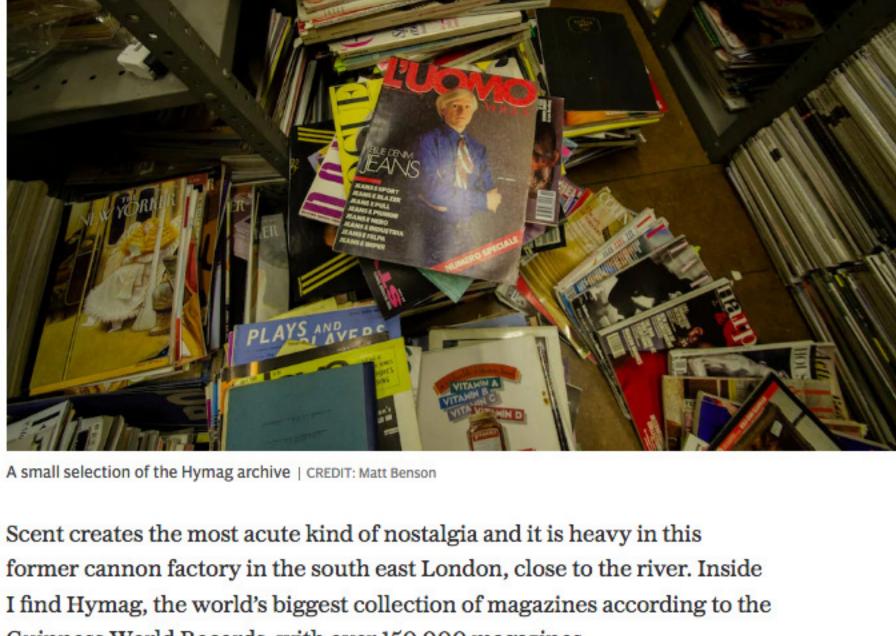
## 'Heaven for magazines': the archivist

## fighting to preserve our paper past Vogue for dogs; every issue of Beatles Monthly; a journal devoted to hacking. All

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visitor.) Hymag is in the process of digitalisation, to reach a wider audience and preserve the material which will, without intervention, eventually degrade. There are plans to offer the entire archive online via subscription with AI

assisting the search process; without it there would be simply too much

material to search. It has established a crowd funder to assist the

digitalization; it would be a tragedy if this were lost.

they form a more complete portrait of the culture).

The magazines live on 3,000ft of shelving under soaring ceilings. It is cold here, lit only in pools, with chairs placed seemingly randomly. It all smells of that glorious thing - paper. There is a desk with angle poise lamp, elegant between the shelves. This is apt, because this is not a place for people, but a place that people fold themselves into and they must, because very few magazines are archived online, and those that have

been are not easily searchable. (There is much greater value for the

historian, or researcher, in magazines being archived together, where

They exist in these numbers here because of a man called James Hyman

who is dressed for cold weather in a bulky black coat and woollen hat. He

used to spend a lot of time in the Book & Comic Exchange in Notting Hill.

"Also known as church," he says, "because I used to worship there".

The Hyman Archive for BBC Watch later



on a bed of Playboy magazines). He found himself with 453 crates of

magazines, and co-founded Hymag with Tory Turk. As knowledge of the

archive grew people came to donate their magazines. A woman arrived

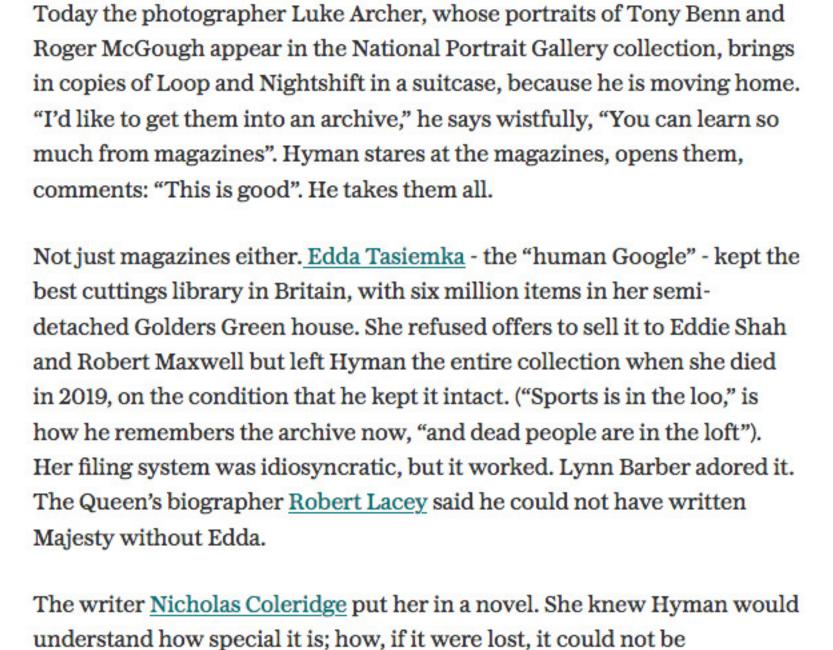
with a campervan full of copies of Athletics Weekly. The fashion writer

