Simian Scrolls
THE UK APEZINE!

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Roy Thomas
Tony Isabella
John Bolton
Gary Chaloner
Kent Burles
Ed Hannigan
Pablo Marcos
Herb Trimpe
John Freeman

RETURN TO THE WORLD OF THE PLANET OF THE APES

Comic Book!
As I recall it, I had this idea sometime in late 1973 or early 1974 because I had got an inkling that the Planet of the Apes movies were popular, and that the first one had done well when on TV. It could be that the Planet's rep (I guess he was actually from 20th Century-Fox) called us first, but I don't think so. Either way, I set up a meeting between the two of us at a restaurant... Stan liked the idea, and left it to me. I wasn't much on business negotiations (percentages, etc.), but I'd set out the general parameters if the guy was interested.

He was (wish I knew his name). He was a middle-aged guy (though doubtless younger than I am now), and mostly seemed to want to repeat how PLANET OF THE APES had done phenomenally well on TV. By then several of the movies were out... though there may have been one or two more to come. So we struck a deal. But he mentioned, then or soon afterward, that we couldn't do any likenesses of Charlton Heston, who had a history of going over the financial books of his movies with a fine-tooth comb and being very litigious, and they didn't want to split the (relatively small) money with him, since he was only in the first movie.
That was fine by us.
In fact, artist George Tuska was specifically instructed to avoid making the hero of the comic adaptation of the first movie, to appear in the b&w PLANET OF THE APES #1 and following, look anything like Heston, and he did as instructed. But the approval process with 20th, which had the right of approval on all the art and copy, was very slow... and at one point we were close to missing our shipping date waiting for them to get back to us about the contents of #1 that we'd sent. So I was instructed by Stan Lee and president Al Landau (I guess it was-- it wasn't just Stan) to talk to our attorney, and do what he said. The attorney said it should be okay, so let the issue be printed.

The issue was being printed when we got the word from 20th that the hero looked too much like Charlton Heston. They were obviously being over-cautious, as there was little real resemblance except for the general heroic look. So we had to change lots of things-- at great expense and delay to Marvel-- not sure if George or John Romita did the corrections, but it was pretty frantic. I ended up with a copy of one of the 16-page “signatures” of the rejected PLANET adaptation, which ran in the back of the issue and had already been printed... kept it for a long time and wish I still had it so I could offer visual proof that the 20th people were being over-cautious. Only thing that saved my editorial hide was the fact that I had followed orders and done what the Marvel attorney said, not acted on my own...

The book seemed jinxed, and never really sold. Turned out later (I forget where I learned this) that experts figured out that the phenomenal rates for PLANET on TV was because there were lots of rainstorms or other inclement weather all over the USA that night, comparatively speaking, so people stayed home... and boosted the ratings. Neither our comic nor the subsequent TV series ever did as well as it would have if there'd actually been a "Planet of the Apes Phenomenon"-- which is not to say that the movie wasn't popular, as was the series, but it simply wasn't going to have the "legs" needed to carry a regular comic series.

Later, I believe it was production man Lenny Grow, a nice guy, who (after I'd moved to California) was deemed responsible when somehow the same month date was put on 2 issues of the b&w in a row, so that one of the issues had a shelf life of maybe 2 days and sold like 5% or something... more of the Planet of the Apes jinx.

Other main thing I recall was that, not long before that first issue was to go out, I hit the ceiling when I saw the article Tony Isabella, whom I'd put in charge of the mag editorially under me, had been ready to send out on the 5 movies. It cast aspersions on the last one or two. Reasonable enough, but I had to explain to Tony that, as this was our licensed product, we weren't going to denigrate it in the mags... anywhere, anytime. We could say that some "Apes" movies were better than others, but that was as far as it could go. Tony (a friend, and a guy of integrity of his own kind) began to mutter something about "freedom of the press" or "censorship," and I had to restrain myself from tossing him out a window. But except for this one lapse he was an admirable editor of the PLANET OF THE APES series... and now it's possible for me, and Tony (I hope) and others concerned to laugh about all the things that went wrong with the series.

Including, I hope, Lenny Grow, wherever he may be...

Roy Thomas

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Tony Isabella has been a fan and collector of comic books since childhood. In 1972, his love of the medium drew him to New York City and Marvel Comics where he began his professional career as an assistant to Stan Lee, Roy Thomas, and Sol Brodsky.

In his 29-year career, Tony has done it all and then some. He has been an editor for both Marvel and DC Comics. He was a pioneer in the comic book retail business as both a specialty store owner and distributor, winning national recognition for his efforts in this area. He has served as a judge for the prestigious Will Eisner Comics Industry Awards.

As a comics writer, Tony’s body of work is immense. A partial list of characters and comics for which he has written include: Spider-Man, The Avengers, Captain America, Daredevil, Dracula, Fantastic Four, Ghost Rider, Green Arrow, Hawkman, The Hulk, Star Wars, Superman, Tarzan - and for POTA he was the Editor of the first three issues of the Marvel POTA magazine.

Tony continues to work and write for a variety of clients as well as developing creator-owned projects. Tony, his wife Barbara, and children Eddie and Kelly reside in northeast Ohio, where he is a much sought-after speaker by the area libraries and schools.

SS: Tony, thank you for joining us

TI: I should preface my answers by admitting that I never liked Planet of the Apes (either movies or comic books) and that hasn’t changed over time. Your readers should probably get a head start on hating me now. It’ll save time later.

Don’t worry, we won’t hold that against you - much... So, how did you get into the comics business and do you think the same route would still be open nowadays?

I developed my skills by contributing to the comics fanzines of the day. In 1972, I was working for the Cleveland Plain Dealer when an unpleasant newspaper strike left me determined to find a new job. I phoned Roy Thomas, who knew me from my fan writing, and he hired me as an assistant editor working with Stan Lee, Sol Brodsky, and Roy himself.

I don’t know that the same route would be open to fans today, but contributors to online websites have been offered work in comics professionally.

What is your abiding memory of being an Editor at Marvel in the 70s? Do you look back on it with fondness or regret for times lost?

More fondness than regret. There was always a sense of pride when an issue turned out well... and especially in working with some of the new talent that was coming into the company.

Regrets? I have a few ... and I’ll even mention them. I always felt I could have done a better job on these magazines if I had just a bit more time and experience. It was very much a ‘learn while you earn’ deal for me. I didn’t usually have access to the company’s top writers and artists.

My ultimate and never-attained goal was to hire people so good that I wouldn’t have to do much work myself.

Doug Moench, who wrote all of the Ape stories for Marvel, mentioned in an interview that it was a period when writers could work having “no Editor looking over your shoulder” and he is quoted as saying that this made writers more responsible. Do you recall anything of your time working with Doug Moench and would you agree with his assessment of the non-heavy handed Editor?

I bought a lot of stories from Doug because he was dependable and fast, but, in my opinion, he had as many misses as hits. But, yes, once a writer established his ability in those days, editors were likely to edit them with a light touch. To Doug’s credit, he wrote very clean scripts with a sure command of grammar and vocabulary. My memory is that, on the rare occasions when I edited his copy, it was to make it a little more exciting.
I definitely edited him with a soft touch on POTA because, as noted above, I wasn’t a fan. Chris Claremont, who was my assistant editor on the magazines, probably did more actual editing on Doug’s scripts for the magazine.

The Marvel monthly in the US ran for 29 issues (the UK weekly over here ran for 123!). The magazine and the comic are very fondly remembered by fans. Were there any special considerations for you, as Editor, in dealing with a licensed product as opposed to a completely “new” product? It was a bit of a new departure for Marvel at the time - did it feel like an experiment?

The only special consideration was that the magazine’s contents had to be approved by whoever owned the rights. This made for some bad moments when it was first launched because the editorial and production departments hadn’t been informed of key contractual provisions ... such as our not having the rights to the likenesses of some actors and some legal stuff that needed to be in the indicia every issue. As I recall, we had to run the indicia twice in the first issue to cover our behinds on the latter.

It didn’t feel like an experiment to me. Marvel had been licensing the Conan property for a few years by then and was actively going after other licenses as well. In fact, just before we got POTA, we had tried and failed to get the rights to do a Godzilla magazine. I would have loved working on that one and was more than a little disappointed that Marvel didn’t get Godzilla until after I had left my staff position there.

Do you recall what thoughts Stan Lee might have had on the Apes project at the time it was part of the new “wave” of black and white magazines. Do you have any memories of working with Stan Lee?

Bob Larkin’s covers for the first 2 issues of Marvel’s 1970’s POTA magazine, reproduced here, as Stan Lee & Tony Isabella might have first seen them - eg. without titles and cover blurbs pasted in.

How could anyone not be a fan after seeing these?

Why do we spoil you in this fashion? because you’re worth it.

Outside of approving the covers, Stan didn’t have any day-to-day involvement with the black-and-white magazines. He trusted Roy and Marv and myself to do a good job with them.

The longest conversation Stan and I ever had about these mags was a discussion about cancelling TALES OF THE ZOMBIE, which was doing poorly. The amusing thing about that meeting was that Stan okayed “killing” off the title character in the last issue. Then, for some reason or another after I had left the staff the magazine’s run was extended for one more issue ... and some poor writer had to write his way out of what I had done.

I have fond memories of working with Stan on a number of projects. His enthusiasm, knowledge, and talent were always in evidence. I learned a lot from him.

Did you have any involvement at all in the U.K side of the production. The UK weekly was massively popular over here and, indeed, exhausted its US source material at one stage. The gap was filled by pasting Ape heads over the bad guys in a Killraven strip, which we all swallowed because the comic had “Planet of the Apes” as its title! Did you hear anything about that?
I was no longer working on the British weeklies when the UK title was launched. My only recollection of the Killraven material being used is that I laughed out loud when told of it by a friend who was working in production. I wonder what would have happened if they had run out of Killraven material as well. Maybe paste ape-heads on Doctor Doom's body and run "Fantastic Four on the POTA" stories?

Do you feel that the role of the Editor in modern comics has diminished in any way given the (apparent) rise of the "superstar" artist and writer phenomenon?

Yes and no. The editors are under tremendous pressure to deliver sales and talent to their publishers. It's not enough for them to have good writers and artists. If they want to advance, or even retain their jobs, they are expected to hire the big names of the moment or develop the next "flavour of the month." Today's editors often put appearance before substance. They get no points if they sign a dependable and veteran creator for a book; "new" and "stars" are what excite the editors' bosses. Of course, when editors do manage to hire big-name creators, they have to make sure they keep them. Often, that means letting these creators take company characters in whatever direction suits them. In the short run, that can make for increased sales. In the long run, it can damage the characters.

What is Tony Isabella up to nowadays?

"Star Trek: The Case of the Colonist's Corpse" (A Sam Cogley mystery) by Bob Ingersoll and Tony Isabella from Simon and Schuster. It's something of a departure from previous original series novels in that Kirk and the crew of the Enterprise make little more than cameo appearance. It's our attempt to do "Perry Mason in space" and I think it's a fun read. If it sells well, we'll do more.

I'm continuing to write my weekly "Tony's Tips" column for Comics Buyer's Guide and those columns are reprinted (with quite a bit of new material) at: www.worldfamouscomics.com

I also write columns for the Perpetual Comics website, which is located at: www.perpetualcomics.com

There's no comics writing in my immediate future, but I'm not one to say "never" when it comes to things like that.

Is there any one project that you would have loved to have handled but missed out on?

The only project I truly regret not working on these days is BLACK LIGHTNING. I created the character for DC Comics and would be very content to write BL stories until my dying day. Unfortunately, DC owns the character and has shown absolutely no interest in my doing said stories. In fact, some of their editors have been downright hostile to the notion. Heavy sigh.

Finally, can you justify our title for their interview by telling us if there is any truth to the Marv Wolfman story of you sleeping under a table at the Bullpen in your early days?

Some. During the period when I was editing three British weeklies and various black and-white magazines ... plus writing two or three comics a month...plus assisting Stan, Roy, and Sol on this, that, and the other thing, I sometimes worked late into the night. So I kept a sleeping bag underneath my desk for those nights when I was just too tired to make it home safely. Even back in the 1970s, you didn't want to be walking the streets of New York at night unless you want your full wits about you.
Amongst Ape fans, the art of Mike Ploog on the "Terror on the Planet of the Apes" strip, which started in the issues you edited, has legendary status. Mike Ploog’s art, and his status as an artist, seemed to evolve and progress the more work he did on Apes. Do you recall seeing the art early on and did you have any inkling that Mike Ploog was going to be something special?

I knew Mike Ploog was going to be something special from the first time I saw his work, which was on either GHOST RIDER or WEREWOLF BY NIGHT. I liked his work on POTA, but, to be honest and keeping in mind that I never cared for POTA, I thought the assignment was a waste of his talents. Even so, I was happy to get such a terrific artist on one of my books. 

Tony Isabella

Simian Scrolls would like to thank Tony Isabella, a true legend of the comics industry, for taking the time and interest to share his fascinating memories with us.

