" for the magazine it was to publish and nurture really, really

good fiction. And I'm certainly happy with how that one turned out. Over my tenure as editor, I published some stories that I'm genuinely proud of. Leah Dearborn's "The Useless Pistol" (which we published in issue #6) is the one that really sticks out for me. I think I'll be happy about the fact that I helped bring that one out into the world for the rest of my life.

Promoting really great music is a very close second to that. It was wonderful to be able to help out some really excellent bands like Sunday Driver and The Men That Will Not Be Blamed For Nothing. Getting to know The Men has been especially good fun, not to mention having a hand in their bringing out the first album with a partial wax cylinder release in over a hundred years!

SteamPunk Magazine also had a political mission though—"putting the punk back in steampunk." How did you try to do that?

It was an incredibly personal process for me. When I first started out, I was only just starting to dip my toes in the waters of punk and politics. I had to go through the whole process of understanding my own privilege that we all have to confront when you start dealing with concepts like racism and ableism. I'd definitely identify myself as an anarchist, environmentalist and an anticapitalist, but my own personal

politics are far more focused on the social systems of oppression that we see in the world around us.

I fell into feminism pretty quickly, but found antiracism far more difficult to get my head around. Fortunately, I had fantastic people like Jaymee Goh and Ay-leen the Peacemaker around me who were hugely patient and understanding of my ignorance, and really helped me learn about the ways in which racism still affects pretty much every aspect of the world we live in today—including steampunk. I pretty much begged Jaymee and Ay-leen to write for the magazine, as well as trying to commission pieces on sexism and other forms of discrimination. I guess if I had a political influence over the magazine, that would be it.

How did you discover steampunk and why did you like it?

I was looking into steampunk as part of an alt-future story for the *Dr Who* fanzine *YANA* that I was co-running at the time. At some point in my discussions with my partner (the other writer on the project), we started talking about Victorian retrofuturism. I started off by looking at Promus-Kaa's awesome steampunk *Dr Who* drawings, then moved into reading more about steampunk generally. That's when I discovered *Steampunk Magazine*. It really shaped my whole perception of what steampunk was about.

I loved the activist ethic that the magazine had. The focus on making and reusing, on forming a more tangible and tactile relationship with technology, and of using the past to help imagine a better future. I've always been absolutely fascinated by the Regency, and in particular by the Romanticism movement, so everything just started to slot together for me at that point.

Now, a few years down line, I'm well on my way to developing "dreampunk," which is kind of a Regency-inspired steampunk genre.

Do you believe that your views of

steampunk conform to the mainstream of the fandom?

No, I don't think they do. But it's difficult to tell, isn't it? Like I say, I started out through *Steampunk Magazine*, so that's what steampunk was for me. Having said that, it was all still new and fascinating to me. And so I made my fair share of weird and wonderful steampunk costumes, I went to a few Abney Park gigs, put cogs on stuff and had a really great time with all of that, but it wasn't ever going to be enough to really sustain my interest in it long term. There always has to be something deeper for me. All the forms of art that I enjoy reflect something about the world that we're living in, and steampunk was never going to be an exception.

But it's still very much the case that whenever I go to steampunk events, I end up meeting people who feel the same way that I do, and also lot of people who aren't political but are into their making and reusing and can do some things with a spanner and a soldering iron that is completely beyond my abilities. I'm always just totally in awe of them.

I try my best not to generalize what the "mainstream" of anything is, anyway. Like I say, people are always surprising me.

Don't you worry that maintaining too broad a definition of what steampunk is can lead to it becoming almost indistinguishable from other alternative styles? If we hesitate to say, "this isn't steampunk," don't we risk losing sight of what steampunk is?

I think people worry far too much about steampunk losing its focus. That always seems to lead into that whole "This is/isn't steampunk" argument which isn't only entirely futile (it's not like we have some kind of sacred text that we can refer to for divine guidance on the matter) but is actually really damaging to the spirit of the community. It just ends up with people being excluded. And I'm not sure that any subculture or style

ever self consciously defines itself anyway.

There will always be a sort of central "essence" of a subculture (usually, it'll be a type of music or a clothing style that most of the community feels drawn to) but then there are always people on the fringes that do things a little differently. I think that's how it should be. I would much rather invite everybody into steampunk with open arms and risk the movement disintegrating than start standing at the door and telling people that they can't come in because they're "Not doing it right." If steampunk is strong and vibrant enough as a movement (or a community, or a style, or

I think steampunk is slowly becoming part of something far larger that's happening in the rest of Western society

whatever it is) then it'll survive no matter what.

Both of us were involved in organizing the Great Steampunk Debate last year where we saw some pretty big differences between steampunk enthusiasts in terms of politics and culture. Do you think these differences are relevant? Can they be reconciled in the community?

You know, I went into the Great Steampunk Debate sort of naively believing that if everyone just sat down and talked about everything, then we'd realize that we had more in common than what divided us. A lot of people who knew much better than me were already starting to tell me that the whole thing was a really bad idea, and on balance, I think they were right and I should have listened to them. I was completely shocked by how ferocious the arguments got. How quickly it got out of control.



I'm not going to say that our differences can't be reconciled. Ultimately, I think that everyone you meet is more likely to be a good person than they're likely to be an asshole, and that the first step in ironing out any differences you might have is to talk to them and keep an open mind. Having said that, now I'd probably also admit that those conversations work best on a one-to-one basis. When you get a lot of people involved in something like that, it tends to become less of a discussion and more of a shouting match.

How do you see the future of steampunk and SteamPunk Magazine's role in it?

I dunno. I try pretty hard not to think about things like the "future," it's all

just conjecture and guesswork. The best thing to do is just sit back and see where you end up. I do worry about steampunk losing that political edge—the part of it that's about reuse, building, upcycling and actually using the past to change the future.

But, that's just because it's the side of steampunk that I love. A lot of people would be equally devastated if steampunk became an entirely political entity and lost all of the fun and dressing up, because that's what they're into. I guess if I have any hopes for the future of steampunk it's that it keeps being a place where the cosplayers can turn up and have a beer with the punks and anarchists. I think that the warmth and openness of the community is the most important thing we have at the moment, and I hope that *SteamPunk Magazine's* place is in helping to maintain that balance.

Tell us about your current projects.

I'm one of those people that always has about a hundred different things going on. At the moment, I'm involved in a few little projects with some friends, and I'm working on a hardboiled *noir*-style cyberpunk novel about a future gone awry (like they tend to do in cyberpunk). But most of my creative energy is going into my new business: Haunted Summer. The basic idea is to keep a bunch of clothing out of landfill by upcycling and embroidering it with cool steampunky (and dreampunk!) things.

The period of history I love the most has always been the Romantic Age, so I'm doing a lot of embroideries of early hot air balloons, the very first steam engines, things like that. Now, if only I could find a way to make an embroidery of Herschel's telescopes look as cool as it does in my head...

Is steampunk popular enough, do you think, for entrepreneurial genre fanatics to cater to specifically?

Heh. You shouldn't ask me questions like that! I'm more or less the polar opposite of the definition of "entrepreneurial." I think that there are definitely businesses out there that cater specifically to the steampunk community. It's easier in the US than it is here in the UK, just because the steampunk scene is so much bigger over there. But I don't think it's as clean cut as deciding whether to cater "specifically" to the steampunk scene or not. More and more now, "mainstream" fashions and attitudes are being influenced by period cuts and shapes and by Victoriana. And things like reuse and upcycling are getting *huge*.

I think steampunk is slowly becoming part of something far larger than that's happening in the rest of Western society, which has the handy side effect that steampunky-inspired products are slowly gathering a much wider appeal.

Visit hauntedsummer.etsy.com to learn more about Allegra's new business.

Victoria Harbor, Hong Kong in the 1860s



RAILWAYS AND WAR

BY LORENZO DAVIA

“Build no more fortresses,
build railways”

—General von Moltke

PROBABLY THERE IS NOTHING more steampunk than the locomotive—besides the airship, of course. Railways have always represented movement, freedom, human genius, but after their introduction they soon became infected by the germ of war and started serving destructive purposes. This seems to be the sad destiny of all human inventions, from the ancient chariots to the modern airplanes.

1825, when the line between Darlington and Stockton opened, is generally considered the start of the Railroad Age. Within decades, all major powers had railways running to serve their burgeoning industrial bases. It took only a few more years before nations recognized the strategic possibilities of the train.

Since the dawn of man, soldier, weapons and food were carried to the battlefield by animals, but animals had to eat too: it has been calculated that the food needed for animals in an army could be more than half of the total food carried. In addition, all the war strategies depended on the movement speed of the troops.

Railways changed the ancient pattern. Troops and supplies could be delivered in short time and in higher amount where needed, providing an advantage on the enemy which had to rely on its animals. Moreover, the defeated party had better opportunities of leaving the battlefield and rearrange elsewhere.

