

HYPHEN

NO. 28

MAY

1961

*copy*



"What do you mean, can I not get in? I'm the Manager, came three hours ago to complain and I can't get cut!"

inside  
COVERAGE  
WALT WILLIS

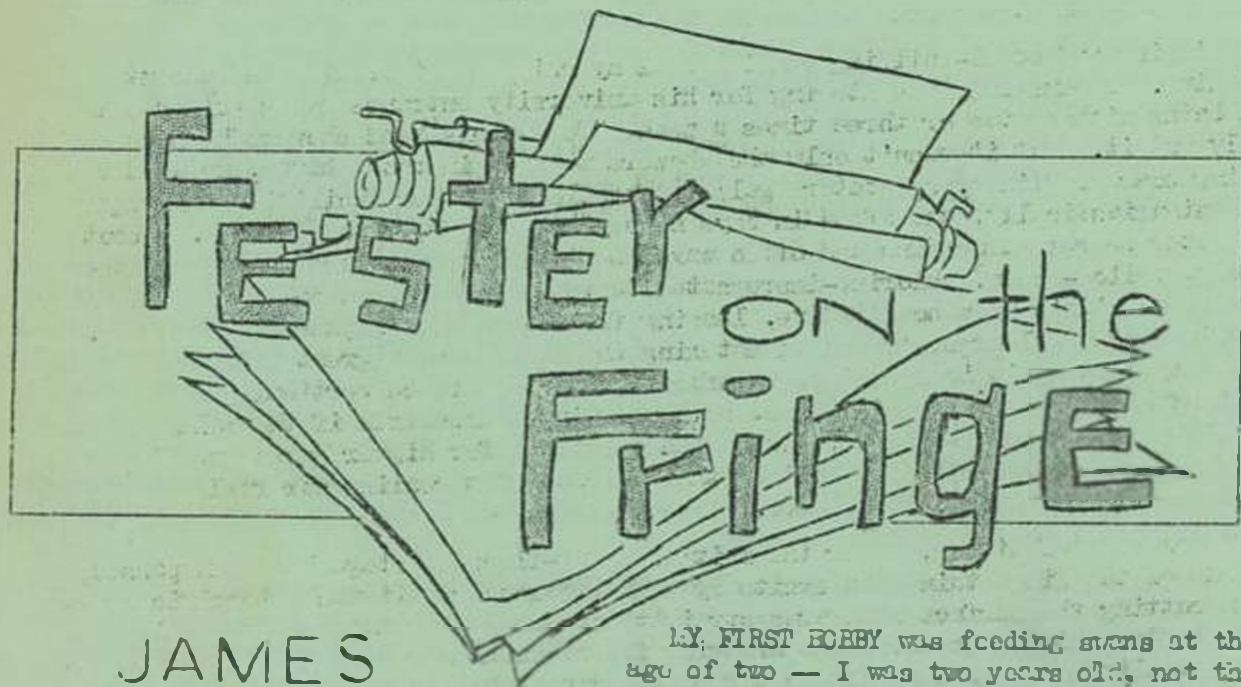
There were so few letters after the last issue that we decided to publish this one without a letter section at all as a horrible example of what will happen if you don't write more letters of comment. It's also a couple of weeks late, as a horrible example of what will happen if you don't write any at all.

As for what was happening while you weren't reading Hyphen. Well, the Belfast Office, feeling that live dogs were better than deadlines, went for a Whitsun holiday to the sub-tropical

paradise of South Dublin. We arrived there on Friday evening in Ian's Superb, Luxurious and Very Dirty Car, after an uneventful passage through the Customs. This was rather a relief to me, because the dashboard shelf was piled with tobacco tins containing dust samples, which Ian had omitted to leave in at his laboratory. (He said they were a weeks work, but Madeleine commented scornfully that she could collect more dust in her own house in ten minutes.) I had visualised having to explain them to the Customs Inspector while Ian was away checking his car documents... "Yes, officer, I know about the prohibition on the import of tobacco, but that's not tobacco in these tins.....Well, as a matter of fact, it's, er, dust...Yes, just dust, look for yourself.....No, honestly, that's not cocaine, it's just ordinary dust...It belongs to my friend Dr. McAulay, he collects it.....No, it's not a hobby, it's his job.....No, he's not a real doctor, just an atomic physicist...No, no, come back, it's not radioactive, it's just ordinary dust. He goes around flex mills all day collecting it and taking it away in tins....Well yes, I suppose a vacuum cleaner would be cheaper but you know the Irish Linen Industry, everything done by hand....I don't know what he does with it, I think he just counts it...Yes, maybe it does sound silly, but it's not against the law is it?...No, I didn't know about the Importation of Dust (Control) Order, 1959. In triplicate, you say?"

Next morning Ian and his SHVD car took us on a tour of the local golf clubs. The first one, Bray, was quite nice but the green fees, 7/6 each, seemed a little high so we shopped around. Killiney was 10/-, Carrickmines 15/-, Foxroc: 20/-, and Woodbrook didn't allow visitors at all. Lest the next golf club should greet us with flame throwers and hand grenades we settled for Bray, and the following few days were passed in the rich full life of golf in the morning, outdoor Scrabble on the lawn in the afternoon a la Dermot Yates, and (ctd. on inside back cover)

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# FESTER ON THE FRINGE

JAMES  
WHITE

MY FIRST BOBBY was feeding swans at the age of two — I was two years old, not two swans — and this is my earliest clear memory. I know this because we moved to Canada soon after and I have reliable testimony to the effect that I did not feed swans in that country, and when we returned to Ireland when I was seven I was

taken to feed the same swans and remembered then, so my previous memory just had to be when I was two. I can remember this thirty year old incident perfectly and yet am unable to recollect the name or plot of a story published three issues ago in analog, which proves something or other about my phenomenal memory, or analog. Anyway, when I fed the swans the second time a lot of the kick had gone out of it — they looked much smaller and my hands were so big I couldn't get them through the railing without skirting them. Besides, it was at the age of seven that I joined my first gang.

This was not a gang in the Harlan Ellison tradition. We had secret signs, of course, and the treasure which we buried in places the other gang was sure to find so's we'd have an excuse for a gang war. The treasure usually comprised a few marbles — glassies, not stonies; our treasure was valuable! — some odd cigarette cards and a hunk of stuff we had filched from the school chemistry lab which was supposed to explode when you did certain things with it, though we never found out what the things were. We being too junior to be taught chemistry at that time our intelligence services took the form of a few crumbs of data handed down condescendingly by the Big Boys. The gang wars were fought with sods instead of stonies because, unlike that Marine sergeant, we did want to live forever. An accurately thrown earthen sod was no mean weapon, but it was relatively harmless to the recipient and a man could sustain a number of hits from them and still remain operational. The casualties sustained in these wars were mostly of the delayed action type.

caused by the reactions of our parents to our carrying topsoil into bed with us in our hair and underwear.