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Above:

Mike Ploog ‘wastes his time’ on Marvel's 'Terror on the POTA' - and in so doing delivers some of the most evocative artwork we've ever seen.
Ed Hannigan’s career as a comic book artist sprawls right across the 1970s through the 1990s and well beyond. In addition to pencilling stories for Marvel and DC he has also worked as a writer, cover designer and editor. If you are at all familiar with comics from that era then you have undoubtedly seen his work, since he designed a huge number of cover designs not only for himself but for many other artists.

Issue 5 (Feb ’75) of Marvel comics POTA magazine presented us with Ed’s landmark contribution to the world of POTA. A memorable assignment as artist for the one-off, self-contained...

Evolutions Nightmare

Simian Scrolls presents

An Interview With Ed Hannigan
Evolution’s Nightmare was your first full length feature. How did you get into comics and how did you get the assignment on Apes?

I wanted to be an comics artist from a very young age. When my parents moved the family to New Jersey in ’69 I had the perfect opportunity since the companies were right across the river in NYC. I went to Marvel and hung around; got to know some of the people. Eventually I got some low level cleanup and zipatone jobs on the British reprints from Sol Brodsky. I worked myself up from there and learned a lot from the artists and writers. I had done some covers for the British POTA weekly so I guess I was considered a natural for the book. Of course I was always begging to be given a chance to draw a story. I was friendly with Doug Moench and I think he lobbied for me to get the job.

The Editor for issue 5 was Don McGregor and in his editorial he reviewed how your art came to be. He mentions that you drew the pages in “gargantuan size”. He also says that Jim Mooney, called in at the last minute to ink the work, said he wasn’t aware he was going to have to ink the “Sistine Chapel on each and every page”. Do you recall any of the events and supposed problems with getting “Evolution’s Nightmare” in for the deadline and do you think that, being your first full length feature, the Editor could have been a little bit more charitable?

I wanted to make a big splash and impress everyone with my first story so I went and bought some Bainbridge 80 Illustration board to draw on. The issue was not so much size (twice printed size, not twice the size of normal art) as weight. The Production Manager, John Verpoorten freaked when he saw the first few pages. “Do you know how much it’s going to cost to ship those pages to Jim Mooney in Florida?” he asked. I don’t think anyone was truly upset. Just a dumb beginner error. They allowed me to draw the rest of the story that way. I wish I had not done that though, because the paper was hard to handle and I couldn’t use a lightbox to trace anything with it.

“Evolution’s Nightmare” was a stand alone - was there ever any thought that there would be a follow-up to it?

Not that I know of. I did write a Tigra story called “Nightmare’s Evolution”. I don’t know if anybody ever got the reference.

The story of “Evolution’s Nightmare” is pretty deep, looking at issues of race and war. Was there ever any discussion as to whether the human character should be black or white?

Not that I remember. I would not have been part of any such discussions in those days.

Interestingly, the look that you created for “Evolution’s Nightmare” turned out to be not a million miles away from the look of Tim Burton’s POTA movie. The battle scenes in particular are very similar, even down to the battle standards held by some of the participants. Did you have a free hand in designing the look or did Doug Moench, the writer, give you any guidance on that?

I pretty much designed everything, but within the established look of “Apes”.

Doug Moench has a reputation for being a quick writer. What was it like working with Doug and did he give you detailed outlines or was it pretty much “Marvel Method” with a sketchy outline?

As I remember (but I could be wrong) it was Marvel Method but a very detailed outline. That’s the way Doug usually worked. He already had most of the dialogue worked out in advance. We talked about it a bit but he already had the thing worked out before I got it. I worked with Doug quite a few times over my years in comics and it was usually very easy and straightforward.

Who would you list as your artistic influences, whether in the comics field or otherwise?

I have tons of influences. Comics artists like Jack Kirby and and Neal Adams of course, but lots of others, particularly storybook illustrators like Pyle and Rackham, and the illustrators in Little Golden Books and such, and classical artists too. Basically I just picked up on art wherever I encountered it. I was familiar with Norman Rockwell and was aware that many of the pictures in magazines and advertising were paintings and drawings. When I was very young I spent a lot of time thinking about how drawing was done and how printing worked, and of course did my own drawings. The first comic artist I was a fan of was Carmine Infantino in the early 60s Flash and that’s when I got the idea to become a comics artist myself.
Dough Moench has mentioned elsewhere that the editorial hand on POTA was pretty light. Was there much editorial input into “Evolution’s Nightmare”?

I was just drawing the story. I had no awareness of editorial issues at that time.

Later on, you went on to do strips such as “The Defenders”. Do you have any favourite body of work that you have done?

I don’t have particular favorites though I think the Defenders stuff I did with Dave Kraft was ahead of its time and not appreciated as much as it should have been. I guess my cover sketches are what I consider my true “art”. I worked on covers more than anything else in my comics career.

Looking back on “Evolution’s Nightmare” do you recall it with pride (we certainly think you should)?

I remember various things at various times. I recently ran across a web page that extensively covered the Tunnelworld stories I wrote in Defenders. I had almost completely forgotten about them, but someone not only remembered but liked them! At the time no one seemed to like them at all.

As far as Planet of the Apes goes, it was an important part of my development but I don’t often think about it. I’m not a huge POTA fan although I did read the book before the first movie and it was a favorite SF book when I was young. I remember being surprised to find that they were making a movie of it. That was many years ago.

Do you have any particular memories of working at Marvel during the mid 70s? It has gone down as a pretty legendary period in comics history. Did you ever get to meet with Roy Thomas or Stan Lee?

I worked with Stan and Roy often. It was a great time and I have more memories than I could tell in any reasonable space. I hope someone writes a good book about that era and I hope they ask me for input. But remember, for most of that time I was only a bit player, never any kind of star.

You wrote Fantastic Four Annual No. 16 and also coloured it with Steve Ditko no less! Is there anything you can tell us about how that collaboration came to be and what it was like working with Steve Ditko.

I’ve always been a huge Ditko fan but I found him rather difficult to work with. He wanted exact sizes of Dragon Man and so on and was kind of cranky. However I thought he did an excellent job. Not many liked that annual though.

Do you agree that the Canadian midget, Wolverine has unfairly and unjustly supplanted The Thing in the popularity stakes over the past two decades?

I am not that enamored of Wolverine, but he’s a popular character. Who am I to argue with frantic X-men fans?

Are we ever going to see Dragon Lord again and how did he become to be created?

Unfortunately we will never see Dragon Lord again. The lawyers for Anne MacCaffrey sent a letter to Marvel saying that Dragon Lord was a ripoff of her dragon stories. It is true that I (like many comics/sci fi people) had read those stories but I did not in any way intend to copy her nor do I think my Dragon Lord character was close to her dragon stories at all. What they were claiming was so broad as to make ANY use of dragons by anyone a copyright infringement, which is ridiculous.

I would have liked Marvel to tell them where to stick it because I thought they had absolutely no case, but in typical fashion Marvel folded and basically killed all future use of the character. Ironically the reason I created the Dragon Lord character was that Marvel had done a story with a Kung Fu type character called Dragon Lord and they wanted to secure the name legally, but they wanted it NOT to be a martial arts character. I always liked Dragon Man so I thought it would be near to weaving him into a fantasy type storyline that could eventually become its own book. Sigh!

You also had the daunting task of re-designing Superman’s old foe, Brainiac. Is there anything you can tell us about that particular experience?

I remember Dick Giordano asking me at a DC Christmas party if I wanted to redesign the character. The money he offered was quite good but if I had a royalty on it I would have really cleaned up.
They wanted an organic “H. R. Giger?” look, you know, the artist who designed all the Alien stuff.

They made a toy (action figure) out of it among other things. It looked pretty good. It had kicking action. You squeezed the arms together and the leg moved! And eventually the arms broke off. I never thought of Brainiac as a kicker particularly. They gave me two of the figures. I have one with the arms broken. I think my mother has the other one but I’m not sure. I’ll have to ask her. I hope she didn’t break the arms on hers.

I thought George Perez was most faithful to my design. I didn’t much care for the way Gil Kane portrayed him.

What is your impression of the comics industry nowadays. Do you feel that it has lost the spontaneity and innocent charm that it may have had when you were starting out?

I don’t read comics and have very little knowledge about the business today. What I have seen doesn’t impress me much but I can’t speak with any authority about it.

If you could do one dream project, what would it be?

I have always had a bunch of ideas of projects to do in various fields. I have always wanted to do a good comics version of Moby Dick but probably never will. I never have the time to do even a fraction of all the things I want to do. Right now I am very wrapped up in my work as a graphics designer using Photoshop and other programs. I have really fallen in love with computers and concern myself more with them than comics.

I am starting to do some superhero drawings that I am selling. I will be showcasing them on my website, which your readers might find interesting. I have a lot of cover sketches and other art on the site.

Ed, you’ve been a star - thank you once again for your participation in our Fanzine.

It’s been my pleasure.

http://www.sover.net/~hannigan/edjh.html

Written testimony of the impact Ed’s art had on readers (taken from the letters page of Marvel’s POTA magazine)

“Evolution’s Nightmare” was fantastic! Loved it! An epic tale! If ever Marvel goes into the movie business this story would make a box office smash!

Aeori Damon

Ed Hannigan seems to really pull toward the sci-fi atmosphere in his art, with some of the most unusual layouts I’ve seen. He’s given us interesting new ape clothes, and Soloman had a look of savagery that Floop would be hard-pressed to capture.

Mike Gallagher

Energetic Ed Hannigan’s artwork was the surprise hit of the issue!

Marvel
HERB TRIMPE

Another Scrolls exclusive – this time we talk to Herb Trimpe, whose art graced Marvel’s Planet of the Apes magazine on the Derek Zane adventures and later exploits of Jason and Alexander, as well as some lovely covers for our very own UK Apes weekly.

In his own unique manner, Stan Lee christened you “Happy Herb Trimpe”. Is “happy” a good way of describing you and what are your memories of working with the great Stan Lee?

Sure, why not? It was a lot easier than coming up with a nickname for a compulsive, anxiety ridden, 27 year old neurotic who was trying to make it in a business in which creative giants reigned.

When you arrived at the Marvel Bullpen in the 60s, as well as your good self, there were also some other legends on the premises, including John Romita, Jack Kirby, Marie Severin and Bill Everett. Do you have any special memories of this time and these great individuals?

Jack was the only legend on the premises at the time. But he was always a legend—looked up to, revered, copied. The rest of us were just admirers of his work. Memories? Hell, enough to write a book, I suppose. Mainly, it was just a fun place to be.

You were responsible for what, for many knowledgeable fans, is the definitive run on The Incredible Hulk. How did you approach drawing The Hulk and did anybody have the good sense to consult you regarding the recent movie (if you saw that, what did you think of it?)?

“Definitive...” I love the title. Even though it’s not unanimous. My one claim to fame in the business — taking a Kirby creation and giving it something that people remember. Of course, the writers of that time had an awful lot to do with it, Roy Thomas, Len Wein, and others. Not to mention Stan. Of course, nobody consulted me about the movie. I think the film stood by itself as an okay movie, but if you were a fan, it really didn’t get it. For the most part, it wasn’t the Hulk that I knew.

During your time on The Hulk, a certain short Canadian character was introduced at the very end of issue 180 and was unleashed on to an unsuspecting world in full in issue 181. John Romita did the original character sketches for Wolverine, and indeed seems to have specified “only 5’5” tall”. Did you have any input at all into the design of Wolverine and are you amazed at just how iconic his image has become over the years?

No input, but a lot of people think Wolverine is my character. I gave up trying to explain. Input was not something that was usually asked of me.

As well as drawing the definitive Hulk, I have to thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for your images of Sue Storm/Richards in a skin-tight costume whilst you drew The Fantastic Four (Annual No. 26, 1993). Your art has evolved dramatically over the years. Who were your early influences and why and whose art do you hold in high regard nowadays?

See, these are the tough questions. What a lot of people don’t understand, is, these are things I hardly ever think about it. As far as evolution goes, it wasn’t me so much, as I was just influenced by different people—copying them, if you will. Early influences were Jack Davis, but that ended at
Marvel. Then it was Jack Kirby. Now it’s Jack Daniels. As to the first part of the question, I’m not sure what you’re talking about, but you’re welcome.

Having abused the privilege of getting an interview with a legend by straying off the top of Planet of the Apes (POTA), we now turn to your run on Apes. It’s been said elsewhere that you were brought in very much as a "pinch-hitter" to help the US Marvel POTA magazine, which always seemed to have deadline problems and that your involvement was also an attempt to bring in a "Marvel art-style" to a magazine that had had its fair share of alternative style artists (be it Ploog, Alcala, Rival or Sutton). Can you recall how and why you got the Apes gig: your first Apes art was on a strip called "Kingdom on an Island of the Apes" in issue 21, which was a King Arthur style Apes story featuring Derek Zane as the hero?

Who’s a legend? Stop it. If the rest of the questions are about P of the As, you’re out of luck. I don’t remember a thing about it, except I had to use a wash, which was a new experience for me. It’s terrible when the answers are shorter than the question, isn’t it?

