

ATOM

21

Yes



or No

is

Back



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Material and letters of comment to Ella Parker.
Fanzines welcomed at all
three addresses.

INVITED

GUEST

EDITORIAL

PAUL

— ENEVER —

"Let me write the editorial," I said; "I can write editorials in my sleep." Well, I could THEN. Four months later Ella called my bluff and all I held was a pair of deuces. What the devil can a retired ('retired' sounds so much more dignified than 'ex-') fan-editor write about other than his retirement? And what could be more pompous and less interesting? "Tell them," says my ever-loving, "WHY you retired." An excellent suggestion except that I can't for the life of me think of any original reason.

I retired because I was too busy to spend hours of my life chained to the typewriter and duplicator - but there is probably a score of fans busier by far who manage to publish a score and a half of fanzines despite their busy-ness. Or I retired because I got disgusted with the feuds and backbiting which plagued fandom for a while. But feuds and backbiting have always plagued fandom and I found it easy enough to glide lightly over them before. No, I think the truth is I was beginning to suffer the onset of creeping no-enthusiasm; Ella and Roberta tempted me and I fell. It should prove a very good thing for fandom because they will lift ORION out of the rut I'd ground it into, and give it a new lease of life.

Before I quit talking about myself I would like to say to all those people who so willingly and whole-heartedly supported ORION in its first twenty issues - the contributors, without which there couldn't have been even one issue, the subscribers, whose hearts ruled their heads to their own misfortune and my benefit, and George Richards whose support was unflinching until it became obvious that I had at last fallen by the wayside and no longer needed support - THANK YOU. If you do as well by Ella and Roberta as you did by me they should enjoy themselves.

... ..

Lately the mail has contained more seed catalogues

than fanzines but there have been just one or two of the latter which have far outshone even the illustrated orchid-lists. One such is Don Allen's SATELLITE 8 in which Don gives an amusing account of his all-too brief visit to us two (or was it three?) years ago. I admire Don's veracity: I should have been inclined to embroider the incident with a lot of untruths, whereas everything happened just as he says, except that I DID NOT give him a cauliflower. They were still in bud. TALES OF INCHMERY is fascinating reading. Ving's story about the doors with bolts on both sides rings a clanging bell in my mind. As a child I lived in a very old and very small farmhouse which had a covered-in stairway with a door at the bottom. This door had bolts on both sides and I shall remember to my last day the furore I created by bolting it on the stair side and then climbing out of the bedroom window, nipping round and bolting it on the outside. For no particular reason. I was just a born fan I guess. The usual excellent lettercol and some interesting other items makes Satellite a must.

The one other fanzine which I haven't been able to ignore is the three issues of APORRHETA I've seen so far. (That was an Irishism?). Apart from well-nigh perfect duplicating AFE has everything I like in fanzines - interest, amusement and information, in that order. Of course, with the Inchmery team producing it that's only to be expected, but it's nice to have something come up to one's expectations.

fanzine

The saddest/to shoulder aside the RHS handbooks was BEM The Last. I know just what Mal means by lack of time and money but I boggle at his suggestion that lack of talent had anything to do with BEM'S demise. Mal could fill it with his own talent, unaided. Are there no Ellas or Robertas in Bradford, Mal?

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In a closed-circuit television system, with the camera trained on a screen one assumes that the image nips smartly round the circuit at approximately 183,000 mps. That being so, every infinitesimal fraction of a second another image of the screen should appear on the screen which is showing on the screen which is....etc. What bothers me is how long need the circuit operate before the image is reduced to a single electron wandering disconsolately up the tube and going..... where?

If instead of a television circuit, we had a sound circuit carrying a single violin note which was amplified each time round how long would it be before the noise got appalling?

Does it require more power to fire a rocket off the earth diametrically away from the moon than it does to fire towards it?

These and a dozen other fascinating questions will be answered the very next time I write a guest editorial.

PE.

TAFF tales --- no.1

THORN OF THE ROSE

BY:

H. KEN BULMER.

Now that the aged - fanwise, that is, and not physically or mentally of even GATWC wise - Paul has with fiendish and heartbroken sobs deposited the little pathetic bundle in the wicker basket and tucked up the tiny quilt and pinned on the brave, broken pencilled note, and then, cautiously and with many a backward glance, left the baby firmly on Ella's doorstep - it would seem that the ripples of emotion for an abandoned child spread to engulf innocent bystanders. I freely agree that the charms of gardening have it all over the rather tatty charms of fanning in these unlovely fannish days, when a dark spirit of violence and anger and intolerance hangs over us all and when erstwhile friends turn their backs and spurn one's overtures of renewed trust and comradeship - but then, the world is not a perfect place, friends, and, 't'were, we'd all don the wings of angels and float skywards, strumming our skiffing harps.

Anyway, what all this guff boils down to is that Ella wants me to tell your waiting lugholes something of what occurred to Pamela and I during the months of August, September and October, and parts of the months of July and November, in the year of Our Lord, 1955.

That's a long time ago, now, and, not having been able to black mail a horde of willing writers into writing my trip accounts for me, as has rollicking Ron from Leeds, and because of many other factors, which may some of them be found in the taff report, we now say: 'ere goes. At first I shall attempt only to pick out a few highlights, or, in other parlance, a few choice plums can be dgedged up and regarded as they shine moistly between prying finger and thumb.

Right, then, to our onions. Many of you must have heard of the rumours that bulmer was arrested in the States, that he was sent for a term to Sing-Sing, that the FBI trailed him everywhere, etc etc. Here, then, is the truth, to set beside other accounts of my clash with the American Law.

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At the time Don Ford was living in Sharonville, which is a charming little -what? township, village, booming suburb of Cincinnati. Although typically American in its arrangement of frame houses along wide roads with lawns minus hedges or fences leading up to the houses, the shopping arrangements and the narrowness of the main roads were quite familiar to us English types. An interesting tie-up also occurs here. I may rightly have felt called from the plough, ie, work, to travel to America, just as much, in fact, as Lucius Quinctius back in the days before Ancient Rome shouldered sufficiently into the limelight to attract the attention of Hollywood was minute-manned from his fields to go off to rescue the two consuls who were in the usual mire consuls found themselves in when legends were in the making. What's the tie-up? Well, friend L. Quinctius was generally called Cincinnatus and tis from this noble example of sturdy republican stock that the fair city of Cincy takes her name.

That's no tie-up, you say? Wait.

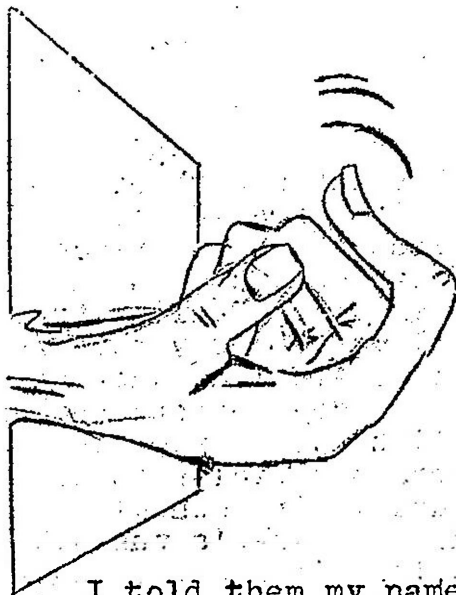
As you all know I was sporting a beard at this time. Don and Margaret were more or less accustomed to it, I suppose, as were the children. But they'd taken the sensible precaution of arranging for Pamela and me to bed down in a friend's house in the next block. We were very comfortably housed there, and used to arise in the am and roll around to Don's for breakfast and meals, and then out for the day. It was very hot. You recall that wonderful summer of 1955? Well, in Ohio just about then it was hotter. I forget the exact day, it isn't important, when I had to leave Don's house and walk around to our lodgings to pick up some trifle or other. I walked along the sidewalk and, succumbing to the temp took off my jacket and slung it over my shoulder. I walked on quietly, thinking. (Would be joke makers form queue to the left, please.) A black car whined along from the horizon and then slowed down. I paid it scant attention; I mean, if a car isn't three of four contrasting colours in the States and a block and a half long no-one notices the thing and they tend to get trampled underfoot.



The car paced me. I was walking on the left hand sidewalk and so the car, being to logical Englishmen on the wrong side of the road, was able to cruise gently parallel with me. I approached the turning to the left down which I had to go. As I reached the corner the car accelerated smoothly and swung across into the sideroad and pulled up so that it was blocking the path of anyone attempting to walk straight on down the main road. Bulmer glanced at it and then angled off down the sideroad and ignored the car.

This seemed to incense the occupants.

"Hey, you!" a voice called.



A hand supported by a wrist poked through the open window and beckoned. Mildly intrigued, I walked across.

"What're you doing, bub?"

Now I'm not going to attempt a facsimile reconstruction of the ensuing conversation. At first it was in true Hollywood cops and robbers style, with me as the tight-lipped hood. I saw at once that these were police, and, probably because the weather was hot, I felt a rush of blood to the head, and decided to be a) dumb. b) unco-operative. c) dignified. and e) a bloody Limey and to hell with these peasants.

I told them my name. They remained unimpressed. They asked me if I lived here. I said no. They asked me where I was going. I told them the house where I was lodging. Did I know the people? No. The driver was youngish, obviously swollen-headed over the fact that he wore a uniform and had a powerful car under his hands, a badge and a) a tommy gun down by his leg. b) a pistol at his belt. c) a riot gun in the back seat. d) and probably an H-bomb in a SAC B-52b on call from his car radio. I showed them my driving licence. The youngster started to tear off each year's licence as though the thing were a book. 'Don't be stupid,' I said, or something even more wounding, and snatched the thing away. He bristled. The older man at his side said a few quiet words to soothe him down and then casually, as though exercising Herlock Sholmesian craft, mentioned the word 'English'. Still icily dignified, I agreed that I was English. I didn't add and proud of it, I felt that to be redundant. I suppose the crown, the coat of arms the 'Honi soit qui mal y pense' had something to do with the deduction process. After that we got on like a house on fire.

I gradually thawed, and they ceased to mention third degrees and suchlike and I asked to look at their armoury and they obliged and we spent an interesting ten minutes or so chatting. We parted on at least pre-Suez terms. The older man really seemed quite a decent type; the younger just needed a little more understanding of life and a little less TV and film impressions of himself.

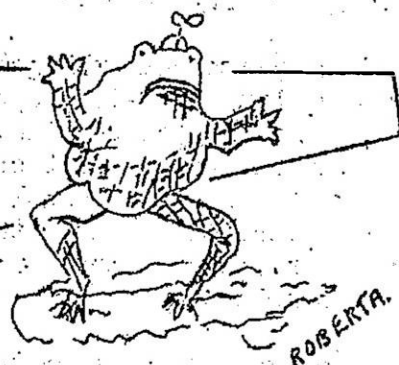
And, too, here I was, a stranger, bearded, coat over shoulder, strolling along when literally no-one was walking out. These men had a job to do, protecting the community from hobos and bums; and that was just what I was to them. Don swore I was joking and none believed me until I mentioned that the elder man had his arm in a sling. Then Don sat down slowly - and that's a seven-foot sight, too, and said: "That was the Police Chief; he broke his wrist." And so I was believed. Then Don wanted to go down to the precinct house and raise Cain but I said I wasn't able to worry, and so we all laughed and passed it off. But those cops figured in a story, yessir, they did too!

