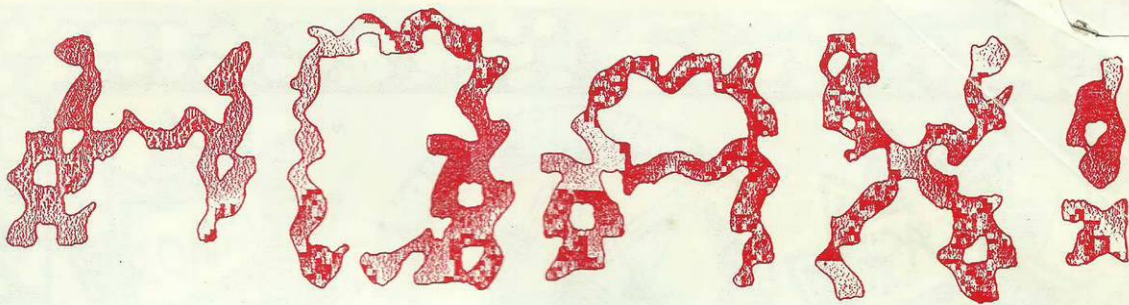


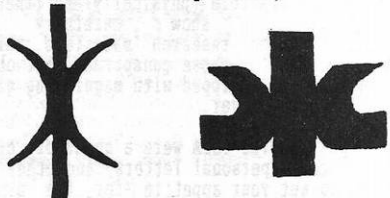
Fantastic Store



This is a MAGAZINE COVER. This writing is the DESIGN upon the MAGAZINE COVER. The DESIGN is placed here in order to help SELL the MAGAZINE. We intend to draw your attention to it and then encourage you to pick it up. When you have done that then maybe you'll be persuaded to READ the MAGAZINE - in this particular instance HOAX! Then we want you to BUY it. The simple idea being that the more of you that do BUY this MAGAZINE the more money that AUX, the MAGAZINE's editor John C.S. Quel and HOAX! themselves will make. To the aforementioned this is known as PLEASURE. A good COVER DESIGN is one that attracts more buyers and gives more PLEASURE. This writing is attempting to pull you in much like an eye-catching picture. It is designed to get you to READ IT. This is called luring the VICTIM, and you are the VICTIM. But if you have a 'free mind' you should STOP READING NOW! because all that we are attempting to do is to get you to READ on. Yet this is a DOUBLE BIND because if you indeed STOP then you'll be doing exactly what we tell you, and if you READ on further then you'll be doing precisely what we've wanted all along. And the more that you READ on the more you're falling for this simple device of telling you exactly how a good commercial DESIGN works. These tactics are known as TRICKS and this is the worst TRICK of all since it's describing the TRICK whilst trying to TRICK you, and if you have READ this far then you are TRICKED but you wouldn't really have known this unless you'd READ this far already. BUT at least we're telling you directly instead of seducing you with a beautiful or haunting visual image that may NEVER ever tell you. We're just letting you know that you really ought to BUY this MAGAZINE because in essence it is a PRODUCT and PRODUCTS are to be consumed and you are a consumer and this is a good PRODUCT. We could have written the MAGAZINE's name in very special lettering so that the title stood out and you'd see it before you'd even READ any of this writing and possibly have bought it anyway. (In fact we have!) What we are really suggesting is that you are FOOLISH to BUY or not BUY a MAGAZINE merely as a consequence of the DESIGN on its COVER. This is a CON because if you agree then you'll probably like this writing - which is the COVER DESIGN - and hence the MAGAZINE inside. But we've just warned you against that. The CON is a CON. A good COVER DESIGN could in fact be considered as one that gets you to BUY the MAGAZINE, but that NEVER really actually happens to YOU because YOU know that it's just a DESIGN for the COVER. And this is the MAGAZINE COVER. The MAGAZINE COVER of the PRODUCT that we have just convinced you to BUY!

NO CONTENT

And if that wasn't enough entertainment for the night the Ladies' Lavatories also decided to contribute to the Fortean flavour of the evening by exploding! (Which, incidentally is no great surprise when you consider the amazing similarity between the sigil for Eris and the logo adopted by toilet-roll holder manufacturers Kimberly-Clark!)



The next day - the 23rd - consisted of almost half a day avoiding street crazies, perusing second-hand bookstores, discovering how expensive it is to get drunk in certain parts of London and attending a phenomenal final performance of all three parts of the trilogy end-to-end as part of the NT's 1993 "Trilogy Season". What a day!!!

The following morning proved to be just as hectic and chaotic as those that had followed (and were also to come!). The change from British Summertime only aided to harass my watch even further. It was having enough problems trying to cover twenty-three hours during a day, let alone twenty-five of them! After my usual antics of getting unbelievably lost in a maze of suburban streets and getting wrong directions from strangers I eventually located "Prettyboy Tentringer" at his Walthamstow Marsh Office beside the River Lea, East 17, attending to marsh business and other such important matters.

Upon my arrival, in attendance were two members of the local Jehovah's Witness sect (or were they in fact Men-In-Black? I couldn't be sure to tell you the truth!) who had called around on their regular Sunday Morning round to try and enlighten/indoctrinate new followers to their faith. (Un)Fortunately I wasn't entirely convinced. Having met many devotees of various religions, cults and so on, I seem to have become quite cynical and jaded about such matters. I've heard it all before, and 99.9% is nearly always complete contradictory claptrap. If I'd been a bit more awake I probably could have introduced them to the Discordian doubt, but there are some things that other religions don't need to know about! [By the way, if anyone reading this thinks that their religion is the "One True Religion" or knows of one that is, then please write to the editor c/o the HOAX! address. The best candidates might just get a mention in our forthcoming Religion/Politics issue.]

Anyhow, the devotional discussion soon got around to the ascent of Jesus into a cluster of star constellations (possibly situated around Uranus! - No, I'm sorry, I apologise, that sort of anally based humour is not permitted as a part of this upstanding magazine's criteria. Prift!!), the life of the (alleged) Virgin Mary, such arcane and esoteric texts including The Gospel According to Phillip, and the current upsurge of earthquakes and violence (Yup! We're living in the Apocryphal Days right now this minute dearly beloved...) Soon, the spiritual brothers departed and we could continue with other impending marsh business...

Although he may at first appear a rather manic eccentric character to some, Kenneth Victor Campbell is a very amiable bloke and a damn fine fellow. His humour may be quite an acquired taste to some, and contains a distinct oddball flavour. However

bizarre, strange, or weird some of his antics and theories may be, he is most certainly in full control of his faculties. "I'm not fucking mad!! Arsehole!!!" he confirms in his play "Jamais Vu". Perhaps, then he is the ideal choice for the first interview for Hoax! to undertake, as he too is interested in the subjects of humour, Fortean Phenomena, art, and of course pranks.

If you were to ask an average Joe Soap in the street who Ken Campbell is, most would best know him for being Alf Garnett's grouchy and belligerent neighbour Fred Johnson in the BBC TV series "In Sickness and In Health". Since the likes of John Birt have resculptured Auntie Beeb into their own image, and have seemingly cancelled the production of such shows which do not fulfil certain criteria, we are unlikely to see Mr. Johnson again. However, television audiences now know Ken for his portrayal of shady Night-Club Owner Oscar Dean in the popular Liverpool based Soap-Opera Brookside. This refreshing change has now meant that he is now liable to be approached by a wider variety of people in the street apart from the usual yobs who tend to break ranks from National Front marches and politely ask, "How's Alf?"

As well as his acting roles he is the author of several children's plays (Old King Cole, Skungpoomery, Frank 'n' Stein, and Clown Plays), the books for two musicals (Bendigo, and Walking Like Geoffrey). His TV/Film scripts include Unfair Exchanges, One Night I Danced With Mr. Dalton, You See The Thing Is This, and The Madness Museum, in which he played the proprietor of the Asylum.

He has toured Britain and abroad with his trilogy of one-man shows Furtive Nudist, Pigsput (or Six Pigs From Happiness) and Jamais Vu.

[Here an slightly inadequate explanation follows for the slightly haphazard appearance of this article: Due to unexpected interference by Illuminates unknown the first 11 questions contained on the one side of a C90 tape were lost in a magnetic void of nothingness. Luckily, Ken came up trumps by enlisting his own replacement machine to continue the remainder of the interview. As well as this setback, when the tape was being transcribed into a readable format, an unstoppable and almost irretrievable computer error helped to thoroughly knacker all hope of typing up this article (and almost put paid to the whole issue too!) Therefore, you may experience slight lapses in continuity concerning conversation and content from this point onwards. You have been warned!]

I started off by asking Ken whether knowing Warren Mitchell (who plays the character of Alf Garnett; and who he also used to understudy whilst acting in the Colchester Rep.) possibly helped him to get the part in the programme. He said that he didn't know for sure, but obviously such contacts mean that opportunities like that will arise from time to time. Needless to say the making of the show always involved a lot of fun on and off camera.