After this warlike period I went into an introspective phase, brought about by my mother giving me a Meccano set for Christmas. One of the first models I built — for which there were no plans in the instruction book — was a spaceship as described in "The Last Rocket to Venus", a serial running in Hotspur at the time. I loved that Meccano set faithfully for three years, then divorced it for a model railway. Actually I swapped it for the train set, the original owner being one Seamus Daly who was to be enrolled in several hobbies with me later. After about a year of OO-gauge megalomania I got onto building flying model aircraft. This came about in a rather roundabout fashion.

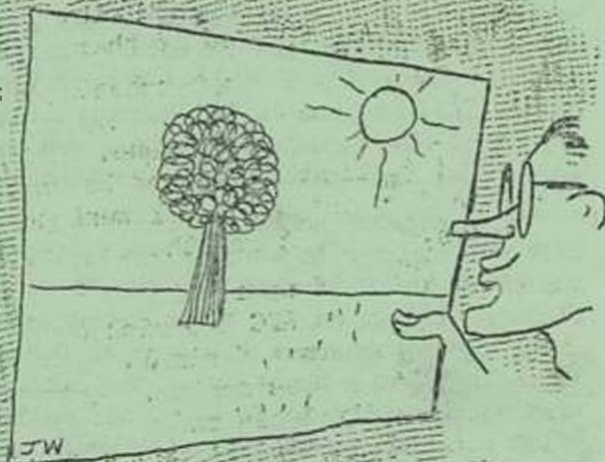
The secondary school to which I had won a scholarship was bombed a few weeks before I was due to start term, and the Education authorities made it a boarding school — which it normally wasn't — and evacuated everyone to Cushendun, a small fishing village on the North Antrim coast. (Their reason being to preserve highly intelligent young men like myself for posterity). One day during a storm a ship tried to climb a headland on the other side of Cushendun bay, and they had to dump most of the cargo to float it off again. Some of the stuff washed ashore was balsa wood and practically the whole school went on a model aircraft building kick. It was at Cushendun that I learned to swim, too, and I was just getting confident at it when I had to go home to work.

Swimming and model-building continued as my chief hobbies, with the accent on swimming. Seamus Daly was stewing for his university entrance exams but came to the baths with me two or three times a week, "To get his head showered" as he so aptly put it. But it wasn't only the showers we used in those baths, we used the diving boards, slides, spectators gallery and all the other facilities thoroughly and enthusiastically, and often in ways nobody had ever used them before. About the water we were true fans and often waxed serious and constructive about those cloudy, yellow-green, chlorine-impregnated depths. At first we jumped in the water because we didn't know how to dive, leaping from higher and higher springboards. At this stage we learned that when entering the water from a great height — twenty to thirty feet — it is much less painful to hit the surface vertically rather than horizontally, and even the toes must be kept pointed downwards if the soles of the feet were to escape a slapping. Then even the craze for higher jumps and bigger splashes began to pall and we decided that we could not realise our full aquatic potential unless we learned to dive.

The process of diving, after the initial bolly-flopping stage had been passed, was one of the first things to excite my sense of wonder. It was a terrific sensation cutting the surface with arms straight out and seeing the blue-and-white tiled bottom sliding up through a clearing fog of bubbles and self-created turbulence. Inclining the palms upwards turned the dive into a slow climb surfacewards, or with experience came the ability to shoot along the bottom in exhilarating level flight until the kinetic energy generated during the above-the-surface component of the dive was dissipated by water-drag effects. It was even possible to do banking turns and slow rolls, though the latter usually ended by me bumping the back of my head gently along the tiles. From this we progressed to diving together and 'flying' in formation, and then to a little game called 'Sink the Submarine' which involved us diving from adjoining corners of the pool and trying to run each other amidships. Altogether we had a hilarious time in that pool and, it being the November to February slack period at the baths, the Man didn't say anything when we spent two or three hours there when the time allowed us was only thirty

minutes. But Spring came, the banks began to draw crowds and the Man started going by the bank. We took up landscape painting.

It was madness to even consider going out to a draughty field to paint as we usually went on a painting expedition to one or other of our houses and just thought up or remembered a scene and went to work on it. Most of my stuff was then, park-like expanses with pale blue, heat-wave weather skies — I was hopeless with cloud effects. But Seamus went in for wild, mountainous subjects in screaming purple and yellow and red — he had been to Donegal and swore that that was what Donegal looked like, both sombre and colourful. I didn't believe him, but later when I had been through the place with Don Mahaffey I apologised. For a while Seamus continued to paint Donegal red and yellow and purple and I switched gradually to portraits and s-f subjects. I'd been reading s-f occasionally since before going to Cusheadam, but now it had got a hand. Painting was dropped for photography and we began taking pictures of steam-rollers and electric pylons at arty angles. Seamus took to sneaking into Earland and Wolfie's to photograph launchings — something that, it being wartime, he could easily have been shot for.



Then all at once Seamus was gone into his attic for an intensive period of studying and I was all alone. My paintings were flat and uninspired, my collection of seven IRE AS's and three IRE Unknowns had been reread at least five times, and photography was impossible without Seamus, outside the darkroom with our alarm in his hand calling out the minutes. I felt restless, lonely, browned off. I had a yen for romantic adventure. Being too shy at that time to take up with girls I joined the A.T.C.

Living as I did in a staunchly Nationalist area nobody would have said a word to me if I'd joined the IPI, but when I began to march up the street twice a week in Air Training Corps uniform Eye-brows were raised and once even A Stone Was Thrown — which missed by yards, incidentally, proving that it had been heaved on principle rather than in anger. Amazingly enough my friends did not stop talking to me — when I was out of uniform — and when I began telling them about the sort of things we did in the A.T.C., signals, air navigation and monthly socials and when the girls seemed completely unable to resist my forage cap and shiny buttons, some of them got over their parents' prejudices sufficiently to show interest. When one of them actually joined up with me the Raised Eye-brows changed to Helpless Smugs.

Reminiscing about one's old regiment tends to bore outsiders. I loved every minute of the A.T.C. — well nearly — there was the time I was on an unarmed combat and toughening course for cadet NCOs outside London and one of von Braun's prototype spaceships landed. It didn't excite my sense of wonder and little bit, the only sense I had was one of relief that it had come down two miles away and in a field. It was also during this course that I was actually ordered to do something

for which, as a child, I had been soundly walloped -- jumping into the water with all my clothes on. This is an indescribable sensation the first time; the splash and first split-seconds in the water when it hasn't yet had time to penetrate through the clothing, then the breakthrough in patches and finally the stage -- just before the clothing becomes completely waterlogged -- when air-bubbles are crawling about inside the trouser legs and sleeves. It was like experiencing some new sin. Later, of course, I became more blasé about it and even complained if there was too much mud on the bottom.

