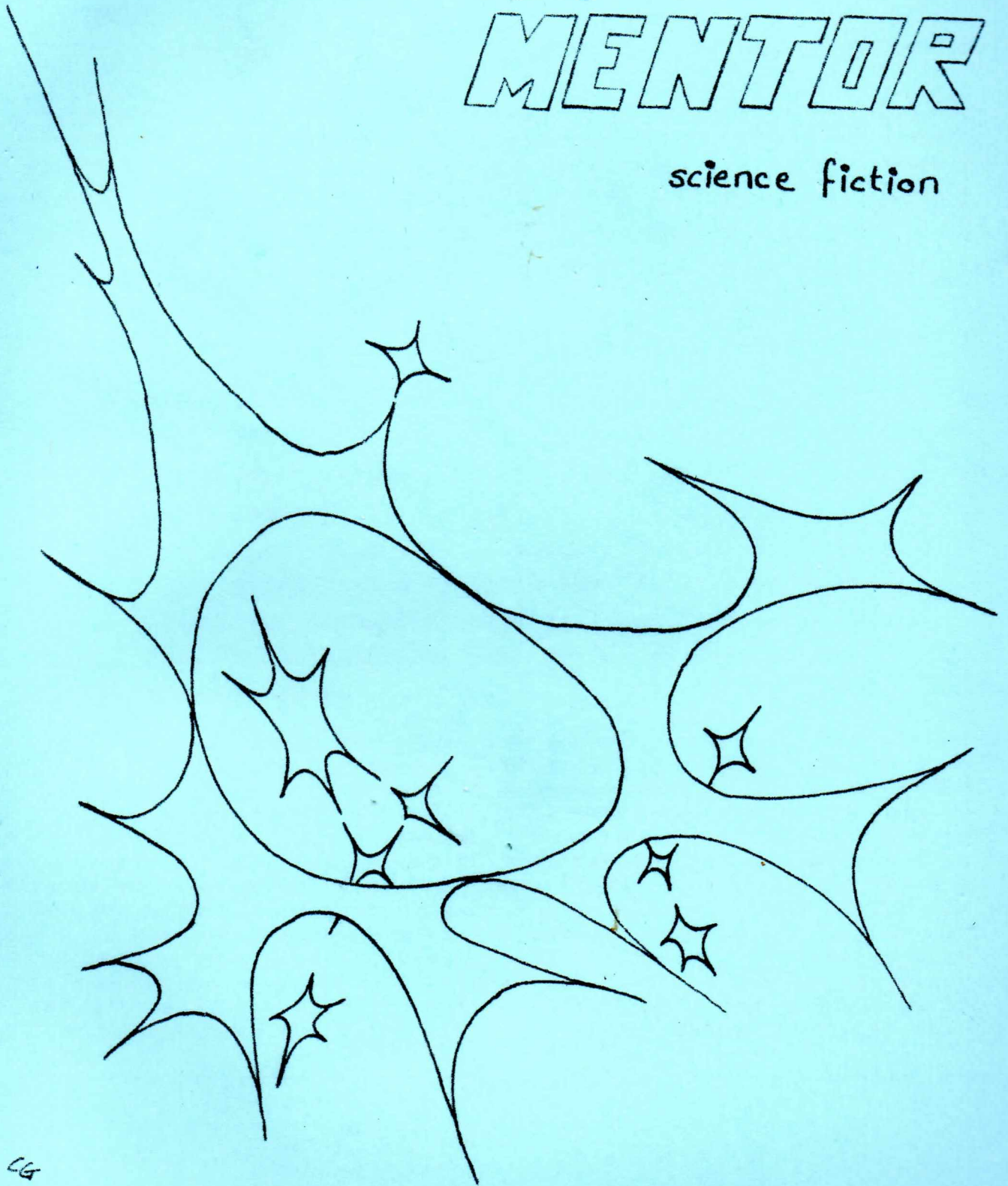
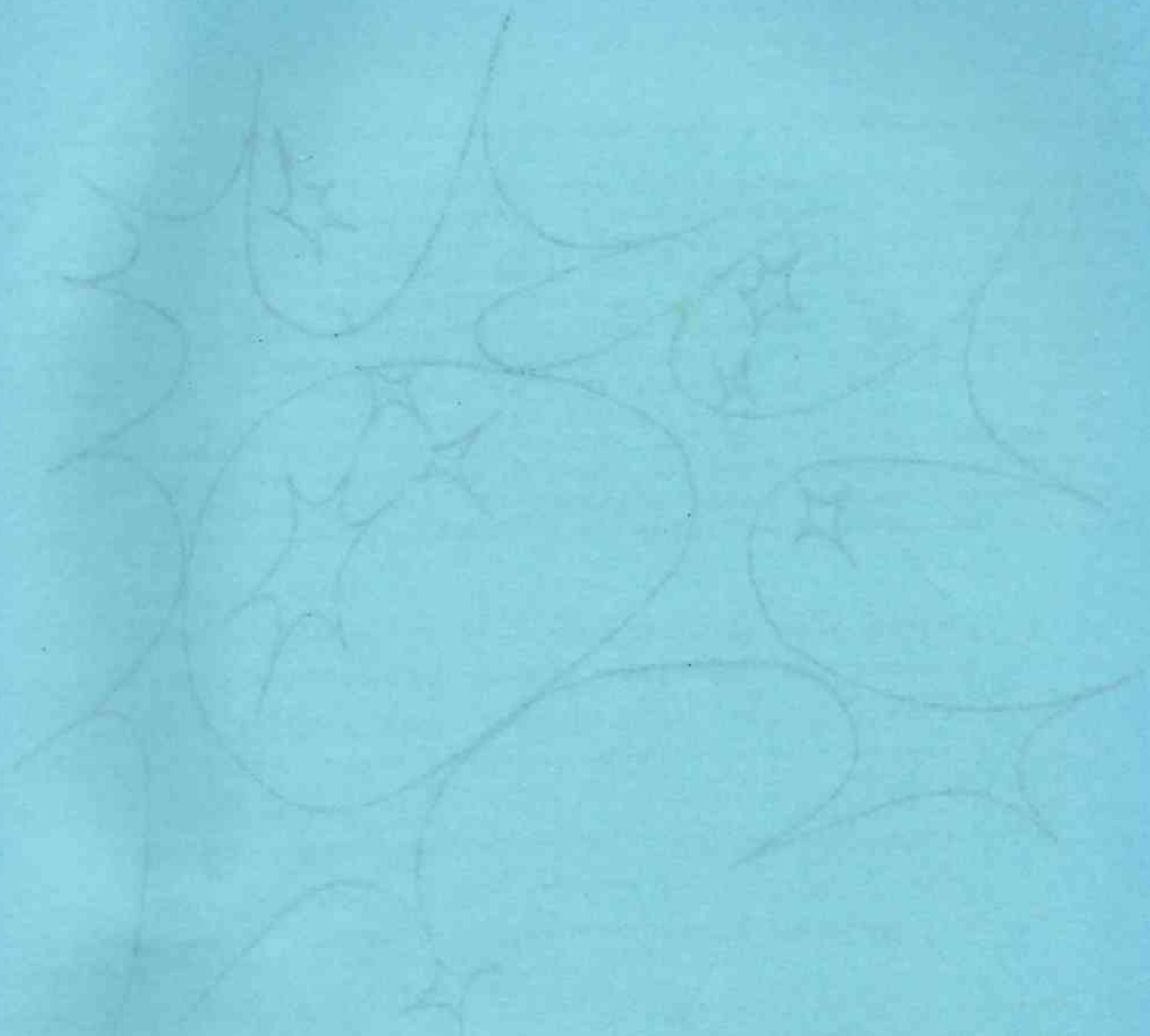


the
MENTOR

science fiction





NOTICE

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THE MENTOR

SEPTEMBER 1968

NUMBER ELEVEN

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THE MENTOR Number 11, September 1968. Edited, printed and published by Ron L Clarke at 78 Redgrave Rd., Normanhurst, N.S.W. 2076, Australia. Phone 48-5826. A25¢ per copy, \$A1.50 for six. THE MENTOR is also available for trade, contribution or letter of comment. The views expressed in this fanzine are not necessarily those of the editor. There are some people very close to the borderline with regard to receiving future issues of THE MENTOR. If you do not receive the next issue - or if you do not want to miss out on it, then I advise you to start thinking about subscribing or sending in a contribution. This fanzine costs money to produce and unless I hear from you within a reasonable time, those of you readers who have not replied to this issue will not receive future issues.

EDITORIAL

I wonder if anyone really knows the definition that accurately describes a fanzine? Plenty of people have ideas of what they consider it is not, but there seems to be a multitude of definitions for what a fanzine is. And this is as it should be. One of the things that a fanzine is not, is, of course, a prozine. There seems to be a slightly hazy attitude toward the term 'newszine', since some of these come pretty close to the generally accepted term for a prozine - a magazine published with the aim of making itself pay its way, with a profit. I am pretty sure there is no fanzine that pays well in relation to the money angle. What it does 'pay' in is, of course, usually why the fan-editor puts it out in the first place - whether it be 'legaboo', the desire to get his views in print, the pleasure of keeping in contact with others whom he likes, or just the plain fun of publishing something that others enjoy to read.

Just what is a fanzine? Even here in Australia each fan-editor has a different approach with his 'fanzine' which he tries to keep to, and which can be seen in his editorials and in his contents and setting out of his fanzine. Leigh Edmonds in RATAPLAN, Gary Woodman and Doug Kewley in APASTRON, Bernie Bernhouse in AUSTRAL FANTALES, Paul Stevens in OPUS, John Bangsund in ASFR, Gary Mason in BRAMSTON, and myself in THE MENTOR, all show their 'policies' in one way or another; and they are all different, though similar in some respects. One of the similarities is that the editor says: This is my/our own fanzine that we are publishing and we will publish what we want and if the reader is lucky enough he will like it too.

Fans show their personalities in their fanzines, myself no exception. Those of you who have seen previous issues of THE MENTOR may have wondered if I am always so serious as THE MENTOR seems to put forward. Another publication of mine, EOS, is designed to give my personal ideas full reign. I may combine both publications later on, but so far they are going to continue separately. EOS is meant to be an opinion sheet - so far.

There are several types of fanzines - if they can be put into 'types'. There is the stf type fanzine, taking in ASFR, THE MENTOR, APASTRON, and the now defunct ETHERLINE. There are the 'art' type zines - RATAPLAN and the comic fanzines - BRAMSTON and (so I hear) OPUS. These cover a wide range of material, but it is surprising how much of it is related to science fiction - modern art and comics both.

There are a few of my ideas re fanzines. I find the hardest thing to do in an editorial of this sort is to say what I want to say without saying too much. In other words, without showing how little knowledge I have of something and how to express myself without sidetracking away from the subject. - Ron L Clarke.

WARNING :- Someday I will reprint the editorial from THE MENTOR No.1 with its aims and the reason 'THE MENTOR' was chosen.

PHOENIX.

by Ron L Clarke

PROLOGUE.

The Survey Team's four-wheel drive vehicle jolted over the pot-holed red soil track. Twin cones of talcum-fine dust boiled from beneath its wheels, and stones five hundred million years old smashed against the vehicle's specially armoured underside. A hundred yards before reaching a creekbed that hadn't felt the cool gush of water for over a thousand years, the dust coated vehicle swung right and its smooth-worn tires bounced up an even rougher track. The jeep topped a rise. Spread out before the descending vehicle was an enormous basin-shaped depression some thirty miles in diameter. The occupants of the jeep, shielding their eyes against the white glare from the rocks surrounding them, could make out scattered clumps of spinifex, barely managing to survive in the jagged landscape of crumbling, rust coloured fragments of sandstone ridges. The jeep slid down the lip of the basin. Two hours of bone-jarring travel later the jeep pulled to a dust choked stop beside a scattered cluster of sunbleached plastic tents.

