

THIRDMANCON

COMBOZINE

EASTER

1968

WOODMONT

COMPOSITE

300

RETRAI

BADINAGE

ManCon

Special



"Do you Con here often?"

IT'S BEEN A GOOD BAD YEAR

{(This is a cross between an editorial and an article,
and is therefore an edicle -

- or maybe an artitorial)}

At the time of writing this editorial/"Thoughts of wereman Johnson", BADINAGE 4 is hovering in a kind of limbo - some parts typed onto stencil, some not written yet - and what exactly the finished product will look like is not yet absolutely clear. One thing we do know (or at least hope) is that the issue should be in circulation at the Con (That's now to you people reading this, so drop everything and grab a copy - if the last Con's anything to go by, there won't be many left for long).

Now that I've disposed of the plug-section (or part of it - there's more on page four), I can turn to the main topic of this piece - 'What is BADINAGE?' I had to ask myself this question recently, on being informed in true BAD fashion that I was henceforth half of the editor. Supposedly, it's the 'Journal of the Bristol and District S. F. Group', which makes it sound like a collection of the minutes of past meetings, which it most decidedly isn't (What minutes?). But in an indirect way, the 'Journal etc.' is what it actually is.

BADINAGE is practically the only way the BAD group can make its presence felt as a group instead of as individuals. BADINAGE has its regulars, already BNF's in their own right, and it has its neofen, still trying to understand the strange entity known as fandom, that they came into contact with one previously normal Bristolian Saturday night. BADINAGE attempts to be representative of the BAD group and what it does - to give some kind of answer to the perennial question 'What do you do at a BAD group meeting?'

BADINAGE answers that question not by giving detailed accounts of the fortnightly gatherings but by allowing the members to write what they want to write. In this way BADINAGE gives you an idea of who comes to the meetings. For what goes on at the Mercers' place these Saturday nights is not as important as who does the going.

You see, like the rest of fandom, the BAD group is not so much an organisation; more a set of friends. It is the people who are important in fandom and it is the people who make fandom. Fandom is probably the nearest thing to a democracy in the world today. It is the people who rule and you'll meet most of the people at the Con, including Bristol fandom en masse.

So don't look now - there's probably one of us reading this over your shoulder -

hello!

Rob F. Johnson

MICK AND DOOF IN BAD-LAND (or, SHUT UP, GEORGE !)

I think it must have been last summer that they joined us. Although 'joined' is, perhaps, a too-definite term. They just sort of drifted in one Saturday evening, like a couple of Bradbury fire-balloons, and sort of hung around. And they're still with us. Well, sort of ...

First, let me try to elucidate the matter of their names. Mick is Mike Chatwin - only his first name is actually Brandon. Doof is George Scantlebury - only his first name is Michael.

They are a prime example of the attraction of opposites. So opposite are they that one wonders just what it is that holds their friendship together. Some kind of static electricity, perhaps. Mick is dark, stocky, and broody-looking, with a wild mop of hair, Hendrix-style. He is or was supposed to be studying at some art school (I think), but he's cursed with an itchy foot, and every so often he just ups and drifts for a while. He's more often than not (a) broke, (b) in need of a shave, and (c), out of cigarettes. He's also searingly self-honest. Not that we've seen him for weeks - I guess he must be on the drift again. I don't think even Doof knows where he is.

Ah yes, Doof. Older than Mick, he's still at school. He looks even younger than he is, mainly because of his very fair hair and pink, scrubbed-looking face. Usually he's very quiet at meetings, but when he does speak, he often demonstrates a surprisingly mature dry wit. (He wrote that wry little story, "Messchance" for MADIMAGE-3.)

I can't remember who it was who suddenly turned to Doof one evening and shouted "Shut up, George !" Whoever it was coined a phrase which is fired at the lad at least once every meeting, usually during one of his longer silences.

The most hysterical occasion of its utterance came during the R.D Group's party last July. In the early hours of the morning mattresses and blankets were flung upon the floor of the Walshes' back room, and sundry bods settled down for a few hours' kip. I was furthest from the door, next to me was Archie, next to him Mick, and nearest the door lay Doof. This was so that Doof could arise at some obscene hour (6.a.m. on a Sunday!) to creep back to Brislington and do his regular paper-round. As the first faint leprous light of dawn slithered horridly through the curtains, Doof arose stealthily and groped for his shoes.

Now, I don't know why I was awake at that uncivilised hour; certainly Doof made very little sound. Be that as it may: Archie suddenly turned over in his usual miniature-earthquake style, yawned, muttered drowsily: "Shut up, George !" - and subsided again. Doof said later that he heard nothing of this.

I lay there in what Leslie Charteris once described as "an agony of noiseless mirth." Mick slumbered blissfully on. And Doof stole away like a bediless blond wraith....

Then there was - and still is - the Mystery of the Wandering Magic Vest of Marrakesh ... the rest of us never did get to the bottom of that ... possibly because said Vest is invisible, said Mick and Doof.

No - I don't know why he's nick-named Doof. If he's at the Con, - and he says he's coming - why don't you ask him? Just head for the loudest silence that you can hear, and shout the magic formula: "SHUT UP, GEORGE !"