The tie-up: Cincinnatus because of the long hair that fell around his shoulders and he went back to noble poverty.

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A TOWN CALLED "SMALL PUDDLE"

By
BOB PAVLAT



In the same week I received two letters from two different addresses in London, one of which claimed that "While the accent differs, fans are fans all the world over" and the other of which asked for an "account of how maybe American fandom differs from Anglo fandom." I do not know enough about Anglo fandom to be able to compare it with American fandom, but I can set forth my impressions of American fandom with the hope that someone else can compare it with Anglo fandom.

There has been much contention over what a "fan" is. I don't have the slightest intention of getting into this argument, but I am forced to define fandom in order to write about it. My definition is that fandom consists of those people and groups with whom a person actively interested in science fiction is liable to come into occasional contact due to his interest in science fiction. This definition is meant to be functional rather than idealistic, and to include those people who have an effect on me in fandom regardless of whether I want their son to marry my daughter.

Fandom starts with people. At least three fans residing in London have recently stated that there is no London fandom, but only individuals acting independently, all of whom happen to reside within the London area. The bulk of what we call fan activity comes within just this sort of a situation. Washington, D.C., has a science fiction association with a membership of approximately twenty people drawn from the Washington area. The only activity of "Washington fandom" however is the annual Disclave and such special projects as the group effort to be voted as the host city for the 1980 convention. The fanzines that flow from the Washington area, the correspondence between Washingtonian and non-Washingtonian, the attendance at conventions--these are activities of individuals or in some cases small groups bound together for a specific purpose.

We have people acting individually. We have local groups of varying formality of structure which impose a communality of action or attitude on the members for a specific action. Fandom also tends to form non-local groups for specific, generally rather limited purposes. There are the amateur journalism associations which clearly belong here-- FAPA, SAPS, OMPA, and the

Colt. Similar, though much more limited in scope, are such groups as the 'Bring Berry to Detroit' movement or the SoLacorn Cavalcade organization.

Sometimes you will get a collaboration of two or more clubs for a specific, but limited, purpose. The Atlanta - Charlotte groups agreed to sponsor a yearly convention, each club to be responsible alternate years. The situation on the west coast is vaguely similar, since any west coast city can bid for the annual Westercon. And, finally, there is the annual world convention scheme with competition between clubs to win the world convention, and cooperation to make the convention a success after the site has been selected.

However, these seem to be the limit of successful fannish organization. The lack of success of the NFFF is notorious. The old Science Fiction League of Gernsback collapsed, as has every state-wide organization of which I've ever heard. The World Science Fiction Society, Incorporated, also failed as an organization--fandom does not seem to be amenable to large, formally prescribed groups.

There is no group that you can point to and say "This is American fandom". American fandom is a group of people sharing an interest in science fiction and/or science fiction fandom. A portion of this group is well-known throughout fandom, since fanzines and their contents can be distributed anywhere that there is a postal service. This is the portion of British and French and Swiss fandom with which I'm familiar. This implication has been made that this is the only portion of Anglo fandom which exists. It's fairly obviously true, from the reports of Pierre Versins and from various reports of German fans, that fanzines play a minor role in Swiss and German science fiction fandoms. It is the group of Quiet Americans who don't normally appear in fanzines that apparently prompts the puzzled inquiries.

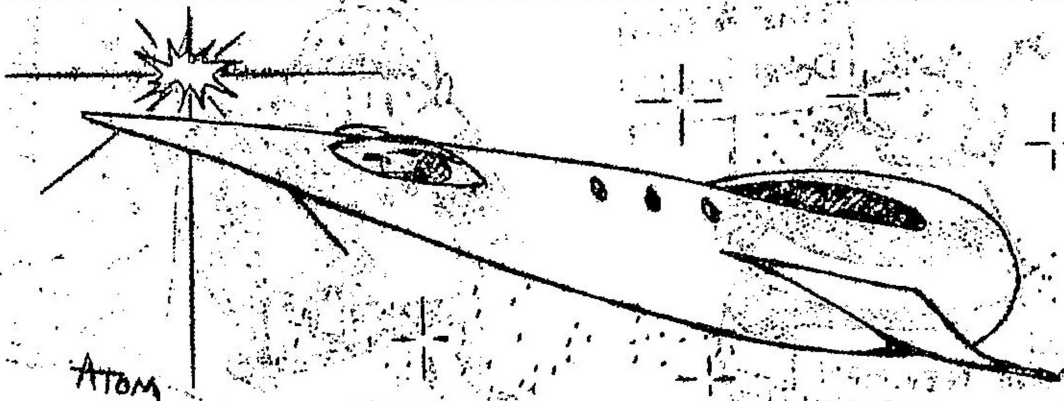
The characteristics of American fandom, however, stem basically from the characteristics of the American science fiction club. The club is normally drawn from readers of science fiction magazines, about the only consistent requirement being that the potential member is not objectionable. The Washington Science Fiction Association normally has about fifteen members; it is almost unique in that seven of these members are fanzine publishers. Chicago has a large group, but only one fanzine publisher. Where are the publishing giants in Philadelphia, Cleveland, Pittsburgh? There aren't any. But each of these cities has a club, each has many readers of science fiction, and many of these readers and club members have knowledge of science fiction, and collections of it, that would make all but two in Washington D.C. look sick.

Over here, any convention receives some convention publicity in the professional magazines--including the magazines which don't otherwise acknowledge that they even have a readership. At every local club with

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which I'm familiar the convention also gets some play---discussions of who is and who is not going, car-pooling arrangements, and similar details--including discussions of what a science-fiction convention is, for those who've never been to one. The news that there is to be a convention thus gets passed to a rather large group, including people who normally have no contact with fanzines. Even Science Fiction Times plays its part in this, for included in its readership are many people who are otherwise unknown as fans but who none-the-less have a more than passing interest in science-fiction. The convention attendance is drawn from all these sources, old fan and new, active fan and inactive, club member and loner. A few, primarily your first-timers, come for the programme and for the discussions of science-fiction which they expect. Your largest attendance will come from active fans who want to meet the people they correspond with, trade fanzines with, or otherwise know through activity, and from those who want to renew acquaintance with fans they've known in years gone by. When the convention is over, some people will leave never to be heard of again, while others will have discovered fandom as a group of people that like to live together even though geographically separated. The small muddle may impress some people with the chance it offers them to be a big frog; for the majority it will leave an impression of a pleasant time with congenial people, and a desire to repeat it at another time.

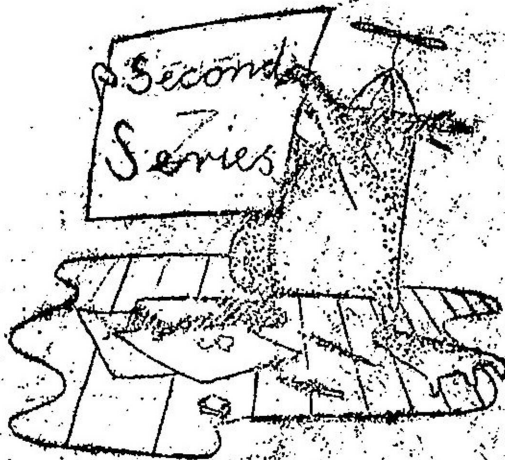
In some respects it might be fair to compare American fandom to a small town. You have your country club set, your sewing and gossip circle, and the boys who get together for Friday night poker. Some people who visit you frequently, some on nod to on the street corner, some you cross the street to avoid. There are the civic minded ones who are active in town council meetings, church groups, and the Parent-Teachers Association, while others take an interest in town affairs only when it comes time to pay taxes or when they are offered a days relaxation at the annual settlers' day picnic at the lake. And that's the way American fandom seems to me--a variety of people in an unrestricted community, not agreeing on anything except their right to sit there if they want to.