It was during this toughening -- or weakening -- course that I first began to feel a bit off-colour. Apparently the stress had uncovered a hidden flaw in my tall, scrawny physique. When I got home I slept for two days and woke up still feeling tired, and began to eat lots of sweets to give me energy. Hah! A few months later I went to see the doctor about it and he diagnosed diabetes, and that was the end of the ATC.

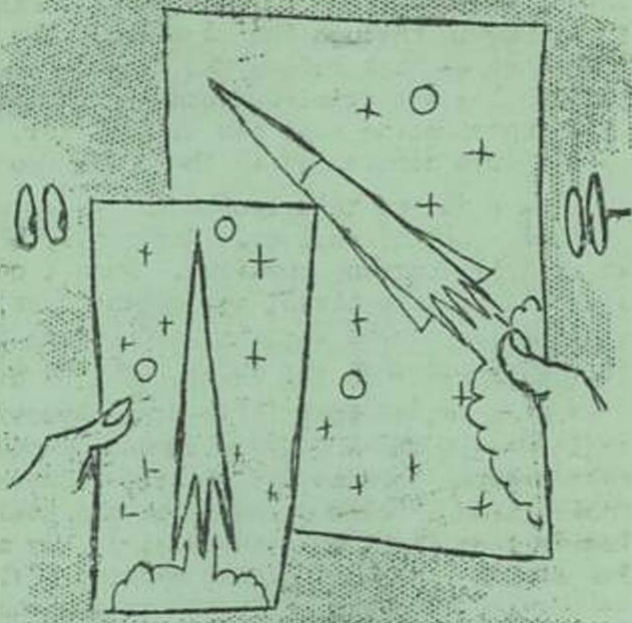
With a lot of spare time on my hands I began building two and three-valve radios -- in the ATC I'd picked up enough technical know-how to be able to make crystal sets and simple one-valvers, and now I was going to expand the whole field of electronics. At the same time I joined the Red Cross to take lectures on first aid and nursing. My medical career ended one night two years later when I was practising bathing a simulated baby -- a large doll, actually -- and its head came off. A man can stand just so much ribbing without losing his self-respect. I took up ball-room dancing.

It was during the combined radio-building, dancing and s-f collecting stage -- the last had been going on unobtrusively for several years -- that I met Walter. Walter collected s-f and built radios, too, but while I had a lot more American Astoundings than he had his radios made me feel that I was confronted with a member of a highly-advanced technological civilisation. Then the first issue of Slant was published and all other hobbies took a back seat.

Running off blotchy pages of type with blotchier woodcuts by myself on them and seeing the pages become clearer and more ambitiously illustrated with each succeeding issue, was the most rewarding hobby I'd had up to that time. For one thing, it was much more creative than dismantling sten guns while blind-fold, or even jumping into the water fully dressed. Walter and I worked very hard on Slant -- him a lot harder than me because I only went up to 170 three or four times a week while he lived there -- but I cannot remember one single time when we stopped to ask ourselves if the trouble was really worth it. But for me helping to produce Slant was just another hobby, and while I enjoyed reading the letters which came in and Walter's replies to them I had no inclination to become part of the fandom they represented. All I wanted to do was set type and occasionally bring up a linocut, then wait anxiously while Walter mounted it on a block, rolled on the ink and peeled off the first impression. If it turned out anyway good we would prop it up against his super-het and talk about its atmosphere and impact and its subtle quality of other-worldliness -- all these effects being due, usually, to faulty inking. Sometimes when I surpassed myself, Walter would say "Exquasut, James, exquasut!" in a pseudo-Ballymena accent which has to be heard to be appreciated.

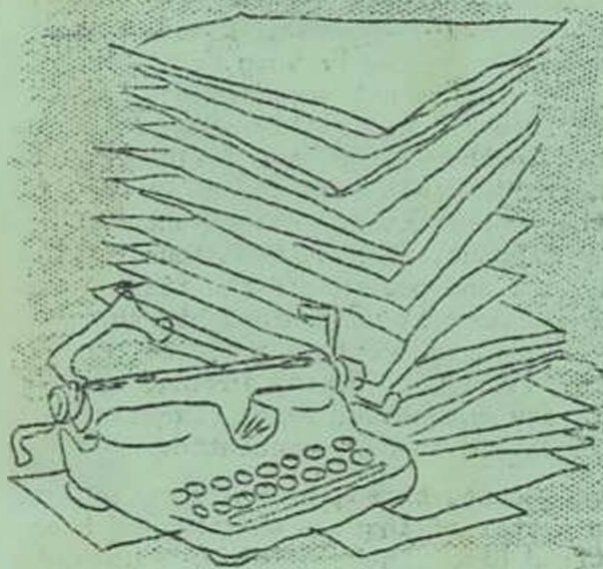
George Charters began frequenting Oblique House, though he was so quiet and unassuming in those days -- still is, as a matter of fact -- that he had been coming for a couple of months before I noticed him. Then Bob Shaw, Ghoodminton and Fannish Good Cheer shattered the hardworking calm of 170 like triple the

bolts and suddenly we were a fan group. We still spent a lot of time type-setting, but now we stopped often to talk. Letters praising what Manly Banister called my impossible linocuts had begun to swell my head and I took up painting again. Bob painted, too, and I remember nights when we just sat at opposite sides of the Slant type-setting table, Walter with his feet up on the mantelpiece talking and co-ordinating between us, just painting our hearts out. They were always s-f subjects, of course, and we would vie to excel each other with special effects. There was a time when my distant galaxies and starclouds ranked second to none -- the technique involving Chinese White and an old tooth-brush -- and I can still hear Walter asking if I'd Mac-learned my galaxy today.



I had the feeling that Fate had something extra special in store for me. My whole spare time life -- the structural and inventive experience of Meccano, my brief excursion into electronics, my anatomical studies with the British Red Cross and my developing artistic bent -- was obviously a preparation for entry into the professional publishing field. James White, I was sure, was going to be a name that would rank with those of Hubert Rogers and Gerard Quinn in s-f magazine circles.

Sometimes I wonder whatever became of that James White, and if there is a probability world wherein I sold my first cover painting to Ted Carnell. . .



