Early Triffids

by Neil Pollard

The Day of the Triffids is John Wyndham’s best-known work, and was the first novel written by John Beynon Harris (JBH) under that pen name. He had had a short story, “The Eternal Eve”, published in September 1950 under the John Wyndham name, but prior to that time he had used other variations of his full name of John Wyndham Parkes Lucas Beynon Harris.

In an article written for the Birmingham Evening Mail by Clem Lewis, which he had researched by interviewing JBH’s wife, Grace, and his brother Vivian, the origins of triffids were revealed.

John and Grace had been visiting friends at Steep, near Bedales. He was drawn back there again and again. One dark night, Grace remembers, they were walking back to the village when they were caught up by brambles. “John said how dangerous it would be if they could think and move ...” That was the germ of the idea for a story ...”

Vivian also wrote about the origins of the story.

He took an old short story and amplified it, humanised it, added his own brand of sentiment and compassion to it, and produced The Day of the Triffids, still selling steadily after all these years. He used another of his names and became John Wyndham, sold it to Colliers for a good price where it appeared with illustrations as a serial.2

The short story that Vivian was referring to was “The Puff-Ball Menace”, which first appeared as “Spheres of Hell” in the October 1933 edition of Wonder Stories. The story concerns a genetically modified parasitic fungus that was introduced into England as a weapon. There it grew to plague proportions and killed all those who were exposed to it.

One of the clear similarities between “The Puff-Ball Menace” and The Day of the Triffids is the method by which the plants of the titles dispersed their seed. In The Puff-Ball Menace, the plants’ seeds were encased in yellow balls that released the seeds when they burst.

The first few puffs stirred the yellow balls and rolled them a little at the ends of their skinny stalks. Later followed a gust which twisted them so that the stalks snapped and they were free to roll where the wind urged. As the pressure grew to a steady blast, it swept up a mass of the light balls and carried them bounding across the countryside, an army of vegetable invaders launching their attack to capture the land and destroy human beings. The wind of a week before had moved only the balls in the most exposed positions, but this time, none but the youngest and least developed had the strength in their stalks to resist the air which tore at them. Every now and then a splashing flurry of white would spring from the hurrying, bouncing horde as the tough, yellow skin of one was ripped by some sharp spike or the corner of a roof. Then the great spores themselves were caught up by the wind and carried on faster as an advance guard of the yellow army.3

their lungs. The cloud of white dust spread wider, afflicting more of the attackers. They lost all capability of fighting. Their eyes streamed so that they could barely see; they staggered to and fro, sneezing, gasping, wheezing like the worst asthmatics.4

Finally, in The Day of the Triffids he provided a vivid description of triffids broadcasting their seed, which shows a definite similarity to the previous two works.

Triffid-seed time was quite a sight. The dark green pod just below the cup was glistening and distended, about half as big again as a large apple. When it burst, it did it with a pop that was audible twenty yards away. The white seeds shot into the air like steam and began drifting away on the lightest of breezes. Looking down on a field of triffids late in August, you could well get the idea that some kind of desultory bombardment was going on.5

JBH had started writing The Day of the Triffids sometime around 1946 but he was dissatisfied with the ending.

I knew the ending was no good, so I told the typist to lay off for a bit while I thought of another. About eighteen months later I remembered that it was still lying there unfinished, and managed to contrive a conclusion – of a sort.6

The invoice shown was issued to JBH for typing he had ordered during 1946. At that time, he was still in the army and was attached to the No 3 Intelligence School, which was based in Catterick, Yorkshire. The Beamish Copying office was about a quarter of a mile from the Penn Club, where JBH usually lived and where he stayed on his visits back to London.

Amongst the various works that JBH was having typed was a fifteen thousand word section of The Day of the Triffids manuscript. This was only a small portion of the final work, which ran to over ninety thousand words.

Once JBH had completed the manuscript, he faced the difficult task of finding a publisher. The science fiction market after the Second World War had changed dramatically from that which had operated before the war. From 1931 to 1939 JBH had a successful publication record of three novels and eighteen short works. But from 1946 to 1950 he’d only had six new short stories published and was struggling to find a style that suited the new market. Accordingly, when he passed copies of the manuscript to two friends, it was with great misgivings regarding its suitability for publication.

