

Re:Action

Newsletter of the Neoist Alliance

Neither Home Nor Hume!

No. 8 Spring Equinox 398 MKE.

TIME IS,
TIME WAS,
TIME SHALL BE
NO MORE!



'The Celts... seem to have dated the beginning of the year from... (Samhain) rather than from Beltane. In the Isle of Man, one of the fortresses in which the Celtic language and lore longest held out against the siege of the Saxon invaders, the first of November, Old Style, has been regarded as New Year's Day down to recent times. Thus Manx mummers used to go round on Halloween (Old Style), singing, in the Manx language, a sort of Hogmanay song which began "Tonight is New Year's Night, Hogunnaa!" In ancient Ireland, a new fire used to be kindled every year on Halloween, or the Eve of Samhain, and from this sacred flame all the fires in Ireland were rekindled. Such a custom points strongly to Samhain or All Saints' Day (the first of November) as New Year's Day; since the annual kindling of a new fire takes place most naturally at the beginning of the year, in order that the blessed influence of the fresh fire may last throughout the whole period of twelve months...' J. G. Frazer The Golden Bough.

WHILE SPIN DOCTORS are busy battering time junkies with their mind bending 'Millennium' psycho-assaults, the Neoist Alliance is fine-tuning the Modern Khemetic Calendar (MKE). This calendar is based on the 365 day year developed by the ancient Egyptians. The Khemetic Calendar is based on cycles of 1,460 years, the end of the last cycle being marked by the Calabrian Revolt which according to addicts of apocalyptic time occurred in 1599 AD. Thus depending on where one places the New Year within the MKE, we are currently right at the end of 398 or just entering the second quarter of 399. While England switched from the Julian to the Gregorian Calendar in 1752, Scotland began treating 1st January as New Year's Day as early as 1 MKE. Surprisingly, some of those who've adopted the MKE still count 1st January as New Year's Day.

According to the English version of the Julian Calendar, New Year's Day fell on 25th March, with the introduction of the Gregorian Calendar 11 days were lost

but in many cases the movement of dates was rounded up to an imperial dozen. Thus in the English Gregorian Calendar, Old New Year's Day became 6th April and New Year's Day was moved to 1st January. The English financial year is still based on the old system but is now dated according to the Gregorian Calendar. The Neoist Alliance favours 25th March as New Year's Day within the Modern Khemetic Calendar precisely because it doesn't coincide with the dates for either the old or current New Year's Day within the Gregorian Calendar. 25th March is a particularly attractive choice for New Year's Day since according to folk law, it is the date on which faeries are most commonly seen. This may also explain why the 398 MKE (1997 AD) *Spectacle-Wearer of the Year Awards* were held at the Savoy Hotel in London on 25th March.

Having fixed New Year's Eve as 24th March, it is perhaps useful to look at some of the ways in which the event might be celebrated. Since Hogmanay in Scotland

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UNMAPPING THE TERRITORY: A ROMP THROUGH BRISTOL TO SUICIDE BRIDGE

“Myth makes track in the hoof-prints of place. Lifelong quest for that unreachable singularity – to be reborn, re-energised by touch, by mutual ecstatic recognition of place & self. Myth is what place says. And it does lie. It spreads a seductive field of pits & snares. You go mad if you try to pursue place through myth: your path will disappear over the nearest cliff. Place is fed by sacrifice of the unwary – though the truly innocent, those born to innocence, according to myth, survive. Place, finally, can be only one thing: where you die...” Iain Sinclair *Suicide Bridge*.

AN ANONYMOUS TIP-OFF led me to Bristol in my search for Dr. Mintern. I made my way from the Temple Meads train station to the Arnofini Arts Centre by way of St. Mary Redcliffe church. In the Arnofini café I spotted one of the Silent Bards slipping a photocopy of *Open Verdict: An account of 25 mysterious deaths in the defence industry* (Sphere, London 1990) into the hands of the novelist and psychogeographer Iain Sinclair. I joined this charmed circle. Beer flowed freely and the surreal silence that enveloped us possessed a truth greater than the gnomonic prophecies of under employed sages. Sinclair returned to London by train without once mentioning Dr. Mintern, while I passed the night at a guest house in Stackpool Road. My slumbers were disturbed by the Glaswegian artist Ross Sinclair. He was inebriated and mistook my unlocked door for the portal giving access to the toilet.