Hugh Cantrell lifted himself gingerly out of the jeep's door and stooped to massage his stiff knees. A tall, thin sunburnt man in faded khaki shorts and pale blue short-sleeved shirt was talking to the driver of the jeep. The driver shaded his eyes and turned and pointed to Hugh. The tall man nodded to the driver and, after muttering a few words to him, strode over to where Hugh stood sweating in the glaring sun.

"Welcome to Divola, Mr Cantrell," he said as he held out his hand. "I'm Willows, Director of this expedition."

Cantrell shook hands and Willows said, turning, "Better come out of the sun. This heat dries out skin faster than a man can sweat and we've had a couple of cases of sun cancer here already."

Willows led the way toward a gigantic pillar of red-streaked sandstone which towered five hundred feet into the blinding sapphire blue of the desert sky. Willows glanced toward Hugh and asked : "I take it they briefed you at Canberra before you left?"

"Only the bare facts," Hugh replied, "Apparently they want me to make up my own mind as to the significance of what you have here."

Willows snorted. "Typical of the politicians," he said, "Haven't the foggiest idea of what is going on."

They were nearing the pinnacle now and Hugh noticed a vertical fault at the base of the side toward which they were walking. Five feet wide at the base, it ran fifteen feet up the perpendicular face of the rock, narrowing to a scant two feet, six feet up from the level, powdery floor. Willows led the way in.

"If you wish to get your own idea of what is in here

I'd better let you see it before I give you the details," Willows said.

Bare electric lightbulbs hung at intervals from the low ceiling, shedding a pale yellow light over the flat sandy floor. "Got a portable generator," Willows explained, unnecessarily. Bleached bones of animals lay on the cave's floor, some half buried in the accumulated dust of ages. Twenty yards from the entrance Willows turned left and stood surveying a huge slab of red sandstone which must have weighed at least fifty tons. Its base rested on the floor of the cave. It was split from its top right hand corner down to the cave floor. Willows pointed to the split. "Fairly recent," he explained, "About four thousand years old."

Willows beckoned to Hugh and he slipped through the crack in the slab. Cantrell followed. The sight which greeted Hugh's startled eyes was totally unexpected ; even though he was expecting something strange, it certainly wasn't this!

There were five skeletons sprawled grotesquely near the far wall of the cavern revealed to Hugh as he stepped through the crack. There was a slight, musty odour in the cavern, as if even four thousand years had not been enough to dispel the smell of the ancient air trapped in the cavern so long ago when it had been sealed. One of the skeletons gleamed whitely in the diffused light from the dimly glowing lightbulb. The walls of the cavern were as smooth as glass and gleamed with a peculiar green light that was at the same time warm and icy cold. It was not this incongruity that Hugh was staring at. Nor the skeleton's grinning, apelike skull. As he stared at the other four piles of bones Hugh could feel the short hairs at the back of his neck stand up. A chill seemed to descend over the musty dryness of the cave. The outlines of the aeons old bones were manlike but something was arousing Hugh's basic instincts.

Willows spoke. "Radiometric tests show these bones to be at least thirty million years old."

Hugh shivered involuntarily as his gaze took in the folds of fabric covering the four heaps of bones and the transparent shards lying nearby.

Willows answered his unspoken question.

"Yes, they are wearing spacesuits."

Cantrell moved closer. There were two groups. The uncovered skeleton and one of the spacesuited skeletons were lying about ten feet from the second group of three figures. From the position of the latter group it seemed to Cantrell as though they had been trying to claw their way through the back wall of the cave. Hugh looked closer. One of the hands clenched over the rockface had six fingers.

"Have a look at this," Willows called.

Hugh turned to the tall figure who was pointing at the skeleton on the floor. He looked closer. It, at least, had five fingers. The back of the hominid's skull was melted ; the base of the skull fused to the top of the spinal column. Hugh turned to the skeleton of the alien lying nearby. It's skull

was split open, and wedged into the crumbling opening was a long splinter of marble.

Willows spoke, breaking the silence in the weirdly glowing cave.

"The skeleton of the hominid is that of a primate, Propiipithecus, whose remains were first discovered in Egypt, and at the time were dated at about twenty million years old. It appears that this figure might have to be changed to something like thirty million years.

"The skeleton's skull corresponds exactly to the fragments of Propiipithecus's skull which have been found in Egypt. There is something curious about that marble splinter, too. Do you see the pale green specks in it?"

Cantrell nodded as his eyes caught the sparkling green flashes from the marble splinter as he moved his head slightly.

"That type of marble," Willows went on, "Is very rare, and as yet has been found in only one place in Egypt."

Hugh's eyes narrowed as Willows continued. "What could an early hominid, forgetting the aliens for the time being, and a piece of marble which all evidence we have as yet indicates originated in Egypt thirty million years ago, be doing here, in the middle of one of the most inaccessible parts of this continent, thousands of miles from Egypt? My own theory is that the aliens captured the hominid and brought him here for some reason. He escaped and, coming upon this group of aliens, attacked and succeeded in killing one of them, only to be killed himself."

"That may very well be," Hugh said softly, "But what of the other three aliens? What could have induced in them such terror as they appeared to have been in? Surely not the hominid; and who or what killed them?"

"One must not forget that these beings were aliens and as far as we know, extraterrestrial ; very likely having had thought processes and emotions entirely different from our own." Willows replied.

As Hugh glanced up towards Willows to reply, a glitter on the cave floor caught his eye. Willows had, in turning to speak to Hugh, accidentally scuffed the cave floor with his shoe, and a small piece of rock had shifted, revealing an object nearly buried in the dust on the floor. Willows' eyes followed Cantrell's gaze and, on seeing the object, he stooped and, sliding his fingers around it, eased up loose pieces of rock and brushed away dust as he sought to prise it from the ground. He gave a tug and the glittering object came away from the floor. Willows straightened up as Hugh stepped toward him, asking, "What is it? Have you found one of these before?"

"No," Willows replied, his voice shaking with excitement, "This is the first artifact we've found. We haven't gone over this cavern yet in a really thorough search. On noticing the peculiarities in the skeletons we put in an immediate call to Survey, as we had been impressed with the necessity of

calling you people if anything of this nature came up. It seems to me that what we have here is much the same mystery as what that boy, Henry Randell, found in the Macquarie Ranges. After calling Survey, between time spent on our regular archaeological work among the pottery finds here and the Cosmic Ray research, some of the technicians have rigged up a sort of advanced sonar which, they claim, will pick up and outline on a cathode screen, any solid objects up to four feet below the ground surface. With a few alterations, they say, it would also register the presence of metal, up to fifty feet down, whether the metal is magnetic or not."

"That could come in useful," commented Hugh as he studied the strange artifact, "We brought some of our own detecting gear with us too, of course."

"It might be best if the technicians went over this," Willows spoke at last, "They may be able to make something of it."

On receiving Hugh's agreement Willows led the way through the crack in the sandstone slab, down the passage and out of the pinnacle. Hugh's vision went momentarily red as he was confronted with the white-hot inferno outside. Red blobs chased themselves across the landscape as his eyes adjusted themselves to the glare. He hurried after Willows across the sun baked sandy clay of the camp and into a large tent Willows had entered. Willows stood holding the flap open until Hugh entered then, excusing himself, he strode over to a group of white-shirted sunburnt men talking quietly among themselves around a tubular steel table on which were scattered parts of what appeared to be a geiger counter. Willows reached the group and presented the find to one of them. A sudden silence descended over the group. Willows spoke to them for a few moments, then turned and strode over to where Hugh stood, a few feet inside the tent flap.

Willows spoke as he came up to Hugh. "If anyone can unravel how that thing works and the use to which it was put, those boys should. It will probably take some time : in the meanwhile, it's nearly time for lunch. If you are feeling hungry we'll have something to eat."

Hugh nodded. "That'll suit me. After the trip I could do with a good lunch."

Willows smiled and said, "Follow mw."

He led the way towards a large green tent pitched over to one side of the camp, away from the pinnacle.

"As soon as the technicians have finished testing the artifact we will be called and we'll probably have a better idea of what we have on our hands," Willows said as he ushered Hugh into the table strewn tent.

Hugh cradled the device in his hands. It was a metallic mesh cup eight inches in diameter and four inches deep. The inside

surface was traced over with a network of microscopic silvery filaments. The outer surface shone with a curious iridescent sheen which shifted in a glassy film over the bottom of the cup. The cup thickened toward the edge. As he studied the network of filaments Hugh's eyes widened a little.

"Has this been tested thoroughly?" he asked Willows.

"Yes," Willows replied.

"..And nothing could be made of it?"

"No," Willows admitted.

"I think I know what it is," Hugh murmured. "It looks very much like an experimental headset that has been developed recently to store sensory impressions and to relay them directly to the subject's brain at any time. It acts as an amplifier though it does not have a powersource of its own incorporated. The brain of the subject is used as the powersource. No, don't look shocked," Hugh said as he caught the look on Willows' face, "It can't drain the subject's brain like a battery. It's innately impossible for it to do so. Anyway, I've had it checked out by the technician I brought with me from Canberra. He's an expert in electronics."

"You sound as if you were going to try it on," Willows said, smiling.

"I am," Hugh replied.

"What!" Willows exclaimed, "You are going to try it?"

"Someone has to," Hugh replied, "It's my job. As well as tabulating any unusual occurrence such as this find, it is my job to follow it up. In this case to see if there is any memory left in the headset after so long a time. Though I very much doubt it, myself. Is there somewhere we can go where I can test it, preferably with something I can lie on?"

"Certainly," replied Willows, "Follow me."

Willows led the way into a prefabricated shed along three walls of which ran long panels of instruments.

"Our central computer control," Willows explained, "It's really a glorified library. It tabulates our Cosmic Ray research and archaeological results with other previous findings."

He pointed to an adjustable chair standing before one of the panels.

"Is that what you're looking for?"

"Just the thing!" Hugh said as he swung on to it and took the glittering headset Willows handed him.

"Good luck!" Willows said.

"Thanks!" replied Hugh, "Here goes!"

He lifted the cup and, upending it, held it over his head and pulled it down.

To be continued.

- Ron L Clarke.

You all know who Gully Foyle is, of course. Gully Foyle is the hero of Alfred Bester's widely-acclaimed The Stars My Destination (alternatively known as Tyger! Tyger!) Gully Foyle is also the title of the most exciting new project to come out of Australian comicdom in years : the adaptation of the above-named book to a Sunday newspaper strip format.

The story begins in 1965, when Stanley Pitt, acknowledged number one Australian comics artist, began to adapt the above-mentioned book into a Sunday page format with a view of getting back into the comics game which he had not been associated with since his Silver Starr strip folded, some years earlier. Since then, he's been drawing covers for Cleveland Press westerns (and he still does), but he was itching to get back to comics : and this time he was hoping to break onto the American scene as well ... Stan's brother, Reginald ("Reg" for short), who was doing the script and detailed breakdowns for his brother, wrote letters to many top American syndicates attempting to sell them on the strip.

I must confess that I don't know a great deal of the background details of this stage, although I was aware of the project from the very beginning by virtue of my friendship with John Ryan, who was to play a big part in the Gully Foyle story a little later. John was the first fan to know about the project, as befits Australia's foremost comics fan. Late in 1964 John had published the first Australian comics fanzine and, following it up, and attempted to track down as many former Australian comics artists as possible. Stan Pitt, living in a neighbouring suburb, was one of his more notable successes. Indeed, Gully Foyle and the Pitt's determination to get back into the comics field was in large part a response to this contact.