Germany was the first nation which planned an extensive system of strategic railway transport designed to move troops from the military centers to the borders. The plan, proposed in 1842 by General Helmuth von Moltke, covered all German and Prussian territory, with branches reaching Turkey and South West Africa, the next planned

objectives of Germany colonialism.

In the following years, the European side of their railway system was realized with accommodations, depots and other infrastructures needed to support a moving army, while the Asian and African branches were lost by Germany in colonial wars.

The German railway system helped Prussia win two wars in the nineteenth century: the Austro-Prussian War (1866) and the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). Both France and Austria were not prepared to move many troops and supplies along their railway systems: cars accumulated at railheads, troops were gathered but without supplies and food, and other similar problems derived from scarce coordination between railway companies and the armies led both nations not to be ready when wars started.

However, the first war in which the railway had a decisive role to play was the American Civil War (1861-1865). In fact, it is considered the first modern war for the level of technology used in both weaponry (as improved artillery, iron ships, submarines) and logistics (as the tactical use of railways).

In 1860, there were railway tracks for thirty thousand miles, two thirds of which in Northern states. The South had a poorly connected railway system and was not able to repair or rebuild damaged tracks or locomotives as efficiently as the North. The industrial might of the Union states, of which railways were probably the most notable sign, is generally accepted as a major factor in their victory.

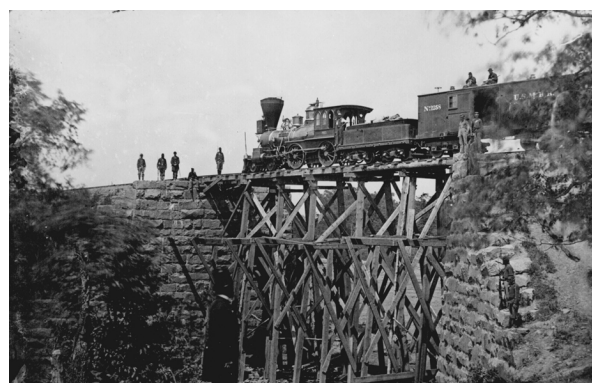
During the First World War, trains were regularly used for transporting men and supplies to the battlefield but there was parity

for the first time between the fighting parties. When the war started, all troops were in positions, ready for the massacre.

The trench war was a static war which consumed great amounts of resources. In order to supply the front, trench railways were developed, easy to build and easy to run. Tracks were prefabricated and assembled on site. Locomotives were light and steam powered although gasoline locomotives were used in visual range of the front, as steam and smoke made them otherwise visible targets for enemy artillery.

Being relevant for military operations, railways became naturally object of attacks during wars. This strategy was first used during the American Civil War by both sides, but probably during World War I, we can find the most interesting example in Lawrence of Arabia. He led Arab tribes in a war against the Turks in the Levant. As the tribes would surely have lost in a real battle, Lawrence attacked the Hejaz Railway, the only line connecting Arabia and Turkey.

Attacking railway stations and damaging the tracks in critical places like bridges, they limited Turkish troop movements, preventing them, for example, from assembling troops against the British Army in Egypt or from supplying outposts which had to surrender to the Arabs under siege. •



The engine "Firefly" on a trestle of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad

Armored trains had protection usually made of steel plates, cement or sandbags and were armed with machine guns or light artillery. They had two locomotives, to grant quick movement in both directions, and the locomotives were anticipated by a void expendable car used to detonate mines.

The first armored trains were used during the American Civil War to patrol railways against saboteurs but extensive use

was made of them during the Russia Civil War (1917-1922) when many trains were used to patrol the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Railway guns weren't used extensively until World War I. They were easy to move and had great firepower but their accuracy was limited. Railway guns were used by the Germans to bombard Allied trenches and by the Italian to patrol the Adriatic coast against Austrians submarines.



Armored train during the Chinese Civil War (*Life*, February 1947)

THE STEAMPUNK WARDROBE

BY HILDE HEYVAERT

STEAMPUNK AND DIESELPUNK HAVE ALWAYS been synonymous to adventure for a lot of people. Exploring things ranging from contemporary events and places to history and hidden tombs in some exotic jungle. Whether in real life or as a made up persona with their own world. Twist and turn as you like, exploration is a big part of both movements and of course one must dress for the occasion.

Explorers should dress comfortably no matter what class of society they hail from. Garments are easy to move in and shoes are comfortable. There's no use going out on a daring exploration if you can't move properly due to overly constrictive clothing or suffer sore feet after half an hour after all. High heels may look pretty ladies but unless you're portraying an aristocrat that isn't doing any walking during her exploring, you may want to reconsider that type of footwear.

While this is something to keep in mind whatever type or class of person you wish to portray,

it is, just like with pretty much every other steampunk style, important to get a firm grasp on who exactly you wish to portray and how historically accurate you want your outfit to be so you know what to go for.

If you're going for proper historical dress, of course researching the era and outfits from those times are vital. If you're just looking at history for inspiration, it isn't a bad plan to look at historical images and text on the subject either. Even if you're not going for historical accuracy, it's always good to know what your basis is and you may get some really good inspiration from the past.

Even on a budget this is doable. You can find a lot of good base pieces in high street stores as an alternative to DIY. Even if you wish to portray

someone from the aristocracy or the upper class you will likely find a nice blouse made from materials to resemble e.g. silks. Leather bags and good, handsome boots are all the rage this season and chains like H&M offer affordable alternatives to big brand names with bigger price tags than popular shops catering to a tighter budget.

As far as accessories go you'll need to think about what you would need if you would really go exploring: a good bag, possibly some kind of utility belt for extra and super handy storage. A weapon of some kind to ward off hostile natives and that pesky competition (treasure hunting and mapping the world isn't without dangers), a hat to protect you from the elements as well as sunglasses or goggles. Other good accessories are scarves, belts, gun holsters and helmets. And of course a tie or cravat for the gentlefolk to distinguish themselves from the more roguish characters out there. •



Katharine Hepburn on location in the Congo jungle for filming of *The African Queen* (Life, 1951)



LOCAL STEAMPUNK « VIENNA

BY MARCUS RAUCHFUß

WITH STEAMPUNK VIENNA PUB MOOT

THE AUSTRIAN STEAMPUNK SCENE IS CENTERED in the capital of Vienna. The core is made up of some two dozen enthusiasts with about 170 people showing a general interest in steampunk.

So far, there are no specific steampunk clubs but steampunks mix well with the local Goth scene. There are also hardly any bands, although the project Aidenn Queen (based in Innsbruck) is to my knowledge Austria's first steampunk music project.

Vienna itself has a lot to offer the steampunk enthusiast. Apart from being the former capital of one of those empires remembered in a more romantic way and more for Empress Sissy and Waltz than colonialist ambitions, its architecture alone is worth a visit.

The area around the *Rechte Wienzeile* and *Linke Wienzeile* features some of the most beautiful Art Deco and Art Nouveau buildings in the world.

For those among us favoring the military steampunk style, the *Heeresgeschichtliche Museum* ("Army History Museum") is well worth a visit. It claims to be the largest and oldest of its kind in the world and is located in Vienna's old arsenal.

Among other things, it features the largest collection of bronze cannons in the world and you are bound to learn a lot during your visit. The museum focuses, quite understandably, on Austria's military history between the sixteenth century and 1945 and there is a lot you might not know because most of military history regarding German speaking countries focuses heavily on Prussia, the German Empire and the Third Reich. See for yourselves and be amazed.

There is more to Vienna. Even if you not only focus on the tourist destination, the

Austrian capital as a whole is a city to warm a steampunk's soul.

The traditional horse carriages of Vienna, the *Fiaker*, are still in operation in the historic city center, and worth the ride, if you are willing to pay the fare.