What actually happened on this time-track was that I started getting severe headaches and attacks of nose-bleeding which forced me to give up lino-cutting and similar forms of artistic eye-strain. However, for some time I'd been writing long, detailed letters to Seamus Daly, who was a B.Sc. now working as a research chemist with ICI in Stockton-on-Tees, and I had shown part of one to Walter wherein I'd described some of the things which had happened on the way to the Festival Convention in 1951. Walter liked it and published an extract titled "I Rode with Bulmer" in Inclinations. At the time I wasn't very keen on being a writer, but when I inherited Walter's 1912 typer on his acquisition of a later (1923) model I felt that the machine was

being wasted if I didn't use it. So in between copying hymns for Seamus Daly's brother Sean -- who was assistant director of the parish choir -- I did a few pieces of fan fiction for SFN, Quandry and Hyphen, including the Harris-White Feud. Oh yes, and I was responsible for introducing the zap-gun into British fandom -- something of which I felt extremely proud, at the time.

The fact that I was being given BNF status was rather embarrassing to me because I did not consider myself a fan at all. I was simply a hobbyist who, because he was a member of a by now world famous fan group, had to keep his end up. The letters and stories I wrote were to and about friends I had made, and although all the friends and incidents written about were connected with fandom I felt that I shouldn't involve myself too deeply in it. At the same time I enjoyed conventions and meeting visiting fans and corresponding, immensely. People who treated the fannish way of life like a religion made me uncomfortable. Fandom to me is about fifty or sixty people, eight or nine of which I meet at least once a week. I look on it as a fantasy or fairy story to which a lot of intelligent -- and a few unintelligent -- people subscribe, adding details, discussing, recording and expanding this warm, friendly but essentially unreal world which they have created. As a group fans are the nicest people I know, but fandom should not be considered more important than comfortable homes, happy wives and well-fed children, and anyone who does think it more important is a fanatic and not a fan. If anybody wants to know how a BNF can subscribe to such heresy the answer is I'm not a BNF, so yaaaah. I'm just a hobbyist who was on a type-setting kick with a fan genius eleven years ago and somehow became embroiled. Fandom is a Good Thing, but it's not for real.

That is why, when I started another hobby by selling my first story to Ted Carnell in 1952, the cries of "Vile Pro" that went up did not bother me unduly. And when my friend and (in print) bitterest enemy Chuck Harris, writing about "The Scavengers" in his usual thoughtful, scholarly style, said:

"James White! the modern Iscariot who, for two hundred and eightyfive bucks, renounced his immortal heritage, and gave his intrepid spacemen American accents.

James White! pseudoscientist, plagiarist, unspeakable foulness festering on the fringes of fandom. Fakefan! Betrayer! Sex-fiend! Jackal!

James White! Vilest pro!

His shocking lurid hodge-podge of evil frustration is completely permeated with the odour of garbage. Written in what is popularly known as the 'Amazing' style, the vague glimmerings of the hackneyed 'Right Is Right' plot do nothing to cover up the butcherings of all the laws of decency, humanity, grammar and syntax. . ."

. . . .I frothed gently at the mouth but did not feel insulted. So I was a vile pro and a fake-fan and a lot of other obnoxious things -- so what, it was the truth, wasn't it? Terms like white alaver and lechar I passed off as mere literary license on the part of my critic, his enthusiasm for purple passages numbing away with him. The only phrase I could point to as being blatantly incorrect was the one which ran ". . . Foulness festering on the fringes of fandom. . ." A fannish historian and commentator of the standing of Charles Randolph Harris should know that this foulness doesn't fester on the fringe, but more in the middle like.



# NONE BUT MY FOE TO BE MY GUIDE



THE SUBSIDING FIRE of science fiction, for want of something to fan its flames, has begun to inflame its fans. From London to Los Angeles learned, distinguished, cultured commentators on the literature of the imagination are saying, "Byyaghhh!", "Grooghhh!" and other words from their ratch vocabularies. One leading expert, who had been reading analog in his back garden, left his magazine on the ground only to have a passing seagull, which must

have been in the market for crudzines, leave a small deposit on it. "Bad manners," the leading expert said mildly, "but, sh—what a critic!" His wife, thinking he would be worried about the mess on the magazine, said, "will I bring a piece of paper?" "Don't bother," the LE replied, "the bird is miles away by now."

Needless to say, most of the preceding paragraph is a tissue of lies. I don't know what came over... Careful, Shaw, you're getting back into the same sequence of jokes! As I was saying, most of the preceding paragraph is lies but, as people who write technical reports say when they are giving doubtful facts in order to influence your opinion, the perspective is reasonably true. Fans are getting a bit fed up with science fiction, and only one or two wonder if it is as good as ever and think perhaps it is the fans who are getting tired.

But whatever the general opinion may be I want to get in my say about what is wrong. As far as I'm concerned, the main loss to sf in recent years has been that nobody cares anymore when you announce your addiction to reading or writing science fiction. In the old days everyone thought you were mad—and it made life interesting. At one time whole fanzines could be filled with accounts of the violent reactions of a fan's friends and family. Now, thanks mainly to the efforts of people like Bradbury and Asis, and the engrammatic reaction of all journalists which makes

\*This remark is actually attributed to Sir Thomas Becher. He is supposed to have said it on one occasion when he was conducting a poor rehearsal in a theatre where a circus was getting ready. During the rehearsal an elephant wandered onto the stage and made its contribution to, as George Charters once said, posteriority, by using the proscenium as a toilet.

then say, "a science fiction dream came true" when writing about new developments, the general public has a vague feeling that sf was right all along and that it must therefore be another boringly respectable branch of esoterica, on a level with company law or comparative philology.

The trouble is that some of us seemed to thrive on adversity. Sneers and jeers from members of our circle of acquaintance in the mundane world seemed to strengthen our conviction that we were really on the inside of something truly worth while. Nobody could have been more anti-science-fiction than my own father. He is one of those Irishmen of the old school who fish, hunt rabbits, breed ferrets and gun dogs, drink porter and believe fervently (or claim to) in fairies. He had a deep hatred, with vaguely religious overtones, for science fiction. It manifested itself in the form of jovial abuse when he was in a good mood and heavy parental alarm over my mental health at other times. He never used the actual words "science fiction", but instead always called it "That black magic stuff."

I think it was this unending barrage which led me to try my hand at writing the stuff and helped keep me at it until I finally began to sell the occasional story. I wanted to make some money and show him that the hours of reading pulp magazines and pounding my 1913 Oliver had not been a waste of time at all. It was entirely typical of my father that he did not give up even when I was able to wave a cheque in his face—he referred to my earnings as "wimmings" and complained bitterly when I refused to share part of it out as is the custom with pools wins.

Practically everybody else I know had roughly the same point of view as my father, the only difference being that they didn't do it in the grand manner. An interesting side effect from all this was that when you encountered someone who did not hold you and sf up to ridicule they appeared in your eyes as wonderful warm intelligent benefactors. I had one uncle called George who would have fallen into this class had he not died before I was old enough to buy my first copy of *Astounding*.