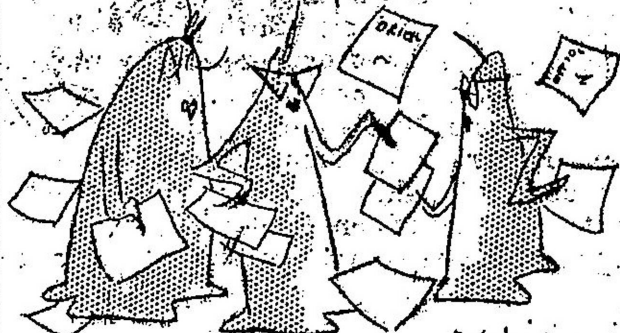
ATOMS FAN BEAMS

Second
Series

Oh Dad Energy



Those responsible

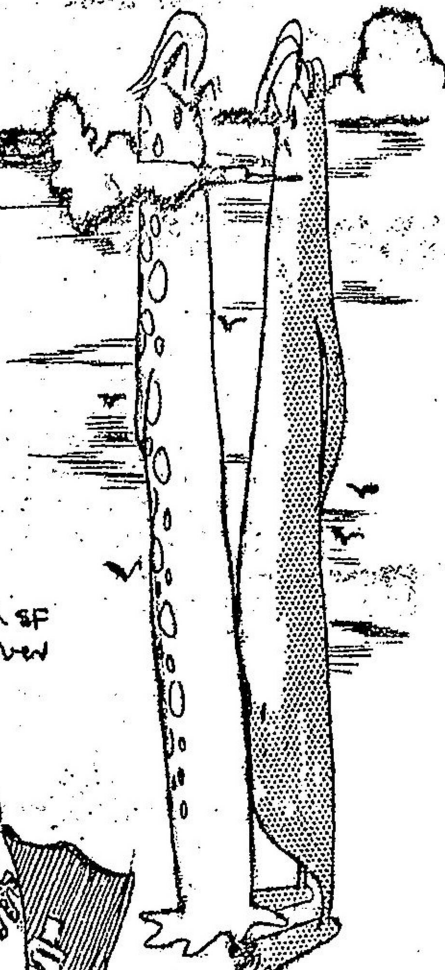


Sandra
Hall

Ewa
Parkov

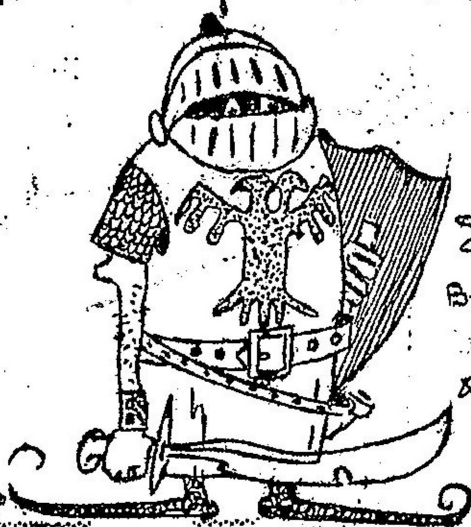
Bobbie
Wild

unknown
Cheltenham SF
Fan member

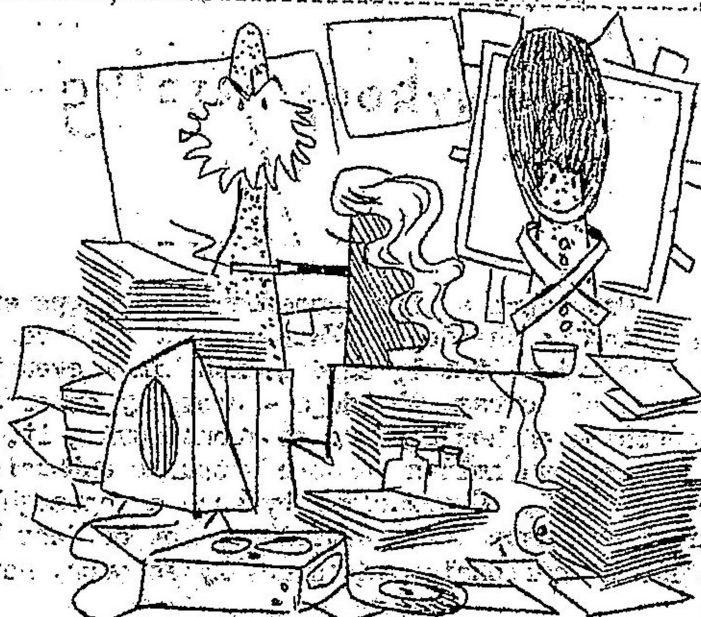


British Publishing
Giants:
Barry Welham
& Brian Hall*

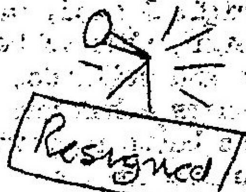
* on
Victory
Verity



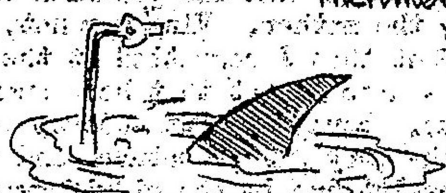
Penelope
Fundergast
(alias -
[scribbles])



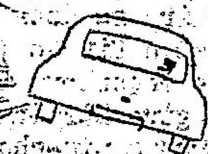
Inchmerry Fandom



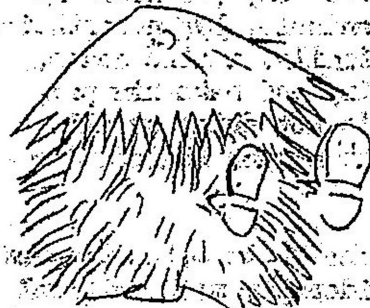
BSFA Chairman



Ailwin C. Clarke
(and friends)



Chuck Harris
(country, Esso)

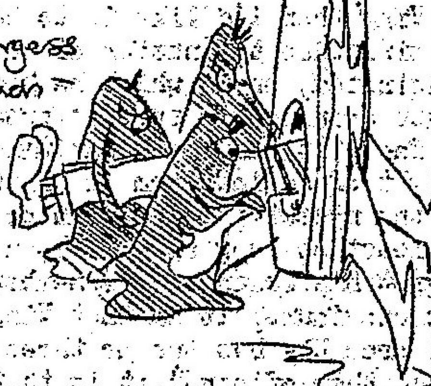


Norman S
Wainborough
(taken during
winter hibernation)

Brian Burgess
(and few friends -
from London
Circle)



New Blood in
British
Fandom
(BSFA member
Number 005)



Anybody Going Up?

ARCHIE MERCER

Once upon a time, somebody just happened to notice that fandom was going to the dogs. Whereupon he said so. To his great surprise, everybody immediately agreed with him - even the dogs - and one and all except, of course, the dogs - promptly entered into serious and earnest discussion on how best to go about saving it. As a direct result, the BSFA was born amid a surge of popular enthusiasm at Kettering over the Easter, 1988. Overwhelmed by such a thoroughly untypically fannish burst of constructive activity a lot of fans hastily decided to re-appraise (still as seriously and earnestly as ever, natch) the situation.

The father of the BSFA, the fan who provided the original seed, was Vinz Clarke, Anglofandom, the mother. Vinz was not, however, able to be present at the birth, a fact that I regretted at the time and still do. To be fair, so does he. I also regret that he - among others - has not as yet seen fit to join us. Here, his attitude appears to be to persevere with the metaphor that the baby was premature, and as he was not on hand to give his expert assistance in the midwifery department, the result was a mis-shapen monster that failed to arouse any particularly paternal feelings in his breast. This is understandable, but nevertheless a pity. If only we had a Raybin (or even a Kylie family) in the house, we might be able to slap an affiliation suit on Vinz and make him pay maintenance. In the meantime, the little monster's not doing at all badly considering that we - "we" being the forsaken mother Anglofandom - have had to cope with the highcost of baby-foot.

At this point, I'd like to interject a personal note - the tone of this article so far tends (inevitably) to be considerably more critical of Vinz than I'd like it to be, it should, of course, be borne very much in mind that the number of worthwhile fannish projects which he has originated, or in which he has participated prominently is considerable, right down to his current preoccupation with the proposed London clubroom. In fact, it has seemed at times almost as if he were bearing the entire weight of Anglofandom on his broad shoulders. Furthermore, he remains one of the nicest people - fan or otherwise - that I know and has been so for at least as long as I've been around fandom. Nevertheless, I continue to regret his absence from membership of the BSFA. I'd say that if the BSFA has one fault, it is that Vinz is not a member. And if Vinz has one fault (he probably has two or three more hidden away somewhere, but I can't place them offhand) it is that he's not a member of the BSFA. Right, back to the main train of thought.

In the absence of Vin, the job of midwife was unhesitatingly taken on by Dave Newman, with Ted Tubb standing by with the boiling water. What emerged was -- to change the metaphor -- a blueprint for a casting. An ad hoc committee was charged with producing the casting and machining it down to give the most practical shape to the finished object. You probably know how we lined up -- Dave as Chairman, Ted as Editor of the official organ, Eric Bentcliffe and Terry Jeeves to handle the secretarial chores between them and myself as Treasurer. We had the good wishes of the convention behind us -- Dave has said he was astounded at the amount of support he found at Kettering, and that it would have been almost criminal not to take advantage of it to get things moving while it was concentrated in one spot -- and fell to with a will. The enthusiasm behind us may have fallen off slightly in some quarters, particularly (it would seem) where it once was greatest. Nevertheless, the will is still very much there, new sources of enthusiasm are coming forward to take the place of the old, and we're still on the upgrade.

So far, the BSFA has been afflicted with two main sources of trouble -- people who'd sooner criticise than join (criticism is always welcome, but it comes a lot more pleasantly from those who are giving active support by subscribing), and the defection of two of the original committee -- the two "midwives", no less, for various reasons. This last is considerably the greater handicap of the two. Dave Newman, as all who participated in the Kettering meetings will agree, could hardly be bettered as Chairman -- just so long as his enthusiasm remains equal to his capabilities. Unfortunately it didn't, and we were reluctantly compelled to relinquish him to full-time golf. Ted Tubb, too, whose presence in the Editorial chair we had been counting as potentially one of our major selling points to the public, found himself unable to stand the extra activity on top of his bread-and-butter commitments, and resigned from office after producing the first issue. His resignation, however, was sweetened by a considerable donation of reading matter to the BSFA Library. That left three of us, and a threesome we at present remain. However, without being unduly boastful -- for I am actually the least active of the three -- I think it can be fairly said that this "proud and lonely" type threesome has produced as much hard achievement during its reign as did the original quintet. Terry Jeeves, taking over the Editorship of the magazine has produced a far more balanced second and third issues than Ted did a first one, whilst Eric Bentcliffe, doing literally what was originally scheduled as three men's work, is getting things moving right and left. The work these two have put into the Association since Dave and Ted dropped out deserves nothing short of complete success. (Have YOU joined the BSFA yet?).

What IS this BSFA, anyway? you may be asking. You know it stands for the British Science Fiction Association and is dedicated to serious constructiveness and like that, but so what? Well, if you'll just glance back at my opening paragraph, you'll see therein some mention of fandom "going to the dogs". Specifically, it was generally agreed that insufficient "new blood" was being attracted into antifandom, whether

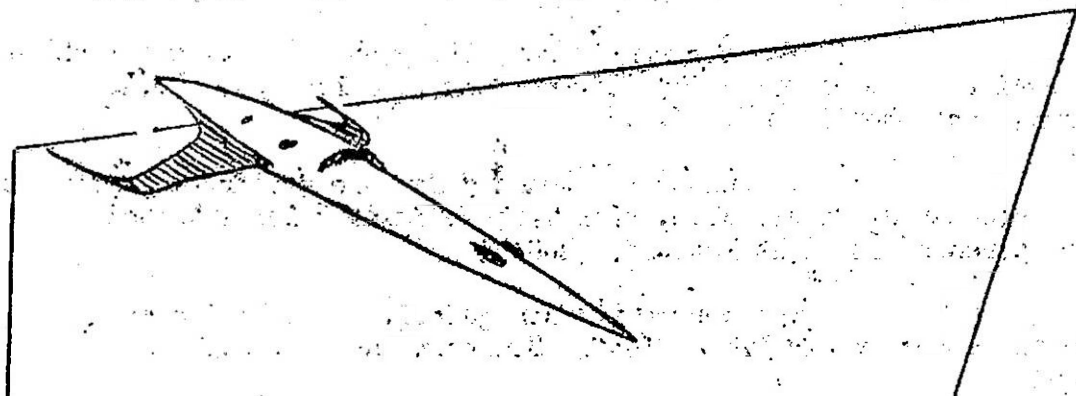
terrific, fanzine-fandom, convivial fandom or any other breed. Fanzine fandom was gradually vanishing up its own rear end in an ever-diminishing spiral, and the weekly gathering at the Globe was just about dead on its feet. Fandom in its various allotropic forms had in the past provided much enjoyment for its members, and was therefore worth taking positive steps to preserve as a vigorous entity. But first it was necessary to get hold of some of the abovementioned "new blood". A majority vote at Kettering decided that the best way of attracting -- and holding -- this "new blood" was to found a society charged with going after it and showing it (when found) what it had been missing.

It has been argued that a full-scale society, with memberships, subscriptions and the rest, was not an ABSOLUTE necessity -- that maybe an information bureau with a small but enthusiastic staff could produce just as effective a result. This may be so -- provided that a suitable means could be found of financing the bureau -- but SOMETHING was certainly wanted, SOMETHING now exists, and we're making it work. It would be easier if we knew that the whole of fandom was behind us, of course, but we (this committee, that is, though in a wider sense it can be extended to include the membership as a whole) do sincerely feel that what we are doing is worth the doing. Apart from one or two diehards who tend to argue on the lines of "well, I found fandom okay without the BSFA, and any other potential fan worth his salt will do the same!", everybody seems to be in basic agreement with us -- differing only on detail, even though some of the points of detail (for instance, the value of a society as against that of a bureau only) seem to be more fundamental to some than to others.