I enquired if the series had now been officially axed (Mostly due to pressure from people who don't understand the topical black humour content of the show). I wondered if John Birt's new regime of political correctness had finally dealt the long-running series a undeserved death blow. Ken said it didn't look too good, but the best person to ask (apart from the ubiquitous Mr. Birt, was Johnny Speight, the show's creator).

After asking a string of questions such as "What was the first play you directed?", "How did you make the transition from actor to director?", "Did you always want to act?", "Have you always acted - as it's always said to be a career where the job prospects are sometimes rather bleak?", etc, Ken seemed to be slightly confused concerning my choice of questioning and wondered whether I was in fact writing an article for an issue of a well-known acting magazine.

I then went on to tell him that the content of the intended interviews were not to be strictly limited directly to pranks, hoaxes and humour per se, but were to explore whatever particular elements that were appropriate or applicable to be related to that general concept either during their evolution or process. In other words, you've got to know where you're coming from in order to know where you're going to!

Our talk then went on to Ken's renowned involvement for having produced the cult play cycle 'The Warp' by Neil Oram (the World's longest play, which clocks in at an impressively brain and bum-numbing 22 hours). As such a project is obviously a major undertaking, I wondered how someone could be persuaded to finance something like that.

In order for the gallant actors and audience to survive a whole performance the show would start at 8pm and continue into the next day. Apparently, by approaching the performance in this way the human body clock was then well-adjusted enough to retire to the nearest pub as soon as the show was over.

I thought that the organisation and abilities of the people involved would be immense, but Ken reassured me that those who participated were not selected purely due to previous acting experience (or in fact any acting skills at all!), but chosen due to their dedication and enthusiasm for the project. As was the case in the earlier production of Wilson and Shea's *Illuminatus!* trilogy which was adapted by Ken and Chris Langham as a 5 part 10-hour science-fiction rock-opera epic. This wonderful piece of factional drama was chosen to open the new Cottesloe extension of the National Theatre. (The debut was held in Liverpool on 23/11/76 - the sacred Discordian holy day of Harpomax; due to the fact that it is the 23rd and also Harpo Marx's birthday).



Ken came to do the original stage-play of *Illuminatus!* in Liverpool because Peter O'Hallighan had come across a dream in Carl Gustav Jung's book *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. The resulting dream changed Jung's life and persuaded him to concentrate on the question of the Unconscious for the rest of his days. On page 223, he describes Liverpool as

"the pool of life". And soon this occurrence began to obsess Peter who was a proud Liverpoolophile. Although, evidence shows that Jung had probably never been to Liverpool during his lifetime, Peter proudly declared that he had discovered the site of the dream to be a conjunction of warehouse roads - one of which being Matthew Street (where the old Cavern was). He promptly obtained a derelict warehouse there and named it The Liverpool School of Language, Music, Dream and Pun. This title was later changed after a number of drinking sessions to The Science Fiction Theatre of Liverpool.

Ken was strangely drawn to *Illuminatus!* whilst browsing in the Compendium bookstore, as it had a yellow submarine on the cover - which fitted Liverpool nicely (what with the Beatle's connections with the city, and so on) - and due to the occurrence of the number 23 in the novel (and since Jung's dream had synchronistically been on page 223).

As the cast couldn't possibly imagine that there was anything anywhere more important than their production of the play available, they dispatched twenty-three letters to twenty-three different parts of the establishment, cordially inviting them to come and witness their spectacle.

A delegation of the recipients came to see the last performance of *Illuminatus!* in Liverpool. (By which time the cast had been whittled down to 23). The warehouse complex where the Science Fiction Theatre was based hurriedly set about in preparation for the ensuing visitation from the bigwigs. Walls were demolished to make way for a royal box, but cigarette butts and other oddments were left in order to leave a feeling of enchantment and character for the exalted guests. (Rehearsals took place during the everyday happenings of the cafeteria based in the warehouse. You could come in for a quick hot dog, and leave 5 hours later permanently illuminated.)

I wanted to know how much of this adaptation of the play differed from the books. "Not much!" was Ken's quick answer. However, there was an extra scene featuring a *deja vu* experience, which evolved as a direct result of an extra page being duplicated by a Xerox machine.

I wondered if it had broken any records. I'd once heard it postulated that it contained more simulated blow-jobs than any other drama in history. I also queried whether it had been presented in front of a Royal audience; who attended; and what did they think of the whole sordid conspiratorial business? But it seemed that regardless of RAW's enthusiasm in the classic *COSMIC TRIGGER*, the play was performed under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in name only.

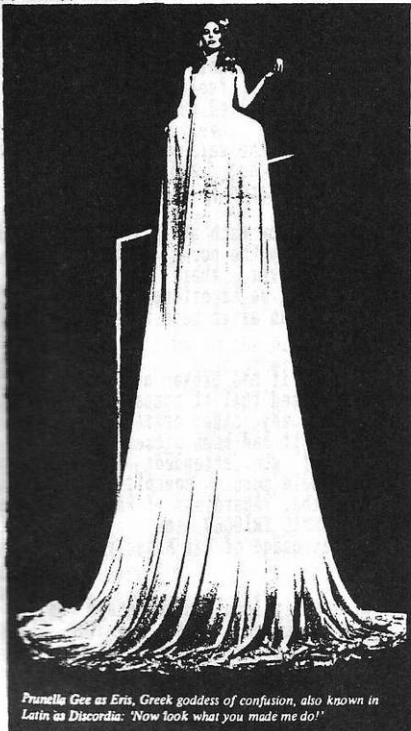
Mr. Wilson actually appeared on stage in a cameo role, as a butt-naked extra in the Black Mass chanting the Crowleyian magickal mantra "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law". However, it seems that he took the whole thing a bit too literally, and whilst his fellow actors (and actresses, of course!) were trying to remember not to fluff their lines, our Robert was enacting an age old ritual.

As Bob Shea was also present at some of these performances, I wondered if he too had decided to tread the boards. But it appears not. Apparently, he would rather write about such things rather than actually do them in front of a paying public.

As the consumption of Cannabis (particularly Kallisti Gold) and other illicit drugs is quite prevalent in the trilogy I wondered if any psychedelic chemicals were actually used during performances by the cast or the audience. The audience was (and still is) anyone's guess, but as far as Ken knew some members of the cast did partake of some sort of stimulant or psychedelic sacrament during the performances (and most probably before and afterwards!), but their usage sometimes aided but mostly abetted their personal performance (both on and off-stage!).

The fate and fortunes of the other cast members since those days has seen Chris Langham (George Dorn) doing advertisements for fish fingers, appearing in classic comedy series such as Spike Milligan's 'Q' series, Not the Nine O'clock News, and being involved in an astounding array of work, both in and out of the acting profession that has also meant that his surname now also adorns that toggled-widget type thing (Oh!! You mean a LANGHAM!!!) that you will almost certainly find at the end of most berets.

Sadly, David Rappaport (Markoff Chaney) committed suicide whilst out walking his dog when he was living and working in America. Out of the other members of the cast, very little is known. Jim Broadbent (Jim Cartwright) is involved in the National Theatre of Brent, and can also be seen acting in a number of productions, and Ken later produced a daughter called Daisy with Prunella Gee, who was Eris.



The play of *Illuminatus!* was also performed in Amsterdam, and in total ran for 5 performances (or possibly 4??). I questioned Ken if he had ever considered doing a follow-up show to *Illuminatus!* He admitted that he liked R.A. Wilson's *Masks of the Illuminati*, and had once considered doing that, but proposed a possible production of the forthcoming *The Bride of Illuminatus!* (which is currently

being written by Shea & Wilson as you read this). This extravaganza would take place in 1999 as this will be 23 years since the original play was opened in 1976. Surely, since the recent revivals of musicals such as *Hair* and *Grease*, why not revive yet another stage spectacular?

[Another significant reason why this penultimate year of the 20th Century should play host to such a venture include: May 1st 1999 being 223 years since Adam Weishaupt revived the *Illuminati* on 1/5/1776. Also if held in London it would commemorate 333 years since The Great Fire of London (333 being an extremely important number in cabbalistic terms, etc, etc, etc. Readers with any other theories should write them down on a scrap of flax-script and hide them safely in a cigar-box in your back garden, where our agents will contact you for further information regarding such important matters.]

Ken has an interest in Fortean phenomena, and has used such elements as synchronicity in the framework of his plays. In 1969 when he was doing the Ken Campbell Roadshow (with Bob Hoskins, Sylvester McCoy et al) he was incorporating Urban legends into the performance. I enquired about what other Fortean subjects he used.

