

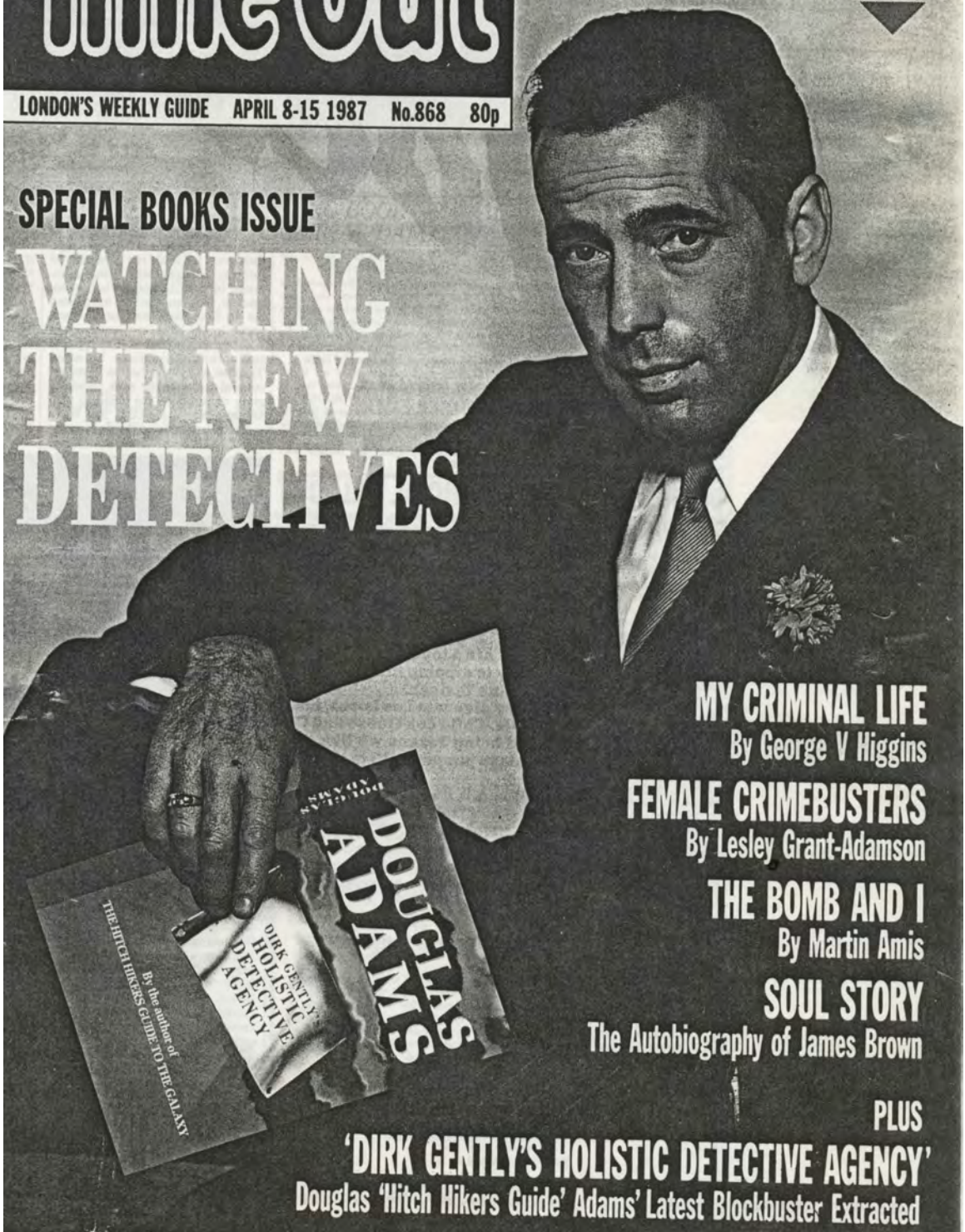
Time Out

LONDON'S WEEKLY GUIDE APRIL 8-15 1987 No.868 80p

EIGHT
DAYS
A WEEK

SPECIAL BOOKS ISSUE

WATCHING THE NEW DETECTIVES



MY CRIMINAL LIFE

By George V Higgins

FEMALE CRIMEBUSTERS

By Lesley Grant-Adamson

THE BOMB AND I

By Martin Amis

SOUL STORY

The Autobiography of James Brown

PLUS

'DIRK GENTLY'S HOLISTIC DETECTIVE AGENCY'
Douglas 'Hitch Hikers Guide' Adams' Latest Blockbuster Extracted

NEW SCHOOL ASBESTOS SCARE

Only a week after revelations that over 300 South London schoolchildren had been given asbestos-contaminated food, another school kitchen has been closed following protests from alarmed parents. Andrew Bell reports. About 100 parents, mainly Bangladeshi, demonstrated at the gates of Thomas Buxton school near Brick Lane on Friday, after hearing rumours that damaged asbestos had been discovered in the kitchen. They were further disturbed by reports that staff were boycotting food prepared in the school but had been prevented by education officers from writing to parents to tell them of the problem.

Although tests indicated that the kitchen had not been contaminated, the Inner London Education Authority had moved quickly to seal damaged asbestos tiles discovered in the ceiling. But there were still lingering fears among parents that the chemical sealant could be stripped off in the kitchen's steamy atmosphere and potentially dangerous fibres released into the air.

Despite assurances from ILEA officers at a hastily convened meeting that there was no health danger, the parents decided to organise a boycott of the school's food and give their children packed lunches. At that point, ILEA decided to close the kitchen immediately and begin removing the asbestos.

Earlier in the week, parents in Peckham attended a stormy meeting with ILEA officials to protest at the way children at Camelot Primary and two other local schools were allowed to eat food contaminated with asbestos. Meals had been prepared in kitchens where asbestos lagging



from heating pipes had been ripped out by council contractors (TO 867).