One fairly fundamental detail concerns the level of the annual subscriptions. This was fixed at Kettering at £1 for full membership and 10/- for associates (under 18 or overseas membership), however, many feel this is too high -- including plenty who have nevertheless paid it. The principle argument in favour of having comparatively high subscriptions is that any society that wants to do anything worthwhile can hardly take any other course. I'm not, myself, entirely in agreement with this as a long-term policy -- nevertheless, we have to provide the members with something in return for their subscriptions, and it stands to reason that £1 per person will go a lot further than 10/- for each of two people, leaving furthermore a bigger proportion over for what is ultimately the Association's main purpose and reason for existence -- the hunt for new members, and then the demonstration to them of what fandom has to offer. In other words, to recruit more specimens of congenial humanity to fill out the diminishing ranks of what we generally recognise as fandom.

However, if a person pays £1, he or she wants to know that it will be personally worthwhile. For the established fan, £1 in the cause of the simple preservation of an existing hobby is maybe worthwhile in itself (and here let me say that I honestly can't imagine any adult in normal circumstances who just CAN'T produce £1 if he wants to).

But the brand-new member, to whom fandom is just a word (if indeed he's ever heard of it in the first place) wants something more concrete. So for a start, we give him our official journal, VECTOR, four times a year. FOR A START, I said. But VECTOR doesn't cost anything like five bob a year, as several fen have already pointed out. We have a postal lending library already in operation, but that is mainly self-financing. We have three separate checklists in various stages of preparation, (including one that Ving Clarke is preparing for us) each of which should prove of considerable utility, particularly to the new member without any detailed knowledge of the field. We are definitely putting on a convention this year, at which membership of the Association covers convention membership. (You'll be hearing more about this convention in due course.) Of course, some of the convention expenses should be recoverable, ditto with at least some of the checklist expenses -- this being the Association's first year of existence. We are also in the process of setting up a fannish advice bureau, which will include putting members in touch with other members sharing the same extra-stefnic interests where required, and performing a general service for the membership besides being incidentally one of the strongpoints of the BSFA's original purpose -- the induction of "new blood" into the pre-existing order of things fannish.



Do YOU want to help keep your hobby alive? If so, why not join the BSFA now, it is run by FANS for the good of FANS.

Write today to the Secretary

Eric Bentcliffe,
47, Alldis Street,
Great Moor,
Stockport,
Cheshire.

SPEED UP

JOHN BERRY

I was doing a crossword puzzle - a pretty difficult one, too. Six across, a four-letter word ending in I-F, meaning "Found at the bottom of a bird cage", had me flummoxed for a bit until my natural born genius asserted itself and I pencilled in the answer triumphantly.

The Sergeant's son, the youngest one, was leaning over my shoulder, breathing noisily down my ear. He laughed. "No, no, Mister Berry, that should be G.R.I.T."

I grunted and reached for the eraser. Kids. I turned to another difficult clue, twenty-three down, "Girl situated between her parents" in eight letters. Uh-huh!

The Sergeant's son gulped. It echoed across the office and shook my ear like a leaf. Something had obviously startled him.

"Quick, Mister Berry, here's the Inspector," he hissed, and shot over me en route for the Sergeant's house, which was attached to the station. I peered through the window and saw the Inspector getting out of his Morris Minor.

The Inspector worried us. He seemed to be under the impression that the station wasn't being run efficiently, yet we'd already got four cases during the current year and it was still only September. We'd got an unlighted pedal-cycle, two unlicensed dogs and a, really serious case, mine, of a boy of eleven swiping the Squire's plums. I jerked my mind back from its triumphant ruminations and opened the door for the Inspector.

I saluted smartly.

"You've forgotten to put your helmet on, Barry," he said softly. He worried us more when he spoke softly.

"S-sorry sir," I said. I emptied the apples out and put it on my head.

"It's on back to front, Barry," he said, even more softly. I turned it round.

"Where's the Sergeant?" he asked, trying to rub a jam stain off the front of my tunic.

Good job he wasn't watching my Adam's apple. I swallowed it twice before I could answer "He's gone on patrol, sir." Because he wasn't on patrol, of course. He was up the creek again. He told me he was going on a patrol; he'd even given me the routes he was taking, but if he'd gone that way he would have turned left when he reported from the station. Instead, he turned right. Oh, I knew where he'd gone alright. There was an auction sale up at Farmer Johnston's and a lot of beehives were in it. The Sergeant was keen on bees.

This, then, was my dilemma. If I told the Inspector to follow the route the Sergeant had given me they'd never meet and maybe the resultant black mark in the Station notebook would prove disastrous. One of us might even get transferred to a busy station.

On the other hand, if I sent the Inspector up to Farmer Johnstons and he caught him in the act of bidding heavily for a beehive or even staggering home with one across his shoulders.... I shuddered inwardly at the prospect.

Undoubtedly this was a situation which called for me to display some of the initiative other people, including the Inspector, didn't think I possessed.

"He's gone to the Marshes, sir," I said quickly. "There have been a lot of reports of men coming from the city to shoot ducks in the Marsh without Gun Licences or even Game Certificates."

"Ha, Good," said the Inspector. "How does one get there?" With pounding heart I sent him on his way. The Marshes were far from both the Sergeant's imaginary route and his real one.

The moment the Morris Minor swerved Marshwards I leapt onto my bike and pedalled like fury to Johnston's Farm. I could hear the auction in progress while I was still a hundred yards away.

"Ten pounds," the Sergeant was bellowing.

"Eleven pounds," shouted a local Labourer named Smith.

"Eleven ten," roared the Sergeant, "and I'll be round to look at your dog licence this week-end, Smith."

"Twelve quid," I heard a little man in a peaked cap squeak.

"Twelve ten," the Sergeant shouted. Before the little man could open his mouth again I heard the Sergeant say, gently, "Nice batch of pigs! Get at the bottom of your garden, William."

I couldn't see William's face, but he sounded sort of pleasantly surprised. "Yes, Sergeant. Doing very well, they are."

"Wasn't it lucky," the Sergeant observed sweetly, "that that sack of middlings should fall off the miller's wagon right outside your front gate?"

"Any advance on twelve ten?" asked the auctioneer in a resigned voice.

There was a biting silence.

"Going...going....gone at twelve ten. Right Sergeant. It'll all be delivered tomorrow."

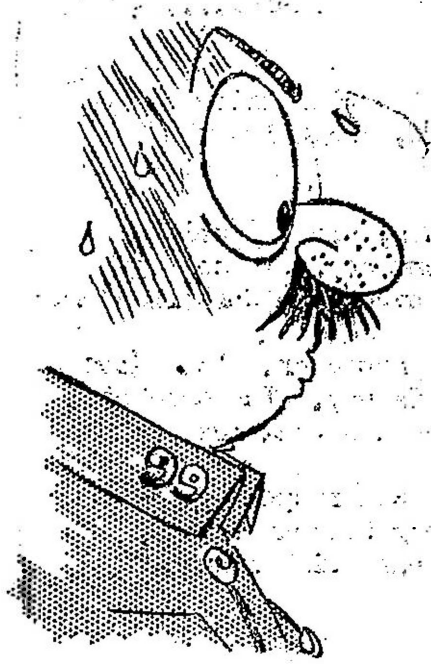
Of course it was my own fault that I hopped off my bike just as I was alongside the midden, but I don't think the Sergeant need have held his nose so pointedly when I tugged at his tunic sleeve.

"Pssst," I hissed, "the Inspector is looking for you on the Marshes."

"On the Marshes?" croaked the Sergeant, dragging his eyes away from the lot of hives he had just purchased. He began to pant.

"Thundering hell!" he swore, "why the Marshes?"

"I sent him there. I knew you hadn't followed the route you suggested and I - er - suspected you might be here."



The Marsh is a pretty complicated area and there's some excuse if he takes a long time to find you. That'll give you time to get there."

"Good boy," whispered the Sergeant, his eyes gleaming. "Look, the Marsh is a big place. It'll need two of us to spot the Inspector so that I can nip round all the little-known paths and meet him accidentally. Heh, hoh, heh! You'd better come with me."

With heads thrust forward, backsides rampant and feet going like the pistons in the Coronation Scot, we pedalled to the Marshes. After half an hour the Sergeant spotted a mud-splattered car approaching.

"Behind the bushes, Berry," he hissed.

Then, with fearsomely majestic stride, he stepped into the road, his right hand held high.

The Morris Minor squealed to a halt.

The Sergeant strode purposefully over to the off-side door. I had a horrid feeling that he was going to over-do it again.

"Show me your Game Licence, please," he roared. "There's been a lot of poaching going on around... oh... it's the Inspector! Goodness gracious! I'm terribly sorry sir, I didn't..."

The Inspector beamed. "It's good to see you taking such an interest in the Game Laws, Sergeant. I'm pleased especially as - oh well, it doesn't matter now. We'll let bygones be bygones. Caught any poachers yet?"

The Sergeant looked at the sky for a moment. I thought he was going to raise his fist and shout "Onwards!"

"Not yet sir, but I will," he replied in his most authoritative voice.

The Inspector put his car in gear. Then he looked out of the window again. "I'm so pleased to see you taking your duties so seriously," he announced, "that I'm going back to the station to make a special entry in the station Note Book - a favourable entry, the first I think." He smiled and purred away.

I joined the Sergeant. He looked at me, then at the rapidly retreating car. "He'll get back to the Station in fifteen minutes and you won't be there to receive him," he said hollowly. "You got me out of trouble and now YOU'RE in it - deep!"

Suffering catfish!! Ruined, and at the peak of my career.

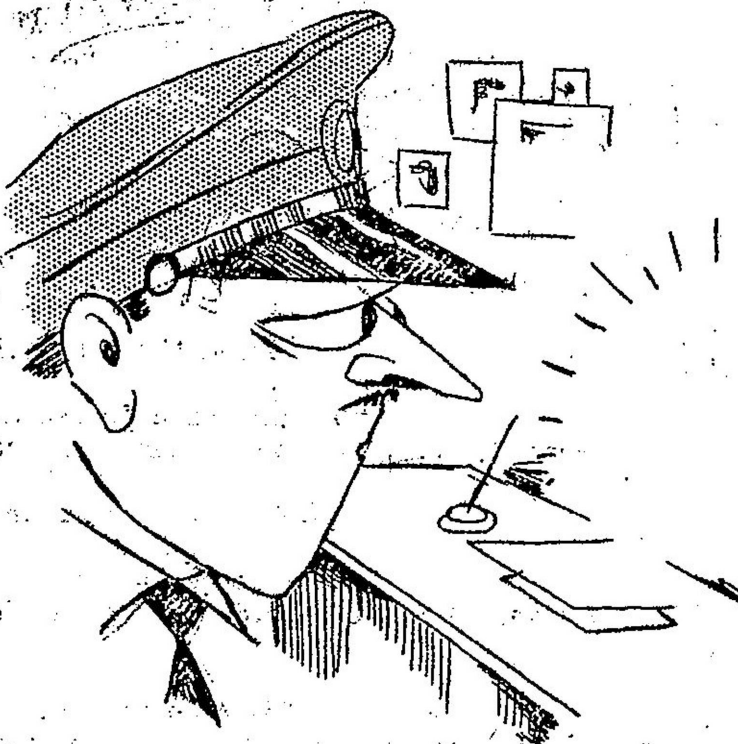
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"I couldn't even get to the station if I could run a four minute mile," I sobbed. The Inspector would arrive there, walk right in and find the place empty.....a monstrous police offence.