KC: Yeah! We dramatized Urban Legends on the very first Roadshow. We called them Bar-room Tales. I was suddenly introduced to them by some bloke so we set about collecting them in order to perform a show based on them. It's the same thing as Science Fiction theatre in a way, except noticing something that's missing. They're uncriticisable, as long as you do them with a bit of flair. They're almost like sort of service; a folklore society but in low-comedy terms. The horror ones were something of a hit. Quite rough audiences actually don't mind a two-minute horror sketch. They go "WOW!! YEAH!!!"

We used to perform a lot in pubs, but not like you tend to do now, in rooms upstairs and all that. There weren't any rooms upstairs... Well, there were, but nobody ever thought of using them. Nor did we ever think of using them either. In fact this using of rooms upstairs originates from the Roadshow, because we used to perform in pubs, and people hearing about that assumed that we must be using these rooms upstairs. And so it started to be. We weren't originally known doing that! We also used to get bookings in Working Men's Clubs. I'm not sure if they still exist now quite like they did. They're fucking great big things, like aeroplane hangars. But Urban Legends didn't go down too well in Working Men's Clubs. You could really do nothing in Working Men's Clubs apart from sing standard songs, or tell rude jokes. That's about it! We wanted to conquer Working Men's Clubs with something that was neither of those things. It must be possible to do something... And it turned out... YEAH! There was... The ferrets down the trousers was a brilliant act!

It wasn't done as 'funny'. A man would come on and he would talk about ferrets. And then a ferret would be brought out. It would be shown around a thousand people, with its teeth bared, etcetera. I mean we used to get ten or twelve minutes out of this... It was only down his trousers for about forty-five seconds. Meanwhile, the audience would panic. It was a killer act that.

We got a book on stunts saying how to hammer a nail up your nose. How to do this. How to do that.

JQ: A bit like what The Jim Rose Circus Sideshow is doing now? Have you seen them at all?

KC: No... But, Yeah! Probably exactly the same...

JQ: You could even enroll as one of their performers, seeing as you can put six sink-plungers on your head and attach clothes-pegs to your eyebrows. [Also the application of false teeth and a Grouch Marx style penis-nose-and-spectacles novelty is not beyond Mr.Campbell's varied stage antics.]



KC: Hmm!

JQ: Right. Can you explain your involvement with Fortean Times?

KC: Well, I wrote a Fortean play called THE GREAT CAPER, which went on stage at the Royal Court. It's in the records there as the one that lost the most money there that year. It happened at the very same time as Bob Rickard launched his magazine, number one of THE NEWS then. He was really good. He supplied us with loads of photographs which had been enlarged to put on display. We really went to town, it was only the public that decided to stay away in droves. It had its enthusiasts. It had people who saw it several times, but it also had more than several people who never saw it once! There was another production of it that was done by the Hull Truck Company. Actually, a better production. That toured, and they did very well.

I was into Fortean things, and then there was a Fortean magazine. It wasn't one way or another. So, I've been one of their mates from the very beginning.

JQ: Can you tell me about the DISTANT HUMPS autobiographical play that you collaborated with FORTEAN TIMES stalwart Doc Shiels on? (see FT#23 page 5).

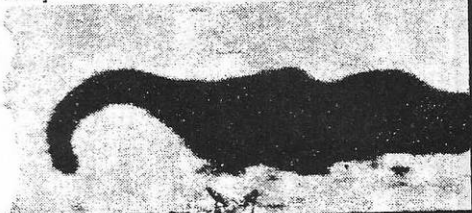
KC: DISTANT HUMPS! Yeah, that floundered due to drink. Mainly the prodigious amounts that the Doctor drinks. I felt it would be an unkindness to bring it to London. They'd worked it out as a little family show, but sadly I thought it wouldn't have made it. I'm a great enthusiast of Doc Shiels and the entire Shiels Clan, they're utterly enchanting people. I wouldn't have missed the time, but I felt the right decision was made in that instance. It was so off-the-wall that the way people could have responded to it would have been very wrong. I just couldn't envision it being a huge success. As a result of this I threw on a thing to fulfil the gig called PSYCHOSIS UNCLASSIFIED, which came out of a Theodore Sturgeon book called SOME OF YOUR BLOOD. We slung it together in a week, and very successful it was too!

JQ: What's your opinion on his photographs of the Loch Ness Monster? Do you think they were faked? Or don't you really care?

KC: I don't mind not knowing. To know for sure would be a destruction of Doc Shiels, you know. I don't see how you could ever know they were genuine anyway. Unless, you had a photograph of him taking a photograph of it. And even then, how would you ever really know? I think it's a splendid photo, and I hope that he earned a lot of money from it. And I hope he went down the pub with it and had a good time!

He's terrific! Doc Shiels is absolutely terrific! He became Irish when I knew him, even though he came from Halifax or something! But he decided to become an Irishman!

[The conversation then drifted onto the present whereabouts of the mysterious Doctor, and whether he still lives in a quaint little cottage down in Falmouth?]



WOULD YOU BUY A USED MONSTER PHOTO FROM THIS MAN?

JQ: The site of The Science Fiction Theatre of Liverpool which was chosen by Peter O'Hallaghan due to a number of coincidences (which we have already recounted) actually opened on the day that Jung died. (Also, there is a yellow submarine in Illuminatus!, and The Beatles who came from Liverpool sang "Yellow Submarine". Five actors were hurt during the Liverpool run, to fulfil the Law of Fives, etc.)

Anyway, surely synchronicity strikes again because in Robert Anton Wilson's COSMIC TRIGGER (which is dedicated to Ken Campbell) on page 223 he actually describes the stage play of Illuminatus!. So I wondered if Ken had encountered any other coincidences in his own life. [Also during the American premiere performance of Illuminatus! (which Ken didn't direct, for those of you who might have wondered) during November 1978 in Seattle, the Jonestown massacre occurred which shares an eerie resemblance to one of the scenes in the book/play - Where a lunatic messiah orders 3300 of his robot disciples to commit suicide by drinking cyanide. (Which was also the particular choice of poison that the Reverend Jim Jones duped over 900 of his automatons to drink in Guyana.)]

I tentatively probed Ken's interest in the occult. I wondered if he might be superstitious as he had opened up an angling umbrella (size 48, purchased from Don's Fishing Tackle Emporium in Edmonton just off from the North Circular) onstage in the previous night's performance and that didn't seem to have perturbed him at all. He remarked that he had also mentioned "THE SCOTTISH PLAY" [MACBETH], and anyway "The usual rules don't apply to me. I'm special and okay!"

JQ: Have you seen any UFOs?

KC: Well I might have done, but I assume they were geese! I identified them, or at least assumed that they were identifiable in some means. I remember seeing things in the sky, but I didn't think that they were from aliens frankly... I've got two sets of chums you see... If I go up to Loch Ness and meet Neil Oram who wrote The Warp, he's fully into 'the aliens have landed and they're wicked'. He's not so much into friendly Space Brothers now, but more like vats of blood and anaemic aliens coming to syphon the goodness out of us, rip cattle up, and so on. And all of this seems very persuasive when you're with him, but then if I go and visit Gerry Web of the Space Consultancy, or if I'm up with the guys with the observatory looking at far way galaxies and we're talking about aliens: NONE HAVE LANDED ANYWHERE!!!

Or if I'm talking to Doctor Jack Cohen... Now, he's really into aliens. He runs alien workshops, but from a biologist's point of view. He'll just say, "Well, let's design a planet. Like this... like that... like this... like that that that, yeah!?! But what life would it have? It would have to be according to the principles of the Universe... a duh de duh da dah de dah..."

And they would work out what lifeform it might have... If you ask him, "Are there any that have landed?" He'll reply, "Oh! I love those stories, but... No! I don't think so, because as described they couldn't be!" He's got vast collections of paintings of aliens. He's a very good man. If you ever really want to get the real hard blow on aliens, then you should visit Neil Oram, get fully paid up knowledge of the vats of blood and everything from him, and then go to see Jack Cohen. Then you'd be armed with a lot of questions...

JQ: Are you a fully-paid up member of any sinister or nefarious cults that we should know or not know about?

KC: Yeah! I subscribe to HOAX! magazine!

JQ: Then you're not the head of the Illuminati then?

KC: No, but then again I might have been co-opted without my awareness.

JQ: Do you have any favourite conspiracy theories?

KC: Ah! Well, my own at the moment. I feel quite proud of the ones that are in JAMAIS VU which I put together. There are two which are interesting there that I put together. One is that the Ice Age is imminent. I didn't suddenly make that up, and say "Oh!! There's an Ice Age coming!!!" There's a lot of writing about this. The need for it often. We should welcome it as well, because of the re-mineralisation and all of the stuff like that. If it IS imminent there will be a bunch of people who would sort out what you would do, because not everyone needs to snuff it at all, because they didn't before. Obviously, London wouldn't be a very good place to be, but Iraq might if you could water it a bit. And, the way to water it is in Ed Regis' book called GREAT MAMBO CHICKEN AND THE TRANSHUMAN CONDITION. Do you know that book?