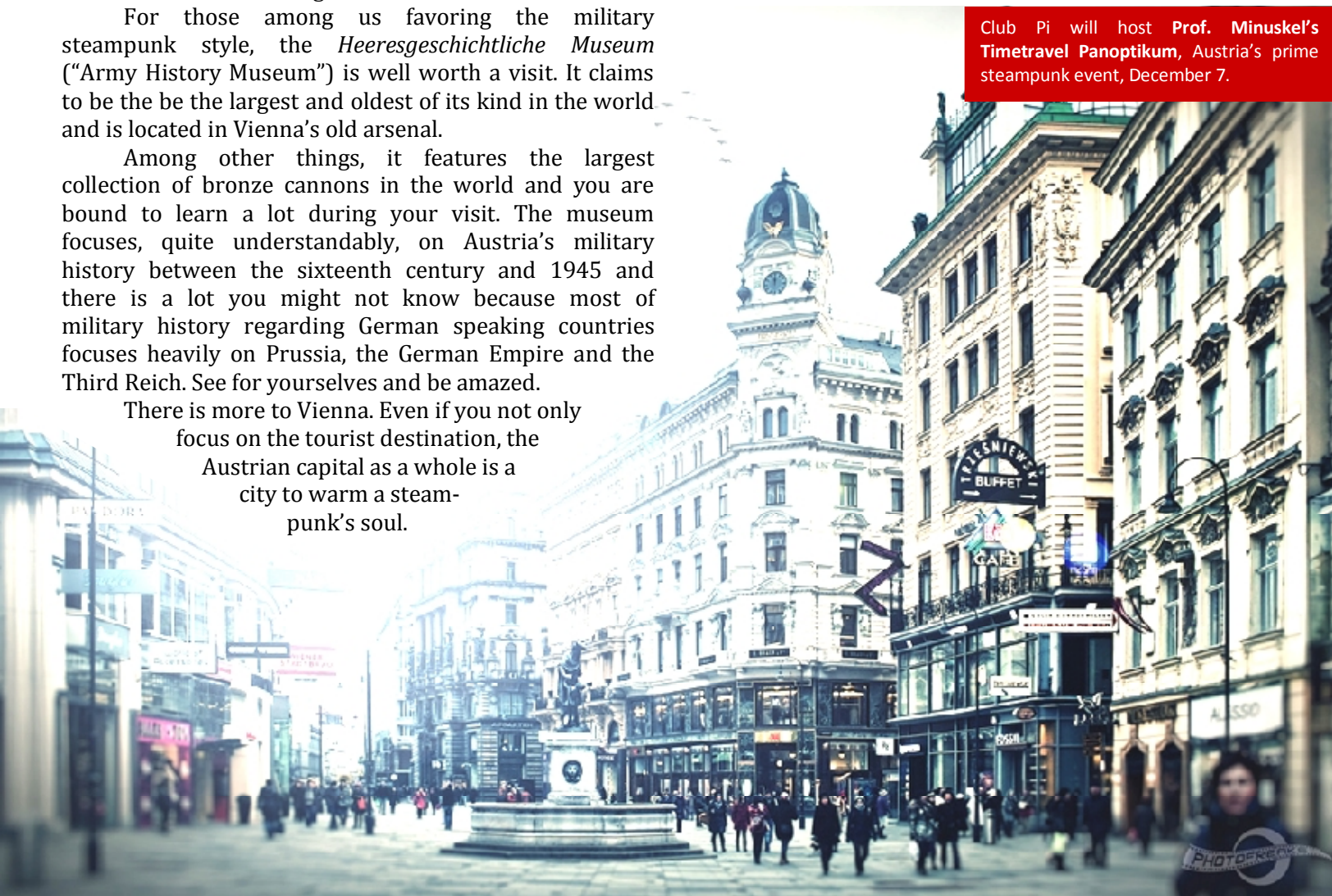
If you do not want to hire a *Fiaker*, there is another option to get about in style: The vintage trams, but these, too, only operate in central Vienna, more correctly the *Erste Bezirk* (First Department) or *Innere Stadt*, which is also the part of the city most heavily frequented by tourists.

The traditional Viennese coffee houses are perfect places for a steampunks to take a break after walking through the city for several hours. More often than not, those coffee houses retain their traditional décor. It just takes a little leap of imagination and you are back in the late 1800s, an experience no steampunk should miss.

Coming back to the *Wienzeile*: If you get the chance, visit the *Naschmarkt*. It is the most popular market in Vienna. You can get foods from every corner of the world here. Also, the car park at subway station *Kettenbrückengasse* west of the *Naschmarkt* is home to Vienna's biggest flea market every Saturday. If you found nothing interesting at the *Naschmarkt*, the flea market surely has something to offer.

For a night out, there are no special steampunk clubs but steampunks are welcome guests in the local Metal and Goth clubs and bars, most notably Club Pi. •

Club Pi will host Prof. Minuskel's Timetravel Panoptikum, Austria's prime steampunk event, December 7.





REVOLUTION IN THE DESERT

BY BRIAN NASLUND

THE STRANGER CAME INTO BISBEE AT MIDNIGHT. He was riding an exhausted Appaloosa that died ten seconds after being tethered to the front of the hotel. The man ignored his mount's demise. He unclipped his canvas pack from the sweat-lathered corpse, slung it over one shoulder, and walked inside. Richard saw all of this from his table in the back corner of the room. He knew the stranger had come for him.

The man wore a tan, double-breasted leather jacket that was sun bleached and crusted from the hard Arizona sun. It was the type of coat the cavalry used during the Great War. Black hair dropped from beneath his wide-brimmed hat in a mess of greasy curls. He had a Schofield no. 3 revolver strapped high on his hip, the way soldiers wear them. Richard could tell he'd used the gun on men before. There was something about the way a killer carried himself, tight in the shoulders and loose in the fingers, ready for anything.

Without setting his bag down, which was full of something large and heavy, the stranger went to the bar, demolished four shots of whiskey, and crossed the room to Richard's table.

"Are you the man with the steam buggy?" His accent betrayed his ragged clothing and sun-baked skin. He was from the north.

Richard wanted to pretend he wasn't that man, because the stranger in front of him smelled like whiskey and death. He would bring trouble, men like him always do. But Richard made his living shuttling dangerous men across the Arizona desert. High prices and no questions, that was his business model. And business had been slow the past few months.

"I am," Richard said, taking a sip from his own glass of whiskey. "Name's Richard Barkman."

The stranger dropped his bag with a heavy thud on the cheap wooden floor of the saloon and took the empty chair across from Richard. He pulled a map from an inner pocket on his jacket and spread it across the table, weighing down either end with Richard's whiskey glass and bottle.

The map was a custom drawing of southeast Arizona, complete with all the rail lines and known Apache encampments from Tucson to Mexico. Richard had never seen anything like it. It must have cost a pretty penny.

"Can you get me to this point," the man jabbed his finger into a rail track outside Tucson, "by ten o'clock tomorrow morning?"

Richard took a minute to consider the distance. It looked to be a little over one hundred miles, and through rough desert terrain. It would have been a two day ride by horse with a good chance of both horse and rider winding up dead, or with the rider scalped by Apache and the horse stolen. In Richard's steam buggy the journey would only take a few hours. No risk of an Apache ambush, either. The buggy was the fastest moving vehicle within six hundred miles. Horse, train, or otherwise. An airship could outrun him, but they didn't frequent Bisbee.

"If we leave at dawn and drive at full-tilt, we should make it there by ten, long as the buggy doesn't break down," Richard said, scratching his beard as he talked, trying to seem unsure. He did not want the man in his buggy.

"I need a yes or a no."

"There's no way to be sure about something like this."

"Will five thousand dollars make you sure?" The man said it so casually that Richard did not take him seriously.

"For five grand, I can get you from here to San Francisco by ten o'clock," Richard said, pulling back from the table and taking another pull from his whiskey. The map curled over without the weight, and the man quickly tucked it away.

"Good," he said, standing up. He pulled a wad of cash from his jacket and dropped it on the table. It was more money than Richard had ever seen at one time. He glanced around to make sure nobody was watching and found the dim saloon empty except for the bartender, who was turned the other way and rinsing glasses.

"That's two thousand. You get the other three when we get to that spot on the tracks. Tell no one where we're going, or the deal is off and I'll kill you. Wake up the mechanic in this town and use some of that money to make sure the buggy is ready. We leave at dawn." The man spoke clearly and methodically, as if death threats were a regular part of conversation. He picked up his bag and turned to leave.

"What's your name?" Richard asked, trying to hide the fear in his voice. The man stopped but did not turn around.

"Call me Jackson," he said.

Lord Reginald Cornbriar despised trains. They were loud, dirty, and filled with commoners. Even in this one, which had been cleared out for his journey, he could smell the traces of their cheap coats and sweating bodies. The first class car was a disgrace. His lunch had been more or less inedible, tea time nonexistent, and the glass of champagne he'd ordered for dinner was one-quarter charcoal soot.

As the night thickened beyond his side window, Cornbriar considered the past few weeks. The Orient had been a disaster. What should have been a simple pick-up had turned into an all out bloodbath in the streets of Beijing. Who would have thought the Chinamen would put up such a fight over something they barely understood? Of course, greed was a powerful motivator, Cornbriar understood that better than most.

The steam ship across the Pacific was no better than the massacre in Beijing. Cornbriar's ship had been victim constant attacks by the Chinese navy, one of which forced him to actually use to item he'd been sent to retrieve—five Chinese cruisers left stranded on the Pacific, their steam engines mashed into metallic balls. The Queen would not be happy when she heard about that little detail. They were floating evidence of the power England now held. Perhaps there would be some way to leave it out of his report.

Once they arrived in San Francisco, Cornbriar had been immediately shuffled on to the train of which he was presently a passenger. He wondered why the Colonies hadn't bothered to send an airship for him. He'd have been in New York by now, and that much closer to England, instead of careening through the middle of the god-forsaken desert. Of course, the train was packed full of his majesty's royal bodyguards, all of them armed to the teeth, but they would hardly have been necessary if he'd been able to simply fly over the danger in the first place.