THE PAGE FOUR THINGY

⌞ For want of a better title ⌟

BADINAGE has become noted for having adverts on the bacover of two out of the first three issues. This then is an advert - and what better thing to advertise than BADINAGE itself:-

'On the whole an enjoyable issue' -- Bryn Fortey

'... its arrival has restored my long-lost fannish urges' - Chris Priest

'Artwork and presentation were spot on' - Rob Wood

- these are some of the things that were said about previous issues of BADINAGE (you didn't think we were going to print the adverse comments in this advert, did you?). In fact, some things were so popular that a repeat performance was called for. As you may know, Bugleford has already returned. What you will not be aware of is the fact that certain other well-received features will be seen again. Tony Walsh's i/c for no. 1 prompted Mary Reed to say "Why didn't I think of that?" - Tony is doing the cover for no. 4. "... vivid fragments and impressions, quotes, talk and people and people and people." - that was Moy Read's impression of ish 2's conrep (and of the Con). It's almost certain that an equally successful and unusual group conrep will take up a large part of ish 5.

But before that of course comes the Con...

)) RFJ ((

@-----@

BADINAGE is edited by A. Graham Boak and Rob F. Johnson
c/o 10 Lower Church Lane, St. Michael's, Bristol 2

This was a sort of do-it-yourself special, 'cos Beryl typed her bit and I typed mine, and Archie duplicated everything he proofread, which was the whole thing.

The f/c is by Jay Kinney, but the heading and the caption can be blamed on me.

The typewriter I used was provided by the Peter Roberts League of Trouserless Clerics and the whole thing was produced by the kind permission of the Bristol police, who politely refrained from arresting me.

@ me again @

FULL STOP

Gothique

SPECIAL THIRD MANCON ISSUE



Gothique

On such an auspicious occasion it seems appropriate to bore you all with a short re-cap of Gothique's seedy existence. The first issue appeared just before '65's London World Con and, indeed, most copies of that first duplicated effort were given away, rammed down people's throats and actually sold at that historic event. The following three years saw the incredibly high out-put of six whole issues, all laboriously hand duped in the very best fanzine tradition. But now we have litho facilities at our disposal and our readers, (pause for hysterical laughter), will now be able to actually see the content, surely the acid test of any fanzine? At this point it also seems appropriate to add that Gothique, as of the current issue, number eight, is set out in columns of justified type and printed on a very fine paper, with an extra thick wrap-round cover, at a new, small size. So any resemblance with the rather hurridly assembled effort you now see should only be tentative, we hope!

Looking back now it seems surprising that John Ramsey Campbell's only contribution to our pages was a letter published way back in our fifth issue, ("Amateurism, in it's best sense, is always preferable to academicism" - that's our excuse and we're sticking to it!), and so we're glad to welcome him on this special occasion with the absorbing article that makes up the greater portion of this Combozine entry. John and his work need no introduction and even so his appearances in the next few days are sure to stick in your memory, (don't say we didn't warn you).

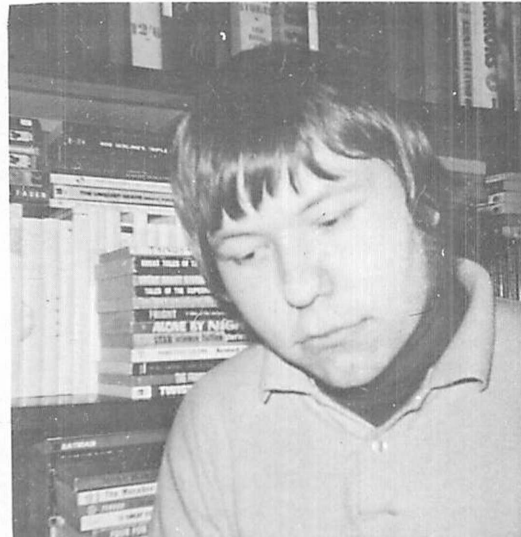
All that now remains, as Home Service announcers are want to phrase it, is to wish you all, well nearly all of you, a happy and eventfull con. Enough! Let the festivitas begin!!

The Editors

ARTWORK: Front cover: David Britton, page four: Dave Griffiths, page six: Moira Read, page seven: David Britton, back cover: Brian J. Frost.
STILLS: "The Haunted Palace", "The Damned" and "Mad Love".



