Forty-six years have passed since the death of John [Wyndham Parkes Lucas] Beynon Harris in March 1969. (I have bracketed the names he did not use in his private life) During that time, in spite of the fact that his best works – those published under the name “John Wyndham” have remained continuously in print and that he is generally acknowledged as one of the major figures of British and world sf, he has received very little critical consideration. And since Sam Moskowitz’s pioneering effort, he has received no biographical attention. This neglect has now ended. In May 1998, the John Wyndham Archive, previously unavailable to researchers, joined the Science Fiction Foundation, Olaf Stapledon, and Eric Frank Russell collections at the University of Liverpool’s Sydney Jones Library. It was not until 1992, the year following the death of Harris’s widow, Grace, that this material was professionally sorted by Bertram Rota, Ltd., the London antiquarian booksellers. The papers were sorted because “the private collector” who had purchased them at an auction wished to resell them and had appointed Bertram Rota to act as the agent. In 1997, the University of Liverpool – the first university in the world to offer an MA in sf – undertook to match the asking price on the assumption (correct as it turned out) that the Heritage Lottery Fund would supply most of that amount.

Of particular interest in the Archive are four unpublished novels. Two of these – MURDER MEANS MURDER (retitled BURN THAT BODY) and DEATH UPON DEATH – are detective novels written in the 1930s. They feature the same Detective-Inspector Jordon who is the protagonist of the detective novel Foul Play Suspected (London: George Newnes, Ltd., 1935). Harris’s second published novel (it followed the same year, same publisher, sf novel The Secret People).

For the composition dates of PROJECT FOR PISTOLS (Harris’s version of William Goldman’s Marathon Man [1974]) and PLAN FOR CHAOS, see Ketterer, “PLAN FOR CHAOS/FURY OF CREATION: An Unpublished Science Fiction Thriller by John Beynon/John Lucas (aka John Wyndham),” Foundation 74 (Autumn 1998), pp. 8-25. This uneven, extraordinary novel of 421 typescript pages which, no doubt, will some day be published might best be described as a cross between Wyndham’s “Consider Her Ways” (1956) and Ira Levin’s 1976 thriller, The Boys from Brazil (imagined as “The Girls from Brazil”). New information further confirms my 1948 composition date for PLAN FOR CHAOS. In December 1999 I received from the University of Texas Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center photocopies of the 313-page file of Harris’s correspondence with his 1951-59 literary agent Paul Scott (later author of The Raj Quartet) of Pearn, Pollinger and Higham, Ltd. The October and November 1951 correspondence (with which the file begins) indicates that a report on PLAN FOR CHAOS by the agency’s reader was largely positive, and that it was suggested that this novel would be published by Michael Joseph as the follow-up to The Day of the Triffids although there was uncertainty as to whether it should be a John Beynon Harris novel rather than a John Wyndham novel. At that point PLAN FOR CHAOS (which was clearly originally written for an American audience) had not yet gone to Michael Joseph’s reader and the eventual report (which I have not seen and which may not survive) must have been negative. (At least one other British publisher, Longman’s, also apparently decided against publication.) An earlier version of PLAN FOR CHAOS had been sent to Harris’s American agent, Frederik Pohl of the Dirk Wylie Agency, prior to the publication of Triffids; an attempt by Pohl to interest Colliers (who serialised Triffids in 1951) in serializing that version had failed. Perhaps the most important conclusion to be drawn from the fact that the composition of PLAN FOR CHAOS immediately preceded Triffids is that the “fury of female creation” theme announced in the alternative title for PLAN FOR CHAOS segues directly into the fear-of-the-female subtext in Triffids (and in The Kraken Wakes).