It was only at the Ryan family's first face-to-face meeting with the Pitt family, some seven months after the first contact, that Gully Foyle first became known to outsiders ... but it was not yet ready to be made public, as the following passage from World Of Ryandom No.5 (in the twelfth mailing of CAPA-alpha (the Comics apa), September, 1965) shows : "... an exciting new project that the Pitt brothers are hoping to launch in the next couple of months. Being privileged to be in on the ground floor of this endeavour, we find it very hard not to break into print about it. However, our lips must remain sealed .. for the time being. When we get the 'all clear' signal from the Pitt household, you can bet your boots that you'll read all about it in CAPA-alpha!! If this project goes into orbit, we can assure you that it will be the biggest news ..."

This great enthusiasm on the part of the Ryans did not subside as John got more and more involved in the project. I knew at the time that "the Pitts' secret project", as it became known in comics fandom, was Gully Foyle, but I did not really feel entitled to press John for more of the type of background

information that would make such interesting reading today, since I was already up on most of fandom in knowing the answer to the mystery at all - and I didn't want to make John unpopular with Stan for breaking a confidence.

The secret was revealed first to the members of CAPA-alpha. John's eighth World Of Ryandom contained three tracings of panels from Gully Foyle pages, and detailed information on the project. This was in August, 1966, when (I gather) negotiations, which were being handled by Reg at this stage, were in progress with the Hall Syndicate. Unfortunately these negotiations later fell through. Meanwhile the members of CAPA-alpha were again privileged to be ahead of the game, as it were, as John now, in October, 1966, presented for their pleasure offset copies of the seventh of the Gully Foyle pages in a similar format to the insert in this magazine. CAPA-alphas were the first outsiders to see the beauty of the full-page breakdown with the huge panoramic panels that refuse to conform to the strict Sunday strip formula which insists on small panels of regular size, with numerous "dropout" panels for the benefit of papers who want to run shortened versions of their strips. However, this sort of non-conformity is not acceptable to the syndicates ... and for publication it just had to go, in favour of the traditional formula that allows papers to run full-page, half-page or third-page sized strips in one, two, three or four lines presented horizontally across the page or vertically down the side of it - the variations employed by newspapers are endless.

It was shortly after this that John conceived the idea of printing up the fourteen completed pages into the promotional sets that some readers may have seen, and bombarding a dozen or so of the major syndicates at once with copies. In the June, 1967, CAPA-alpha, John wrote : "At the present time, replies are starting to come in ... five, so far. I think it was obvious, to anyone who knows anything about newspaper strips, that the format, (while very easy on the eye) would not be acceptable to the syndicates. And that's the way it's panning out. But the letters have been encouraging ... with the most likely customer being the Ledger Syndicate." J.W. Higgins, President of Ledger, pointed out that the pages would need redrawing for syndication and also "considerable editing and tightening up". Perhaps this was because the strip followed the book so closely - utilizing huge slabs of Bester's text, as the reader will perhaps best appreciate from the accompanying sample - and consequently moved more slowly than the average newspaper comic strip. Unhappily, it seems that the very strength that we fans find so prominent in the Pitt's adaptation - that of close conformity with the book - was the main weakness as far as the syndicates were concerned.

But Higgins had another suggestion. "Are your people interested in doing only a Sunday page or are they prepared to do both daily strip and Sunday as well?" he asked John Ryan, who has handled all correspondence since - virtually - becoming the Pitt's agent. "Frankly the Sunday field is the toughest to

crack, though it can be done. If we had a choice we would come out first with a daily strip followed, in not too great a time, with a Sunday. We are interested, however..."

This brought all sorts of problems. For one, would the daily strip have a separate story line and, if so, who would write it : Alfred Bester? Reg Pitt? For another, there was the possibility that a six-days-a-week strip, in addition to the weekly, would necessitate the employment of another artist, and there was none suitable to be found. Fortunately, Higgins reconsidered. "Somehow, I just can't see it reduced to four column size, particularly in view of the number of descriptive and informative wordage balloons you carry over and above the dialogue balloons between the characters. These would be lost in a daily strip, I feel, and are only adaptable to a Sunday colour page. Because of the fine art, I can see it only as a Sunday, i.e., Prince Valiant." Prince Valiant, of course, is exactly the sort of strip Gully Foyle is : a real prestige product that any feature editor on a newspaper should be glad to carry in his paper. But as Higgins reminded Our Heroes, "Unfortunately, the average editor doesn't pay as much attention to his features as he should. To him there is no difference between Flash Gordon, Brick Bradford, and Gully Foyle - they all have rocket ships in them and are about space. Too, he's been running either Flash or Brick ; they have some readership, so why change? However, we do have the superlative art and I feel a sales job can be done provided GF is put into proper format, which will require that it all be redrawn and relettered with tightening up done along the way."

The last little snag to signing on the dotted line was strictly legal. Wondered Higgins : "To state our greatest fear it is the distance between us and trying to work at this distance with people that we do not know and would have no legal recourse against whatsoever if all of a sudden, after we had spent a fortune selling and promoting GF, you just stopped producing it. In this country we would, of course, have our attorneys act against such action immediately. In your instance we would be completely helpless and this is, very honestly and frankly, what worries the hell out of us all!!" His next letter suggested that "we should have six months' material in our hands before we went ahead with the release. We would need six pages with which to sell and during our sales campaign the Pitts could be finishing up another twenty pages. Once in publication we would want to keep ahead at all times..."

This was the sort of arrangement the Pitts and Ryans had envisaged anyway, so they readily agreed.

Ledger received those six redrawn pages towards the end of 1967 or early in 1968. Meanwhile, the first public news of 'he Gully Foyle project outside CAPA-alpha had been released in a long article on Stan's career in John Ryan's Bidgee column in Larry Herdon's fanzine, Star Studded Comics No 11 published in June of 1967. This published two full pages of Gully Foyle, pages 7 and 11 - as well as a full colour back cover utilizing

Gully Foyle 12

By ALFRED BESTER & STANLEY PITT ASSOCIATES

★ GULLY FOYLE HAS BEEN CAPTURED BY PRIMITIVE "SCIENTIFIC PEOPLE" WHO CARRY HIM OFF TO THEIR "MEDICAL CENTER". HE ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE...

THEY STRAPPED HIM DOWN ON THE OPERATING TABLE, SURROUNDED BY ANTIQUE APPARATUS AND CORRODED SURGICAL EQUIPMENT.

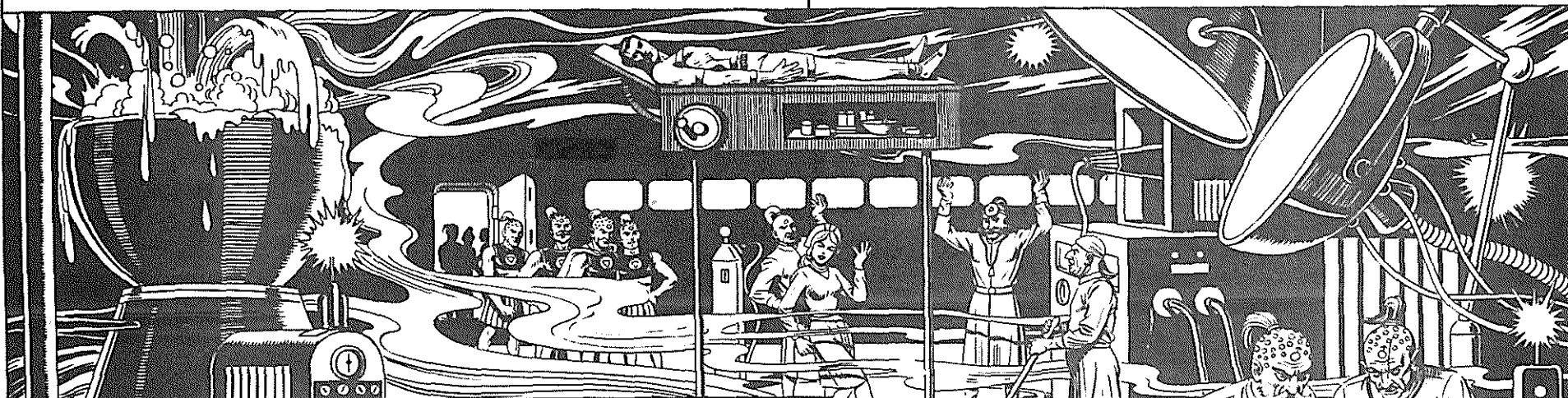
GULLY FOYLE'S FURTIVE BURST FOR FREEDOM WAS SHORT-LIVED.

PREPARE HIM FOR SURGERY!



THEY TURNED ON THE ANCIENT AUTOCLAVE. IT BOILED AND GEYSERED, FILLING THE HALL WITH HOWLING STEAM. THEY TURNED ON THE OLD FLUOROSCOPE. IT WAS SHORT-CIRCUITED AND SHOT SIZZLING BOLTS OF LIGHTNING ACROSS THE HALL.

TWO MEN BEGAN TURNING THE ANCIENT CENTRIFUGE. IT EMITTED A RHYTHMIC CLANKING LIKE THE POUNDING OF A WAR DRUM. THE ASSEMBLED BEGAN TRAMPING AND CHANTING. GULLY FOYLE'S HEART CONSTRICTED.



A TEN-FOOT FIGURE LOOMED UP TO THE TABLE. IT WAS JOSEPH ON STILTS. HE WORE A SURGICAL CAP, A SURGICAL MASK AND A GARISHLY PATTERNED SURGEON'S GOWN THAT HUNG FROM HIS SHOULDERS TO THE FLOOR. HE TILTED A RUSTY CAN OVER GULLY FOYLE. THERE WAS THE REEK OF ETHER.

I PRONOUNCE YOU "NOMAD!"



GULLY FOYLE LOST HIS TATTERS OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND DARKNESS ENVELOPED HIM. OUT OF THE DARKNESS VORGA T.1339 SURGED AGAIN AND AGAIN, BURSTING THROUGH HIS BLOOD AND BRAINS UNTIL HE COULD NOT STOP SCREAMING SILENTLY FOR VENGEANCE.



Next Week:

LONELY HEARTS - SARGASSO STYLE

the cover illo from the promotional sets and some single panels from pages 1 and 13. For anyone who is trying to gather together a full set of the 14 original Gully Foyle pages from their various reprintings in fanzines, SSC 11 is a must. I don't know where you will get a copy, though, since Larry has sold out.

The other fanzine to have carried extensive reprintings of Gully Foyle is Vanguard '68, published in May, 1968, by my good friend Robert Latona. Vanguard had pages 1-8 reprinted, and sells for \$US1-25 plus another \$US1-25 optional overseas airmail postage. Bob's address will be 148 South Wrexham Court, Tonawanda, New York 14150 until September 15th ; his stocks are steadily dwindling and if you haven't written by then there won't be any point in it - so I won't give the address for after that date.

And this present reprinting completes the listing and would give interested fans an almost complete set of the 14 Gully Foyle pages originally prepared. The six straitjacket-format pages cover roughly the same ground, and it's beginning to look like no more will be drawn, but we shall see.

With the legal snags about enforceability settled by the agreement that Ledger should always have six months' worth of pages on hand, it appeared that the only detail remaining was to actually sign on the dotted line... and so it was. But this, now, appears to have become a major problem in itself : the drawing up of the contracts. Not being a lawyer, I don't pretend to know what the difficulty is. However, I do know that the outlook for the return of Stanley Pitt's name to the newspaper comics pages right now is somewhat dismal. However, these things can change overnight - maybe the contracts, all drawn up and ready for the Pitt's signatures, will arrive in the Ryans' letter-box tomorrow. I can only report the facts, not predict them.

