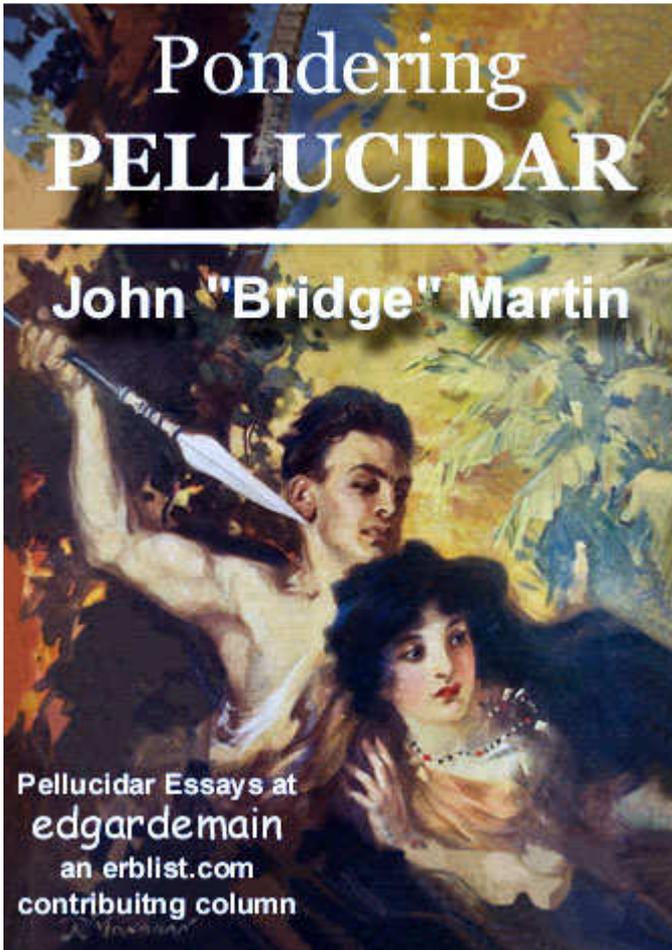


Pondering Pellucidar – John "Bridge" Martin  
Edgardemain, an <http://www.erblast.com> column



*Pondering Pellucidar:*  
*A series of thoughts regarding the Inner World as*  
*Chronicled by Edgar Rice Burroughs*  
*by*  
*John "Bridge" Martin*

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## The Principal Protagonists

### *A Connecticut Yankee in King David's Court*

David Innes is the protagonist in much of Edgar Rice Burroughs' seven-book Pellucidar series.

A Twentieth Century man thrust into the stone age could either help or take advantage of the primitive people, depending on his character or lack of it. Fortunately for the Pellucidarians, David Innes is of sound character; he is compassionate, resourceful and brave. Even without his modern skills, a man like David Innes could probably have survived pretty well at the Earth's core.

David's character was molded in his 20 years of life on the outer surface. ERB tells us several things about

his early days that contributed to the makeup of the man.

As the first book opens, David tells us he was born in Hartford, Connecticut., and that at the age of 19 he inherited a mining company from his father. A modern encyclopedia tells us there is not much going on in the mining business in Connecticut today, so, in retrospect, it was good that David got out of the business, though unexpectedly, when he did.

David spent many years of his boyhood in the small town of Andover, Connecticut, about 15 miles east of Hartford. He learned to appreciate, care for and love animals, owning a collie named Raja, whose most memorable feature was his "sad eyes." (*Pellucidar*, Chapter 7)

Oftentimes, stereotypes are untrue. We are sometimes presented with images of the bookworm, who has no time nor ability for sports; or the image of the jock, who can't spell the name of the position he plays!

David Innes, however, loved and excelled at both sports and studies.

Growing up, some of his favorite reading involved military history, and he was particularly fond of studying the battle strategies of "Napoleon, Von Moltke, Grant, and the ancients." (*Pellucidar*, Chapter 3). He was also familiar with the exploits of Columbus, Magellan, Captain Cook and Balboa. (*Land of Terror*, Chapter 19)

But he was a boy of action as well as words, and very likely a three-sport letterman.

In *Pellucidar*, David sometimes harvested his meals by knocking birds down with a rock, "for long practice as a pitcher on prep-school and varsity nines had made me an excellent shot with a hand-thrown missile." (*Pellucidar*, Chapter 7).

His baseball expertise had also been good enough for the college level.

At Andover and, later at Yale, I had pitched on winning ball teams. My speed and control must have been above the ordinary, for I made such a record during my senior year at college that overtures were made to me in behalf of one of the great major-league teams.<sup>1</sup> (*At the Earth's Core*, Chapter 3)

The fact that David Innes played college ball as a senior also tells us something more about him academically. The normal age for a college senior is 21 to 22, but he had already completed his senior year before he came to the inner world at age 20. (*Land of Terror*, Chapter 1). Thus, his academic excellence may either have allowed him to skip grades in his elementary or prep years and thus to get to college sooner, or he may have carried an extra heavy credit load and gone to summer school in order to finish college so soon.

David combined his natural ability with hard work:

...always had my physique been the envy and despair of my fellows. And for that very reason it had waxed even greater than nature had intended, since my natural pride in my great strength had led me to care for and develop my body and my muscles by every means within my power. What with boxing, football and baseball, I had been in training since childhood. (*At the Earth's Core*, Chapter 1)

ERB records no practical use of football skills in Pellucidar, but the boxing came in handy. He wowed

---

<sup>1</sup> A scouting sheet for the 1912 Boston Rustlers shows a “favorable” for “Pitch, Ieines, David, Conn, 18, Farm 1” a possible misspelling of his name which might refer to David Innes, but otherwise no other scouting reports of the period for any major teams shows anything similar. *Baseball Through The Ages*, p.24

the first Pellucidarians he encountered by knocking flat Hooja, the bully, with a blow from his fist, a fighting technique apparently unknown to the prehistoric men (*At the Earth's Core*, Chapter 4). On another occasion, as Dian the Beautiful watched, he performed a similar maneuver on Jubal the Ugly One (*At the Earth's Core*, Chapter 14). Later, David taught Tanar, the son of his friend Ghak, the Hairy One, "as he had taught many another young Pellucidarian, the art of self-defense, including boxing, wrestling and jiu-jitsu." (*Tanar of Pellucidar*, chapter 5).

One sport at which David did not at first excel was track. In *Earth's Core*, chapter 13, he was pursued by Sagoths, which caused him to reflect:

Running had never been my particular athletic forte, and now when my very life depended upon fleetness of foot I cannot say that I ran any better than on the occasions when my pitiful base running had called down upon my head the rooters' raucous and reproachful cries of 'Ice wagon' and 'Call a cab.'

But what practice on a baseball diamond could not do, exposure to constant danger in Pellucidar apparently did, for 10 years of hoofing it in the inner world had enabled him to build up his speed, as we learn in *Pellucidar*, chapter 7, when hyaenodons were on his tail:

I have never been much of a runner; I hate running. But if ever a sprinter broke into smithereens all the world's records it was I that day when I fled before those hideous beasts along the narrow spit of rocky cliff...

David Innes is not a perfect hero. He makes mistakes. But he admits them. At one time he confessed, "I recalled numerous acts of my past life which I should have been glad to have had a few more years

to live down. There was the affair in the Latin Commons at Andover when Calhoun and I had put gunpowder in the stove--and nearly killed one of the masters." (*At the Earth's Core*, Chapter 1)<sup>2</sup>

David tried to learn from his mistakes, and sometimes such lessons were thrust upon him. After taking a wrong trail one time, he philosophized:

...I set off down that which seemed the easiest going, and in this I made the same mistake that many of us do in selecting the path along which we shall follow out the course of our lives, and again learned that it is not always best to follow the line of least resistance. (*At the Earth's Core*, Chapter 9)

Yet, his paths, his decisions, his actions, led him to be the ruler of a people. Abner Perry, his co-adventurer from the outer world, dubbed him "his serene highness, David I, Emperor of the Federated Kingdoms of Pellucidar" (*Pellucidar*, Chapter 3), but David did not revel in such titles, nor did he surround himself with the trappings of royalty. He never looked upon his subjects with condescension, but valued their friendship and loyalty to him, and repaid it with his own, leading them by example.

And for all the technology and know-how he possessed as a Twentieth Century man, he was wise enough to keep it in perspective, and balance his attributes with those of the stone age men.

In narrating *Land of Terror*, David, in chapter three, gave voice to some of this wisdom:

Perry and I used often to discuss the helplessness of Twentieth-Century man when thrown upon his own resources. We touch a

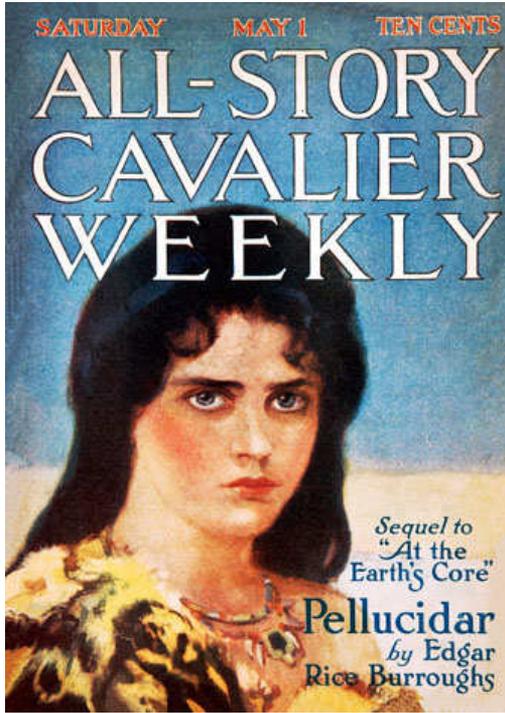
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<sup>2</sup> Andover – Mystery Explosion. A faulty vent pipe and accumulated creosote has been blamed for an unfortunate heating stove malfunction .... *Andover Press*, January 12, 1908

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button and we have light, and think nothing of it; but how many of us could build a generator to produce that light? We ride on trains as a matter of course; but how many of us could build a steam engine?....