DAVE GRIFFITHS



STAN NICHOLLS

CORRECT TO CUT

by

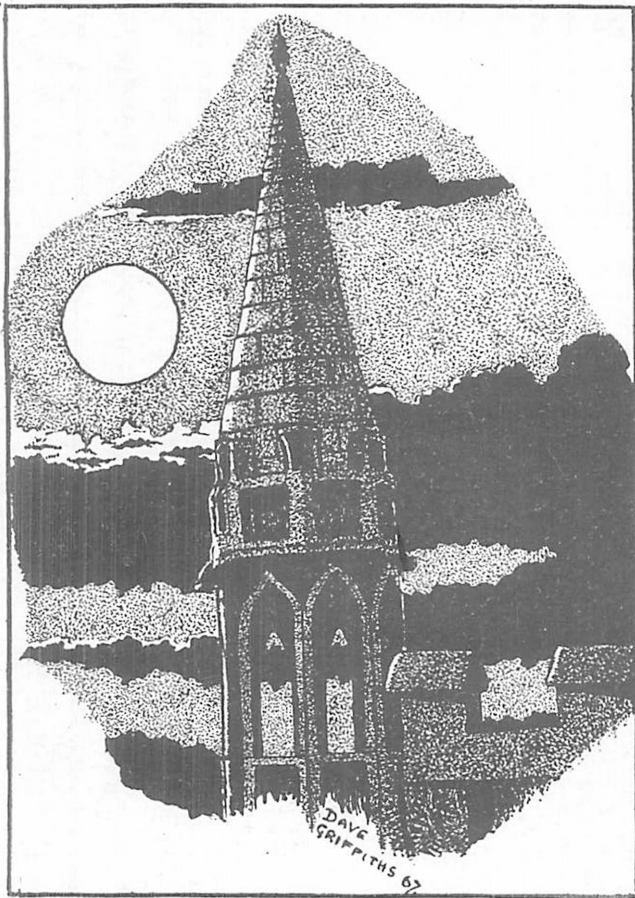
JOHN RAMSEY CAMPBELL

In the most perceptive point he ever made about a movie, Robert Bloch commented that the famous cut in "Frankenstein" implied something far nastier than the complete print had actually shown. Censorship in any form violates the private right; we all know that. And yet I find the howls of wrath with which the fans greet the tiniest cut in any horror film faintly disturbing. Does it matter that several hideous murders were curtailed in "Curse of the Living Corpse"? I think not: simply because the film itself doesn't matter. The idea of censors as arbiters of cinematic worth scarcely appeals to me; but it's worthwhile to take a colder, harder look at what is cut, and why such cuts are made.

Examples: "Curse of the Living Corpse" or "Frankenstein's Daughter", (a telling extract from which I hope to show at this Con), or the recent stream of sadistic Italian westerns. All have been heavily cut in England; I see no reason to complain. Such films, each typical of a whole tatty cycle, are based on violence: the characters are puppets of violence, but no more so than their audience. Their total absence from our screen would cause no lack, or would it? Unfortunately, yes, as demonstrated by the magazines which spend much of their time complaining: there would

be a lack of sadistic gratification. (Even those who realize just how bad "Frankenstein's Daughter" is are likely to qualify "The only good scene was the one with the acid-throwing" or some-such). Of all the arts, the cinema degenerates most easily into voyeurism. And that deflated feeling, (familiar to me, I'm sure, as much as anyone), which succeeds the censoring of promised sadism is basically sexual: the blind pulled down over the window opposite, the keyhole blocked, the orgasm interrupted.

Of course fine films are censored: Ingmar Bergman is a perennial victim. Of course censorship tends to be arbitrary: why was the climax of Gordon Douglas' "Them!" virtually removed when the inferior, and exceptionally tasteless "Tarantula", (from which, again, I intend to show an extract), survived intact? Why, for that matter, have I seen versions of Corman's "Haunted Palace" and Hitchcock's "Psycho", (both of which use the horror genre to make important statements), of varying completeness in different Liverpool cinemas? Yet the feeling persists that censorship is, if certainly not desirable in its implications, at least in some sense necessary. The hypothetical viewer who rushes out of "Jack the Ripper" to



stab a passer-by is of course an absurd myth; but an increase in cinematic violence could be symptomatic of, and responsible for, the increasing reluctance to be shocked by or sympathetic to forms of human suffering - which is to say a decline in humanism.

Let's consider some films from which the censor has apparently "protected" us by refusing them a public exhibition. The notorious "Lady in a Cage", by its misuse of sensationalism, (which is, as Hitchcock, Fuller, et al have demonstrated, one of the cinema's great assets), ends up by suggesting that the victim of hoodlums is more guilty and vicious than they, which may be doctrinaire liberal argument but is here disturbingly ill-formulated. I've shown elsewhere that "Freaks", (now publicly showable), ultimately turns its heroes into monsters for the sake of a ghoulish climax. The Lewton-Robson "Bedlam" simila-

arly requires it's long-suffering asylum inmates to bury alive their tormentor, and I can't support films which express an Old Testament morality. I expect the best from Bunuel's long banned "El", but "Un Chien Andalou" still strikes me merely as an unpleasant bit of enigmatic self-indulgence. On the credit side of the banned list, there's Shinto's "Onibaba", a Japanese legend which rises above sadism to become lucidly and acutely horrifying, and Kenneth Anger's homosexual fantasies which have every right to be beautiful, as much so as Hollywood's heterosexual fantasies. But God knows what their effect would be on an average audience. Incomprehension breeds immorality, and in this light censorship might be justified.

Meanwhile the new permissiveness is setting in, and bringing movies into line with prose. Why is it that violence in books, (except, of course, in the deplorably suppressed "Last Exit To Brooklyn"), is never considered cause for objection? Thus such obscenities as the stories of Scott-Moncrieff, ("Not for the Squeamish" - now out of print, I trust for always), and most of the contents of the Pan books of horror stories do their dirty work unremarked and make it all the harder for such subtle writers as Robert Aickman and Errol Undercliffe to reap their just rewards. Now it's the movies; although "Black Sunday" is still banned, and the other extremely interesting Mario Bava films are crudely cut, an inferior film like "Revenge of the Blood Beast" gets past, maggots in eye-sockets and all. Nobody is more pleased than I to see such films as "Bonnie and Clyde", "Point Blank", "The Chase",

Opposite: Two films famous for their censorship problems; "Haunted Palace", (top), and "The Damned", (bottom).





