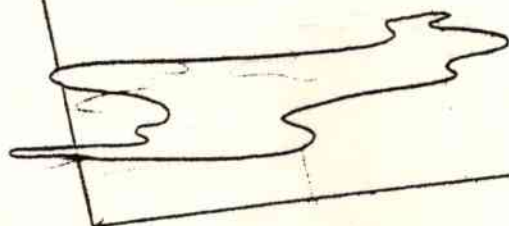
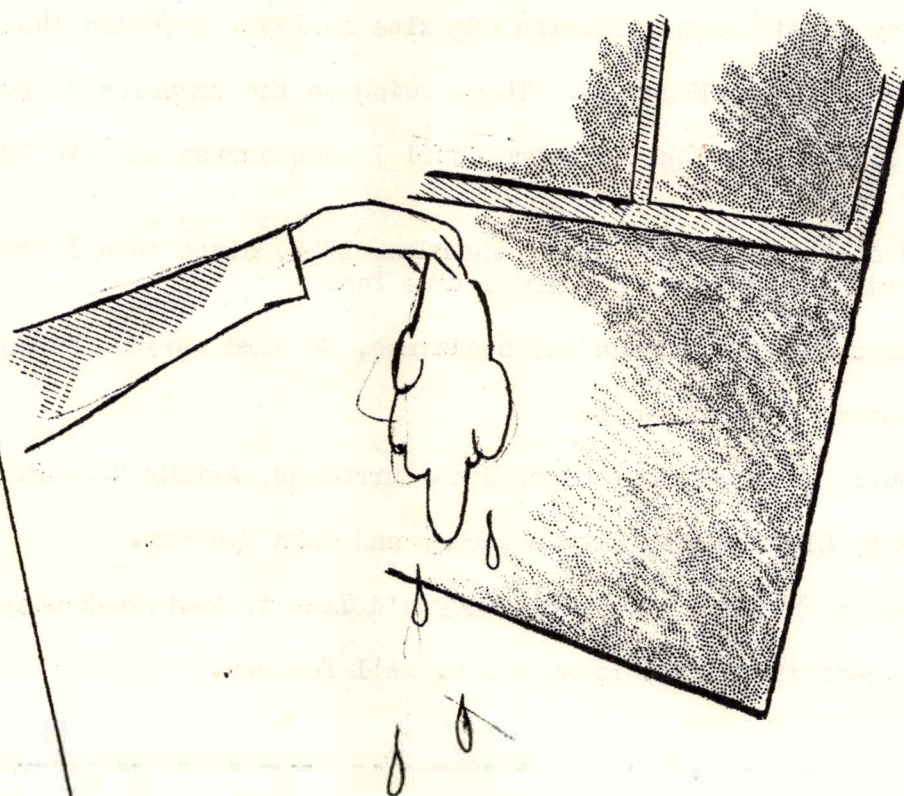


# BURGESS'S

# LIGHTS



No 1

Burgess's Lights No. 1. Produced for the 25th mailing of the Off Trail Magazine Publishers Association by: Brian Burgess, 138a, Kenley Road, Merton Park, London. S.W.9. Published by the CAPress.

A SHORT PERSONAL HISTORY.

First I should tell you something about myself, yes? I'm 28 yrs. old, 6ft. 3" in height, and weigh, approx 15 stone 7lbs or, in Americanese 217 lbs.

I read my first Science Fiction magazine in 1947, it being the 2nd issue of Walter Gilling's Fantasy Magazine. Then, owing to the vagaries of post-war publishing I lost touch with the genre until I came across the 6th issue of New Worlds in the Spring of 1950.

I first came into fandom around November 1952, since then I've graduated from a very raw neo-fan to a very new active fan.

In my SF collection I have 317 magazines, 84 hard covered books, 55 pocket books, and approx 1,700 fanzines.

My favourite authors are: Edgar Rice Burroughs, Arthur C. Clarke, Robert E. Howard, Edward Elmer Smith, Wilson Tucker and John Wyndham.