Do not look down with condescension upon the men of the Old Stone Age, for their culture, by comparison with what had gone before, was greater than yours. Consider, for example, what marvelous inventive genius must have been his who first conceived the idea and then successfully created fire by artificial means. That nameless creature of a forgotten age was greater than Edison.



### *The Beautiful Empress Dian*

In a land where people often have descriptive phrases attached to their names, such as "the hairy one," "the fleet one," and "the strong one," you just know there has to be something special about someone called Dian "the beautiful one."

Dian the Beautiful is the heroine of the Pellucidar series. She becomes the one who stands by the side of her mate, David Innes, emperor of Pellucidar.

And this savage beauty is a perfect compliment in many ways to the modern man who rules a stone-age world. Like him, she is brave, loyal, and wants the best for her people.

David meets her on a Sagoth chain gang in *At the Earth's Core*, chapter 4. Later, in a chapter titled "The Garden of Eden," near the end of the book, Dian tells David that she had loved him from the first moment she saw him, but didn't realize it until after David had fought Hooja the Sly One for her. Because David had unwittingly committed a Pellucidarian social blunder right after fighting for Dian, she had, quite properly, kept her love a secret until David got around to declaring his own, similar commitment, to her.

David was a bit slower to define his feelings for Dian. Eventually, while separated from her and attempting an escape from the Mahars, he

...thought of a beautiful oval face, gazing out of limpid eyes, through a waving mass of jet-black hair. I thought of red, red lips, God-made for kissing ... I realized that I loved Dian the Beautiful... (*At the Earth's Core*, 11)

Once the matter of their love was settled, the two were united in the purpose of claiming and overseeing their empire. Dian was particularly ambitious—David had told Dian of the wonders of the outer world, and she was anxious for him to bring about the marvels of which he had spoken.

It is true that she had her own interests in mind, somewhat. She said,

I long for (civilization's) comforts and luxuries as I never before longed for anything. (*Pellucidar*, 5).

Who could blame a cave girl for yearning for something better? But even so, her yearnings were not selfish, for what she wanted for herself she also wanted for all the people of Pellucidar. She told David,

"You used to tell me of the wonderful things you could accomplish with the inventions of your own world. Now you have returned with all

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that is necessary to place this great power in the hands of the men of Pellucidar."

She spoke to him of the...

"... knowledge, which you alone may wield, to guide them toward the wonderful civilization of which you have told me...."

But though Dian yearned for the luxuries of civilization, she did not slather herself in them once they became a reality. She was a cave girl at heart, and could fight, kill and brave new dangers with the toughest of her people. In a storm-driven boat upon the fearsome ocean, we're told

If Dian was terrified, she hid it; for was she not the daughter of a once great chief, the sister of a king, and the mate of an emperor. (*Pellucidar*, 12)

Dian was eager to learn the use of new weapons, such as the bow and arrow that David had introduced to the empire. David taught her, made arrows for her, and marked them for identification. (*Land of Terror*, 15)

Dian had never seen a lighter-than-air balloon before, and well she knew the track record of Abner Perry's prototypes. Yet she had the courage to go up in this contraption. "When was a woman of Sari ever afraid?" she had asked. (*Savage Pellucidar* I-4)

In *Land of Terror* and *Savage Pellucidar* she was separated from David and had to battle her way back to Sari against overwhelming odds. But though she was always happy to leap back into David's arms, neither time did she require him to rescue her. She came through dangers to home through her own resources, wits and skill, and the inevitable lucky breaks.

We do not read of David Innes surrounding himself with the trappings of an outer crust emperor,

such as a decorative throne, a lavish palace, and a royal court. But we do read of one little indulgence he allowed. In *Tanar of Pellucidar*, chapter 13, as Tanar sees the city of the pirate Korsars, he observes that

"Most of the buildings were white with red-tiled roofs, and there were some with lofty minarets and domes of various colors—blue and red and gold, the last shining in the sunlight like the jewels in the diadem of Dian the Empress."

So David, as an expression of his love for Dian the Beautiful, the empress, had provided her with this sparkling symbol of his affection and her office.

But the most wonderful prize was David's alone. He said,

...for have I not that greatest of all treasures,  
the love of a good woman—my wondrous empress,  
Dian the Beautiful?

# AT THE Earth's CORE EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS



## *Abner 'Prayery': Study in Contrasts*

Just as Pellucidar is the opposite of the world's outer crust in many ways, so one of the series characters, Abner Perry, is the opposite of ... Abner Perry.

This unique individual is a study in contrasts:

He is the only elderly man among a world full of youthful-looking people;

He sometimes seems to be a peace-loving man; at other times, he exhibits a warlikeness to rival that of humankind's most bellicose;

He prays, frequently; yet "swears like a trooper."

Perry, David Innes' companion in Pellucidar, is the

inventor of the Iron Mole, the underground prospecting device with the improperly engineered steering mechanism that sends the two on a downward course to danger, adventure and, in David's case, romance at the Earth's Core.

The opening chapter of *At the Earth's Core* is the first we learn of Perry's penchant to invent things which don't work right the first time. Later, he would build a sailboat, which would immediately flip over; gunpowder, which would be useful for extinguishing fires, and an airplane, which would taxi backward.<sup>3</sup>

To Perry's credit, he was never discouraged with his early failures, but kept working on his inventions until he got them right, bringing the wonderful advantages of "civilization" to the stone age people who sadly lacked these modern improvements.

Abner Perry came from humble roots. His father had been a minister in a backwoods village (*Pellucidar* 3). Perhaps it was growing up in such a place, where modern conveniences may not have abounded, that spurred him on his constant quest to invent better, easier ways of doing things.

Likely, in that backwoods setting, he was required to do a lot of walking, for he spurned such exercise. "...poor Perry hated walking," said David Innes (*At the Earth's Core*, 4).

On earth I had often seen him call a cab to travel a square.

Perry devoted the better part of a long life to the "perfection" of the Iron Mole." As a relaxation, he studied paleontology (*At the Earth's*

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<sup>3</sup> "Interview with Professor Crackpot", Hartsfield Courier, May 12, 1873. *An affectionate article regarding an elderly local inventor who fails more often than he succeeds.* This small town Connecticut newspaper appears to be the earliest report on Abner Perry.

Core, 1).

So at about the age of 65, Perry, an old man, came to the land of youthful Pellucidarians.

In the inner world, the sun hangs eternally at the position of noon, so it is difficult to keep track of the passage of time. As a result, there seems to be no such thing as time, nor even aging, in Pellucidar.<sup>4</sup>

There is, of course, some aging, as children are born, and mature to become adults. But there the aging seems to slow to a crawl, if that. Perhaps it is the climate of Pellucidar, or perhaps it is the fact that people—without the pressure of having to match their lifestyles to a clock—just naturally live longer. Or perhaps it is the fact that the presence of ferocious beasts and human enemies keeps most people killed off before they have a chance to get old, thus making it “seem” like no one gets old. Probably, it is a combination of these and other factors.

In any case, *Land of Terror* is set 36 years after the time that David and Abner first broke into the inner world. Thus, David calculated, Perry had reached the age of 101, and David, in outer crust time, had gone from 20 to 56 years of age. Yet, neither he nor Perry had shown any physical evidence of the passage of time (*Land of Terror*, 1).

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<sup>4</sup> "Effects of Constant Illumination for Certain Plants", Jasko Umbertino, *Modern Scientific Botany*, 1955. Thesis regarding "youthful vigor" due to constant exposure to illumination; a suggestion that the diurnal nature of Earth's rotation has prevented plant immortality, suggests that humans might never have evolved. Also contained in the issue was "Man-Eating Plants: Humanity is Doomed", so this editor (and the entire scientific community) believes a grain of salt is indicated. HOWEVER, subsequent studies have indicated there might be something to the "single state", full light or full dark, proposition to longevity.

Perry, who probably didn't "feel" 101, was upset at being told he was past the century mark: "He nearly threw a fit." So David backed off on his age calculations in the next book, "Savage Pellucidar," probably just for Perry's benefit. Apparently, three decades in Pellucidar had improved Perry's health to where walking was no longer a problem for him, in spite of his advanced years, for he was proposing to undertake a long, dangerous hike with David. At that point, David reminded him that he was "over ninety" (*Savage Pellucidar* IV:1).

"Stuff and nonsense," replied Perry. "I can keep up with the best of you."

Perry was also a peace lover, yet was warlike.

When David and Perry were attempting to escape from the intelligent reptile Mahars, David found four sleeping Mahars and suggested that they kill them, skin them, and use their hides as disguises to escape.

"To my surprise, he (Perry) was horrified," said David (*Earth's Core*, 5).

"It would be murder, David," he cried.

"Murder to kill a reptilian monster?" David asked.

"Here they are not monsters, David," he replied. "Here they are the dominant race—we are the 'monsters'—the lower orders...."

Yet, at other times, Perry often took a warlike stance. He invented gunpowder and guns to shoot it; he talked about inventing poison gas, and he tried to invent an airplane to drop bombs on people, all to give them the benefits of "civilization."