Did the Colonies not know the value of what he carried? Probably not, Cornbriar decided, settling himself back into his cushioned seat. Because if they did know, they would have definitely sent an airship to make sure there wasn't any trouble. They're all peasants, Cornbriar thought, suited for farming and internal bickering, not clandestine operations and intrigue.

Richard's buggy broke around eight in the morning, just as the sun was becoming an issue. They'd been making good time until a blown O-ring caused one of the pistons to stick, overheating the engine in a matter of minutes.

At first, Jackson waited in the passenger seat without saying anything as Richard attempted to repair the problem. After Richard's struggle dragged on for a few minutes, Jackson stepped out of the buggy, deftly drew his Schofield from its holster, and pointed it at Richard's face.

"You have one more minute to get this buggy running again," Jackson said, using the same tone with which he might ask someone to pass the butter at dinner.

Richard panicked for a moment, but did not allow it to get the better of him. Men had pointed guns at him before, and he had learned that losing composure never helped the situation. He took a deep breath, focused, and managed to fit the new O-ring into place. They both got back into the buggy and continued in silence, but Richard

noticed that Jackson had not re-holstered his pistol. It was still in his hand, cocked and pointed at Richard's belly. He realized that if the man was prepared to shoot him in the middle of the desert over a blown O-ring, he was probably prepared to shoot him over anything.

Five thousand dollars being one of them.

As Richard brought the buggy back up to full speed, expertly shifting gears and dodging rock outcroppings, he tried to think of ways out of the mess he'd gotten himself into. He figured he could try crashing the buggy, and hope to come out on top—maybe, with some luck, killing Jackson in the process—but then he'd be stuck in the middle of the desert with a wrecked buggy. He might not be killed by Jackson and his Schofield, but he would certainly wind up dead, either by Apache or the rays of the sun. His only chance was to take Jackson to the train tracks and look for a chance to escape in the buggy when they got there.

Jackson checked his map periodically, and must have realized they were making good time and would arrive at the tracks ahead of schedule because he seemed to relax, although he kept his gun drawn.

"How'd you come to own such a rare machine?" Jackson asked.

Richard was taken off guard. Jackson had, up to that point, shown no interest in anything except arriving at the train tracks on time. Richard generally kept the origins of his buggy a secret, but figured if there was a time for honesty, this was it.

"My father was a steam engineer for the Southern Colonies. He designed turbines and generators mostly, but built this prototype dune-buggy as a side-project. The wheels and shock absorbers were the hardest part. Normal wheels would sink or melt in these conditions."

"How come he isn't the one driving it?"

"He was killed in the fire bombings of Memphis, at the end of the Great War."

Jackson didn't respond for a few seconds, taking some time to scan the golden and disant horizon to his right. "A lot of people died in those bombings," he said finally. "The Northern Colonies killed an entire company of their own men when they saw the Southy soldiers breaking through the lines. In retrospect it was a decision that probably won the war, but I remember feeling otherwise at the time."

"You were at the Memphis firebombing?"

"I was," Jackson said, but didn't elaborate. "Anyway, if you're father died in Memphis, how'd you end up in Bisbee?"

"The buggy was designed for desert transportation. My father figured they could be used to move supplies from Texas up to the front lines, if it came to that. The buggy wasn't much use in the Tennessee Mountains. I came out here after the Unification, figured I could make a buck or two shuttling people to California who didn't want to use the trains. Still plenty of folks that don't like

the Northern Government telling them what they can and can't do."

"Outlaws, you mean."

"You tell me," Richard responded. "Most of them dress like you."

Richard wasn't sure, but he thought he saw Jackson smile.

Cornbriar awoke from a nightmare covered in sweat and crunched into side of the train. He dreamed he'd been captured in Beijing and taken to an underground torture chamber to be tested on like a guinea pig.

"Bloody hell," he murmured. The bodyguard standing in the aisle looked down on him with manufactured concern. These men were soldiers, unaccustomed to waiting on the upper classes.

"May I get you anything, your Lordship?" he asked. There were five bodyguards in his car alone, dozens more spread throughout the train, which had been emptied of civilians for the journey. They all dressed in the same dark overcoat, bowler hat, and cheap suit—each of them carrying a Winchester rifle and pair of Peacemaker pistols. Fools, Cornbriar thought. It was just like England to outfit their men with the latest and the best of an antiquated type of weapon. He would change all of that. Steam armaments were the future. If they only knew how their pitiful weapons compared to the device he carried.

"Just some tea, if you can find a decent cup in this wretched metal tube," Cornbriar responded without looking at the guard, who grunted in acknowledgement and disappeared down the aisle, moving towards the dining car.

After the guard was gone, Cornbriar sat up in his seat and smoothed his pants and jacket. He wondered where they were. Although, if he knew the name it wouldn't have made much of a difference. His geographical knowledge of the colonies was mediocre at best. Plus they were always fighting wars between each other; wars of annexation and then wars of unification. The Great War seemed to have settled them down for a while, but Cornbriar knew that wouldn't last long. The division between them was ingrained in the bones of their history like syphilis.

North versus South. Who honestly gave a damn? Their bickering allowed England to continue exerting control upon them, however. That was something.

As he waited for his tea, Cornbriar reached into his pocket and idly fingered the device he'd retrieved from China. Of course, they'd made a big show of keeping a safe in the rear car under close guard and heavy lock, all smoke and mirrors, though. Not even the guards knew the actual cargo was the size of a pocket watch and in his pocket.

So much power in so small an item. Truly remarkable, he thought. The world was going to change,

and the catalyst was in the palm of his hand. In two months, he'd be able to replicate the device a hundred times over. Europe would fall beneath England's power within months.

Jackson saw they had arrived first, and motioned with his left hand to ease back on the throttle.

"Pull behind that outcropping," he said.

Richard obeyed, guiding the buggy to the base of a large rock protruding from the earth then turning off the engine. The pistons continued to tick and sputter as steam rose lightly from the rear exhaust tubes. Jackson stepped out of the buggy, showing no signs of stiffness from the long drive, and checked his watch.

"Ten minutes," he said to himself. He moved to the rear of the buggy and pulled his pack from the luggage compartment. Richard hadn't asked what was in the bag—another part of his business model—so he looked on with interested as Jackson opened it.

Jackson knelt down and unclipped the multiple straps of the bag with expert efficiency; it was clearly a process he'd completed many times before. When the clips had been undone, he shucked the canvas down and Richard finally got a look at what was inside.

A massive steam cannon.

Richard had heard of them before, his father had tinkered with the idea for years. This one had a large-bore barrel with the stock built into the bottom so that the canon could be held on top of a man's shoulder.

Jackson laid the canon down on the canvas sack and pulled out several steel-mesh tubes and a set of tools. He used the tools to attach the tubes to sockets located on either end of the long barrel.

"I need you to remove the steam-cache from your buggy and bring it to me," Jackson said, already on his feet and moving to the top of the outcropping.

Richard nodded and went back to the buggy. Realizing this may be his last chance to escape, he casually positioned himself next to the driver's seat, pretending to begin removing the steam-cache, and then looked up at Jackson.

He was looking down on him from the outcropping, the massive gun in one hand, pointed to the sky, and the Schofield no. 3 pointed at Richard.

"What are you waiting for?" Jackson asked.

Defeated, Richard unhooked the steam-cache, rendering the buggy immobile until it was reattached and synchronized with the engine, a process that took two full minutes. He wasn't going anywhere unless Jackson allowed it.

He brought the steam-cache to the top of the rock and passed it to Jackson, who set it down into a nook and attached both tubes to the ports meant for his buggy's engine. Richard looked out over the basin in front of him and saw the train tracks about a hundred yards away from their position. In the distance, the wisp of an

approaching train's exhaust puffed steadily into the sky.

Jackson finished attaching all of the tubes, and then opened the steam-cache ports, the dials on the side of the canon jumped to attention.

"I thought you were trying to hop a train to San Francisco."

"You thought wrong," Jackson said, eyes on the train as it got closer.

Jackson squatted low to the ground and hoisted the steam cannon over his right shoulder. With a flick of his thumb, a sight popped out of the cannon's side, aligning perfectly with Jackson's cold blue eye.

"I know that you think I'm going to kill you," Jackson said, pulling the cannon off his shoulder again and making some minor adjustments with the sight. "But I have no interest in your life, or keeping that five thousand dollars. Once I'm done with your steam-cache you can use it to drive back to that gutter you came from."

Richard had no intention of returning to Bisbee ever again. Five thousand dollars would buy him permanent residence in San Francisco. He was leaving the desert behind. "I'd like to believe you, but you'll forgive me if I don't," Richard said.

Jackson pulled the cannon back onto his shoulder.

"I will," he said.

The train drew closer and began making a lazy turn to the east through the open desert, revealing its right side to Richard and Jackson. The silver sides of the cars shimmered gracefully in the sun like a metal snake.