All we fans can do is cross our fingers ... and wait.

- Gary Mason.

JOTTINGS.

Since several people have been asking, below are the sub. rates for THE MENTOR. For various reasons (mainly publishing ones) I will not take an advance of more than a six-month period. There should be five, probably will be six, issues out in that time period. About one per month. Anyway, as below :-

A25¢ per copy.

\$A1.50 for 6 issues.

(airmail additional to the above).

This is not including trade or contributions. (I can see myself getting confused later on, with who is where...)

REVENANT

by Michael Black.

He was warm, swathed in blankets and sheets, dreading the cold beyond his bed-environment, wishing that this were Saturday with such intensity that his drowsy mind was three-quarters sure that he would not have to work today. His calendar watch still faintly luminous in the grey pre-dawn light leered as it forced the realisation of his fate upon him, its dial standing out clearly against the blur of his room.

The alarm clock on his bedside table rattled into damnable life, his world overflowing with intolerable noise. He forced the decision to turn it off onto himself and, summoning all his energies reached out and groped wildly until he had found the lever.

The window had begun to rattle irritatingly.

He had had enough! Angrily throwing off his bedclothes, he stormed haphazardly out of bed, staggered threateningly into the hall and down to the bathroom. The cold of the floor broke his angry determination into jagged, painful apathy. He stood before the mirror seeing only a blurred incomprehensible world through doped eyes.

He thought to himself : what was I going to do here? Then, unable to decide, unable to think of anything at all, determined to retrace his steps until he had had remembered.

Going out the door he recalled - a shower! Before the thought could evaporate in his steaming mind, he organised everything in preparation, tested the water and stepped unhesitating under - ice cold water.

Having rectified this error and thoroughly washed, dried, shaved and bled himself, he finished dressing and organised a meagre breakfast.

Risking indigestion as usual and with all the eyes he could muster watching the clock, he waded through the food and rushed out the door keyless, moneyless, coatless.

Climbing in the back window which he had neglected as usual to lock, he retrieved those items he had forgotten and ran to the bus stop to see his bus disappear down the hill.

Disgusted with life, love and the pursuit of cold, hard happiness ; cursing something even he left undefined ; he forced his out-of-condition body to gallop in its rough fashion down to the wharf only to see the ferry move ponderously out as he arrived.

About then he realised he had forgotten the book which he had meant to put into his briefcase because it would be overdue at the library by the next day.

Ten minutes later - the ten precious minutes by which his

arrival at work would be behind time - the other ferry on the run had berthed and he had rushed aboard trying vainly to claim the best seat.

His mind had leapt ahead to the scene later in the office where he would be reprimanded ; seized on the possible excuses, discounted them all, attempted to rationalise out of the situation by postulating a series of freak examples of luck by which he could make up for this ten minute delay in selecting various alternative bus routes to get him to work and dismissed these as improbable on this of all days.

By this time the ferry was pulling into the wharf and he had instinctively mounted the rail about to leap onto the wharf when the ferry's bow struck a pil and he lost balance to fall between the leviathan and the pier.

Crushed and dazed, he was sinking as he sleepily emerged from this psychic dream of the day ahead.

He realised the implications of his dream. The pre-dawn light was just coming through his window. He realised, true to his fatalistic outlook that nothing he could do could prevent his death in this way.

He was warm, swathed in blankets and sheets, dreading the cold beyond his bed environment, wishing

- Michael Black.

X
X
X

INVASION!

Whilst it is interesting and indeed gratifying to see the surge of interest in science fiction by film makers, cinema and TV, it is just as disappointing to see the quality of films we are getting. The latest TV effort THE INVADERS is just such a case. Q.M. produced THE FUGITIVE and now that that has been laid to rest it has come up with THE INVADERS. Instead of Richard Kimble we have David Vincent, instead of a one-armed man we have aliens with slight differences in their physical appearance.

Perhaps they wanted to make a good SF series, if so, why didn't they watch STAR TREK, or TWILIGHT ZONE and pick up a few pointers. Both these shows are interesting, well acted (in the main); taunt, acceptable backgrounds, in fact they are/were tops in SF. THE INVADERS to be sure had a weak base to begin with, but surely it could have been better scripted, made more believable, more exciting.

The similarity between Q.M.'s two productions FUGITIVE and INVADERS are cut from different clothes although they use the same pattern. The same dreary voice, regaling us with the why's and wherefors of the events from the weeks before, the

VALE! TONY BOUCHER.

- Ronald E. Graham.

Known to everyone in the science fiction and fantasy fraternity as 'Tony Boucher' (and also variously as 'H.H. Holmes', 'Parker White' and 'Herman W. Mudgett'), William Anthony Parker White died on April 29th, 1968, after a long illness.

An accomplished and talented author and man of letters, Tony Boucher will be missed and mourned by many, for he possessed a host of friends who loved him, and who undoubtedly will remember him, not so much for his literary attainments as for his warm humanity, his kindliness, his wit and his warmth, his enthusiasm and sheer delight in living and loving, for his companionship and for his rock-like loyalty and solid steadfastness as a friend.

Tony Boucher loved people and he excelled in the role of host - at conventions - on radio - at social gatherings and at home. His ready wit and his wide experience as a lecturer served him well, too, in his oft undertaken roles of Master of Ceremonies, Compere or Toastmaster. He was a connoisseur of food and drink, a dedicated poker player, a devoted football follower and a lover of poetry and music - particularly opera.

J. Francis McComas once said of him when they were co-editors of F&SF "The man is a nut on Opera. Stacked up in his living room are between four and five thousand recordings - operatic works ranging from an 1895 Angelina Patti to 1951 Enzo Pinza's. All too often when we should have been working on the magazine, he has beguiled me into listening to choice selections of these, accompanied by the most fascinating, most intelligent and least patronizing commentary on things musical that I have ever heard."

Tony Boucher took a keen interest in public affairs. He was a leading figure in his political party and in his church, always ready to lend his talents, time, energy and wits to a cause he believed in - the good of humanity and the humanities - or just good fun. He was, for instance, one of the early members of The Elves, 'Gnomes', and Little Men's Chowder and Marching Society!

Born on 21st of April, 1911, he is mainly known to science fiction and fantasy fans as an author, editor and reviewer. He was, with J. Francis McComas, one of the founding editors of The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction. In 1954 J. Francis McComas retired and Tony was sole editor until forced to retire, due to ill health, in April, 1958, although, due to the normal publishing lag, F&SF bore his byeline until the August, 1958 issue. He continued to act as book reviewer for F&SF until the January 1959 issue when his association with the magazine ceased.

As an author Tony Boucher's own stories lived up to the high standards he demanded as an editor. Brilliant imaginative concepts, bold and ingenious plots, excellent characterization, and dramatic writing gave his works a distinctly

individual appeal. Who, having read them will forget "Nine Finger Jack", "The Quest for Saint Aquin", "Snulbug" or "Mr Lupescu"?

Foundation President of the Mystery Writers of America, and a highly regarded member of the Baker Street Irregulars, Tony was equally well known in the detective-mystery field as writer, critic, reviewer and editor. Again with J. Francis McComas he was co-editor of Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine. As 'H.H. Holmes' he reviewed 'whodunits' for the New York Herald Tribune and as 'Anthony Boucher' did the same for the New York Times Book Review. He did reviews for the SF Chronicle and The Chicago Sun-Times, covering fantasy and science fiction for those journals.

In addition to these roles as short story writer, novelist, critic, reviewer and editor he was also well known as an anthologist both in the detective-mystery and science fiction and fantasy fields. In the former he compiled, among others, Great American Detective Stories; Four and Twenty Bloodhounds; and the Pocket Book of True Crime Stories. He wrote, too, the Introduction for "The Science-Fictional Sherlock Holmes".

It was however as an editor that he gained his highest stature. He had a flair for editing, an unerring literary taste coupled with an instinctive knowledge of what would sell successfully. This is exemplified in his article "The Publishing of Science Fiction" written for Reg. Bretnor's "Modern Science Fiction" where he analyses the market from the bad old days of the 1930 pulps when the rates were "microscopic fractions of a cent payable upon lawsuit" to some rosy future time.

As an Editor, the achievement of which he was most proud was the number of "first" stories that his magazine had printed. He delighted in finding new authors and giving them help and encouragement. Rarely, if ever, did he use a printed rejection slip. He preferred instead to devote his valuable time to writing a letter of rejection pointing out faults to the budding author and suggesting ways of improving the story. In the case of "Mary Celestial" for instance, Miriam Allen DeFord considered that he had contributed so much to the story that she refused to allow it to be printed otherwise than as a collaboration!

Among the many authors whose first stories he published, some of the better known are :-

Winona McClintic, Idris Seabright, Richard Matheson, Zenna Henderson, Mildred Clingermen, Ron Goulart, Chad Oliver, Avram Davidson, and Robert F. Young.

Yes! Tony Boucher will be missed. His impact as a man can be gauged from the closing passages of the enlogies of his friends :-

Poul Anderson : "Tony was gentleness, loyalty, wit, intelligence, understanding and love. Only now do we begin to see how much he gave us".

Miriam Allen DeFord : "I shall miss him for all the time I have left".

Robert Bloch : "Tony will be missed and mourned but few have left

behind such happy memories for so many!"

Judith Merrill : "Tony never said "Good Bye", he always said "God Bless". When he said it I always thought it quite possible that God really would. Good-Bye Tony - God Bless!"

Margaret St. Clair : "I think the remark that fits him best is something I once heard him say about a mutual acquaintance 'Oh, he's a lovely man'. It's painful to have to put that remark in past tense!"

J. Francis McComas : "He was a man who 'take him all in all, we shall never see his like again'".

Reg. Bretnor : "If even Wellington could weep for his dead friends, then so can we".

Avram Davidson : "It is darker than it used to be".

Philip K. Dick : "I am not the person I would have been if there had been no Tony Boucher".

Isaac Asimov : "All the gatherings of science fiction fans will be the sadder in spirit and in fact for his going".

Randall Garrett : "He was the friendliest, most understanding man I have ever known. I shall treasure his memory forever".

Joe Ferman : "His too infrequent visits to the New York office were occasions for joy and pleasure with a warm, kindly man".

Mildred Clingerman : "In his last letter to me Tony wrote, 'Does it sometimes seem to you that everybody is dying?' Yes, Dear Tony ; it does".

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- Ronald E. Graham.

INVASION! cont.from p13(I'll measure handwriting/typing lengths same infernal,sorry,eternal search for the nasty horrible^{yet!}-RLC.) aliens, or one armed man. The same supposedly STIRRING music, the same old cliché ridden dialogue and sound effects, ad nauseum.

Perhaps if some of our ardent fans or(more interested) viewers wrote to studios etc.,we could get results? Maybe,maybe not, but at least we could try. How about letters, reviews of SF features, then send the clippings to studios; fanzines are going all over the world. If all these fanzines co-operated on things of this kind, perhaps we could promote SF-the better type of SF, the kind of SF that we like and then we can prove to others that it is worth reading, that SF is exciting,colourful and at times enthralling material. After all, we don't want to be selfish and keep SF all to a few aficionados.If STAR TREK can interest a skeptical man of forty odd in SF then what can two, three or more good exciting SF films do?

Okay, SF fans, let's start our own movement - promote SF everywhere!

- Leah Strahle.

REVIEWS :

BREVITY, THE SOUL OF STF. (If not of review.) -Brian Richards.

The most enjoyable and simultaneously the most tantalising and irritating thing in the whole field of s.f. is a good anthology. Taking a very close second place in both feelings is a good volume of an Author's Short Stories. It may seem to you that this is a paradoxical statement and tis true that enjoyment and irritation are as fine a pair o'doxies as you would find anywhere.

