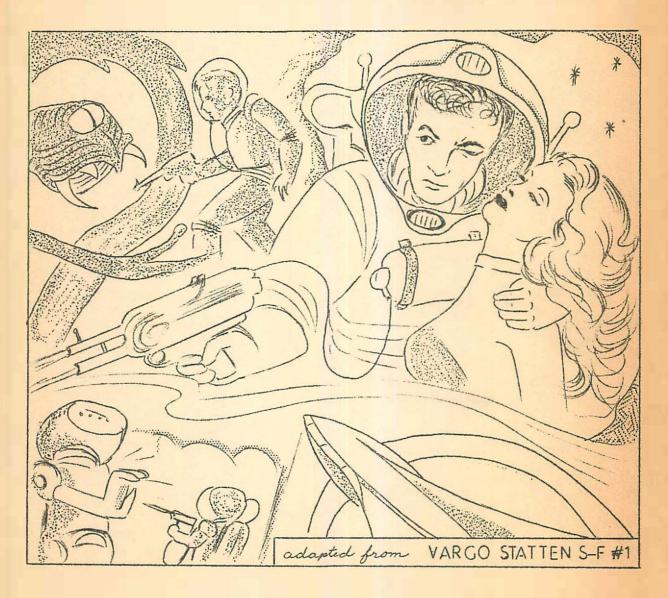
JOHN RUSSELL FEARN-AN EVALUATION

BY --- PHILLIP HARBOTTLE



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JOHN RUSSELL FEARN AN EVALUATION -DY -----PHILLIP HARBOTTLE

When Fearn died in the fall of 1960, he was virtually unknown to present-day science fiction readers. This was not due to any lack of merit in his work - which spanned a generation - but to many factors, chief amongst which was the attitude of the author himself; modest and unassuming, gathering about himself a host of pseudonyms with little thought for any recognition by his readers.

For reasons best known to himself and sundry editors, he chose to disseminate his work over a very wide range of periodicals. This has effectively served to obscure his work to posterity, and it is the desire of the writer that his works should at last be brought to light in their entirety, so that readers may judge for themselves his standing

in the history of science fiction.

He began writing in the early thirties, and quickly hit upon the type of story favoured by the editors and readership of that day. Beginning with "The Intelligence Giant", a serial in the 1933 AMAZING, he went from strength to strength. The thought-variant era in the Tremaine ASTOUNDING, with its extravagant extrapolation, was a type of fiction he was well capable of providing. His "Mathematica" stories were outstanding in their day (1936), and there were many more in a similar vein. A year earlier, his cosmic extravaganza "Liners of Time" in AMAZING had created something of a minor sensation and had served to consolidate his reputation.

In 1938 and the following years the science fiction market expanded enormously, until, by 1940, there were over a dozen magazines which featured it. Strangely enough, this glut of magazines presented several problems to the authors. At that time when an author presented a successful story he immediately became typed. Readers demanded sequels, or more in a similar vein, a trend encouraged by the editors. The bond between the editor and reader was then very strong, as can be seen from any of the letter columns which were an integral part of the magazines. This fetish led to the development of Ray Cummings! submicroscopic stories, "world wrecker" Edmond Hamilton, the "screwy animals" of Weinbaum and his many followers. Fearn himself became noted for the extravagant

story.

Thus there began the cult of the pseudonym. Editors were reluctant for their authors to present different styles, so that when an author wrote another type of story than for which he was noted, he was obliged to use another name - the most successful of which became typed again, and so on. Realising this, together with the fact that an author could be represented in several magazines in the same month, we should not be too greatly surprised to learn that Fearn employed no less than seven within a year: Geoffrey Armstrong, Thorton Ayre, Dennis Clive, John Cotton, Polton Cross, Dom Passante, Ephriam Winiki. Indeed, between 1935 and 1948 Fearn wrote over 130 stories for the science fiction magazines, of which total only 48 were published under his own name. Of the pen names he employed two of them went on to rival his own name in popularity, becoming typed in the process - Thornton Ayre (33 stories) and Polton Cross (26 stories).

One of the yardsticks we can use to evaluate the stature of a science fiction author is his subsequent inclusion in anthologies. In this respect I consider that Fearn was unfortunate to be represented

only twice, setting aside the several stories which saw reprinting in magazine versions, and his novels.