"It was beautiful, you know," Jackson said as the train churned towards them.

"What was?"

"The firebombing of Memphis. I was moving out of a ravine when it started. The concussions sounded like some tormented god being unleashed upon the world. I climbed up to a ridge and watched the city being destroyed a few miles away. Fire was everywhere. It was just...everywhere."

The train straightened out on the flat desert earth. It would pass parallel to their position—an easy target by any standards.

"Why are you doing this? What's on that train?" Richard asked, realizing that Jackson was probably the most dangerous man he'd ever met.

"Knowing the reason wouldn't make it any better. Reasons just let you know what to call a thing. Memphis was a massacre. This is just robbery."

"Not everything is that simple. You said yourself that Memphis won the war."

"Massacres end wars as good as they start them. Doesn't change their name."

When the head car was almost even with their position, Richard watched Jackson's muscles tense and heard him take in a heavy breath. For an instant, it seemed like the train's methodical churning was the only sound for miles.

Jackson fired the steam-canon and sent a massive wave of energy blasting along the open plain. Two jets of sand burst high into the air in the wake of the shot, which landed dead-center in the locomotive. The car was flung from the rails and turned on its side as if it had been punted by an invisible giant. The front of the second car popped off the rails too, digging into the sand and lumbering into a horizontal spin. Within a few dozen yards, all the cars had crumpled to a stop. Steam and sand rose skyward, enveloping the scene of destruction in a yellow mist.

Jackson dropped the steam cannon and was on his feet moving towards the train before Richard had a chance to react. He walked quickly but deliberately, his Schofield drawn and aimed towards the wreckage.

"Better get working on that steam-cache," he called without turning around. "The rest of your money is in the buggy."

Richard looked from the cannon to Jackson's back, which was disappearing into the rising mist. He did not move.

Up ahead, Richard could just barely make out small black figures emerging from the twisted car, they scattered like ants reacting to a large but unknown danger. Jackson's coat blended into the blowing sand like a jaguar's hide in the night, and he was in pistol range before they spotted him. He fired six rounds in quick succession, throwing a man to the ground with each shot. Richard had never seen a man shoot like that.

The men who hadn't been shot dead were slow reacting to the gunfire. They were still dazed and disoriented from the crash, some of them panicked and fired aimlessly into the rising wall of sand. Jackson reloaded his pistol and moved towards the third car, fast and low to the ground.

Coming to his senses, Richard unhooked the steam cache from the cannon and clambered down the side of the outcropping to his buggy. As he worked on the reattachment, gunfire filled the air behind him. The reports of the men's Colts and Winchesters sounded like pop guns shot by children compared with Jackson's booming and merciless Schofield.

Lord Cornbriar had lost consciousness when the blast derailed the train. He awoke with his face on the floor, watching the black boots of a bodyguard squirming through a broken window to his left. Three others stood over him in a circle, all facing different direction, their rifles upright and steady.

"What's happened?" Cornbriar demanded of the group above him. "Have we hit something?"

Before any of the guards could answer, six shots rang out, the sound echoing through the train's small metal cabin.

"More like something's hit us," said one guard, cocking his rifle and chambering a round. "Stay down, my

Lord. You'll be protected inside here. We've got all the angles covered."

The cabin's walls echoed with the sounds of gunfire. Cordite filled the air. Cornbriar could tell that whoever was attacking them, they were winning, and he began once again to finger the metal object in his pocket, as he had on the open ocean. The gunfire moved down the train, towards one of the rear cars.

"They're going for the safe. That car's filled with ten armed men. They'll get 'em," one guard said, his voice not nearly as confident as his words.

The gunfire picked up again, this time the sound clearly muffled by another car. Cornbriar could hear screaming and other noises of terror. He unclipped the metal slide along the device, placing his finger on the button.

A bodyguard burst through the connecting door, emptying his revolver before the door closed fully behind him. He scrambled to his feet and retreated back towards Cornbriar and his three guards, making a mess of reloading his pistol.

"He's...he's an animal," the guard said, breathless. "He moves too fast...can't get a clear shot."

"It's just one man?" Cornbriar asked.

"He's killed them all. Christ, the entire car of men. Once his gun was empty he finished the rest of them with a bowie knife the size of an axe—" The man was interrupted by the Schofield's report, booming in groups of two.

"He's coming this way," the frightened guard said. "Steady lads, steady. He'll try to bum-rush us. Spread your fire out, he moves like a goddamned lion."

All four men trained their rifles on the car door. The gunfire had stopped and they could hear the hiss of steam being released from the cracked locomotive behind them. To hell with this, Cornbriar said to himself. He pulled the object from his pocket, closed his eyes, and tried to squeeze down.

A bullet from the Schofield tore through his hand before he had the chance, blowing his thumb and the object down the back of the train. Cornbriar looked at his ruined hand in horror as the men above him fell almost in unison. Their fingers falling lifelessly away from their triggers, eyes still open.

Jackson dropped from the roof-hatch behind the guards. The metal heels of his boots clicked against the floor as he moved to the device's resting place. He reached down casually, grabbed it, and stowed it in his breast pocket.

"Hello, Reginald," Jackson said, reloading his pistol and moving towards the kneeling man. Instinctively, Cornbriar began to retreat in the opposite direction. Jackson raised his pistol to halt him. "Don't let your dignity get away with everything else."

"Who are you?" Cornbriar asked, trying to compose himself.

"Don't you recognize me? It hasn't been that long." Jackson said, lifting his hat and allowing a beam of sun to catch his features. Cornbriar's eyes widened as he recognized the man before him. An old killer from an old world.

"Waylon Jackson. I should have known you'd have a hand in this. What're they paying you for such a reckless slaughter? Whatever it is, it's not enough. You've no idea what that piece of metal is capable of." Reginald thought a bribe might be in order.

Jackson smiled and removed the object from his pocket, weighing it gently in his hand.

"Of course I do."

Jackson leaned down over Cornbriar. "I'm going to let you live, but not out of mercy or pity. You will survive this because you still have a purpose to serve in this mess. I want you to go back to your Queen as an empty-handed failure. Tell her that the Colonies are her pawns no longer. We are free. If she wants to contest that matter, she can trek her army across the ocean and we can have a fight." He looked down at the object. "In the meantime, I'll hold on to this."

Standing up straight again, Jackson holstered his pistol. "Of course, I need to make sure I've got the real thing," he said, smirking. "What's the size of the epicenter? Larger than this car, I hope."

Cornbriar just nodded, realizing what was about to happen.

Jackson pressed down on the button, keeping his eyes on Cornbriar. The object vibrated rapidly in his hand and then released a shockwave of energy, rattling the sides of the train and expanding out across the desert.

Richard Barkman was almost a mile away from the train when the shockwave overran him and imploded his steam engine.

The captain of the Northern Colony's airship, Graydon Steele, watched the shockwave spreading across the desert through his telescoping lens. Two miles above ground and safely out of range to the west, Graydon could only admire the power and terror rolling along the sand below. The train's steam engine imploded and then released a geyser of boiling water thirty feet into the air when the pressures became too great. Every car except the second became twisted and deformed by an invisible force. Jackson had described the event to him beforehand, but the reality was profoundly more striking. It was a power only gods were supposed to wield.

As planned, Graydon ordered the ship lowered to the wreckage after the explosion had cleared. From the deck, he could see that the ground was littered with bodies. A man emerged from one of the front cars that had been twisted off the rails, and Graydon quickly indentified him as Waylon Jackson. There were not many men who could walk through a scene of destruction with such cold-hearted confidence.

One of the deckhands lowered the rope ladder and Jackson pulled himself aboard. Graydon walked over and embraced his old friend.

"Everything went according to plan?" he asked.

"I've left Cornbriar in the car. As long as he's smart enough to bring some water with him, he'll be able to follow the tracks into Tucson. We'll be across into Illinois before he has a chance to alert anyone."

"And...the device?"

Jackson showed him the object briefly, and then returned it to his pocket.

"How long before it can be activated again?" Graydon asked.

"To be used to full effect, thirty minutes."

"We could destroy the entire British Armada in an afternoon," Graydon said, feeling a rush of excitement in his stomach.

Jackson nodded and moved towards the side railing. Graydon flipped his hand, signaling for the deck hands to pull up the ladder and rise to cruising altitude. In the distance, Jackson could see Richard and his buggy, immobilized and sad. He stopped a passing deckhand.

"When we pass over that man in the distance, parachute an extra steam cache down to him."

"Yes sir, certainly sir," the deckhand said, eager to obey but not understanding the purpose of the order.

As the airship passed by overhead, Jackson gave a casual salute to the man below.