JQ: Er, no... [Thinking that no such book of such title possibly exists ever!]

KC: Aw! You should get it! It's published by Penguin. GREAT MAMBO CHICKEN AND THE TRANSHUMAN CONDITION by Ed Regis, Science on The Edge. He goes

and meets the real practitioners of stuff. Cryonics! Bong! It's there... Nanotechnology! Bong! It's there... The old L5 Society.. WOW! The recreational bombers of California... FUCK!! It's a terrific read, and it was there that I got the plans for blasting 17½ billion gallons of the Amazon across the South Atlantic courtesy of 150 ft diameter heavy plastic piping held to the ocean bottom by cement ballast. BUT, I put in "Why do you think there's this trend to recycle plastic all of a sudden? The stuff used to be a menace. Now we need all that we can get!" So that's like an authenticating detail for a concept that was only in planning stages in the book.

[Here I interjected and told Ken about the alleged conspiracy involving Aerosol manufacturers and BFCs. Whilst Ken elucidated about Johnny Speight's theory concerning, "How one month you have to eat butter and not margarine, and the following month you are told to eat margarine and not butter" (for butter replace with dangerous aerosol can, and margarine replace with roll-on deodorant). It all finally boils down to who bribes the experts well enough...]



JQ: Where were you when Kennedy was shot? And who do you think shot him? (and Why?....)

KC: Covent Garden in the old days, when it was a fruit market. I was having a cup of tea with Terry Rigby, an actor. And a bloke who ran a stall, when it came over the radio, he just went FFUUCKK!!! You could only spell it F-AA-AARK!!!

JQ: Of course, you were only 22 at the time. You weren't 23 yet!

KC: Was I? Fuck! I didn't have a bloody clue about it! I thought Oliver Stone's film was terrific. A bloody marvellous film! If you can see it on a BIG screen, it's a BIG screen movie! And it's a film, as opposed to a movie really. The way that he uses film, magnifying frames and so on, it's really wizard. The way he films the putitive Oswald, so Oswald is in monochrome but in a coloured sequence. It's got so many things in it which are just interesting as a film.

[At this point I informed Ken about the hidden subliminals which are allegedly integrated within the framework of the film JFK as discovered by Dean Grace in the Feral House book SECRET AND SUPPRESSED.]

KC: Brilliant! Really?! Yeah! I believe it! Do you know the book FLICKER by Theodore Roszack?

JQ: (Somewhat despondently) Nope.

KC: Well, that you HAVE to get! Now, that is right in your area! Absolutely! And it speaks of that having been done for years in films.

STONKS
/reunions

JQ: In the original version of THE EXORCIST it's claimed that they subliminally added the sounds of tortured animals into the film's soundtrack and also cut in scenes of road crashes. All this just to add a bit of extra melodrama to the horrific proceedings.

KC: Yeah! Well, that's fair enough with that sort of subliminal being used there. FLICKER's a great read. It explains in detail how these things are done. It may well be a hoax book, but it's one of those great impermeable books, like ILLUMINATUS!, where you'd have to do the same amount of research as they did to come to the same conclusion. Actually it's thinking of things like that, that remind me of the opening bit of JAMAIS VU when I say "a mixture of truth and lie, fantasy and research so inscrutably compounded..."

I'd say of that genre FLICKER is probably the best. In it's own way it tops ILLUMINATUS! as a coherent piece for sure, not saying that ILLUMINATUS! is an incoherent book, but ILLUMINATUS! wanders into daftness quite considerably in my opinion. It's not all as good as it's great bits.

JQ: But surely when you're dealing with works that involve a large amount of research and detail the process can become never-ending. Like in your performance last night you were doing a monologue concerning the Dianagate tapes, and I don't know if you realized it, but Diana gets called Darling 23 times on them. So... the number of new permutations of coincidences and consequences is limitless.

KC: Yeah!

♥ **JAMES GILBEY - the man who called Princess Di "darling" 23 times on the famous Squidgygate tape - will shock her today with an amazing collection of X-rated Valentine cards.**

JQ: Have you done many adverts on TV?

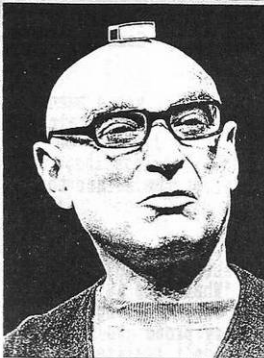
KC: NO... I have done a few, but not many. I played the Devil in a Kit-Kat advert. That was the best one. I sort of approved of the product. I did another one for Parcel Force. I didn't particularly know much about the product there. I just sort of did it.

JQ: What was it like acting in the soap-opera Brookside up in Liverpool recently?

KC: Oh! Very good! The thing was at the same time I was working on JAMAIS VU, so I didn't have any time to really arse around in Liverpool. It was very pleasant working with the Brookside folk, but a lot of it is getting on a train and going to Liverpool and then coming back from Liverpool, and so what you have to do is be very positive about train journeys. Itake a load of stuff, which is mainly due to having to be on a train from three to six hours a day sometimes. I might be doing some more work with them in the future.

JQ: What's your relationship with the media like?

KC: Alright I suppose! I haven't heard from John Birt! (Who, for all those reading that don't pay attention to any media, or live in faraway lands, is the current Director General of the British Broadcasting Corporation) I'm a bit disappointed, I must say, with the reviews of JAMAIS VU. Perhaps I didn't make it as clear as I was intending. I thought it was more amusing to be a fan of John Birt.



[I then told Ken about Birt's mysterious disappearance from London immediately after his appointment when he reportedly had sneaked away to his holiday home situated in a remote part of Wales (not far from the HOAX! HQ) where television reception is virtually nil. If the fact that such a media mogul can't even receive his own corporation's output wasn't ironic enough, it is doubly bizarre that no-one could find any trace of him. However, it should also be noted that Salman Rushdie lived in a cottage in these very parts for many months during his post-Fatwah period without even raising a single batter of an eyelid!...]

JQ: Have you had any complaints from Jeremy Paxman or Prince Philip then, as they appear in your trilogy of plays?

KC: No. I don't see why. What have they got to complain about? Tell me what they might complain about...

JQ: Well, maybe being seen in an stupid or unfavourable light. Similar to something like the television series Spitting Image tries to accomplish.

KC: I don't think they are seen in a stupid light really. I mean, my account of John Birt talking live to Jeremy Isaacs is factual and spot on. That's what it was like. The carry-on after that... So what! If he thinks about it at all John Birt would know that there are people who think they're him, because there's a load of people who do think that their radios and TVs talk to them. And, that style of schizophrenic, if they've already moved into that stage of delusion starting to think that they're somebody else then they would go to the top of the media tree. They would take an interest in these things. So they would think that they're John Birt, or Janet Street-Porter. I don't know who the fuck they might think that they are. If you're a military loon you might think that you're the Duke of Wellington or Napoleon. Or if you're religiously inclined you may think that you're Jesus. I mean that's neither here nor there. It's just an adventure. Going off to meet someone who thinks that he's him, and anyway he doesn't think that he's him and he just keeps his mind in a box.

JQ: So do you think that there's many people about who think that they're Billy Connolly then?

KC: Well, I don't know. But my friend Elizabeth Valinsky who was at the performance yesterday, who's comedienne and does interviews on the television in the States and everything. She interviewed a guy who thinks that he's Lauren Bacall, and when she interviewed him she was never allowed to say that he wasn't Lauren Bacall. He was Lauren Bacall.

[I then told Ken about the rather unusual way in which I unexpectedly came across Billy Connolly's home phone number.]

KC: Isn't it weird how Billy Connolly has been omitted from the paperback edition (of a certain book about the Royal Family)

JQ: It'd be interesting to contact the author to find out the reason why...

KC: Aaahh! The author didn't know. At least that's what he says. He came to see the show, and WOW! once he saw that revealed he thought, "What else is going to come out!" He said that it was very exciting. HA! HA! HA! And he said that he was very proud to have written a Gant's Hill book. He didn't realize that was what he was doing.

Actually, I think that anyone who comes to see the shows and gets mentioned in them tends to like it.

JQ: Yeah! It's almost quite illuminating in a way.

KC: Yes. Well, I don't say anything worse about the Royal Family than what's published in the papers. I just do say it. But, it seems to me if you're talking about saving them then you've got to have the extremes really. It amuses me how there's two twin tales going through the media establishment. "Thou shalt loathe John Birt. Thou shalt get rid of the Royal Family with all haste." Which even if we don't think that, that's what we are told that we should be thinking. So it was my anarchic bent that led me to be saved by John Birt in the jungles and to witness the hologrammatic appearance of bums and things, all of which clearly shocked me! And then to wind up being a fully paid up Pilipantist, with thoughts of bringing back this regenerating new trinity that I'd found in the South Pacific.