Staff were advised, after the presence of asbestos had been confirmed, that they could go ahead cooking lunch for children at the three schools. Tests carried out later revealed that the air carried 97 times the permitted level of asbestos, even after the premises had been cleaned twice.

Despite reassurances from an ILEA medical adviser that there was 'only a minute chance' that any of the children would develop cancers as a result, parents angrily demanded the resignation of ILEA officers who, they claimed, had not acted promptly when the danger was discovered.

CHERNOBYL: THE FINANCIAL FALLOUT

One year after Chernobyl, the financial cost of the world's worst ever man-made disaster has been estimated by Friends of the Earth to run as high as \$5 billion. Andrew Tyler looks at the breakdown.

Based on the Soviet Union's own figures, as well as other 'reliable sources', FoE says the total includes medical and clean up costs, rebuilding and compensation.

Around the plant itself, there is the £1.65 billion expense of writing off a two-year-old reactor and preventing an even more catastrophic fire by building a sarcophagus — an operation that required teams of miners to work around the clock for six weeks. Other major expenses came from the construction of roads and dams, the removal of miles of top soil and the erection of a whole new town.

Tourism was badly hit. Poland is estimated to have lost £50 million in foreign revenues. And there were massive compensation claims by farmers as a result of the wholesale slaughter of contaminated animals. In Norway, Finland and Sweden 40,000 reindeer were killed. The British compensation costs have so far run to

about £4.5 million, but with additional equipment and monitoring costs, the total UK damage is estimated at £15 million.

There is the further cost of 65,000 fatal and non-fatal cancers, says FoE, up to 640 of which will be suffered in the UK.

To mark the first anniversary of the catastrophe, FoE will stage a major London rally with CND on April 25 — the first time the two groups will have combined on such a scale.

Feeding into the main London rally will be four tributary marches, leaving from Sizewell, Hexham near Newcastle, Longtown near the Polaris base in Faslane and Cardiff. Because of the distances involved, relay teams will use motorcycles and bicycles to reach the London assembly point on Victoria embankment. Participants will then march to Hyde Park for speeches and an hour of music, the maximum permitted by the Department of Environment. A FoE spokesman said this week, however, he was concerned that the police, acting under the new Public Order Act which became effective last week, might try to set other conditions.

PROFILE

After last week's Glasnost flirtations between Gorbachev and Thatcher, a wedding took place in Leningrad on Monday that could really ensure cultural exchanges between East and West. Simon Miles profiles the enterprising bride.

Like Montagues and Capulets, Russians and Americans washed their differences down with champagne after clinking glasses to bless the union of Joanna Stingray and Yuri Kasparian.

Stingray is an American singer/songwriter and Kasparian is the lead guitarist in an underground Leningrad rock band. Not long ago, their guest list could not have been so catholic. Stingray was being questioned by the CIA and Boris Grebenshchikov, the man who first introduced her to Kasparian, was being questioned by the KGB.

Stingray pre-empted the type of talks that took place between Thatcher and Gorbachev on increased cultural exchange last week, by smuggling tapes out of the USSR to turn into an album in the USA. 'Red Wave' — Four Underground Bands from the USSR' will be released in Europe,

of the four bands, have been offered professional status. Kino has had to turn it down for the moment, but at last Grebenshchikov, who is as idolised in the USSR as Dylan or Bowie in the West, can earn a living from his name.

This will make Stingray's latest scheme, to get Aquarium to the States where Grebenshchikov will share a stage with Sting, negotiable. Sting showed himself an early Glasnost diplomat with his 'Russians Love Their Children Too' single.

KGB questioning has given way to official co-operation and Stingray's early cloak-and-dagger negotiations are no longer necessary. Visas are showered upon her and Soviet officials and commercial figures were among her 200 wedding guests — together with everybody who is anybody in Soviet experimental and rock music.



probably by RCA, in the spring. Through her extraordinary initiative Stingray, at 26, has found herself in the strange position of being almost the sole go-between between the out-of-bounds rock and roll of a nation of some 257 million souls and the rest of the world. And this initiative has had its political repercussions.

Although all four bands on 'Red Wave' are famous in the USSR, this album will be their first. This is because at the time of recording they were officially labelled 'amateur'. Such status is often forced by a policy that allows bands to make records on only one label — the state Melodiya label. Without an invitation from Melodiya, bands are prohibited from earning money and, until relatively recently, they were banned from giving concerts. Several 'amateur' venues have been established, but the money raised on the door goes to the organisers, not to the musicians.

So Victor Tsoi, lead singer of Stingray's husband's band Kino, is forced to work as a boilerman for less each week than one copy of 'Red Wave' will raise on the black market in Moscow. But since Stingray's achievements, Kino and Aquarium, the most famous

in more suspicious times, Stingray recalls the militiamen (who attend every amateur concert) preventing her from singing with Kino. One night she defied them and went ahead anyway, after Victor Tsoi introduced her with the promise that although Reagan and Gorbachev might have failed in Reykjavik, the young were at least going to show that friendship was possible.

Suddenly Stingray is an unofficial diplomat of some importance. When UB40 visited Moscow last year, they contacted her to act as their chaperone. People have run across Red Square to get her autograph and grateful fans write to her from all over Eastern Europe. Meanwhile on Sunset Boulevard, where she has her offices, Hollywood has moved in with offers for the rights to her story.

The interest has become so keen that she has decided she needs managing and has signed up with no less than the Ken Kragen organisation which handled the 'We Are The World' promotion. Gorbachev's One World concept, Glasnost, may have a weird brand name, but initiatives like Stingray's will surely help sell it in the West.



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