He was a thin worried-looking ex-sailer who, as far as I could determine, spent most of his time cleaning his shoes for work the next day. There was a family gathering at his place every week and the only bright spots in these meetings, as far as the infant B&S was concerned, were when George occasionally looked up from his shoes and cut into the woman-talk with some prediction about the invention of spy rays or nuclear powered ships.

I don't think he ever actually read any science fiction because he never acquired the facile use of words like "continuum" and "asteroid" which in those days in non-scientific circles distinguished the sf reader from the man in the street. He had somewhere however picked up a rudimentary grasp of the idea of escape velocity and this was perpetually exciting his sense of wonder. Every now and again on summer evenings when he and I were outside the front door throwing my old tennis ball about he would explain to me how if an object were propelled skywards fast enough it would go into orbit. George didn't call it "going into orbit", because he wasn't familiar with the phrase. He simply said that if you threw the ball up fast enough it would "stick", and this was enough for me. I got the idea.

I used to ask him to try to do it and, kindly soul that he was, he never refused to have a go. His thin brown face would take on a look of intense concern, as though to impress me with the magnitude of the task we were attempting, then he would perform an elaborate series of wrist flexings and twistings which would become more and more violent until they finally culminated in as powerful a throw as he could manage. The ball would go up and up into the evening sky until I was

about six it was going to "stick"; then it came sailing down, usually in the next street, and I had to go hunting after it. Every time I recovered the ball I was slightly in awe of it - as is only proper when one is handling an object which has barely missed being consigned for ever to outer space.

Looking back on it, I can see that Uncle George may not have been an expert on science fiction, but he certainly knew a lot about keeping small boys amused.

(Signed)  
BY A  
BOB

My earlier mention of the people who write technical reports reminds me of the clam I have often felt over this subversive movement within the English language. Occasionally during the course of my work I have to take a technical report, on anything from guided weapons trials to straddle carrier design, and extract enough information from it to write a newspaper article. Having read the report a couple of times, I get the picture. At least I get the picture the person who compiled the report wants me to get - a vision of hundreds of white coated scientists and engineers working on immense amounts of expensive complicated machinery, each man a genius dedicated to the truth. The reports are always dull and difficult to understand but, one feels, this is only natural considering the enormously complex, abstruse, technical nature of the subject. The non-technical person is inclined to feel humbly grateful to the engineer-writer for having managed to get the concepts involved into English at all. It is as though he had just succeeded in explaining life insurance to a Laming.

At this stage I get hold of one of the Publicity Department's photographers and go out to the particular production, design or research department involved. This is where the magnificent edifice of illusion created by the report abruptly crumbles away. I find a few mates in frayed Fair Isle pullovers sitting in an obscure corner of a laboratory snacking and occasionally toying with some pieces of miscellaneous hardware. It is only then that I get the real information to write the story. When you approach these chaps in their natural habitat they are prepared to forget about the Scrabble hands after their names and tell you simply what they are up to. Far from being reassuring, this is the most frightening point about the whole business. Why should a person who is quite capable of explaining his job in lucid, plain English have this compulsion to lapse into boring, incomprehensible jargon when he lifts a pen?

Is it a defence mechanism? An attempt to establish superiority over the uninitiated?...to convince people that the job is difficult?...to cover up mistakes? It doesn't only happen in engineering and research either. There is a perfect example hanging up on the wall in my bank, which is supposed to explain to customers just how the bank is getting on. I went in the other morning to take some money out and as I was standing there pale and trembling (I always go that way when tak-



ing money out of the bank - I think it's called a withdrawal symptom) I studied this notice for ten minutes and at the end of the time was still completely baffled. Somewhere something has gone wrong.

Unlike Vance Packard and other writers who merely expose a dismaying trend, I have done something about it. I have managed to obtain, direct from a top-flight guided weapons technician, a translation of some of the more commonly used phrases. This should be of use to anyone who ever has to read technical reports, but I didn't want any payment.

Technical Phrase.

Translation.

"It has long been known that..."

We haven't bothered to look up the original reference.

"...accidentally distorted during assembly".

Dropped on the floor.

"Handled with great care throughout the test".

Not dropped on the floor.

"Typical results are shown in the table".

The best results are shown.

"The figures are correct to the order of magnitude expected".

Something went wrong somewhere.

"More theoretical work is required".

Nobody can understand the results.

"Initial experiments have produced promising results".

If we can't do better than this, we'll have to scrub the lot.

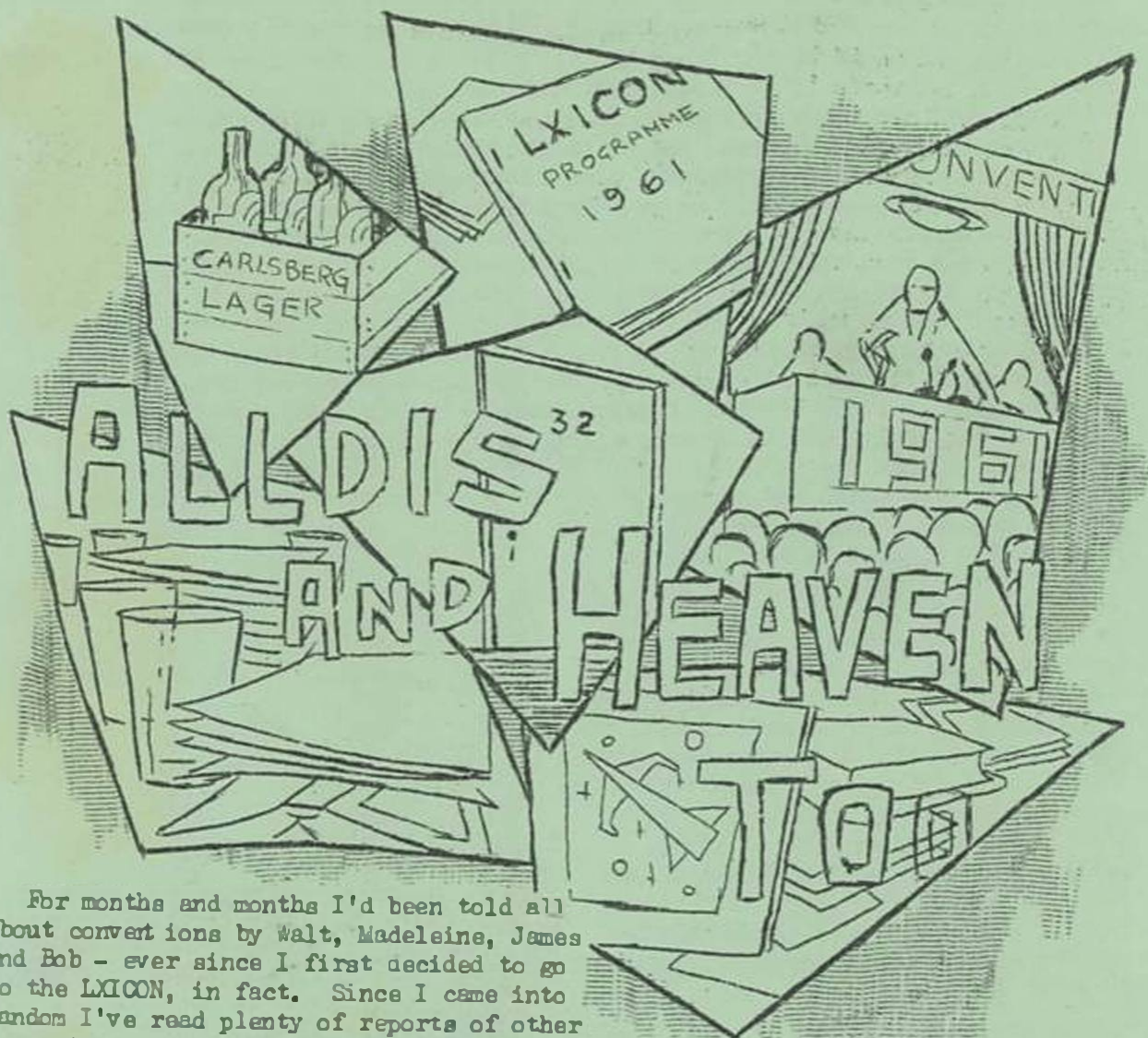
This is only a start, of course, but if things are properly organized on behalf of the common man we may eventually see the publication of Handy Phrase Books, not for foreign languages, but for talking to lawyers, plumbers, income tax men and so on.