JQ: Is it quite easy to learn Pidgin English?

KC: Yeah! It's easy to learn as you fall in love with the language immediately.

JQ: But aren't there only 800 words?

KC: No. There's more than that really. There's only about 800 basic ones that you need. It's the spelling that really puts you off. The French took a great delight in making it loony.

[Ken then rummaged about in his Marsh Desk and found a copy of the Island News and competently translated a few articles.]

JQ: What percentage of the population speak the language?

KC: Oh! A really, really good number!

JQ: So it is their first language then.

KC: Yeah! For some of them it is.

JQ: It's a bit like Esperanto on acid!

KC: Well, I think that it's got a lot more going for it than Esperanto, because it's so engaging. It's an automatic Esperanto that evolved.

JQ: An intuitive Esperanto almost.

KC: Well, yeah! They got it from hearing the general way that English was and that was the way that they talked to each other. But, when they talk to each other in Pidgin it's very difficult to understand.

You really need to be there for a few weeks in order to pick it all up. However, they can understand you if you speak it as near as you can. They can then talk back a little bit like you do and make it easy.

JQ: Do any pop records sung in Pidgin English exist or are there just ritual chants and things like that?

KC: Well, the song that we play at the end of the show is a sort of Pidgin hymn. There's not many pop groups there, but there are recordings of people singing in Pidgin for sure, and I've got some on video tapes.

JQ: In the show last night I was sorely tempted to throw a pair of socks at you, but I thought that I might be thrown out! [The reason being that at one point in the show Ken shares his extensive knowledge of socks with the audience, and tells of the time when a sock was thrown at him onstage.]

KC: Oh! You should've done. I would've exchanged a pair of computerized socks with you. [And if you want to know what a pair of such socks are like don't watch Tomorrow's World, just attend one of Ken's shows!]

JQ: Can you recount for our readers the story about your Royal Dickensian Company hoax?

KC: Yeah! A one-time girlfriend of mine who I hadn't seen for quite a time I noticed was in the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of Nicholas Nickleby, so I went to see her. It was in two-halves, so I booked to see the one-half one week, and the second half the other. After it we went out for a meal and she was talking about Roger Rees (who played Nicholas Nickleby) who had put a fruit bowl in his dressing room so that the queue of people who were waiting to congratulate him could have a bit of fruit while they were expecting their turn to meet him. A very nice idea! And she had found a banana in Soho which you just touch and it turns into a penis, and so she had put it in his fruit bowl. And, I was very impressed! [Apparently, the cast had been told at rehearsals to adopt the style of The Ken Campbell Road Show in their approach to parts of the play. Although, Ken sat in the front row, and enjoyed what he saw, any possible links with his own Roadshow totally escaped him.]



Royal Dickens Theatre

Stratford upon Avon Warwickshire CV37 6BB
Telephone: (0789) 296655
Box Office Telephone: (0789) 292271

14th July, 1980

Dear Terry,

I'm sorry to spring this on you but I have instituted a major policy change. The whole experience of "Nicholas Nickleby" was such a source of joy and inspiration - in fact it was for me a spiritual cleansing - that I am clear in what has to be done. Our many fine Dickensian actors must no longer be tied to this endless wheel of Shakespeare revivals. Someone said this at some meeting or other. Who was it?

I divined that our break with the bard should be sudden and clear, which is why I didn't bother discussing it with you.

I'm sure the potential audience for lively Dickens in fact far exceeds that for the Bard. And let's face it Terry - it's such more FUN!

Love,

Trev

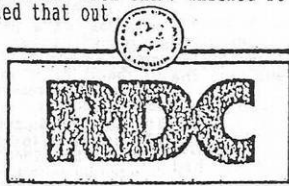
also in Stratford upon Avon at The Other Place and in London at the Aldwych Theatre and The Warehouse.

Royal Dickens Company

JOINT ARTISTIC DIRECTORS Terry Hands Trevor Nunn
DIRECTOR Peggy Ashcroft JOHN BARTON Peter Brook Terry Hands Trevor Nunn
Royal Dickens Theatre incorporated under Royal Charter. MAJESTY HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
PRESIDENT Sir Harold Wilson CHAIRMAN Sir Kenneth Clark VICE CHAIRMAN Dennis L. Flower

Actually, I thought that the show was terrific and decided to write a letter. So I sat down to write this letter, but every time I wrote something it looked like it had been written by a prick. But then got this idea about the Royal Dicken's Company, that they would sling out Shakespeare and concentrate on Dickens as there's as much if not more written by him. It seemed to me that the fellow was possibly superior. His novels were better plays than Shakespeare's plays.

So... Next I rang up Richard Adams of Open Head Press and asked him how long it would take to redo a Royal Shakespeare letterhead so that it read Royal Dicken's Company. He said about an hour if you can get an original. So, I found somebody who had just received a letter from them, whisked it over to him and he sorted that out.



Royal Dickens Theatre

Then, there were two more people involved, both good friends of mine, Dave Hill and Terry Johnson. Dave and I composed the letters. What Terry Johnson did was he'd seen Nicholas Nickleby and he'd just read Little Dorrit, and so was responsible for the casting. The letters to the cast were exactly the same format except for the last sentence. It explained because the performance had been such a great success that was it for the bard as far as current commitments decently permit.

When all this happened in 1980, the RSC seemed to be permanently in the red. As this play had been such a source of real joy to the cast, staff and audiences, it therefore came as no surprise when information announcing forthcoming productions showed a heavy Dickensian bias. The next production under this new banner was billed as being Little Dorrit, adapted by Snoo Wilson, and directed by Trevor Nunn and John Caird (who had co-directed the previous play).



Royal Dickens Theatre

14th July, 1980

Stratford upon Avon Warwickshire CV37 6BB
Telephone: (01827) 25655
Box Office Telephone: (01827) 252271

Dear Roy,

As you have probably heard there has been a major policy change in our organisation.

"Nicholas Nickleby" has been such a source of real joy to cast, staff and audiences that we have decided to turn to Dickens as our main source of inspiration.

As someone said at a recent meeting, 'why tie so many fine Dickensian directors and actors to this endless wheel of Shakespeare revivals?'

I am convinced that Dickens will prove as big a draw as Shakespeare, if we can keep up this terrific standard.

So that'll be it for the bard as soon as our present commitments decently permit.

The first production of the new RDC is hoped to be "Little Dorrit", adapted by Snoo Wilson and directed by John Caird and myself.

Looking forward to chatting to you about the fiscal situation - after all, these spectacles aren't cheap.

Love, *Trev*

Hope to get together with the Minister soon at the Pickwick Club to discuss the ins and outs. Hope you'll be able to join us.

also in Stratford upon Avon at The Other Place and in London at the Aldwych Theatre and The Warehouse.

Royal Dickens Company
JOINT ARTISTIC DIRECTORS: Terry Hands, Trevor Nunn
DIRECTIONS: Peggy Ashcroft, John Barton, Peter Brook, Terry Hands, Trevor Nunn
ROYAL DICKENS THEATRE: Incorporated under Royal Charter. Patron: Her Majesty the Queen
PRESIDENT: Sir Harold Wilson. Chairman: Sir Kenneth Clark. VICE CHAIRMAN: Dennis L. Flower

Letters on the headed note-paper were sent to everyone, each signed "Love Trev" (something Trevor Nunn would never do, according to Ruth Kaplan of the RSC Press office) asking them to join in the exciting venture. Dispatches went out to the appointed cast and the in-house directors. We had to do a bit of research and find out what the predilections of each particular person was, where their talents lay. Terry was very helpful as he knew a lot about Dickens and knew what sort of book they could adapt, how it might be without pressuring them, etc. And, we enjoyed that so much we thought that more people should know about this, so we then started writing to directors who we knew more.