It is a pity that Harris was not able to get beyond the 122 pages of MIDWICH MAIN; set almost sixteen years after The Midwich Cuckoos; it breaks off just as the reader realises that the protagonist, Richard Gayford, is under the control of a friend of one of the randomly distributed, apparently alien Children he has been asked to investigate. (For an account of The Midwich Cuckoos as the best and...
From a biographical point of view, of most interest are the more than 350 letters (dated 3 September 1939 – 26 June 1945) that Harris wrote to Grace during the Second World War. After working as a Temporary Civil Servant in Censorship (August 1940 – November 1943), and serving in that office’s Home Guard unit (June 1942 – November 1943), Harris served (although at forty he was over-age for a commission) as an NCO with the rank of lance-corporal in the Royal Corps of Signals working as a cipher operator. According to his army record (summarised for me by Mrs M. McClenanahan of the Ministry of Defence, 7 March 1999), he participated from 11 June 1944 to 4 September 1945 in the follow up to the "D-day" Normandy Landings (6 June 1944). He was demobilised ("Released to Army Reserve") on 6 October 1946. Harris's experience of the Second World War and his memory of the First informed his four famous "Wyndham" invasion catastrophe novels (in the last case the catastrophe is putative): *The Day of the Triffids*, *The Kraken Awakes*, *The Chrysalids*, and *The Midwich Cuckoos*.

But voluminous as the Wyndham Archive is, it does not provide a complete record of Harris's life and career. Unfortunately, he did not keep a detailed diary (as opposed to a small appointments diary) and, on his own instructions, most of his personal papers were destroyed. One of the important omissions in the Archive is what appears to be Harris's first publication, the beginning, reprinted for the first time below, of a weird sf tale entitled "Vivisection". This title is, thanks to this essay, now recorded in the 2001 fullest bibliography currently available, that compiled by Phil Stephensen-Payne.

Mrs Anne Archer, the Librarian at Bedales School, drew my attention to it while I was investigating (on 23 May 1998) what evidence remains of the three very happy years that Hams spent at that pioneering co-educational boarding school (1919-21). "Vivisection" appeared in the second issue (November 1919) of *The Bee: An Independent Journal of Art, Literature, Politics, Science and Music*, edited by pupils Rolf Gardiner and Stephen Bone. Harris would have been sixteen years old at the time. "Vivisection" is important not just because it appears to be his first published work; it is important because it presages the Wellsian form of sf associated with the name "John Wyndham" – the titles that would make his fortune. Twelve years would go by before the appearance of the first example of Harris's fiction noted in Stephensen-Payne's bibliography: "Worlds to Barter" by John Beynon Harris in *Wonder Stories* (May 1931). And that story was in the mode of shooting large fish hooks and lines at Zeppelins).

Continued school career by writing stories when set to write essays, and frequently got away with it.

Was "Vivisection" such a story? Harris's autobiographical statement was enclosed with a 22 June 1938 letter to T. Stanhope Sprigg of the publishers George Newnes, Ltd. See the John Wyndham Archive.

It seems that earlier examples of Harris's fiction – very short stones yet to be located – appeared in London newspapers in 1925 and perhaps later (see Moskowitz, op. cit., p. 120). Describing what he did after leaving Bedales School at age 18, Harris recalled that "At intervals all along I had been doing an occasional story which nobody took. Now [around 1926] I tried more seriously, and got one short -[short]-shorts in daily or evening papers." Harris refers to such publications in his answer to question number 8, one of the thirty questions that Sam Moskowitz, preparing to write his biographical article, sent Harris in a letter dated Jan. 12, 1963 (a mistake for "1964": Harris answered in his letter dated 22 January 1964). I am grateful to the late Sam Moskowitz for generously sending me (on 29 May 1996) photocopies of this correspondence.

Harris apparently deliberately suppressed, his mystery novel published in 1927: *The Curse of the Burdens* written by John B. Harris. The last of its 62 unpaginated pages (approximately 660 words per page) announces "A new Aldine Mystery Novel is published the Last Day of Every Month, price 4d." The British Library copy of this pulp paperback (with a front cover illustration), the only copy I have seen, is date-stamped 26 February 1927.