"Strip off," yelled the Sergeant.

I say I looked at him. Suffering....

"Take your tunic, shirt and trousers off, dump 'em behind the hedge and start running like hell back to the station across the fields!"



Without even looking at me he pedalled away as fast as he could in the opposite direction.

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... ..

Half an hour later I staggered up the station steps and collapsed at the front door. It opened and I surveyed the Sergeant, the newest junior constable and the Inspector.

The Sergeant slipped me a crafty wink. The junior constable looked as though he'd seen a ghost -- a thin one wearing a dirty vest, dirtier underpants and whacking great size twelve hobnails heavily coated in cow manure. The Inspector's smile reminded me of the Grand Canyon.

"Oh, what a change has come over this station," he sighed. "The Sergeant finally doing his duty conscientiously and Barry becoming a great long-distance runner...well! I must inform the Commissioner as soon as I get back." He shook my sweating hand, tripped down the steps like a gazelle, forced his way through a crowd of fascinated villagers which had been attracted by my half-naked trot through the village and drove away in clouds of blue smoke.

The Sergeant and the junior constable carried me in. "I hope you didn't think I'd let you down after you'd saved my bacon, did you, John?" the Sergeant asked. First time he'd ever called me John. Big time.

"How did you.. how did you do it?" I gasped.

"I pedalled to the nearest house," said the Sergeant with a happy smirk, "and phoned through to a farmer I know, whose house the Inspector would have to pass on his way to the station. On my urgent instructions the farmer drove his tractor onto the middle of the road and immobilised it. You know how narrow the lanes are along there - it was completely blocked. Then I phoned the station and got my wife to run down to the village and get young Smithers to report in and act as station orderly. I arrived just before the Inspector, and a few minutes before you clawed your way round the corner."

"Magnificent, Sergeant," I said. I meant it, too. For all his many faults he could certainly plan a crafty move...

He roared with laughter and I heard the door slam as he went into his Married Quarters.

"Great chap, the Sergeant," I said to Smithers, the new recruit. "Play the game with him and he'll never let you down."

Smithers looked at me sort of..sideways..

"Ha!" he said.

"Huh?" I said, in turn.

"Ha! Ha!" said Smithers, without laughing. "You should've heard what he told the Inspector."

A cold lump began to congeal in my upper intestine. He'd over-done-it. He ALWAYS over-did things.

"Wha-what did he tell the Inspector?" I whispered. Could it be..? ooohh...nooo...

"He told the Inspector that you were only eleven seconds outside the British native record for the six miles. He said he sent you out training every afternoon because you were so good and showing improvement all the time."

I broke out in a sweat all over again.

"And then...?"

"And then the Inspector said that the British Police Six Mile Championship is being held next month and he's putting your name down for it immediately. The fact that you're improving every day, he said, tended to show you might even break the record."

I fought back an incipient coma. The Inspector was a renowned sportsman. He'd probably make sure I ran six miles every day.....Suffering catfish! I got a stitch just running up a hill.

The Sergeant came in with a cup of tea. He draped a blanket over my shoulders.

"How are you, Champ?" he roared.

I gave him the dead eye. "Heck, Sergeant, there was no need to tell the Inspector a lot of lies about my non-existent prowess as a six-miler..."

"Berry," said the Sergeant, his eyes turned inward, "as I saw the whole panorama this afternoon - the green hills, the trees, the sleepy village and you staggering down the main road, I felt that I must create something special."



He smiled so much his face wrinkled up like a prune. "And then, you see, I had to make the Inspector think there was some reason for you to be tearing all over the countryside in your undies. It seemed the right thing to say at the time... made the thing look authentic."

"So now what?" I pointed out. "I'm committed to running in the Championship soon and the Inspector will expect me to break a record.... I'm more likely to break a leg."

The Sergeant gave me a look. THAT look.

"I'm working on it," he said thoughtfully.

I winced. In case I forgot, I pencilled in the answer to twenty-three down in the crossword on the table. Then I shuddered.

Somehow I felt that the next few weeks held a great many surprises in store for me.....

KNOCKIN' THE ROCK

I always thought of William Haley as the man who wrote about the atom bomb,
But the Haley I've been reading about is real gone, hep-cats, real gone!
He plays a frenzied type of music that is known as rock-n-roll,
Which is souped up jazz and boogie combined in a way that's droll.
But I don't feel like crazy - am I? - Dig this! I just don't care,
And this Haley makes me feel like and E equals MC square.
Nowadays I'm not even left in peace when I turn on the radio
Because what do I hear but bellows of "Oh, daddy, oh, oh, my daddy, O!"
And I feel strongly tempted to give the screamers a shock...
By heaving a rock right into their clock.

Sure, how I hate yuh, alligator, I don't think you're soignée,
And crocodile, go jump into the Nile, I don't find you funny.
Rock-n-roll, real gone, don't play bebop,
When you blow your horn pull out every damned stop.
When the horn fails you then grab your guitar
And play rock-n-roll to twelve dead beats in a bar.
Perhaps they got this idee fixe from the tunes of dear old Dixie,
Plus a basin street of blues from New Orleans,
Now everywhere they're stompin' and their jaws are chompin', chompin',
While they're leapin' about like those ole jumpin' beans.

Whenever I stroll down the street there's music with a heavy beat
Stomped by a thousand jiggin' feet.
They sing rollin' to the Palais and the rock the shack -
OH! Beat me, daddy, and I'll bash you back!
No doubt the real cool kids think that I'm quite a bore,
But I wish to Heaven they'd say what was behind that damned green door.
Of course, I don't really object when they run around singing their blues,
Whenever I'm near them it's only to amuse myself I'm swinging a noose.
The jitter bug once cut a rug
While Humphrey blew and blew on his golden horn.
But now they're tough on the solid stuff,
So don't be square or you'll attract their scorn.

So now we hear them daily, we hear them singing gaily,
"C'mon, get - HEP - with - HALEY!"
CLOMP!!... Oh, well!
See me at the Old Bailey.

Maybe it's because I've long left school, but I find I cannot get real cool.
Say there's no music in my soul - the nearest I'll get to to rock-n-roll
Is racing to the station against the clock
And rockin' to work on the rollin' stock.

Robert Wild

The OLD MILL STREAM

A Press Column

By Penelope
Fandergaste.

As far as I can make out, "ORION" first saw the light of day early in December, 1953, just over five years ago. In those dark days the magazine was an off shoot of the Lakeland Science Fiction Organisation, the same mob which later gave rise to that spiritualist fanzine, East and West. It's rather surprising to find that two fanzines, Orion and Andromeda (as East and West was in those days) should start out on such similar lines and end up so many poles apart. Peter Campbell converted his fanzine into an amateur version of his professional namesake's Astounding, with oodles of delving into the inner reaches of the mind. Paul Enever, however, cut loose from the Lakeland Organisation and made his fanzine into one of the best ever informal and family type fanzines. Without qualification, Enever deliberately kept his fanzine small and informal. While Andromeda was advertising "Every Issue Bigger," Paul was concentrating on making his Orion intimate and readable. Completely lacking in pomposity, a natural falling in many fanzine editors who like to think of themselves as near professionals, Paul kept the circulation of Orion down to a number which could be easily handled, a number of fans to whom Orion was never 'just another fanzine,' but for whom Orion was composed deliberately.

Paul was a perfect fanzine editor, a rare position to attain in British fan circles. His first and foremost consideration was always the friendliness of his fanzine. He was not concerned in epics which shook fandom, he took no notice of advice designed to improve the layout of Orion; he was always well in the background when a fanish feud brought out the normally hidden nastiness in lesser mortals. It is true that

in
 Erewer was a great believer in controversy, and he used controversial material to a great degree in Orion, never however permitting material which bore discussion degenerate beyond discussion. Although Paul often raised controversial matters in his editorials, quite deliberately intending that letters of comment would pour forth through his letter box, he was always mature enough to realise that in the long run it is a lot more satisfactory to be nice about it. When one early issue of Orion was practically ready for collating, he realised there was material in that issue which might cause offence and meticulously went about changing that issue's contents.

There were times when Paul's fanzine was little more than an extra long letter column, for his policy of friendliness to all, and let's have some controversial material to chew over certainly paid dividends. There were regular letter writers like Walt Willis, Vince Clarke and Bill Temple. Not that Paul didn't have his regularly contributors, either. Quick to realise that regularly run columns breed informality (when of a higher standard than this one), he banished poor old James Keating to the more stolid Andromeda, and wheedled material from George Whiting, the only fan to read Amazing Stories in the Northern and Southern hemispheres at the same time, and Doris Harrison who certainly sat through some sessions at the Globe in that ill lighted corner of hers. John Berry wrote stories about his policing, and Arthur Thomson popped up to contribute his superb artistic humour. Orion probably put Arthur in the fan's eye more than did Hyphen, for Arthur certainly contributed some excellent cartoons to Orion, and Orion came out more regularly. Indeed, for three whole years, Orion was published "on or about the eighth of every other month." Quite a schedule to keep up.

And look at the names which appeared in Orion from time to time... notwithstanding the famous names that appeared in the letter column, contributors of articles were; Vince Clarke, Constance Mackenzie, Bob Shaw, Ron Bennett, Walt Willis, Chuck Harris, Archie Mearns, Mal Ashworth, Joy Clarke, Madeline Willis, Ted Tubbs, Laurence Sandfield, Daphne Buckmaster, John Ashcroft, Alan Dodd, Terry Jeeves, "Jack Williams", and Bill Barry, decidedly a formidable parade of the best of British Fandom.

And now, Orion is being handed on to Edda Parker, a regular attendee at the Globe for the past year, but a girl who has still to make her name in the fanzine world. It is nothing new for a fanzine to be handed on to another fan for editing purposes. Femizine, begun in the desert by Sandy Sanderson (desert, Sandy, humm...) was handed on to Pamela Bulmer who has herself relinquished the position of editor to Ethel Lindsay. Alan Dodd took over Camber from Welshman Fred Robinson, the cameraman of many a British convention. Canadian Fandom has in William Grant its fourth or fifth editor, Shangri-la, once the organ of the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society keeps popping up under different editors, as does Space Diversions, the club magazine of the British LSFS, the Liverpool group. And there is in America, a fanzine which alternates each issue between thirteen different editors.

Ellie, then, need have no qualms about taking over Orion. The magazine has a tradition, and with the enthusiasm of a new editor, has a future. The two can be well balanced. Ellie Parker is no 'starry eyed neofan, but a mature young woman who can be relied upon to produce a fanzine combining the best from Orion's established ideas and her own fresh ones. Leave Paul Enever to his countryside gardening and move with Ellie to the City of London. The old Orion dies and the new phoenix (how did he get in here?) arises from the ashes.