Latter-day anthologists have undoubtedly been more concerned with garnering stories by authors still writing at that time, together with a commercialised bias toward stories from ASTOUNDING during the forties, than they have with the actual best stories of the period. Thus it is that many fine stories deserving preservation have been overlooked. I should like to take this opportunity of directing the readers' attention to just a few of them: "After Doomsday", "The Arbiter", "He Conquered Venus", "Mathematica", "The Mental Ultimate", "Moon Heaven", "Secret of the Ring", "Secret of the Buried City", "The Unbroken Chain", "The Ultimate Analysis", "White Mouse", "World in the Wilderness" and many others.

Even in the late forties Fearn was appearing with some success in the Standard magazines. Had he remained in the American market and continued to upgrade his stories as did Kuttner, Leinster, and others, he would have become famous. He had the potential - of that I am convinced. However we must never lose sight of the fact that Fearn was a professional author and a business man. Towards the end on 1949 he suddenly saw the possibility of a science fiction breakthrough in the British market that he had been patiently awaiting for over a decade. He was first in the field with his original novel "Operation Venus", which was published in the winter of 1949 by Scion Ltd. Obtaining from them a lucrative contract in 1950 Fearn went on to write dozens of pb novels for them under the pseudonyms on "Vargo Statten" and to a lesser degree as "Volsted Gridban".

Other publishers in Britain jumped on the bandwagon of Fearn's huge success with a positive deluge of base imitations, most of which was puerile trash. It was Fearn's misfortune to have the blame for them laid at his door by the minority of fans in Britain who had been familiar with the American product. Notably Kenneth F. Slater, who contributed a long and scathing article on the British scene to the JOURNAL OF SCIENCE FICTION in 1952, and which was printed in 1953. Unfortunately Ken's many activities precluded him from an extensive reading of the Statten titles, and many of his statements are open to contradiction, especially that Fearn threw anything and everything into his stories in a hodge-podge of pseudo-science. Many of them contained simple, lucid and entertaining extrapolation such as anyone could follow who had never heard of the term science fiction, and therein lies their undoubted worth.

In the four years beginning from 1950, Fearn produced, under a great variety of names over 70 sf novels published in Britain, selling well over five million copies, and many of them were extensively reprinted and republished in Europe. No one will ever know whether Fearn was prompted by a purely commercial interest or whether he was concerned with the introduction of science fiction on a wide scale to Britain. His experiment with the magazine market in 1954 ironically showed how well he had sufceeded with this latter. His magazine was slanted toward the younger reader with limited experience of the science fiction field, and when it folded two years later it showed how well Statten had educated the fans they no longer needed the primer, they were already turning to the sophisticated American product! The number of people who cut their sf teeth on the Statten books - still in free circulation through second hand dealers - must today be astronomical.

Back in 1939 Fearn had begun a series of novelettes in FANTASTIC AD-VENTURES featuring the exploits of a wonder-woman, Violet Ray, alias The Golden Amazon. Then in 1944 he completely revised the character, smoothing out the pulp pseudo-science, and placing her in the near future. He also upgraded his writing and "The Golden Amazon" still remains as probably Fearn's most polished novel in the series.

1944 saw Fearn moving into the Canadian market, STARTLING and THRILL-

ING WONDER for his short works, and he began to place full length novels in the Canadian newspaper, THE TORONTO STAR WEEKLY. His "Golden Amazon" series was specially created for them, and it went on to enjoy an unbroken run of success through to 1960.

With this series Fearn went the limit with imagination, and there is no doubt that from time to time literary standards went by the board in this, his tour de force which ran serial-fashion at the rate of two novels a year for fifteen years. But in fairness to the author the reduction in format in recent years forced him to solve his problems in a

very few words and tended to inhibit character development.

The Amazon series is especially interesting because it is the embodiment of his super-woman theme, so often evident in his works. Also, it was an intriguing marriage of his own "Liners of Time" epic plot-ideas with the scope of E.E. Smith's "Skylark" series. For instance, Fearn's obsession with the metal copper - invariably used as a source of atomic power - stems directly from Smith. The series earlier carried an archenemy almost as brilliant as the Amazon herself - Sefner Quorne, a composite of Fearn's Jelfel and Smith's Du Quesne. But Fearn's treatment was his own.

The sheer improbability of the novels is actually their most redeeming feature. It is remarkable how Fearm ties them up into a story, with the most bizarre elements all falling into place. The action is fast and ceaselessly inventive.