The story is told in eighteen titled chapters beginning with "Shadow of the Curse". That curse was called down on the new owner by the old prior of Shotladder Priory when it passed into the hands of Sir James Burden following Henry VII's dissolution of the monasteries. Two recent Burden deaths in the twentieth century and the disappearance of the protagonist, Dick Burden (and the apparent appearances of ghosts), would seem to be consequences of this curse but are shown to have a naturalistic if very contrived explanation. One Albert Honeyman, a religious fanatic and the son of a very ugly-looking Burden cousin, Mr. Robertson, is responsible. Robertson's ugliness is one of several misdirections; it may however have symbolic point in that, like his association with the foreign element (he lives m France), it could be understood as representing Burden evil, especially greed. The mystery narrative is mixed up with a love story involving Dick Burden, his rival suitor and older brother James (who is swiftly murdered), and Letty Kingsbury.

There can be no doubt that John B. Harris is John Wyndham Parkes Lucas Beynon Harris. The style and convoluted way with plotting (particularly at this early stage) are his. Other identifiable touches include; the opening quarrel between the brothers re the younger brother's request for additional money from their deceased father's allowance which seems to owe something to the opening quarrel between the brothers Orlando (the younger one) and Oliver over Orlando's request for his share of the money allotted in their deceased father's will in *As You Like It*, the Shakespeare play in which the young Harris performed the role of the brother-usurping Duke Frederick while he was at Bedales; Harris and his brother Vivian also lived on an allowance from their father's estate; the resort town setting Easthill-on-Sea, places with which Harris was familiar; the description of Letty Kingsbury which is very similar to that of the female love interest in Harris's next three novels (The Secret People [1935], *Foul Play Suspected* [1935], and *Stowaway to Mars* [1936]); the emphasis on people putting up in inns and hotels (the judge Sir
“Vivisection” is clearly inspired by Wells’s _The Island of Doctor Moreau_ (1896). Given the title clue, the sequence of two goat-monkey-men, “two little creatures, about four feet high, with black faces and curly hair,” and the man-horse “about eight foot high” (“The Master”) obviously belongs to Moreau’s grotesque menagerie of beast folk. Presumably a conflict is to ensue between Professor Langley, the vivisector (who has invited the narrator-diaryist to stay with him), and his hybrid creations led by ‘The Master’. Clearly, Harris’s tale is essentially a pastiche of Wells’s. When Harris first read _The Island of Doctor Moreau_ is unknown – perhaps it was shortly before he wrote “Vivisection”. However, in a 1968 interview “Talking to John Wyndham,” “Pooter” records that _The Time Machine_ will ever remind him of Derbyshire and the prep school where he came on Wells . . .”12 Harris moved to Shardlow Hall, a boarding school in Derbyshire, in 1915 and perhaps he first read _Moreau_ around the same time he first read _The Time Machine_.

“Vivisection”, itself, is the direct seed of a story that Harris published eighteen years later, and dramatically revised and improved seventeen years after that – a story that, in its reconceived form, is one of his most successful and most reprinted. Since 1954, it is mainly known by its third title, “Una”.14 A bibliography of story submissions, publications, and broadcasts in the Wyndham Archive indicates that, in its original form and under its original title, “The Perfect Creature”, it was (I think fairly) rejected by the editor of _Amazing Stories_ “as too unoriginal”. This may have been in 1935 because three archived letters from T. Stanhope Sprigg, editor at the London publisher George Newnes Limited, reveal that on 3 February 1936 Harris submitted “The Perfect Creature” for consideration for an sf magazine that Newnes were projecting and that he, in his self-disparaging way, mentioned the previous American rejection. That magazine never happened. But Harris’s friend, the founding editor of _Tales of Wonder_ (1937-42) – the first British magazine of its kind – was grateful to have it for that magazine’s first issue which was published in June 1937. The below-story-title synopsis – “A Scientist Creates Life . . . and Produces a Monster” (p. 116) – indicates the other original source that the editor of _Amazing Stories_ was probably thinking of – Mary Shelley’s _Frankenstein_.