MORNING

A CHAPTER FROM **ANDREW BENNETT'S FEARLESS**

AFTER WASHING WITH A BOWL OF COLD WATER mysteriously provided for her, Eva had dressed and ventured forth toward the ship's wardroom, she was unsure of what time it was and when breakfast would be served, although she had assumed it would be soon. She was shocked to find, upon entering the wardroom, rather than the assembled officers and food she had expected, Crabbe. He was stripped to the waist and shaving himself in a small mirror sat on a shelf which was leaning up against the wall. Eva quickly apologised and withdrew, but not before she had noticed the prime physique that his lanky frame hid. Although he was thin, the powerful build of his shoulders was unmistakable and his well toned chest showed the effect of hours of vigorous exercise. After the shock of walking in on Crabbe half naked Eva elected to walk around the deck, although she paused amidships directly across from where Swan was overseeing a group of crewmen, who were lowering themselves to kneel behind the gunwale. All of the men, she noticed were carrying Lee-Metford rifles and as she began staring out into the endless blue surrounding them Eva heard Swan's deep, booming bass voice begin to sing as her thoughts drifted away as if on a breeze. She was still troubled by her dreams from the night before, although they had been many, there was one which lingered in her mind more than any other.

In the dream Eva found herself walking through a garden and had suddenly found herself facing a male figure she identified as Harrier. He was stood perfectly still, almost as if he were standing to attention, but when she approached his head fell backwards and although his lips didn't move, his mouth dropped open and a strange laughter emerged from within him. The laughter was in

no way human, it was squeaky and mocking without even a hint of mirth. The sound of it made him seem like some form of demented Mr. Punch and despite her prostrations he continued laughing. Growing more and more frustrated with his continual laughter she struck him across the face with the flat of her hand. To her surprise Harrier began to sway violently, eventually keeling over sideways, his body shattering like glass as he hit the pebbled pathway, his face last of all. As his head exploded into fragments she found it reminding her of a china doll she had accidentally smashed as a child, and how its' broken face had looked once it had fallen. She looked at where Harrier's head had landed and saw his eyes and mouth still intact, albeit strangely placed and his horrible inhuman laughter continued to echo through her sleep.

She had awoken in a cold sweat and panicked, she looked around her until she realised where she was along with the fact that the strange fragile Harrier had just been a demon of her sleep, and nothing more.

Eva was swiftly brought back to reality by the sound of someone behind her clearing their throat. She turned and found it to be a rather sheepish looking, and a now fully dressed Crabbe. In addition to the dark blue trousers he had been wearing earlier he had added a tunic matching the colour of his trousers along with a dark shirt and tie. He seemed to be quite hesitant and broke out in a rapid succession of stammering, but eventually he spoke;

'I am very sorry about our run in earlier. I didn't realise you hadn't been informed that you were occupying my cabin, and that I would be sleeping in the Wardroom. I am very sorry you had to see me in a state of undress.'

'Oh no, it should be me who should apologise. I am the one who interrupted you during your ablutions.' This exchange caused an awkward silence as each of them smiled bashfully and looked at the other. Into the void they left came the booming of Swan's singing, punctuated by the stamping of his boot on the deck as he kept time;

*'Poor old Rueben Ranzo....
...Oh, Ranzo was no sailor...
...He was a New York Tailor...
... Shanghaied aboard a whaler...'*

As each line he sung faded away it was met by the chorusing of the kneeling crewmen as they operated their rifle bolts, chanting in response;

'Ranzo, me boys, Ranzo!'

The surrounding silence made Eva notice it all the more keenly and as she leaned on the gunwale she turned to Crabbe asking him;

'Do you mind telling me the purpose of the singing?'

'Not at all' came his reply. He turned slightly, lowering himself to lean his elbow on the gunwale. He positioned himself so that he could face her, but still indicate the men kneeling on the opposite side of the ship. 'The song is a hauling shanty, and since most of our crew trained as either sailors or airmen, therefore not being trained in the use of rifles, we use the shanties they are familiar with to both help train them, and coordinate their firing. Whereas normally on a board ship they would haul on Ranzo, they fire on it instead.' Eva nodded in understanding, and she was forced to see the ingenuity behind the scheme. But before she could comment Crabbe continued in his explanation;

'It also allows the men to fire accurately in volleys, not only making it easier to defend against boarding parties, but also making us appear to have a much larger force of men than we actually do.' As he said this Swan finished singing and the men who had been kneeling rose stiffly to their feet and returned to their duties. Crabbe glanced at his watch, which, like Harrier he wore strapped to his wrist with a wide leather band.

'Ah, I do believe that breakfast shall be served soon. Would you care to accompany me to the wardroom Miss Wood?'

'Certainly Mr. Crabbe.'

Breakfast proved to be a relatively uneventful affair, and half an hour later Eva was making her way toward Harrier's cabin to deliver the briefing. When she entered she was surprised to find in addition to the officers she had met the previous evening two other men, both of them strangers but still stood before Harrier's desk. One of the unknown men she recognised as the flame haired sentinel who had watched over her first meeting with Harrier, whom was introduced as Mr. O'Rorke, the chief engineer. Harrier explained wore was because of his dislike of leaving the engine room, and more particularly his 'still' in the charge of his assistant. The other man was short, wiry with spiky blonde hair and his brown eyes were greatly magnified by the lenses of his strange eyewear. His goggles, for want of a better word, seemed to be a pair of wire-rimmed spectacles but also had several different pairs of lenses set on hinged levers and

most were sitting in front of his forehead, evidently it was possible for him to drop them into position before his eyes. Harrier introduced him simply as Drax, and informed her that his position on board was that of the communications officer. Harrier gestured for her to join him behind the desk and as he moved aside she began;

'Well, as I'm sure you are all aware you have been hired by Her Majesty's government to aid in the retrieval of a missing MIS agent, who is presumed to have been captured. Once we have been able to locate him, we shall help him to complete his mission, that is to gather as much information on the design and purpose of the new French Lyons class airships, and to destroy them if they are not being built for their declared purpose, which is supposedly to ferry gold ore from the banks of Lake Chad.' At this point Harrier moved behind the desk and took over the briefing to explain his involvement;

'I shall accompany Agent Wood here in the search, to both represent our interests and to act as protection. As we shall be meeting with a group of dissidents which this missing agent was working alongside.' Eva noted the title he used with some satisfaction, particularly so with their violent encounter the previous evening.

'What's their stake in this mission?' Crabbe asked

'We don't know. All we do know is that they have reason to despise the current French military-led government, other than that we're in the dark. They could be Anarchists, Communists, or even Republican revolutionaries.' Before another word could be spoken a frantic crewman burst into the room and presented himself before Harrier.

'We've spotted an airship sir' he said between pants.

'Colours?' quickly came Harrier's reply

'She's French sir.' This pronouncement instantly attracted the attention of all the men present and Harrier himself immediately became a different man as he animatedly started issuing orders to the rest;

'O'Rorke, get back to the engines and prepare to move us closer, then ready the winches. Swan, prepare the men to board, and have the guns readied. Drax, get back to the radio and prepare to issue our demands. Crabbe, get your rifle and meet me on deck.' He then vaulted over the desk and raced out of the cabin, pausing only to collect a pair of binoculars sitting on a shelf near the door. He was trailed by the crewman and Eva whilst the other officers left behind scattered themselves to carry out their captain's instructions. Upon entering the daylight Harrier purposefully strode up to the quarterdeck and raised the binoculars to his eyes and began to survey his prey as Eva joined him. She was a medium-sized cargo carrier, and was bound to have some valuable items on board. As the Falcon moved closer they were joined by Crabbe who was carrying an odd looking rifle. Eva was able recognise it as a Lee-Metford, but the bank of lenses mounted to one side of the barrel in front

of the breech, along with the single lenses at the rear and muzzle mystified her until he knelt before the rail and began adjusting lenses from the collection at the breech, moving them in and out of position all the while muttering to himself about range and wind speed when it became clear they were a sighting arrangement. Another crewman suddenly appeared next to Harrier's shoulder and said;

'Message from below Sir. She's demanding we identify ourselves'

Harrier removed the binoculars from his eyes with a smirk and turned to the man before he issued his commands;

'Hoist the colours. That should give them enough identification. Then get to Drax and tell them we demand that they surrender immediately, or we shall open fire.'

'Yessir' The crewman responded with a smile. Eva felt compelled to ask;

'What colours do you intend to hoist Captain? I thought that as a Pirate you had none.'