---ooOoo--- --

-- -- ooOoo-- --

Isn't "Deal 'M' For Murder" a wonderful play? The situation is so well contrived and those little loose threads so tidily knitted together throughout the entire action. I saw the play the other week at the local repertory theatre. The week before they'd done Noel Coward's "Private Lives" and the week after they went straight on to Priestley's "An Inspector Calls". It amazes me the way they do it, these repertory people. What a wealth of theatrical experience there is in the local rep. One play being performed twice nightly, a second play being rehearsed in the mornings and goodness knows how many more parts being read and learned. One week an actress plays a schoolgirl and the next week she is seen in the part of a tender but over possessive mother. A man plays a Cockney sailor, playing to the hilt the lines which are rich in humorous dialect, and the next week he's the suave tennis player in Deal 'M For Murder who is blackmailing a down-on-his-luck gentleman to murder his wife.

What amazes me even more than the number of parts these repertory players carry, is their standard of performance in the parts they play. They carry an air of conviction about them, and rarely indeed do standards sink down to the depths of "Ham". Not only have the performers to be convincing to an audience which probably sees every play they perform, it is no easy matter to persuade someone who was delighted with your performance as a vagabond that you are equally at home and at ease playing the part of a major-general.

Foosh on television. Give me the Rep. every time.

---ooOoo--- --

-- -- ooOoo-- --

I met the local school master last week, while I was taking my morning constitutional. A nice chap, a few years older than I, and a man who has devoted his life to trying to knock a little sense and formal education into youngsters who all too often want to get out into the world and bring home a weekly pay packet. None of the Blackboard Jungle, Young Devils attitude about him, though. He's strict, but fair, when it comes to discipline and he was forced to laugh when I chided him about his week's holiday that was coming up for half term. Teacher's Rest, we used to call it in my day.

"I suppose you'll be going taty scratting," I told him, but he said it was too hard on his back, and anyway, he had a deal of correction to do for the children.

That led us on to considering ways and means of making "taty scratting" easier. To start with there was the obvious means of employing his young charges with a practical piece of work, though the way we tackled the problem wasn't too practical, I have to admit. We talked about a giant machine, which could cover a whole field of potatoes, turning them up as it went along. The youngsters would sit on the back of this, leaning backwards to pick up the potatoes as the machine went along. With the whole school at work, over their holiday, the job would be cleared in no time at all.

This got our friend on to using his imagination and, in no time at all, he'd thought of crossing potatoes with Mexican jumping beans, so that all one had to do was walk along each row of potatoes, waiting for the little perishers to jump up into a waiting sack. Soon after this we'd got on to scientific methods of collecting the potatoes, and as far as I remember it was the school master who came up with the ultimate notion. In future, he prophesied, fields would be built. Instead of just being left to lie around the countryside and look untidy, they would be deliberately planned as to colour and location. All would be giant bowls, allowed to swivel freely on a central screw. When the potatoes had grown and were ready to be collected one would press a button, and the field would revolve. All the potatoes would be thrown to the field's sides and would remain there, glued by a strong paste, the rate of spin would be determined so that only the heavy potatoes would be thrown to the sides of the fields; the light soil would stay where it was.

Now, the reason I mention all this isn't, as you may well imagine, to revolutionise farming methods, but rather to show you that there lay a really fannish scheme, thought up by a distinctly non-fannish mind. The school master I mention has spent a few evenings with me, and he has seen my meagre collection of science fiction books and magazines. He has also browsed through the odd fanzine that I have happened to have lying around at the time. He thinks they are low and vulgar, and that all fans are quite mad.

I am sure that other fans will agree with me when I say that this is something we have all experienced. How many of us know really fannish characters, people whose informal idiosyncrasy, tempered by a degree of formal sense, would be a great catch to fandom if they could be persuaded to throw in their respective lots with our little world? The question is rhetorical, really, for I'm sure it has happened to all of us, and happens all the time. It's one thing to be considered an authority on rockets and artificial satellites and to be able to say, "oh, yes, he used to come round to the Globes," when someone mentions so and so's latest novel, but quite another matter to have to keep fanzine fandom as a skeleton in the cupboard whenever the vicar comes to call.

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In his much abused "Science and Fiction," for example, Patrick Moore states: "I recently read through one magazine, published in Cateshead, and came to the last page without having gathered the faintest notion of what it was all about." Of course, this was before Satellite had started running parodies of The Old Mill Stream, but you see what I mean. The more I think of it, the more I am sure that Vice Versa hit the nail on the head when he said, "It's a proud and lonely thing to be a far." A sad thought, isn't it?

HELP
SEND

Barty
TO
DETROIT

Cash to

STOP
PRESS!

Bill Rickhardt now
GAFIA! Amerifren should send
money to Nick & Noreen Palasca,
5612, Warwick Drive, Parma 29, Ohio, U.S.A.

Arthur Thomson
17 Brockham House
Brockham Drive
London S.W.2

OR

Bill Rickhardt
21175 Goldsmith St,
Farmington,
Michigan
U.S.A

A
PAGE
FOR
T.A.F.F.





BY E.C. TUBBS

There is something tragic about an empty bottle. Seen in the cold light of dawn it takes on some of the attributes of a corpse - a thing deserted, unwanted, forlorn. Yet, like the body which once was full of vibrant life, what magic DID that bottle hold!

Take a full bottle, hold it to the light, study the lambent golden glow of the liquid within. In your hand you hold the refined blood of sun-kissed grapes, the culmination of the sweat and toil of those who tend the vineyards, the fruits of the sun the rain and earth all compressed to a velvet smoothness. Open it, hold it to the nostrils, inhale the indescribable fragrance of what it contains. Tip a little into a glass, sip it, savour, then swallow it, THIS IS NECTAR.

Who can tell to what magic world you will be wafted? A full bottle holds within itself the key to worlds of imagination beyond description. The paths between the stars open wide; adventure beckons with inviting eyes and the sweet scent of achievement lies in the golden essence of the liquid spilled by the crushed grape for the surcease of sorrow which is the lot of man. Even the corroding guilt of Original Sin becomes a merry fantasy as the contents of the bottle lower and vile truth, that wanton jade, which ever lies lurking at the base of the empty is still far away.

No one has yet been bold enough to attempt to measure the projects, adventurous imaginings, brave enterprises and crystalline concepts which the contents of a bottle have induced. Sorrow is dissolved into mirth, cowardice becomes courage, tears refine themselves into smiles beneath the impact of the healing juice. Truly it has been asked;—

"Oft I wonder what the Vintner buys
one half so precious as that he sells."

Escape from the chains of mundane bondage can have no price. God, when he created Man, took pity on his estate and, to him, then gave the grapes so that, even in part, he might remember his heritage.

Yet what a tragic thing is an empty bottle!

Gone are the dreams; the brave imaginings, the bold adventures.
Gone too, are the crystalline concepts, the unveiled truths, the rosy colour of the universe. Gone is the warm companionship of strangers.
Tears and heartbreak return. Courage reverts to cowardice.
Misery holds sway ever all. God, in his grief, turns His face from his creation.

Despair fills the universe --

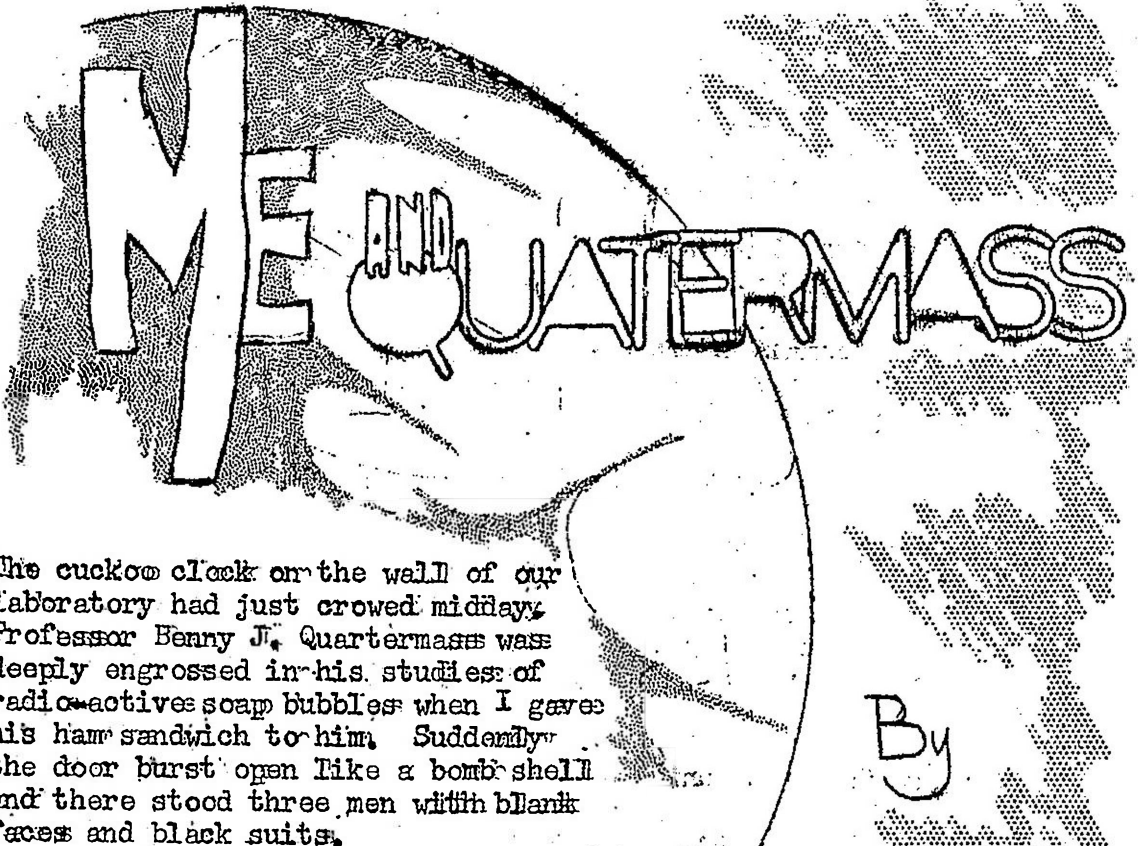
More tragic than the ashes of a dead love is an empty bottle.
More tragic than the anguish of a broken heart. More tragic, even, than the pains of unrealised ambition. More sorrowful than the questioning wail of unwanted children. These things are a part of life, a thread in the pattern, but an empty bottle is a useless thing, for a Vision once seen, cannot lightly be forgotten. An empty bottle but reminds us of what it did contain. So buy another, my friend, and to you I will give my heart.
You buy me PARADISE.

Yesterday this day's madness did prepare;
To-morrow's silence, Triumph, or despair:

Drink! for you know not whence you came, nor why;
Drink! for you know not why you go, nor where.

Omar Khayyam. (trans. Fitzgerald)

2nd Edition. Quatrain 80.



The cuckoo clock on the wall of our laboratory had just crowed midday. Professor Beany J. Quatermass was deeply engrossed in his studies of radio-active soap bubbles when I gave him his ham sandwich to him. Suddenly the door burst open like a bomb shell and there stood three men with blank faces and black suits.