What was it like working with Dough Moench and do you have any memories of your Editor in Chief at the time, the legendary Archie Goodwin?

I liked both these guys very much, but I have a question. How can everybody be legendary?

In the final Derek Zane strip “Beast on the Planet of the Apes” the credits, as well as for yourself, include Dan Adkins and Sal Trapani. Can you recall who did what. Were your final pencils substantially inked and can you explain a little bit more about what the "washing" process is for black and white art?

Actually, I think I might have something to say here. First, as to who did what? Again, I can’t say. Second, the wash was achieved using a chemically treated paper in which two separate liquids were used. They were brushed on, and one gave a light gray tone, and the other, a darker gray tone. Together, that is to say one over the other, gave a third tone. It was easy and fun to do, and almost anything you did looked pretty good.

On your run on the “Terror” series you, no doubt with the assistance of Doug Moench, created some incredible graphic scenes including Viking Gorillas with longboats and battle-axes. You also created possibly one of the most memorable of all Apes comics images, namely the “Gorilloids”, the half-Ape, half-robot destroyers employed by Brutus in the end. Were you given free rein on those designs and were you enjoying yourself?
You know, I’d have to see the work to give you any useful information. I swear, I’m not suffering from Alzheimer’s, but I really don’t remember. You better check on the spelling of that word. I remember we pretty much had free reign in the design area, but as far as enjoyment went? I can’t say that I would frequently use that word in describing my experience in drawing comics. I struggled with it most of the time.

Being the big soft sap that I am, my personal favourite scene of any Apes comic ever is the death of "Foo-Foo", who is slain by one of the Viking Gorillas whilst trying to protect Lightsmith. It’s a pretty dramatic scene and your artwork serves it superbly. Were you working purely from script or did you have the chance to talk to Doug Moench to plot things out?

I’m really glad the stories and art of Apes meant something to you. I’m always amazed that work that I routinely cranked out had some significance for some people. I’ve heard other artists say the same thing. Mostly the older generation of artists, I would imagine. The younger creators automatically feel their work is important and earth shaking. It’s a generational thing, I suspect, with some exceptions. Yes, Doug was a guy who was extremely approachable, and the lines were always open to discuss and alter plots. Notice I didn’t say scripts. We never worked from scripts. That was Stan’s innovation from the beginning, and was an integral part of the Marvel style.

I would not be doing my duty as an Editor of a POTA fan magazine if I didn’t ask you whether or not you had any idea what the future scripts were to hold for the Apes characters had it not been cancelled with issue 29. Have you any idea where "Terror" and possibly Derek Zane were going to go in the future? There was talk of a completely new strip being created and I wonder if you have any knowledge of that at all?

None, zip, nada.

As we are based in the UK, we had better wrap up with a couple of UK-based questions. Firstly, during the 70s you were in Britain with Stan Lee doing the Roundhouse events. Do you remember anything of those events and British fans?

Given the fact that Linda, my wife, is a world traveller, we happened to be living in Cornwall at the time of Stan’s tour. He got in touch with me, and I appeared with him once on stage at the Roundhouse, and drew Hulk pictures using an overhead projector. That was it. I don’t recall the point of the whole thing, except that Stan is a frustrated entertainer and a consummate ham.

We can not let you go without asking about the one and only Captain Britain, who was launched on to an unsuspecting UK audience in the 1970s with, for the UK, the revolutionary attraction of his strip being in actual living colour. You did the early art on Captain Britain which was superb and is still viewed with great affection by a great many fans over here. How much input did you have into the actual design of Brian Braddock’s alter ego, Captain Britain and what was it like working with the
one and only Chris Claremont? How did you feel with the way the Captain Britain strip turned out and have you ever had a chance to see his subsequent redesign by Alan Moore and Alan Davis?

I can’t believe that anyone in the UK looks upon Captain Britain with great affection—or any affection for that matter. Having many friends in England, and having made many trips including living in Cornwall for a full year, I found Captain Britain to be somewhat of an embarrassment. It seemed to me a case of misplaced identity, or something, meaning trying to affix an American cultural value to a British cultural system. Kind of like what we’re trying to do in Iraq right now. Again, I had little or no input with the characters nor have I seen how the subsequent redesign turned out. I worked well with Chris Claremont and, you know, Chris is Chris. Or, maybe you don’t.

Tony Isabella, who is also being interviewed for this issue of Scrolls has said that, just before Marvel got the rights to POTA, they tried and failed to get the rights to do a Godzilla magazine and that he would have loved working on that one and was more than a little disappointed that Marvel didn't get the rights until after he left. It was only on re-reading that, that I was reminded of your run on Godzilla.

Let’s see, Godzilla. Since I was working on a couple of other books at the time, it’s kind of a blur. I think I had seen only one or two of the movies at that point, and I pretty much didn’t like them - not that I didn’t like them, it just wasn’t my kind of entertainment. For me, the best parts were the miniature cities and landscapes that the guy in the rubber suit went around stomping on and torching. I think the comic pretty much kept in line with the movies in terms of maintaining the big guy’s character, but I don’t think I was particularly moved one way or the other by doing the work. It was more of a curiosity than anything. Plus, I got paid.

Finally (at last we hear him scream!), what is Herb Trimpe up to nowadays and where can we go to buy some of it?

I write, and am trying to sell two books at this point. One is a young adult adventure story, and the other is based on journal material I kept while volunteering during the recovery efforts at the World Trade Center in NY. I do occasional commissions, but shy away from recreations, because it’s so boroorrrring to go over the same old stuff. So, there’s no place you can buy anything nowadays, especially since my interests are pretty far away from anything that has to do with comics. And by the way, thanks for the opportunity to practice my writing skills. It was my pleasure.

JOHN ROCHE
PABLO MARCOS

Simian Scrolls is pleased to present an interview with the illustrator who crafted some of the finest original cover artwork on Marvel UK’s weekly Apes magazine.

How did you get into the comics industry and who would you say your biggest influences were and are?

You can check my webpage, www.pablonarcosart.com, for the answer to this question, as well as a page that contains my biography, www.tebeosfera.com.

Over the years, you have inked some of the legends of the industry, including John Buscema and George Perez. You have always had a very recognisable and distinctive inking style – do you have any memories of George Perez and John Buscema during your time inking their Avengers and Conan work?

I had almost no contact with John Buscema: we very rarely showed up at the Marvel offices simultaneously. With George Perez, it was different – he is very amicable and communicative. With regard to the work of John Buscema, he had very dynamic and well-situated sketches, and I was able to finish his pencils very easily. George Perez’s pencils were supremely detailed – I just added the solid or black zones.

Your style of work seems to be very suited to the horror and black and white genre. In particular, whenever you drew Dracula and/or the Zombie, you could almost smell the darkness! Do you enjoy and prefer black and white work?

I feel very comfortable working in black-and-white. In a very natural way, I can see where to place shades and how to create ambience.

To the delight of UK Planet of the Apes (POTA) fans, having endured what might be described as average covers on our UK POTA weekly, when the issue hit number 88 (which was a stunning cover done by yourself to celebrate the merger of Dracula Lives and Planet of the Apes) we were treated to an explosion of fantastic covers from some of the greats, including Herb Trimpe, Frank Thorne and your good self. Indeed, your run of covers starting with issue 104 arguably ranks as the best set of covers the comic ever saw. How did you come to do the UK Apes covers? It seems to have been an ongoing project.

Sol Brodsky was the manager of the weekly magazines they were doing in England. He asked me if I would be available to do a cover. After this work, others came along and we managed to form a good production team. Later on, I had more time to collaborate on the interiors of such adventures as Captain Britain. Since these publications were weekly, I ended up occupying all my time on these projects. It was a time of intense work and satisfaction.
Your UK *Apes* covers are very powerful and graphic. Did you ink these yourself and did you also do the colouring, can you recall? Did you have any photographic terms of reference or specific guidelines as to what had to go in?

When penciling and inking solo, I never did it in color. I had photographic references of the main characters, and I also viewed the interior pages in order to create the corresponding covers.

You subsequently went on to do the “split page” covers for the merger between the UK *Apes* comic and *Mighty World of Marvel* – can you recall how difficult it was to squeeze two exciting images into the two halves of the cover?

I don’t remember very well, but Marvel had John Romita and Marie Severin as art directors, and everything worked well with them.

Whilst working on the Marvel UK comics, you also had a run as inker on our very own *Captain Britain* strip. Herb Trimpe, who drew the original series, is also being interviewed this issue. Can you recall any of your work on *Captain Britain*? In fact, you actually had the opportunity to draw HRH Queen Elizabeth II whilst she was hypnotised and launching an invasion fleet!

I don’t recall.

Within several of the *POTA* comics for which you drew covers, the artwork of several of the Filipino School was included, including the magnificent work of Alfredo Alcala, Nestor Redondo and Sonny Trinidad. Did you ever have contact with any of these artists during your career?

I had contact with Ernie Chan, Rudy Nebres and Alex Nino. With Alex, I formed a great friendship. In addition to art, we also shared a taste for the culinary arts, and we learned much about Filipino and Peruvian meals.

What was it like working with Steve Gerber during your time on *The Zombie*? Steve has created some amazing stories and characters over the years (not least *Howard the Duck*).

I worked very comfortably with Steve Gerber. We initiated direct communication and spoke extensively about the image that was given of the original Zombie. Not long ago, I spoke with him again, right after an interview that I did for *CBA* #13 (May 2001).

You drew the *Conan the Barbarian* newspaper strip for a while and in your *CBA* interview you said that doing “muscular adventures” is really your preferred theme. That certainly came through with your covers for the *Apes* series. Do you get a chance to look at modern comics and do you feel that they have maybe lost a bit of that raw style that the old classics used to have?

I miss very much the great variety of styles that we enjoyed drawing at that time. Ever since Jim Lee, artists seem to have adopted an Asian style that is uniform across all comics. In regard to *Conan*, I have recently finished a series of approximately 400 trading cards (*Conan* sketches) for a project with Rittenhouse Archives.
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Do you have any memories of working at Marvel and, in particular, working with Roy Thomas?

I was always lucky to work with writers and publishers of great talent. Roy Thomas’s writings are always high quality, with suspenseful action, interesting adventures and varied topics. In Savage Sword of Conan #228, I did a sequence of six pin-ups, and then Roy did the text.

For the benefit of our resident Scot, Alan Maxwell, who has never forgiven Peru for beating Scotland so comprehensively in the 1978 World Cup, do you follow soccer at all and what are your interests outside of comics?

Soccer and boxing are my greatest interests after art. Every day, I watch a bit of any game that comes on television. In regard to the former, I have a soccer magazine project for children for which I created all the characters, the cover and some of the interior pages. I am still searching for a writer and a publicist to continue the project. If you know anyone interested, let me know! Thank you for the interview.

INTERVIEW BY JOHN ROCHE
TRANSLATION BY RICH HANDLEY

Below left: Pablo Marcos’s original cover for Marvel UK’s Planet of the Apes #114:
Below right – a more recent recreation of the cover, which Pablo has very kindly given Scrolls access to reproduce here
CLASH OF THE TITANS

For UK Apes fans, the return of a UK Planet of the Apes comic left many of us misty-eyed with nostalgia. In 2001, the Titan Planet of the Apes title ran for only five issues and, whilst it couldn’t match the 123 issues of its Marvel predecessor, Planet of the Apes was at least back on the magazine racks in newsagents. Production values were high and the graphic layout was superb. The editor behind these excellent publications by Titan was John Freeman and Scrolls is delighted to have the opportunity to speak with John not only about the Planet of the Apes comic but also about the comics industry in general in the UK. We are very grateful to John for taking time out from his very busy schedule to talk to us.

The Data Bank bits in the comic are interesting for the information that they give. For example, in issue 1, the description in the Daena biography of “Mauro Bog” as the place where Daena first encounters Leo is the only place where that name actually occurs. Were these bits supplied by Fox and did you get any biography/publicity pack from Fox to use?

Hmm... as I recall, I think I got some of this information from the Dark Horse website, but most of it came from the Planet of the Apes official website. I tend to be a bit of a hunter on the web. I’ve been using it for years and I’ve picked up a few ways to find things most people don’t bother to use. Ploughing through the official site was a bit of a pain though, because of the way it was designed - not for print journalists, that’s for sure!

Were there any problems in adapting a US comic sized publication up to the A4 magazine size in the UK?

No, Titan’s been adapting these strips for years – there was no stretching of pages or anything horrid like that.

Some fans felt that the movie adaptation was less than inspiring. Missing out on the actual landing for example. The early art work seemed stiff while the later stories were arguably, far better. What was your personal opinion?

The strip was all reprinted from DH. With film adaptations you must bear in mind that artists will have been working from an early script and the things you mention might not have been in that version. Approvals can affect how a strip is created. An actor might not like how they’re drawn and ask for changes which then make it ok for the actor but not for the people reading it. Licensing people put demands on things that are often incomprehensible, too. I don’t know if DH had any problems like that. I thought all the art was of a good standard, unfortunately the source material wasn’t, in my opinion. I was terribly disappointed by Burton’s “reimagining”. Personally, I love comic strip. It’s far more flexible in terms of storytelling than TV or film, despite the advances in CGI we’ve seen used to tremendous effect in, say, Lord of the Rings. The original follow up stories were far better than the film, never mind the film’s adaptation.
The actual presentation of the Titan Apes comic was superb. The cover images were fantastic and the pull out posters were tremendous in their design and image.