Julius Kingsbury and his daughter Letty live in a hotel (the Warlock Hotel) as Harris, his brother, and his mother Gertrude were wont to do following the separation of Gertrude and her husband George Lucas Kingsbury.13 Julius, a strong family character is given a typically charge role (the plucky police superintendent’s daughter Rose Ivory); the link between madness and religion points to the anti-religious theme in Harris’s later work; and the hints at the relevance after all of a supernatural explanation (if only for its atmospheric impact and because the natural explanation, probably required by the series editor, is a bit of a let-down). In answering Moskowitz’s question 10 (“When did you first begin writing, even unsuccessfully, and what type of stories did you write?”), Harris recalled that “when I first tried to get stories published (and didn’t) they were mostly uncanny or ghosty. (When I did get any encouragement the lousy editors of the period always said: ‘But of course it needs a rational explanation at the end.’ I still don’t understand how their minds worked, but anyhow the stories were very poor.”)

As for the evidence that Harris deliberately omitted _The Curse of the Burdens_ from his publications record (presumably because he regarded it as inferior hackwork), I would point to the facts that (1) no copy of the book or reference to it can be found in the Wyndham Archive, (2) when directly asked by Moskowitz about his early career efforts and publications (questions 8 and 10), Harris mentions publishing only the 1925 short-shorts, and that (3) Harris begins his introduction to a slightly revised reissue of _The Secret People_ with this sentence: “This, the author’s first book-length story, was written thirty years ago, and tentatively labelled: Sub-Sahara” (Harris, _The Secret People_, p. 5).

11 For Harris’s denigration of American sf, see the six articles by Harris in _Works Cited below_. In one of them, “Personally Speaking”, he is very specific about his sense of the distinction between American sf and the imaginative work of Wells: “It was Verne who fathered the sense of the distinction between American sf and the imaginative work of Wells: “It was Verne who fathered the American sf pulp magazines, a supposedly Vernean mode that Harris would come to oppose to the preferable “logical fantasies” or “reasoned fantasies” or “implicatory fiction” of H. G. Wells.”

In the second section, "Alfred's Theory", Alfred's imagination has been overstated by reading Wells's Island of Doctor Moreau. You expect to go to the Grange and be greeted by a horse walking on its hind legs and talking about the weather (p. 120; cf. p. 123).

This conjures an image that harks back to the last sentence of "Vivisection". Alfred "had become so full of the 'wanton torturing of our dumb friends' by 'the fiendish wielders of the knife' and the 'shuddering cries of a million quivering victims ascending to high heaven', that there was no holding him" (p. 120; cf. p. 124). The narrator assures Alfred that "this gentleman is Professor Dixon and not Doctor Moreau" (p. 121; cf. p. 127).

Alfred, however, is adamant: "I call it vivisection – vivisection" (p. 121; cf. p. 127).