After breakfast The Thin Man arrived to guide me to the water maze in Victoria Park. Designed by Peter Milner and Jane Norbury and constructed in 1984, the labyrinth is aligned with St. Mary Redcliffe church. Built from brick, water bubbles up at the centre of the maze and flows outwards through this unicursal labyrinth which contains no puzzle element. The design is based on a fifteenth-century roof-boss in St. Mary Redcliffe, it contains eleven circuits and is of Christian design. Traditionally, mazes are traversed from the outside to the goal. The Bristol water maze reverses this process, since the water flows outwards from the centre. After escaping the labyrinth, the water streams underground along an old pipe line until it reaches a section damaged by bombing during the last inter-imperialist war.

In the company of The Thin Man I made my way to St. Mary Redcliffe, which lies just outside the old town wall. The church is intimately connected to the water maze. More than eight hundred years ago, Lord Robert de Berkeley gave the Ruge Well to St. Mary Redcliffe. Every year there is a procession following the two mile plus course of the conduit along which water was piped from the well to the church. The same spring feeds the water maze. A more recent feature of the church is the *Chaotic Pendulum* created by Dr. Eric Albone. Water is fed through a pendulum and the erratic manner in which it swings about is impossible to predict. The pendulum's creator claims it illustrates both chaos theory and a primordial link between science and religion. There is a cross behind the pendulum and its erratic swinging motion might be interpreted as the body of Christ twitching during his “passion”.

We emerged from the psychic vortex of the church in a state of considerable confusion. Unfortunately, The Thin Man struck out in the wrong direction and it was some time before we were able to recover with espressos in Woodes Café. The joint is named after a famous pirate and a Silent Bard informed me that locals always refer to it as ‘Captain Woodes’. This avant-bardist also warned me to avoid the deep-fried romanticism that permeates the Cathay Gardens restaurant in King Street. This Chinese eatery is situated on the site of the library in which Coleridge is said to have first uttered the phrase ‘willing suspension of disbelief’. Emerging from this whispered conversation among coffee spoons, I charged past the local Masonic Lodge and ducked into the safety of The Bookshop. The Thin Man was chasing my shadow. It took twenty minutes sensory deprivation surrounded by secondhand stock in a dark basement before I felt able to continue my journey.

After a wander around the remainders in Unsworth, Rice & Company, we ascended the stone steps of the Cabot Tower. The Cabot family, with financial backing from Bristol merchants, played a not insignificant role in various commercial cum imperialist ventures. Bristol was spread beneath us like silver on white linen. The view obscured by a fine mist. The landscape shook and what looked like burnt out hills were dimly visible in the distance. Seeking further clues to the strange disappearance of Dr. Mintern, we made our way to the Beware Of The Leopard bookstall in the market. Among other things, this resulted in the purchase of two Paladin Poetry paperbacks featuring work by Allen Fisher, Bill Griffiths, Brian Catling and Lee Harwood. Shortly afterwards, a placeist was abused with a rousing chorus of ‘Long Live the Gallo-Latin Semiology International’ while a copy of *Socialist Wiccan* was flashed at the panic stricken hack.

Sometime later we picked our way through thickets of books in Cheltenham Road. Garth O'Donnell, the proprietor of Bristol Books, was barking into a phone. O'Donnell announced to an invisible confidant that he'd put a flea in the ear of a lawyer who was demanding advance notice before the bookdealer allowed scaffolding around some buildings he owned to collapse again. With an unerring flair for publicity, O'Donnell had bought up various Jamaica Street properties occupied by artists with the intention of converting them into a museum of slavery. Needless to say, this had not gone down well with either the tenants or various professionals employed to promote a positive civic image of Bristol. After O'Donnell attempted to sell The Thin Man a job lot of surplus stock from his defunct bookshop in North Street, we darted out and rushed into his Bristol Books Academic emporium next door.

The events I'm relating took on a sinister cast when I stumbled across two slightly foxed copies of the rare and out of print *Open Verdict* by Tony Collins in O'Donnell's Academic bookstore. The Thin Man had already announced at Captain Woodes that my tour of Bristol would end at the Clifton Suspension Bridge. Collins begins *Open Verdict* on the evening of 4 August 387 MKE, when Vimal Dajibhai's body fell from Isambard Kingdom Brunel's architectural masterpiece into the Avon Gorge below. When I purchased both copies of *Open Verdict* at £2 a shop assistant began a conversation that incorporated topics as diverse as *Report From Iron Mountain* and the ‘Bristol hum’. Poetry Field Club investigators believe the latter is caused by a rent in the underchalk, where wind escapes into the void. If this rent can be located then our thesis that all landscape is synthetic will be vindicated.