Initially, Fearn took pains to establish the characters: Abna, Jovian busband of the Amazon, Viona their daughter, and Quorne himself. But once this was done, Fearn threw off the shackles of normal literary standards, manipulating his characters to the ends of his several universes. They offer sheer entertainment - nothing more. It seems doubtful whether the

later sagas will see book publication, and this is a pity.

Together with the Amazon series in this paper were over a score of straight science fiction yarns which reached a very high standard of characterisation and plotting. Two of the later ones, "Manton's World" and "Climate Incorporated", are amongst Fearn's best, being modern treatments of some of his most interesting old-time ideas. It seems likely that he wrote general fiction for the paper, and perhaps fantasy as well, under pseudonyms, but I regret to say that Fearn was unable to give me complete data before he died. To which I would add that I learned of his STAR WEEKLY work too late to collect more than a portion, so that my listing is incomplete.

The attention of anthologists is drawn to the listings: recognition is long overdue! And if they further serve to introduce new readers to the works, or cause old readers to reread them in a new light, then I

will have succeeded in my task.

P. Harbottle, Summer 1962

MAGAZINE STORIES 1933 - 1954

This listing covers only science fiction and fantasy. Those stories published in Detective, Off-trail, or other magazines are not covered.

Suffixes: N - Novel n - novelette
S - Serial novel s - short story

Ás	JO	HN RUSSELL FEARN:-		
Aftermath	N	Startling	Sept	45
After the Atom	S	Startling	May :	48
Arbiter, The	S	Startling	May	47
Before Earth Came	N	Astounding	July	34
Black Empress	n	Amazing	Jan	39
Black-out	S	Science Fantasy	Wint	50
Blue Infinity, The	N	Astounding	Sept	35
Brain of Light	N	Astounding	May	34
Brain of Venus	n	Thrilling Wonder	Feb	37
Climatica	N	Fantasy	No.2	39
Cosmic Derelict	n	Planet	Spr	41
Cosmic Juggernaut	n	Planet	Summ	
Dark Eternity	N	Astounding	Dec	37
Death At The Observatory		Captain Future	Summ	40
Deserted Universe	n	Astounding	Sept	36
Dynasty of the Small	n	Astounding	Nov	
Flight of the Vampires	8	Amazing	Sept	52
He Conquered Venus	n	Astonishing	June	40
He Never Slept		Astounding	June	34
Intelligence Gigantic, The	S	Amazing, two-parts beginning	June	33
Interlink	S	Thrilling Wonder	Sept	45
Judgement Bell	n	Weird and Occult Library	No.2	
Last Hours, The	n	Amazing	Aug	42
Last Conflict	N	Fantasy	No.1	
Liners of Time	S	Amazing, Four-parts beginning	May	35
Lords of 9016	n	Thrilling Wonder	Apr	38
Man Who Stopped the Dust	n	Astounding	Feb	34
Ditto	11	Tales of Wonder	No.8	39
Mathematica	n	Astounding	May	36
Mathematica Plus(sequel)	n	Astounding	July	
Martian Miniature	s	Amazing	May	42
Menace From the Microcosm	n		Junë	37
Metamorphosis	N	Astounding	Jan	37
Misty Wilderness, The	S	Startling	Sept	39
Multillionth Chance, The	N		Sept	
Phantom From Space	S	Super Science	Mar	40
Portrait of a Murderer	S	Weird Tales	Dec	36
Ditto as Experiment in Mur		Strange Tales	No. 1	L
Pre-Natal	s	Outlands	No.1	
Queen of Venus		Marvel Science	Nov	
Red Heritage	N	Astounding	Jan	38
Red Magician	N	Fantasy	No.1	38
Secret of the Buried City	n	Amazing	May	39
Seeds from Space	n	Tales Of Wonder	No.1	
She Walked Alone	s	Fantastic Adventures	July	39
Subconscious	N	Amazing	Dec	36
Superhuman	ន	Startling	May	41
Sweet Mystery of Life	8	New Worlds (Ditto TWS Feb 47)	No.1	
Thoughts That Kill	3	Science Fiction	Oct	39

