

= Tales of Wonder (magazine) =

Tales of Wonder was a British science fiction magazine which was launched in 1937 with Walter Gillings as editor . It was published by The World 's Work , a subsidiary of William Heinemann , as part of a series of genre titles that included Tales of Mystery and Detection and Tales of the Uncanny . Gillings was able to attract some good material , despite the low payment rates he was able to offer ; he also included many reprints from U.S. science fiction magazines . The magazine was apparently more successful than the other genre titles issued by The World 's Work , since Tales of Wonder was the only one to publish more than a single issue .

Arthur C. Clarke made his first professional sale to Tales of Wonder , with two science articles . Gillings also published William F. Temple 's first story , some early material by John Wyndham , and " The Prr @-@ r @-@ eet " by Eric Frank Russell . American writers who appeared in the magazine included Murray Leinster and Jack Williamson ; these were both reprints , but some new material from the U.S. did appear , including Lloyd A. Eshbach 's " Out of the Past " , and S.P. Meek 's " The Mentality Machine " . With the advent of World War II , paper shortages and Gillings ' call up into the army made it increasingly difficult to continue , and the sixteenth issue , dated Spring 1942 , was the last . Tales of Wonder was not the first British science fiction magazine , but it was the first one aimed at an adult market , and its success made it apparent that a science fiction magazine could survive in the U.K.

= = Publication history = =

The first U.S. science fiction (sf) magazine , Amazing Stories , was imported into the U.K. from its launch in 1926 , and other magazines from the U.S. market were also available from an early date . However , no British sf magazine appeared until 1934 , when Pearson 's launched Scoops , a weekly in tabloid format aimed at the juvenile market . Soon Haydn Dimmock , Scoops ' editor , began to receive more sophisticated stories , targeted at an adult audience ; he tried to change the magazine 's focus to include more mature fiction but within twenty issues falling sales led Pearson 's to kill the magazine . The failure of Scoops gave British publishers the impression that Britain could not support a science fiction publication .

Despite this failure , only a year later , George Newnes , Ltd . , the publisher of The Strand magazine , decided to launch a group of four genre pulp magazines , and to include a science fiction title . The editor , T. Stanhope Sprigg , had help from Walter Gillings , a British science fiction reader who had been active in fan circles since the early 1930s , in searching for good submissions , but the project was placed on hold after fifteen months . Gillings next approached The World 's Work , a subsidiary of William Heinemann , who were already publishing titles such as Tales of Mystery and Detection and Tales of the Uncanny , as part of their Master Thriller series . Gillings had heard that The World 's Work were planning a science fiction magazine ; as it turned out this was not the case , but Gillings was quickly able to persuade them to add science fiction to their list . He was asked to prepare a single issue of 80 @,@ 000 words to test the market . The World 's Work reprinted a good deal of American fiction and since they were only paying for reprint rights their rates were lower than was usual for new fiction . Gillings was given a budget of 10 / 6 (ten shillings and sixpence) per thousand words : the low rate discouraged those writers who could sell to the better @-@ paying American magazines . Newer writers were glad of the chance to develop a British market for their work , though most American writers were unimpressed .

The first issue of Tales of Wonder appeared in June 1937 . Sales were good enough for The World 's Work to continue publication , and from Spring 1938 the magazine appeared on a quarterly schedule , with occasional omissions . None of the other titles in the Master Thriller series ever turned into a separate magazine , so it was evidently selling well . The success of Tales of Wonder led Newnes to believe that they had been wrong to turn down Gillings , and in 1938 they launched Fantasy as a competitor .

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 did not immediately lead to paper shortages , but paper began to be rationed in April 1940 , and the page count , which had already dropped from 128

to 96 , fell to 72 by 1941 . Gillings was called up for military service , and for a while he was able to edit the magazine from his army camp , but the magazine eventually ceased publication with the Spring 1942 issue .

= = Contents and reception = =

American science fiction magazines had by the mid @-@ 1930s begun to publish some more sophisticated stories than the straightforward adventure fiction that was a staple of the earliest years of the genre . Gillings decided that many British science fiction readers would not be familiar with most of the developments in American sf , and so he did not make a point of seeking innovative and original material . The first issue contained " The Perfect Creature " , an early story by John Wyndham , under the name " John Beynon " , as well as " The Prr @-@ r @-@ eet " , by Eric Frank Russell . The second issue included Wyndham 's novel Sleepers of Mars , and William F. Temple 's " Lunar Lilliput " , which was Temple 's first science fiction sale . " Stenographer 's Hands " , a story by David H. Keller , also appeared in the second issue , reprinted from a U.S. magazine ; Gillings claimed that this was to introduce British science fiction readers to American developments in sf , but in fact it was because he was having trouble obtaining good quality material from British writers .

Other reprints acquired by Gillings included Murray Leinster 's " The Mad Planet " and its sequel , " The Red Dust " , and two stories by Jack Williamson : his first sale , " The Metal Man " , along with " The Moon Era " ; these were both by American writers though Gillings tried to reprint stories from the U.S. markets by British writers when he could . Reprints were not restricted to American and British authors , or the U.S. pulp market , however : Gillings also ran " The Planet Wrecker " by R. Coutts Armour , an Australian writer who used the pseudonym " Coutts Brisbane " ; the story had originally appeared in The Red Magazine in 1914 . Some new stories from American writers did appear , including Lloyd A. Eshbach 's " Out of the Past " , and S.P. Meek 's " The Mentality Machine " . Gillings ran competitions for reader essays , one of which was won by Ken Bulmer , later a well @-@ known British science fiction writer , and he encouraged fans to contribute , with articles and fillers . The most significant writer introduced by Gillings was undoubtedly Arthur C. Clarke , whose first sales were to Gillings , for the science articles " Man 's Empire of Tomorrow " and " We Can Rocket to the Moon ? Now ! " , which were published in the Winter 1938 and Summer 1939 issues .

Science fiction historian Mike Ashley regards Tales of Wonder as " a lively , entertaining and enjoyable magazine " . Its success demonstrated that there was a market in Britain for a magazine aimed at adult science fiction readers , despite the earlier failure of Scoops , and in 1938 George Newnes , Ltd. went ahead with their much @-@ delayed plans for an sf magazine , Fantasy , having seen the success of Tales of Wonder .

= = Bibliographic details = =

Tales of Wonder was published in pulp format for all 16 issues . It began at 128 pages ; this was cut to 96 pages with the Winter 1939 issue ; then to 80 pages with the Autumn 1940 issue ; and finally to 72 pages for the last three issues . It was edited throughout by Walter Gillings , and was priced at 1 / - . There was no volume numbering ; each issue was numbered consecutively .