He initially approached Walter Gillings, who had been the editor of Tales of Wonder before the war. In that role, he had included stories by JBH, under his then pen name of John Beynon, in a number of editions of the magazine. After the war, from 1947 to 1949 Walter Gillings published fifteen editions of the fanzine Fantasy Review, which also regularly included articles and book reviews by JBH. Years later, Walter Gillings wrote about JBH:

More than once, despite his professionalism, he almost did give up. It was after an agonisingly bad patch, during which he was producing little or nothing, that he entrusted to me a novel-length

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manuscript, assuring me of his grave doubts of its worth. At the time, it was 1950, when sf had just made the grade with America's book publishers and new novels were at a premium – I was acting on this side for Dirk Wylie, the New York agent.

I didn't wait to finish the MS. Halfway through, I shipped it over, confident that so long as it ended somehow, it would sell. It did – and almost within weeks was published in three separate editions by Doubleday, after being serialised in Collier's.

It was "The Day of the Triffids." After that, John Wyndham had no more arid spells to torment him, as far as I'm aware. It was only later that I learned he had spent two years trying to find the ending I had not stopped to read. British publication followed, and the Penguin paperback alone sold more than 100,000 copies. Then, of course, came the radio and film versions.7

Walter Gillings's recollections of the events, some eighteen years after they occurred, are a little inaccurate in a number of instances and will be looked at in more detail.

It was Frederik Pohl who received the manuscript of The Day of the Triffids early in 1950 as he was running the Dirk Wylie agency by that time.

After the war, Pohl's long-time chum Dirk Wylie went into business as a literary agent, with Pohl as a silent partner, representing a small group of science fiction writers. … Wylie had fought at the Battle of the Bulge; he had suffered a severe back injury when jumping off a truck, so as Wylie began experiencing debilitating back problems and was in and out of the hospital, his wife Rosalind, assisted by Pohl, kept the agency going. In the early months of 1948 Wylie's condition worsened, and he developed tuberculosis of the spine, leading to his death in August. Pohl was devastated by the death of his oldest friend, but he and Rosalind decided to keep the agency going under the Dirk Wylie name …8

In fact, Pohl would eventually receive two versions of the manuscript. The first version had the triffids' developing from seeds brought back by an expedition to Venus. On 20 March 1950, Pohl wrote to JBH with a number of suggestions for modifications to the manuscript. Five days later JBH replied and touched on the Venus origins for triffids:

> Your second point is well taken. The origin of the triffids was written as a kind of dangle for the science-fiction editorial mind. It doesn't belong, it did not exist before, and it shall disappear.9

The second version that Pohl received had triffids originating in Russia.

On 29 March 1950, Pohl mailed a contract to JBH from Doubleday and Company for them to publish The Day of the Triffids in the US. This edition was published on 22 March 1951, nearly a year after the initial contract, which raises the first inaccuracy in Walter Gillings memory of the occasion. His "almost within weeks it was published" was in fact nearly a year.

In line with Pohl's suggestions, JBH modified the manuscript and by November 1950 Pohl had confirmed that Doubleday would publish a general release book as well as a book-club edition, and there would be a serialization in Collier's magazine.

Around the same time, JBH approached Robert, later Sir Robert, Lusty with the manuscript. JBH had lived at the Penn Club since the 1920s, including during its move in 1938 to its current site in Bedford Place. He had meet Robert Lusty around 1930 when Lusty also lived at the club at its then location in Tavistock Square. Robert Lusty only lived at the club for about a year but during that time he met his future wife, Joan Brownlie, and established a friendship with JBH that was to last a lifetime. When JBH approached him with his manuscript, Robert Lusty was the Deputy Chairman of the publisher Michael Joseph Limited. Twenty-five years later in his autobiography, Bound to be Read, he wrote about the occasion:

> The economics of publishing then made much more practical the publishing of first novels than they do today and our 1951 list included no less than nine. One of these derived from my years at the Penn Club, where a resident, a little older than myself, was known to all as Harris. He was to remain there for almost the whole of his life. He had a certain amount of money, which seemed to make a 'gainful' occupation unnecessary. Thus he was at the beck and call of the other and busier residents and was an invaluable friend to have around the place. He did a certain amount of writing, but not very seriously nor, as far as one could make out, very successfully. … One day in Bloomsbury Street I was told that 'a Mr Harris' was downstairs and would like to see me. In my office he handed me a manuscript. 'This is a novel I've managed to write,' he said. 'I don't quite know what to do with it and I thought you might advise me. It is not for you,' he added, as though horrified that I might think it was. He told me he was doing fairly well with science fiction short stories and the Penn Club, now in different premises, was doing fine.

> I took the manuscript home. 'Old Harris has written a novel,' I told Joan, 'and he sends you his love.'

I read it with rising interest and excitement. It was not, as its author had prophesied, quite my cup of tea, but it was wonderfully good. I invited Harris to come again to the office. 'I know,' I told him, 'that you didn't think this was for us, but would you mind very much if we were to publish it?' … And so we added to our list The Day of the Triffids by John Wyndham and thus introduced to the world one of the most successful science fiction writers

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Late in December 1950, JBH received a letter from Michael Joseph enthusiastically accepting *The Day of the Triffids*. Having weathered a very lean period as an author since the war, JBH found himself looking forward to a promising year with his major work to appear as a UK edition, two US editions and a serialization in a US national magazine. The financial return for the work was substantial, with the Collier's contract alone worth £4,000. The timing of this change in fortune was extremely fortuitous, as Vivian later wrote:

> All this time the family finances were at a low ebb. The family income had to support me because I was still suffering from an anxiety neurosis which dogged me all the rest of life, and he had not established himself yet; my mother was old and ill. We wanted that she should have everything she wanted which included nurses, doctors, like at the Hydro and so on. I had just reached the point where I was about to write to him and tell him that we must cut our allowances when the phone rang and his voice, bubbly with excitement, told me he could do without the allowance for a while as he had had “a bit of luck.” He never drew his allowance again.  

Another of Walter Gillings’s inaccuracies was the statement that *The Day of the Triffids* “was published in three separate editions by Doubleday” when there were actually only two printed, the general release edition and the book-club edition.  

The Collier’s serialization by the Crowell-Collier Publishing Company of Springfield, Ohio preceded the Doubleday editions. The story was included under the title of *Revolt of the Triffids*, in the 6 Jan, 13 Jan, 20 Jan, 27 Jan and 3 Feb 1951 issues of the magazine.

To suit the five-part serialization format the story was heavily abridged to a little over half the size of the full-length version. The abridging was not applied evenly across the work, with one chapter, “Shirning”, being relatively untouched, whilst the twelfth chapter, “Dead End”, was completely omitted. The substantial abridging also required a number of passages of bridging text to be written by Collier’s. Importantly the serialization also used the alternative version of the story which included seeds from Venus as the source of the triffids.

It appears that Collier’s only ever received the version of *The Day of the Triffids* that had the triffids originating on Venus. However, the headline on the front cover of the 27 January edition of Collier’s, “Why Russia Can’t Be Trusted”, which provides an indication of the prevailing attitude in the US at the time, would have readily supported the alternative triffid source of Russia.

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12 Doubleday did publish a second book-club edition but it was not released until April 1979, nearly ten years after Walter Gillings’s article was published.
The Doubleday edition was intended for the US market and so was an Americanised version of the text. The UK edition that appeared later in the year was de-Americanised. The changes made include: the use of US punctuation, in particular the use of " as the quotation marks around spoken text rather than ' as used in the UK; the US spelling of words such as gray instead of grey and favorite in place of favourite; and the substitution of US terms for UK terms. The changed terms are listed in Table 1.

The substantial passages that were removed are:

- Chapter 1 – The End Begins
  619 words – the meeting with Dr Soames in the hospital and his subsequent suicide.

- Chapter 2 – The Coming of the Triffids
  125 words – Bill’s father’s despair at Bill’s poor maths
  1947 words – the involvement of Umberto Christoforo Palanguez in the stealing of triffid seeds from Russia.