You can thank Rob Farmer, the comics designer, for that. He did an incredible job. We had a good supply of images, over 20 CDs of pictures and logos as I recall. That always helps. Sometimes you get very little support from licensors in terms of imagery but Fox and Dark Horse were brilliant.

Were the sales catastrophic or just not good enough to continue? Did the fact that Dark Horse were discontinuing have any bearing on the ending of the Titan comic?

The sales weren't what was expected. Sometimes you have to take a chance that something will be a success and just do it. For example, no-one imagined The Mask Adventures would be such a runaway success as a comic in the UK for Titan but it was published in the hope that it would be! Unfortunately the Dark Horse material on that ran out and we couldn't run any more. On POTA, the sales just didn't justify continuation. If the film had been more of a success it might have stuck around longer but it wasn't, and I think that impinged on the comic's success. You only have to look at the success of the original POTA films and the subsequent Marvel UK title to see that the success of a licensed comic does depend a lot on how good the source material is.

What market was the comic actually aimed at? There are some pretty strong images in there of humans and at least one Ape being branded with an iron - and the violence is pretty extreme. Was there any concern about the content?

I was a little concerned that the comic was being pitched too young I think the strip was more for a teenage/2000AD audience. But there was no censorship of the original DH material by us.

Was it difficult to maintain a monthly format?

No, much of it was reprint and easy to do. Approvals were very rapid. Doing a title like that is all about planning, making sure the material's been delivered and having some idea of what the strip's going to look like so you can work up advance PR. That helped me do a little bit of online promotion, a lot of fan web sites were very helpful about that. With hindsight I think you could have done a title with a higher page count, run the new strip in the front and the original strip in the back, which would appeal to collectors. Then add some features on the film, actor interviews, that kind of thing. That would have appealed more to the collectors and a higher price might have meant it would have kept going longer. But we weren't allowed to mix the original and new franchise. To me that's like saying only one actor played Doctor Who!

What did you yourself think of the Tim Burton movie? It has had fairly mixed reviews and Ape fandom is divided on it.

I think the visuals were stunning in Tim Burton's film and there was no faulting the acting but the story itself lacked any depth and tried to be too clever. It's clear the audience didn't think much of it either, judging by the box office and the disappointing sales of merchandise like the comic.
Had you seen any of the other movies/TV series and, if so, what did you think of them?

I love the original films and grew up watching the TV series. Roddy McDowall was one of my favourite actors.

Do you remember the original Marvel UK weekly? That ran for 123 weekly issues and only really ended, arguably, because the US material ran out.

I have a couple of copies of the original Marvel weekly. Yep, it did end because the material ran out. In the end Marvel UK were running Killraven strips as if they were POTA stories, doctoring them by putting ape heads on the characters. With hindsight they should have originated their own material.

If there is a sequel to the Tim Burton movie, could we reasonably expect to have another comic based on Apes?

Based on the sales of this title, I doubt it. But I'd consider it if we could make it more of a collector's magazine, like I suggested earlier.

How did you get into the whole comics/magazine world?

I started out by doing my own comics zine which got the attention of the team at Marvel UK — I always advise would be artists and writers to do their own ‘zine — and that helped me get a job there when I moved to London in the late 1980s. I started as a designer on Doctor Who Magazine and then began editing it, and worked for Marvel on a huge number of projects for five years before going freelance for a time, then getting a job sometime later setting up Titan’s magazines department with a terrific team there, who I still do quite a lot of work for today.

What do you think of the current state of UK produced comics?

The UK market is actually in quite good shape but only in the “cartoon comic” market. The Beano and the Dandy still sell about 100,000 copies a week, for example, although of course that’s not as good as the 1970s when comics sold one million a week. Adventures comics, like 2000AD, are struggling, although Pete Nash’s STRIKER — a new football comic — is doing well, which is good news.

That said, it’s fantastic to see they’re bringing Billy the Cat back to the Beano – an adventure strip I remember from my youth. You have to wonder if it’s because the editors want it in there though, or because it’s the kind of character that might well get the attention of some Hollywood mogul looking for the next big comics film. I’m probably being far too cynical.

Comics can still sell, but I think part of the problem is a lack of marketing for them, combined with pretty dismal treatment of creators. When you look at the amount of money spent on promoting a film or computer game compared with a comic it’s no wonder people aren’t aware they’re out there.

But it’s not down to marketing. Your creations, your comic have to have a soul, an energy and something unique about them to make people buy them. Having creators on side, especially these days with such direct contact with an audience, is essential in my opinion. Let creators have a stake in their creations, just like books, and they’ll be happy to help promote them. It happens in books publishing so I don’t see why it can’t happen in comics.

Comics should have some fun, too. Don’t take, things too seriously. No one wants death and gloom all the time!

The world could have used such philosophy when Taylor decided to detonate the Alpha - Omega bomb!

John Freeman prepares to travel to the year 3955 in an attempt to talk Taylor out of detonating the big one!

DOWN THE TUBES.net

If you’re on the web be sure to check out John Freeman’s own site not only for news on British comics (mainstream and small press) but also as an invaluable resource.
John Bolton was seven when he first encountered a paint brush and it was love at first sight, offering him an output to visualise and create what he saw in his mind and put it onto paper. Thus began a lifelong ambition of creativity, with influences acquired from a wide variety of sources, but all connected by one underlying theme - the interesting and the bizarre.

Since then John Bolton has collaborated with some of the industry’s most prestigious contributors to produce a portfolio of spectacular work. He has handled assignments for every major comic publisher and has his own international fan club and magazine.

Having previously run Alan Maxwell’s definitive review of John Bolton’s astonishing art work on the Brown Watson Annuals in our first comic special, (SS6), we are thrilled and honoured now to be able to share with Apedom an interview with the one and only John Bolton himself.
SS: How did you get the job of illustrating the Brown Watson Annuals (1975, 1976 and 1977) and did you have to do any sort of audition or submission beforehand?

JB: I had been to Brown Watson with my portfolio. They subsequently began to commission me for various books, having done a couple of annuals the POTA editor knew that I would be able to handle the POTA commission and also have fun with it.

Were you a fan of POTA or was the whole Brown Watson project just a job?

I was an enormous fan of the first film and I couldn't believe I was being given the opportunity to illustrate it - it was a labour of love.

For terms of reference was it difficult to stay within the framework of the likenesses?

I was given a limited number of photos and had to use those as the template which became increasingly difficult because of my passion to maintain the likeness of the characters. This meant it prolonged the exercise.

Are you aware that you hold the distinction in POTA of being the only person to actually illustrate a true likeness of Charlton Heston (apparently Marvel weren't allowed to do that).

The likeness was not in the brief but purely something I wanted to do and I am surprised even to this day that I got away with it. On delivery of the art the editor recoiled in dismay when he saw the likeness as he thought it could lead to problems.

Whilst your Apes were probably the most supremely well-drawn example of the genre to be found anywhere, it also has to be said that your horses are truly, truly stunning! was this an aspect of the job that appealed to you that you would have to draw so many horses?

I do enjoy the dynamics of drawing and painting horses, but primarily it was the opportunity to draw the apes.

Two of the strips drawn by you (‘Pit of Doom’ in the 1976 Annual and ‘Breakout’ in the 1977 Annual) were in colour. Did you do the colour on these yourself and, for comic strips, do you have a preference between colour and black and white?

My preference "now" is to work in colour but I still have a fondness for black and white. All the colouring on the two strips you mentioned was done by me.

What was the creative process for creating the strips and illustrations?

The way that I work and continue to do so is that I receive a script or short story, I then "breakdown" the script and choose the scenes to illustrate.

Do you have any idea who wrote the Apes strips and stories for the Brown Watson Annuals?

Sorry, I have no idea who wrote the scripts as I was never introduced to him/her.

You had a classical training as an artist. Coming from that background, were there any comics artists who specifically influenced you?

Generally my influences were and are outside of comics.
Were you at all aware of the other Marvel Apes stories?

I saw the POTA magazine produced by Marvel but never particularly cared for it, although the photos included in the articles where useful.

Looking back on the Brown Watson Annuals, do you view them with embarrassment or a degree of fondness?

There are some black and white annuals that I look back with some embarrassment but POTA is not one of them.

In ‘From out of the Sky’ we get to meet Verina, a female astronaut who has the name patch ‘Bolton’ on her chest?

That patch on her chest was probably the only way I could sign the artwork - in those days most publishers preferred creators to remain anonymous.

The fact that you took care to use ‘ANSA’ as opposed to ‘NASA’ suggests that you took great care in getting everything right.

I cannot take the credit for ANSA, that would have been the writer.

Verina also happens to be absolutely gorgeous. Was she based on a real person?

Whilst the character Verina was made up her appearance would have been based on my wife who was and is an enormous influence on my work (Note: he only says this because Mrs Bolton agreed to type up his replies!!).

Peter Normanton, who publishes “From the Tomb” a superb publication dealing with horror art, has asked how you now feel about the House of Hammer Magazine. Your werewolf story is considered a classic, as is your Dracula, Prince of Darkness. Peter asks if this was just an assignment or did it run deeper? He describes your rendition of Dracula as simply “exquisite”.

Thank Peter for his comments and he was very astute to notice that these assignments ran deeper, as all the stories I worked on were chosen by me because of my love for those films.

As well as black and white work, you have also created sumptuous colour images, including work on “Hellraiser” and “Batman”. Your King Kong piece, which is colour, is yet another striking gorilla (was your earlier work on Apes a good grounding for that?!

If anything King Kong was a grounding for POTA. I saw KK on TV at night, I was about 12 and my mother allowed me to stay up and watch it.

Do you feel that horror works best in B&W?

I do think that horror works extremely well in B&W, the 1922 Nosferatu springs to mind.

You have worked with many of the legends over the years, including Chris Claremont and Neil Gaiman, and your own legend status is assured. If you could write your own epitaph, how would you like to be remembered?

"In Pursuit of Excellence" that would be my epitaph. My prime motivation has always been my passion for the project and never the money.
Do you have any other outlets for your artistic tendencies, for example sculpting or music etc?

I do like to sculpt when I have a chance.

What is John Bolton up to now and how can we best publicise it for him?

I have recently completed a Batman/Joker story entitled SWITCH written by Devin Grayson and I am about to embark on a 96 page comic book written by Mike Carey who also wrote The Furies, this story is an urban fairy tale.

Did you have any idea at all of just how highly your work was regarded in those three UK Brown Watson Annuals and are you surprised that, over a quarter of a century later, there are still fans badgering you for interviews about this work?

I am very surprised and flattered that there is still interest in this work after such a long time, and would like to believe that the passion I have for my work has allowed for its longevity.

Do you have any idea where the original strips might be now?

Because of the publishers policy of never returning artwork I have no idea where the art is, so if it ever turns up please let me know. Although I hate to say this I feel that it may have been shredded at the publishing house. The non return of artwork did not stop me from producing the best work I could at the time. Working for publishers that do not return art is not something I’ve done since.

Thank you John Bolton, we are extremely grateful for your kindness and courtesy in this interview and we all look forward, with eager anticipation, to any future projects.

Those of you with internet connections might like to point your browsers at:


Once there you will find samples of John's work (in glorious colour) News, links contact information and the chance to sign up for an exclusive newsletter.
ADVENTURE COMICS
an overview of the series that relaunched Planet of the Apes

"We're really trying to keep the elements that made the films so unique while updating Apes for today's comics audience."
Charles Marshall, writer, 1990

"Given the concept of Planet of the Apes, it's a curious editorial decision to present it as episodes of Dallas with apes and the occasional bout of violence."

Many fans do not fondly remember the series launched by Adventure Comics back in 1990. In fact, as many detest it as sing its praises. However, despite the way in which it has divided audiences, its importance cannot be understated. In those far-off days before the internet kept us all informed, it was the face of Apes fandom. Long before Burton's remake threw our favourite simians back into the public eye, this series was dragging fans out of the closet and into their nearest comic shop. It was Apes in a time when there had been no Apes, and so, for our comics special, Scrolls has decided that it's time to cast our eyes back over that series and see just what it has to offer.

It began when editor Tom Mason was seeking ideas for a Planet of the Apes series and writer (and Apes fan) Charles Marshall threw his suggestions into the ring. Having encountered a licensing problem not dissimilar to Marvel's film adaptations of the seventies, Marshall's plan avoided the use of characters from the movies by setting his series approximately one hundred years after Battle for the Planet of the Apes.

There was certainly plenty of scope to explore and in the end Marshall found himself not only writing an ongoing title, but also creating various spin-off miniseries as well.