'None but my own Miss Wood.' At that point both she and Harrier turned, he back to viewing the French merchantman through his binoculars, she to the ship's stern where the German Tricolour that they had been flying was being taken down, and in its' place rose a black flag. As it reached the end of the pole it was caught by the breeze unfurling completely, to reveal both a white silhouette of a perching bird of prey in the centre, as well as, in the upper right corner, a Union Jack. Eva's horror at Harrier's blatant use of the flag, was short lived as he spoke;

'Ah, that's certainly lit a fire under their backsides' Harrier then turned to Swan, stood below on the deck 'Prepare the starboard guns, on my command, fire at their rudder.' After the briefest of pauses Harrier yelled; 'FIRE!' In an instant an entire deck of the Falcon's guns erupted, removing the French vessel's rudder completely. Onboard the French ship was pandemonium as the men realised that not only were they unable to flee they were not dealing with just a simple pirate crew, but the dreaded James Harrier, and his men. They were witnessing the arrival of 'The Scourge of the Skies' himself. The French ship's Captain and his first mate had been stood on the aft deck observing the opposing ship from a distance and were currently embroiled in an argument over what to do since receiving the demand to surrender. The Captain was adamant that he would not give his ship to a pirate, expecting his crew to be willing to, like him, fight to the death in defence of the vessel. The mate and most of the crew however were much more interested in the possible, albeit shameful, escape surrender offered, than the certain death resistance offered. Back onboard the Falcon, Harrier was observing the argument between the captain and mate with interest, and asked Crabbe;

'Do you see those two blokes toward the rear there?' Crabbe replied in the affirmative.

'Looks like they're discussing our offer. Let's narrow their options. When I say so, shoot the one on the right, I think he's the Captain.'

'Aye.' Eva was horrified that he could even contemplate such action and began to protest before Harrier lowered his binoculars and cut her short;

'Agent Wood, did I just hear you question my decisions?' When she didn't answer he continued;

'We are Pirates, and must therefore attack any targets of opportunity we find, I may make a point of not attacking British shipping, but do not mistake that for cowardice. If you question my orders again I shall be forced to confine you to your cabin.' He then returned his gaze to the merchantman while Eva retreated to her cabin, not wishing to witness any of the barbarity she expected to follow, her departure was not noticed. Once Harrier had been told that the winch guns were ready he yelled;

'Fire!' On the deck beside him Crabbe fired his rifle and took the French Captain in the head, his lifeless body dropping straight downwards to land in a sprawled heap on the deck. Below, two large guns fires, launching hooks, trailing steel cables into the hull of the opposing vessel; they quickly passed through the thin armour, opening out before the chains were pulled taught. The Falcon's engine then started to wind in the cables connecting the two ships. As they neared the few men assembled on deck quickly removed any sign of resistance, few though they were. As the hulls of the two ships met the men of The Falcon leaped aboard and then quickly gathered up the French ship's crew. After being told the French ship was secured Harrier himself swung aboard followed by Crabbe. They found the deck relatively clear, other than the kneeling forms of the French crew huddled together, with the men from the Falcon watching over them. In a sudden flurry of movement a struggling man was brought through a hatch from below by another two members of Harrier's crew. Together they threw the man to the deck alongside his crewmates. However, as he caught sight of the two men who had just boarded he pointed and began screaming;

'*Un Spectre! Un Spectre! Un Spectre!*' he then rose running headlong towards Harrier, still shouting '*Un Spectre! Un Spectre!*' Before he had moved three feet Harrier had quite calmly removed one of his pistols and shot the screaming Frenchman between the eyes. As the man's limp form dropped Harrier asked Crabbe quizzically;

'What do you think all that was about?' Crabbe shrugged in response before responding;

'I think he was shouting something about a ghost, or a spirit.' Harrier turned to the assembled mass of the French crew and shouted in question;

'*Parle-vous Anglais?*' when he received no response he again shouted '*Parle-vous Anglais?*' As one man the crew looked to the body of the Captain.

'It's times like this that make me wish Drax would didn't have to man the radio, it doesn't look like we won't be able to get anything out of them. Not unless one of the men speaks fluent frog.'

'Well, I think for most of them their knowledge runs out at asking for directions to the nearest brothel.' Harrier responded with a smirk;

'Let's go below and see what she's carrying.'

'What about the crew Sir?'

Harrier turned to find the question had come from one of the crewmen stood guarding the captive French crew, in a single glance he looked at the kneeling group, all of whom eyed him suspiciously. He was tempted to cast them adrift in the ship. But if they were found it would be easier for the French to properly implicate them in anything they did in the course of their mission. Harrier had reached a decision in moments suddenly he spoke;

'Line them up and throw them overboard! Take anything of value.' As the two men descended into the gloom below decks, the screams of the French crew as they realised what was about to happen to them filling their ears, they were met by the one eyed form of Greene as he climbed upwards.

'Anything valuable on this bucket Mr. Greene?' Harrier asked.

'Not really sir. Other than the food supplies and a few hundred rounds for the maxims we won't get much off her.'

'Cargo?' the Captain asked

'That's why I was coming up sir, there's something which might interest you.' As he led Harrier and Crabbe further into the ship's interior and down to the cargo holds he continued speaking;

'When the men first started looking around we didn't find anything more than a few dozen bales of silk, so naturally we were a bit suspicious until we found these crates.' As he indicated the pile of boxes stacked before them both Harrier and Crabbe inadvertently gasped in surprise. Stacked between the decks were a vast multitude of wooden crates, measuring around four feet long by two feet wide by one foot tall, all of them were bound with metal bands, all bearing unknown symbols which had been painted on them, along with a stencilled, but undecipherable message in French, though they were clearly warnings of some description. Harrier spoke for all three men;

'What are all these for?'

'I've no idea sir, that's why I came for you and Mr. Crabbe.' Crabbe's judgement came swiftly;

'Well there's no way we can get in them safely, not without knowing what's inside them.' Harrier nodded in agreement.

'Looks like we'll have to leave them then. We can't safely take them onboard the Falcon, and the longer we stay here, the more chance there is that some nosey git

will turn up and investigate, plus there's no guarantee that they didn't send off a distress call and for all we know we've got half of the French Air Fleet chasing us down.' His two companions nodded in mute agreement. With a sigh he issued his orders;

'Once the men are done with the crew, finish loading any food supplies and destroy the radio. Once we're done we set the engine in motion and leave the ship to drift.'

'Yessir' the joint reply and the two men set to their tasks.

Harrier himself set out in search of the Captain's cabin and, more particularly a drinks cabinet. He was troubled, not only as he always was at the prospect of abandoning a ship to the elements and the will of the gods, but also by the mysterious crates. His

mind wondered at their purpose, along with the stencilled symbols and warning messages as he uncorked a bottle of brandy belonging to the ship's now dead captain, drinking deeply from it to wash away the memories of his past sins, along with the thoughts of both his present and future ones. •



A WORD ON THIS FINAL EDITION

BY NICK OTTENS

AS ANNOUNCED IN MY EDITORIAL, THIS WILL BE the final print edition of the *Gatehouse Gazette*, at least until further notice. Loyal readers of the magazine deserve to know why we're quitting so a word on that now.

Largely, you can blame me. Editing a magazine, even if it appears only once every two months, takes up quite a bit of time—time that I should probably be investing in projects that pay. But if that were all, I could find the time, ask others to help out, etc. What's more important is that I feel that the *Gazette* has run its course and has accomplished all that it could in its present form.

The *Gatehouse Gazette* started, as you can read in the short history of the magazine that's attached to this edition, in response to a politicization of steampunk that was embodied in the publication of *SteamPunk Magazine* in 2008. The contributors to this magazine never saw the need to inject politics in steampunk nor did they agree that politics had somehow always been there, lurking underneath the Neo-Victorian décor and colonial fashions. The *Gatehouse Gazette* aimed to be a platform for steampunks who wanted to keep the movement free of politics, including steampunks whose politics weren't radical or even left of center. I think we've accomplished that with great issues about the "Beauty of Industry", Victoriantalism and the May 2010 edition which was wholly dedicated to the question of steampunk's ideology.

Articles that were published in these, and other, editions of the *Gatehouse Gazette* stirred discussion and

sometimes controversy. It forced steampunks to think about different aspects of the movement, not just politics, but their appreciation of imperialism and industrialism. This final edition, I hope, will do the same.

What a print magazine can't be, however, is a place for debate. It doesn't allow readers nor contributors to react instantly to things that are said or written about steampunk. It doesn't utilize the many wonderful means of communication that we've come to take for granted online. That's why we're ending the *Gatehouse Gazette* and reviving *The Gatehouse*.

"Your gateway to the world of dieselpunk and steampunk online" has been reinvented as a blog with familiar *Gatehouse Gazette* contributors writing about genre theory, ideas, events, art and whatever happens to be of interest to them. Think of it as an even better online magazine, one where you can comment on articles and don't have to wait two months to read something new.

I'm confident that with an outstanding team of bloggers, *The Gatehouse* will once again be a pivotal and necessary voice in the steampunk community. Our goal is to explore what dieselpunk and steampunk are about. We don't keep God and guns out. We won't avoid asking tough questions and publishing essays that may not always be in line with the mainstream of the movement. But we do want to speak to what we believe is the vast majority of 'punk genre enthusiasts who are just looking for inspiration and fun—not a cause. They won't be overshadowed by the activist anymore. •



Trafalgar Square, London
at night (*Life*)

HISTORY *of* THE GATEHOUSE GAZETTE

The *Gatehouse Gazette* started in the summer of 2008 after *SteamPunk Magazine* released its first edition and aimed to put the punk “back” in steampunk.