May 68.

"The Torn Curtain", etc., (in which the effect of the violence is devastatingly moral), shown complete, and it's a pleasant surprise to find the true horrors of a fine film like "The Long Hair of Death" visible on our screens. Even such vicious a film as "Rough Night in Jericho" commends itself as an explosion of the heroic Western myth over and above it's obvious intention to outdo the Italian "Fistful of Dollars". And the recent trend to sexual explicitness, with it's attendant dangers of voyeurism, is surely to the good in that it brings sex into the daylight from beneath the sadistic sublimation of the horror movie. But simultaneously the James Bond cycle has ushered in a plague of extreme violence, balletically (and hence enjoyably) filmed. The more we see of anything, the less we are affected - because it has been interiorized. The growing problem of the artist who feels bound to shock his audience into awareness and is thus forced to outdo the tradition of previous violence devolves upon us all. I'm not advocating censorship: I'm insisting that the more we see, the more we must evaluate, the more each of us must be his own conscious censor. Otherwise, how long before we're expermentially numbed beyond sensitivity and beyond humanity?

Gothique magazine, (the poor man's "F.M."), is available from; 5, St. John's Wood Terrace, St. John's Wood, London, N.W.8., and a copy of the current issue, 8, will be despatched in a flat, sturdy envelope on remittance of 2/6, (plus 6 pence postage, etc.). It is now in complete litho.

All lettering in this Com-
bozine is by Robin James.
Copyright, 1968.

THE GOTHIQUE FILM SOCIETY

"Dracula", (original), "M", "Son of Kong", "Ghost of Frankenstein", "Stranger on the Third Floor", "The Raven", (original), "Them!", "Circus of Dr. Lao", "The Cat People", "First Man into Space", "Dr. Cyclops", "Night of the Hunter", "The Ape"; these are just some of the films shown to date at Britain's only specialised film society, the

Gothique Film Society. For full details please write to the following address



ROBIN JAMES:
33, BETHANY WAY,
STAINES ROAD,
BEDFONT, MIDDX.

STARDOCK

The first issue of Stardock, companion magazine to Gothique is now available, and if you don't see a copy floating drunkenly around, more are available from the following address, at the paltry sum of 2/6; small enough price for this S.F. rarity. (How's that for a plug?)

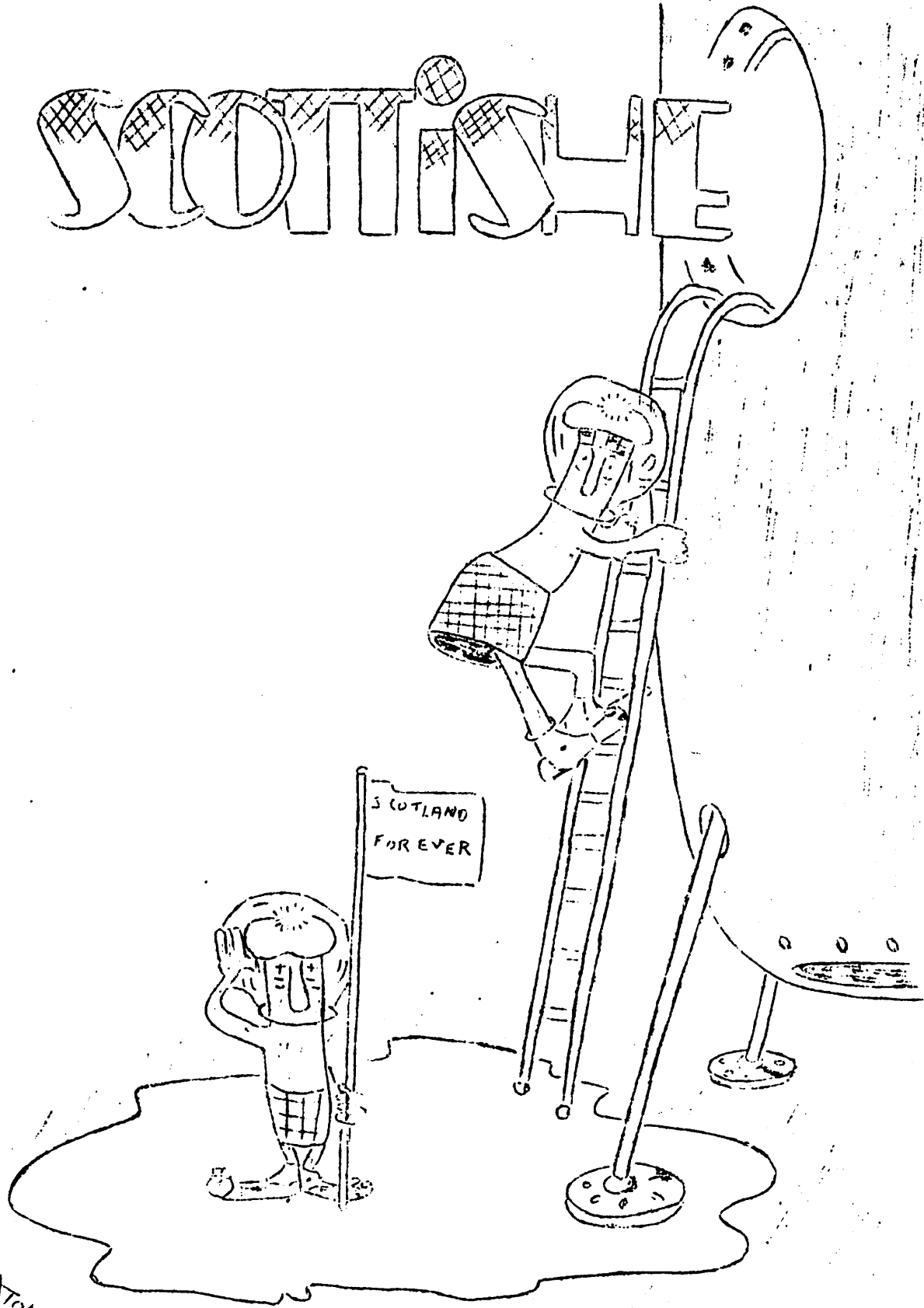
5, ST. JOHN'S WOOD
TERRACE,
ST. JOHN'S WOOD,
LONDON. N.W.8.