Thirty minutes later, The Thin Man turned up a seventies paperback edition of Crowley's *Moonchild* in the Amnesty International Bookshop. A pound secured the tome and it confirmed my belief that in sourcing copies of *Open Verdict*, I'd stumbled across something BIG. Within Crowley's occult system, books are considered to be extremely powerful talismans. Quarry and prey shadow each other. Moving closer, melting, merging, separating. I urged The Thin Man on towards the Clifton Suspension Bridge. CCTV cameras were obtrusively mounted above a toll booth, while a notice asked those contemplating suicide to call the Samaritans. Dusk was falling and the lights of Bristol glittered like languid jewels. As he led me across the Avon Gorge, The Thin Man explained that he always kept to the left when using this bridge.

As we made our way back the landscape was shaking. A figure carrying a megaphone emerged from a cave in the cliff side. ‘What we walk is myth flattened into space. Its hide,’ Dr. Mintern hollered before disappearing back into the underchalk from which he had so unexpectedly emerged. Words emerged from the void and imprinted themselves on my mind. Poets who risk nothing are doomed to drone on forever, whereas a Silent Bard must gamble everything on a single throw of the dice. The avant-bard will consume itself – as well as place, enclosure and the occult. We will open up the underchalk. A thorough search of the cliff side cave turned up nothing more than a pair of spectacles and a wig. Dr. Mintern's whereabouts remain a mystery wrapped in an enigma.

A report by
The Unknown Neoist.

CAKEHEAD WATSON DOES NOT EXIST!

In an article entitled ‘Swamp Fever’ in the Fall 1997 edition of *The Fifth Estate*, David ‘Cakehead’ Watson not only pretends that the Neoist Alliance is a political organisation, he treats it as though it actually exists! Likewise, Cakehead Watson rather too self-consciously confuses the non-existent Neoist Alliance with the Neoist Network of the 1980s through the indiscriminate use of the term Neoist in his piece. Cakehead is clearly attempting to smear individuals who have nothing to do with the non-existent Neoist Alliance — such as tENTATIVELY a cONVENIENCE, Blaster Al Ackerman and John Berndt. Indeed, it is extremely likely that Cakehead is working hand in glove with Stewart Home in a bid to further Home's career as a novelist and penny dreadful pornographer.

In recent months, Stewart Home has been circulating an open letter to *The Fifth Estate* dated 21/12/98. In this text he completely fails to criticise Watson for conflating Neoism and the Neoist Alliance. Since Home recently tricked the Bristol based literary magazine *Entropy* (# 4, January 1998) into printing an English translation of an article about Neoism from the Berlin publication *Super! Bierfront* as a guide to the movers and shakers behind the ‘Neoist Alliance’, the possibility that he is the real author of the Watson piece cannot be readily dismissed. While Home has never responded to difficult criticisms made of him in texts such as *History Begins Where Life Ends* and *Manufacturing Dissent*, he is quick to direct his rhetoric against lame duck targets and it can be shown that on occasion he's been involved in manufacturing feuds for the specific purpose of inhibiting debate. Rather than criticising Home for his obvious weaknesses, ‘Swamp Fever’ actually serves his self-aggrandising agenda, which includes taking credit for the achievements of the Neoist Network. Read alongside ‘Swamp Fever’, Home's open letter provides strong circumstantial evidence for our belief that David Watson is a stooge of this penny dreadful pornographer. Home's letter runs as follows:

“Dear Fifth Estate. While I was pleased David Watson took a public position on both *Green Anarchist* and John Moore in his ‘Swamp Fever’ article (*Fifth Estate*, Fall 1997), I felt that at times he indulged in gross misrepresentation. More than half of *The Green Apocalypse* – one of the publications Watson was allegedly reviewing – is taken up with documents produced by diverse hands, and yet Watson quotes from these without explaining what they are. For example, failing to identify his source as a reprinted leaflet entitled *The Sordid Truth About Stewart Home* – in which it is ludicrously claimed that I have sex with animals and that Murray Bookchin is one of my pen names - Watson claims Bookchin ‘is cited approvingly by the Neoists in *Green Apocalypse*.’ The notion of approval is a completely inappropriate description of the way in which the Bookchin quote is used, and Watson makes no attempt to establish who authored the piece. It is telling that Watson should attempt to conflate ‘the Neoists’ with Bookchin, despite the fact that his ongoing dispute with this anarcho-bore is of little interest to me or any of my acquaintances. Likewise, Watson cites the ridiculous assertion that ‘Syndicalism shows that it is possible to have a complex industrial society without hierarchies’ from an anonymous leaflet reprinted in the documents section as if it proved that ‘the crux of the Neoist argument is simply a barren, unexamined defence of industrialism and mass technology’.