As these missives were presumably thought to from the Royal Shakespeare Company's joint artistic Director, Trevor Nunn. Norman St. John Stevas, the then minister for Arts was told that the success of Nicholas Nickleby had inspired them to take the bold step of the name change and the inevitable acceptance of the works of Dickens as their principal fare. Director John Barton, well known for his 'interpolated classics' was invited to complete Dickens' unfinished novel, The Mystery of Edwin Drood. And Michael Bogdanov, known in the business as Bodge, was offered Dickens' Sketches by Boz (and asked if he could possibly include circus stunts in his adaptation of the classic). Peter Cheeseman was kindly asked to submit his ideas to do a production of Martin Chuzzlewit. Max Stafford-Clark was asked to attempt Barnaby Rudge (providing that his sparse, clear directorial style could capture the whole sweep of the book with the aid of no more than six chairs and a plank). Bill Gascott was offered The Uncommercial Traveller (which would be adapted by Edward Bond), as clearly the juxtapositioning of the figurative and literal seemed to be ideally suited to his ample talents. Ron was asked to consider David Rudkin's adaptation of David Copperfield as an option. The reactions of Howard were sought concerning A Christmas Carol, whilst Richard and Trevor Griffiths were sought to work on A Tale of Two Cities. Barry was asked what writers he would like to work with to produce Pictures from Italy. Lindsay Anderson was tentatively approached to put on a production of The Old Curiosity Shop, as it was felt that his cool, intelligent approach was badly needed. Bill was asked to carry out a production of The Pickwick Papers (as the prospect of a script by Keith Dewhurst and music provided by The Albion Band really helped fire the imagination of the fictional Mr Nunn). Meanwhile, a letter to Mike offered twenty-three actors for a seventeen-week rehearsal period in the Spring of 1982 if he was prepared to take on the challenge of Bleak House. As well as contacting scores of directors, many actors were also enlisted in on the scam.

Peter Hall was not impressed at all by the letter that he had received (after swallowing it hook, line and sinker assuming it to be genuine) and considered it in very bad taste.

The response to this new venture was mixed, and a highly embarrassed Trevor Nunn had to report to the press on the company's apparent radical change of policy (and hastily called in the Special Branch, believing that it was an inside job). Some of those whose help had been sought had refused point blank, while others seemed only too willing to help. [Newspaper reports covering the hoax grandly exaggerated the affair, saying that 'thousands of sheets' of RDC notepaper had been printed, and that 'hundreds of letters' had been sent out. Clever Trevor was reported as saying: "It is deeply embarrassing; a lot of people have written to me

refusing, or, even more embarrassing, accepting the offers.]

JQ: So how did you eventually get found out?

KC: By Newsnight, some months later... About six months later they did an interview with a bemused Trevor Nunn which looked into the whole hoax, a whole little feature, and at the end of it they said, "Right! What would you say if you ever met the perpetrator of this?" And in no humour at all he said, "I would throw down the gauntlet." (He had assumed that the whole hoax has gone global and letters had been sent across Europe, etc.) But, what he didn't know was that they had previously phoned me up accusing me of it, I initially said, "No, it wasn't me... But, ring me back in a few hours and I'll look into it for you and see if I can find anything."

So, I then rang up Richard Adams and he said that I should say, "Fair cop, guy!", and then I rang up Dave Hill, and he said, "Deny! Deny!" And so I had a choice then, the casting vote was what should I do with my life at that point. And, so eventually I said, "Yeah! It was me," and they asked if I'd go onto Newsnight that night up in Manchester, and I said, "Yeah... O.K." But, what was quite interesting was they filmed me in sort of terrorist type lighting (lighted from behind thereby revealing a sinister silhouette) for some time, so you still didn't know exactly who it was.

JC: So they actually revealed your persona live on the programme then?

KC: Yeah! That's why I did it really. I didn't have any particular reason for doing it. I didn't want to get Susan involved, I couldn't just say that it had been as a result of having dinner with Susan! I just talked drivel. I was a bit pissed actually! I don't think I said anything of any great importance... At the end the guy said, "Well, I don't know about all that..." referring to whatever it was that I had said, "But I think that it's a damn fine idea!" HA! HA! HA! HA! And Lindsay Anderson said later that what was so terrific was that it was such a good idea. You know, one would really have admired the RSC if they really had done that! HA! HA! HA! It was a better idea than what they were into... HA! HA!

JQ: You should really do something else like that. So now you could be on Newsnight with Jeremy Paxman to see what his reaction would be like.

KC: Hmm! Yeah, that would be interesting. The other thing that's worth saying is that we also had posters designed by Richard Adams. I don't know how many of them exist now, but they were beautiful posters. We plastered them all up one night before the last performance of Nicholas Nickleby at the Aldwych Theatre. They had all the names of the cast of Little Dorrit in the same style as the RSC uses. They were superb.

Theatre director admits Dickens

Ken Campbell, the writer and theatre director, admitted yesterday that he was responsible for the spoof in which the Royal Shakespeare Company was metamorphosed into the Royal Dickens Company, and actors and directors invited to work on productions for the new company.

Speaking on the BBC 2 television programme, Newsnight, he said he had been inspired by the excellence of the RSC's adaptation of Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*. "I wanted

Dickens of a hoax played on the RSC

Shakespeare's name stands absurdly too high and will go down, Lord Byron said in 1814. This month it looked as if the Bard had finally been toppled from his pinnacle by the unlikely contender of a novelist, Charles Dickens.

The Royal Shakespeare Company's success with its Dickens adaptation *Nicholas Nickleby* has brought the company more than just an unfulfilled clamour for tickets; it has also given rise to a hoax that is causing much embarrassment in the theatre world.

Trevor Nunn, the RSC's joint artistic director, said yesterday that someone, whose identity they could not discover, had produced thousands of sheets of headed writing paper, immaculately printed in exactly the company's style. But instead of RSC at the top, the note paper said RDC — Royal Dickens Theatre.

"On this notepaper, the hoaxer has written to hundreds of people working in the theatre, offering them the chance to do productions with this new company, which has abandoned Shakespeare." Each letter has been sent as if from Mr Nunn, signed "Love, Trev".

"It is now deeply embarrassing; a lot of people have written to me refusing, or, even more embarrassing, accepting the offers", Mr Nunn said.

He said the people were chosen very carefully: thus John Barton, well known for his adaptations of Shakespeare and Greek tragedies, was asked to finish *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*; Michael Bogdanov, known as Bodge, was asked to direct *Sketches by Boz*. Other letters went to such disparate people as Sir Roy Shaw, secretary-general of the Arts Council, and Peter Cheeseman, who runs the Victoria Theatre at Stoke-on-Trent.

One letter sent to Mr Norman St John-Stevas, Minister for the Arts, read:

"I am writing to alert the world to it." So he decided on the hoax, which he said only took a couple of days to prepare despite the skill with which the new letterheadings and posters were designed.

Mr Campbell, known for his comic performances on stage and his mammoth science fiction productions, said he was surprised by the success of the hoax, which convinced theatre people to take seriously the offers of work for the "Royal Dickens Theatre".

Dear Minister—As you have probably heard there has been a major change of policy in our organization.

Nicholas Nickleby has been such a source of real joy to cast, staff and audience that we have decided to turn to Dickens as our main source of inspiration.

As someone said at a recent meeting, why tie so many fine Dickensian directors and actors in this endless wheel of Shakespeare revivals?

I am convinced that Dickens will prove as big a draw as Shakespeare, if we can keep up this terrific standard.

So I shall be it for the hard as soon as our present commitments decently permit.

The first production of the new RDC is hoped to be *Little Dorrit*, adapted by Snoo Wilson and directed by John Caird and myself. Any thoughts you have on this will, as always, be treasured.

Love TREV PS. Perhaps we could get together for lunch some time soon to discuss this. The Pickwick Club would seem appropriate!

The hoax has now gone a stage farther, with staff at the Aldwych Theatre in London arriving one morning to find that every Nicholas Nickleby poster had been covered by another, in exactly the RSC house style, advertising the future production of *Little Dorrit*.

Mr Nunn explained, somewhat wearily, that no new Dickens adaptations were scheduled.

A few days ago Mr Nunn received a smart packet containing copies of a selection of the hoax letters. At the end of the collection was a separate note, a quotation from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*:

As you from crimes would pardon'd be

Let your indulgence set me free.

A Dickens of a hoax on RSC

Actors fooled by Dickens of a hoax



Ken Campbell

JQ: Have you been responsible for any other pranks you can tell us about? Whether while still at school, during your life, or at work, etc...

KC: No, but I'll tell you a funny thing though. A few years after doing that I was passing a bookshop on Havistock Hill, and I saw this book, Richard Boston's Book of Hoaxes. And, I thought... "Well, I think I'll get that, maybe it's about time for another hoax." And, I opened it and there's a whole chapter devoted to mine. [It is also granted a mention in the books Heroic Hoaxes by Andrew Mound, and the tome Hoaxers and their Victims penned by Nick Yapp.]

In a certain sense, my pranks these days take form in the framework of my shows. JAMAIS VU is something of a prank, but it's also a monologue. I'm prankfully interested you might say! That Re/Search book is awfully good, particularly the one about the chicken...

JQ: Ah! Yes, Blinky... A classic prank for sure! [For more data on this see F.T.#53 p23]

[Another prank that Ken once instigated has never been discovered (as yet!) This involved a semi-fictional letter which was sent to a friend. Whether it worked or not, we can only speculate. This is how he recounts the story in WOOD - WOO - WO.]