All I can say now is, thank goodness this insidious disease hasn't crept into fandom. Imagine what it would be like if some sercon fugghead used it to mess up your ~~eyes~~. It would be enough to make you gaffiate!

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AUTOMOBILE NOTES

(Extracted from Gasp 13; Gerald Steward)

If you are the type who feels safer in a big car, I suggest that instead of buying a new car, buy a Sherman M-4. This vehicle is powered by a 500 hp V-8 of gigantic proportions manufactured by that old V-8 King, Henry Ford. However the M-4 is so big--heavy--strong--and safe, that it needs every bit of that 500 hp. As a matter of fact it has a top speed of only 35 mph, but you can average this speed regardless of traffic conditions. During a road test, the M-4 left two Buicks and a Lincoln extremely flat out. True, one cannot be first away at a green light, but at the red light one can crawl right on up and over to the front of the line again.

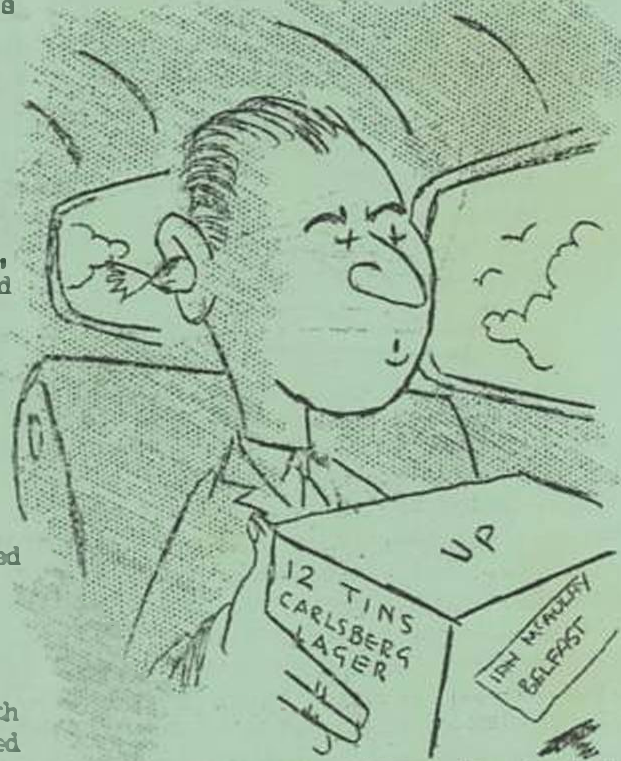


For months and months I'd been told all about conventions by Walt, Madeleine, James and Bob - ever since I first decided to go to the LXICON, in fact. Since I came into fandom I've read plenty of reports of other cons, too. But somehow nobody had ever succeeded in getting it across to me that it was possible to enjoy a convention continuously for three days without being bored for an instant. Well, now I know, and a brood of demons wouldn't keep me away from the next one.

IAN  
M'CAULAY

The one snag about this sustained high level of enjoyment is that I forgot completely Walt's warning to take copious notes; after all, who is going to take notes when they run the risk of actually missing a few words of the conversation? Not me. From the moment I arrived to the moment I left I found the conversations with old friends and new ones, the talks about sf, the room parties and the superb programme so enjoyable and entertaining that about all I can do is trust a slightly rose-tinted memory and write down those things that I remember seeing, hearing and doing, and trust that you will get some slight idea of just how good it all was from start to finish.

My journey to Gloucester didn't start very promisingly. First of all, the departure time of the aircraft I was travelling on was put forward three times. Eventually, two hours behind schedule, we followed the stewardess out to an old crate which looked as if it should have been retired at the end of the last war. I suspect that the words 'Spirit of St. Louis' had been hastily painted over on the engine cowling. When everyone who still had enough nerve left to continue with the flight was aboard, this prehistoric monster lumbered across the apron with windows rattling and seats creaking. As we passed the maintenance hangar I noticed a group of engineers clustered at the door watching the plane with interest; the thing that worried me was that they had their fingers crossed. While we creaked and clanked our way out to the end of the runway, the stewardess came around to check my safety belt and offered me some boiled sweets which she said would prevent my ears from hurting while we were taking off. After a take-off run that must have made use of every available inch of runway, the aeroplane clawed its way into the air and began to gain altitude slowly. I unfastened the safety belt, took the boiled sweets out of my ears and began to breathe again. I had a good look around to see what a thoughtful airline had provided for me to read while our graceful silver bird was winging its effortless way across the ocean (that's what it had said on the travel posters anyway). The nett result of this search was a leaflet in two languages telling me what to do in the event of a forced landing and an out-of-date religious paper. In spite of this lack of optimism on the part of the airline, we landed safely at Bristol. Quite suddenly, everything began to go smoothly. The Customs examination was quick and polite, the bus into Bristol was comfortable, and then I was boarding a Gloucester train with fully thirty seconds to spare. I settled down in a comfortable seat and began to re-read "New Maps of Hell" in hopeful anticipation of being able to quote chunks of it in conversation with Kingsley Amis.