When the good ship *Sari* was involved in the first great naval engagement of the Empire, Perry scammed below while David did the fighting with his revolver. After the enemy was driven away, Perry resurfaced from his hiding place and asked,

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"Have the scoundrels departed, have you  
killed them all, David?" (*Pellucidar*, 4)

But Perry was merciful as well. After the empire's  
armada defeated Hooja's forces in another great sea  
battle, David says:

At last I heard Ja shouting to the survivors in  
the dugouts—they were all quite close to us  
now—offering them their lives if they would sur-  
render. Perry was standing close behind Ja, and  
I knew that this merciful action was prompted,  
perhaps commanded, by the old man; for no  
Pellucidarian would have thought of showing  
leniency to a defeated foe. (*Pellucidar*, 14).

Perhaps the greatest contradiction in Abner Perry's  
personality though, is his penchant to both pray and  
cuss.

Before David and Abner began their journey in the  
Iron Mole, Perry prayed. When the mole controls re-  
fused to respond and they were being carried toward  
what they thought was certain death, David was quite  
sure that Perry would pray again...

...for he never left an opportunity neglected  
when he might sandwich in a prayer. He prayed  
when he arose in the morning, he prayed before  
he ate, he prayed when he had finished eating,  
and before he went to bed at night he prayed  
again. In between he often found excuses to  
pray even when the provocation seemed rather  
far-fetched to my worldly eyes. Now that he was  
about to die I felt positive that I should witness  
a perfect orgy of prayer—if one may allude with  
such a simile to so solemn an act.

But to my astonishment I discovered that  
with death staring him in the face Abner Perry  
was transformed into a new being. From his lips  
there flowed—not prayer—but a clear and lim-  
pid stream of undiluted profanity, and it was all  
directed at the quietly stubborn piece of un-  
yielding mechanism. (*Earth's Core*, 1)

His backwoods minister father had instilled some spiritual values into Abner Perry. He did believe in the value of prayer and in the purpose of God. He told David (*At the Earth's Core*, 5),

"I believe that God sent us here for just that purpose—it shall be my life work to teach them His word—to lead them into the light of His mercy while we are training their hearts and hands in the ways of culture and civilization."

Yet, he could cuss a blue streak. And up through the last book of the series, he was still at it. Said David:

He was almost perpetually good natured; and when he wasn't praying, he was swearing like a trooper... (*Savage Pellucidar*, I:10)

Why this contrast in behavior? We're never told the content of any of Abner's prayers—only that he prayed. But, we might assume that some of those prayers were for forgiveness for times when his temper ruled his mouth.

And since many of his prayers took place at times when he and David were in deadly peril, it might also be assumed that those prayers were for salvation from doom.

Though David Innes referred to himself as a worldly person and to Perry's penchant for praying as a "harmless mania" and a "little idiosyncrasy," perhaps a certain fact was not lost on the younger man: Perry's prayers for deliverance were always answered.



## Love, Commitment Vital to Stone Age Couples

The traditions of love, courtship, engagement and marriage are as varied in Pellucidar as they are in the many cultures of the outer world.

Our first glimpse of an inner world courtship custom comes when Dian the Beautiful tells the reason she is far from her home tribe.

"Jubal the Ugly One placed his trophy before my father's house....It remained there and no greater trophy was placed beside it. So I knew that Jubal the Ugly One would come and take

me as his mate." (*At the Earth's Core*, 4)

She further explained that there was a way out for her. It was permitted that close relatives could discourage suitors. In her case, there were none available or capable of thus intervening, so she had no choice but to flee.

Our second lesson in the Pellucidarian "rites of Spring" comes at the expense of David Innes, who decks Hooja when he determines the Sly One's advances to Dian are unwelcome. Having fought on Dian's behalf, David sees Dian look...

...at me with wide, wondering eyes, and then she dropped her head, her face half averted, and a delicate flush suffused her cheek. Then her head went high and she turned her back upon me. ... Dian's cheek went suddenly from red to white.

From then on, Dian refused to have anything to do with David. Ghak the Hairy One finally explained the situation to this other-worlder:

"When a man of Pellucidar intervenes between another man and the woman the other man would have, the woman belongs to the victor. ... Had you taken her hand, it would have indicated your desire to make her your mate, and had you raised her hand above her head and then dropped it, it would have meant that you did not wish her for a mate and that you released her from all obligation to you. By doing neither you have put upon her the greatest affront that man may put upon a woman. Now she is your slave."

Later, when David has another chance with Dian, he grabs her hand and says

"You are mine."

She rebuffs him, saying,

"I do not believe you, for if you meant it you would have done this when the others were present to witness it—then I should truly have been your mate; now there is no one to see you do it, for you know that without witnesses your act does not bind you to me." (*At the Earth's Core*, 14)

This last pronouncement by Dian, however, was not really a Pellucidarian custom, but Dian's hurt-fueled white lie. Witnesses were not really needed; it was "magic words" that were necessary. Later, when it finally occurred to David to utter those magic words ("I love you," chapter 14), there was no longer any insistence by Dian that witnesses be present. In fact, the presence of others in their "Garden of Eden" at that particular time would have been about as welcome as a serpent.

Perhaps because of Dian's experience with Jubal, and perhaps at her urging, David made one of his official acts as Emperor of Pellucidar to change some of the courtship rules. Hodon notes (*Savage Pellucidar*, I:4) "that David Innes did not approve of the old fashioned method of knocking a lady over the head with a club and dragging her off to one's cave. He had made very strict laws on the subject. Now no man could take a mate without the girl's consent."

Dian had waited for David to declare his love before revealing her own. But as we read on in the Inner World series, we find this is not so in every "land down under."

On the "island of love," Amiocap, is a young woman named Letari who "does not hesitate to reveal what is in her heart" in declaring her affection for Tanar, (*Tanar of Pellucidar*, 4). Says Tanar, whose father, Ghak, is king of Sari,

"The girls of Sari are not like that. They would die rather than reveal their love before

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the man had declared his. But perhaps she is only a child and did not realize what she said."

Snaps Stellara, Tanar's true love:

"A child nothing. She knew perfectly well what she was saying...."

Not all women of Pellucidar insist that a man make some kind of decision after fighting for her. Jana, The Red Flower of Zoram, is rescued from four attackers by Jason Gridley, another out-worlder (*Tarzan at the Earth's Core*, 7), but she apparently doesn't expect him to take her hand afterward and evinces no hostility when he doesn't. She "saves" her temper for later, when she hints to Jason that he loves her and he hesitates just a little too long before replying (*Tarzan at Earth's Core*, 8).

Eventually, Jason tells Jana he does love her and, as in the case of Dian the Beautiful, that declaration is sufficient for her to announce, at the end of the book, that she, too, loves him.

There is a pecking order for marriage among the Mammoth Men, just as there is among many tribes and cultures of the outer surface. It was considered proper that the oldest daughter have a man first. This tribe also practiced polygamy, since a man who wanted a younger daughter had to take the older one(s) along with her if the father insisted (*Back to the Stone Age*, 14). Just like Laban snookered Jacob into marrying his oldest, Leah, before he got Rachel, the one he really wanted (Genesis 29).

If a Mammoth Woman picked a reluctant groom-elect, her father or another champion could fight him. If the champion won, the groom would belong to the woman. (*Back to the Stone Age*, 15)

While placing a grisly hunting trophy at the door of a woman's hut might be comparable to an engage-

ment ring, the actual wedding rite seemed to be far less complicated.

In only one passage in the series do we read of a "marriage ceremony," when David says,

While I was waiting for sleep to come, I overheard a conversation in a nearby hut. A man was speaking, and he was trying to persuade a woman to enter the hut with him, which would have consummated the simple marriage ceremony of the Ruvans... (*Land of Terror*, 25)

If such a marriage "ceremony" was recognized on the outer surface, there would be a lot more "married" folks than there are now. But it is binding and respected in Pellucidar. After David and Dian declare their love, anything more is left to our imagination. But when David is reunited with Perry, he introduces Dian as his wife. (*At the Earth's Core*, 15)

ERB describes a rather unromantic marriage "seal" when the gruesome Grum of the Mammoth Men takes Horg as mate. She begins their wedded bliss by beating the tar out of him.

"You've got to start right with them," she explained. "If you give them the least little toe-hold, you're lost...."

By way of reaction, Von Horst remembers he...

...had known women of the outer crust who were like her. Perhaps their technic [sic] was more refined, but their aim was identical. Marriage to them meant a struggle for supremacy. It was a 50-50-proposition of their own devising—they took fifty and demanded the other fifty. (*Stone Age*, 15)

If marriage ceremony there be in Pellucidar, then it is the simple and honest declaration of love and commitment between man and woman, the same type made by Bowen Tyler and Lys LaRue at the con-

clusion of the novelette about the prehistoric world on the outer surface, *The Land that Time Forgot*.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, for all practical purposes, Tanar and Stellara are married in Chapter 9 of "Tanar" with words as moving and binding as any ever heard in an outer-worldly service:

Before him stood Stellara, her beautiful eyes filled with incredulity and with happiness.

"Tanar!" It was only a whisper, but it carried to him a world of meaning that sent thrill after thrill through his body.

"Stellara!" he cried, as he took the girl in his arms. "Stellara, I love you."

Her soft arms stole around his neck and drew his face to hers. His mouth covered her mouth in a long kiss, and, as she raised his face to look down into hers, from her parted lips burst a single exclamation, "Oh, God!" and from the depth of her half-closed eyes burned a love beyond all understanding.