Most, if not all, of the finest original ideas in the field of speculative fiction, are to be found in short stories, or, in the longer Short Story that the erudite in their wisdom designate the novella. The enjoyment of a new idea, or a new slant on an old idea, tersely and concisely expressed in a plot, which because of the space limitations imposed, must be speedily developed and brought to an early conclusion, is in itself, that which provides the bread and butter of the prozine. John Foyster's "favourite" fan "The Man On the Workshop Floor" pays out his hard eaned loot just for this very enjoyment. Since he is the chap who pays for the survival of the prozine. Then his tastes obtain maximum editorial consideration or we would not have prozines to castigate. The classic example of ignoring the Man on the Workshop Floor is "New Worlds" and we are all aware of the difficulties experienced by this fine intellectual journal. The classic examples of pandering to this mental approach can be found in Analog, Galaxy, If, F & SF, and it is quite obvious that Messers Campbell, Pohl and Ferman have no intention of following Mike Moorcock's Suicidal plunge.

Whilst it is manifest that good ideas and conciseness form an excellent portion of the average prozine, the lack of development of these ideas and the lack of character expression establish beyond contradiction that good s.f. writing is being edited out of existence in these periodicals. Ideas as entertainment are fine, but only contribute partially to the development of s.f. as a literary field of endeavour. This is exactly the point where irritation creeps in and the thoughts of what might have been written raise their tendrils into the conscious levels of the brain.

It is quite astonishing how many short stories could, had the opportunity been offered, could have become good novels, quite a number of these major novels. Sometimes an author is given the opportunity to rewrite a short story as a novel but this is all too seldom.

That preamble leads me to the fact that, recently, four excellent collections of short stories and two fine anthologies have come my way.

The View From the Stars.	Walter M. Miller	Panther	80¢
The Worlds of Robert F. Young.		Panther	80¢
Out of My Mind	John Bremner	N.E.L.	60¢
News from Elsewhere	Edmond Cooper	Mayflower	60¢

Which are first class one Author collections which

could grace any bookshelf. Written by men who are acknowledged masters of the craft.

Rulers of Men	Ed. Santesson	Pyramid	60¢
Six Great Novels	Ed. Conklin	Dell	Priceless

Top grade anthologies by top grade anthologists and two more for the permanent collection. All six of the books repay reading by giving enormous pleasure and all six will frustrate you with thoughts of what they could have been.

- Brian Richards.

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AUSTRALIAN COLLECTION.

- Leah Strahle

Have you seen the collection of Australian Science Fiction yet? If not, I urge you to go out and buy a copy. It is called "The Pacific Book of Australian S.F." and is edited by John Baxter. There are twelve stories in this volume; like all collections it has its poor points, but on the whole it is very good, and I would like to see more like it.

Australia has some excellent SF writers and it is a shame we don't see more of them, and let the world know that we can produce world class writers.

Jack Wodhams' story "There Is A Crooked Man" is in its way a brilliant piece of writing; confusing perhaps, enigmatic certainly, but worthy reading over and again. There is no need to mention A.B. Chandler, L. Harding, D. Broderick - their stories need no word of commendation, their writings are always good. Stephen Cook, Colin Free and Kit Denton may not be well known, but they should be. Martin Loran is a two man team, consisting of two well known Aust. authors.

All in all this volume is first class material. The cover perhaps could be better, but then again the next volume's might be. Perhaps if enough are sold and a few letters to the publishers sent, we may get more collections, or our own Aust. SF magazine. We have the talent in Australia to put one out, so why doesn't someone start pushing for one - like IF or GALAXY, but an Aussie publication. There are thousands of the American monthlies sold in this country - there is obviously a market for them.

So some of you SF readers unite and try getting publishers interested in doing something for us along these lines.

- L.S.

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THE ESPIONAGE ROOM

- Michael O'Brien.

Does anybody out there remember back when the spy was an anonymous civil servant and not a public hero? Aha, if you said "Yes", you've revealed your true age! As I write, my

transistor booms out the haunting tune from the TV show "Mission Impossible". This is one of the better shows, and it will be mentioned below.

It all started with James Bond, 007. In 1953 Ian Fleming wrote "Casino Royale", the first Bond novel. When the film-makers got hold of Bond, Fleming's success skyrocketed into a world craze. Strangely, Fleming was assistant to the Director of Naval Intelligence during the Second World War, but the films have become more fantastic with each movie. The latest film, "You Only Live Twice", bears no more than the slightest resemblance to the novel.

The next most successful spies are, I suppose, the Men from U.N.C.L.E. These are the most gadget-ridden heroes in history, with secret weapons in each pocket. Robert Vaughn (as Napoleon Solo) and David McCallum (as Illya Kuryakin) have battled their nemesis, THRUSH, through hundreds of TV shows, half-a-dozen movies, and (at last count), a total of fourteen books.

Mission Impossible is a refreshingly 'straight' show, with barely a wisecrack or satirical snigger in the show. The stories of this show have even been accorded the honour of an article in TIME.

The best show produced by all this madness is "The Avengers". Starting in Britain when 007 and UNCLE were only ideas in the movie/TV minds, Patrick MacNee has waltzed through innumerable episodes, always impeccably clad. His two kinky girlfriends, Honor Blackman and Diana Rigg, in turn, have assisted him in overcoming hundreds of bizzare threats to the Empire, and many of the themes were pure sf.

Of course, we mustn't forget Patric McGoohan. His show, "Danger Man" (retitled "Secret Agent" in the US of A) was a top-rater for some years. McGoohan, as a spy whose conscience pricked him occasionally, refused to have anything to do with the usual seductive beauties in his show on the grounds that his children watched it. As PUNCH remarked, apparently he didn't mind them watching the violent fights and murders that abounded.

It is one of the symptoms of this craze that a host of anti-hero spies have emerged. John Gardner's Boysie Oakes, for example, is an inept coward who somehow manages to save the day in each book.

The first spy story was not written till the 20th century, though espionage is one of the oldest professions. The writers seem to be making up for their lost time, in an era when real spy-agencies are spending millions on espionage and counter-espionage. To close, I might mention that the CIA maintain a complete library of spy fiction in their main building at Langley (Va.).

- Michael O'Brien.

** The above article, while not having a direct link with sf, is about a field which, every day, becomes more closely bound up with sf techniques and ideas. Which is why I printed it. -RLC**

The R and R Dept.

Ron Graham
Yagoona, N.S.W.

Dear Ron,

To see one of the world's greatest men of science fiction so contemptuously dismissed as a "pompous ass" by your reviewer Brian Richards in his article "International Science Fiction" in THE MENTOR No 10, shocked me immensely, and, I feel impelled to write a few words regarding him - not in his defence, for Walter Ernsting's standing and reputation in the SF world is so great that this would be both unnecessary and presumptuous - but rather to remind your readers of his tremendous contribution as a fan, author, editor, translator, critic and reviewer.

I do not know Mr Brian Richards, and to my knowledge have never read any of his stories, so I am unable to offer any direct comparison of either him or his writings with Walter Ernsting or his works, but I was fortunate while in Germany a few years ago to meet and talk with Walter. I have read and have in my library over 200 of his works, both novels and short stories.

The man was a delight to talk to and his knowledge of the world's science fiction, and the world science fiction scene, is encyclopaedic.

Walter was born in Koblenz on 13th June 1920. During World War 2 he served in the German Air Force - communications - and was stationed successively in Poland, Lapland and Russia. He was captured by the Russians and spent the years 1945-1950 in a prisoner of war camp in Karanganga, Siberia. Here he suffered great privations and for two years after his release was too ill to work. In 1952 however he became an official translator for the British Occupations Army.

Interested in science fiction from his earliest years he took the opportunity during this period to devour all the British and American SF he could lay his hands on, and decided to make his future career in the field of SF.

He convinced Erich Pabel of the Publishing firm of Pabel Verlag of Rastatt in Baden that there was a future for science fiction in the German-speaking countries and was appointed editor of the "Utopia" publications - Utopia Kriminal, Utopia Sonderband (or Grossband) and Utopia Zukunftsroman. He translated British and American SF for printing in these periodicals, and, under the pseudonyms "Clark Darlton" and "F. MacPatterson" wrote numerous original stories.

Walter Ernsting's claim to have founded German Fandom is a perfectly valid one. He meant, of course, organised fandom. In the period Mr Richards speaks of - 1945 - Germany was at war - a torn country, smashed, disorganized, still licking its wounds and under military occupation. Organised fandom, as might be expected, was non-existent and no SF was being printed.

Walter Ernsting laboured mightily in the cause of SF and in his capacity as editor, sponsored the setting up of clubs and

made his columns available for news of them. He was honoured by being made President of SF Club Europa, and, later of the Science-Fiction League. He is most highly regarded in Germany, indeed throughout Europe and the World and is probably Germany's combined counterpart of Forrie Ackerman, John W. Campbell and Doc Smith.

Walter is, in my opinion, the most prolific writer of SF that the world has ever known, even including John Russell Fern. He has written well over one hundred novels and hundreds of short stories. In addition, he has translated more than three hundred of the best American and British SF stories into German. The fans of Germany and other German-speaking countries have awarded him five "Hugos".

His was the brain that conceived "Perry Rhodan - The Heir to the Universe". Perry Rhodan is the epitome of all the great characters of science fiction that Ernsting admired - and he knew them all. Perry Rhodan is an amalgam of Kim Kinnison, Hawk Carse, Tarzan, Superman, Buck Rogers, John Carter and Dick Seaton, plus any others found necessary from time-to-time. The adventures of Perry and his comrades, and other characters, cover the complete range of SF plots up to and including inter-galactic travelling in the E.E. Smith tradition replete with E.Ts., Androids, Robots, BEMs, planets of every conceivable type, Galactic Empires etc etc. Perry Rhodan appears weekly in "Perry Rhodan : der Erbe des Universums" and monthly in "Perry Rhodan - Planetromane", the latter being full length novels. Each issue sells over 200,000 copies - more than twice the circulation of the top U.S. monthly prozine. In other words, Perry Rhodan sells over one million copies per month.

For one man to produce all that wordage is obviously impossible and when conceiving Perry Rhodan, Ernsting at the same time, conceived something equally important - a team of writers to produce the series. This team originally consisted of himself (as Clark Darlton) looking after characterization and general outlines. K.H. Scheer to do the plotting for all stories to preserve continuity and coherence, plus three others, Kurt Mahr (a pseudonym of Klaus Mahn, a physicist) W.W.Shols (Winifred Scholz) and Kurt Brand as assistant writers.

This team produced some fifty stories and Ernsting tried to sell the series to Pabel Verlag, the "Utopia" people, but they were wary an unenthusiastic and refused it.

Eventually he sold it to Moewig-Verlag of Munich, and the Perry Rhodan saga began - a success story on an unprecedented scale. It was a smashing hit and attracted thousands of new readers every week. Perry Rhodan clubs sprang up all over the German-speaking world, Perry Rhodan comics appeared and the first Perry Rhodan film is now showing in Germany.

The latest Perry Rhodans I have received are No 346, "Warnung aus den Jenseits" by H.G.Ewers and No 347 "Die Sucher von M-87" by William Voltz. These two latter writers were added to the team after W.W. Shols had been wooed away by Pabel Verlag to head an opposition team to write the "Mark Powers"

series (based on the adventures of Flash Gordon), which, however, proved unable to compete with Perry Rhodan and folded in 1964.

Perry Rhodan appears in France and a recent news release from the States advised that ACE had purchased the American rights to the series so that the English-speaking world may soon become familiar with the greatest selling SF character of all time.