The ongoing series that launched Planet of the Apes on an unsuspecting comics audience featured Alexander, grandson of Caesar, ruling over Apes City and coping with similar problems (and a lot more besides) to the ones faced by his more famous grandfather.

The series proved to be more popular than originally envisaged. As well as being upgraded from the planned four-issue series to an ongoing one, the debut issue proceeded to break all kinds of records. The best selling debut for an independent black and white comic, the first issue (available in three different versions – yellow, pink or green) was reprinted twice and presented in a limited edition variant sponsored by American Entertainment.

Marshall was certainly keen to have a large cast of characters at his disposal. Some would feature regularly, while others would appear briefly at first only to become major players later on. The main characters who lasted the length of the series were:

- ALEXANDER – Caesar's grandson and the leader of Apes City.
- JACOB – son of Virgil and defender of the faith.
- GENERAL OLLO – Militaristic gorilla leader of the Aldonites.
- SIMON – a human who, unusually, can talk.
- GRUNT – the friendlier but less articulate son of Ollo.
- COURE – the leading female ape character in the series.

The first issue, entitled "Beneath" (subsequent issues in this storyline were entitled "Escape", "Conquest" and "Battle" – get it?) begins what is essentially a retread of Battle for the Planet of the Apes as Jacob and Alexander retrace Caesar's steps into the Forbidden Zone only for Ollo to seize power in their absence. While on their travels, the two apes encounter Cour and Max, who are searching for Cour's mate, Joshua. Meanwhile, Simon the human sees his home destroyed and his mother murdered.

As set-ups go, the first issue does the job. We may be on familiar ground in terms of much of the story but it gets the series going quickly and serves as a good introduction to many of the characters and their motivations.

The second issue sees the band of travellers running foul of some mutants and also introduces one of the series more fascinating additions to the Apes mythos – the Forgotten Apes. These are apes who, like their human counterparts, remained in the ruined city after the war (though not through choice), trapped as the radiation slowly mutated them. The character arcs also continue for Grunt and Simon but it's the retracing of his grandfather's steps (right down to the freeing of the apes) that makes Alexander's story the best part of this issue. Where the first issue was very similar to Battle, this issue combines the plot with that of Conquest as well.

The third issue, and the penultimate chapter in the first story arc, continues the story of Jacob, Simon and Grunt in the Forbidden Zone, while emphasising the struggle still going on back in Apes City. It's a good issue and even features the ruined Statue of Liberty just to keep us happy, but the main event is yet to come.

The finale in issue 4 again is heavily reminiscent of Battle but differs in one crucial respect. Ironically, given the number of times the sacred rule is broken throughout the course of Adventure's series, Alexander actually manages to deal with the threat of Ollo without ape killing ape. His path up until now may have been following in the shadow of his grandfather but Alexander has finally surpassed him in that respect.

Where Marshall succeeds in the wrap-up to his first storyline is that the tale reaches a satisfying conclusion but at the same time plants enough seeds from which future plots will grow. Ollo's fate is sure to require revisiting further down the line; but in addition we begin to see the further evils lurking within the city walls in the shape of Doctor Moto and his vile experiments and also the beginnings of some serious Zaius-style anti-human feeling from Jacob. If there is a low point in the issue it involves Simon communicating to the savage humans
through a series of grunts. If they can understand that, then it's a language of sorts and if that's the case then it undermines the whole notion of primitive humans. Minor slippages aside however, the first story arc draws to a conclusion with plenty of promise.

Issue Five, "Loss", is a one-off story that builds on the strands left hanging in the previous arc. While Moto continues his experiments, Alexander is the subject of an attempted assassination and Simon is forced to leave the city, whereupon he falls in with the wrong crowd. Weaving together the stories of Jacob and Simon, this issue sees the mistrust between the two boil over and while Simon leaves the city we also get another hint that Jacob may not be as honest as he would like to appear. For drama to work you need conflict, internal and external, and Marshall by this point had certainly managed plenty of that.

The reason for the attempt on Alexander's life seems to come out of the blue which again lets down an otherwise entertaining issue but the real talking point is the origin of the famous "Beware the Beast Man" scroll. When you step back and think about it within the context of Apes continuity and the Lawgiver, it doesn't really jibe: however this drawing reference at least goes some way towards reassuring us of Marshall's fan credentials.

Issue 6, "Welcome to Ape City", offers very little in terms of plot or character development (aside from furthering our mistrust of Jacob and Moto) but serves the purpose of a jumping-on point for any readers who may not have picked up the comic yet. We see an introduction to the city and characters from the point of view of a new resident named Reader (subtle, yes?) but it's a clever plot device that does the job and is a perfect opportunity to familiarise oneself with the comic if previous issues have been missed.

There is another change of pace again for issue 7, "Survival of the Fittest", which sees action take centre stage again but this time as a result of a more natural danger. An earthquake rips through the land and appears to result in the death of Alexander and Coure. The story hops between their story and that of Grunt and Roto, who put their differences aside long enough to help out in Ape City's time of need but. This plot by itself is not really enough to sustain the issue's Planet of the Apes but could just as easily not be - a problem that hits a number of Marshall's stories), however it does serve to introduce the next major plot point - with Alexander missing, control of the city falls to Jacob who of course has slightly different views.

"Here Comes Travellin' Jack" in issue 8 slows the pace down slightly with a Christmas tale that shows even on a planet of apes, miracles can happen. There are small developments in the stories of Alex, Coure and Simon but on the whole this issue is all about Christmas - or at least what passes for it among the apes. One of the most interesting aspects of this issue is the letters page, which covers the subject of a potential remake and a plug for the forthcoming book Planet of the Apes Revisited. Of course we know now that neither of these appeared until a decade later!

The pace picks up again in issue 9, the aptly titled "Changes". Alex is separated from Coure and, suffering from amnesia, falls in with a group of swamp apes who are planning to do battle with the Forgotten Apes (who, unfortunately, are literally forgotten as far as Alex is concerned)! Coure suddenly realises what Moto has been up to: and best of all, Jacob's hatred of humans has reached new heights and with him being in control of Ape City we are edging closer to the world we see in the original movie. The introduction of new plots into the overall story arc, in particular Jacob's transforming of Ape City, serves to make this issue another highlight. Notably, the final page begins a series of prologues for "Countdown Zero", another highlight that would begin a few issues later.

The following issue's "Return to the Forbidden City" sees the story develop further with Simon deciding to strike a blow for human rights, Coure's decision to confront Moto and Alexander being captured by the Forgotten Apes - discovering their new leader in the process. It's another key issue in the overall story arc and another highlight - the return to the forbidden city is another chance for the Burles and Kaalberg team to show off their wonderful ruined landscapes, and Marshall's story is perfectly judged to keep readers hanging on. Moto's comeuppance is delayed, Simon swears his desire to restore humans to power and Alexander finds himself at the mercy of his greatest enemy, whose appearance is a nice surprise. It's a shame that this kind of storytelling was not maintained for the whole series.

Once again the letter column proves interesting as one perplexed reader queries why the humans in this series are worse even though the TV series, which is set long after, shows them as talking. If nothing else it goes to show that we fans have always been like this even before the internet came along to let us argue it out with other likeminded people!

The turmoil and upheaval come to a head in issue 11, with Alexander entering into a showdown with Ollo while the apes from the swamp and the forbidden city prepare to wage war with each other. Meanwhile Coure has to get used to Jacob's ruling Ape City.

This issue marked the departure of artists Kent Burles and Barb Kaalberg from the series, but it is a suitable send-off. The Alexander vs Ollo confrontation in particular has a conclusion that is certainly unexpected, and fans of Marvel's magazine may find themselves comparing the issue to Marvel's Evolution's Nightmare story. Also one for the fans to pick up on is Marshall's slip-up regarding the history of the Aldonites, as he states that the group was formed following Aldo's banishment from Ape City. Maybe I misinterpreted Battle's final moments, but I don't think Aldo was in much of a position to be doing anything at the time!

Issue 12 veers a little too close to soap opera territory in places (Alexander and Coure get married, Simon and Grunt are reunited) but at the same time the friendlier change of pace is not without an undercurrent of dread and conflict (Simon vs the apes, Ollo vs the apes). Indeed one of the highlights of the issue is the brief return
of Ollo just to let the apes and us readers know that he's still around and still has it in for Ape City.

The wedding issue also marked the debut of the new art team of MC Wyman and Terry Pallott. While the team of Burles and Kaalberg had excelled at the alien landscapes of Ape City, the Forbidden Zone, etc., Wyman and Pallott found their strength in the apes themselves. While many artists struggled to give the apes different appearances (in fact, in some cases it was difficult to even tell between orang-utans and chimps), Wyman and Pallott managed to ensure that every ape in the city had their own identity. If there was once criticism, and this unfortunately could be levelled at the majority of artists hired by Adventure, it's that artists often perfected the apes at the cost of leaving the humans looking bland and uninteresting.

Issue 12 also sports a cover by established comics artist Paul Gulacy. It was while casting my eye over this thought that a sudden and more which – Alexander appears to be an orang-utan. Given that he is also supposed to be the grandson of Caesar, a chimp, it makes for a pretty interesting family tree...

Working my way through these comics again recently I found myself enjoying the letter column almost as much as the story. As a time capsule containing a snapshot of Ape fandom, they are priceless and it's worth noting that this particular issue features a letter from Terry Hokines of Canada, which resulted in the formation of Ape Chronicles, the first Planet of the Apes fanzine.

Issue 13 proves to be unlucky for readers of the series. The issue tries to cram three short stories into the standard number of pages, featuring "Frito & Jojo's X-Cellent Adventure", "Honey I Shrink the Ape" and "A Drunken Interlude". Unfortunately it fails to entertain and is ultimately (despite obviously being conceived as a selling point for two of the spin-off mini series) a pointless issue. The Frito and Jojo story has nothing to offer: these two characters are almost universally derided by Ape fans, both being intended as comic relief but not actually managing to muster too much comedy. The other two stories are tie-ins to the Ape City and Ape Nation mini series. Sadly if you've not read the spin-offs then these stories are pretty meaningless and don't inspire you to purchase them: if you have already bought them you will find little being added by these stories, since they both suffer from the limitations of being crammed into one regular issue. Overall the issue just seems cramped and rushed.

The series really picks up again with the next four issues. Having been previewed on the last page of each issue since number 9, the four-part story that ran from issues 14 to 17 had certainly been built up. The anticipation was worth it in the end, with "Countdown Zero" proving to be another of the highlights of the series.

The story seems unoriginal at first – three astronauts go into space for sixteen months, and when they crash land in St Louis, they find the Earth has become a planet of apes – but it manages to twist the usual Ape conventions to spin an engrossing yarn that actually manages to bring something new to the world of Planet of the Apes.

Issue 14, aside from being the only Planet of the Ape comic strip to feature Bart Simpson, Fred Flintstone, Robocop and Stevie Wonder, sets the story so that we can quickly get down to the nitty gritty (although one slightly concerning flaw is a post-it note that appears to have been stuck on one of the pages and not removed before going to press, obscuring part of the art on one of the pages!).

One of the new ideas that the series brought up was the manner in which the astronauts discover the fate of their world. In nearly every previous incarnation of Planet of the Ape, any visiting astronauts have found a planet of apes first, before later discovering it is the nudity Earth. Not so in this story: here the astronauts first discover that this is Earth and a terrible disaster has befallen it: this throws them head long into a nightmare which is only compounded by the later discovery that not only is it in ruins, their planet has been taken over by apes. It might be yet another "group of astronauts crash" storyline, but at least the plot device was used slightly differently this time.

Another side of the Planet of the Ape that this story emphasises (and it was a highlight of most of the spin-off miniseries as well) is that it portrays a sense of geography. In this story it's St Louis: elsewhere it might be Memphis, New York or even another continent. The world portrayed by Adventure made sure that we always knew that this was Earth (in some ways, the empty hillsides valleys were just as haunting as the ruined cities) and offered slightly different cultures depending on where the story was set. You really began to get a sense of ape society as a whole rather than just the New York area, and this storyline added to that by taking us away from the setting and characters of the regular story and introducing new elements that, while sometimes related to the familiar characters, were entirely new.

Another aspect of the story that particularly shines is the dialogue of the apes. One of the more irritating points raised when discussing the original movie is that it's obvious it was Earth all along since the apes all spoke English. I won't even go into the stupidity of that statement here, but suffice to say that Marshall promptly does away with it by having this group of apes speak Spanish!

The story is not without its flaws – it seems a little too convenient that the astronauts manage to find hostels intact or old stores full of tinned food, and when
the story requires it they manage to get a motor vehicle working. Also, for all the build up, the apes don't really play a huge part in the conclusion. However, in some ways this actually works in its favour. "Countdown Zero" is as much about how the downfall of man occurred as what is happening afterwards. Certainly there are plenty of references to events that shaped the ape planet from ape servants to plague outbreaks, which is a treat for fans of the movies who love to theorise on what actually happened, but there are also long periods of apenesslessness where the human characters show exactly why man was doomed. This story is more about the failings of humans than the triumph of apes and it is in the human characters that the storyline finds its strongest attributes.