The standard of chat going from gig to gig in the car was high. (1987/88 "Science Fiction Blues" Tour; me, Brian, and Petronilla Whitfield.)

Sometimes Brian would tell his tales of liberating Burma. Then I would indulge in unspoken happy memories of my Burmese chum, by that time long gone her own way. She'd gone her own way shortly after I'd bought her a dog. Chloe, she'd called it. Chloe was besotted with my own dog, Werner. But even so, chum had gone her own way.

Salisbury Arts Centre.
I was giving them "The Expensive Delicate Ship":
" - and I saw other faces, faces of animals, all staring helplessly across the churning waters -
and at that moment, - Whooosh!
Some joker had let off a rocket.
And there's the helpless, frightened face of Werner, scrambling to make it to me under the wings curtaining, but grabbed and grappled backwards by anonymous arms.

Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire. Village Pub.
They'd kept it open late for us to have an after-show meal.
And drinking late was an ex-miner.
And his dog.
Dustbin.
Dustbin was very fat and very black and was possibly once a Labrador.
Ex-miner to dog: "Tell us a story, we want you to tell us a story, Dustbin, we've got a very famous author here, Dustbin, so tell us a story, we want your story, Dustbin - " and on and on in this vein.
Eventually Dustbin rolls on his back.
Ex-miner manipulates Dustbin's belly with his feet:
"Tell us your story now, Dustbin, tell it now, your story, Dustbin, we're waiting for your story - "
Suddenly, Dustbin sits up and tells us a story.
Strange accent. Halifax influence. Also Geordie.
Difficult to make out the words.
Deep voice. As if talking through cotton wool.
But a constructed tale. Horror Genre.
Ghastly shapes seen through smoke -

The ilk of banshees certainly figuring -
Spectral manifestations in mists.
Often long sentences of a Lovecrafty fogginess.
Then the climax: "Woo - woo - wo!" - clearly, by its delivery, an expression of something most dear - lost.

Applause and cheers.
The performance had, to put it mild, been awesome.
Ex-miner says that Dustbin will now expect crisps. He gets them.
Then Petronilla comes out of the toilet.
She's missed it all.
Brian asks for a repeat performance is possible, for Petronilla.
Ex-miner says that Dustbin will never tell the same story twice in an evening.

Brian: "Really, any story will do..."
The whole rigmarole again.
"They want another story now, Dustbin, another story" etc. Dustbin again o his back, belly manipulation, and then bolt upright, but this time a tale in light-hearted vein, a story involving periods of waiting, then whooosh! into action, - jumping implied and prancing and bounding.
Accent now north of the border.
Delivery: that of an engaging amateur clown, - fun, self-conscious.
Bit like Ian Banks.
Ex-miner: (at conclusion) "That were the one about the rabbits."
From then on, hysterical, totally, all of us.
(If only the Burmese chum could have been there. I found myself laughing with her laughter: the laughter of waterfalls.)

Back in our Hotel, Brian, wet eyed with awe, giggling, -
(I think he was back on the cigars)
and now the great man's tittering. Tee-heeing.
"What we miss living in the city! Woo - woo - wo!"

"LIVING WONDERS - Mysteries and Curiosities of the Animal World by John Michell and Robert J.M.Rickard," Thames and Hudson 1982:

Lancer, the talking dog of Dallas Texas. Apparently very useful to his owner Mr Gerald Wright, president of a cosmetic company "because he can charm the ladies at work by learning and speaking their names." But "his voice sounds muddy, as though his mouth were stuffed with cotton."

And from Australia report of dog "whose spoken phrases included "Hello Mum!" and "Here I am, Mum", as well as a word often heard in masculine company and not in the ladies' presence... A peculiar feature of this talking Australian fox-terrier was its background, which was ecclesiastical. It's owner was the Diocesan Registrar of Newcastle, New South Wales. There was cause for laughter, therefore, when Australian scientists advanced the conventional explanation for the animal's power of speech, that it was a 'conditioned reflex', meaning that the dog had picked up its vocabulary from its environment. The Evening Standard made a perceptive comment on this diagnosis:

"This shows how stupid scientists can be. It is just conceivable that a Diocesan Registrar, on occasions of rare stress, might utter a word unfit for ladies to hear. But that he should be given, with such frequency as to condition a dog, to saying: "Here I am Mum", surpasses belief. No man who called his mother "Mum" could rise to even moderate eminence in the Anglican Church".

Arli, The English setter owned by Thomas Mann's daughter, Elizabeth. "To communicate with Arli she designed a special typewriter with keys about two inches wide, big enough so that he could push them down with his nose..."

Need for an Arli! - Be Dustbin's secretary.

But Chris! Learn Chris, seekers! Part beagle-mongrel, (1950-62) who could "count, add, subtract, multiply, divide, spell, do square root, cube root, and solve for an unknown in algebra..."

On one occasion two engineers from the Du Pont Company set the dog a complicated mathematical problem which they thought up on the spur of the moment without themselves knowing the answer to it. While they worked out the answer to their own question, Chris pondered it. After four minutes he was ready with the answer. The engineers took note of it and went on with their calculations. It took them ten minutes to solve the problem, and the answer they arrived at was the same as that which Chris had just dictated...

He (Chris) made a few television and stage appearances on behalf of animal charities, but he was never exploited or made to work when he did not want to. He spent most of his time like other dogs, wandering off with canine friends, barking at cats and chasing cars...

Reports of his talents reached the great Dr. J.B. Rhine of Duke University, North Carolina, famous for his ESP experiments, and two researchers from Duke, Dr. Cadoret and Dr. Pratt, went up to Rhode Island to run tests on him...

Chris got a score of 104 in a series in which 55 is the most likely chance score."

Time I heard from the Burmese chum. Decided to attempt to prompt reaction from her by sending the following letter:

May Myanga
My Ayaing
6, (9?) a) Alanfore
b) Blandfor (de) Avenue,
(0) XFORD.
Try 6 Blandford Avenue.

(From 10th May 1986 until end

of June at least!)

c/o Dr. R. Chapman,

64, Watson Avenue,

Rose Park,

Adelaide,

South Australia.

30th April
Dear (May Myanga)
(My Ayaing),

I hope you exist(!) and that this letter gets to you. I enquired of the Oxford Dictionary Enquiries but they didn't have either of the above names.

My name is Doris Whittleton and I am the daughter of Dr. Pratt who investigated "Chris" for the Rhine Institute in the late 50's (see p112 of enclosed photostats).

Our dog, Rusty, is the great-great-great-etc! grandson of "Chris". Rusty can make small additions and subtractions (tapping his little paw on our arms, just like Chris), and has a shaky concept of multiplication.

Almost a year ago Kirsty got the hang of the alphabet, and thus we can now in some measure converse. On some three occasions he has dictated letters including the addresses. All were to people unknown to myself or my husband. The first letter was returned but the second arrived safely, much to our excitement. Although the messages made little sense to us, the amazed recipients were able to make some sense of the information.

The message Rusty has for you is:-

CHLA SE WERNK IN

and asked to repeat it:-

CHL SE WURMA

Myself and husband (and Rusty!) are leaving for Australia next Tuesday and until the 26th of June we will certainly be resident at Dr. Chapman's.

If our darling Rusty's little message does get to you we'd be delighted to hear from you.

When I was a little girl I was often throwing bottles with messages in them into brooks, rivers, and seas. Mr Walker, currently Moscow correspondent of the English "Guardian" newspaper, who I have now kept in touch with for twenty years, was one, and really the most wonderful one, of the only three who replied to my messages in bottles.

I fear we have taken up too much of your time. (If you exist) of course if you don't exist it doesn't matter. But I think you do!) Rusty is wagging very excitedly, God bless you and love.

Sincerely,

Doris Whittleton.

Quite a bit later Burmese chum rings me. Doesn't mention dog letter, though, and nor do I. Invites me to her wedding.

Good do.
Lots of waterfall laughing.
(Wooo - woo - wo!)

JQ: Can you tell me how you ended working up with the band Test Dept? As you appear in one of their videos.

KC: AH! Yeah! I gave a lecture at Goldsmith's College on the Exhilaration of Working in a New Form (and you know it's got rules, but you don't know what they are). And Angus from the band was quite inspired by that and started him off with Test Dept, and so he rang me up and asked me to be in the video. It's as simple as that. It's the first time that I've been a proper fan of a music. A bunch of us always went to these Test Dept gigs, they were bloody extraordinary. Really, really, excellent! Unmissable, all of them!

JQ: Have you collaborated with any other bands, because there's the song Buster Bloodvessel from Bad Manners wrote about your nose?

KC: Well, they just did that for me, but not strictly speaking. Bands have been formed for productions, but those were those bands...