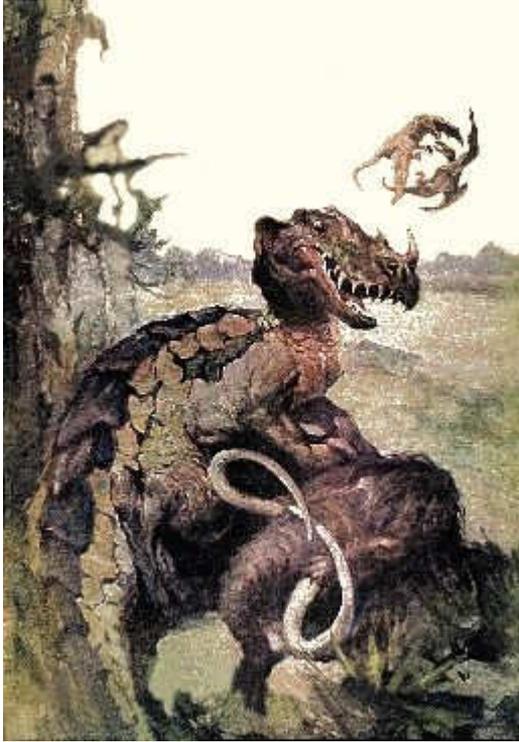
"My mate," he cried, as he pressed her form to him.

"My mate," breathed Stellara, "while life remains in my body and after life, throughout death forever!"

Thus, they pronounced themselves man and wife.

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<sup>5</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, 1942, Society Page: "Bowen Tyler and wife Lys celebrate 25<sup>th</sup>" Remarks: "Married her once on an island and married her again on a ship and I'll marry her again tomorrow!"



## Hints of Tales Untold

Edgar Rice Burroughs loved telling a good story.

But he also loved hinting at a good story, and leaving the tantalizing details to the inadequate imagination of the frustrated reader.

The untold tale probably most famous to ERB fans concerns the mysterious map found by "Tarzan the Untamed" on the body of the dead explorer. What did Tarzan ever do with that map? We never find out.

In the Pellucidar series, there are untold tales as well—hints of other things that did happen, that could happen, that might have happened.

Here are some of those untold tales:

### *The Long Trek Home*

*Tanar of Pellucidar* is an action-packed adventure, but when it finally ends, Tanar and his mate, Stellara, are still a world away from their homeland. The last chapter reports:

The story of their long and arduous journey through unknown lands to the kingdom of Sari would be replete with interest, excitement and adventure, but it is no part of this story.

And so we must forever wonder: What happened? Did they endure capture, enjoy escape, and experience yet other recaptures at the hands of weird races of people, as Von Horst and La-Ja did in *Back to the Stone Age*? How close did they come to death? How many times were they separated? What strange sights did they see? How many sleeps did the journey take? Did they have any children by the time they reached Sari? We'll never know!

### *The Quest for Harbenite*

In the next book of the series, *Tarzan at the Earth's Core*, a lightweight airship must be built to carry the would-be rescuers of David Innes to the inner world, and to build that aircraft a special metal, called Harbenite,<sup>6</sup> must be acquired. ERB writes:

It is not my intention to weary you with a re-

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<sup>6</sup> Obituary from *Manila Times*, August 11, 2001. "Pedro Miguel Sanchez, 93, passed peacefully at home. Well-loved by family and friends, he was known as the Storyman for relating fantastic tales to entertain children of an imaginary airship *Hardantite* which flew over a land of dinosaurs and wild men. Survived by..."

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cial of the details of the organization and equipment of the Pellucidarian expedition, although that portion of it which relates to the search for and discovery of the native mine containing the remarkable metal now known as Harbenite, filled as it was with adventure and excitement, is well worth a volume by itself.

But we don't have that volume on our bookshelves, do we? What dangers confront that expedition? Was it Arab slavers? Fierce cannibals? Tantor in must? Communist plotters? Lost civilizations? Amnesia for Tarzan?

ERB chose to keep us guessing.

### *The March of the Waziri*

In Chapter 3 of *Tarzan at the Earth's Core*, Jason Gridley is separated from the 10 Waziri warriors<sup>7</sup> and Lieutenant Wilhelm Von Horst. What became of Von Horst is told in another book, *Back to the Stone Age*. Of the Waziri's adventures in Pellucidar, however, we do not know much.

A brief update on the lost party is given in *Tarzan at the Earth's Core*-8 and the Waziri finally play a key role in Chapter 15, when they are reunited with Tarzan. But are we to believe that they just had a peaceful stroll through savage Pellucidar until the time when their scent just happened to be wafted to the nostrils of the ape-man?

Nay, for there is no such things as a peaceful walk through the Inner World. We are given only a hint of

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<sup>7</sup> *The Art of Africa* by M. Clayton, 1958. Her research suggests Waziri folk art underwent a change around 1930. Interviews with native craftsmen indicated a group known as Ten-With-Stories were the influence. She was unable to locate or interview any of the Ten-With-Stories.

their adventures when Tarzan asks them if they still have plenty of ammo for their rifles, and they reply,

"We have saved it, Bwana, using our spears and our arrows whenever we could."

That indicates there were times when the Waziri had to resort to their rifles, because they faced an enemy that could not be easily discouraged with the lighter weapons. So, they had adventures in Pellucidar. We just don't know what those adventures were.

A story about the Waziri could also clear up some mysteries for us. In *Tarzan at the Earth's Core-3*, the Waziri drop their rifles in panic while fleeing the charge of the great carnivorous cats. In *Tarzan at the Earth's Core-8*, we read "they had never again been able to locate the clearing" where the rifles lay. Yet, when Tarzan encounters the Waziri, they have their rifles with them! Obviously, between Chapters 8 and 15, the Waziri must have gotten turned around again (something that is easy to do in Pellucidar) and by chance ended up back at the clearing where their rifles lay. Then, after cleaning



the rifles, they somehow wandered around until coming back to the Gyor Cors and the rendezvous with Tarzan. It sounds improbable, perhaps, and yet, are not ALL of the adventures in Pellucidar improbable? That is what makes them such great stories!

Another thing a Waziri story could do is shed just a little more light on what happened to Von Horst. The German is with the blacks in *Tarzan at the Earth's Core-8*; yet, as *Back to the Stone Age* begins, it appears that Von Horst spends only a short amount of time with the Waziri, before becoming separated from them. That's the key word: time. What seems like a short time to us could, in Pellucidar, be enough time for Von Horst to go clear to *Tarzan at the Earth's Core-8* before splitting.<sup>8</sup>

As a footnote, one might observe that *Back to the Stone Age* is the only Edgar Rice Burroughs book that features the Waziri, however briefly, without Tarzan or Jane.

### *The 'Ana' Sisters?*<sup>9</sup>

In *Tarzan at the Earth's Core*, chapter 7, we learn that Jana, The Red Flower of Zoram, had a sister, Lana, who had been stolen as a mate from the Mountains of the Thipdars by men of the lowlands. We never learn any more about poor Lana.

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<sup>8</sup> [However, a more likely reason for the Von Horst discrepancy could simply have been ERB using literary license. *Back to the Stone Age* was about Von Horst—not Von Horst and the Waziri. So, in writing *BSA*, ERB probably just simply and deliberately glossed over the time Von Horst and the Africans had spent together.]

<sup>9</sup> Edgar Rice Burroughs, early in his career as chronicler of extraordinary people and events (see *Tarzan of the Apes*, 1912, *All Story*, October issue), declared the names were changed to protect identities. Jason Gridley observed, in 1952, two years after ERB's death, that Burroughs was running on "name strain" in an effort to keep identities secret. The "Ana Sisters" speculation, he believed, was a result of too many notes, too many stories, too many who needed protection.

In *Land of Terror*, we meet Zor of Zoram, who "had been very much in love with a girl of Zoram, who one day wandered too far from the village and was picked up by a party of raiders from another country." (*Land of Terror-4*) The girl's name, we learn a few pages later, was Rana.

Jana and Lana of Zoram were sisters. Could Rana have been a third sister? Perhaps names ending in "ana" were popular among Zoram families and maybe the tribe had its share of girls named Dana, Elana, Shana, Vanna and Hanna. Then again, maybe it was just Jana and Lana's mom and dad who were partial to the rhyming names. But we don't really know. We don't know if the three girls were sisters, or even triplets. One argument for a family tie, other than the names, is that all three tended to roam too far from home. Lana and Rana were captured and never heard from again, and Jana was almost captured.

From what we know of the fighting spunk and spirit of Jana, though, it'd make a good story to hear of what befell these other two lovelies, and how miserable they made the lives of their captors.

### *David's Second Return to the Outer Crust*

We all know that David Innes and Abner Perry first came to Pellucidar in Perry's invention, the Iron Mole, about 1902. We also know that David made a return trip to the outer crust, then back to the inner World, about 1912 or thereabouts.

But in the opening lines of *Savage Pellucidar* we read of another trip. David says,

When I went back to the outer crust after the Great War that ended in 1918, I heard a lot about the use of aeroplanes in war... .

That's all we know about that trip: The time. Questions abound. Why did he go back? What did he bring back with him? How did he make the trip? The answer to the last question seems obvious; in 1918, the polar opening had not yet been discovered by David (that came around 1929 in *Tanar of Pellucidar*) and it wasn't until *Savage Pellucidar*, the last book of the series, that Perry began tinkering with planes and balloons which might eventually have negotiated such an opening. So, the only conveyance we know of that was available to David was the Iron Mole.