By

Sandra Hall

"Good morning, Professor," said the tallest of the three. "The man on my left is called Smith I. On my right is Smith III. My name is also Smith. We are the men from the Ministry, the three Smith brothers of Scotland Yard." As he spoke the badge on the lapel of his suit lit up in vivid neon lights. "Professor, this is an emergency. A flying saucer has just landed in the middle of the Matzahari desert. Knowing your record, we thought you ought to deal with it. This may mean an invasion. We've just found peculiar marks stamped in the sand nearby. Someone's been using indelible ink out there."

"Is this a sign of invasion?" I demanded. "Have the Martians arrived?"

"Yes, it's top secret but the Martians have done it at last. The foot marks were made by engraved cloven hooves."

"Who told you that?" asked Quatermass as he stared at the ham in his sandwich. "How do you know?"

"The Local customs officer sent us an S.O.S. The aliens wanted to declare something and they'd forgotten what forms to use. After all, it's more than fifty years since anyone declared anything out there in the desert."

"I'm with you," cried Quartermass as he threw the soapsuds down the drain. "Pauline, fetch my toothbrush and ray gun. Gentlemen, I am at your disposal. Do me the honour of having a sandwich."

Cramming ham sandwiches into our pockets, the five of us raced madly through the corridors and out into Hyde Park where the Band was playing the March of the Secret Service. We leapt into the streamlined car provided by the Royal Horrorcultural Society. Smith III took the wheel off and drove like a fiend along the Great North Road to Portsmouth.

"How handsome he looks," I thought to myself glancing sideways at Quartermass. He was crouched on the floor playing with his Buck Rogers ray gun and eating a sandwich at the same time.

Throughout that journey the speedometer showed 150 miles an hour. We got to Liverpool early to confuse the enemy then we stopped to have a drink at the Las Vegas clubroom. With typical forethought the navy had provided the very best of transport, their new Top Secret Sub - Aqua - Stratic machine. Unfortunately this modern miracle was still at the drawing board stage, so we lashed the drawing boards together with boot laces, and using the periscope we set course straight for the Matahari.

The log book of that journey alone would make fascinating reading. There was, for instance, the thrilling time when Smith I was all shook up on a whale spout. It really sent him, Smith II got all tangled up with an octopus, (female, of course). Smith III went hunting crottled greeps and -well, never mind what happened to him. We were nearly out of petrol when we got to Sing Sing but an understanding Chinese opium smoker lent us twenty tons of Polish spirit which, as you may know, is excellent fuel. To him I dedicate this story. He can put it in his pipe and smoke it. But alas, these and other incidents must be passed over, and now, back to the story.

So we came to the last stage of our thrilling journey, the final night before tragedy struck. Once we reached the desert our drawing boards were no longer effective so we ditched them on the roof of a nightclub and borrowed transport from a friendly Tourog Chief. Never will I forget that starry flight. Roped tightly to the humps of our camels we galloped recklessly over the salt marshes towards the alien spaceship.

I looked at Quartermass. "How handsome he looks," I thought to myself as I watched him clinging desperately to the tail of his camel and trying to eat a ham sandwich at the same time.

Quartermass looked at me. "Damned Yak!" he screamed. Uncertain whether this remark referred to me or his camel I did not pause to question him.

The false dawn was just beginning to shed it's silvery light over the desert when we saw the strange spacecraft in front of us. There it lay, gleaming like an out-sized soapbox and not a sign of a Martian anywhere. All we could find was a lurid luminous footprint. The three Smith brothers let out a song and dance of joy when they saw it. Meanwhile, Quartermass and I inspected the spaceship. There was a notice on the door in the forgotten language of Senzar. "Come to Earth" was what it said. I read it to Quartermass in a muffled voice.

"We're saved," cried he in a shrill voice that betrayed his feelings. "Goor³ and Klonz², they have done it at last!"

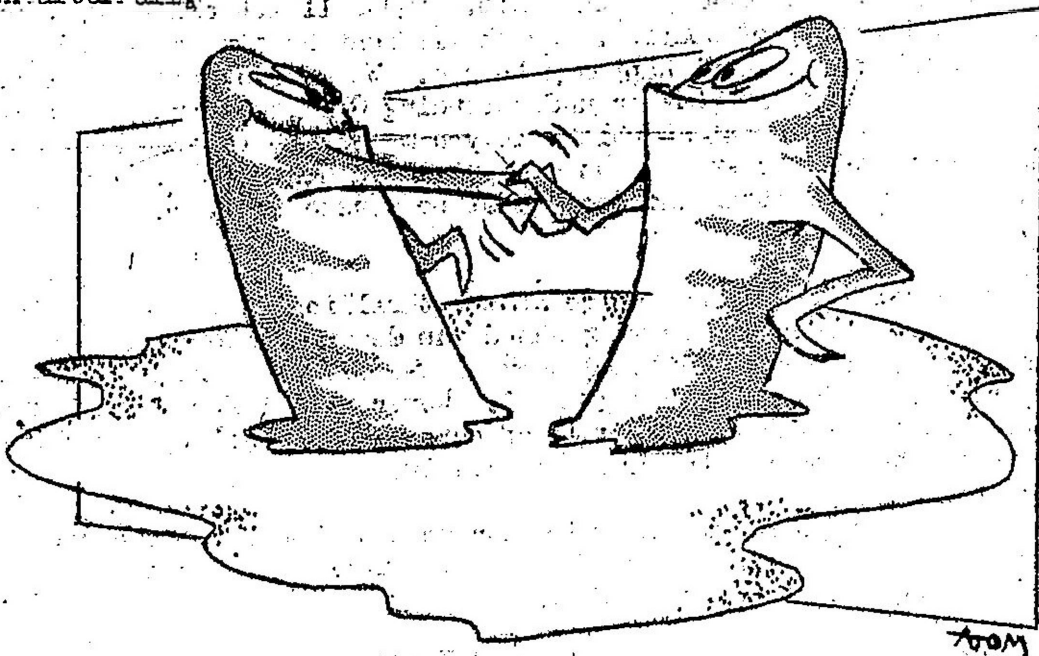
"Never have I seen him look so handsome," I thought to myself as I saw his antennae begin to lengthen in blissful joy. "We're established," I yelled. "The earth is ours at last!" I grew a pseudopod to wave at him.

"Hold everything!" said Smith II coming towards us carrying a deadly looking zap gun.

"That won't kill us, you know," I said saluting him with a stray tentacle. "Ah, but this gun doesn't contain water. It contains the only thing that is fatal to your metabolism - it contains black currant juice."

"The dreaded black currant juice!" Quartermass shrieked. "Quick, Pauline, we've run out of ham sandwiches. Swallow those men!"

So we swallowed the Smith brothers, camels and zap guns included. You see, Quartermass and I come from Pluto and the two of us are going to invade earth after all.



CONVERSATION PEACE PAUL ENEVER

"Cousin Willy," said my brother-in-law, "has spent most of his life trying to prove something. Lots of people have chips on their shoulders but he carries a whole log."

The last time I saw Willy he wasn't big enough to hold a thimbleful of sawdust but it seemed he was sticking pretty close to the family pattern. I nodded sagely. "Teenagers are all alike - don't know where they're going and mad as hell at the world for not telling 'em."

My brother-in-law bit into his fourth sausage. "It's all this equality that's doing it. No heroes to worship, no one to look up to. Everybody level - all grovelling."

This was a new reason to me, and being the father of a teenager and a half I thought I'd heard them all. "No heroes?" I asked, "with film stars and television faces and disc jockeys and rock-and-roll roarers all getting more publicity than was ever heard of before?"

"Crippen got a lot of publicity," said my brother-in-law, "but that didn't make him a hero and we didn't look up to him as a shining example. There just aren't any Great Men nowadays - just a lot of anonymouses."

I reflected for a moment, partly because I wasn't sure this conversation was worth pursuing and partly to give him time to clear the sixth and last sausage. He was making me hungry. He pushed the plate aside.

"You being a sciencefiction fan and having read a book or two to boot ought to know what I mean."

I didn't and said so.

"Well.... Back before the war you told me that one day a rocket would leave for the moon, right? That'd be a great day, you said, and whoever sent off that rocket would be a hero and a Great Man and in no time at all a Household Word, right?"

His memory carries twenty years less bric-a-brac than mine but I did have vague recollections of quoting such opinions to him when he was still young enough to listen in respectful silence. "Right," I said.

"Well.... Who's the Great Man, the hero, the Household Word? Who sent the rocket off?"

"Hey, hold on a minute," I exclaimed. "Things are different now. That rocket was a team business with a whole regiment of men behind it. You can't give the credit to any one person."

"Course you can't. Just what I'm saying. But there was a team or two behind Christopher Columbus when he set off for America, and a whole mod of 'em worked on the Wright brothers' aeroplane and Lord knows how many people went with Amundsen and Sir Hubert Wilkins but it's the Names you remember, not the anonymouses. You can't make heroes of Government Corporations or name streets after Army Companies and you can't wish you were a research unit."

"We were discussing teenagers," I pointed out, certain now that the conversation had rendered pursuit impossible.

"That's right," said my brother-in-law. "Teenagers need someone Big they can admire and imitate. All they get is song-torturers, confessed murderers and politicians. Modern adventure is too damned complicated and expensive for a Big Name to carry. It has to be done by a lot of anonymouses and teenagers are all the poorer for it."

The radio announced that our first moon rocket was believed to have fallen into the Pacific. We gazed sadly out of the window. It was just beginning to rain.

"Must have ditched with a hell of a splash," said my brother-in-law.

We were talking about Art of the Picassian variety.

"Knew a fellow in Liverpool once," said my brother-in-law, "used to paint still-lives and no one ever looked at 'em. Nuclear fission made him famous."

"Alright," I said, "I'll buy it."

"Painted a uranium atom and called it Still Half-life. Got a good pitch outside the Liver building now."

While I was trimming my moustache my brother-in-law read six sciencefiction novels. True, my moustache is a bit wayward and the scissors weren't too sharp but I couldn't help remarking that this was going some.

"I got a labour-saving system," he explained. "Only read the first two pages, two in the middle and the last two. Tells me all I want to know."

I sneered - no mean feat when you're desperately trying to keep the scissor point from going up your nose.

"Sometimes," he went on, unperturbed, "I only need read the first two pages. Tells me more than I want to know about the author. Sometimes I have to read the first and the middle two before I get the hang of it and then I can skip the last two. Once in the first two pages the hero said he was going to seduce the heroine and by the middle two he still hadn't done it. Never read anymore. Can't stand procrastination. Had to look at eight pages once. Middle two were pictures. Good book, though. Spaceship got all the way to Mars without a stowaway."

I put down the scissors. "Now you're making it up," I said.

"Honest," he said, "never was hit by a meteor either Landed without burning up all its fuel, didn't sink into the sand and no one was killed by a Martian. There weren't any. Brought back by remote control a week later and made a perfect landing again. Wasn't till they joined the reception committee the scientists found out they'd left the crew behind. Didn't find out meself until the last two pages."

