

Two Years Of
+
+ S A N D S
+
+ O F T I M E
+

The ghost might have gone west, but this is not his spectral typing. If you want your name in letters of fire, write to Ted Carnell at 17 Burwash Rd, London, SE18

+-----* 1 0 *-----+
+ Dec. 1943 +

This Space To Let With Vacant Possession. +

.....: OVER 50,000 MILES in eight months of travel is the GULLIBLE'S latest achievement of your Sandsman; we knelt in TRAVELS + homage to the first rain and fog we have seen in almost that length of time. The last rainstorm we had the pleasure of shower-bathing in was the clash of three mighty electrical storms somewhere in the Indian Ocean near the Equator. Since then it has been very stormy for the Nazi's and Italians, to our lasting satisfaction.

Reading the issues of Fido that have appeared during our absense we observe that a few airgraph letters of ours have reached home; that there has been much going and coming amongst fans; arrivals from the States; and that it seems to have been Baby Time in Britain too. What are we -- a man or a mouse?

To our regret we never quite caught up with Sphinx Temple -- we arrived in Cairo only to find that he had moved on to the Tunis area a month before; we moved from Sicily into Italy to find that he had followed us into Sicily; and now we have left Italy we hear that he has arrived in our footprints there and is probably chasing the tedeschi still further back. Of other fans in the Middle East we saw and heard little, although we had some amazing meetings with non-stf people we knew from the old home town, and many were the carousels on looted Italian wine.

.....: THE PAST EIGHT FULL MOONS have borne great significance to us in our travels. Each one has brought new scenes and strange places, and stranger adventures -- until our travels have read stranger even than fiction. So that these glimpses of life in the raw are not lost upon posterity we have been writing a book about them -- "Foo-ey, A Travelog Of The Little Foxes" will never see print owing to it's rawness, but may make interesting reading to a private audience after the war.

March full moon found us sweltering in the heat of the tropics somewhere off Freetown, Sierra Leone. The long weeks of idleness with nothing to read produced from three of us a naval game taking six hours or more to play. The game became the craze of the ship, and seems to have spread throughout Fleet circles, for when we reached a North African port a few months ago we found that it was being played by officers and men there complete to the final details of rules. (Patent applied for).

At this time, too, we undertook to edit and produce a 4-page ship's newspaper every other day. "Tropical Times" became quite a success during our 8-week voyage, and we wrote several controversial articles anent astronautics, ghosts

and telepathy which raised local storms. Astronautics was hotly debated in the Officers' Lounge and we finally had to give a lecture to some 200 of them, explaining the simpler more fundamental principles -- our brain couldn't go deeper than that, not having the depth that Pilot Officer Clarke has. Needless to say that the old bogey of whether a rocket could work in space or not cropped up, and many bets have been placed upon our proof or disproof of the fact.

The full moon in April was under idyllic conditions -- it shone across the outline of Table Mountain, Cape Town, while we were delving in a variety of secondhand bookstalls loaded down with pro mags -- on loan only, as the supply had been stopped from USA. May saw us watching a movie show in an open-air cinema at Suez -- it happened to be Disney's "Fantasia" again, while June moon leered down at us from across the mountains in the heart of Syria. July illuminated the Sphinx and Pyramids under a mysterious light, and for fleeting moments of magic woven by the sonorous voice of an Egyptian guide we were transplanted back to the days of the Pharaoh's.

July saw a different scene -- the battle of Catania Plain in Sicily, with huge fires burning from the aerodrome; of cones of red flak floating skywards in the protection of our ports and beaches; the roar of artillery barrages, and the chatter of machineguns.

August brought almost a total eclipse of the moon, a calculated fact as we stealthily crept in on a commando raid on Messina, allowing us to get ashore under darkness only to be pinned down on a mile stretch of road for a whole day by German and Italian guns from the mainland. September saw us again viewing a movie, this time only a few miles behind 8th Army frontline in Southern Italy, with General Montgomery as guest of honor. So rapid has our movements been that October full moon shone on us once again at a movie show, this time back in N. Africa while the November one peered fitfully down upon us in the setting of our Editorial address.

.....
 * * * * *
 . CHANGING * * * * * . AS WE FLUNG BACK the roll-top desk a veritable flood
 . FANDOM + * * * * * . of mags, letters and fanzines flooded out, which have
 * * * * * . taken many days to mull through. Now from the seeming
 * * * * * . chaos we view the changes that have taken place this
 * * * * * . year during our absence, and can perhaps give a survey
 from a fresh viewpoint. We welcomed the return to small size of AST
 bemoaning the fact that the large size spoil the bookshelf, but more
 or less happy in the knowledge that we still have a complete file of
 the mag. So Unknown has gone? The last issue we had was Dec. 1942.
 Presumably one or two more were published before it disappeared into
 its 4th-dimensional realm, from whence it came?

The first yarn we read was van Vogt's "The Weapon Makers," and once again hand it to AE for a superb story, topped only by his earlier effort "Slan." In our estimation "The Weapon Makers" far outstrips any of the old masterpieces of Smith, Williamson, Vincent, Simak, Cummings, etc. There is a forcefulness behind the writing and a beautiful layour of plot formation and characterisation.

We feel that we are so far behind the times with reading at the moment that it would be a waste of time to review or analyse any stories or issues. Later, perhaps, if necessary. Meanwhile, there seems plenty of room for random thoughts, especially about fandom.

During our eight months absence we observe that the face of fandom has changed in Britain even more so; the signs have been evident for nearly two years that there will be a vast difference after the war --- that British fans will not revert back to the same conditions as existed for them before 1939. We can predict the following, having mentally reviewed the situation, that the newer fans who have become known during the war years will be the leaders of the new fandom that will rise from the foundations they have been building since 1941. This is not a prediction that the older fans intend to fade out --- many of them will return from their travels overseas and become just as active as previously, but, in the main, we feel that the old-timers will want to take a back seat, although still retaining their interest in fandom and fantasy. We take this view mainly because of the number of fans who have been married since the war began; many of them now having families, and their leisure time will be curtailed considerably in nursing the babies and keeping the wolf from the door in general. Also, we know of many fans who ardently wish to crash the fiction markets, and we predict that they won't be able to continue fandom as they used to if they devote their spare time to writing.

Fandom then will still be carried by the younger members, which is as it should be; for then the feeling that there is a ruling clique of older fans holding the reins will be abolished.

As for the revival of the Science Fiction Association and the continuance of the present British Fantasy Society, we can only speak as an observer and not as an authority, for the destiny of the former is in the hands of the Executive Committee when they reform after the war. Our personal feelings in the matter is that much good could come from an amalgamation of the two, combining the best aspects of each and utilising to the full the connections that both have built up. That is for the future, however.

..... THE REST OF THIS COLUMN will be made up of random
 . FLOTSAM & thoughts which might be of interest to you. Our re-
 . JETSAM + turn trip from Italy to N.Africa was marked by one of
 those mysteries of the sea, very common in warfare.
 We crossed the Mediterranean in bad weather for small
 craft, and as dawn broke one morning we found we were some 5 miles
 off Cape Bon, Tunis. Away on our starboard quarter floated some-
 thing which at first we took to be a U-boat, but upon closer exam-
 ination turned out to be the broken stern of a US LCT, which had
 broken her back during the night owing to the rough sea. No sign of
 life came from her -- only the US flag fluttered occasionally from
 it's mast. Like pirates of old we boarded her, for there's still
 prize money to be had for derelicts, as well as loot aboard.

The crew