Through Earth's Core	n	Tales of Wonder	No.2	38
Ultimate Analysis, The	S		Sept	
Unbroken Chain, The	S		Spr	46
War of the Scientists	n		Apr	40
Worlds Within	N	0	Mar	37
Zagrabud	S	Amazing, Three-part beginning	Dec	37
Zagi wowa		14,,622,135,132,00		
	As P	OLTON CROSS: -	D - h	40
Chameleon Planet		Astonishing	Feb	40
Chaos	S		Nov Feb	47 38
Degenerates, The	n			42
Destroyer From the Past	n		May Summ	
Devouring Tide, The	n		Apr	41
Last Secret Weapon	***	Marvel Science Fantastic Adventures	Nov	39
Man From Hell, The	n		Jun	41.
Man Who Bought Mars, The	n s		Jan	38
Mental Ultimate, The	S	The state of the s	Apr	39
Martian Avenger, The Master of Golden City	n		June	
Mark Grayson Unlimited	S		Spr	
Other Eyes Watching	N	Startling	Spr	46
Outcasts of Eternity	11	Fantastic Adventures	Sept	
Prisoner of Time	n		May	42
Science From Syracuse	11	Science Fiction	Mar	41
Space Trap	n	m	Sept	45
Twilight Planet	S		Summ	46
Vicious Circle, The	S		Summ	46
Wanderer of Time	S	Startling	Summ	
Wedding of the Forces	s	Future	Nov	
World Beneath Ice	n	Amazing	Aug	
World That Dissolved	S		Feb	
World Without Chance	n	9	Feb	
World Without Death	n		June	
Wings Across the Cosmos	S	Thrilling Wonder	June	Ĵβ
	As D	OM PASSANTE:-		
Across the Ages		Future	Oct	
Men Without a World	n	Future	Mar	
Moon Heaven		Science Fiction	June	39
A COLUMN TO THE REAL PROPERTY OF THE PARTY O				
	As E	PHRIAM WINIKI:-		
Earth Asunder		Science Fiction	Oct	
Eclipse Bears Witness		Science Fiction	Mar	40
Jewels From the Moon		Science Fiction	Aug	
Leeches from Space	S	Science Fiction	Mar	39
	As D	ENNIS CLIVE: -		
Frigid Moon		Future	Nov	39
Flat Folk of Vulcan		Future	Nov	
Laughter Out of Space	n	Future	July	
Voice Commands, The	n	Science Fiction	June	
Valley of Pretenders		Science Fiction	Mar	39
		ONLY COMMONA		
		OHN COTTON: -	Mar	40
After Doomsday		Future Science Fiction	Mar	39
Outlaw of Saturn		Future	Nov	40
Onslaught From Below	5	1 4044		

As THORNTON AYRE: -

all	THORI	VION AIRE.		
Amazon Fights Again, The	n	Fantastic Adventures	June	40
Case of the Mezoic Monsters	n	Amazing	Apr	40
Case of the Murdered Savants	n	Amazing	May	42
Children of the Golden Amazon	n	Fantastic Adventures	Apr	43
Domain of Zero		Planet	Fall	40
Face in the Sky	n	Amazing	Sep	39
From Afar	n	Hands Up Annual (Br)	Win	47
Golden Amazon, The	n	Eantastic Adventures	July	39
Golden Amazon Returns, The	n	Fantastic Adventures		41.
Island in the Marsh	S	Startling	Nov	40
Locked City	n	Amazing		38
Lunar Concession	n	Science Fiction		41
Ditto	n	New Worlds	No.2	
Lunar Intrigue	'n	Fantastic Adventures	Nov	39
Lunar Vengeance	11	Amazing		43
Man Who Saw Two Worlds	n			40
Man Who Sold The Earth	-11	Science Fiction	Oct	40
	n	Fantastic Adventures		42
Mental Gangster, The			June	
Microbes From Space	S	Amazing (with A P Stahan)	Oct	41
Mystery of the Martian Pendulum	n	Amazing (with A.R.Steber)		40
Mystery of the White Raider		Fantastic Advenures	Feb	
Penal World	S	Astounding	Oct	37
Secret of the Moon Treasure		Amazing	July	
Secret of the Ring	n	Amazing	Nov	38
Ditto	n	Amazing (reprint)	Oct	42
Silver Coil, The		Amazing	Nov	42
Special Agent to Venus	n	Fantastic Adventures	Oct	40
Twilight of the Tenth World	n	Planet	Win	40
Vampire Queen	n	Planet	Fall	
Whispering Satellite	8	Astounding	Jan	
White Mouse	8	New Worlds	No.1	46
World in the Wilderness	n	Science Fiction	June	41
World Reborn	n	Super Science	Mar	40
World Without Women	n	Amazing	Apr	39
As VA	RGO :	STATTEN: -		
Before Atlantis	n.	Vargo Statten SF Mag	No.2	54
Beyond Zero		Vergo Statten SF Mag	No.1	54
Conqueror's Voice, The		British SF 5 parts	No.7	
Here and Now		British SF 5 parts	V2.2	
Master Mind, The		Vargo Statten SF Mag	No.3	
Matter of Vibration, A		British SF	N.12	
Reverse Action		Vargo Statten SF Mag	No.4	
Rim of Eternity		Vargo Statten SF May	No.5	
Second Genesis		British SF	No.7	
(The above was a reprint of "Co			Summ	
Three's A Crowd		British SD	AS'J	-
			1 10 8 44	
As N. WESLEY FIRTH:-				
Lords of Zorm	N	Futuristic Stories	No.1	
Mary Had A Little	S	Strange Adventures	No.1	46

