

RADIO I'm interested in their history  
and I'm interested in their history  
~~HERALD~~ Britain is a well-known maker name many people will recognise as a maker of metal and plastic toy soldiers. The plastic figure side of things had its origins in a firm called Herald, <sup>owned by a man called Meiser Zang</sup> ~~Herald had started under another name, Modern Packages, in the Old Kent Road~~

The origins of Herald are complicated, but things really started to take shape when they moved <sup>in 1952</sup> into the Clerkenwell district; ~~Clerkenwell is a district~~ long associated with small craft-based business such as watchmaking and jewellery. Roy Selwyn-Smith, who was Herald's main sculptor, said that their premises at 56 Clerkenwell Rd was "where Goldsmith [Zang's] brother Herald's ~~pre~~ first premises ~~at~~ 56 Clerkenwell Road, ~~housed~~

"The figure-making part of the business now operated from the basement of this building, a space which they shared with a glassblowers who made neon lettering for shop signs & also moulds for condoms. Above them on the ground floor a relation of Zang's called Billski had an engraving shop where they produced the stamp that printed the numbers on tote tickets. Zang was a partner in this business. In spite of these cramped conditions [Herald], the phenomenon out of the ashes of [its earlier incarnations], seems to have by an air of confidence which was less apparent in what we know of the old firm. The technical difficulties which had [previously] made plastic production such a faltering endeavour... were seen to be dispersed like the parting of the Red Sea. The most important change was that <sup>raw</sup> polythene was now available in larger quantities. Earlier its supply had been rationed because the means hadn't been developed for large scale production. The crucial breakthrough came at the beginning of the 1950s when ICI moved from a fermentation to a petrochemical base for their ethylene production; ethylene is the principle ingredient of polythene.

[The firm produced, on a hand-operated Westminster injection-mould machine which they had acquired in the late 1940s, in 1:32 scale,] a Sikh, a Scots Guard, a Highlander and a khaki soldier, all standing at attention. They were ~~followed~~ offered for sale hand-painted at a retail price of one shilling each (retailers had to buy the figures by the dozen). [The date of issue was January 1953.]

They were not, as many of Zang's employees seem to have believed, the first plastic figures to be produced... The German firm Friege and the US firm Behm had both made bakelite figures during the 1930s. Other German firms had ventured into production of polystyrene figures before + during the war. The Danish firm Reister, were producing polystyrene figures by 1949.

Zang's was not even the first British co. to produce figures in

QUOTE FROM BOOK p 31

plastic. This honour is usually accorded to a firm called Malleable Mouldings, who started producing a small plastic range in 1947. Their figures were in cellulose acetate & were probably produced by simple pressure moulding. Another <sup>(British)</sup> co., Avitex, produced a series of plastic figures around the same time as Malleable Mouldings. They seem to have moulded them at different times in different materials, sometimes nylon, sometimes polythene.

... Although Herald was not the first firm to produce figures in plastic [their new figures] represent a watershed in toy figure history. Their fine detail set them apart from any earlier hollow cast, composition or plastic figures. The sharpness of the detail was achieved ~~part~~...

Rahere St was Herald's next base. They moved there in 1953. It doesn't exist any more but we know where it is cos I've got this A-Z that dates from the 40s & shows it. "Most of our information about Rahere St comes from Kay Fido, who worked for the firm as a sculptor for about a year. It would be fair to say that she is not as enthusiastic about the Herald project as most of the people I have spoken to. In contrast to the picture I have been trying to build of an enterprise dedicated only to fulfilling the dreams of young children such as myself, in a spirit where nothing but the best would suffice, Fido describes a seedy little operation which she drifted into by accident and escaped with considerable relief.

She went to Herald straight after leaving Cambridge College where she had been studying sculpture. Right from the start she was casting a detached & scathing eye over the business, challenging the deepest-held assumptions, and proposing unfamiliar views on what the co. should be doing. This seems to have been very eye-opening for Herald, & in her short time at the firm she had a considerable impact.

"First, her description of Rahere St. 'We were in this old terraced house which had a fire trap. The back was a hotmaker. It must have had an extension in the bottom where you went in, & there was a counter which was where they set out the homework, & behind that they did the packaging.

"Also on this ground floor, Fido continues, was the one & only lavatory. Mr Z was nearly blind, which meant he peed all over the floor. There must have been a middle floor... oh, that was the office. & then you just came up the wooden stairs to the top floor where me & Ray Selwyn Smith did everything, the modelling & moulding. It was a real tin pot set up.