- Chapter 4 – Shadows Before
  656 words – detail of Josella’s capture and her captor

- Chapter 6 – Rendezvous
  318 words – details of the Malet Street gardens
  432 words – discussion between Bill and Josella in the gardens before the university meeting

- Chapter 8 – Frustration
  287 words – details of the location of where Bill is held captive
  253 words – Bill’s indecision over the best course of action for the future, following Beadley or Coker

- Chapter 9 – Evacuation
  1374 words – Bill’s search for Josella including the discussion with a woman from her party

- Chapter 10 – Tynsham
  963 words – details of Beadley’s group evacuation after Coker’s raid on the university
  914 words – Coker’s attitude on traditional female roles

- Chapter 11 – And Further On
  81 words – Coker’s exploration of Tynsham Manor
  899 words – triffids and small villages

- Chapter 12 – Dead End
  533 words – details of the Charcot Old House party and how they survived the comet
  451 words – the rescue of Mrs Forcett
  120 words – discussion of the size of community needed to survive

- Chapter 14 – Shirning
  65 words – details of the intended development of the house

- Chapter 15 – World Narrowing
  86 words – Bill’s visit to London
  549 words – triffids and the future
  154 words – the historic distrust of comets
  241 words – Bill’s Uncle Ted and the inevitability of the future

The other significant difference between the Doubleday and UK editions was that the US edition was abridged.
Even though Doubleday had contracted to publish a book-club edition, it did not appear until March 1953, two years after the general release edition was published. There are differences between the two editions but they are only superficial.

The most significant difference between the two editions is the binding. The general release book is bound in grey cloth with lime green printing on the spine. The book-club version is bound in a light grey leather-look material with dark blue-grey printing on the spine.

The only textual difference between the two editions that has been found is on the copyright page where the general release edition includes the text “First Edition”. The book-club edition has a blank line at the same location.

The dustjackets have more differences than the books themselves including the only one that specifically identifies the book-club edition.

The backs of both dustjackets carry Doubleday advertising. The general release edition includes blurbs for science fiction novels by Isaac Asimov, Ray Bradbury, Theodora DuBois and Nelson Bond who were all well-established science fiction authors at that time. The book-club edition carries, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, testimonials for Doubleday’s Adventure Book Club.

At the top of the front flap of the general release edition is the book price of $2.50 the initials “T.D.O.T.T.” This coding provided bookshops with a rudimentary method of stock control. When the book was sold, the bookshop would cut the price and code from the dustjacket and retain the corner. The bookshop could then tally the number of corners to determine how sales were progressing for a particular title. Books treated in this way were “price clipped” which is a description that is often seen on second-hand book listings.


At the bottom of the front flap on the book-club edition is a blue overprint “Book Club Edition”. This is the only specific difference between the two editions that identifies the book-club version.

The general release edition has “Printed in the U.S.A.” at the bottom of the rear flap. This notation is not present on the book-club edition on the rear flap but has been moved to the bottom of the back of the dustjacket beneath the advertising.

Each of these differences is shown in Table 2.

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Grace Wilson, JBH’s future wife, also lived at the Penn
Club; she had the room adjacent to JBH’s. For many years she kept a diary and recorded snippets of their daily lives. JBH researcher, David Ketterer, who now currently owns Grace’s diaries, has kindly provided a number of relevant extracts from the period.

4 January 1951 – J is de-Americanising the Triffids for Bob … it is to appear in August …

25 April 1951 – Triffid first ed. to be 10,000 …

20 August 1951 – A second printing of Triffids, 9,000 having been ordered …

Michael Joseph’s UK edition was scheduled for release on 22 August 1951 and orders for the book were so strong that the second printing took place before the release date. The publisher cheerfully included this detail in their advertising together with the fact that The Day of the Triffids had already been named as the Daily Graphic’s “Book Find of the Month” before it actually was available.