If I was David Innes, I would have thought long and hard about taking another chance in the mole. They were lucky on the first trip (down) to come out on Pellucidar's dry land, rather than at the bottom of one of its oceans. When David made the return trip to the outer crust at the conclusion of *At the Earth's Core*, they pointed the prospector straight back the way it had come, so he would end up in Connecticut. But we read:

...on the instant of departure I was nearly thrown from my seat by the sudden lurching of the prospector. At first I did not realize what had happened, but presently it dawned upon me that just before entering the crust the towering body had fallen through its supporting scaffolding, and that instead of entering the ground vertically we were plunging into it at a different angle. Where it would bring us out upon the upper crust I could not even conjecture. (*Earth's Core*, 15)

Fortunately, the angle of entry was sufficient to bring the mole up in the Sahara Desert, rather than at the bottom of the Atlantic or the Mediterranean Sea.

(Note: The *Titanic* sank in 1912. With good timing and a little less luck, David coming up could have met the *Titanic* on its way down!).

David was fortunate again on his return trip to the Inner World. He came up on land—not in an ocean!

No matter how strong the scaffolding and how good the calculations about where the mole might emerge on its 1918 trip, there had to be a terrific element of danger in such a trip. Therefore, there must have been an extremely important reason to risk such a trip. What was that reason? Where did the mole come out upon the outer crust? On his first return trip to the outside, David had intended to take Dian the Beautiful along, but was thwarted. Did he take her along this time? If so, what did she think of the outer crust? Was she kidnapped by a thug and had a need to be rescued by David while there? Where did they come out when they returned to Pellucidar? What problems did they encounter getting back to Sari? There are answers to these questions, but we do not know what these answers are. It's another untold tale of Pellucidar.

### *Voyage to the Dead World*

This isn't fully an "untold tale" because a tale of the Dead World was told in the short story, "Back to the Earth's Core," by William Gilmour in *Burroughs Bulletin* #21, and another concept of the Dead World was explored by F. Paul Wilson in "The Dead World," a story in the anthology volume, "Worlds of Edgar Rice Burroughs," and perhaps by other pastiche writers as well.<sup>10</sup>

But we'd like to know what ERB would have had to say about it had he ever written of it.

The Dead World is the satellite to Pellucidar's eter-

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<sup>10</sup> *Moon Maid at the Earth's Core* by Andy Nunez is a complete novel available at [erblast.com](http://erblast.com)'s Fan Fiction section.

nal noonday sun. It has a fixed orbit and thus always darkens the same circle of land a mile below, a country known as The Land of Awful Shadow.<sup>11</sup>

The Dead World itself rotates on its axis<sup>12</sup>, and David Innes uses its rotation as a clock for the first time in "Pellucidar," Chapter 12:

I pointed to a great lake upon the surface of the pendent world above us, telling him that if after this lake had appeared four times I had not returned to go either by water or land to Sari and fetch Ghak with an army.

Yes, there are lakes, and more, on this world.

I could see its mountains and valleys, oceans, lakes, and rivers, its broad, grassy plains and dense forests. (*Pellucidar-6*)

And David and Dian both thought about going there:

Above us the pendent world revolved upon its axis, filling me especially—and Dian to an almost equal state—with wonder and insatiable curiosity as to what strange forms of life existed among the hills and valleys and along the seas and rivers, which we could plainly see. (*Pellucidar-11*)

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<sup>11</sup> The "Awful Shadow" is merely less bright than the surrounding area. At one mile above Pellucidar the atmospheric diffusion of sunlight would be no greater than a half-eclipse of the sun by the Earth's moon at midday and further illuminated by ground reflection from the curved inner surface. The diameter of the Dead World is unknown but celestial mechanics dictates that body would be small (Innes said "tiny") and of very low density to remain suspended above the gravity attraction of the earth's crust, off-set by the attraction of the inner sun.

<sup>12</sup> The axis is parallel to the surface, thus if standing below the moon, neither pole is visible while the rotation is fully visible.

How would they ever get to that mysterious land in the sky? Two possibilities present themselves in *Savage Pellucidar*: Airplane or balloon!

Perry invents an airplane in *Savage Pellucidar*, but it taxis backward and he tries his luck at a balloon instead. The balloon is more successful, and daring Dian goes for the first ride. The balloon becomes untethered and Dian is carried along at the mercy of the winds. Her voyage takes her over The Land of Awful Shadow, and beneath the Dead World which creates that shadow. Obviously, Perry's first attempt at a balloon was not capable of great altitudes, but he was known to constantly work at improving his inventions. So, perhaps later, he invented a serviceable and sturdy airplane, or a better gas-filled balloon.

Could a balloon have reached the Dead World?  
Easily.

Modern balloons have reached altitudes in excess of 20,000 feet many times. And a mile, the distance the Dead World orbits above the surface of Pellucidar, is just 5,280 feet. Once Perry had perfected a bigger and better balloon, it would have been simple to float up to the Dead World and, with a balloon, one wouldn't even have to look for a landing strip.

So, the voyage to the Dead World is one of the great Pellucidar tales that ERB never lived to tell.

Yet, there is perhaps another untold tale even beyond that. Is the Dead World, we might wonder, hollow, like the interior of the earth? If so, we can only dream of what Edgar Rice Burroughs might have had to say in the never-written tale: "At the Dead World's Core."



## First Impressions Sometimes Proven Wrong

### *1. The Homing Instinct*

David Innes, in the first two Pellucidar books, spoke authoritatively on many subjects about the Inner World.

But by the time he communicated with Jason Gridley to narrate the sixth book, *Land of Terror*, he had to admit that he had not always known what he was talking about.

In Chapter 19 of *Land of Terror*, for instance, he says,

I assumed, for instance, that those things which came within the range of my experience were typical of all Pellucidar. I assumed, for instance, that the Mahars ... were dominant throughout the entire area of Pellucidar; but now I realize that I do not know this, for the land area of Pellucidar is enormous, and I had seen only a very tiny portion of it.

Likewise my assertion that three-quarters of the surface of Pellucidar is land, giving a total land area considerably greater than that of the outer crust, was based solely upon Perry's theory that depressions upon the outer crust were protuberances upon the inner crust; so that the land areas in Pellucidar corresponded roughly with the oceans of the outer world; but of course that is only a theory, and I do not know that it is true.

However, Perry's ideas were based on more than a theory. He was actually looking at a Mahar map (*At the Earth's Core*, 5) when he was talking to David about the area of the inner world. It's possible that he may not have understood the map properly, being new to Pellucidar.

But it is true, as David admitted, that there are many statements, ideas or concepts put forth in the earlier Pellucidar books which just couldn't stand the test of "time." And although the last two Pellucidar books have sometimes been referred to as literary midgets, as potboilers, we can be thankful to those two volumes, and to passages in some of the mid-series books, for straightening us out on a few things about Pellucidar.

Some of these things (and there may be others) are the Pellucidarian homing instinct,<sup>13</sup> bows and arrows,

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<sup>13</sup> Jason Gridley quipped "homing pigeon blood" when reporters shouted questions at his last public appearance at the Interna-

domestic animals, money, language and fire.

One of the most fascinating aspects of life in Pellucidar is the homing instinct, possessed by every native Pellucidarian. On the outer surface even a man without instruments can figure out how to find his way about by following the movements of the sun and stars. But in Pellucidar, with a stationary sun and no stars, Perry wondered how the dwellers knew where they were going. Ghak the Hairy One replied that any Pellucidarian, blindfolded and carried to a far land, could find his way home again unerringly by the shortest route. Perry dubbed it a "homing instinct," similar to that possessed by certain pigeons and even some animals of the outer surface. (*At the Earth's Core*, 5)

In subsequent books, we are given more information on the characteristics of this instinct:

Mountains, rivers, and seas may have to be gone around, but never once does his sense of direction fail him—the homing instinct is supreme. In the same remarkable way, they never forget the location of any place to which they have ever been, and know that of many of which they have only heard from others who have visited them. In short, each Pellucidarian is a walking geography of his own district and of much of the country contiguous thereto. (*Pellucidar*, 4)

In *Tanar of Pellucidar*, we find that the homing instinct is also a homing "urge." Stranded on the island of Amiocap, we read of Tanar in Chapter 3,

To this primitive mountaineer it seemed little short of hopeless even to dream of returning to his native land, for the sea appalled him, nor did he have any conception as to how he might

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tional Radio and Communication Exhibition, Waikiki, Honolulu, 1953.

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set a course across its savage bosom, or navigate any craft that he might later find at his disposal; yet so powerful is the homing instinct in the Pellucidarians that there was no doubt in his mind that so long as he lived he would always be searching for a way back to Sari.

In *Tanar of Pellucidar* 15, ERB tells how Pellucidarians use their fingers as a sort of direction finder to help point the way to places other than their own home. Using the method he describes,

...A Sarian pointing in the direction of The Land of Awful Shadow would say that he was traveling two left fingers from Sari, since the middle finger of the left hand would be pointing about due south toward The Land of Awful Shadow.

In both *Tarzan at the Earth's Core* (Chapter 6) and *Back to the Stone Age* (Chapter 4) we learn that the homing instinct is possessed by all animals of Pellucidar, as well as by humans.

Now all of this is "progressive revelation," as each book adds to our store of knowledge. But in the last two books, the knowledge gets downright contradictory! For in the earlier books we are told that the homing instinct does not work if the Pellucidarian is at sea, but only if he is on dry land. In the last two books, the instinct works everywhere!

David Innes becomes aware of this "water hazard" in *Pellucidar*, Chapter 12, when he, Dian and Jaug are attempting to return to the mainland by boat. David suggests that they steer simply by allowing Dian, with her homing instinct, to point the way to Amoz. Sadly, Dian replies,

"We could do all this upon land. But upon the water that power is denied us. I do not know why; but I have always heard that this is true—that only upon the water may a Pellucidarian be

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lost. This is, I think, why we all fear the great ocean so—even those who go upon its surface in canoes. Jaug has told us that they never go beyond the sight of land.”