"Fido offers us a view of Zang as being a sort of irascible, unscrupulous

QUOTE FROM BOOK P48.

greedy old fuddy duddy who exploited his staff at every turn, guided only by the profit motive. The whole thing just grew out of the fact that Zang had these machines for making the manometer cases. Zang was the sort of man who'd always been in business of various kinds; he'd come across figure production almost accidentally, I think, because he had the injection mould machines. I think it was Ray who pushed it into figures. Then the figures took over more + more. They weren't created for it at all, it's like Zang didn't really know what had happened. The firm still knocked out the thermomometer cases while they set up another machine with maybe pigs or something. They had to change these moulds a lot in order to get any kind of range. ~~Some~~ [As well as sculpting] I did drawings for catalogues. Just pen drawings... But that's how it was - it was a real do-it-yourself place before I went there. Ray was doing all the boxes. Ray did everything you see. Zang shouldn't have been gaining off Ray's enthusiasm he was a bankrupt.

[Some corrections: Zang, as far as I can discover, wasn't a bankrupt. Also the firm had been making toy figures ~~before~~ out of glue + pumice powder before Roy Selwyn-Smith's arrival in 1947 CTE. But it seems right to credit Roy Selwyn-Smith as being the backbone of the firm through the '50s + '60s.]

p 50

There must have been the feel of a family firm at Herald. Zang, employing his niece as a secretary, his brother-in-law, Goldsmith, was handling the accounts and his son, Cecil ran a plastics firm in pmo End, within an enclave of which Herald did their moulding. Zang was also, as mentioned, in partnership with another relation, Billski, making the stamps for tote ~~machines~~ numbers. But families can be emotionally charged + shot through with power games. Zang clearly saw himself as the patriarch within the Herald family. 'He would look at his employees if they were very loyal,' says <sup>member of staff</sup> [one witness], 'but he was a night so + so if not. [Another <sup>member of staff</sup> witness] remembers in the early days that Zang used to maintain a personal relationship with his employees but known to sack people on the spot for crimes like powdering their faces or reading books during the time when they were supposed to be working.'

The picture that emerges is of an intimate little outfit without hard and rules, but with Zang expecting unusual dedication from his employees, +, expecting that his word + his views would go unchallenged. Thus Roy Selwyn-Smith with his lively enthusiasm + unassertive manner wd have been a very acceptable employee to Zang, whereas the more feisty Kay Fido was bound to come into with him.

The main point of issue between Fido + Zang was that Fido had a distaste for fighting figures, + felt that the firm should employ other avenues. 'Mainly I are there were little girls who were it catered for at all. It took ages to get Zang to let do the ballet dancers. I think he conceded to them because they cost very little to paint it came to the firm an encampment set. I remember Zang making a fuss, he dic mind about the women with the ba

the fire. But as he couldn't see anyway it was all a bit ludicrous.  
The encampment set, released in late 1953 or early 1954, has within it a depiction of the row that the set caused. Fido told me that when she made the totem pole she incorporated portraits of herself and Zoug among the faces on the pole.

The set was a success, and was continuously available until 1978. "It wasn't difficult to think up, was it," says Fido. "You've got this whole thing about war and soldiers & pageantry, & girls could play with the encampment set as well. I'm glad I did the more humane things."

"...The Indian Encampment set represents an important juncture for Herald/Binkins. Fido fought a hard war to make the firm look beyond fighting & war for its subjects. One of the distinctive things about Herald/Binkins from this time onwards is the range of their subject matter, going well beyond just soldiers. Connected with this breadth, there was a quest for subjects that would increase the size of the girls' market to more nearly the size of the boys'. Thus, although Fido was with the firm for such a short time, her legacy is very large, & it came from the fact that she didn't really fit in — in the sense of a) being a woman doing a non-menial job, and b) coming from an art-school type background — but she was prepared to fight for her alien world.

Can I connect Plastic Toy Figures, Performance, Bladenunner  
Brimsville Girl? American Werewolf in London?

I will try, using the theme of anger & aggression. I  
want to try to raise questions rather than offer answers,  
although I feel I know the answers to some of my questions.  
For example a fundamental question is, Do things like  
toy guns, toy soldiers, violent films promote violence,  
act as propaganda for violence, or do they channel it?  
I would suggest that they channel it. I worked for CND  
in the 1980s. A ~~to~~ <sup>One woman</sup> ~~some~~ <sup>person</sup> people there, "thoughtful people who  
I respected, had children and tried to bring <sup>him</sup> up their children  
without any toy guns, toy soldiers etc. and he had ended up  
joining the army. I've seen other boys whose parents have  
had similar ambitions and have tried to prevent toy guns  
entering the household, and the boys have just employed  
sticks as ~~gun~~ their toy guns.