"What happened to the crew?" I asked, with certain misgivings.

"Still up there," he said, "waiting for the author to write a sequel."

: : : : : : : :

"Talking of books," he said, "ever read a dictionary right through at one sitting?"

I didn't think I had.

"I did once. In digs at Cleethorpes in mid-winter. Skint as usual, and this dictionary was the only book in the room except the Bible and I hate horror tales. So I started at ABACIST and went right through to ZYMOTIC. Made me word-happy."

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FANZINES

By Roberta Wild

HYPHEN 21 Walter A. Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd., Belfast, N.I. 1/- or 15¢. The coming-of-age number of Britain's most famous fanzine. A fine issue with contributions by Bloch, Tucker, Walt and Madeleine Willis, Shaw, Harris, Atom, Birchby, Vince Clarke, Ashworth, and, of course, the usual uproarious letter column. Bad news is that this issue is probably Chuck Harris's swan song in fandom, unless we can persuade him to divorce that damned car. Very strongly recommended zine.

TRIODE 15 Eric Bentcliffe, 47 Alldis Street, Great Moor, Stockport, Cheshire. Co-edited with Terry Jeeves. 3/6d. or 4 for 5/-; 20¢ or 6 for \$1.00. Material by the Eric the Bent and Terry Jeeves, Archie Mercer, Mal Ashworth, Malash et al. This issue good, but somehow I feel that a little more life could have been injected into it. To be fair, I should add that Eric and Terry are bearing the brunt of the B.S.F.A. work and it is miraculous that they have found time to put out a fanzine. Recommended.

BRENNSCHLUSS 3 Ken and Irene Potter, 72 Dallas Road, Lancaster. 1/-. I note that No. 3 says fifth year of publication and it's a pity it doesn't come out more often. A cosy and humorous zine that is definitely a buy. Mostly by the Mister and Missis. with assistance from Dave Wood and Malash. Recommended.

SCIENCE FICTION PARADE 8. Last issue to be edited by Len Moffatt, 10202 Belcher, Downey, California. Usually devoted to reviews of promags, books, fanzines and letters, but this one is a Solacon report issue, and lists fanzines which also contain Solacon reports. If you are interested in Conreps this is a must. 9 upward obtainable from Stan Woolson, 12832 Westlake Street, Garden Grove, Cal.

APORRHETA 7. Sandy Sanderson, "Inchmery" 236 Queen's Road, New Cross, London, S.E.14. 1/6 (15¢) per copy, 10/- (\$1.50) per year, or trade or letters of comment. This is an unclassifiable zine which should not be missed. Well set out and Sandy's personality breathes life into it. Articles by Bob Pavlat, Penelope Fandergaste, Bill Temple, Joy Clarke and Part II of John Berry's serial. The best thing in Aporrheta is still the Fan Diary, which announces the birth of Nicola Belle Clarke. Half of fandom seems to be producing babies - Ghods! the lengths to which fans will go to get new blood for science fiction! - as I said before somewhere, this desire for new blood seems to have given fandom a fecund wind. Highly recommended. This zine I mean, not the drastic method to get new fans. But come to think of it-----

SATELLITE. Don Allen, 34a, Cumberland Street, Gateshead 8, Co. Durham. 1/- or 2/6 for 3 issues. Don is speaking the truth when he says he could call Satellite the International Fanzine. Articles on French fandom by Mike Moorcock and Michel Boulet, on Austrian fandom by Erwin Scudla, on Inchmery by Vince Clarke, and letters from all over. All this and a take-off of Penelope Fandergaste by Envelope Blunderbust. One quibble in that article - the side-swipe does not bother me but dammit! after nearly four years it's about time all you fans spelt my name correctly. It's Wild, not Wilde. (Certainly I live up to it.) Get this zine - it's worth it. Highly recommended.

YANDRO 71. Robert and Juanita Coulson 105 Stitt Street, Wabash, Indiana. 15¢ or 12 for \$1.50. 1/3 or 12 for 12/-. When husband and wife are both fans something good always seems to happen and Yandro is Something Good. Though I

was surprised at publication of Ron Bennett's Odyssey as the editorial is against conreps. As usual, Colonial Excursion is too short and stops just as the reader is getting dug in. This issue includes an offtrail story by Hyacinthine Hill, mimeograph instructions by John W. Thiel, which I can echo and film and letter columns and fanzine reviews make a nicely rounded zine. Highly recommended. English Agent: Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Rd. Hoddesdon, Herts.

DISTAFF 1. (Femizine in disguise - next time round it will be Femizine again). Ethel Lindsay, Courage House, 6 Langley Ave., Surbiton, Surrey. 1/- or 15%. The zine in which males are allowed only in the letter column. Contributors who were cajoled, nagged or persuaded by Ethel include Madeleine Willis (who wrote the best thing in the issue) Belle Dietz (Lunacon report) Joy Clarke (fanzine reviews) Pamela Bulmer (Wigwam Column), self (Cytricon IV report) and, of course, Ethel herself, with interpolations by Frances Evans. The duper went temperamental on Ethel, so the repro's not too good, but for her first try at editing a subzine it's not bad going. Material by femmes wanted. Recommended.

PERIHELION 4. Bryan Welham, 179 Old Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex. Co-editor is Barry Hall. 1/- a copy or 3 for 2/6. 15c or 3 for 35c. This zine is the rising star of British fandom - may it never go nova. Part 1 of Colonial Excursion (Ron Bennett) in this issue, which also includes material from Arthur C. Clarke, the ambivalent perambulant (Penelope Fandergaste), the two editors, and an article on Lumenology (candle-watching) by Vince Clarke, which is a wicked and wonderful take-off of a jazz article in P.H. 3. Support these boys - fandom has need of their type. Highly recommended.

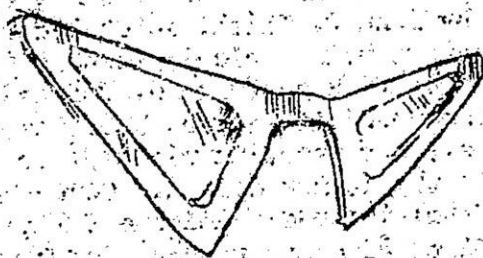
RETRIBUTION 11. John Berry, 31 Campbell Park Avenue, Belmont, Belfast, N.I. Sleeping partner this issue - Arthur Thompson, 17 Brockham House, Brockham Drive, London, S.W. 2. An unclassifiable zine with the accent on humour - don't miss it. No Atom this issue and John proves that he can draw as well as write. This time space is divided between G.D.A. and non-G.D.A. stuff. Highly recommended.

G.D.A. & RETRIBUTION INDEX. Published by the editors of Retribution. This is what it says it is - an index and a must for all G.D.A. addicts who want to keep a checklist of the Goon Bleary saga.

PSI-PHI. Bob Lichtman, 6137, S. Croft Avenue, Los Angeles 56, Calif. U.S.A. 10%. (No British price stated, but probably 1/-). A first issue and the lay-out is peculiar, but I think these boys are worth encouraging. They would probably find it cheaper to use proper duplicator paper and both sides of the sheets. The editorial states what is wanted in the way of contributions, and the other material includes an article on films, a fairish short-short story, and some quite good fanzine reviews. Material by Bob Lichtman and Arv Underman. This is a brave try.

VECTOR. This is not a fanzine, but the Official Organ of the British Science Fiction Association. It contains article on science fiction, reviews of hard cover S.F. books and of British and American promags, news of the S.F. world - in short, it tries to cover everything that interests the S.F. Fan. Non-members who are interested should write for information to Eric Bentcliffe, 47 Alldis Street, Great Moor, Stockport, Cheshire.

And that's all for this issue. Fanzines for review should be sent to me at 204 Wellmeadow Road., Catford, London, S.E.6.



Press

By Ella
Parker

Bobbie has been sending me agonised appeals over the past few days for these two last stencils so she can get on with the typing. She is using her weeks holiday from work to do this, it seems I'm holding up the works, so here goes.

Assuming you have read the 'zine, and are not in a hurry to put it down so you can get on with something more interesting, what do you think of the 'new look' ORION? I know, I KNOW! There isn't a letter column, all the letters Paul had were sadly out of date, there won't be one next time either, unless you do something about it. O. enjoyed quite a reputation for it's letter column and we would like to maintain this fannish tradition, without you, we can't, I have no intention (or time) of writing letters to myself.....so give with the screeds.

Some of the O. regulars we are retaining, such as Fanlights, now done by the fair? hand of Bobbie Wild, John Berry is with us, and has promised to keep us up to date with his constabulary capers, The Old Mill Stream rose to flood level and filtered through the front door, much to my surprise and I hope, your gratification. (No, I don't know who it is either)

Practically every time I pick up a fanzine I can make a pretty safe bet that somewhere in it's pages I'll come across the appeal for new blood. Fandom needs New Blood, WE need New Blood, any intending neo reading this sort of thing may be forgiven for thinking we are Vampires. Even so, there is no reason that I can think of why we should be different,

we got Archie to make our appeal for us. Bobbie had the brainwave of providing fandom with a Bloodbank all it's own. This to be material submitted by neos or those who have never or seldom appeared in 'zines before, the idea being that you, our readers, will tell them in no uncertain manner whether they are potential Willis's or Wansboroughs, but no malice PLEASE, if you can't offer constructive criticism and/or serious encouragement, just say if you liked it or not. Our first offering in what we hope will be a series appears on page 34. We are appealing for contributors, for the bloodbank column particularly, 'tho all material submitted will be gratefully considered. -We had thought of making the next issue a ConSpecial, if the majority agree with this and we get sufficient offers of conreps we will go ahead with this plan.

I could quite easily have used these pages just thanking all those who have rallied round to make sure this would not be filled entirely by our own efforts. Two of our friends didn't know for where or whom their material was destined, I hope they have decided to forgive me. I cannot speak too highly of the help and advice I've had from all concerned with this issue. Ken came through like the sport he is, 'tho a very busy man he also cut his own stencils, Ted volunteered to help out with a couple of pages, having read them I'm glad I accepted, I hope you are too, John is a stalwart of O. and was most encouraging when I broke the news of it's fate to him, ATOM deserves special praise for the fine work he has done, in I may add, a very short space of time; this was through a misunderstanding of my own making, last but not in any way the least, our good friend and mentor Dear Paul, who is even now preparing another column for us to use in a future edition, so you see, we haven't lost him altogether. Without these people I would have sunk in the morass of my own ignorance.

With few exceptions, this 'zine will not be coming your way again, unless you give us some indication that you would like more. To ensure that you remain on our mailing list you can send us either..... 1/- 15/- per. issue, a nice LOOOONG letter, an article, poem or even a Greetings Telegram wouldn't come amiss, but something we must have, it is essential to our ego! All for this time, See you at the Imperial Hotel B'Ham. Easter, while I think of it, I hope all you bods that intend being there have written to the hotel direct to make your bookings, if not, GET CRACKING! All convention fees payable to Bob Richardson, 19, Courtiers Drive, Bishop's Cleeve, Nr. Cheltenham, Glos. 5/- BSFA members, 12/6d non- members. See YOU?

ELLA

ORION 21

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