“As well as reproducing a large number of documents, *The Green Apocalypse* contains responses to much of the Green Anarchist material it reprints. Since Watson reiterates a number of Green Anarchist slurs already reprinted and responded to in *The Green Apocalypse*, it would be advisable for anyone commenting on ‘Swamp Fever’ to read the pamphlet. To take just one example, I do not intend to waste my time by repeatedly explaining how a satirical leaflet attributed to a non-existent Green

Action Network is not an example of ‘forgeries claiming to be from Green Anarchists.’ It is, however, amusing to speculate that it was the similarity between the parodic leaflet and the politics espoused by Green Anarchist that led Watson to confuse the names ‘Green Action’ and ‘Green Anarchists’. It should be stressed that Watson's use of the capitalised plural term ‘Green Anarchists’ can be explained as a typo, or as a deliberate attempt to ensnare careless readers. Watson might like to clarify his position on this.

“Watson's failure to provide a credible summary of the arguments to be found in *The Green Apocalypse* can be illustrated by his claim that: ‘Around the time of the Persian Gulf War, everyone in the dispute agrees, *Green Anarchist* founder Richard Hunt went over to an explicit right-wing or ecofascist position.’ While I have argued that Hunt was a founder of *Green Anarchist*, reprinted in the documents section of *The Green Apocalypse* are materials in which the current editors of the publication implausibly deny this. Watson seems to agree with some of the arguments I have made about the right-wing nature of Hunt's ideology but the word ‘explicitly’ is misleading. My view is that Hunt's positions have always been right-wing regardless of the fact that he still claims to be a part of the political left. Likewise, from material reprinted in *The Green Apocalypse*, it is clear that the public line of the current editors of *Green Anarchist* is that Hunt held left-wing views prior to the Gulf War, before inexplicably turning fascist overnight. This position appears to have been adopted because in texts such as *Green Anarchism: Its Origins And Influences*, the current editors of *Green Anarchist* use Hunt's theories as an ideological framework for their ongoing activities.

“Watson misrepresents the positions of all those involved in the dispute he is writing about. To deal thoroughly with the many errors ‘Swamp Fever’ contains would take more time than I am prepared to devote to the task. Besides, it is pointless attempting to engage Watson in debate since his rhetoric is even more ridiculous than that of an old tailors dummy that I keep in the attic and which I sometimes put out on the pavement, so that I can crawl inside it. Thus hidden, I frighten passing pedestrians with my hamster impersonations, while shying lone and languid peanuts down the street. After reading ‘Swamp Fever’ and ‘On The Road To Nowhere,’ I consider this hobby considerably more serious than the *Fifth Estate*. Indeed, Watson's absurd posturing has earned him the nickname Cakehead here in London. He clearly hasn't learnt his A, B, C of revolution because if he had, he'd know that the slogan ‘Long Live Death’ was chanted not only by Spanish Falangists but also by those defending the Paris barricades in 1848. Personally, I prefer the variant of this slogan that runs ‘Long Live Life.’ Finally, if you wish to print this letter, it should be run in full with the heading ‘Elementary My Dear Watson.’ Yours faithfully, Stewart Home.”

David Watson no doubt feels flattered to be in on Home's “joke”, he probably doesn't realise that most people are fed up to the back teeth with these phoney feuds. In the ‘Swamp Fever’ article which is attributed to him, Watson suggests that the Neoist Alliance ought to dissolve but since it does not exist, this is actually a sneaky call for the creation of an organisation bearing the name. Down with this confusionist nonsense! Long Live Avant-Bard Internationalism! Concerned readers should send postcards bearing the slogan ‘Cakehead Watson does not exist’ to *The Fifth Estate*. As punishment for his involvement in this substandard black propaganda, we suggest that Cakehead makes available an English translation of Oliver Marchart's book *Neoismus: Avangarde Und Selbsthistorisierung* (Edition Selene, Vienna 1997). Marchart is another of Home's stooges who specialises in running his master's drivel through the mill of hegemony theory.