If there is anything else about me you'd like to know, ask away and I'll answer in the next issue of this magazine. All for now.

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## WHY "BURGESS'S LIGHTS?"

In 1954 the annual Convention was to be held in Darkest Manchester, and about four weeks before this event took place I was approached in the White Horse tavern by Ron Bucknaster and B..... Provincial Campbell who asked me if I'd accept the role of the 'sacrifice' in a sketch the London Circle would be putting on. I agreed and said I would provide my own props.

Three days before the Convention I went into a butchers and bought 1/6d worth of lights for use in the sketch.

I arrived in Manchester on the Good Friday at 8-30 a.m. just in time to take Peter Hamilton's morning tea into him. As I wasn't sleeping in the hotel I asked Peter if I could leave my ransack in his room. Peter said: "yes."

Later on, about 4 p.m. I was very tired as I'd had no sleep the previous night, so I asked Peter if I could kip down on his bed for a few hours.

When I reached his room, I unloaded the rucksack and, for some reason, put the paper bag which contained the lights, and which by now were beginning to smell a bit high, under the bed. I left the hotel about 2 a.m. the next morning; forgetting all about the lights.

On my return to the hotel after breakfast, I went to Peter's room to collect the lights, which, by now, were becoming an embarrassment, and found he'd wakened in the night because of the smell; he'd scoured the room looking for the source of the stink and finding it under the bed had nearly been sick before he managed to crawl to the window and throw the whole shebang into the canal below.

I've never been allowed to forget this incident and the topic is recounted to all newfen joining the London Circle. So, what better name for a magazine put out by Yours Truly.

THE INSCRUTABLE AMERICAN ANGLE.

BY  
SAM MOSKOWITZ.

(reprinted from New Worlds V.1. No. 3. May 1939)

There has been need of an article of this sort for some time - an article which would show the British fans just how they stand in relation to the American fan. In pioneering such an effort, I may eventually find myself consigned to the dubious honor of becoming a martyr, but Lindbergh wasn't afraid, so why should I be?

In perfect frankness, existing conditions between the British and American fan today are none so good, stretching a point I might even say none so fair - however, I believe my meaning is clear.

Years ago, in those dim, dead days that <sup>some</sup> British fans must recall, a peculiar set of conditions existed in the sciencefiction world. Dealing in fans exclusively, I state that there were two important groups. 1. Those silver-spooned youngsters who were born in America close to the source of supply, and 2. those unfortunate innocents, plagued with a love of fantasy and born on the other side of the tracks, or is pond more applicable? There is no need to go into a description of the hell created torture experienced by those early science-fiction-starved Englishmen. Time has not had sufficient opportunity to smother the memory of it.

Those were the days when editors filled half their columns with letters from English readers, using it as a prod to keep dissatisfied American readers in hand by subtly reminding them that they might have been born in England. How clearly I remember the manner in which I suffered along with my English brethren. Bursting into tears as I read each new foreign letter pledging over and over again Britain's great love of science-fiction and her despicable plight. Them were the days. The British fans today are comparative sissies. They don't have to batfle for fantasy fare, it's handed to them on a silver platter. Ask Grand-pop Gillings. He can tell you plenty.

Happily, this set of conditions does not apply today. Britain is virtually on her way to becoming self-sufficient, as far as science-fiction and fantasy is concerned, but there still remains a deplorable aftermath of those earlier rougher years. This is where the inscrutable American angle comes in, and here also is the point where I will not attempt to convey a merely personal opinion or prejudice, but the popular attitude of the American science-fiction fan as a unit.