A week after The Day of the Triffids was released in the UK, Grace recorded in her dairy:

3 film offers …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapters</th>
<th>Michael Joseph</th>
<th>Doubleday</th>
<th>Collier’s</th>
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<td>2 The Coming of the Triffids</td>
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<td>3 The Groping City</td>
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<td>68 – 86</td>
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<td>5 A Light in the Night</td>
<td>97 – 106</td>
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<td>6 Rendezvous</td>
<td>107 – 125</td>
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<td>126 – 139</td>
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<td>10 Tynsham</td>
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<td>11 … And Further On</td>
<td>200 – 211</td>
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<td>12 Dead End</td>
<td>212 -230</td>
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Table 3

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14 Ketterer email 26 May 2017.
The Michael Joseph edition was the longest version produced and accordingly has to be considered the only complete version of the story released in the first year.

Table 3 provides a comparison of the sizes of the Michael Joseph, Doubleday and Collier’s versions of The Day of the Triffids and is ordered from the longest to the shortest edition. It should be noted that it is difficult to pinpoint some of the precise chapter equivalents in the Collier’s abridgement as completely new text has been added to connect original chapters. The word counts for the chapters have been determined as accurately as these text alterations allow.

Walter Gilling’s recollection of the early days of The Day of the Triffids is also surprisingly incomplete as he did not mention an Australian edition of which he was definitely aware.

Just two days after the last part of the serialization appeared in Collier’s, he issued a receipt to JBH on behalf of the Dirk Wylie Literary Agency for the agent’s commission for the serial rights to The Day of the Triffids in Australia.

The serial rights were sold for £100, a drastically lower rate than the £4,000 that Collier’s paid for the US rights. However, the rate was probably based on the likely target market size. In 1951 the US population was 154.9 million while Australia’s population was 8.4 million. And, as will be seen, the rights really only applied to the state of New South Wales which had a population of just 3.3 million. When the rates are compared to the potential reading population, the apparently cheap Australian price is actually more expensive than the US rate.

According to the receipt that Walter Gillings issued, the purchaser of the rights was Australian Associated Newspaper Services but this is actually a corruption of the purchaser’s correct name, Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL).

At the time, ANL were the publishers of a number of Sydney newspapers including The Sun and The Sunday Sun & Guardian. The company also operated a rotogravure-printing arm, Sungravure Limited, which specialised in magazines. It was one of these magazines, the Sydney weekly, Woman, which was to feature The Day of the Triffids under the title The Revolt of the Triffids.

Woman magazine was first published in December 1934 and was only distributed in New South Wales. Its main rival was the Australian Women’s Weekly, which initially was also only available in New South Wales, but soon became so popular that editions were produced in all states of Australia. While the Australian Women’s Weekly is still published, albeit as a monthly magazine despite its name, Woman struggled to continue and went out of production in 1956. During the 22 years that it was published, 1,137 editions were released.

Woman was originally published on a Thursday, but could be purchased as early as the preceding Monday. On Friday, 16 July 1937 ANL changed the publication day to Monday with the magazine available on Saturday.

However, it appears from advertisements in The Sun that from the outset Woman was actually available on the Friday rather than the Saturday. By early in 1938 this was certainly the case.

The relatively short life of the magazine and the length of time since it ceased publication mean that it is not well represented in public collections and no detailed list of all the magazines’ contents appears to exist. The only readily available clues as to which editions of Woman included The Day of the Triffids come from contemporary newspapers, but they are also scarce. The variation between the publication date and the date the magazine was actually available also means that it was initially difficult to pin-point the issues that include The Day of the Triffids.

Not surprisingly, the advertisements that refer to Woman are in newspapers published by ANL.

The strangest love story of the year probably doesn’t immediately conjure up the thought of The Day of the Triffids to those familiar with the work, but it is the heading that was used to advertise the serialization to the women of Sydney.

The first advertisement appeared on Thursday, 29 March 1951, as a short article in the body of the

16 “The strangest love story of the year,” The Sun, 29 Mar 1951, p. 32.
Women’s section of *The Sun*. The reference to the title of the *Revolt of the Triffids* and the mention of the triffids’ origins as another planet, suggests that the serialization was the same as that used in *Collier’s* a few months earlier.

The article states that the first instalment would be available in the edition of *Woman* that would be on sale the following day, Friday, 30 March. This pinpoints the first part of the story to having appeared in the 2 April 1951 issue of *Woman*.

