An editorial in memoriam

Gil Williamson began *Mythaxis* in 2008 with the intention of delivering a simple, fiction-focused genre magazine without the usual trappings of the web – minimal advertising, if any at all, and as little visual clutter as possible to distract from the stories he chose to publish. Ten years later, he released the 21st issue on the anniversary of the first. Under his editorial guidance, *Mythaxis* featured one hundred and sixty-five original stories, six classic reprints of old masters, and a dozen cartoons or short comic strips. Some of those original pieces also represented the first publication of their authors, mine included.

[Gil and Beryl pics]

Sadly, in the summer of 2019 and a little over a year after that anniversary issue, Gil passed away following a period of illness. To say that he lived a full life would be an almost criminal understatement. He studied astrophysics at Edinburgh, but instead went on to enjoy a long professional career in the world of computing. With his wife Beryl, he created a software company named Amazon Systems (long before any upstart global behemoth began trading under a similar banner) which delved into fields as diverse as medicine, banking, security, word processing, and computer games. *Mythaxis* itself is published via software written by its editor.

He was a polyglot of European language, on one occasion translating the user manual of a medical computing system developed by Beryl from Swedish to Danish. He also spoke Malay, a skill no doubt of passing use when he navigated the Limbang river between Malaysia and Brunai in a dug-out canoe. As well as an amateur small-vessel sailor he was a racing enthusiast, as can be seen below, so crossing Istanbul during rush hour at the wheel of someone else’s car likely did little to raise his heart rate.

[Gil sports pics]

A life rich with experience, yes, but perhaps most of all Gil was modest, so understand that this shameful act of praise is committed only out of a sense of admiration and affection, one I’m sure is shared by far more people than those who knew him as their editor. I first met Gil as a member of the long-running book-lovers forum *Palimpsest*, where his passion for science fiction, in particular that of William Gibson and Iain M. Banks, made his a voice I always watched out for.

His championing of Patrick O’Brien’s epic *Aubrey & Maturin* sequence, the most famous of course being “Master and Commander”, introduced me to a series of books I now cherish. And in a different way I also cherish *Mythaxis*, now most of all as a legacy to the man who created it. When illness and the demands of operating the magazine became incompatible, Gil asked if I would take over editing duties, and I was proud to have been given that trust. It gives me great pleasure to be able to continue what Gil started, my only regret is not being able to do so while he was still with us.

So, our salute to Gil Williamson is this: eight stories by past contributors we hope you will enjoy, and which we hope he would have too. And we will keep on saluting. *Mythaxis* will persist in his mission, to seek out great speculative writing by authors new and old and let it distract you from the world, just for a little while.

~ Andrew Leon Hudson

Mythaxis editor