In the third section, "The Professor's Claim", Dixon explains that he has not distorted living forms: "I have built them" (p. 122; cf. p. 128). He has found "the life force" (p. 122; cf. p. 129); in 1953 this becomes a secret method of animating a different kind of life. He has created the parts out of a synthetic material. He does not deal with dead or living bodies; he is not a vivisectionist. The term is not used but he is actually a creator of cyborgs. In the fourth section, "The Demonstration", Dixon explains his decision to build the perfect creature, or as near to that as one's finite mind can conceive" (p. 123; cf. p. 131). "I call him Number One [. . .] the first of his kind" (p. 124). It is at this point that the 1953 text diverges sharply from that of 1937: "I call her Una ( . . . ) the first of her kind" (p. 134). His 1953 construction is female. However, she looks much the same as Number One: "a sharply conical carapace, six feet high, poised upon three short cylindrical supports" (p. 125; cf. p. 135 - "sharply" is replaced by "dark" to exchange a phallic suggestion to a vaginal one). They both have all-round vision thanks to three eyes, and four arms "half way up" (p. 125; cf. p. 135 - "sharply" is replaced by "dark") and a generic conical carapace and four arms "half way up" (p. 125; cf. p. 135). Dixon explains that he has not distorted living forms: "I have built them" (p. 122; cf. p. 128). He has found "the life force" (p. 122; cf. p. 129); in 1953 this becomes a secret method of animating a different kind of life. He has created the parts out of a synthetic material. He does not deal with dead or living bodies; he is not a vivisectionist. The term is not used but he is actually a creator of cyborgs. In the fourth section, "The Demonstration", Dixon explains his decision to build the perfect creature, or as near to that as one's finite mind can conceive" (p. 123; cf. p. 131). "I call him Number One [. . .] the first of his kind" (p. 124). It is at this point that the 1953 text diverges sharply from that of 1937: "I call her Una ( . . . ) the first of her kind" (p. 134). His 1953 construction is female. However, she looks much the same as Number One: "a sharply conical carapace, six feet high, poised upon three short cylindrical supports" (p. 125; cf. p. 135 - "sharply" is replaced by "dark" to exchange a phallic suggestion to a vaginal one). They both have all-round vision thanks to three eyes, and four arms "half way up" (p. 125; cf. p. 135) – the upper two are delicate, the lower muscular. Number One weighs "between six and seven hundred pounds" (p. 126); Una, however, weighs "over one ton" (p. 137). To justify the three legs, Dixon explains that "the tripod is an efficient support adaptable to any kind of ground" (p. 126; cf. p. 137).

In the last section, "End of the Monster", Dixon, exasperated by Alfred's continuing accusations, unlocks Number One's cage after pointing out that "Number One is carnivorous and does not mind his food raw" (p. 126). Chased by Number One, Alfred heads for the river because he figures that the monster, never having seen or experienced water will assume that it can support his weight. So the story ends with Number One (and Dixon) in the river while Alfred swims to shore where he poses this question. "I suppose there's no chance that he gave the damned thing gills, is there?" (p. 127).

The 1937 story is clichéd, gimmicky, somewhat humorous, and novel only in Harris's departure from Frankenstein's and Moreau's recourse to dead or living flesh and bone. In 1953, by making the monster female and having her fall immediately and madly in love with Alfred, Harris adds wholly new dimensions of human
interest and humour. To read "Vivisection", the 1937 "Perfect Creature", and the 1953 "Perfect Creature" / "Una" in sequence is to appreciate the evolving spurts whereby Harris's talent developed.

After introducing Una in the 1953 version, which is bylined "John Wyndham", the creature speaks: "That one will do. I like his glass eyes" (p. 135). Dixon explains that he has "promised her a mate" (p. 138) after warning the two inspectors about her "somewhat short temper" (p. 135). Una tries to grab Alfred: "Give him to me! I want him" (p. 139). Dixon wonders, "could I have overdone the hormones a bit?" (p. 140). Clearly, at this point two further intertexts are relevant: King Kong and The Little Shop of Horrors. The party retreats as Una goes berserk and breaks out of her cage. She grabs Alfred and flees with him to a bridge crossing a river. But the bridge gives way under Una's immense weight, and once again Alfred is able to swim to safety. However, Alfred now intends to change his profession: "he now finds it difficult to look a cow, or indeed, any female animal, in the eye without a bias that tends to impair his Judgement" (p. 147).

There is a logical, next-step relationship between Moreau, "Vivisection", and "The Perfect Creature" on the one hand, and Harris's best known novel, The Day of the Triffids, on the other. Moreau, "Vivisection", and "The Perfect Creature" combine the human and the animal; the triffid conception might be said, in at least one respect, to combine the human and/or animal with the vegetable. Triffids are plants with "legs" - three legs, like the tripods Number One and Una. Unlike any known form of vegetable life, they are ambulatory. It is because of their three "leg" roots that they are called "triffids". And as originally and finally imagined, these triffids are not Venusian plants but the product of Russian genetic engineering.16