One could continue dealing with further facets of Walter's career, but I think your readers will now have enough facts of background to judge whether Walter Ernsting should be called "a pompous ass" or whether the author of those remarks should instead address them to a mirror.

- Ronald E. Graham.

— 8 —

John Ryan
Fairfield, NSW.

Dear Ron,

Like Gary Woodman, I didn't see copies of THE MENTOR 7 & 8 ... so I have no idea whether they earned the Victorian awarded title of being a crudzine or whether No 9 was a big improvement on No 8. While No 9 may not have been a Hugo contender, I could find nothing in the issue which would put it in the "crud" class. It was a very neat, cleanly produced little fanzine. The big problem, of course, was that it appeared to contain very little. The lack of a solid article was only too obvious. No doubt you'll tell me that you can't publish what you don't have. Oaky! So don't publish. I don't subscribe to this theory of "anything's better than nothing" - not when you're asking people to pay for it. (** I may ask for subs, but who says I get them? - RLC **)

One thing I can say with some certainty is that THE MENTOR No 10 was a great improvement on the previous issue. This was, mainly, because of Gary Mason's excellent article on the Censoring of STAR TREK. Gary's "readability rating", with me, goes up and down like a yo-yo! Sometimes I can enjoy it ... other times I can't make the required effort to understand it. With this article, however, I had no problems... in fact, it's about the best thing he's done, to date. It's obvious that a great deal of time, record-keeping and research went into this article ... and I'm pleased that it received an airing in Australia. If you can lead off each issue with articles of similar length and interest, you've got it made.

If what John Brosnan tells me is correct, no doubt your readers will descend on Leah Strahle's little tribute to Jules Verne. I gather that a great deal of the technical information applicable to Verne's "inventions" were available at the time. Not only that, Verne botched the job by not making use of

much of this information and came up with gadgets that were unworkable, when they could have been workable!! Ask Brosnan, he has all the details ... I hope! (ulp!)

Seems to me you may as well run the full address of each writer, in your lettercol, as I don't see the purpose of half an address. If, for some reason you don't want to disclose a writer's address - don't put anything in. I can't lay my hands on THE MENTOR No 9, at the moment, but I wanted to register my distaste at the short piece on the inside back cover that was some form of criticism against one of the leading lights in the Sydney SF group (Zian Wilkinson??). The thing that annoyed me about it was (and I don't know if the dig was merited - nor do I know the person concerned) the fact that a penname was used. Pennames may be alright for reviews, articles etc. - but when used in this manner can only be compared to anonymous letters, the last card in the pack. You will be doing your fanzine and yourself a disservice if you allow this type of thing to happen again. If someone feels they have a legitimate gripe, they should have the guts to sign their name - or shut up!

Bestest,
John Ryan

** I was thinking about giving the full addresses myself. So, commencing with the next issue I will print the full address. If you don't want it published, say so; otherwise it goes in. With regard to the question re pennames, There has been only one penname used (to my knowledge) in Nos 7 to 10, and that was not the "penname" John refers to. That is the person who wrote the article's actual name. As to what I printit will be in the bounds of good taste. -RLC **

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A.M. McBurnie
Ingleburn, NSW.

Dear Mr Clarke,

Thank you for sending me THE MENTOR's No 9 and 10. I also received the others.

The pieces in No 9 were, I thought, only items, and suffered because of this. Being a computer programmer, I noticed this particularly in the item on computer technology. While essentially correct, to have been really accurate it needed more space - yet what place does this sort of thing have in an sf fanzine anyway? P.G.D. was, I thought, especially vague about computer languages. I will just point out that many computers can understand (this is really the wrong word to use) written English, or at least a subset of it known as COBOL. This language looks like English : you can write "ADD TOTAL TO FINAL-TOTAL", and so on. But you still need knowledge of the computer to use any programming language.

I am enclosing a series of "pictures" which may be of interest to you, produced by a UNIVAC 10-04 computer. I'm told you can make the I.C.L. Nineteen-hundred series whistle tunes via a loudspeaker on its console typewriter.

Yours sincerely,
A.M. Mc Burnie.

** The article by Peter Darling was only meant to be a sketch of the background of computers -RLC**.

—o—

Douglas J. Kewley
Mordialloc, Vic.

Dear Ron,

After being deluged by a number of zines over the last few weeks, I have been goaded to write. Keeping in with my position as an uninformed, non expert about nothing I am usually very reluctant to utter words. It's bad enough for APASTRON (note the plug?). Your remarkable THE MENTOR (again note the capitals) has definitely rocketed up in quality since the ninth issue. I definitely approve of your inclusion of a piece of fiction. Hey, they were both written by Michael Black.

The stories were of a highly fanciful nature. To me there was no real continuity; only the ramblings of a writer who started to encapture random thoughts on paper. (Keep at it!)

I will have to finish now, as I am a Uni student who wants to STAY one.

Yours in SF,
Douglas J. Kewley.

** OK, there is a plug for APASTRON. When is it coming out? -RLC**.

—o—

John Zube,
Wilshire St.,
Berrima 2577.

Dear Mr Clarke,

Your THE MENTOR issues get better and better. On page two of THE MENTOR you mention that there are four sf clubs in Sydney. Why didn't you mention their address? Parochialism and sectarianism? As you rightly say, judging by the number of sf booksales there is room for ten such clubs. But they are likely to be established only once the existing clubs are better known. Then the natural development of more clubs would be through splits in existing clubs. Instead of of opposing such divisions you should welcome them - as contributions to increased

diversity and division of labour - and should keep up communication between them. I do completely share your last sentence in this article : Support any s.f. club ..." So, to give me a chance to do this in my own way, please give me the addresses and if you know them - the meeting times and places also.

Yours sincerely,
J.M. Zube.

** The addresses are included in CLUBS! NEWS on the back cover of this issue -RLC **.

—o—

George Olmstead,
Fairfield, Vic.

Dear Ron,

I'M mighty amazed to see you've roped in God as a reviewer! He sure told off old Fred Pohl and that pompous ass Mr SF Europe. What about getting him to debunk even older John W. Campbell and those other pompous asses, Forrest J. Ackerman, Murray Leinster and Robert A. Heinlein?

Sciencefictionally yours,
George Olmstead.

** Yes, well ... -RLC **.

—o—

G. Hord
Revesby, NSW.

Dear Ron,

Congratulations on THE MENTOR No.10. Keep up this rate of improvement and ASFR will soon have to look to its laurels. Certainly Sydney has never seen a better fanzine, with the possible exception of R. Nicholson's FORERUNNER, and, even that is doubtful. Typing, duplicating and layout were good and general appearance by far the best yet.

I enjoyed the articles, especially "The Secret Censors" and "Jose Luis Borges". Reviews were fair to good, but I must comment on Brian Richards' "International Science Fiction No.1"

This reviewer must be the most self-centred, egotistical megalomaniac ever to put his pen to paper - "Old Fred Pohl's conception is a miscarriage, which is indeed almost an abortion".

"Old Fred Pohl" is 48 - hardly doddering yet. This is the same greatly respected and admired Fred Pohl whose "Worlds of If" has won the top acclaim of the World's Fans in Conventions for the past two years - two Hugos in successive years! He also printed Larry Niven's "Neutron Star", which won the Hugo for the best short story! Jack Gaughan, the art director of "International Science Fiction" is the same Jack Gaughan, who, this year, made fan history by winning the Hugos for both Best Pro Artist and Best Fan Artist. (** I've always wondered about that.

-RLC **)

Can Brian Richards be talking about the same magazine which I read and loved? Is my taste in SF so offbeam I wondered as I read through the review and found that one story only had won the reviewer's acclaim?

Then I came to his final paragraph. After reading this my faith in myself was restored. Anyone who can describe Mr Science Fiction himself as a "pompous ass" is displaying such a colossal ignorance of science fiction that his opinions can hardly be classed as worthy or authoritative.

Still, in THE MENTOR 9 you said you were prepared to print anything, so Brian Richards too I suppose is entitled to have his views printed - offbeat, uninformed and offensive though they may be.

Yours for Science Fiction,
C. Hord.

—o—

Morton Stenhouse
Revesby, NSW.

Dear Mr Clarke,

Normally I read the SF fanzines without being stirred to comment. I loved your THE MENTOR NO.10!, but one review raised my ire, due to the fantastic conceit of the reviewer. This was "International Science Fiction, Vol.1 No1" by Brian Richards.

The patronizing, know-it-all air of this reviewer's remarks made my hackles rise. I instantly disliked his derogatory remarks about two of science fiction's well loved multi-hugo winning editors and authors, but what really stirred me to write was the snide reference to Damien Broderick!

No actual words of condemnation were written, but neither were any words of praise, and, in its context I read that the story was being damned, not with any faint praise, but with no praise at all!

When I first read "The Disposal Man", I thought it excellent. Re-reading it in "International SF" I again thought so. So did Frederick Pohl or it wouldn't have appeared there. For a short story, "The Disposal Man" is a gem of its type well worth its inclusion in Issue N.1 of an International SF Magazine. It is, too, a tribute to Australia for Fred Pohl to consider that there was one story worthy of the honour, for I guarantee he read all those which were available. Well done Damien Broderick - phooey Brian Richards, your review stinks worse than the breath of a Zwillingian Buzzcrud.

Yours sincerely,
Morton Stenhouse.

** I will print anything I think fit for THE MENTOR and I stand by the idea that everyone is entitled to his own beliefs - the reviewers as well as the readers. Pretty well nothing is censored from letters. So watch it! - RLC **

John Bangsund
St. Kilda, Vic.

Dear Ron,

Thanks for THE MENTOR 10. This issue and Leigh's RATAPLAN No1 give me the feeling that I can very soon gafiate and no-one will notice.

Without casting aspersions on the other contributions, I must say that I enjoyed Brian Richrads's review of International SF more than anything else in the issue. He is a delightful man and a constantly provovative and witty writer ; I am continually being astonished at the things he knows, the places he has been, the things he has done.

May I make two carping comments on other articles? First, somewhere along the line, someone might have observed that Jorge Luis Borges's first name is not Jose. A small matter (and don't get me wrong - I've done worse than that in ASFR!), but unfortunate.

Second, and rather more important, Pat's listing of the Aims and Objects of the Australian Science Fiction Society is very misleading.

I feel that I should be the last person to object to Pat's little piece, since it is largely my fault that that the facts about the ASFS are not widely known. However, let me object a bit, and then you can all chuck bricks at me and call me nasty names. Pat's list of points reads very much like the motion which I proposed and Tony Thomas seconded at the Easter Conference. This motion was :-

"THAT a national organization be formed to co-ordinate fan activities throughout Australia;

THAT this organization have as its major functions - to act as an advisory bureau and information service; to contact fans throughout the world in order to exchange news and ideas; to supervise the arrangement of conventions in Australia; to generally promote sf and fandom in Australia;

THAT this organization be known as the Australian Science Fiction Society, and be properly and legally constituted as such."

For better or worse, this motion was rejected - by a vote of 14 to 11.

Pat then moved : THAT we form a national science fiction society - and that's that." John Foyster seconded, and the motion passed, 23 to 2.

At various times since the Con I have been accused of trying to sneak in by the back door the ideas which were voted against at that session. And, swash me buckles! - here's Pat doing that very thing!

I would like to make it clear that I stand by my original motion, and think it unfortunate that the new organization failed so narrowly to get off the ground at the Con. But the fact is that it did fail - it was voted out, in that form.

Pat's listing of the duties of the Provisional Committee is also misleading in some respects, but I won't go into the

matter just now. The Committee's report should clear everything up, when it appears. (And if I stopped writing locs maybe it would appear sooner!)

Cheers,
John Bangsund.