Issues 1 to 4 of *Entropy* cost £2 each from the usual London outlets such as Compendium, or direct from Entropress, Garden Flat, 15 Ashgrove Road, Redland, Bristol BS6 6NA, British Isles. Send postcards bearing the slogan ‘Cakehead Watson does not exist’ to *The Fifth Estate*, 4632 Second Avenue, Detroit MI 48201, North America.



THE EGO HAS LANDED

Stewart Home continues to churn out drivel. Not content with issuing two novels last year – *Come Before Christ & Murder Love* followed by *Blow Job* both on Serpent's Tail – news has reached us that he's just released two CDs. *Stewart Home Comes In Your Face* features the hapless novelist trotting out his punk rock tunes some of which are twenty years old. Talk about shameless recycling of material! Even worse is Home's *Cyber Sadism Live!* This is a spoken word CD featuring readings and stand-up routines (ha ha!). Both are distributed by Overground and should be avoided at all costs. Far better is *The House Of Nine Squares: Letters on Neoism, Psychogeography and Epistemological Trepidation* (Invisible Books). In this Home supplies the bulk of material while supplementary contributions from Florian Cramer demonstrate that the experimental novelist is on a hiding to nowhere as far as theoretical issues are concerned. You can order *The House Of Nine Squares* for £5.50 plus postage from Invisible Books, BM Invisible, London WC1N 3XX, UK.

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is traditionally a more important festival than the birth of the Toad of Nazareth, it seems appropriate to look for inspiration in the 'far north'. There are a number of Scottish fire festivals that kick off just before midnight on 31st December. For example, at Biggar in Strathclyde there is a ritual known as *The Burning Out Of The Old Year*. A gigantic bonfire is built in the middle of the main street and after a torch lit parade through town it is set ablaze. The fire is kept burning until first light in the New Year, when herrings are grilled in the embers. In the north-eastern coastal town of Stonehaven, locals ward off evil spirits with their *Fireballs Ceremony*. Wire balls filled with paraffin soaked wood and cloth are whirled around the heads of those engaged in the ceremony before being thrown into the sea. In the *Flambeaux Procession* at Comrie in Tayside, ten foot long birch poles crowned with flaming hessian sacking are paraded behind a pipe band.

In Scotland, 11th January is Old New Year's Eve and this is still celebrated with a fire festival known as *Burning The Clavie* at Burghead on the Moray Firth. A half-barrel is attached to a fisherman's pole. Beneath this a cage is constructed through which the Clavie-carriers stick their heads. The half-barrel is filled with wood and tar before being set alight at six in the evening. Carrying the Clavie is a sweaty and potentially hazardous task but members of various local families enthusiastically take a turn. The superstitious believe that ill luck will

fall upon the residents of Burghead if a carrier stumbles. Therefore the Clavie is breezily carted up Doorie Hill, where it is installed in a stone receptacle and the flaming contents thrown down at the assembled townsfolk. Spectators scabble for pieces of the burning Clavie, since its remnants are said to bring good fortune while simultaneously warding off evil.

There are, of course, many other fire festivals that take place at different times of the year and some of these might also provide inspiration for New Year ceremonies kicking off late in the evening on 24th March. Those propagating the Modern Khemetic Calendar in different parts of the world will have to look for suitable locations for these festivities. In mainland Britain, the psychogeographical researches of the Neoist Alliance have already uncovered an extremely ambient site. This is in the area immediately around the Nascent Lion stones in Hazelhead Park, Aberdeen. The local council uses this park as a dump for much of its unwanted street furniture and these dressed stones were acquired in the 1930s so that the artist D. O. Pilkington-Jackson could sculpt them into lions for a planned road bridge. Due to war economies, the bridge was built without decorative sculptures and three of the four stones purchased for this purpose have been arranged in an ensemble at Hazelhead Park.

A sign beneath the Nascent Lions states that they are not druidical stones. The Aberdeenshire area is famous for its abundance of recumbent stone circles which pre-

date the Druid religion by hundreds of years, so it is difficult to explain why Aberdeen council is concerned that the curious might mistake the Nascent Lions for Druid Stones. Close to the Nascent Lions is the Hazelhead Maze which was laid out in privet by Sir Henry Alexander in 1935. Recently the maze has been locked up but it is easy to get over the fence and Neoist Alliance researchers have experienced extremely good orgasms at the goal. The name Aberdeen means between the River Dee and the River Don. A fire festival at the Nascent Lions on the night of 24/25th March would thus successfully combine the elements of fire and water, a particularly fine achievement. For this reason, the Neoist Alliance has decided to make the Nascent Lions in Hazelhead Park the focus of its 399 MKE New Year celebrations.

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