JQ: There were bands in ILLUMINATUS! weren't there?

KC: Yeah! Musicians... But as far as an existing band that gets together, etc... No, not really!

JQ: Is there anything else that you'd like to blatantly plug, or mention here now before the interview ends?



KC: Well, I wouldn't mind if you could mention that PIGSPURT and FURTIVE NUDIST are in print and that JAMAIS VU will be published soon by Methuen.

JQ: And the CLOWN plays for children and SKUNGPOOMERY...

KC: That's got the best opening line of any play. It's got this Policeman saying to his mum, "Aw! But all the other Policemen wear boots." (Snigger!)

JQ: Have they been dramatised on television?

KC: CLOWN PLAYS was, yeah!

JQ: And there's the screenplay that you did for Julie Walters...

KC: UNFAIR EXCHANGES. That's about the telephone network becoming a living thinking brain and for some absurd reason beginning it's experiments by ringing Julie Walters up and pretending to be people she knows.

JQ: Well, what with British Telecom's new technological breakthroughs such as System X they can digitally construct a map showing the connections between telephone calls that have been made and so find out where all the terrorist units/drug dealers, etc are based.

KC: Well, I rang up a cab firm and got this recorded voice endlessly repeating my telephone number in a weird way, not in the same manner of speaking of digits as is the regular way or format of digit linguistic pronunciation. I honestly didn't know what to think about that, I assumed that the phone was bugged!

JQ: Or bugged! It's frequently said that when phones are tapped, sometimes when you pick up the receiver it's not unusual to hear your own voice speaking back to you from a past taped conversation. Probably, all due to incompetence on the part of the eavesdropping agency who are bugging the phone system.

KC: Well, if anyone has any information or has experienced similar phenomenon such as that I'd be interested to hear from them. [All correspondence regarding this subject can be sent to Ken c/o HOAX!]

JQ: So, this sound was like a looped tape was it? Was it similar to your own or more mechanical?

KC: No, it wasn't like my voice! It was not like the sort of person who you employ to officially give out numbers, you know!

JQ: So how long did you spend listening to that? Or did it just freak you out so much that you slammed down the phone!

KC: Oh! Just for a bit, you know! I suppose I should just have kept it off the hook and got the neighbours in to come and have a listen.

JQ: So did this happen quite recently then?

KC: Yeah! Quite recently, a few months ago...

JQ: OH! Right! Because, there are some devices you can get now that can show the number of incoming calls on telephones before you even lift the receiver so that you can monitor the calls you do or don't want to take. And since it was a taxi firm (who tend to be prone to receiving a fair amount of hoax calls from time to time it must be said) possibly this cab firm had one of these devices and recited your phone number back at you for a lark (although, surely they would also lose custom by doing this!)

KC: No, I don't really think that some mini-cab firm just up the road would have one these expensive little black-boxes, they've hardly got cars! HA! HA! HA!

We continued talking a bit more about a few things (South Pacific Gnostic scriptures, Walt Disney, and the intricate innate abilities of human programming, you know the usual sort of stuff, huh!) before it became quite evident that if I didn't get a move on I would be stranded in London and Ken's dog, Fred, would soon collapse from lack of exercise and urine retention. Obviously, it was time for me to leave and for a certain canine to go walkies along the adjoining canal-path.

At approximately 2:23pm I gathered my travelling bags and personal clutter, bade Ken a kind farewell, and quickly headed off for the nearest public transport service. Missing the next double-decker bus meant having to wait over half-an-hour when the tube-train network also decided to break down and run behind its Sunday schedule. When I eventually reached Paddington Railway Station, the departure platform changed several times before it was finally decided that the Welsh bound train would be leaving from platform 5 at 15.55.

Everything went fine until the train stopped just 200 yards or so from Reading station at 16:23 (I'm not kidding!). Five minutes later we were told that a possible incendiary device was being searched for and that we would be staying put for the time being. Minutes slowly turned into hours... The musty air was starting to play tricks with my mind. I took solace in reading the latest issue of FORTEAN TIMES (in which Ken Campbell cropped up in three places - A coincidence!?) I didn't care about synchronicity anymore, I just wanted to get off this fucking train NOW! The stuff that the Jehovah's Witnesses had said about the End of the World came flooding back into my memory. Perhaps, this is what it would feel like; stuck in a railway siding with no way forward and no way back, or some sort of an analogy like that.

I was situated directly across from a batty old

woman who had somehow managed to smuggle on a King Charles Spaniel in a hoddall and constantly kept talking to it, as if it were a small toddler. The canine resembled a marooned fish (a Fantail Guppy to be exact!) as it's beady little eyes stared at me. Out of its gaping mouth, a tongue lolled about seeking the slightest hint of moisture to redeem its unending first. (I wondered how much the Buffet Car prices had gone up again in the last few minutes!)

As time passed, each and every marooned passenger learned of each others destinations and vocations in life, and other such important matters. The car-battery factory worker and his similarly Japanese employed colleague who had gone to London to attend the Motor Show (they should've taken the car!) and myself eventually decided that the whole damn episode was an unnecessary hoax and were quite prepared to draw straws to drive the train through the station.

Two hours passed before we were informed that a controlled explosion had demolished part of the station and would therefore prevent us from continuing with our journey. The train reversed back along the line to Twyford Station (about the size of shoebox, but with 17 benches, as one bored passenger recalled as he spent the following three hours counting them). Once we realized that the evacuees from our train and all others departing from London were going to be stuck here for a considerable amount of time we set about trying to get comfortable (the toilets were warm, and didn't smell too bad!) I stood and watched countless bustling and fighting for phone-box queues, inept British Rail employees trying to deal with emergency situations (that should be pretty well taken care of on major routes, but obviously are nt) by cupping their hands (no loud-hailers, or adequate Public Address systems for a start!) and felling the amassed rioting hordes: "Obviously, all train services are now cancelled, but should anyone experience any difficulties please do not hesitate to go to the manager's office." OH! Really! I shouldn't think that anyone there had any problems at all... We all like to be stranded in the howling wind and rain in a half-starved state not knowing what the fuck is going to happen next.

I light-heartedly remarked that this must have been some kind of divine intervention to a clergy man who was queuing for the last of the digestive biscuits (being sold on a quickly made-up and highly-lucrative luggage trolley type-contraption). I guessed that he must have been an imposter wearing that white-dog collar as clearly did not seem to be impressed. The woman with the dog was allowing it to relieve itself by taking a long juicy crap on the platform nearby a lamp-post. I sauntered over to the guys from the battery factory from Merthyr and we wisecracked ourselves into insanity trying to amuse ourselves and block out any trace of memory of this whole sorry situation that we had suddenly found ourselves in.

Half-past-Ten. The first bus arrived out of the road-blocks around the city centre. Avoiding the mass riot to get on the eagerly awaited vehicle, we held back to fight our way to the front of the second. After getting lost (twice!) we arrived after half-hour at some other Godforsaken type location, jumped back out into the arctic conditions and waited for the 23:00 train. IT WAS LATE!!! (As if it really mattered much now, huh!) Sometime later, believe it or not, a train came... and went past us. Four more trains came and went, before we were allowed to inhabit another carriage.

Seated with some student types, the battery factory geezers, and a few more assorted itinerants we had attracted, whiled away the hours entertaining ourselves and any other passengers who happened to get in the nearest vicinity. Mr Economics Student, who was sat next to me read out choice excerpts of his 500 page letter to a friend he had started on train number one, which started something like: "This must be the classic train journey ever! I started out on Friday in order to go to my cousin's wedding in Windsor...etc, etc, etc, Did you know that there are 40 waste-paper bins at Twyford Station?" (And he had left London two hours later than us!?)

Many tales were told: The worst traffic jam you had ever been in, the most interesting drug experience, biggest British Rail cock-ups, etc.

Eventually, we reached our final departure point at Newport railway station. Even though British Rail had previously promised that no-one would be stranded (as they would provide transport or accommodation), myself and an elderly woman (who was laden with Harrods hat boxes) were put on a bus headed for Hereford (her destination) and dropped me off enroute in the middle of Abergavenny bus-station at 2:30 Monday morning. Not wanting to die of hyperthermia anymore than I already was somehow managed to get a lift the remaining distance home. At 3:30, eleven hours after boarding the "train to hell" I had finally arrived home.

In the following few days (whilst recovering from the inevitable onset of a severe bout of influenza) I realized that the Goddess had played dice with my life during that day (and had seemingly won!) BUT to add a further mysterious and annoying synchronicity to the proceedings that had occurred, SHE had ensured that all of this Chaos and Confusion had happened on the 5th day of The Aftermath (Also known as Maladay, the Apostle Holyday belonging to The Elder Malaclypse) of the Discordian Calendar. Boy! That Eris sure has a wicked sense of humour!



Ken Campbell