© Brian J. Frost 1967
for Gothique

SCOTTISH



ATOM

SCOTTISHE is produced and published by Ethel Lindsay, 6 Langley Ave. Surbiton Surrey. Quarterly.

4 for 7/-

SCOTTISHE was first published in December 1954 through the OFF TRAIL MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION. The latest issue, No 47, was published in March of this year. The first few issues were run off on a flatbed; then a change was made to a small Emgee. In 1957 this was exchanged for an electric Gestetner which is still running happily.

The first few covers were by Brian Miller of Glasgow and Michael Duggan of Australia. The first ATOM cover came with No 7 and he has stayed faithfully with SCOT ever since. Of the 41 covers that ATOM has produced for SCOT, the cover of this is the editor's favourite. It originally came out with issue 9 in Dec. 1956. It is reproduced here by the editor—who cannot stencil so skillfully as ATOM but who has tried her best as a tribute to him.

Contributors to SCOT through the years have been varied. Mainstay for many years was MACHIAVARLEY who left us, alas, for a gardening hobby. Walt Willis, another faithful columnist for many years, also left us when other interests intervened. One early contributor, Sid Birchby, still writes on occasions. SCOT has never really tried very hard to garner more contributors; the editor being content to fill any gaps with her never-ceasing NATTERINGS. Still, all contributions have been published. There is only one exception to this—and it was a piece of fiction. The editor feels that there is enough fiction published in fanzines without her adding to the flow.

SCOT left OMPA in Dec 1963 and is now a genzine. The US Agent is Redd Boggs and SCOT takes this opportunity of thanking him for his help over the years. SCOT hopes to trundle on merrily for many more years to come but fears it may have to put prices up if we lose the printed paper rate as threatened. SCOT is now in its 14th year and is curious to know if it is eligible to be called Britain's longest running fanzine.

HAVERING

This was first published in 1960 and the latest issue—No 32—came out in March 1968. Originally started because the editor made a New Year resolution to comment upon every fanzine received and was too superstitious to drop the idea quietly. She soon found that writing so many letters of comment was impossible and so began to put the comments on stencil and send them all out together. Apart from faneds who receive HAVER as a trade item, it has a fairly large list of subscribers among new fans who want to find out which fanzines they should buy.