Those two examples feature boys. I haven't seen little girls  
needing to create these channels for aggression. Perhaps  
aggression is a more a male thing. Yet at least as many  
of ~~of~~ my friends, at least as many women as men  
are troubled by deep wells of anger. (Is it meaningful  
to distinguish between anger and aggression? Let's think of  
aggression as the innate thing & anger as the culturally  
induced thing.) Our culture, which ~~causes~~ seems.

Maybe I'm drawn to angry people but it seems like  
almost everyone I know is wrestling with their  
anger. ~~It's~~ And it's as much an issue with me as it is with  
any of them, altho people think of me as placid because  
I'm terrified of confrontation.

In general terms it seems fair to say that our culture  
produces all this anger, but it's useless at ~~de~~ enabling  
us to deal with it, or even at allowing us to acknowledge its  
existence.

From my ~~no doubt~~ (limited) perspective it seems that  
the only things which have offered a sustained challenge to  
this culture, at least during my lifetime — ~~It's~~ pop music  
and the hippie movement. The challenge has been real for  
the reason that ~~this~~ <sup>one</sup> non-intellectual, an attitude rather than  
a theory.

The hippie thing of course is associated with peace and  
love, non-aggression. There may be profound spiritual  
ways in which love is the answer, but I believe peace  
and love were the achilles heel of the movement  
because they feed this difficulty we have about  
acknowledging and accepting the anger which modern

Western life ~~engenders~~ in us tends to produce in us.

Donald Cammell, who wrote + co-directed Performance, was critical of the hippie movement - for the hippie movement for failing to examine the anger which is within us. The film does precisely this. It creates a situation where a hippie is infiltrated by a man whose profession is violence. He fascinates the hippies, this menace fascinates us the audience, as it does the hippies. At the climax of the film the male hippie seems to merge identities with the gangster.

Punk came along ~~in the~~ after the hippie thing. Punk could be the utter opposite of hippieism, but from 2012 it seems like punk was a corrective, attempting to supply to the broad-pop music counter culture what it has previously been lacking, the acceptance that we have an angry part to our nature.

But how persistent has been the attempt to deny this part of ourselves. New Ageism nauseates with its "you-gotta-think-positive" narrowing of human experience into bland ~~can't think of the right word~~. This thread of seeking ~~the hippies~~ ~~the hippies~~ ~~the hippies~~ ~~the hippies~~ back through the hippies to ~~Joseph Christian~~ ~~Joseph Christian~~ ~~Joseph Christian~~ ~~Joseph Christian~~ the devil and ~~edit~~ being "other", not-us. It leads us in the trap of trying to sit on our anger, feel guilty about it, banish it to unconsciousness, where it becomes more destructive, project it onto others, anything to avoid FEELING it and being friends with it.

It's a dangerous subject. I'm not much of a Rolling Stones fan, but one of my exhibits has to be Sympathy for the Devil, a really powerful <sup>movie</sup> exploration made by ~~Joe~~ of ~~the~~ the demon in us, recorded very close in time to when Performance was being made.

~~I don't know whether this is a general perception~~ I think there may be a perception that Sympathy for the Devil sparked Altamont. It must have freaked the Stones out, and they never did anything very adventurous after that. Donald Cammell drew a more-or-less completely opposite conclusion: "Altamont happened when we were cutting the film. I remember saying, I told you so, you see what rock and roll can do when you get a lot of people ... you have to understand that you are still attracted to violence. The Woodstock Nation is attracted to violence. ~~and~~ Mick Jagger explains this further:

"Donald's really hung up on the ritual of violence not being the thing any more, where certain people can through certain moods - like a tournament or a small war - but ~~now~~ that's not being used anymore that's very dangerous. He's deploring the lack of ritual in violence. The way of coping with the violence is to sort of act it out theatrically."

Small War? Never mind.

~~American~~ You could look at Blade Runner as being about a part of us that we try to suppress which insists on forcing its way into the open.

And American Werewolf is about the violence in us which can possess us. We become a victim of it, as in the scene where he first becomes a werewolf and you feel his suffering as his body is transformed.

Brownsville Girl is not really ~~the~~ a very related theme. It's more about the trap of fame, using as its touchstone the film starring Gregory Peck, which is The Outsider CHECK. But I love it for its <sup>liberating</sup> vagueness about identity:

"There was this movie I seen one time, & I think I sat through it twice. I don't remember who I was or where I was born."

"Strange how things never turn out the way we had 'em planned."

The only thing we know about Henry Porter is that his name wasn't Henry Porter & there was something about you that I liked that was always too good for this world. Just like you always said there was something about me that you liked that I left behind in the French quarter."

& it mentions swampholes

It's co-written by Sam Shepherd