magazines when they outgrew his London flat and country house. (They

Colin McDowell loaned 2680 English, Italian and French fashion

are stored together, should he wish to reclaim them.)

Just a fraction of the 3,000ft of shelves containing the Hymag archive | CREDIT: Matt Benson



recovered. It is housed on the other side of the building in plain manila

folders. Touch one - I touched David Bowie - and a life tumbles out in

thrilling discord. It's impossible to find material of this quality online,

less interesting to read than on these fragile pages where it belongs.

Magazine is an Arabic word meaning "warehouse" or "depositary". The

Monaths Unterredungen (Edifying Monthly Discussions). In 1688 came

first magazine appeared in Germany in 1663. It was called Erbauliche

"Entertaining and Serious, Rational and Unsophisticated Ideas on All

Kinds of Agreeable and Useful Books and Subjects." The first woman's

and the Spectator, for which I write, in 1711, with the tag line: "to

magazine, the Ladies' Mercury, came in 1693. The Tatler arrived in 1709

enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality". In the 19th

because so little of it been digitalised; and even when it has it is somehow

and 20th centuries magazine publishing swelled to immense proportions. It seemed there was a magazine for everything. Now they, and print itself, are in decline. To someone like me, for whom ink is a drug and the Internet an oppression veering into a mental illness, this is an incomparable treasure house. I mean to go through it comprehensively, but I find it is impossible; the best archives can only be trodden lightly because there is always more. There should be more; or it would not be a worthwhile

archive. I fall down wormholes, and so does Hyman. We begin to discuss

something - American Vogue, for instance, or GQ, or Mad magazine - but

something else. He likes all magazines, but he loves the arcane, the rare

He pulls out a 1994 interview with Bryan Ferry in Ray Gun magazine

written entirely in the font Zapf Dingbats, because the journalist got

bored and so published in a font no reader could read: "It's rare," says

Hyman, "It's a cultural artefact". He lent it to Design Museum's exhibition

then he pulls out a different magazine and we are talking about

and the bizarre.

California: Designing Freedom.

Then he pulls out a copy of the FBI Internal Law Enforcement Bulletin from 1983: "Real under the counter stuff." He shows me a Beatles Monthly containing material not published elsewhere: "A guy came from Liverpool and said, 'please keep these'". He shows me a hacking magazine called 2600 from 1984: "How to hack traffic lights. How to hack computers. How to hack anything. They published all the numbers of the Reagan White House. So, you could phone up the president". I like the oddities too because they have a wit and variety journalism simply can't afford these days: they are filled with hope. I touch a

magazine called Tiny Magazine, which I cannot read it because it is tiny,

but am glad exists nonetheless, and a magazine called Dogue - "a parody

listening to multiple conversations, some with ghosts, but, even if it deals

than Twitter. Books are varnished and considered selves. Newspapers are

with the transient and the whimsical, it is more meditative and kinder

of the world's most famous fashion magazine: Vogue for dogs."

It is disorientating, and soothing: to be among these artefacts is like

swift impressions. Magazine journalism is between the two: a record of enthusiasms made at speed and forgotten, but not here. I wonder if they are, on the whole, more truthful. I find an interview with Donald Trump in a winter 2000 issue of Millionaire magazine. The headline is a prophecy: Trump for President. "Lest anyone question his potential as a national leader," says a piece by

Linda Marx, "Trump cites a success scored in New York's Central Park".