John Foyster
Springvale North, Vic.

Dear Ron,

Thanks for sending THE MENTOR and EOS. THE MNETOR has come quite a way since the Normanhurst High School days - are your fellow-editors of those long-lost times still active? (** One, at least is - this issue's cover illo is by him -RLC**)

I suspect that you were thinking of EOS when you the editorial, but you also mention four Sydney clubs (when I can only count to three), so maybe that was part of it too.

I would be more upset by Gary Mason's article were it not for my opinion that STAR TREK would benefit greatly by being cut about 45 minutes per episode : the very few episodes I've been able to bring myself to watch have been very bad. I suppose one could argue that four episodes are not enough to judge the series on, but on the other hand, how many do I have to dislike before I'm allowed to quit watching?

I was pleased and surprised to read Ron Graham's article on Borges. So far discussion of Borges in fandom seems to have been limited to Judith Merrill's occasional flutters and Michael Moorcock's name-dropping. But I was also surprised to see that Ron didn't mention Borges' habit of collapsing a novel into a short story : an aspect which partially explains the richness Ron does refer to. I personally find Borges a little too rich ... but that's my taste, for you.

David Gray's letter was amusing : he says 'Let us have some creativity, not rehashes and descriptions of some other writer's creation'. His own major contribution in this field seems to be in English Grammar (a talent he shares with the revered Mr Campbell). His suggestion follows on a list of other suggestions (which presumably would be 'creative'). There are so many articles concerning the effect of Computer Technology on real people that it would be pointless to try to list them all here - I'll refer briefly to the Pelican book THE WORLD IN 1984. Isaac Asimov's THE CAVES OF STEEL is one book of several which at least discusses the problem. The book on the population explosion is A TORRENT OF FACES (Blish and Knight)- if you are looking for one of many stf novels. And of course the number of articles is much longer. Articles on psychosomatic medicine have also appeared in many, many places : and Philip K. Dick has written at least two novels on the subject. And I guess some stf writers have put in time in mental institutions.

You see, Mr Gray fails lamently to be creative. I don't care - but he should.

I think Brian is a little unkind to NOVA EXPRESS (Burroughs at least reads ANALOG..), and a trifle inaccurate - NOVA EXPRESS was written quite a long time ago, and appeared in book form in 1964.

Ooooh, yes. David Gray refers to 'main-line' authors and 'main-line fiction. He seems to mean mainstream authors and mass fiction. 'Main-lining' is something else again (see, for example, William Burroughs...)

The reasons why US Book Clubs don't deal with outsiders are pretty clear : the problem of getting cash from reluctant payers, the time lag between offer and order, possibly the extra costs involved. I understand that the Doubleday SF Book Club will accept Australian members who agree to take all books offered. (is it 24 or 12 per year?).

Well, maybe I'll be seeing you in the Australian apa : otherwsie I shall look forward to the next issue of THE MENTOR.

Best,
John Foyster.

Gary Mason,
French's Forest, NSW.

Dear Ron,

The tenth issue of THE MENTOR was great! Here is at last is a Sydney fanzine that looks like a fanzine, rather than the rather starved little pamphlets that previous issues were. Here is a zine that I can be proud to be associated with....one that I am delighted to promote. It is a pity that the lead article had to be a reprint, and one of such peripheral interest anyway, but I am glad I let you use it, if only to make the zine a little thicker - a little more attention catching.

The contents were varied and balanced - I imagine there was something there for everyone - and I hope that most read more of the issue than I did. I blushed my way through my own article first and then read the rest - Entity excepted. With all apologies to Michael Black, I did not read his piece. (Maybe, in return, he didn't read mine.) It may have been the best fan-fiction ever published (I'll let my fellow readers adjudicate on that), but I fear that I am unable to interest myself in fan-fiction in any shape or form. I have my reasons for this aversion but they are comics fan's reasons (as benefits my position as, primarily, a comics fan), and I have discovered that generally science fiction fans are far more receptive to and appreciative of fan-fiction than are most comics fans I know (** And it's probably the other way around with sf fans and comics fan's strips -RLC **). So continue to run it by all means ; I will gripe, but I will be in a minority as I do so, no doubt.

My only comment on such items as Speculation can be "That's nice, but so what?" They just play with generalities - to me saying nothing, making no startling observation, having

apparently no beginning, middle or end. If anyone asked me what was the point of Speculation, I would be at a loss to answer. It might have been better if it had been expanded and some conclusion, however tentative, reached. Both sides of the question should have been considered : after saying "It will be interesting to see how many of our idols today will still hold our interest in fifty or sixty years", it may have been an idea to name a few current favourites and examine their works and attempt to speculate on the possible timeless qualities (or lack of them) of these works; contrast with the two 'old masters' and reach some sort of conclusion. There is no doubt about where the author stands on the question of the merits of Verne and Wells ; but what about the newer writers? The author does not seem to think that they will stand the test of time, and I might agree - but the author doesn't explain these beliefs or attempt to justify them. She should. Now to Scorpio, although there's no doubt, at least, that "Scorpio" is an honest-to-goodness for-real pseudonym. I do like his reviews, though.

And who is "Ronald E. Graham" a pseudonym for - or is he a real person? His Jose Luis Borges was readable and well constructed, but I felt something less than entertained. The writer spent a couple of paragraphs on Borges's humour : how about some of his own? I do like the general tone of a fanzine to be Serious and Constructive, but not unrelievedly so. Every single word does not have to be completely serious, revelant and 100% spot-on the subject. Informativeness is all very well - and the writer showed an excellent knowledge of his subject - but even school teachers digress occassionally! Surely there is a happy medium between the idiotic flippancy some of the younger Melbourne writers continually display in their publications and completely cut-and-dried, no-nonsense boredom? Refer to AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW or some of the leading American fanzines - like YANDRO - for examples of (what is to me, at least) a pleasing combination of sercon and entertainment.

Michael O'Brien's reviews suffered from much the same sort of complaint together with a lack of detail. To take the first as an example : what does "quite good" mean? Worth the money or not? Why or why not? In what respects is the book "quite good" ; in what respects does it fall down? "It's awfully (awefully?) hard to pick out a 'best' from these, but I'd say for me it would be HL Gold's amusing short The Man With English." Why is that one the best for you, Mike? Perhaps the answer can be found by recasting the sentence, but would you say "...it would be H.L. Gold's short, The Man With English, because it was amusing" or "...it would be H.L. Gold's The Man With English because it was short and amusing" or "...it would be H.L. Gold's amusing The Man With English, because it was short"? Or would there be another reason altogether? And if so, what? Of course it is difficult to be profound in 5½ lines, and perhaps this is the answer. If, Ron, you want to run reviews, at least devote enough space to them to allow them to be worthwhile - otherwise you might as well just run a list of books with a rating scale

from 0 to 10 alongside. But, of course, if the reviews are going to have any length worth noticing, this question of entertainment in addition to relevance has again to be faced. When reviews are longer than a dozen lines and begin to occupy a significant portion of the issue, they cease to be simply guides for prospective buyers and become, as well, ends in themselves, read by people who aren't necessarily contemplating buying the books reviewed (here's one reader who has no intention of reading any stf books yet is an inveterate reader of the reviews). Of course, however there are also readers who might plan to buy the books, so entertainment value is no substitute for - but instead should be in addition to - relevance. I think Leigh Edmonds's review demonstrates that admirably. Yeah.

And perhaps book reviews could be separated from fanzine reviews, and both of those from film reviews (assuming that that is what Leigh Edmonds's - ah - effort was) and all three from magazine reviews? And, incidently, I should mention that I greatly enjoyed Brian Richards's magazine review : a nice blend of meaty insight and entertainment.

Pat Terry's The Australian Science Fiction Society report embodied information that needed setting down on paper, but the superficial objectivity (e.g., the author referring to himself in the third person) seemed somehow at odds to me with the setting out which appeared to be designed to press Pat's own point of view, without actually expressing it in so many words. In fact, I wish Pat would write a little opinion piece on what he thinks the aims and organization of the national group should be ; I've heard him speak about these matters at Foundation meetings, of course, but I'd like to see his highly valued views (and they are highly valued, probably more so than anyone else's in all of Australian fandom) set out in writing.

One general comment - the standard of spelling and punctuation and typing was not as high in THE MENTOR No.10 as in No.9, and a return to the standard of that issue would be welcome. I was a little dismayed at some of the typos in my article. I sometimes wonder when I see typos in fanzines whether they are editor-created or contributor-created (and merely transcribed, unnoticed, by the editor, but I know for a fact that there were typos in my article as published in THE MENTOR that were not in the copy I gave you. ("Menagery"?) I know my punctuation and grammatical constructions get somewhat convoluted at times, so you're forgiven on these scores, but the misspelling of words - well, I know that THE MENTOR No.10 offended far less than many other 'zines I've seen, but knowing from No.9 just how well you can do when you really try, I feel that the comment was warranted. No.10 did represent a lowering of standards in that department - but, the foregoing notwithstanding, in no other. All around, bravo!

P.S. To prove how great I thought THE MENTOR 10 was, find enclosed 40¢ for another two copies! (You can give them to me next time you see me; no need to waste postage or fold them into

an envelope).

Yours sincerely,
Gary Mason.

** Unfortunately Gary never did get those two extra copies -
there are no copies left of THE MENTOR 10, or 9. -RLC **

Michael O'Brien
Hobart, Tas.

Dear Ron,

I thought THE MENTOR '10 was great! It's your best ish yet. You've definitely left the crudzine period behind. The article on STAR TREK censorship was alarming; isn't it extraordinary that the Govt. can censor stuff coming into the country, but can do nothing to control the home made product (e.g. girlie magazines, for one). That sketch of Pat on p.33 was pretty good, Shirley.

I look forward to many more issues of THE MENTOR. If your standard continues to climb at this rate, you'll win a Hugo in a couple of years! (** 1984, maybe? -RLC **)

Oh, you can tell Shirley I liked the cover too; especially the caption - they should stencil it on all the Vietnam medals.

Yours inanely,
Michael O'Brien.

Leigh Edmonds,
St. Kilda, Vic.

Dear Ron,

AT LAST a loc on THE MENTOR. What is Michael Black on about? Last ish he had a story about someone being buried (I assume) and here we have something about somebody opening a door to somewhere and something (?) happening. If what I have just written is confusing, it only reflects the story - still, he is writing for you so you might as well use what he does.

JOTTINGS : when you say that some people have said that they don't think spelling matters in a personal type fanzine, I can only assume that you are referring to me, among others. My attitude is that if I am typing up a personal type fanzine I am doing it straight onto stencil (with notes) and if I stop to corflu a wrongly spelt word, I stand the chance of losing my thread of thought, and that is far more important than how any word is spelt. Later I can go back and pick out the poor spelling, but I always seem to miss some. (** Me, too - RLC **) And what is more important in a fanzine, the contents or the spelling? Anyhow, this seems a trivial subject to dedicate such amounts of time and letters and fanzines on - I know that I can't spell but I refuse to worry about it.

I think that in RATAPLAN I have given a bit of my attitude

to stf. I admit that it is the basis of fandom and all that but I don't think that it should come first - which is more important, people or stf? (** Two entirely different concepts -RLC **) The only reason I have not turned over as Fred Pohl says every stf reader does is because I have discovered fans and find them generally interesting and friendly people. Stf forms the basis for any contact, being a common interest on which to start a conversation, much as mundane people talk about the weather. I agree that stf comes before any club, especially a group like the Futurians or that sf/fact thing in Brisbane but not before people. Fandom is people... (** I am talking of stf fans. You are talking about ...? By stf fans I mean readers as well as the active type stf fans. After all stf is people, too! -RLC **)

Yours,
Leigh Edmonds.