In his eyes the English fan is beginning to rise as a sort of hypocrite, figuratively speaking. He remembers clearly those days of the past when British letters to the Readers' Departments of the professional American magazines read like the flow of a blend of milk and honey. The British perspective of appreciation and finding sufficient adjectives for that appreciation, seemed virtually unlimited. It easily put to shame the foundling attempts of the American fans. Naturally, when TALES OF WONDER appeared the peculiar method of appreciation the British fans used in greeting that effort was entirely incomprehensible to the American mind. For no apparent reason, the English fans who had always been the most liberal in their views of science-fiction, found it necessary, in order to properly display their loyalty to direct a blunt chorus of hisses and cat-calls towards all American projects of a similar nature. At first this was regarded simply as a brand of encouragement, but when Gillings proceeded to fill his book with a batch of American reprints of ordinary quality, and the British still persisted in branding American science-fiction as barren and sterile in comparison to TOW, which was featuring American reprints, the American view regarding British fans as hypocrites becomes understandable.

Similarly the British turn of mind in regard to American fan magazines has been most perplexing. That American fans have been most liberal in their support of amateur British fan publications, I believe is undeniable. Some of the British publishers were reluctant to admit it for a time, but those of a more frank nature, such as Rosenblum and Burke had not hidden the fact under a bushel. And a perusal of SFA rolls would, I feel certain, reveal an astonishing number of American patrons.

Sadly enough, American fan magazines cannot boast similar support from their across-the-sea cousins. Don't get me wrong. I'm definitely not asking Britons to purchase American fan magazines. I'm merely attempting to point out, and if possible to correct, what I believe to be an erroneous point of view.

Before I go on and bring out the result of this lop-sided state of affairs, I would like to correct a popular British excuse, for indeed it is no more than an excuse. It seems that they regard American fan magazines as being on an entirely lower level in quality than their own. This excuse was certainly not prevalent before there was a British fan magazine. It is also impossible to learn how the British fans arrived at this conclusion, not deigning to give the American fan magazines the courtesy of reading them.

Why such fans as Ted Carnell, J. Michael Rosenblum and John F. Burke, who should know better, have not attempted to squelch this idea I do not know. Perhaps they believed it useless. That they were in accord with the popular British view I cannot believe. I won't turn this into a sales talk for the American fan magazines. Neither do I condescend to using the "your other" type of argument. I merely ask the courtesy of having any of the three above gentlemen give "The Inscrutable British Angle", if such there be, and in doing so, venture to give their opinions on such American fan magazines as AD ASTRA, FANTASY DIGEST, FANTASCIENCE DIGEST, D'JOURNAL, or any others they may have read which are highly regarded in USA. If their report is complimentary, the American fans would appreciate a degree of politeness to the extent that you at least do not refer to their efforts as being on a "lower level." If their opinion is counter-wise, I will, most certainly, bow to the inevitable and leave Great Britain to entertain her own ideas at her own leisure.

Finally we come to American opinion in regard to British fan magazines and fans. TOMORROW and NOVAE TERRAE were the most widely purchased fan magazines in USA. Peculiarly enough, THE FUTURIAN and THE SATELLITE are by far the most popular and complimented. The American enjoys the fairness and spontaneity of the latter

two, which they dub as "Americanised." Not that TOMORROW or NOVAE TERRAE are thought poorly of. On the contrary, but the American finds it impossible to enjoy them. He does enjoy THE SATELLITE and THE FUTURIAN. Why? Simply because they are not limited in discussion to British subjects. Their scope is broad, and apparently their readers desire a more complete coverage. A coverage of not only Britain but USA as well. Therefore the interchange of ideas and the British views in regard to American subjects are, to the American mind, intriguing. For the same reason TOMORROW and NOVAE TERRAE were regarded as bone dry. They had no basis at all for American interest. They were narrow minded to the extent that they featured British topics and British views on American topics. If any, almost exclusively.

I can realise that the American fan magazines are in a sense guilty of the same thing. But in America there is an excuse. The excuse being that no American fan publication enjoys the patronage of more than three British fans. A few, none at all. Therefore the impossibility of presenting subjects of dual interest to both nationalities has to some extent been neglected. However, this could would not be the case, I know, if Britain took advantage of the continuous invitations to contribute to American fan activities. Therefore, to the American viewpoint, English fan magazines because they include on their subscription lists from one fourth to one half Americans, are being extremely narrow in not presenting something also of interest to the American.