While lacking the depth of a George Taylor or the three-way banter of Virdon, Burke and Galen, the trio of astronauts in "Countdown Zero" are still fresh enough to carry the story. For one thing, one of them starts to lose the plot, demonstrating great difficulty in grasping the current situation. Tough heroes are all very well, but it's nice to see someone with a slightly more human reaction to discovering that Earth is in ruins and dominated by apes.

The fact that one of the astronauts is a woman helps immensely. With the exception of the cartoon series, Planet of the Apes had never really explored the dynamic of having two female humans and one female as the last survivors. "Countdown Zero" does just that and creates all the tension and problems you would expect when there are only three humans left alive and one of them is an attractive woman. It is this that really creates something different to all the astronaut stories that have gone before, giving us more of an accurate microcosm of society as we know it, so much so that the third issue of the four that comprise this series features only brief appearances by the apes and is almost entirely devoted to building up towards the final fate of the human characters.

Marshall could occasionally get heavy handed with his preaching on humanity bringing about its own downfall but this story is perfectly judged and serves as a fine illustration of the point. The story offers a satisfactory conclusion and even manages to throw in a little reference to the finale of the original movie for fans to pick up on.

"Countdown Zero" may have been another example of Adventure's commitment to showing that it truly is a planet of apes (rather than just a small city) but there was more to come. Having already demonstrated the geographical differences in the ape society, the cast of characters are expanded on over the issues to come, each of which illustrated a new one-off story concentrating on different characters from the series. Issue 18's "Gorillas in the Mist" finally resolves the Moto story in a satisfactory manner, as well as adding to the myth of General Ollio in a fun way. However, the return of the ape known as Heston (from the events in Ape Nation) and some light relief from Frito and Jojo seem like pointless filler material to pad out the story and detract from an otherwise very good issue.

Issue 19 ("Quitting Time") is the one to seek out if you're a fan of the movies, being a direct tie-in to Conquest of the Planet of the Apes (taking place in Breck's city at the time of that movie). Taking leave of Alexander and friends, Marshall uses this issue to return to the scene of his favourite Apes sequel and successfully retells the Conquest story from the perspective of a human who lives and works in the city.

There are plenty of references for the movie's fans to pick up on but at the same time Marshall is keen to flesh out the world only glimpsed in the movie. He takes us into the human home of 1991 and shows us the work that goes on behind the scenes to make sure you know how to look after your ape (the main character of the story is employed to write leaflets about ape management). Seeing the conquest from another perspective is immensely enjoyable, although Marshall does slightly tease with one loose end reminiscent of the "which books" question that closes the 1960 film The Time Machine. Try reading this issue and not wondering what that final urgent pamphlet was...

(It's also worth noting that the letter column is significant again - a letter in this issue from two brothers resulted in the publication of another Apes zine, Ape Crazy)

Issue 20 was another one-off tale, this time starring the Ape Riders (a bunch of apes styled after the old west, who had already appeared in Adventure's Planet of the Apes Annual). While an improvement on the story from the annual, this is still nothing more than a western featuring apes. The issue would be largely forgettable but for a terrific cover painting by Tony Harris, who would later find fame on DC Comics' highly praised Starman series.

The final four issues of the series saw a return to
the multi-part epic as Charles Marshall threw together a four-part wrap-up story that saw the return of Governor Breck and featured almost all of the major characters introduced throughout the series. Marshall does an adequate job of tying up the ends and bringing the saga full circle, although the world left behind at the finale is more akin to Battle in tone than the original movie.

The story has its ups and downs. It's good to see the return of Breck, especially when given a brief glimpse of his softer side as he sees what has become of humanity; but on the other hand the way he is brought back (and indeed the whole finale in which Caesar also makes a return) is pure fantasy and completely at odds with what makes Planet of the Apes so special. There is also a sense that, while Marshall was limited in trying to fit everyone into the story, some characters deserved a more fitting send-off. Ollie's final fate is certainly an anti-climax and would have benefited from more exposure – more room could have been made by excising the interlude from Frito and Jojo, whose humour is again at odds with the dark tone.

The art also suffers. With Pallott having been replaced as inker from issue 21, Wyman's art isn't as good as in previous issues. It lifts slightly with the concluding part of the story illustrated by Craig Talifer, but once again a lot more effort seems to have none into getting the apes right at the cost of the humans' appearances. On the subject of the finale, Marshall again tries to throw in another reference for the fans, but his suggestion that Caesar and the Lawgiver were one and the same (presumably meaning that there was more than one Lawgiver in ape history) is a bit hard to swallow, albeit not as difficult as the fantastic final battle.

The finale certainly wraps up the loose ends but is patchy – and in the end that's probably a fair reflection of the series as a whole. There were a lot of good issues and sadly some bad but the latter can be forgiven when one considers not just the good issues but the importance to Apes fans as a whole. Reading back through the letters pages gives a terrific sense of where Apes fandom was in the early nineties and these comics are almost as valuable in that respect as they are for their stories.

In addition to the twenty-four issues in the ongoing series, Adventure put out a number of spin-off one-shots and mini-series, usually by different creative teams to the regular issues. Like the ongoing series, they offer a mixed bag for Apes fans looking to be entertained but all have points of interest and there is much to recommend.

"Let me apologise to any diehard Planet of the Apes fans who suffered from seizures upon viewing the first issue of Ape City."

Charles Marshall, writer, 1990

The four-issue Ape City is probably not a good place to start. The art is by future series regular MC Wyman, but without Terry Pallott's inking it just wasn't in the same calibre as his later efforts. Marshall's script was really the weak link however, with any good ideas usually being ruined by moments of complete silliness.

The general concept is a sound one, and one that many an Apes fan has posed questions about over the years. In the movies, we see only the east coast of America – so what happened in the rest of the world?

An All New PLANET OF THE APES Mini-Series

Marshall's Ape City sees yet another group of astronauts flung into the future, this time landing in Europe by mistake (although for once they did actually intend to land in the future), where they find talking apes rule but in a world still populated by twentieth century technology. It's certainly different, although this is as much a weakness as it is a strength, with Marshall relying too much on unfunny comedy and totally daft plot twists. In his favour, Marshall has at least managed to retain some flavour of Boule's original novel, with human technology being "aped" but not really understood (except by Dr Benday, an ape scientist who has realised that the technology will not last forever). If it all sounds vaguely sensible so far, you should probably know that the cast of the series is populated not only with your average astronauts and apes but also with baboon ninjas, gangster apes with tommy guns and Helf's Apes, a gang of motorcycle-riding chimps. If you've managed to read that
last sentence without hurling your copy of Scrolls across
the room in disgust, then you might want to give this
series a try. Just don’t go expecting anything too
intellectually demanding.

The introduction of a giant ape called Cong and
the sight of his lead character, who sings Monkees
songs in nightclubs on a flying motorcycle sum up all
that’s wrong with the series. However, Marshall still
manages to depart from the silliness and the Boule-like
setting for long enough to throw some teasers at the movie
fans.

The astronauts’ mission for example is to land in
the future US many years ahead of Taylor and
exterminate as many apes as possible in order to prevent
the original movie coming to pass. It’s not without flaws
(not least of which is having the mission commanded by
Taylor’s daughter – somehow he just didn’t seem like the
father-figure type) but it gets the story kicked off. More
interesting is Marshall’s offering on how the ape society
came to pass and the differences between what we’ve seen
and what happened in Europe.

Less silly but nevertheless still derided by huge
numbers of Ape fans is the follow up series Ape Nation.
Nowadays comics crossovers are regular occurrences of
which many are churned out every month, but when
Adventure decided to combine their two Fox-licensed
properties, Planet of the Apes and Alien Nation, there was
still a sense of novelty about the ensuing four-issue series.
The premise was a simple one – a ship carrying the slave
race from the planet Tenconth crashes on Earth, as per the
original movie and subsequent spin-off TV show Alien
Nation. This time however the ship finds itself on the
Earth of the future and a plot is soon hatched between
Danaide (the Tenconthese leader), General Olo of the apes
and Simon, the human, that will see Ape City laid to
crash. When the ape Heston leads a group of apes to
investigate the sighting of this strange ship, the two
groups are fated to meet on the battlefield. The idea of
another spaceship crashing might seem like too much of a
coincidence but it’s nothing compared to the number of
human astronauts who seem to have ended up on the
Planet of the Apes.

Although set in the same continuity as the ongoing
series, Marshall was careful to use characters who
were either minor players or else had already been written
out so that there would be no major impact on the ongoing
series. In his one-shot Planet of the Apes Annual however
(a squarebound comic featuring the anthology “A Day
on the Planet of the Apes”), he took a different approach.
This collection of stories was to flesh out the world of
Adventure Comics’ Planet of the Apes by using a string of
new characters to show different aspects of ape society.
While his intentions were good, the result is forgettable.
The linking story (concerning a lost ape trying to make it
back across country to his mate) is the best of the
collection but we are given no indication of who he is, the
story being only a few pages in length. The stories that it
holds together however are a lot poorer. There is another
Frito and Jojo story, which does not differ much from their
other adventures (and certainly does not improve on them): an Ape Riders story; “Eternal Dusk”, a story of a
derapist apes; and another Ape City spinoff. The latter
does little to encourage interest in the series or to add to it
(instead being an excuse for a long fight scene) while the
two middle stories are essentially a western and a
haunted house story with the characters replaced by apes –
in this respect they are little better than Marvel UK’s
Apeslayer, which at least had Neal Adams’ art to
recommend it. The plot has a couple of serviceable twists
and the art on the stories is competent but this is one of
Adventure’s more forgettable contributions.
More fondly remembered is the four-issue Urchak's Folly by Gary Chalonor. Chalonor's art was first rate – while a lot of Apes artists specialised in one area, Urchak's Folly boasted well-drawn apes and humans against a backdrop of superbly crafted ape villages and ruined cities – and it was all the better for gracing one of the better Planet of the Apes stories. Combining the world of Apes with elements of Boule's other classic, Bridge on the River Kwai, Chalonor's tale revolved around a human named Sebastian who awakes in a ruined city on a world where apes are the ruling species with no memory of who he is or how he comes to be there. Soon he runs afoot of the titular gorilla and the insane scheme involving a bridge that will take the apes to the world beyond this valley.

In addition to a fondness for Bridge on the River Kwai and Victorian-era fantasy authors, Chalonor's love of Planet of the Apes shines through. There are little touches such as the gorilla uniforms or a tribe of humans called Taylorites to illustrate his fan credentials. There are also more significant tie-ins: the opening hunt sequence that so closely resembles the original movie; a mutant as per Beneath; and the journal of Lewis Dixon that details the events of Escape (though one wonders if it was really wise of him to keep the secrets behind Caesar's birth in his journal). Chalonor does not completely ignore Adventure's continuity though, and regular readers will be able to spot how Urchak's origin relates to the world seen in the ongoing series.

Urchak's Folly offers plenty of original ideas – the introduction of a mandrill character, the method of time travel used by Sebastian (not completely original but at least he's not another astronaut) and indeed where the lead character came from (leading to a wonderful fate for Urchak himself). The story is well structured (the destruction of the bridge is, rather than a finale, used as a means of sending the story off in a totally different direction) and, combined with the top quality art and links to the movies we all love, makes this one of Adventure's most rewarding Apes books.

One aspect of the movie continuity that was frequently brought up by Adventure, although not so frequently enforced, was the sacred rule – ape shall never
kill ape. The four-issue *Blood of the Apes* puts an interesting spin on the idea. Ape shall never kill ape – unless it’s his job.

Further down the line – a notion that is probably more relevant in today’s climate than it was at the time it was published. (One final note if you are hunting these issues down – be warned that a printing mistake meant that issue 2 was emblazoned with “Part One of Four” on the cover!)

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*Sins of the Father* is a one-shot that should definitely be on any *Apes* comic fan’s shopping list alongside *Urchak’s Folly*. This tie-in marked the only occasion on which Adventure Comics actually stepped into the world of the original movie (or more accurately some years before it) and actually features one of the characters from the movie. Lending extra depth to said character, the story benefits from some well-paced action, one or two interesting characters and a new revelation that would have repercussions for the yet-to-arrive Taylor. On top of all this, the art in the book is among the best of all Adventure’s lines – it’s heavily stylised, showing a slight manga influence, and strays further from the look of the original ape make-up but is technically superior to a great deal of the other output from the other spin-off titles. It’s also worth noting if you take heed of such things that it was the only *Apes* book put out by Adventure that actually features a couple of scenes of nudity, every other artist having managed to camouflage the modesty of the human savages!

In the end, *Blood of the Apes* is a good idea suffering from a poor execution. The art is average at best (and the apes look too human, with only the pronounced noses and brows to suggest anything apelike about them) and the writing suffers from bad ape puns (an unfortunately frequent occurrence in Adventure’s run), poor dialogue (when did we ever hear an ape say “kiss my butt”?) and a disjointed story that wastes time recappping events that have only just happened.