In “Tanar,” Chapter 4, we read something similar:

Tanar moved always in one direction and his homing instinct assured him that the direction lay toward Sari. As far as land went he could move unerringly toward the spot in Pellucidar where he was born. Every Pellucidarian can do that, but put them on the water, out of sight of land, and that instinct leaves them and they have no more conception of direction than would you or I if we were transported suddenly to a land where there are no points of compass, since the sun hangs perpetually at zenith and there is no moon and no stars.

Since there is a Pellucidarian moon, however, Tanar might have referred to instances where someone was on the far side of the sun and could not ascertain where the moon was, due to it being obscured either by the sun itself or by the brightness thereof.

But when we come to *Land of Terror*, it's necessary to throw out all that previous conventional wisdom on the homing instinct and water.

First, we have U-Val, a resident of The Floating Islands. Even though the islands move about, U-Val says of his particular island:

“I will always know where Ruva lies, no matter where it is. I do not know how. I simply know.” (*Land of Terror*, 21)

In the last chapter of *Land of Terror*, we find out that Lu-Bra and Dian the Beautiful, on separate ocean journeys, are both able to find their way back home by the aid of the homing instinct.

In *Savage Pellucidar* (I:11) the Mezops are using their homing instinct instead of Perry's rustic naviga-

tional aids, and in II:4, a man of Amoz (Dian's home tribe) is the compass at sea.

The easy way out of this would be simply to say that ERB forgot what he had written earlier. After all, several years had elapsed since he had last written of Pellucidar.

But other explanations are possible. Here are three:

1. Since ERB promotes various theories of evolution in this and other series, we could just say that evolution speeded up for awhile and that the homing instinct "evolved" to enable the Pellucidarians to use it upon the sea.

2. We could say that the homing instinct is really a skill, and that, as the advent of David's empire brought about more sea travel, they learned how to make their instinct work at sea.

3. My favorite solution to the problem: They had the ability all along, but just didn't realize it! After all, they were superstitious to a degree. They believed that Pellucidar floated upon a sea of fire. They were afraid of going out too far onto the ocean for fear of falling off the edge. Could not this fear have fostered the notion that their homing instinct would fail them upon the sea? In the boat with Jaug and David in *Pellucidar*, Dian apparently doesn't even try to exercise her instinct; she just says she has heard it isn't possible. Also, most Pellu-



cidarians didn't have much experience at sea, so they wouldn't have had much opportunity to prove the theory one way or the other. *Tanar of Pellucidar* is narrated by Abner Perry, so the mention there of the homing instinct's failure on water may simply be him repeating what he has been led to believe.

But as they traveled more and more on the oceans, they eventually began to realize that their homing instinct worked just as well there. And thus, they began to use it.

## 2. Bows and Arrows

While prisoners of the Mahars,

Perry conceived the idea of making bows and arrows, weapons apparently unknown in Pellucidar. (*At the Earth's Core*, 5).

This proved a very popular new weapon in the Empire of Pellucidar where it was, apparently, not known. David refined this weapon by making poison arrows when he came across a nest of vipers in "The Garden of Eden." (*At the Earth's Core*, 14). Much later, David ingratiated himself with the tribe of Ruva by tying a cord to his arrows and shooting fish for the people (*Land of Terror*, 23).

But beyond the Sari-based empire, we learn in *Savage Pellucidar*, there are other peoples who have fashioned bows and arrows without David's help. These are the men of Lolo-Lolo and Tanga-Tanga, the men who have advanced beyond "cave man" stage to the bronze age. (*Savage Pellucidar-II:4*)

Another previously unheard of tribe which uses the bow and arrow is the tribe of Zurk the Zurt, who tries to use the weapon to shoot O-aa's jalok (*Savage Pellucidar*, 4:9), but whether these tribesmen developed

the weapon on their own or whether they got the idea from another tribe, which may have in turn gotten it from the empire, we aren't told.

### 3. *Domestic Animals*

In *Pellucidar*, chapter 7, David saves a hyaenodon from drowning and it becomes his friend. "I had a dog!" David exclaimed.<sup>14</sup>

I had never guessed precisely what it was that was lacking in life in Pellucidar, but now I knew that it was the total absence of domestic animals. Man here had not yet reached the point where he might take the time from slaughter and escaping slaughter to make friends with any of the brute creation.

So there, David made another assumption. This time, immediately, he began to clarify it, for in the very next sentence, as if suddenly remembering something, he says,

I must qualify this statement a trifle and say that this was true of those tribes with which I was most familiar. The Thurians do domesticate the colossal lidi, traversing the great Lidi Plains upon the backs of these grotesque and stupendous monsters, and possibly there may also be other, far-distant peoples within this great world, who have tamed others of the wild things of jungle, plain or mountain.

While it is a bit of a stretch to refer to Horibs as people, these repulsive creations from *Tarzan at the*

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<sup>14</sup> Innes described the creature as similar in size to a Shetland pony and walking with his hand upon the creature's nape. Hyaenodon fossils bear this out as having shoulder heights between 12 and 48 inches and weights between 11 pounds to 1,100 pounds for the largest specimens. Innes' new "puppy" was probably 80 pounds and all jaws.

*Earth's Core*, do, at least, have an intelligence capable of domesticating another species. Their mounts are the Gorobors, swift, giant lizard-like creatures.

*Back to the Stone Age* gives us the Mammoth Men, a tribe which captures and trains the fierce, tusked creatures as riding mounts. Von Horst, the hero of the book, acquires a mammoth himself, though through no special skill. He simply rescues the animal from a trap and it follows him around for awhile like an over-size dog and proves a good creature to have on your side in danger-fraught Pellucidar.

In *Savage Pellucidar* are two groups of people who domesticate animals.

On the island of Tandar is a tribe which has tame tarags<sup>15</sup> (saber-toothed tigers) hanging around. Dian the Beautiful, a temporary prisoner, befriends some of these animals by sneaking them extra pieces of meat. When she escapes, the tarags assist her, setting the stage for a great Frazetta image! A rival tribe on the island trains the taho, a prehistoric lion (*Savage Pellucidar* III)

Also in *Savage Pellucidar*, O-aa makes friends with a jalok<sup>16</sup> (IV-4) which turns out to have been domesticated by the Zurt tribe (IV-6)

#### 4. *The Allure of Money*

David Innes and Abner Perry assumed money was unknown in Pellucidar and, in a noble effort, they were determined that it would stay that way. In "Pellucidar," Chapter 15, we read:

There is no money, nor is any money value placed upon any commodity. Perry and I were

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<sup>15</sup> Smilodon

<sup>16</sup> Hyaenadon

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as one in resolving that the root of all evil should not be introduced into Pellucidar while we lived.

He went on to explain the Pellucidar system of trade. Our two heroes get an "A" for effort, but the money part of civilization had, alas, already infiltrated into the inner world, a fact they were to learn later.

Taken as captives by the Korsars and ordered to build them better weapons, David and Ja were, instead, trying to figure out a way to escape. In *Tanar of Pellucidar*, Chapter 14, it says,

By the order of The Cid, Fitt had furnished his three prisoners with ample funds in the money of Korsar that they might make necessary purchases in the prosecution of their investigation and their experiments.

The money, which consisted of gold coins of various sizes and weights, was crudely stamped upon one side with what purported to be a likeness of The Cid, and upon the other with a Korsar ship. For so long a time had gold coin been the medium of exchange in Korsar and the surrounding country that it was accepted by the natives of even remote villages and tribes, so that David had little difficulty in engaging the services of eight carriers and their two hampers to carry equipment... .

So it wasn't simply a matter that the Korsars, who had moved from the outer world to the inner to settle, had brought along the concept of money, but it was taking hold with some of the primitive tribes of Pellucidar as well.

In *Savage Pellucidar*, we find money has found its way into the economy of the Bronze Age men, who not only have developed an eight-sided coin, but have invented a religion as well, since so often the love of

money and false religion seems to go together. (*Savage Pellucidar*, II:5)<sup>17</sup>



### 5. Languages

In a series of articles on "Assumptions in Pellucidar," I've been talking about conclusions made in early books that were proven wrong later. But in this case, we have a statement in a later book that was proven wrong earlier! So, David Innes was apparently assuming that his memory was correct about languages, when it wasn't!

In the sixth volume of the seven-book series, "Land of Terror," Chapter 2, David says of his captors:

I could easily understand them, as they spoke the language that is common to all human beings in Pellucidar, insofar as I know, for I have never heard another. Why all races and

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<sup>17</sup> Found in the company safe, years after his death in 1950, notes collected by Edgar Rice Burroughs which were sent by Abner Perry and never included in any of the "novels", was a seven page abstract from Perry regarding the creation of the Bank of Sari. As this fiduciary information had no bearing on the travelogue ERB produced regarding named participants, it was not utilized in the reporting.

tribes, no matter how far separated, speak this one language, I do not know. It has always been a mystery to both Perry and myself. Perry suggests that it may be a basic, primitive language that people living in the same environment with identical problems and surroundings would naturally develop to express their thoughts. Perhaps he is right—I do not know; but it is as good an explanation as any.

David may be speaking here of strictly human language. We know that Sagoths speak a pidgin form of the Pellucidarian language and also speak the language of the great apes, among whom Tarzan grew up on the outer surface. There are also sabertooth men who are not fully human who speak a language all their own (*Savage Pellucidar*, I:47)

But David was forgetful when he claimed to have never heard another human language. When he first encountered Ja the Mezop as he attempted to steal Ja's canoe, he ended up saving Ja from a denizen of the deep. This turn of events was to form a friendship that was to last from then on, but the hurdle of language had to be overcome first.