From Gloucester railway station I walked the half-mile to the hotel, registered, went up to my room and washed away the travel stains. Soon I got out, full of go-now enthusiasm, to find the con hall. Outside it I saw a large, dense hedge with two eyes glaring over it. The hedge moved and remarked "you're Ian McEulay". Then I knew I was talking to Bruce Burn and the luxuriant growth was his renowned beard. In rapid succession I met Ethel Lindsay, Don Geldart, Keith Freeman, Joe Patrizio and Ted Forgythe. After they had almost buried me with little cards which exhorted me to buy the London Group's Combozine, I started to look around the room and almost immediately screamed in a conditioned reflex. Yes, Ella Parker was there!

After inspecting the impressive con hall and looking at the exhibits for a while, some of us went up to Ella's room where she and Ethel produced a seemingly inexhaustible supply of sandwiches, rolls and cakes. The sandwiches were alleged to have been made from Irish bread in deference to Bruce Burn's taste. I was very



pleased to hear this, until I enquired a little further and found that this so-called Irish bread had actually been made in London. After tea, we returned to the con hall and talked for a while. Then Ted Forayth started a very praiseworthy trend by renoving his sub to Kyphen. When the rush to give me money had died away, I adjourned to the bar with Archie Mercer and Don Geldart until the official programme began.

The countdown over a loudspeaker went smoothly and at the appointed time Eric Jones was all set to officially open the con. Unfortunately, nobody else was. However, the delay was very short and before another fifteen minutes had passed the con was under way with the welcoming speech and introduction of some of the fans. During all this, I was keeping a close watch on Brian Aldiss, since I had recent-

ly read 'Hothouse' and had wondered what sort of a man could have written a story like that. To my surprise he looked human and intelligent. He spoke with enthusiasm and it was obvious that he intended to enjoy himself during the next couple of days.

After the introduction there was a short film show which included a German fantasy film called "The Ring". This may have been very good, but nobody seemed to understand the plot, the characters or the deep, hidden significance of its allegorical nature. I think.

Soon it was time to "circulate...to renew old friendships and make new friends" as the programme so poetically put it. So, to the accompaniment of copious draughts of refreshing and stimulating liquids, I circulated, etc, etc.

In this period I was successful in one of my life-long ambitions, that of adding a couple of items to Ron Bennett's collection of bits of completely useless information. In tones of hushed reverence, we discussed Kingsley Amis, who so far seemed to be enjoying himself, though few of the fans had as yet approached either him or Brian Aldiss. After a while, taking my copy of "New Maps" in one hand and my courage in the other, I went into the lounge where Messrs. Amis, Aldiss and Doherty were talking with Mrs. Amis and Margaret Manson. I asked if the volume could be autographed. It was, drinks were brought with alacrity, cigarettes were handed round and a discussion started about, of all odd subjects, science fiction.



About this time I awoke to the awareness that there was something bothering me, and soon realised that it was the fact that I had been within striking distance of Brian Aldiss for several minutes and hadn't yet brought up the subject of "Hothouse". Obviously it was necessary to show finesse and tact in introducing the topic naturally into the conversation. I decided on an oblique and subtle approach and next time there was a pause in the conversation I said: "Brian, about that story of yours called "Hothouse". There are a few points I'd like to have your comments on".

From then on we were at it hammer and tongs. "Spider's webs to the moon, Bah!" "How did the first spider get there?" "Have you lost your sense of wonder?" "How come the earth and moon didn't collide if they weren't rotating about a common centre of gravity?" And so on. At one point in the conversation the Trojan position was mentioned, which greatly interested Kingsley Amis until he realised it was an astronomical term. I must confess that Brian completely disarmed me by admitting that all the criticisms I had put forward were valid but that he had felt that he had to write the story in spite of being unable to tie up all the loose ends properly. I still don't like that particular story but I do think that Brian could give lessons to Dale Carnegie any day.

Kingsley Amis and Geoff Doherty talked about many of the sf stories they liked, and Geoff seemed particularly fascinated by the world of fandom. This group was in a constant state of flux with people continually coming in to take the places of those who left to go on to the parties or out to the bar or somewhere. While I was there I met Harry Harrison, who didn't look a bit like the mental picture I had of the author of "Deathworld". On hearing that I had come from Belfast he immediately asked about James White, which just shows the sort of company he must be used to keeping. I met Dave Kyle, too, and his wife, Ruth. At first glance Dave looked to me like a successful and staid American business man, but he has a witty and pleasant personality which make him very good company. Ruth is a charming person, too, and if all American fans are as nice I hope I meet plenty more of them.

By now it was getting on towards one o'clock and time to go and see about the room parties. Some of Dave's movies were being shown by Norman Shorrocks in his room and this is where I found myself soon, unfortunately too late to have seen the beginning of the show. I consoled myself by reclining on the floor and sipping at a glass containing a pet concoction of Norman's - coffee-flavoured Marsala wine. After the film was over I succeeded in getting a place on the bed where I was rapidly crushed beneath several people who refused to move unless I promised them a place in the next set of backcover quotes. The ringleaders in this pressure group were Norman Shorrocks and Bruce Burn, but in spite of their worst efforts I remained staunch to the principles which are a prerequisite of all members of the Hyphen staff. Now if only they had tried to bribe me. . . !

At about half past three, everyone decided that it would be a good thing to have an early night at the beginning of the con so as to be in tip-top condition for the two full days which lay ahead of us. So we all said good-night to each other and I wended my happy though somewhat less than steady way to my room.

Next morning I had a hearty breakfast just after nine o'clock to enable me to face whatever the day might bring forth with my usual poise and savoir faire. It was just as well I did because the first thing the day did bring forth was Hyphen's art editor whose immediate demands for cover ideas almost blew a fuse in my brain. It struck me as slightly odd the way he kept invoking the name of some near-deity called Harris. Finally I came to the conclusion that there must be some deep ancestral memory of primeval significance attached to this odd habit.



The first item on the official programme for Saturday was the tape "Typo", made by the Cheltenham group. This ambitious farnish play dealt with the attempts of one "Harry Sline" to solve the mystery of the theft of Eric Frank Russel's typewriter. I thought it very enjoyable, but I'd like to hear it again under rather better listening conditions.

Geoff Doherty then gave his talk "An Alien in the Academy". Geoff is an English teacher who likes reading sf and has even written a book called "Aspects of Science Fiction", which is designed for use in schools. The only annoying thing about this talk was the high frequency of interruptions from the audience. Geoff dealt well and interestingly with these questions and with those which came during the discussion period after his talk. This convention was his first meeting with fandom and it's nice to be able to say that he seemed very favourably impressed with it, even though a little bewildered with the more "faanish" side of things.