*Blood of the Apes* contains a couple of ties to *Urchak’s Folly* (the reappearance of Argo the mandrill and the Taylorites) but is far inferior to that series. If there is one interesting aspect to *Blood of the Apes*, other than the basic concept, it’s the notion of apes arming humans but risking these same weapons being used against them.

Adventures returned to the four-issue format for their final published forays into *Apes* comics. The *Forbidden Zone* boasted a strong story (by *Men in Black* creator Lowell Cunningham) with clean, polished art by Leonard Kirk and thankfully saw out the franchise on a high.

The story sees two mutants named Kolp and Mendez (who we must assume are descended from our
chums from *Battle* have a falling out over the matter of a nuclear bomb. Leaving the ruins of New York, Mendez stumbles across the city of Primacy, a city where, three centuries after the events of *Battle*, apes and humans live together in harmony. The city is situated on the other side of the Forbidden Zone from the Ape City we know of (giving rise to the other "tribe" that Zaius will hint at hundreds of years later) and seems to be more technologically developed. Soon enough we are catapulted into a war of apes, humans and mutants that will end bloodily for all concerned.

Between the geography, the story, the characters and a few other subtle hints Cunningham has crafted a story that does a grand job of linking the events of *Battle* to the world we see in the first two movies some two millennia later. There are a couple of ideas that don't quite sit right (there is yet another Lawgiver: also, the idea of telepathic mutants shouting at each other seems at odds with their depiction in *Deneath*) but equally there are some nice unusual touches (for once we see a gorilla who is a scientist).

The story is complemented by terrific art that actually seems to benefit from the black and white format in its detail and style. It is also noteworthy for taking the unusual approach of making the ape characters appear more like real apes (a move closer to Boule's novel that the original movie would probably have attempted had the technology existed at the time). All in all it's a good tie-in for fans of the movies and a pleasing conclusion to Adventure's contribution to *Planet of the Apes*.

I hope that this overview has been of some use to you if you're choosing which of these issues to hunt down — but since none are particularly rare or valuable, it should not be too difficult to put together a complete collection quickly and cheaply. The series might be more relevant as a landmark in Apes history than as a comic, but they are worth picking up all the same.

The completists among you should be warned though — in addition to the comics discussed here, Adventure also released four issues of *Terror on the Planet of the Apes* (reprinting Marvel's story from the seventies), paperback collections of Marvel's first three movie adaptations (featuring some production art too), a paperback (entitled *Monkey Planet*) collecting their own first four issues and finally limited edition variants of the first four issues of *Planet of the Apes* and *Ape Nation*. So now that you are fully up to speed, you can go and get raking through those bargain bins and pick up a bit of *Apes* history!

"We may have gotten sappy at times, melodramatic at times and downright silly at times but our hearts have always been in the right place."

Charles Marshall, 1992

ALAN MAXWELL
KENT BURLES

Simian Scrolls is proud to present an exclusive interview with the artist who was involved in delivering Planet of the Apes to a whole new generation of comic readers when Adventure Comics launched their series way back in 1990.

How did you get into the comics industry and how did you get the job of pencilling the Adventure Planet of the Apes series?

I made an appearance at local comic book convention (in the days of the black & white explosion - ancient history now) where an artist named Peter Hsu saw my work and was able to get me started with Adventure Comics on fittingly, The Adventurers. That series continued with Eternity/Malibu and when it ended Planet of the Apes seemingly fell into my lap. It seemed so easy at the time as one thing simply flowed into another - ah youth!

Your inker on the series was Barb Kaalberg - did you feel you were a good team?

Yes, I did - Barb and I talked on the phone quite a bit as we were working on the series, discussing what worked and what didn't and I always felt that she was always trying to improve and sharpen her inking skills. In many ways we were both feeling our way and I think it would be interesting to pair up again - although have no idea what Barb is doing today or even if she is still doing art in some form.

The first page, which was a striking splash page in the first issue drawn by you, is of General Ollo, a mean son of a bitch gorilla general, following in a line of mean gorillas. His look is graphic - can you recall designing him and did you enjoy working on General Ollo? General Ollo is also the opening full-page splash page on your final issue (number 11).

I have only the vaguest memories of designing General Ollo but I do remember enjoying working on him and wished that he could have been a bit more prominent - after all a villain is usually a lot of fun. Mind you, there was no lack of reprehensible characters in that series so I didn't suffer too much.

Charles Marshall wrote the series - did you have any input into the scripts or was it very much a done deal? Did you have a degree of freedom designing the look of the towns, uniforms, etc.?
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The scripts were very much a done deal - which was no problem for me. I had done some writing on the previous series I worked on (The Adventurers) but didn't really consider myself a writer, and still don't, much as I enjoyed writing and would love to do it again. Different ways of working present different challenges so working from a full script is its own challenge, which I was glad to tackle.

In issue 11 of the book there is a battle scene where both sides are facing off (pages 18 and 19) that is very reminiscent of Ed Hannigan's Evolution's Nightmare from the original Marvel magazine. Have you read any of the Marvel magazine stories and were you familiar with Evolution's Nightmare?

When I did that scene I had never seen the Marvel books. Since then I have read some of them but not that particular story - I would be quite intrigued to take a look at it and compare it to what we did.

Were you an Ape's fan before taking on this project? Had you seen any of the movies and, if so, what did you think of them?

I had only seen the first movie when I did the series - and I enjoyed it immensely. In fact, even if I hadn't liked the film I'm sure I would remember it because the first time I ever took a girl out on a date was to see the original Planet of the Apes. Since then, of course, I have seen most of the others but nothing matches the impact of that first film. I mean the film, of course, but the date wasn't bad either.

![Illustration from Planet of the Apes #11](image1.png)

Kent Burles and Barb Kaalberg illustrated this battle scene (above left) in Planet of the Apes #11, which was reminiscent of Marvel's Evolution's Nightmare (above right) from the original Planet of the Apes magazine

Does it surprise you that, all this time later, there are still weirdos out there who ask you questions about your run on Planet of the Apes? The adventures of Alexander, Grunt and General Ollo are fondly remembered by many fans?

I'm not surprised at all - as a fan of comics, old horror films and sundry other bits of obscure pop culture I understand that love of a special series, film or character. Even now when I make an appearance at local comic book shows there are still fans who remember my work on Planet of the Apes or even less well-known series.

What is Kent Burles doing now and would he ever be willing to re-visit the Planet of the Apes if the opportunity arose? In what direction would you have liked to see the Adventure series going had you stayed on the project?

I now do work in the role-playing game industry, some commercial art, and have just started to get some of my more fine art oriented work into galleries with my first show coming up next summer. I miss comics, and would love to redo some of the things I did on Ape's so put the two together and I would definitely willing to revisit the series. If I had stayed on I would like to have seen it to go in a more epic direction - titanic armies and continent spanning conflict, that sort of thing!
Who are your own personal heroes in the world of comic art and who would you say has influenced you the most?

In a field as diverse, or potentially diverse as comics, there must be many influences and I could probably enumerate them in the hundreds. Undoubtedly though my #1 influence and personal hero in the comics world is Jack Kirby. My earliest memories include reading Kirby’s monster stories for Marvel pre *Fantastic Four* #1. I didn’t know the name of the artist but I knew I loved his work and that love affair has lasted to this day. If anything it has only deepened as my understanding of art and comics has deepened. His was a giant talent, a giant imagination, a giant heart - I consider myself lucky to have lived in a time when his work took comics to the furthest reaches ... and beyond.

*Above & below: Kent Burles and Barb Kaalberg’s art illustrating two stunning Apes landscapes*

*JOHN ROCHE*
GARY CHALONER

Simian Scrolls presents an exclusive interview with the writer and illustrator of one of Adventure Comics' most popular Planet of the Apes series, Urchak's Folly.

Before Urchak was ever heard of, you did the cover for the third issue of the main POTA book, featuring a suitably fanged gorilla (presumably Ollo?). How did you get involved with Adventure in the first place and were you going to be doing Urchak's Folly from the outset?

Adventure Comics was one imprint of Malibu Graphics. Another imprint was Eternity Comics. I'd produced a series for Eternity -- The Jackaroo -- that only sold so-so, but they really liked my stuff so they asked would I like to do something for one of their licensed projects. Being a fan of POTA (and apes in general) I jumped at the chance to do what was to become Urchak's Folly.

In January, 1991, issue 1 of Urchak's Folly was launched on an unsuspecting world, written and pencilled by one Gary Chaloner. How did the tale of Sebastian Thorne come about - was it something you had had in mind for a while?

Well, I loved the time-twisting aspect of POTA, as well as the old Time Machine movie with Rod Taylor. I also loved the fact that Pierre Boule wrote the screen play for Bridge on the River Kwai... that got my thoughts going. The other aspect of POTA movies that I loved was the allegory and thinking behind them. This made me want to explore the 'Taylorites' and the messiah angle. It was all thrown into the pot to make Urchak's Folly.

Dillon Naylor was your inker (with Greg Gates as well after issue 1). Did you feel the inking worked well and are you one of those artists who would ultimately always prefer to ink his own work?

I love Dillon's inking. I think it suited the Ape's artwork really well. A bit more brush-heavy and moody. While I would have loved to have inked it myself, at the time, I simply didn't HAVE the time. As it turned out, I ended up doing most of the last issue's inks myself anyway due to Dillon and Greg getting tied up with other work.

Chris Ulm was Editor on Urchak's Folly - was it a light editorial hand and do you recall having to run anything past Fox?

Chris didn't interfere at all. In fact, I don't recall even talking to him! As to Fox, I had nothing to do with that side of things. No changes were requested, so I assume it was all smooth sailing.

On a personal note from myself, Miranda's "butt" in the shadowy wagon scene in issue 1 is worth the price alone. Did you have a particular model for her and, if so, do you still have her telephone number? Also, as queen of her tribe, I applaud your decision to dress her only in a string thong - there are no complaints from me, merely sincere thanks. Did a lot of thought go into designing Miranda's look or was the "naked woman" style always your first choice?

Well, I suppose I had Nova from the movies in the back of my mind... as far as dressing in skins and showing a bit of flesh. Seems as how this was the 90s and not the 60s, I could get away with a bit more. Raquel Welch in One Million Years BC was a pretty good starting point as well. Rrrrrrrrrrr!

The opening double splash page of Dr. Titus on pages 2 and 3 of issue 2 of Urchak's Folly is one of the best two page spreads ever in Ape's comics, in my opinion. Were you looking for a "cinematic" feel, given the origins of the source material and is it a lot different approach for you as a creator adapting an existing concept as opposed to creating your own?

Thanks, I really enjoyed doing that one. Using the fashions and pre-conceived look of POTA was a lot of fun. I had no probs drawing that stuff. It made it look more like a POTA product. I wasn't too keen on the other Adventure Comics that had biker apes, ninja apes and all sorts of other things that were a bit silly. It wasn't POTA to me.
The character of William, the telepathic human, has echoes of the mutants in *Beneath*, but he is a far more sympathetic and interesting creation. What was your thinking behind creating him?

Well spotted. Yep, the mutants from the second movie were the inspiration. Plus, his telepathy was a great way to communicate with the mute Thorne. It was a tangled web I wove. Sigh.

The Claudius Bridge has echoes of that other great Boulle masterpiece *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. Is the Claudius Bridge a metaphor for bridging the gap between ape and human (or is it just a bridge)?

It was Urchak's folly... literally. He was going to finish that thing if it killed every human on the planet. Urchak had pretty loopy plans of his own, and the bridge became a symbol of that. Like the Japanese bridge in Kwai, I also wanted the imminent completion of the bridge to create a time frame for certain plot developments.

What does Urchak want with Miranda - is there an extremely dodgy sexual thing going on there?

If I remember correctly, Miranda was the leader of the Trog... half human/half apes that lived in the valley. They were at war with the apes of Urchak's camp. She represented a peaceful merging of ape and man... and that could never happen as far as Urchak and any decent ape was concerned. Miranda was also a Taylorite. She converted the Trog to believe in the coming of Taylor, much like a missionary.

The Dixon Journal is a really great idea, tying the whole mini series into the original canon. Was it important to you to establish a strong link with the original material? You certainly achieved it!
Yes, very important! I wanted this to be a legitimate POTA product that could stand up next to the movies... and perhaps back a bit... to the left. The Dixon Journal was a lot of fun to put together. I was a bit annoyed at some ad placements in the comics though. All that stuff could have gone at the back and the story could have unfolded uninterrupted. Damned advertising.

For a limited series of 4 issues, there are an amazing number of well-rounded characters. Apart from the main characters of Sebastian, Miranda and Urchak himself, characters like William, Caspian and Chenko leave a lasting impression. Possibly the most intriguing character is Argo Di Vincenzo, a (I believe) Mandrill, whose back story would have made a fascinating limited series in itself. How did you come up with this character and what do you see as his origin story?

The only thing I was trying for there was to put forward the idea that there were more than three types of apes that had evolved intelligently. Sure, we know about gorillas, chimps and orangs... but there are a lot of simian species. So Argo sprung from that. Plus he looked interesting and so different from the others!

Was Urchak insane from the start of your series or did he snap towards the end of issue 3?