Now as to British fans best-liked in America. They are, easily enough, Ted Carnell, J.M.Rosenblun, John F.Burke, Dave McIlwain, Walter H.Gillings, John Russell Fearn and Eric Frank Russell (the latter three as fans, not because they are proficient professionally). I think the reason for this choice must be obvious. The just named know and appreciate science-fiction on both sides of the Atlantic. They have shown, time and time again, that they can be fair in their opinions. The SFA is regarded as being England's premier fan organisation.

For the sake of completeness and to the aim of promoting better understanding among British and American fans, I ask that one of the three previously named prepare

(cntd. on page 10)

THE INSCRUTABLE BRITISH ANGLE

BY  
JOHN F. BURKE.

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If our British fans are expecting me to tell our friend from across the water that he's got us all wrong, and that really we are being done an injustice by American fans, they are going to be disappointed. Mr. Moskowitz is, alas, speaking as near the truth as makes no odds. But he doesn't realise the mentality of most British fans (those that have any mentality worth speaking of).

First point - This TALES OF WONDER business. The despicable manner in which fans write to this magazine and praise it, at the same time running down the American product as worthless, has already caused me much annoyance; I fancy the desire to see their names in print in the readers' columns is behind this hypocritical twaddle. Mr. Moskowitz's comments on this are, as far as I'm concerned, unanswerable and all too true.

The fan-mag angle is a different matter, and needs most attention. I won't deny that American readers have helped a lot with the SATELLITE, and their criticisms have always been given in a very appealing manner. I have no doubt that other British fan publishers will have had the same experience - I hope so, for it is a very pleasant one. But I am not saying that the American response is exactly generous - it isn't, and a lot more response is necessary, before I, at any rate, can say that American fans are the mainstay of the magazine.

As to the quality of the American fan-mags, I am honestly flattered that Sally should be considered in the same class. Fan-mags from USA are nearly always smartly turned out, interesting, and often very witty. Apart from the FAN, Official Organ of



the Mutual Admiration Society of Wolheim & Co., I cannot think of an American magazine that has not in some way appealed to me - even the poorest have a 'personality' that most English products lack. No, there is no lack of quality in the American mags BUT....why should we squelch the British Intolerance? It seems to me that the Editors themselves are at fault, for not advertising more. How do you expect English fans to pour out cash when they've never even heard of your mag? The last issue of New Worlds carried little paragraphs from some of the most prominent - you can't say Ted Carnell hasn't helped you in your publicity. I'm willing to exchange advertisements with any American fan-mag editor - if you'll ask me.

But don't go - there's some more yet. It is necessary to explain to Mr. Moskowitz that English fans are the most miserly people on the face of the earth. They are also lazy, and so long as they can pick up remainder magazines in a bookshop for 3d (six cents to you, sir) and get a few official fan-mags through the post every so often, they are satisfied. Imagine the average British fan reading an advertisement for an American fan-mag. He looks at it stolidly for five minutes, and at the end of that time an inkling of what the paragraph means seeps in. Provided he goes on, he realises that he will have to write to America for it, and enclose peculiar forms of coinage called cants. If he gets as far as enquiring at the Post Office, he will hear about International Money Orders and by this time his poor, weary brain will be so fatigued that he'll give up in disgust. And a month's wait seems an awfully long time to the poor fellow - he'll be wondering all the time if his ten cents has dropped in the Atlantic. Besides, we Britishers never trust foreigners, you know - it isn't done.

I fear that I have been supporting Mr. Moskowitz in his dreadful assertions, and even adding to them, but I do so in all sincerity. British fandom is in a parlous state, and I find it almost impossible to disagree with the critical attitude.

Just as a matter of interest, though, I would say that some time ago I wrote to the editor of one of the fanmags mentioned, trying to arrange an exchange, and

haven't seen any results as yet. There have been many fans in the past who have written off trustingly to America, sending money, and never got anything back. That matter was thrashed out in the CRITIC, a long time ago, and things have definitely altered for the better, but there is still doubt in the average English fan's mind.