There were members of the *Smoking Lounge* message board community who felt that there had never been much “punk” in steampunk to begin with and they wondered whether they couldn’t produce a magazine of their own.

The first few issues were notably lacking in cultural and political commentary but did feature interviews and reviews—the sort of content one would expect from a steampunk publication.

The first edition included a review of Toby Frost’s *Space Captain Smith* as well an interview with the author. Hilde Heyvaert wrote her first Steampunk Wardrobe column which would become a regular feature in all future *Gazettes*. And “Col. Adrianna Hazard” provided a cartoon.

Dieselpunk was at the time an almost totally new genre that hadn’t been properly defined yet. The first *Gatehouse Gazette* had a lengthy introduction to the concept therefore in the form of a discourse between Nick Ottens and Piecraft, both dieselpunk theorists. Piecraft later wrote an

exhaustive, three part “History of Dieselpunk,” published between the third and fifth editions of the *Gatehouse Gazette*. The final installment in the series, “Diesel’s Punk,” explored the relevance of punk philosophy to the dieselpunk culture in detail.

With its interviews, the *Gatehouse Gazette* tried to give a voice to the lesser known of dieselpunk and steampunk artists, makers and musicians. Abney Park, Datamancer and Jake Von Slatt “are magnificent artists to be sure,” suggested Joost van Ekris, an early *Gazette* contributor, “but I doubt there is anything new that could be said about them.”

Hilde Heyvaert interviewed Molly “Porkshanks” Friedrich and fashion designer Vecona for the fourth and fifth issues respectively, both pioneering steampunk artists in their fields who hadn’t been discovered by the mainstream yet. Nick Ottens and Amanda Stock interviewed Hilde for the sixth edition which also included a guest contribution by Andii of the band Ghostfire.

Craig Daniel started writing The Liquor Cabinet in the fourth issue when Sean Schoenherr, under the *nom de plume* Sigurjón Njálsson, also submitted his first film review.

Marcus Rauchfuß, who became a prolific *Gazette* contributor, first wrote an

alternate history about the reign of Friedrich III in the May 2009 “Tinkering with Time” edition, the

issue that also published David Townsend’s first travelogue.

The first Halloween edition, released September 1, 2009, was graced with a beautiful cover by Myke Amend who provided cover illustrations thrice for the *Gatehouse Gazette*. The issue had an interview with Sam Van Olffen, dieselpunk artist, and it published a short story by Natania Barron, “Dr Adderson’s Lens.” The *Gatehouse Gazette* was never heavy on original fiction but did publish chapters of Andrew Bennett’s *The Fearless* between the twelfth and twenty-first editions.

The first stride into a more activist role came with the November 2009 edition which celebrated “Beautiful Industry” in opposition to notions of self-sufficiency and a “return to primitivism” as were championed by some in the steampunk community.

In his editorial, “Loving the Factory, Too,” Nick Ottens hinted at a divide between dieselpunk and steampunk enthusiasts. Whereas the former herald technological progress as redemptive, he worried that steampunks tended to take it for granted. “The Victorian era brought us industry and in spite of all its vices,” he wrote, “it paved the way for a new era of



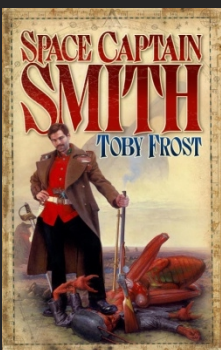
Piecraft



Hilde Heyvaert



Sam Van Olffen





Covert artwork by
Myke Amend

economic growth and prosperity. We live in that era today.”

Ottens returned to the schism between the two alternate history genres almost two years later when he wrote in the editorial to the twentieth edition that “steampunk can be an escapist genre. It can make the past seem all perfect even if it’s a huge deception.” Dieselpunks, by contrast, have no time to around and dream of a better past. They “roll up their sleeves and start building.”

Issue#9 also featured an interview with author Carol McCleary by Hilde Heyvaert after the publication of her novel, *The Alchemy of Murder*. She wrote two articles for the *Gazette* about the book’s protagonist, Nellie Bly, for the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth editions.

Another extraordinary woman was featured in the tenth edition. J. Parkin wrote a short biography of aviatrix Amelie Earhart for the first *Gatehouse Gazette* of 2010. The issue predicted that steampunk would really take off that year and it sure did. Steampunk entered the mainstream as a popular aesthetic and if the downloads of the eleventh installment of the magazine were any indication, many more people had discovered the culture by then.

In fairness, the March 2010 issue was read a lot because it was controversial. Themed “Victoriorientalism,” the *Gatehouse Gazette* was vehemently criticized for reviving racial stereotypes of “the East” even if the issue itself didn’t contain many references to Orientalism besides a short article about Richard Burton. The editorial, however, which suggested that “steampunk allows us to reject the chains of reality

and all the racism and guilt associated with it, to explore anew this imagined world of sultans and saber-rattling Islamic conquerors; harems and white slavery; *samurai*, dragons and dark, bustling bazaars frequented by the strangest sort of folk” was picked apart by postcolonialists who rejected the premise that steampunk could safely reimagine a past that wasn’t.

The Victoriorientalism debacle, in part, prompted the *Gazette* to organize a Great Steampunk Debate in the spring of 2010 in conjunction with *Exhibition Hall*, *SteamPunk Magazine* and *Steampunk Tales*, three other online magazines, as well as *Dieselpunks* and the *UK Steampunk Network*. The two-month online discussion aimed to tackle steampunk ethics and politics and hoped to provide a clearer and comprehensive picture of the steampunk scene with open debates and censuses.

The May 2010 *Gatehouse Gazette* was published to coincide with the start of the Great Steampunk Debate and featured thoughts on the ideology of steampunk by Jacqueline Christi, op-eds by the editors of *Exhibition Hall* and *The Steampunk Tribune*, “Steampunk—an utopian expression?” by Dr Damon Molinari

and an article about German militarism by Marcus Rauchfuß. It was the most overtly political issue to date.

Amanda Stock added, “In Defense of the Lighter Side of Steampunk” in the thirteenth, altogether more light hearted, edition. Her article about how steampunk should be informed by feminism, “Battle of the Sexes,” was published in issue #15 in which she lamented that “the intelligence and passion of the woman behind the corset don’t matter, so long as she looks good standing at the front of an airship.”

The first full

color edition of the *Gatehouse Gazette* was published in January 2011. The issue explored the Weird West subgenre of steampunk.

Issue #17 delved into the Roaring Twenties with Lorenzo Davia’s first proper article for the magazine about Art Deco, the first in a four part series about the history of the dieselpunk era by Tome Wilson of *Dieselpunks* and a contribution from Larry Amyett Jr. about the philosophy of dieselpunk.

To distinct between an “Ottensian” and a “Piecrafrican dieselpunk” to refer to the optimistic and darker sides of the genre respectively had by then become commonplace and Amyett focused on the former which revels in “decadence”, or “the lifeblood of dieselpunk.” He further suggested that the punk in dieselpunk “adds the potential for fantasy, horror and speculative fiction” and emphasizes self-determination.

The seventeenth edition also featured Ian Brackley’s first Gents column which would go on to explore different means for gentlemen to express themselves in the modern world.

When the twentieth *Gatehouse Gazette*, one of the thickest ever made, was put together, the end of the magazine was not yet in sight. Larry Amyett, who contributed an article about the golden age of radio, described the issue as a “who’s who” in dieselpunk. Indeed, with topics ranging from Nazi architecture to *The Rocketeer* to Russian dieselpunk to the impact of the 1929 stock market crash, the magazine provided a broad introduction to the dieselpunk culture.

The final edition, themed “Empire,” urged steampunks to be “honest and upfront about the fact that we admire the pomp and spirit of the globetrotting Victorians.” It featured articles about steampunk in Africa, Great White Hunters and an interview with Simon R. Green. •



Carol McCleary



Dr Damon
Molinarius



Marcus
Rauchfuß



Cover of the first full
color edition



Page from the Victoriorientalist
edition



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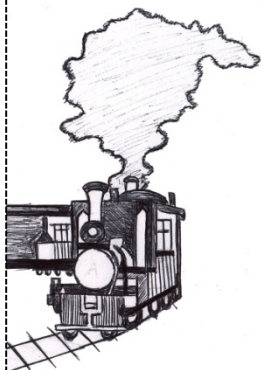
the *Gatehouse Gazette*. Published **November 2, 2011** by *The Gatehouse*. Contact the editor at n.ottens@gmail.com.

Photo of steamer off Dar-El-Salaam, Tanganyika courtesy of *Life*.

November

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 6 *Supernatural Monster Day* _____
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December

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 8 *Pretend to be a Time Traveler Day* _____
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 24 *Howard Hughes Day - Christmas Eve* _____
 25 *Christmas Day* _____
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This year, Hilde Heyvaert provided two steampunk themed **birthday calendars** with each issue of the *Gatehouse Gazette*.