I pull more out: Tatlers from the 1990s; Telegraph magazines; Spectators;

a colour supplement from the Jewish Chronicle in the 1970s. I find it

(The success is: he helped fix the ice rink. Or he said he did).

oddly mesmerising, and not just because no Anglo-Jewish weekly has the advertising revenue to publish a glossy magazine in this century, or probably any future century. I feel I am communing with many female, Jewish ghosts. These are a few things I pause on: a Telegraph Sunday magazine from 1976 with "Man of Wit - Frank Muir and Family [including a dog]" on the cover. An ancient Tatler with Ghislaine Maxwell in a pink Moschino

jacket that looks like a balloon animal, which feels like folly now, and was

A feature called "Notable Doubles in Real Life" from The Harmsworth

folly then.

London Magazine. More than a century after the journalist - who was he? - searched for likenesses I am stunned by them: The Duke of Norfolk and Mr G Manville Fenn. Professor Stewart MP and Mr Stanley J Weyman. The Rt Hon Lord Rosebery and the Hon Philip Stanhope MP. That only I am staring at this now is much of the pleasure. It feels subversive, intimate, and secretive. The adverts are fascinating too: Jilly Cooper, a star in British journalism in

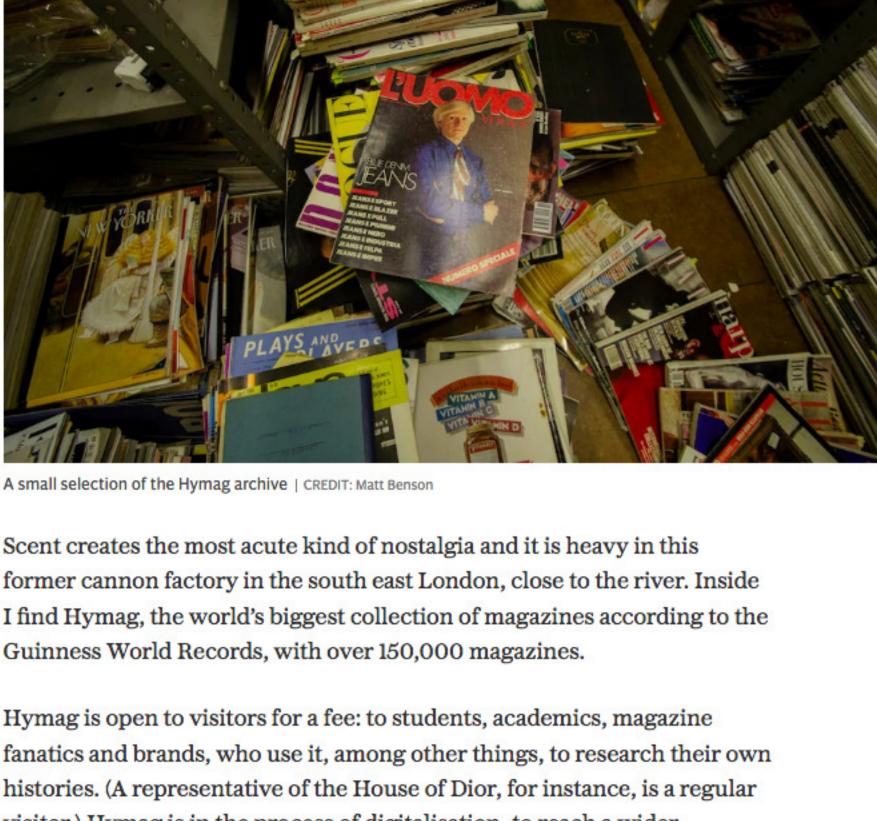
the 1970s, appears in a Sanderson advert for interior design: "very Jilly Cooper, very Sanderson" says the copy under a photograph of Cooper stroking a dog near explosive orange florals. I had forgotten what a beauty she was; and I did not, until now, how influential. (We like to imagine that advertising has nothing to teach us. It does.) There are cigarette adverts, like little puffs of madness, selling snobbery as if lung cancer itself is posh: The world of Lambert & Butler [Park Lane,

London] ....with a quality and style that sets them apart from other

cigarettes". There is an advert disguised as an open letter to Feminists:

"We, the undersigned," it says, "believe in better working conditions for women". The solution, maddeningly, is to buy an Hygena kitchen. I know that I became a journalist in 1999, as all this magical variety was ebbing away. So perhaps Hymag is particularly special to me. But I don't

think so. For more information on James Hyman's archive visit hymag.com



this and more can be found only at Hymag - for now By Tanya Gold 2 February 2021 • 5:58pm