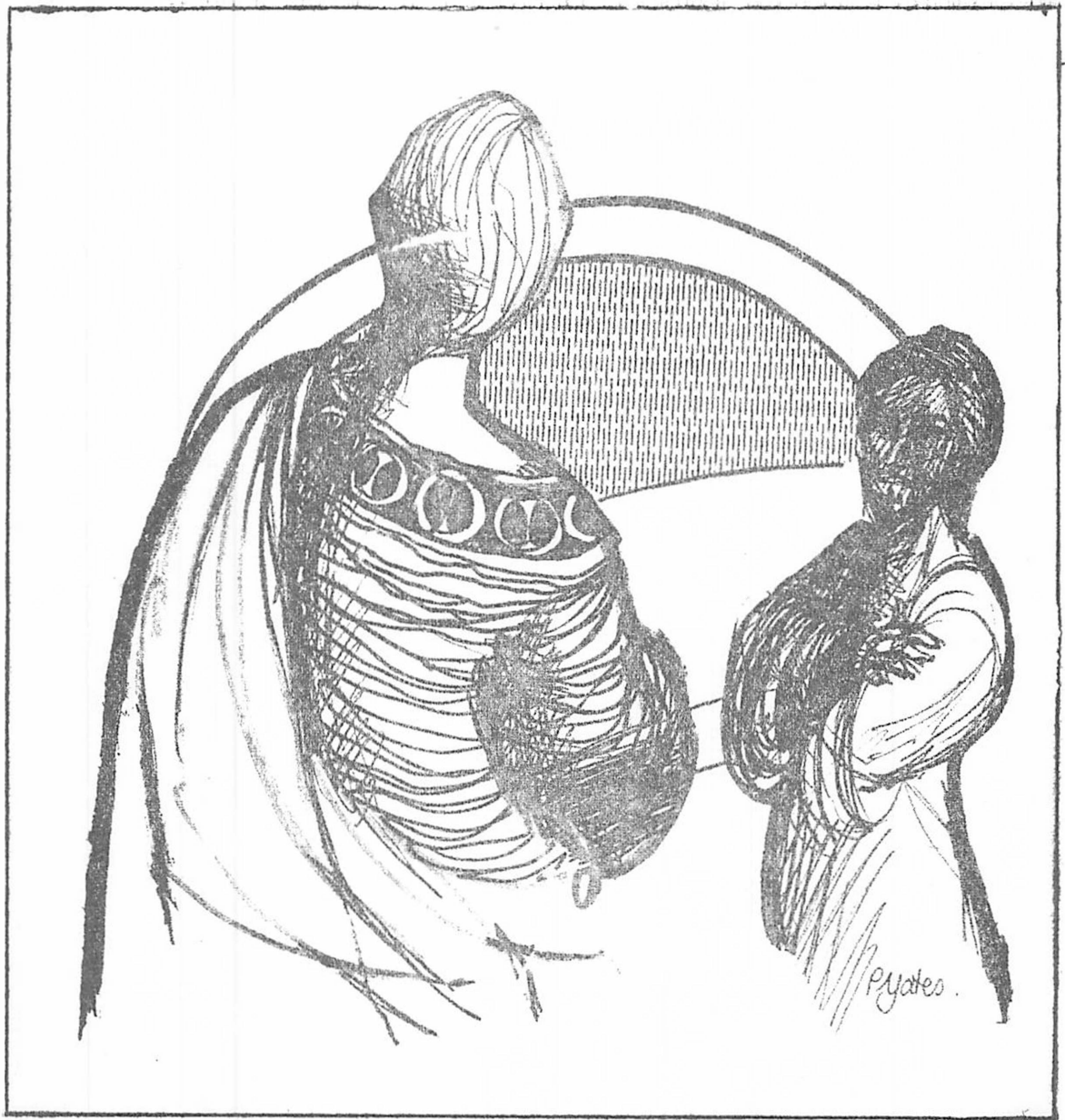
HAVER always recommends new fans to send for only one issue at a time till they find out which zine suits them best. HAVER also cautions them to remember that fanzine publishing is a hobby, a very expensive hobby, and no known fanzine has ever been sent out at anything but a whopping loss. This being the case, editors may feel free to publish what interests them.

SCOTTISHE and HAVER and Ethel wish all convention-goers a very happy con!
And we also thank the con committee for having us.

Speculation

EASTER 1968
CONVENTION ISSUE.

THE SPECULATOR AT LARGE



A special issue of THE SPECULATOR AT LARGE, produced
by Peter Weston for the Thirdmancon, 1968, Combozine.

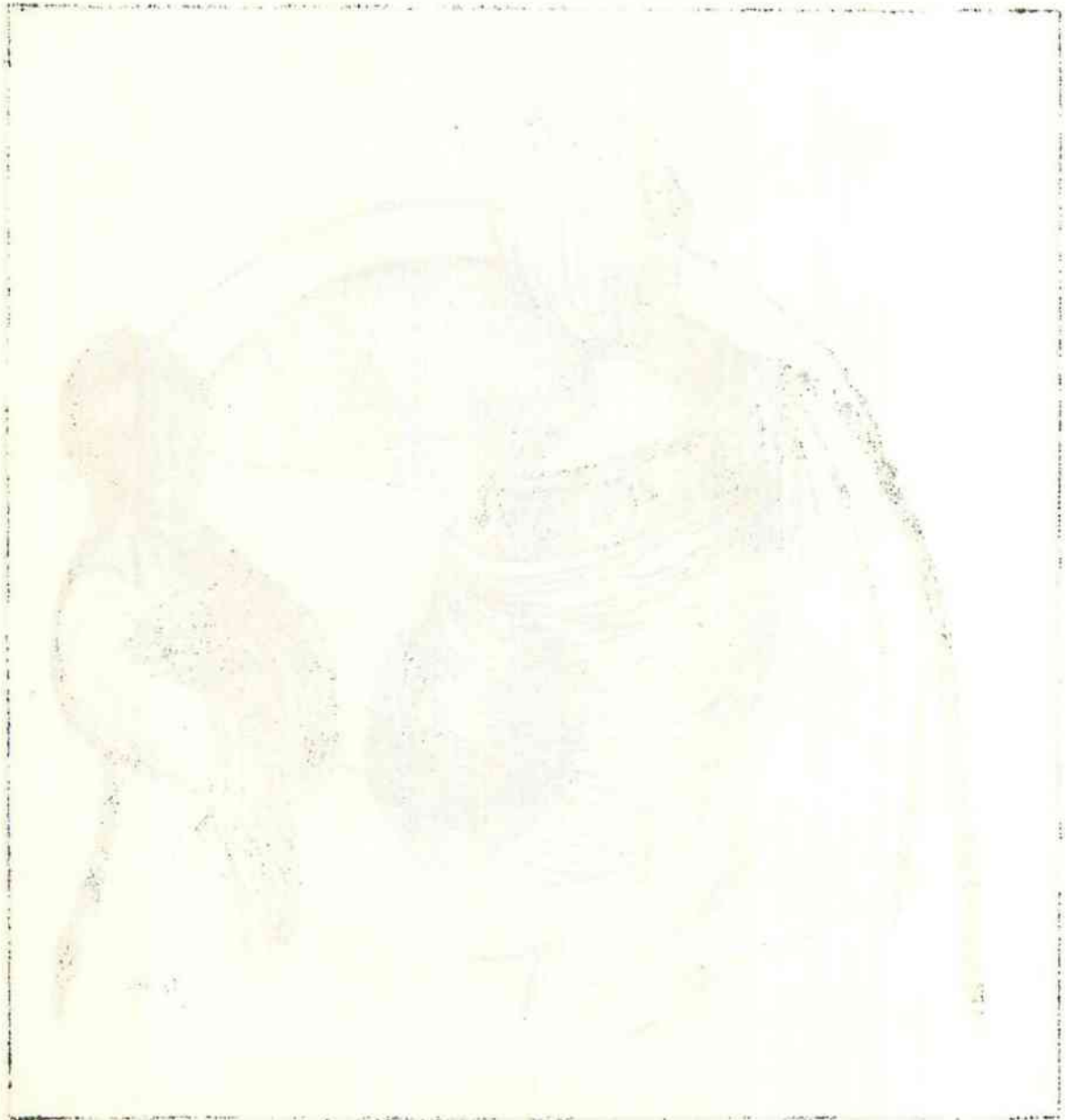
Cover illustration by Pamela Yates, illustrating DUNE (from SPECULATION-12)