Four days later a simple advertisement appeared in the news section of *The Sunday Sun* for the edition of *Woman*, which was by then on sale, even though the edition is dated for the following day. In the same newspaper, there was also a small advertisement in the banner of the Women’s section of the paper. It refers to the magazine containing the first instalment without specifying how many parts would appear to make up the full story.

The following week on the first page of the Women’s section of *The Sunday Sun* another small advertisement appeared, this time publicising part two of the serialization. There was still no indication of how many parts would be published.

These are the only four advertisements that appeared for what was finally titled *The Revolt of the Triffids*. None of the ANL’s papers in the following weeks made any further mention of the serialization or of the following parts.

As already mentioned *Woman* is not well represented in public collections. The National Library of Australia in Canberra, offers an online catalogue which lists five libraries in Australia that hold copies of *Woman*. In addition to the National Library itself, the Australian War Memorial Research Centre, Canberra; the Monash University, Melbourne; the Murdoch University, Perth; and the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, have incomplete collections. However, only the Monash University Library and the National Library of Australia have copies from 1951.

From the National Library’s catalogue and copies obtained through their extensive inter-library copy service, the publication dates for the serialization have been confirmed and are set out in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Revolt of the Triffids serialization in Woman</th>
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<td>Part</td>
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Table 4
The identification of the editions is complicated by the fact that one of the editions of the magazine is incorrectly numbered on its front cover. The 16 April edition should be No 2351 but is identified as No 2350 the same as the 9 April edition.

It has only been possible to locate part two in the Monash University Library’s Rare General Collection and parts three and four in the National Library of Australia. Copies obtained of each of these parts have permitted a partial comparison with other versions of *The Day of the Triffids*. However, the absence of parts one and five leave some conclusions open to challenge.

Part Two of *The Revolt of the Triffids* provides the clearest proof that the *Woman* serialization was based on the Collier’s version published three months earlier.

Without even considering the text of the two publications, one similarity is immediately evident. The first double page of each part in Collier’s featured a full page colour illustration by Fred Banbery. For Part Two the subject was Josella and Bill at her home where a triffid towers menacingly over the body of her father.

Although the illustration in *Woman* has been redrawn to suit the monochrome and spot colour printing used in the magazine, as well as to fit the page format, it is clearly based on the Collier’s illustration.

Considering the text itself there are a number of close similarities.

Firstly, the story in both publications starts at the same point, which is not a natural break point in the story; it falls about halfway through the fourth chapter in the full-length novel. As has already been mentioned, the Collier’s version linked various abridgements with their own text. The first sentence in Collier’s Part Two is one of these lines of text, and exactly the same Collier’s-written text is the first sentence in the *Woman* Part Two.

Secondly, both publications provide a summary of the story up to that point before the part actually starts. Collier’s prefaces the new part with a section they wrote entitled “The Story”, while *Woman* entitles an abridged version of Collier’s text as “The story so far.”

Finally, a direct comparison of both versions shows that the *Woman* version is an abridged version of Collier’s already abridged version of the story.

While the *Woman* version is clearly based on the Collier’s version, the publishers of *Woman* did apply their own style to the story in a number of ways.

A comparison of the *Woman* and Collier’s versions suggests that the *Woman* text was abridged to around
eighty percent the size of the Collier's text, or around thirty-eight thousand words. But four of the parts in Woman were not just straightforward abridgements of the equivalent Collier's part. Although I have not been able to examine the first part in Woman it appears reasonable to believe that it was a straight abridgement of Collier's Part One because the second part in each publication starts at exactly the same point in the overall story.

Parts three to five in Woman however have different starting points from the Collier's parts. Each Woman part includes a block of text that corresponds to a block from the next part that appears in Collier's. Table 5 shows how these blocks overlap in the two versions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collier's</th>
<th>Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part</td>
<td>Words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10470</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While each Collier's part is longer than the preceding part, the offsetting and abridging has resulted in each part in Woman being approximately the same length, at least for the parts that have been examined. This would appear to have been a conscious decision by each publication to suit their own serialization practise.