As VOLSTED GRIDBAN:- Alice, Where Art Thou? March of the Robots Others, The Saga of 2270 A.D. As VOLSTED GRIDBAN:- Norgo Statten SF Mag Norgo Statten SF Mag Norgo Statten SF Mag Norgo Statten SF Mag Norgo Statten SF Mag	No.4 54 No.1 54 No.3 54 No.2 54
As FRANCIS ROSE: - After Twenty Years n British SF A reprint of "The Voice Commands" from Science Fiction - Saturnian Odyssey n British SF A reprint of "Outlaw of Saturn" from Science Fiction -	June 40
As MAX ELTON: - Chaos In Paradise n British SF A reprint of "War of the Scientists" from Amazing Hero Worship n British SF A reprint of "He Conquered Venus" from Astonishing	V2.7 55 Apr 40 V2.6 55 June 40
As HERBERT LLOYD:- Murmuring Dust s British SF A reprint of "Microbes from Space" from Amazing	N.12 54 June 39
As MALCOLM HARTLEY:- Out of the Past n British SF A reprint of "Men Without a World" from Future	No.9 54 Mar 40
As MORTON BOYCE: - Nemesis n British SF A reprint of "The Last Hours" from Amazing	V2.1 55 Aug 42
As MARVIN KAYNE: - Grey Avenger, The s British SF Reprint of "Phantom From Space" from Super Science	V2.2 55 Mar 40
As ARTHUR WATERHOUSE:- Adrift n British SF Reprint of "Cosmic Derelict" from Planet	N.11 54 Spr 41
As <u>DOUGLAS</u> <u>DODD: -</u> Mars For Sale	V2.5 55 June 41
As <u>WARD ROSS</u> : - No Place On Earth in British SF Reprint of "World Reborn" from Super Science"	N.8 54 Mar 40
As SHERIDAN DREW:- Imperfect Crime n British SF Reprint of "The Mental Gangster" from Fantastic Adventures	V2.4 55 Aug 42
ANTHOLOGY INCLUSIONS:-	

ANTHOLOGY INCLUSIONS: -

As Polton Cross:-Wings Across the Cosmos / "A Treasury of SF": Conklin, Crown, 1948 Originally appeared in Thrilling Wonder Stories for June 1938

As John Russell Fearn: Wanderer of Time "My Best SF Story": Friend & Margulies, Merlin, 1949
Originally appeared in Startling Summ 44 by Polton Cross.

NOVELS: 1943 - 1960

Those novels of the This Listing covers only science fiction. Western, or Mystery type, are not covered

THE PB NOVELS FOR SCION AND DRAGON PRESS

As VARGO STATTEN: -

1950-

Annihilation! The Micro Men

Wanderer of Space

-2,000 Years On

Inferno

The Cosmic Flame

Nebula-X

The Sun Makers

1951-

The Avenging Martian

Cataclysm

The Red Insects

Deadline to Pluto

The Petrified Planet

Born of Luna

The Devouring Fire

The Renegade Star

The New Satellite

The Catalyst

1952-

The Inner Cosmos

Man From Tomorrow

The Space Warp

The Eclipse Express

The G-Bomb

DeCreation

Across the Ages

1953~

Black-Wing of Mars

The Dust Destroyer

The Lie Destroyer

Man in Duplicate

Zero Hour

The Black Avengers

The Interlopers

Odyssey of Nine

Pioneer 1990

Black Bargain

Man of Two Worlds

The Grand Illusion

As VOLSTED GRIDBAN: -1953-

Moons For Sale

The Dyno-Depressant

Scourge of the Atom

Magnetic Brain

A Thing of the Past

Exit Life

The Purple Wizard

The Master Must Die

1954-

The Genial Dinosaur

Frozen Limit

The Lonely Astronomer

I Came - I Saw - I Wondered

The several other novels under the Gridban pseudonym not listed here were written by E.C. Tubb, who originated the name in 1952.