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THE SPECULATOR AT LARGE (EASTER ISSUE) by Peter Weston.

NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT !

Today is Saturday the 30th March, the day before I'll have to get some new tyres for my car. It's also just 13 days to the Easter convention, if my mental arithmetic is correct. What is more natural than to receive a letter from Harry Nadler asking whether my entry for the convention Combozine can be received by April 5th ?

No, Harry, it can't!

A long time ago, it seems, I queried whether the THIRDMANCON committee would like me to put something into this revolutionary sort of programme book/souvenir magazine. And not hearing anything further, I promptly forgot all about the idea. It would now appear that, to meet commitments, I have exactly five days to produce this little epic (if that's not a complete contradiction of terms!).

That's all right. you see, because I'm backed by the vast resources of SPECULATION.

* pause for subdued laughter*

But seriously, there are a few bits and pieces I'd like to publish and a few events I've meant to talk about for the last month or more. First, for the benefit of any new people who may attend the convention, just who am I ? :-

No-one important, for a start. If your ceiling leaks when you're finally installed in a room at the St. Anne's, then don't come looking for me. I also have no idea of what's due to be on the programme, who is running what or whatever is going on with the BSFA. But I do edit this magazine called SPECULATION.

If you're interested in something that tries to review new books, print detailed critiques and evaluations of authors, and occasionally publishes little tit-bits of information from writers themselves, then you really ought to come looking for me. It won't even cost you anything - I'm giving away a special 16-page complimentary issue this year, FREE OF ANY CHARGE to whoever's interested. (Of course, you do have to sign your soul away forever, but that's a different matter....)

But enough of that. I've more interesting things to say, and stories of tell such as the TRUTH about the Birmingham Science Fiction Group, and about my CAR ACCIDENT last month, and about the wonderful things we've been doing at the YOUNG CONSERVATIVES recently. I can also hear Joe Patrizio in the background, with a review of something called VOICES PROPHECYING WAR. Perhaps Joe can take over.....

VOICES PROPHECYING WAR: 1763-1984,
By I. F. Clarke, Oxford University Press, 1966, 42s.

Review by Joe Patrizio.

"This one seems to have slipped through without reaching any reviewer," says Joe, "and I didn't even know of the book's existence until I saw it in the library."

Writers of the 'Glory of War' stories must accept a great deal of the responsibility for forming the attitudes that lead to the 1914-18 War. Is that a valid opinion? - it's one of those discussed in the book.

Because the book is an examination of that literature which deals with the whys and hows of future wars; the events causing them and the methods used in fighting them. The author shows how the pre-1914 stories emphasised the glory and righteousness of wars to come, while post-1918 stories are mainly anti-war, emphasising the stupidity and inhumanity.

Speaking of stupidity, some of the attitudes of the time almost approach this level on looking back at them. For instance, two ideas seriously presented by early 20th Century writers were that Britain was riddled with German spies, in the guise of waiters, and (even more mind-boggling) that German military bands were touring this country and between engagements, were laying secret concrete foundations for siege guns in the London suburbs.

"Personally," says Joe, "I was only vaguely familiar with a few of the earlier references, so what will probably be of interest to others like myself is the pretty comprehensive bibliography of 'future-war' books published between 1770 and 1964. The post-1945 books examined here will be familiar to most of us - those looked at most deeply include 198 & APE AND ESSENCE, although both DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS and THE DEATH OF GRASS are well thought of, and A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ and many others are mentioned."

Joe Patrizio, 1968.

That's Joe's opinion of a book related to our science fiction field of interest. He didn't say whether STARSHIP TROOPERS, for instance, was mentioned anywhere. I would certainly pick this as a title most worthy of inclusion, especially since, as both Brian Aldiss and Alex Panshin have suggested elsewhere, that it is a book which almost glorifies the idea of war. Come to think of it, there are a considerable number of Heinlein books which could be eligible. MOON IS A HARSH MISTRESS is nothing more (or less) than the story of the plotting of revolutionary war. So is SIXTH COLUMN and REVOLT IN 2100 ("If this Goes On") in their individual ways. But these observations aren't original - I'm cribbing heavily from Buz Busby in the current (No.17) issue of SPECULATION.