And lastly, until American fan-mags can cut out a lot of their silly squabbles and stop pretending that their various organisations are almost as important as their political parties, and that the particular fan they represent is a great guy, a real clever bird, and all one could wish for, they won't get far. Too much space in American mags is wasted by silly mud-slinging cracks at other fans who are really no crazier than you are yourself, and the airing of bigoted views that no-one wants to read, anyway.

Still, taking it all round, that article needs some attention from British fans - there's too much truth in it to be ignored. Wake up, British fans ( what a hope!).

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Sam Moskowitz.

(cntd, from page 7)

an article of similar nature to this, giving their opinions on the subject. If argument turns me into a martyr, I can only say I attempted to give the truth, as I saw it, as frankly and honestly as possible, and I believe that I'm qualified to do so.

Continuing the "Inscrutable" Series

BRITISH ANGLE

by

J.M.ROSENBLUM

Having been specifically accused in Mr. Moskowitz's article of being a leading light in British fandom - such as there is - it is incumbent upon me to reply to his charges in such a manner as I am capable of. Sam has written quite an intriguing article in his usual rather provocative style and I will attempt to deal with his words and their implications as they appear to me.

Like most of his others, this article contains much that is true, some exaggeration and a certain amount of misconception, produced from very insecure and slender grounds. There is a prevalent attitude of Americans, which naturally includes the fan microcosm, to either regard everything British with an immense amount of awe, or alternatively to believe that this island can produce nothing good. We must deplore both these attitudes for even the British are quite human and need gentle criticism, understanding and perhaps sympathy. Regarding science-fiction however, Britain has its own ideas and conditions.

Because the American fantasy devotee is nurtured almost solely on magazine fiction, his English prototype need not be so unfortunate. The poor starved Britishers are largely a figment of the imagination; for in this country, fantasy in book form has been poured out in a prolific stream since the beginning of the century. As witness Ralph Strauss in the SUNDAY TIMES only a few weeks ago reviewing another fantasy work and stating over 1000 of such books could easily be collected (presumably by a millionaire). And the British fan, too, differs. He is largely inarticulate, in his early twenties; not vociferous in the mid-teens as so many US fans appear to be. Nor does he regard with the requisite awe and reverence the few mimeo'd and hektographed sheets insecurely stapled together and doing duty as an

amateur magazine -- a fact of which we who try to sell him such things are by now well aware. To the best of my belief only some four British fans make any attempt at all to collect fan magazines.

Yet many Britishers like and admire American fantasy and American fans. Personally, I have always had excellent relations with our American cousins and sincerely hope that this happy state will continue. But that British fans laud TALES OF WONDER and hoot at its American contemporaries, I just cannot believe, in fact the opposite is more nearly true -- ask Granpop Gillings that.

How many British writers write for US magazines and are apparently well-liked over there? Off-hand, Fearn, Temple, Beynon, Ayre, Cross, Pragnell. Then why should not TOW feature American writers?

Regarding the apparently sore point of the fan mags I must point out that the American efforts came first, and after a brief golden age, rapidly deteriorated to a horde of fourth-rate material. This was the time when most English fans came into contact with them, and the soreness does linger! Moreover quite an amount of the common run of US fan-mag material is of scant interest to us. We don't want to read the interminable reviews of magazines we won't see for months possibly, nor study the petty bickerings of highly-strung adolescents. But the doldrums have been passed and that the present crop of amateur productions is very fine is both obvious and must be admitted. Of the seven examples Moskowitz gives, I have adequate personal knowledge of four, and must accord them my deep reveration. The glorious pot-pourri of FAPA productions that I receive each quarter deserve many compliments too. But so far in England we have been spared the many sheets of fourth-rate filth which did so much to drag the fair name of American fan-mags into the dust.