Harris's early career as an sf writer – a quasi-American sf writer – was inspired in 1930 by his coming upon the American pulp magazine Wonder Stories in the lounge of the Penn Club, a London Quaker-based residence, then in Tavistock Square, where (with a war-time interval) Harris lived from 1925 to 1963. Over the next twenty years while Harris wrote mainly for the American magazines, and in the "Wyndham" years that followed, he elaborated his distinction between the various varieties of American sf and the "logical fantasies" of H.G. Wells. Wells's mode he believed to be preferable on both aesthetic and commercial grounds. He realised that, if he could take up and develop the form that Wells had abandoned, there was the possibility of a much wider audience than the readership of the American pulp magazines. In 1951 The Day of the Triffids proved him correct. But "Vivisection" is evidence that, in emulating Wells, he was also returning to the mode of what seems to have been his modest first publishing success.

"Vivisection" combines Wellsian sf with Wellsian and non-Wellsian horror. The way in which the diarist's apprehensions are aroused during his train journey to Dartmoor by his conversation with an apparent "inhabitant of these parts" suggests the influence of Bram Stoker's Dracula. Nevertheless, the "J.W.B. Harris" who is credited as the story's author is a clear avatar of the later "John Wyndham". The Wyndham style – urbane, civilised, wryly humorous - is immediately recognisable. The feigning of documentary realism, of course, characterises the sf of Wyndham as much as that of Wells. Harris seems not that different a personality from the narrators and leading characters of his major novels, and the diarist of "Vivisection" seems pretty much a grown-up version of the sixteen-year-old Harris. Harris did not gain an Oxford BA but he did study law with an Oxford tutor.18

How might Harris's career have developed had he directly continued with the Wellsian mode of "Vivisection"? It's impossible to say. But as things turned out, Harris was able to combine the motifs and plotting techniques he learned from his American apprenticeship with the Wellsian model and so claim the originality of providing essential bridges not only between British and American sf but between the British "scientific romance" and the many varieties of "science fiction" which followed.19 Harris became more than just a superior Wells clone; he became his own man, "John Wyndham", with a voice and vision of his own. In all probability, then, we can be glad that whatever ambitions might have been associated with his early Wellsian mimicry were aborted, just as "Vivisection" itself is cut short. What we have is only "Part I". There are no succeeding parts in the six succeeding issue of The Bee. Whether or not Harris wrote a succeeding part, or succeeding parts, I do not know.21


18 Moskowitz, op. cit., p. 119.

19 Leslie Flood, Harris's friend and a specialist dealer in fantasy (one-time owner of the Fantasy Book Centre in Bloomsbury), points to the American debt with regard to, The Day of the Triffids: "by utilizing a couple of unoriginal ideas with his Gernsback-trained attention to logically based explanatory detail and realistic background, together with his new [post-war] strongly developed narrative style, 'The Day of the Triffids' became one of the classics of modern speculative fiction, surviving even a mediocre movie treatment": "Introduction" to The Best of John Wyndham, ed. Angus Wells (London: Sphere, 1973), pp. 7-11, at pp.9-10.

20 I speculate in the concluding "Wyndham and the Winds of Change section of my essay on The Midwich Cuckoos that "wind" references in much of "Wyndham's" work constitute a signature cryptogram. The one such reference in "Vivisection" might be regarded as prefiguring this development: "The wind rustled in the tree-tops and alone broke the silence."

21 I am grateful to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for a 1997-2000 Research Grant which has covered the expenses related to my Wyndham investigations.
PART I.: being the diary of EDWIN LUNST, Esq., B.A.,
OXON,

October 3rd.

I spoke to-day with Professor Langley upon the possibilities of Vivisection; but from remarks he made, I do not think he knows much of it. His ideas are too wild to be practical. However, he has asked me to stay with him at his house, in a wild part of Dartmoor, and offer him advice on his work.

October 5th, 10 p.m.