In *At the Earth's Core*, Chapter 8, David says of Ja, "Presently he spoke to me, but in a tongue which I was unable to translate." David then tried the pidgin tongue of the Sagoths and Ja understood that, so they conversed.

But Ja did not understand the language of the men of Sari and Amoz, which was the first language David would have tried. Why these Mezops, who lived so close to these two cities, would not have gotten some familiarity with it over the years, is a mystery.

Since Ja and the Mezop tribes were to become the naval arm of David's empire, they must have had to do a lot of studying to pick up on the language that everybody else in Pellucidar spoke. Their situation

might be compared with that of natives in the Americas, who have their own tribal dialects but who today all mainly speak English as their everyday language.

Another curiosity, language-wise, is that the Korsars, who came from the outer crust, apparently adopted native Pellucidarian as their official language at some point. No communication problems seemed to exist between Korsars and their legions of enemies. Most groups tend to proudly and tightly hang onto their native language as a part of their heritage and culture, but obviously, in Pellucidar, whole groups made exceptions to that tradition just to be better understood by their friends and their enemies.<sup>18</sup>

## 6. *Flames of the Inner World*

David Innes never makes the assumption that fire is unknown to Pellucidarians, but he does make note that during his early adventures there is no fire to be found.

And perhaps the reader is the one who might make the assumption that fire is yet unknown to these people, and that David will have to be their Prometheus along with all the other hats he is wearing.

Such is not the case, however. Fire is well-known and widely used on Pellucidar. It's just that we have to get a ways into the series before we find this out.

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<sup>18</sup> "Deconstructing Babel, An Observation of Language and Meaning", Dmitri Valadasnikov, 1924, Professor Society of Aboriginal Studies Moscow. Valadasnikov, by exhaustive study, shows that human language has a common root structure and "convenience and society" is more important for instilling one "choice of structure" over another as why there are so many different languages. Only in the most primitive dialects are the "abstracts" and "future/past tense" unavailable.

After arriving in Pellucidar and being taken prisoner, David and Abner are led into the Mahar cavern, and David notes:

We had seen no artificial light or sign of fire since we had entered Pellucidar...I marveled that they had no means of lighting their way through these dark, subterranean passages. (*At the Earth's Core*, 4)

In *At the Earth's Core*-14, we find David, on his own, still without fire in Pellucidar as he has a "meal of raw meat, to which I had now become quite accustomed."

Finally, in the last chapter of *At the Earth's Core*, we learn that fire must have been available, because Perry fails "to produce a gunpowder that would even burn."

One thing David made sure of when he went back to the outer crust was to bring back some dry matches. In "Pellucidar," Chapter 1, David says,

I also strapped a considerable quantity of ammunition across my shoulders, pocketed some matches, and hooked an aluminum frypan and a small stew-kettle of the same metal to my belt.

In Chapter 3, Perry builds a fire, then used an ember to touch off some experimental gunpowder. The "gunpowder" extinguished the ember!

But if we are still thinking that the only fire in Pellucidar comes when David or Abner are present, that notion is put to rest in the following books when the floodgates of fire open and we find out that everybody has had it all along. There are many examples, but here are just a few:

Amiocapans plan to burn Tanar and Stellara at the stake (*Tanar of Pellucidar*, 4)

Tanar makes fire by the primitive method of rapidly revolving a sharpened stick in a tinder-filled hole in a large piece of dry wood. (Tanar of Pellucidar, 5)

Thoar makes fire by the primitive expedient of friction. (*Tarzan at the Earth's Core*, 6)

La-Ja has firestones (*Back to the Stone Age*, 9) and uses it to make torches.

The Bison Men use fire, but their slaves build it for them (*Back to the Stone Age*, 20).

Women warriors of Oog do what David had never seen before or since in Pellucidar.

They lighted torches, made of what I afterward learned to be a resinous reed, and hurled them among us. These torches gave off volumes of acrid black smoke that blinded and choked us. (*Land of Terror*, 2)

O-aa makes fire, but we're not told how. (*Savage Pellucidar*, IV:6)

So David didn't have to spend time teaching people how to start fires; but he did have to put a few out.

## That Huge Polar Opening

In the latter half of the 19th Century, *Steele's Science*, "New Descriptive Astronomy," copyright 1869 and 1884, one will find on page 154 in the chapter on Mars, under the heading "Telescopic Features," the simple statement, "No mountains have yet been discovered."

In 1877, Giovanni Schiaparelli discovered the canals on Mars and he is credited with finding "high" features on Mars late in the 19th century, although a superficial search does not turn up an exact year. It appears, though, that the discovery must have come just a few years after *Steele's Science* book was published, or perhaps even before, although—the internet

not being available in those days—Steele simply may not have gotten the news before his book went to press.

But there's a logical reason why Steele himself, as well as others, may have looked through a telescope directly at—and yet not seen—what came to be known as Olympus Mons, which spreads out as widely as the state of Missouri and is three times taller than Mount Everest. It was simply so large that one could look right at it and not realize what they were looking at.

This is the same principle that Edgar Rice Burroughs noted in describing the North Pole opening to Pellucidar.

In *Tarzan at the Earth's Core*, Jason Gridley explains to Tarzan that the polar opening:

...is so large that a ship, dirigible, or an airplane could dip down into it a short distance and return without ever being aware of the fact... .

Nowadays, of course, thanks to observation by better telescopes and various space probes, we have done a better job of exploring Olympus Mons and know much more of it, and its great size. It is too bad that we are so obsessed with exploring worlds millions of miles away that we have forgotten that we still have a world of our own which has not yet been fully explored. For a smidgen of the amount of money spent shooting satellites into space, we probably could have undertaken an effort that would have adequately found and mapped the polar opening to Pellucidar by now.

I share this observation with you in the world of Edgar Rice Burroughs only because of its interest but in no way am I advocating that we write letters to our government requesting a search for and study of the polar opening. For we know that, as Burroughs him-

self pointed out in another of his anthropological tomes on events taking place among various cultures on the face of our globe, that men from the civilized portions of the upper crust, given the opportunity to explore new lands, would only bring, along with the refining influence of civilization,

...imperial conquest, trained mercenaries and abhorrent diseases. (1)

And looking beyond Burroughs, how long would it be before Pellucidar would be ravaged with such things as income and sales taxes, high-cost cable TV with a poor selection of channels, and its own NFL franchises with accompanying merchandising?

So, yes, spend the money exploring the stars and planets. Pellucidar is well enough left alone.

## Exotic Flowers of the Earth's Core

While writing of courageous adventurers and fearsome monsters in the inner world, Edgar Rice Burroughs paused along the way to appreciate its beauty, as passed on to him by the narrators of the stories he recorded.

In the first book, he described

...the gorgeous flowering grass of the inner world, each particular blade of which is tipped with a tiny, five-pointed blossom—brilliant little stars of varying colors that twinkle in the green foliage to add still another charm to the weird, yet lovely, landscape. (*At the Earth's Core*, 7)

Flowery writing? Yes. But I believe ERB topped himself in *Savage Pellucidar* (I:6) when he wrote a sentence that is as descriptively clever as any ever penned by any great writer anywhere:

"Great sprays of orchids trailed down the

Pondering Pellucidar – John “Bridge” Martin  
Edgardemain, an <http://www.erblast.com> column

rocky face of the cliff, gorgeous corsages pinned  
to the breast of the mountain."

One of the most intriguing descriptions of a flower  
ever to grace the pages of an ERB book, though, came  
in *Tarzan at the Earth's Core*, Chapter 7, when he de-  
scribed this beauty of Pellucidar:



Her single, soft garment made from the pelt  
of tarag cubs, whipped about her naked legs,  
half revealing, half concealing the rounded  
charms of her girlish figure. The noonday sun  
shone down upon her light, bronzed skin, glis-  
tening from the naked contours of a perfect  
shoulder and imparting golden glints to her hair  
that was sometimes a lustrous brown and again  
a copper bronze. It was piled loosely upon her  
head and held in place by slender, hollow bones  
of the dimorphodon, a little long-tailed cousin  
of the thipdar. The upper ends of these bone  
pins were ornamented with carving and some of  
them were colored. A fillet of soft skin orna-  
mented in colors encircled her brow and she  
wore bracelets and anklets made of the verte-  
brae of small animals, strung upon leather  
thongs. These, too, were carved and colored.  
Upon her feet were stout, little sandals, soled  
with the hide of the mastodon and from the center  
of her headband rose a single feather. At her  
hip was a stone knife and in her right hand a  
light spear.

Such was Jana, The Red Flower of Zoram.

### *Ode to Some of the Women of Pellucidar*

Not every gal in Pellucidar was a classic beauty such as Dian or The Red Flower of Zoram. It had its share of homely women, and they seemed to have names to match:

I don't want to romance Rhump,  
Nor spoon with Sloo, nor nuzzle Shrud;  
Nor listen to a fugue with Fooge,  
Or watch Grum chew, as on a cud;  
And poor ol' Gluck is outa luck,  
Don't want these gals; their names are mud.

### Night in the Inner World

Is there such a thing as day and night in the Inner World? Yes.

Is there such a thing as day and night in Pellucidar? Depends on your definition of Pellucidar. Pellucidar is the name given to the Inner World which curves ever upward on the inside of our globe, 500 miles below our surface. The name Pellucidar comes from the English word "pellucid," which means "translucently clear." It's a good name for the land which is lit at all times by the eternal noonday sun at the true center of the earth.

This sun happens to have a moon-like satellite, and it is not called by the name of Pellucidar but by the name of "Dead World." This moon rotates on an axis, so that the side facing the Pellucidarian sun is experiencing day while the side facing Pellucidar below is having "night."