AND NOW, a special feature, rejected by VECTOR, SPECULATION and many other magazines. Only I can tell the inside story of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group;-

" CONTEMPT FOR THE OLD CONTEMPTIBLES ? "

I WAS JOKING, when I said somewhere or other that Bob Rickard was the man who would one day revive the Birmingham Science Fiction Group. Bob is the highly-dynamic individual who co-edits my fanzine, draws pretty pictures, collects Marvel comics and gets so disgustingly drunk that he walks into walls and smashes both his glasses and (by the look of him the day after) his face as well. But he's a great chap.

Anyway, Bob invited me along to a meeting at the University of Aston, which was very different from an fan-activity formerly taking place in the city. It's not the old BSFG under new management, not by any means. There's no sitting around in the lounge of a noisy pub, wondering when the landlord will get sufficiently annoyed to throw you out. (And do you remember, Rog, that night Alan Roblin made headlines in our Bulletin because he'd complained about flat beer and was subsequently ejected?) No, there's no more sessions at the Old Contemptibles - this new crowd have all the advantages...They meet in a warm, comfortable private lounge at the Students Union, have a bar, and will even be paid £50 per annum for doing so, if their Treasurer can ever get along to the Council meetings at the right time.

Bob is a post-grad. student in Industrial Design, at the Gosta Green University of Aston. At the last count he had roped in about 20 students, fringe-type readers of SF most of them, although there are a few potential fans. There's a library of sorts already, books and magazines mostly, although I've been unloading all my rubbishy old fanzines on to them. Yes, I've been doing my bit to introduce them to SF fandom, what with selling them lots of books and magazines I don't want, and introducing some of the others to the delights of fanzine production. (Translated, that means making them spend half the night collating issues of SPECULATION. Just you try handling 22 sheets of 300-off each !)

But really, the Birmingham people don't need my help. I'm an outsider, a kind of nut who gives away loads of peculiar duplicated bits of paper.

I'd thought SF Groups were a thing of the past, but perhaps they have merely 'gone underground' instead? Certainly the Delta people in Manchester are active, but otherwise all the old fan-circles seem to have died a death. In an old Operation Fantast (I think), and that's going back a bit by itself, there were mentions of at least a dozen Groups in England alone, and a rather touching little plea for a 'really big recruiting drive'.

Things have changed - but even now there are some centre of interest. Chairman Jim Metcalf (whom I know not) runs the Oxford University Speculative Fiction Group; there's the Birmingham people; Martin Pitt of

mediæval Handsworth fandom has organised a Group up at Nottingham University. Tony Sudbery said something about a circle at Cambridge, while Hartley Patterson (who is at the con, I hear) is Secretary/Treasurer and guiding light of a society in Manchester College/University (?)

Hartley wrote recently; "This is a Union-supported Group which meets on Union premises where we also keep our library. I suppose the difference between us and the normal fan group is that to obtain a Union grant we have to cater for the casual reader as well. Which gives a membership of 80 and about 10 addicts. There are no fans as such in the group, if you define a fan as a contributor to fanzines. I am the only person with any contact with the fan world, and that has been for about a year to date."

Looking at all this activity, I'm almost tempted to take up a suggestion made by Geoff Winterman of the old Cheltenham circle. Geoff finally married his Helen, and they're established in a large empty house near Sutton Coldfield. Who better to fill the house than fans? Or possibly Tony Walsh can offer a different opinion?

A LAST WORD FROM YOUR SPONSOR

I did hope to print an excerpt from our Quinton Young Conservatives Magazine, but on re-reading through it, I can see that the article is pretty turgid and not really worth the trouble. I will mention briefly that Rog Peyton (anyone remember him - editor of VECTOR for 2 years, Poul Anderson fan extraordinary, etc.) is chairman of our branch, and is getting married in July. Goodbye, Rog, it was nice to know you!

Anyway, I did promise to bore you with a note about my car crash recently. It wasn't my car, or even me driving. No, I was but an innocent passenger in an 1100 works car, being driven up to Leeds with a load of display items and castings for a small conference.

Bang! A tyre blew. We were doing 70 mph at the time, and what with the weight and the speed, the driver had no control at all. First we headed for the central reservation. I shut my eyes and then we were heading for the embankment. Crunch and we were driving sideways down the M1; Lurch and we were heading up the embankment, Bang and little bright lights spinning around... and I was lying on my stomach on the grass, a gentle rain of castings falling from the skies, the car a wreck with nose dug into the bank, glass everywhere, the driver climbing out of the shattered windscreen, lorry-drivers topping in great multitudes to pick up the pieces. I had been flung through the door on the first spin - on the second the roof caved in on my side (thank god I'd taken off my seat-belt just 5 minutes before). So the police came, and an ambulance, took us both to Mansfield Gen. Hospital and kept me in for nearly a week with shock, bruises on the chest and a great many aches, which still twinge now. I recommend the hospital, incidentally, nice nurses, but I don't recommend the experience. AND THAT is why SPECULATION was late, again.