Ahhh, the poor bastard was insane from the start. His on-going and debilitating battle with the Troggs in the valley didn’t help things. Then there was this damned bridge that he was trying to finish so he could conquer the West!

Caspian’s crucifixion in issue 3 is depicted on the cover in graphic fashion. It is a very striking and, indeed, disturbing image. Was there any concern about using that image at the time?

Well, I was going for powerful. Plus, I was recalling the crosses that bordered The Forbidden Zone in the movies. It stuck in my head. It was all very Roman, in a way. Invading armies and all that. Seemed to fit.

The time machine conclusion at the end of the series is a welcome break from the spaceship mode of arrival. Did you want to get away from the traditional spaceship thing?

Well, the whole time thing was established in the movies, so I dipped further back into classic science fiction and went straight to HG Wells. Why the hell not? I thought, why should time travel be limited to the spaceship thing? Having the Victorian era angle also allowed me to make Sebastian Thorne a product of those times... a victim of those times.

The final issue of Urchak’s Folly is a serious change of pace. Its Victorian “feel” is a precursor to Alan Moore’s and Kevin O’Neill’s League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, two decades later. Given the change in feel, did you consciously adopt a particular style for the main body of Urchak’s Folly, given its science fiction theme and did you have to adapt your own natural style to suit?

I wanted a different style to denote a different time, so I used a style that echoed the art styles of Victorian magazines and ‘penny dreadfuls’. It was an obvious solution to set the visuals apart.

It probably isn’t worth mentioning, but Colonel Urchak made a cameo appearance in the project I did after Folly. His stuffed body was a prop in an office in The Olympians #1, published by Marvel/Epic in the early 90s. Now that’s something to track down for ALL desperate POTA completists! [Alan Maxwell cannot refuse a challenge like that – see image left!]

What is Gary Chaloner doing nowadays and where can we buy it?


If every Apes fan could buy a copy, I’d appreciate it!

One of these days, I’d LOVE to do a sequel to Urchak’s Folly, too.

JOHN ROCHE
SO YOU THINK YOUR COLLECTION IS COMPLETE?

You’ve got the Marvel comics and magazines; the UK comics are taken care of. Brown Watson annuals? Got them; you’ve got all the Adventure comics including limited editions and reprints. You’ve finally secured that copy of Gold Key’s Beneath adaptation, including the free poster of course; and of course, we can’t forget the Power Records sets. Surely that’s it for a Planet of the Apes comic enthusiast? Not so. Simian Scrolls shows that there is still a world of Apes comic capers out there for you and take our word for it, this is just the tip of the iceberg...

So you thought you could escape us.

MIDDLE LEFT: Mad magazine pokes fun at all five movies in The Planet That Went Ape.
TOP LEFT: Cracked magazine takes a pot at the Apes TV series, having already torn into the movies.
TOP MIDDLE & TOP RIGHT: A 1964 issue of American men’s magazine Saga featured (a slightly abridged) publication of Boule’s original novel, accompanied by illustrations. Not really a comic but worth including as it’s a visualisation of our beloved Apes concept that predates even the original movie.
RIGHT: Mighty Samson saw a barbarian battle strange creatures in a post-apocalyptic America. The cover featuring the ruined statue was published almost three years before the iconic finale of Planet of the Apes.
BELOW RIGHT: Scrolls readers will by now be familiar (see issue 7) with Jack Kirby’s Kamandi, which tells of a young boy’s adventures among super-intelligent animals on a post-apocalyptic Earth.
BELOW MIDDLE: An issue of Strange Adventures tells of two humans transported to a world where apes and men are at the other end of the evolutionary ladder, before even Boule’s novel, with some interesting similarities.
BELOW LEFT: Some obviously PotA-inspired apes turn up to invade Earth in one of Dark Horse’s Godzilla comics!

ALAN MAXWELL
Phew! have we stopped yet?? This Comics Special Edition of Simian Scrolls has been a roller coaster ride with no downs! From the moment that we contacted the wonderful Roy Thomas (be of Alter Ego et al - see below for details), this comics special has taken on a life of its own. Roy put us in touch with Tony Isabella and one interview has pretty much lead on to another to the point where we have an overview of Apes Comics stretching from 1974 through to 2001. Every single person interviewed has been a joy, being friendly, helpful, and, to a man a class act (notwithstanding our intrusion into their hectic schedules). It is highly likely that Roy Thomas had to invent and use a time machine to find the time to do our introduction - within the chest of Roy Thomas beats the true heart of a Fanzine Editor! Jim Salicrup was kind enough to put us in touch with Ed Hannigan and Kent Burles has restored to life yet another Gorilla bad guy for us, providing our wonderful Ollo cover - it's nice to see that you can't keep a bad gorilla down and he now joins our Hall of Fame alongside Carl Critchlow's wonderful Brutus cover for issue 6. Speaking of Carl, issue 3 of his Thrud the Barbarian is now out and is a sumptuous and hilarious romp through a world of magic, warriors and brillo pads. Thrud is a full colour comic that cannot be praised highly enough and is available from most good comic and game shops. Alternatively, you can order it directly from Carl Critchlow, P.O. Box 371, Southport, PR8 6YE enclosing a cheque or P.O. for £2.60 (including p&p). If you want to get a flavour of Thrud, visit www.thrudhebarbarian.com. You will not be disappointed.

Some Apes fans aren't comic fans, but we hope to convert the unbelievers with this issue. Apes and comics have always had an almost symbiotic relationship, as the galaxy of talent on show in this issue proves. For UK fans in particular, it is a tremendous thrill to hear John Bolton's happy recollections of his work on the 3 UK Annuals, which were also reviewed by Alan Maxwell in issue 6. Speaking of Alan, his superb review of the Adventure Series in this issue represents yet another definitive contribution by Alan to the history of Apes, following on from his, by now, legendary review of the Apes T.V. series in issue 3 of Scrolls.

The depth and variety of contributions in this issue placed a great responsibility on the guys designing and laying out the interviews. As these pages show, Dave Ballard and Alan Maxwell were certainly more than up to the task and both deserve every credit for putting issue 9 together. Their roles as co-editors encompassed everything from finding images, designing layout, making sure everything looked graphically spot on and listening to ill informed and uneducated suggestions from that idiot Roche. Both guys deserve more thanks than they ever get and are Apes fans in the very truest sense of the word - giving something back without demanding anything in return. It also should be noted that neither editor has had the opportunity to review these comments as both would, no doubt, have modestly edited out such praise.

We have a new feature this issue, which is our Gallery Page on the back cover. The contributions are from some of our younger fans and readers. In a few years, these guys are going to be the new John Bolton's of this world, so look out! We hope to run this feature again in future issues and if there are any young readers out there or anybody with young family members who'd like to participate, just send the images in and we'll do our best to run them. Scrolls has always had the philosophy of being "by the fans, for the fans". If any contributions of art aren't immediately used in Scrolls, that doesn't mean that such art won't be used in the future - sometimes it is a question on balance and space. Massive apologies to anybody who doesn't see their work in this issue. Many, many apologies - we are grateful for everything we receive.

The people at SFX Magazine were kind enough to vote Scrolls 8 Fanzine of the Month again. They also recently did a (reasonably!) kind review of the Return to the Planet of the Apes animated series and, gradually, we are converting the world to Apedom. Speaking of which, the UK Branch of the fan club goes from strength to strength. There was a mini meeting of several UK Apes fans in Bristol in May of this year at the Bristol Comics Festival and we are planning on putting together a special bulletin for the UK fan club. If anybody can think of a good title for that, please let Scrolls know! The UK branch of the fan club is here to stay and all suggestions for logos, products, meetings, etc. should be sent to Scrolls and we will follow them up.

The contact details for most of the creators interviewed in this issue are incorporated within the interviews. Anybody with even a passing interest in comics and their history, as well as the history of their creators, should be reading Roy Thomas' fantastic fanzine (it is the daddy of all fanzines?) Alter Ego. As luck would have it, there is now a handy UK distributor for Alter Ego which allows UK
readers to save the cost of International Postage by subscribing through the UK Agent. Six issues of Alter Ego will cost £20.00 and, when you see just one issue of Alter Ego, it will rapidly be apparent just what a fantastic deal that is. Alter Ego is an essential, must read, for anybody interested in comics and the UK Agent is Quality Communications Ltd. 345 Ditchling Road, Brighton, BN1 3JL Telephone: 01273 566222 e-mail: qualitymailsales@yahoo.co.uk. Cheques are payable to “Quality” and they also accept Visa and Mastercard. Readers in the US and Canada should contact TwoMorrows at TwoMorrows Publishing, 14047 Bedfordtown, Drive, Raleigh, N.C. 27614 e-mail: twomorrow@aol.com/www.twomorrows.com. Do yourself a favour and take out a subscription and don’t forget to tell them that Simian Scrolls sent you!

Whilst we are spreading the good word about Fanzines, the best large format UK Fanzine of any description, by far, is “From The Tomb”. This is an astonishingly good fanzine that explores, primarily, horror comics, including Warren and similar publications. It is published by Peter Normanton and you can e-mail Peter at Peter.Normanton@btinternet or write to him at 619 Whitworth Road, Lower Healey, Rochdale, Lancs. England OL12 OTB. One issue in the UK is £3.95 and cheques are payable to “Peter Normanton”. A three issue subscription in the UK is £11.00, outside the UK it is £22. Again, you will not be disappointed if you order From The Tomb - to cap it all, Peter is also a loyal Apes fan and Scrolls reader and was probably one of the better looking fans who attended the Bristol get together (although that certainly isn’t saying much!). Another loyal Scrolls reader is Piers Casimir and Piers puts out the quite magnificent fanzine “Spooky”. This is a superb fanzine looking at the history of Warren publications and it is also a fanzine which is definitely going places so get in early for the ride. Piers can be contacted at: piers@spookyfanzine.com. As this is a comics special edition of Simian Scrolls, for those with a wider interest in the comics world Tony Ingram has the publication for you. Tony’s fanzine “Comics Retrospective” is a deceptively excellent review of the comics a lot of us remember from when we were kids. Retro has given us excellent and entertaining reviews of The Invaders (Roy Thomas beware!) as well as, currently, The Avengers. Past issues have looked at Tornado and the range of Retro stretches from Desperate Dan through to George and Lynne. At £1.20, it is probably the best value per word of any publication you could hope to buy nowadays and is available from: Tony Ingram at 3. Lower Harlings, Shotley Gate, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP91QE. The world of fanzines in the UK is certainly in safe hands with people like Peter, Piers and Tony - they have all supported Scrolls in the past and some of you found Scrolls through them. All of them now deserve the support of the massed ranks of Apeldom!

Sadly, whilst this issue of Scrolls was being put together, two greats of the film and comic world were lost to us. Jerry Goldsmith passed away in July of this year, and will need no introduction to Apes fans as the composer of the scores for Planet and Escape, the best two film scores ever, ever written, without argument. Anybody who hasn’t yet had an opportunity to listen to Jerry Goldsmith’s commentary on the 35th anniversary edition DVD release of the original Planet of the Apes should rush out now and buy it and listen to a master talking about his craft. The affection Jerry Goldsmith clearly still had for his Apes music is very evident in the commentary and Scrolls salutes a true giant of the music and film industry.

Whilst most readers of Scrolls will be primarily Apes fans, many are also comics fans in the wider sense. Comics fans everywhere mourned the loss of Julius Schwartz, who passed away in February of this year. For those who don’t know who Julius Schwartz was, he was a writer and editor at DC comics from 1944 through to 1989 and that bald statement doesn’t begin to convey the impact Julius Schwartz had upon the comics industry. He revived, redesigned and reinvigorated characters such as The Flash, The Green Lantern, The Atom, Hawkman, The Justice League of America. He was the group editor of the Superman comic books for two decades and had the remarkable distinction of not only being a long serving editor but also a universally loved individual, two attributes that do not always go hand in hand within the comics industry. In 1932, Julius Schwartz helped start the first ever Science Fiction amateur magazine, called “The Time Traveller”. Scrolls is only one of the many hundreds, if not thousands, of fanzines that ultimately grew from that original seed. Not everybody can be a legend. Julius Schwartz is.

In some small humble recognition of both Jerry Goldsmith and Julius Schwartz, therefore, this issue of Scrolls is dedicated to them both with sincere and heartfelt gratitude and respect for all that they achieved.

Next issue, issue 10, will be full of more goodies. As well as a feature on an original series of Argentinean comics based on the Apes T.V. series (we kid you not, these things exist and are wonderful!), including a focus on how the comics were discovered, restored, and translated into English, we are also hoping to run some features on the third Apes movie (and a favourite of many fans) Escape from the Planet of the Apes.

Nine issues in and we’re talking about issue 10. It looks as though Apes are here to stay. If Scrolls has anything to do with it Apes will be around for ever! Apes Rule!
COMIC BOOK ARTISTS
THE NEXT GENERATION?

Rachael. Age 6 USA

CHRIS.
Age 10 UK

TIM.
Age 10 AUS

KASS. Age 3 USA