David Innes, getting his first real look at the Dead World in "Pellucidar," noted, "As I watched it, I saw that it was revolving upon an axis that lay parallel to the surface of Pellucidar, so that during each revolu-

tion its entire surface was once exposed to the world below and once bathed in the heat of the great sun above. The little world had that which Pellucidar could not have -- a day and night and -- greatest of boons to one outer-earthly born -- time."

The "Dead World" had mountains, rivers and forests just like Pellucidar below it and the outer surface beyond that. But ERB never wrote of any flight undertaken by denizens of Pellucidar to attempt to explore the world above, although its bottom side was always only about a mile above Pellucidar itself. Thus, it never became known whether the "Dead" World was actually populated by any living creatures which could experience the regimentation of night and day cycles.

ERB reports that Pellucidar itself is a timeless land because no one can keep track of time, the sun always positioned at "noon." For awhile, Abner Perry and David Innes used the Dead World, also referred to as "The Pendent World," as a timepiece, announcing the completion of a time cycle each time a certain landmark on the Dead World completed a rotation. However, the people of Pellucidar were happier with timelessness, so after the invention of time proved unpopular, the whole idea was scrapped.

### *References of Night*

Because Pellucidar is lit by an eternal noonday sun, which hangs in the exact center of the Earth and lights up the landscape on the concave side of our planet, there is no such thing as night.

Or is there?

There are at least two references in the Pellucidar series which mention night, something which is impossible on Pellucidar. Are these simply the result of a

slip of ERB's pen, or is there some reason to believe the references are exactly as reported?

In neither case does ERB himself report that there is such a thing as night falling; rather, the references are both contained in quotes by people in the Inner World.



The first comes in the second book of the series, *Pellucidar*. David Innes's search for his lovely mate, Dian the Beautiful, takes him to The Land of Awful Shadow, the shady part of Pellucidar which lies di-

rectly below the Pellucidarian moon, known alternately as either the Dead World or the Pendent World. It hangs a mile above the surface of Pellucidar and in an orbit synchronized with the movement of the Earth so that it always casts a shadow over the same landscape below.

The shadow covers a large area, for in The Land of Awful Shadow are seas, islands and various villages and peoples. When David first enters the vicinity of the land, he states,

"However, when the river led me to the sea, or rather just before it reached the sea, of a sudden the sky became overcast and the size and luxuriance of the vegetation diminished as by magic -- as if an omnipotent hand had drawn a line upon the earth, and said: 'Upon this side shall the trees and the shrubs, the grasses and the flowers, riot in profusion of rich colors, gigantic size and bewildering abundance; and upon that side shall they be dwarfed and pale and scant.'"

Even though the land is in shadow, there is still enough light available, perhaps coming in from the lighted areas circling the shadow, to allow people to see. On his trek, David is spotted by a lad from a village who, obviously, can see him.

"The youth who had seen us was evidently of the Thurians. That he had lost no time in racing homeward and spreading the word of my coming was evidenced when we had come within sight of the clearing, and the village -- the first real village, by the way, that I had ever seen constructed by human Pellucidarians." (*Pellucidar*, chapter VII, "Plight to Plight.")

A couple of pages later, David says,

As we came in sight of the warriors the men set up a great jabbering. Their eyes were wide in

astonishment.. .

So, we have several references to seeing. The youth saw; David came within sight of the clearing, David saw the village, and came "in sight" of the warriors, whose "eyes were wide." A whole lot of seeing going on in the Land of Awful Shadow.

That is easily explained because just as we on the outer surface can see in shady areas, so could the Pellucidarians.

One reference, though, is puzzling. As David describes a village, he says,

There was no gate. Ladders that could be removed by night led over the palisade.

But David! What are you saying? There is no night in Pellucidar!

We can, perhaps, easily explain this seeming contradiction simply by attributing it to an erroneous assumption and forgetfulness on David's part. He was a man of the outer surface and accustomed to night and day. When he saw that the ladders were not permanently fixed, his first thought may have been that they pulled them up at night. A more accurate assumption would have been that they pulled them up when enemies attacked.

### *Night in Pellucidar?*

We've seen that there is real night and day on the Dead World which orbits above Pellucidar, and we've seen how people from the outer crust can think in terms of night and day even in a land where the sun always hangs at noon. But native Pellucidarians would never think in those ways. Or would they?

There is at least one other mention of night in ERB's Pellucidar series. It comes in the third book in

the series, *Tanar of Pellucidar*. Tanar and Stellara experience many harrowing adventures, including capture and recapture by the Korsars, a pirate-like people who had originally come to Pellucidar through the Polar opening from the outer surface.

In Chapter 17, the pair are imprisoned in the Korsar city when the opportunity comes to escape. Tanar thinks their best bet is to disguise themselves as bearded Korsar seamen. He applies pitch to their faces and they stick on hair cut from the beard of a Korsar Tanar had slain. Tanar is easily able to complete his disguise with Korsar clothing, but it's a different matter for the lovely and shapely Stellara. The hair applied to her face had done its job, but Tanar saw no easy way to disguise her girlish figure until Stellara herself came up with a solution:

"Wait," exclaimed Stellara. "Sometimes the sailors, when they are going on long voyages, wear cloaks, which they use to sleep in if the nights are cool. Let us see if we can find such a one here."

This is harder to explain. The Korsars well may have used such cloaks when they or their forbears, perhaps the Mediterranean Corsairs, were on the outer surface, but Stellara would have had no way of knowing that. Nor would she have had any idea of the concept of night, or the word for it.

But perhaps there is a logical explanation for this one as well. She may actually have said something about them sleeping in them when the weather was cool. *Tanar of Pellucidar* was narrated by Abner Perry, in a radio message to Jason Gridley on the Earth's surface. Abner, an outer crust man accustomed to the concept of night, may have mistranslated Stellara's words and mistakenly used the term of

"night" when he should have said something about "when they sleep."

Or, Abner could have said it accurately but ERB himself could have typed it wrongly when he was converting the story, third or fourth hand, to his typewriter.

It's a natural assumption for an outer crust man to make, even when he knows better.

## Trivial Pursuit: The Inner World Edition

(No word yet on when this edition of the popular board game will hit Toys R Us.)

1. Who dumped Rana for Kleeto?
  - A. Zuppner of the zeppelin
  - B. Zor of Zoram
  - C. Zurk the Zurt
  - D. None of Zee above
  
3. What question are we specifically told you never ask a Sarian?
  - A. What's your sign?
  - B. What time is it?
  - C. Are you afraid?
  - D. Is there a Santa Claus?
  
3. The "buried people" are also known as:
  - A. Coropies
  - B. Gorbuses
  - C. Horibs
  - D. Terribs
  
4. Which of the following was on Abner Perry's drawing board?

- A. Camera
- B. VCR
- C. Submarine
- D. Flushing toilet

5. Jana's sister is:

- A. Lana
- B. Rana
- C. Vanna
- D. Chiquita Banana

6. Who, in Pellucidar, could give an order to "strike up the band?"

- A. The Korsars
- B. The Mahars
- C. Lolo-Loloans & Tanga-tangans
- D. Abner Perry

7. The prime minister of the Empire of Pellucidar is:

- A. Ghak the Hairy One
- B. Abner Perry
- C. Dacor the Strong One
- D. Ah-Gilak

8. Which group is religious?

- A. The Ja-rus
- B. The Jukans
- C. The Jakoks
- D. The Juloks

9. Abner Perry is the narrator of:

- A. Pellucidar
- B. Tanar of Pellucidar
- C. Savage Pellucidar
- D. Beyond the Farthest Star

10. Gr-Gr-Gr is:

- A. Noise made by stuttering cave bear
- B. Grum's wedding song
- C. Mate of Mamth
- D. Ruler of Brute-Men

For non-Pellucidar experts, the answers can be found by scrolling down...

THE STUNNING ANSWERS:

- 1. B (LT-15)
- 2. C (SP-I:7)
- 3. A (TP-5)
- 4. A (SP-IV:1)
- 5. A (TEC-7)
- 6. B (AEC-6)
- 7. B (P-3)
- 8. B (LT-6)
- 9. B
- 10. D (P-8)

## The Lure of Pellucidar

We've taken another look at Pellucidar. Most of these articles, but not all, were originally published in ERBapa, and some were revised slightly from when they originally appeared.

Now that you've revisited Pellucidar in a detached way, would you like to actually travel there?

That's the theme of this last entry (for now) in the series:

I want to go to Pellucidar,  
Where Abner, David and Dian are;  
Where lurks the mighty dinosaur,  
And old age hardly leaves a scar.

I want to go to the Inner World,  
With horizon every upward curled,  
Where the Star of David is unfurled,  
And from the mast of the Amoz twirled.

I don't want to go by Pole;  
I want to go in the Iron More,  
And burrow through a seam of coal,  
Until I finally reach my goal.

I want to sail on the Az with Ja  
(A Navy man without a flaw);  
Like Heyerdahl, aboard the Ra,  
His seamanship's the highest law.

I want to sail up North so far,  
And attack the Port of Korsar;  
Just give me a ship, don't got no star

To steer 'er by in Pellucidar.

I want to roam 'neath the noonday sun,  
With plenty of ammo and a trusty gun,  
So leviathans that weigh a ton  
Will see me coming and decide to run.

I want to take my savage mate  
Out on a noonday luncheon date;  
For a snorting thag we'll lie in wait,  
Then eat it raw, its natural state.

I'll battle Mahars face to face,  
And make them yield to the human race;  
And when I'm tired of the hectic pace,  
I'll put the book back in its place.