Like many US magazines, Collier's has spread the story throughout the magazine rather than have it as a continuous run of pages. This practise is much more common in US magazines than in UK or Australian magazines, which tend to keep articles together. Page details are set out in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collier's</th>
<th>Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part</td>
<td>Pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9, 10, 11, 63, 64, 66 &amp; 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>28, 29, 50, 51, 54 &amp; 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>36, 37, 50, 51, 52, 54 &amp; 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24, 25, 38, 39, 42, 43 &amp; 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>28, 29, 50, 52, 53, 54 &amp; 56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Woman not only published each part as an uninterrupted run of pages but also, for the parts examined, on the same pages in each edition of the magazine.

As well as providing a uniform run of pages Woman used the same structure for each part. Pages 24 and 25 carried the banner title of the story, the "Story so far" section, and the illustration for the part, or in the case of Part Three, two illustrations. The illustrations for parts three and four in Woman are quite different from Collier's illustrations unlike the illustrations for Part Two, which have already been discussed.

Pages 26, 27 and 28 use full length columns, generally three with a two-column width, full height advertisement, although Part Two uses all five columns on one page, and Part Four uses just two columns on one page with an additional column given over to advertising.

Each of the parts examined also has a short paragraph, at the bottom of the last column on page 28 entitled “Next Week.” This paragraph is printed in the same spot colour used for the illustration of the part, i.e. red for Part Two and blue for the third and fourth parts.

Apart from abridging the Collier’s text only one textual change has been noted in the Woman version.

In the unabridged Michael Joseph edition there appears this paragraph:

It must be, I thought, one of the race's most persistent and comforting hallucinations to trust that 'it can't happen here' – that one's own little time and place is beyond cataclysms. And now it was happening here. Unless there should be some miracle I was looking on the beginning of the end of London – and very likely, it seemed, there were other men, not unlike me, who were
looking on the beginning of the end of New York, Paris, San Francisco, Buenos Aires, Bombay, and all the rest of the cities that were destined to go the way of those others under the jungles.  

Collier’s abridged version removed one city to shorten the text:

… there were other men looking on the last stages of New York, Paris, San Francisco, Bombay and all the rest, before they, too, should begin to go the way of those ancient cities long-buried under the jungles.  

Woman used the same abridgement but made one significant substitution aimed directly at its target audience:

… there were other men looking on the last stages of New York, Paris, San Francisco, Sydney and all the rest, before they, too, should begin to go the way of those ancient cities long-buried under the jungles.  

But probably the most significant change included in the Woman version was to the title of the work. While the ANL newspaper advertisements referred to the story as Revolt of the Triffids, when the serial actually appeared in Woman it had acquired the definitive article “The” so that the title became, The Revolt of the Triffids.

Phil Stephensen-Payne’s very close to definitive bibliography of JBH’s work lists only one English-language version of The Day of the Triffids published as The Revolt of the Triffids, and that is the appearance in Collier’s. However, this entry is incorrect, as Collier’s published the story simply as Revolt of the Triffids.

Although (and this is rather important) Stephensen-Payne’s bibliography does not include the Woman version of The Revolt of the Triffids, it does record that the JBH short story, “Affair of the Heart”, appeared in a 1952 edition of Woman.

--oOo--

While Michael Joseph declared in their advertising that Wednesday, 22 August 1951 was the day of the triffids in the UK, it seems reasonable to now declare 1951 as the year of the triffids.

In The Day of the Triffids JBH wrote about the coming of the triffids:

Its sudden appearance, and even more, its wide distribution promoted very puzzled speculation. For though it matured more rapidly in the tropics, specimens in various stages of development were reported from almost any region outside the polar circles and the deserts.

If you read this paragraph as a reference to The Day of the Triffids the work, rather than to triffids the plants, it appears equally as accurate. Certainly, like triffids, the work took root in the US and the UK, and now we know, in Australia as well. However, hopefully unlike triffids, the work will not only continue to survive but also to flourish worldwide, despite the time that has passed since the early triffids first appeared.

17 Wyndham, The Day of the Triffids, p. 95.  
21 Wyndham, The Day of the Triffids, p. 46.
References


———. Email message to Neil Pollard, 26 May 2017.