David Gray,
22 Tuckett Rd.,
Salisbury, Qld., 4107.

Dear Ron,

Informal meetings are being held at the above address or at other convenient places, depending on the mood of SF fans. Meetings are usually held once or twice a month to suit the mood and enthusiasm. We must apologise if some of the fans contacted earlier have not been invited but owing to a fire a file was burnt. If they read this letter they must contact me again through Box 174, P.O. Broadway Qld., 4001.

A number of us have been to see the great film '2001', I have yet to go, but the general opinion has been interesting. One member when asked for his opinion, was outspoken by his mother who said "The film was alright, but the music was beautiful". Generally, we felt it was a step in the correct direction, it has a wide public appeal which subject matter is not too distant ; and feasible. For us it is good public relations, it is well advertised and presented at a leading city theatre of excellent decor.

I have arrived at the opinion that a section of fans do not like ANALOG, I say 'like', perhaps 'hate' would be nearer, but why? Is it John Campbell? I must admit his philosophy is not with the general trend of the public. It is his unfailing stickability that I admire, I will not rave about his capabilities here, but would like all those who dislike John Campbell or/and ANALOG, to destroy themselves by writing to me or this magazine about WHY I (they) DISLIKE JOHN CAMPBELL. It seems one either goes for his 'stuff' or hates same.

I popped into my local BOOK SWAP SHOP and picked up F & SF No1 - Australian first edition. Would some kind person let me have some information about it? Mainly the date of publication - the cover is of a rocket ship keeling over, and ground crew scampering. The price is all of 2/-.

We have received letters suggesting that the majority of SF authors are not really moralizing with their writings, that we are all mixed up to expect constructive scientific, religious, social and political innovation from this source. Well, someone does not know good ideas when they see them. I could fill THE MENTOR from cover to cover with good and wise constructive politico/social ideas. Each author is drawing on his own knowledge and experience for each story written (or imagination). At least SF writers do not live with a big post stuck up in front of them on which is stuck a notice which reads "SEX".

One example I liked was the Socio-political system put forward by Mack Reynolds in Sweet Dreams, Sweet Princes; not so much liked as interested me. Also another source of valuable philosophical material came from The Pawns of Null A by A.E. Van Vogt. Buy the book and just read the quotation at the beginning of each chapter.

Example :

chapter XIII 'For the sake of sanity, be careful not to LABEL. Words like Fascist, Communist, Democrat, Republican, Catholic, Jew, refer to human beings, who never quite fit any label.'
chapter IV 'A child's mind, lacking a developed cortex, is virtually incapable of discrimination. The child inevitably makes many false evaluations of the world. Many of these false-to-facts judgements are conditioned into the nervous system on the 'unconscious' level, and can be carried over to adulthood. Hence we have a 'well educated' man and woman who reacts in an infantile fashion.'

One final thought, a member of the audience at a political meeting at Mt. Isa to greet the new leader of the opposition asked a question. He asked : That in view of the fact that a Science Fiction author had written that with \$2 million he could be the next government - was it Party Policy or publicity that won elections? The leader of the opposition replied that the questioner could have the whole Party, lock stock and barrel, for only \$1 million.

Yours sincerely,
David Gray.

(** According to Graham Stone's AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION INDEX the edition you have of F&SF is dated November, 1954. If you want any more information then I suggest you write to Graham, who has, I hear, the INDEX in stock. For his address, see CLUBS' NEWS. -RLC **)

Gary Woodman,
Monash University, Vic.

Dear Ron,

Much to my regret, THE MENTOR gets better every issue, (well after all, I still am a practicing faned, halted in my tracks only because of an unavailability of time). Maybe it's because I haven't seen a Victorial fanzine since ETH 6, 'round

about the end of June. Maybe it's because I'm dreaming about what my fanzine could be. Maybe - oh, I don't know.

Your editorial, as usual, contains adequate reason for publishing same. I often sneer at Edmonds for writing pissweak editorials (probably because he does, and because his was the only regularly-published zine since the Con), and here in THE MENTOR my dreams are realised. Why, your stirring editorials almost make me reach for my pen to write an impassioned rebuttal of the utter crud you have written! Unfortunately, it is usually sound stirring.

You have the wrong end of the stick when you say that the sf population of Sydney is underground. Rather it is the other way 'round - fandom is hidden from the public eye, while maybe twenty per cent of Sydney reads SF aboveboard. (*EH!???-RLC*) With a gentle publicity campaign, Sydney (and, for that matter, Melbourne) fandom would double, triple or even increase higher still, what's more - ahh, crap! (** Double EHH??? -RLC**)

You are right when you say that the younger fen want nothing to do with the past. Without meaning in the slightest to be unkind, we wish the survivors well and we will use them as we can. You are bound to get that wrong, so I will elaborate - we venerate the older fen. We place them on pedestals, we worship them. However, the good old days of fandom are the good old days, and all concerned let them remain so.

I still think you should urge Vicfen to send their material to you.

Ah, Ron, the Secret Censors was no doubt a particularly knowledgable article, but I did not have the intellectual stamina to finish it. It was only passing interest as I do not watch TV (it's not that I can't, it's just that I consider it as dangerously addictive as heroin, etc., and an extremely successful substitute for thinking) but no doubt enough people were interested to warrant its publication.

The story - first three pages excellent (but found myself wondering if it was the start of a Laumer-type novel), fourth page very good, fifth page less last phase passable (or saleable), last phase unpleasantly enigmatic. Your stories are getting better, but no doubt some Ballardophile is taking the opposite view. More thud-and-blunder, I say. The inevitable response, "why don't you write some yourself," is being acted upon, Great Ghu. (** Poor, mixed up fan . See PHOENIX for editor-type-writings. -RLC**)

Speculation put into print a thought I have nurtured for years (not counting Superman, Verne's Journey to the Centre of the Earth was the first SF I read). However, it turned out to be something like The Reader's Digest. Why-can't-those-naughty-scientists-and-their-bombs-and-germs-leave-us-alone-to-appreciate-the-beautiful-things-of-life perenial complaint. I felt faintly churned by the whole business.

I have never heard of Borges but after your reviewer's praise I will look out for his works, which I suppose is all that can be expected from a review. Leigh Edmonds is a bit rough

on The Power - I though Undersea Kingdom was the best thing I ever saw (needless to say, this was before I saw 2001 - which reminds me : are stills from 2001 available?

(** Yes, we got some from MGM -RLC **)

David Gray is that Campbell fellow, isn't he? Ah, well, I don't hold it agin him. I thought it was funny the way he estimated SF readers to be 'chemists, doctors, engineers and many ordinary self-educated and deep thinking people'. I personally know a factory janitor, a school teacher (of history), a brick-layer and a farmer who like SF and display no tendencies towards 'deep thinking' or 'self-education'. If indeed SF does contain a statistically disproportionate number of technologists I would be inclined to put this down to their greater capacity for making their literary tastes known. Now, I do not mean that they are all stirring buggers ; rather it is because they are quite capable of landing, both-feet wise, on any author who ballses up his science. Much genuflection to the will of Ghu, authors know this.

Then he cruds on with a little boo to all you fans out there in Good-Guy Land who read some SF lately. Mr Gray says that we are a minority group and more intelligent than the average person who can make sense out of two consecutive words (to quote him "... more intelligent than the usual reader of mainline fiction..." This may be true of people who write letters to fanzines, but what percentage of "SF followers" know of Fandom and yet continue on in their own sweet way?

I would like to continue in such a vein, but I will never fit this letter into one of my envelopes as it is. Further comments will be short, and I hope Foyster is enthusiastic or has bigger envelopes.

Yours sincerely
Gary Woodman.

Anothermouse,
Sydney.

Dear Ron,

Pleased with the development of THE MENTOR, it is turning into a rival for ASFR. The present standard is good, the articles are interesting, but why not more letters. The stories by Michael Black are interesting to say the least, but has that person seen his psychiatrist lately?? If not then I know a good one in Sydney. So keep up the good work and don't slip back. The art work was good too - how about some more?

On the whole congrats to the editor and contribulors of and to THE MENTOR.

(** And the above is not me. -RLC **)

Brian Richards
Swanbourne, W.A.

Dear Ron,

"Begin at the beginning" saith the blue caterpillar "go right through, until you come to the end, and then, stop!" Cover art inspired and timely. Big pat on the back for Shirley Clarke, Editorial, good points well taken, you have written most of it before but facts and sensible soapboxing will always bear repetition.

The Secret Gensors. My turn to get on a soapbox. I shall believe in censorship the day that a censor anywhere in the world resigns stating :- "I quit, because the filth which I have been obliged to view over my years of office has so corrupted me, that I am rotten to the core and thus grossly unfit to do my job." Gary Mason writes the things that most of us only think about writing, "strength to his pen", say I.

Entity. A minor gem. Hope that Michael Black gives us some more - how about a few biographical details ; in fact a few such details on your other contributors would extend the mateship a bit. Speculation. I feel that it is a great pity that few readers today make a first acquaintance with s.f. via Verne and Wells - the way in now is via Wyndham and Christopher or the second rate prozines we now have. Digressing for a moment, I wonder how many people have been frightened off s.f. by a diet of Ballard taken too early, before the palate had grown accustomed to Richness? Borges. Ron Graham is obviously most enthusiastic about the man and his books but neglects to give us a little fundamental information about the availability of the books - my useless Bookseller never heard of him and does not have him listed. Can Ron be prodded into further assistance?

Reviews. Balanced out the contents to a nicety.

I am afraid you have reached the stage where you must abdicate the claim to be our no.1 crudzine - mate, you just aint, not after a flaming good effort like this.

Afterthought. Very handsome chap on the inside back cover, too.

Regards;
Brian Richards.

JOTTINGS.

That is about all the letters for this issue. I am going on holidays from October 5th to October 27th, so do not expect to receive any replies to letters within that period. It will probably upset my schedule for publishing THE MENTOR, too, so issues around that date will probably be a bit out of sequence. If you receive no more issues of THE MENTOR after that it could mean that I'm stranded out near Lightning Ridge or Broken Hill and have died of thirst. -RLC.

CLUBS' NEWS

QUEENSLAND - QUEENSLAND SCIENCE FICTION/FACT CLUB.

Information about this club is contained in David Gray's letter in the R & R DEPT in this fanzine. Postal address:
Box 174
P.O.
Broadway
Qld. 4001.

N.S.W.

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY.

I do not know much about this club - however I do have the address :-
Alex Robb
c/o " annabis Sativa"
MacQuarie University,
Sydney.

SYDNEY SCIENCE FICTION FOUNDATION

Postal address same as this fanzine. Meets weekly, Thursdays and Fridays, alternately. For information read FORERUNNER, the club mag. 5¢ per copy, \$1.00 per year.

FUTURIAN SOCIETY OF SYDNEY

Is planning to meet monthly at Randwick and Ryde, alternately. Ryde address is :-
6 Anderson Avenue
Ryde 2112.

For further information contact the ASFA (see below).

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

AUSTRALIAN SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

H.Q. for the FSS and the ASFA. Mainly a bibliographical group. Postal address is :-
Box 852
P.O.
Canberra City,
A.C.T. 2601.

VICTORIA

MELBOURNE SCIENCE FICTION CLUB.

Possibly the oldest and most active SF club in Australia. Postal address :- (could change, if it hasn't already)
c/- (Mrs) Diane Bangsund,
3/12 Redan St.,
St. Kilda
Vict. 3182.

That's it for this issue. Hope you enjoyed it. Comments, contributions and subscriptions welcomed for future issues.
Fanzine received : RATAPLAN. Expected : APASTRON & AFT.-Ronl Clarke.