I arrived here after an interesting journey in the train from London. I entered into conversation with a man, whom it appears is an inhabitant of these parts. I mentioned that I was coming here, and he regarded me with a most peculiar look, as if I had committed a sin in doing so. My host received me very graciously; I have a comfortable room and have retired to bed early, being tired after my journey.

October 6th, 7 a.m.

I couldn't sleep well last night because of the yells and cries of animals; not plain, ordinary animals such as one hears at the Zoo, but mixed; there was one which sounded like a combination of a lion's roar and the bellowing of a bull and other curious noises. Suddenly arose a most frightful scream of pain, the sound of a tortured soul. The wind rustled in the tree-tops and alone broke the silence. I rushed upon the landing; all was dark; but it was not so silent now; in the distance I could hear the trot of a pony, in the house.

Nearer and nearer it came, until it began to ascend the stairs, but now I found the switch of the light and pressed it; I saw before me not a pony, but two beings with the hindquarters of a goat, and the top part bearing a strong resemblance to a man. They stood upright and glared at me, with their chins kept well in and their small pointed beards against their chests. One stretched forth a misshapen hand, like a monkey's, towards me; instinctively I turned off the light and tearing into my room, locked the door.

I lay shivering from fright, in my bed, listening for any sound of movement from the monsters outside, but I heard none, and composed myself, as best I could, for sleep. Once I heard a faint cry, but nothing else, and the rest of the night passed quietly.

10p.m.

Who was ever in such a state? I feel as if I was living in a Chamber of horrors. Of all strange places I was ever in, this is undoubtedly the strangest. As I came down this morning, I was confronted by a man-servant, who conducted me to the breakfast-room, where an excellent meal was laid out for me.

Half way through, I suddenly remembered that I had left lying upon my dressing table, my watch and a case containing notes to the value of forty pounds. Not being willing to risk their safety in such a strange house, I rushed to my bedroom, burst in and stood amazed at what I saw; for making the bed, were not ordinary English housemaids, but two little creatures about four feet high, with black faces and curly hair; they each wore a light blue garment, which hung right from their shoulders to the ground at their feet. They moved with short, stumpy motions and conversed in peculiarly throaty accents and, though I could not quite distinguish what they said, it sounded vaguely like English.

Returning downstairs, I finished my breakfast, and took up my paper. When I had been reading for some little time the man-servant came in to clear the table and brought a note from Professor Langley, whom it appeared, was very busy, and asked me to entertain myself as I liked.

There is a beautiful garden, laid out in an old-fashioned style with a walled garden, about two hundred yards square.

As I walked over the velvety lawn, I thought I saw somebody or something move in the bordering trees, and advanced to investigate.

Out of the trees came a most ridiculous figure. It was about eight feet high and had very short legs in comparison with its body, on its head was an old straw hat, and its raiment consisted solely of an overall. "Hallo!" remarked this apparition in a peculiar voice, "what do you want?" To say I was scared, is to put it mildly. So dumbfounded was I that I could not say a word. The creature advanced, "Can you not speak?" it demanded, slowly; whereat I said, "Who are you, and where do you live? For thought I, surely this is some lunatic, some freak of nature; but it merely said, "The Master," and turning, it ambled off through the trees.

I stared after it and then at the ground before me. I wondered what size its feet were, to be in proportion with the rest of its body, it must take at least...

The prints upon the ground were those of horses hooves; no others were visible.

J. W. B. HARRIS.
Works by John Beynon Harris Cited Above


"Vivisection". By J. W. B. Harris. The Bee: An Independent Journal of Art, Literature, Politics, Science and Music I (November 1919), pp. 29-30. The eight issues of this journal (July 1919-December 1920), "Produced by Members of Bedales School" and edited by Rolf Gardiner and Stephen Bone, were collected as a single volume printed by The Morland Press Ltd., 190 Ebury Street, London SW1.


"Why This Cosmic Wild West Stuff?" The British Scientifiction Fantasy Review I (April 1937), pp. 11-12.