1952 - continued

The Time Trap

Worlds To Conquer

The Last Martian

Laughter In Space

The Time Bridge

To The Ultimate

Ultra Spectrum

Science Wetropolis

1954-

Wealth of the Void

A Time Appointed

The Multi-Man

I Spy

1,000-Year Voyage

Earth 2

Creature From the Black Lagoon

The authorship of the above title, also published in hard covers, is

in some doubt, since this was a

book of the film.

Many of these titles were published in France, Denmark, Sweden, and elsewhere, in appropriate foreign editions.

As POLTON CROSS: - Published by Pendulum Publications in 1946, pb. Other Eyes Watching Originally appeared in Startling for Spring 1946 THE PB NOVELS FOR CURTIS-WARREN LTD, also published in limited hard back editions.

As PAUL LORRAINE: - Dark Boundaries

1953

As BRYAN SHAW: - Z Formations

It should be noted that subsequent novels under these pseudonyms were not written by Fearn.

THE PB NOVELS FOR TIT-BITS LTD.

As CONRAD G. HOLT: -

1953

As LAURENCE F. ROSE:-

Cosmic Exodus

The Hell Fruit

THE PB NOVELS FOR GAYWOOD PRESS

As ASTRON DEL MARTIA:-

Published 1950

The Trembling World

Dawn of Darkness

Interstellar Espionage

Space Pirates

Although most authorities give Fearn as the author of all the Del Martia titles, the issue is far from cer - tain. The Trembling World is cer - tainly his, but the others are written in a style totally alien, and inferior, to his usual one.

THE PB NOVELS FOR HAMILTON'S

As JOHN RUSSELL FEARN: - Published 1950, the 4 titles comprise a series

Emperor of Mars, Warrior of Mars, Red Men of Mars, Goddess of Mars

THE HARD COVER NOVELS FOR WORLD'S WORK

As JOHN RUSSELL FEARN

Twin of the Amazon, 1954

The Intelligence Gigantic, 1945
The Golden Amazon, 1944
Liners of Time, 1947
The Golden Amazon Returns, 1948
The Golden Amazon's Triumph, 1953
The Amazon's Diamond Quest, 1953
The Amazon Strikes Again, 1954

The Intelligence Gigantic, 1943 Originally serial in 1933 Amazing

Originally serial in 1935 Amazing

All the Golden Amazon novels appeared originally in the Canadian news - paper The Toronto Star Weekly.

As JOHN RUSSELL FEARN: - Published by Kaner Ltd. circa 1948, pb. Slaves of Ijax

As JOHN RUSSELL FEARN: - Published by Scion Ltd in 1949, pb.

Operation Venus An original novel, the forerunner to the "Vargo Statten" series.

THE STAR WEEKLY COMPLETE NOVELS by JOHN RUSSELL FEARN

These listings are incomplete. In some cases titles are known, but not dates, and these have been merely guessed at. In others, no data is available, and space has been left. For all years 1950, 1957, 1958, 1959, and 1960 the information is complete.

The Golden Amazon	1944?
The Golden Amazon Returns	1946?
The Golden Amazon's Triumph	1946?
The Amazon's Diamond Quest	1947?
The Amazon Strikes Again	1947?
Twin of the Amazon	1948?
Lord of Atlantis	1948?
Lord of Jupiter	1949?
The Central Intelligence	1949?
Triangle of Power	1950
The Amethyst City	1950
The Son of Quorne	1951?
Daughter of the Amazon	1951
Quorne Returns	1952
The Cosmic Triumvirate	1953?
?	1954
The Deathless Amazon	1955?
The Cosmic Crusaders	1956?
The Shadow People	1957
Kingpin Planet	1957
World in Reverse	1958
Dwellers in Darkness	1958
World in Duplicate	1959
Standstill Planet	1960
Ghost World (posthumous)	1960
OTTORO HOLTE (Donottomore)	

In addition to the Golden Amazon series, a great deal of straight science fiction was published, but once again most of the titles and dates are unknown.

Deadline	2
Here and Now	?
Winged Pestilence	?
Robbery Without Violence	1957
Manton's World	1958
Climate Incorporated	1959

- ADDENDUM -

MARK DENHOLM: NEWS WORLDS #1 1946 Solar Assignment WORLDS OF THE UNIVERSE #1 1946? Waters of Eternity