This string of reactions is merely a somewhat hasty answer to Sam Moskowitz's <sup>inditement</sup> of British fans. I hope that I have trodden on nobody's corns, and make no claim to speak for others. Perhaps I will hear what Americans say to my arguments. I sincerely hope so.

AMERICAN ANGLE

BY

DONALD A. WOLHEIM.

Since Mr. Moskowitz has designated himself as spokesman for all American fandom in his article, I think it wise to put in a word to the effect that his opinions are those of his own and as far as my own experience is concerned not particularly those of any large percentage of US fans. When he speaks arbitrarily of what the "American fan" thinks of British fans, fan magazines or professional magazines, the "American fan" referred to is just Moskowitz - maybe a few correspondents of his, that's all. For the sake of those Britons not familiar with the gentleman - his assertions of memories of "years ago" must be winked at. Moskie became a fan way back in 1937.

I haven't noticed any feelings here that Britons are being hypocritical in praising their own publications over the US ones. After all, there is a difference in the traditions and customs and outlooks of both countries and why should not a British magazine be more accurately tuned to the taste of a Briton than an American one?

It may be of some interest that this particular American fan, the writer, has come to the opinion that TALES OF WONER today is superior to any US professional magazine as a purveyor of science-fiction. Many others rank it high. Moskowitz finds it hypocritical that the magazine should be filled with American reprints of what he describes as "ordinary quality". Despite the point that the stories there in are for the most part above ordinary quality, being those that have borne the brunt of time and managed to stand out. I have not found any old-time fans who <sup>was</sup> in the least put out by seeing again these tales. The acclaim given to the reprint

corner in STARTLING by old fans proves that no antagonism rest there. As for quality, compared with the formula-hack garbage being purveyed by most US magazines today, TOW is intellectually refreshing, being at all times readable, more than some of the pulps can claim.

Perhaps also, Moskowitz should not "forget" that during its first two years the pioneer AMAZING STORIES had to lean haevily on the strong British arm of H.G. Wells, whose yarns, reprinted, helped sell the magazine to the American populace and serve as inspiration and model for future stf writers.

It seems that Moskowitz is peeved because some British fans regard some of their native fan magazines as being on a higher level than US ones. In some respects he has a point there. That is to say those British fan magazines published by your local Americophiles, which set out to be deliberate imitations of the US type, will naturally never get to be more than imitations. However, those of your publications put out by Britons to serve Britons in the British manner sometimes succeed in raising themselves to a point of maturity which is incomprehensible to Moskowitz and hence "impossible to enjoy." Again my personal opinion (and that of a great many fans here), is that NOVAE TERRAE was the finest fan magazine of the past three years, and that TOMORROW in its printed issues was likewise definitely superior to any contemporary(save NT). Moskowitz likes NEW FUTURIAN and THE SATELLITE because the former is a "Cosmic Publication"(!) and the latter is very funny about the Michelists. If Burke chose to substitute SM for DAW some day, we would hear a different tune from Newark.

Moskowitz brings up the point of the small number of British subscribers to US fan stuff as compared with the higher number of American subs for your stuff. Mr Burke passes this off apologetically as due to miserliness and laziness. Rather than cast aspersions on his own people, would it not have been more honorable of Mr. Burke to significantly point a finger at the different standards of living in the two nations and consequent greater care with which the Briton must watch his spending?

Americans may have money to throw away on anything, but the Briton must think twice and even thrice before pouring his money down the drain.

One comment in closing, this particular American wishes that the SFA would keep its eyes peeled for those Americophiles among it, and keep swatting them every time they show up. When Americans buy a British fan magazine, it is reasonable to assume they expect to receive a British magazine and not a half-breed imitation of the sillie type of American stuff.

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Publishers Note.

My apologies to Brian (who is on holiday) and to you, the reader for obvious strike-overs and/or typos. I've been trying to push this out too near the dead-line while doing a load of other things at the same time. The front-cover is a mess because for some reason it wouldn't come off the duper as it should. Sorry.

*Ella Parker*