Then it was time for lunch, for which Arthur and I joined Ken and Pam Bulmer (and Debbie) and Ron and Daphne Buckmaster in a voyage of discovery of the Gloucester eating places. I enjoyed a good salad while the others toyed with sundry less palatable dishes. This naturally put me in good spirits and I readily sympathised with Arthur as he tried to figure out the esoteric symbolism that had caused the cafe to represent a cup of tea by a plastic disc with a hole in it. Debbie spent the time in demonstrating her generous nature, amazing in one so young, by showering largesse in the form of cutlery over the nearest tables.

We got back to the con hall in nice time for the Don Ford slide show, with taped commentary by Don himself. Norman Shorrock did an excellent job of showing the slides in perfect timing with the commentary and keeping the focus right throughout the show. The slides themselves were perfect examples of all that slides should be, though I would have preferred fewer slides and a bit more commentary from Don.

Then came the moment we were all waiting for - Kingsley Amis' speech. After an amusing introduction by Brian Aldiss, the author of "New Maps of Hell" launched a verbal assault entitled "anti-science, anti-fiction" at us. He first of all condemned much of the pseudo-scientific nonsense that has been used as a basis for



"THINKWISE, I SHALL HAVE TO REVISE MY WHOLE CONCEPT OF SCIENCE FICTION NOW THAT MR KINGSLEY AMIS HAS TORN IT UP INTO LITTLE PIECES AND STUFFED IT DOWN OUR THROATS"

sf stories. This included time travel, psionic machines and his own particular hate, translation machines. Kingsley went on to speak with horror of the poor characterisation that was a feature of many stories, quoting extracts to support his views.

This talk was obviously designed to be as provocative as possible and it certainly succeeded in its object. A large percentage of the audience were restively waiting to tear the speaker apart verbally during the question period. However, they heard it out in silence and waited until the chairman called for questions.

To be honest, the first five minutes of the discussion were so appallingly inane that it was almost embarrassing to be in the hall. Fortunately things were brought back to a listenable level by Dave Kyle. Ted Carnell and Ken Bilmer also made some intelligent remarks in defence of sf. After these had set a good example, the audience recovered its head and Kingsley Amis must have been well pleased with the the response to his speech. I think the audience was well pleased, too, with having a knowledgeable and generally favourable critic even though they may not have agreed with all the criticisms. Perhaps the funniest remark of the whole con was made during this discussion. Ted Tubb had remarked

how he hated to read, and was shocked, by some sf stories which were only thinly disguised pornography. Kingsley dumbfounded him and caused the audience to become almost hysterical by remarking: "I'm afraid I must be much more blasé than you, Mr. Tubb".

A break for tea enabled dozens of small arguments to break out all around the room and these only ended when the suction began. This was first of all ably handled by Eric Jones, but after about twenty minutes Ted Tubb took over. I'd heard about Ted's method of suctioning before, but it really has to be seen to be believed. The most lurid pornographic details were quoted from perfectly innocent books and the high point arrived when he sold a book which must have been about sixty years old by stating that it was an early work by John W. Campbell. John Campbell was the name on the cover all right, but I think it was a book of sermons by some preacher of that name.

After tea with Archie Mercer and Terry and Val Jeeves, I returned to the con hotel to find it resounding with the preparations for the fancy dress ball. Gallant efforts were being made by six strong men to fit Brian Burgess into a suit of peg-board armour never designed for his frame. These efforts were finally successful and at the beginning of the ball, Brian was stalking around waving a heavy wooden sword and making muffled remarks beneath his vizor. Gradually the hall filled with



vampires, Barsocinian Bath Hunters, space men, aliens, witches, space girls and heavily armoured knights.

A feature of the evening was a violent combat between two groups of knights. The hall resounded with full-blooded cries and the impact of wooden sword on pagboard armour, Arthur Thomson being in constant risk of his life as he dashed every few seconds into the thick of the strife to extricate some unfortunate who had sustained more than a simple fracture. When the great joust came to an end as adraw, the bodies were dragged away to be revived by the internal application of soothing lotions in the form of ethyl alcohol plus traces of higher organic esters.

The fancy dress parade wended its way round and round the hall with all attention concentrated on it. The co-editor and art-editor of Hyphen spent most of their time forcibly restraining each other from refixing feathers onto Ina Shorrocks's spacebird costume. This was merely a desire to be helpful on my part, but I think Arthur must have been seeking some suggestion for a cover idea for this issue. I don't think a family magazine like Hyphen could publish some of the suggestions he got, though. The judges reached their decision after a considerable amount of hesitation, which wasn't very surprising as some of the costumes were obviously the result of a great deal of thought and hard work. Honourable mentions went to Norman Weecall, Bobbie Gray, Bob Richardson, Eric Jones, Tony Walsh and Norman Shorrocks. Second prize went to Ina Shorrocks and First was gained by Eddie Jones; Eddie had designed both his own and Ina's costume, so he got a special round of applause. After the presentation of the prizes by Ruth Kyle, those who had been dancing returned to dancing, and the rest of us returned to talking in small groups about anything that took our fancy.

Arthur had decided that he was going to make some contribution to this con report, apart from his illustrations, and I reproduce below the document he handed to me at this point in the con. The typos are his.

"Having motored down to Gloucester on the Saturday morning I arrive at the con hotel to find the other half of the Hyphen 'Tonight' team pacing restlessly up and down in the hotel lounge. I had had a few words of getting out when this gael had the call to start in right away on just which of us was going to cover which part of the convention. I found I had been delegated to cover the Saturday afternoon delegates then the fancy dress party the Ompa meeting the auction the afternoon tea and the changing of the Bulmer baby; I also to illo this lotx up and at the same time keep no ..."

The document stops short presumably because someone was foolish enough to offer Arthur a drink at that point.

After the ball, quite a few of us ended up at the London group's party in Ethel Lindsay's room. Arthur was in charge of the dispensing of liquid refreshment and things



soon got quite lively. The big names of the con were with us for a good while and we were even treated to the spectacle of Kingsley Amis making an effort to lead the party in the singing of luridly worded songs. Another highlight was the formation of a splinter group which held its own party in a bathroom. In a bath. Half full of warm water. It appears that they felt the main room was becoming hot and crowded and it seemed reasonable that they should move into the bathroom. It was reasonable until practically everyone else decided to join them.

The party got hotter, livelier and noisier; after an hour or so Brian Burgess arrived to ask would we move to another room as the staff had approached him to say that they couldn't sleep as their bedrooms were on the same floor as the party. After a pause of wonderment at the way Brian can get involved with any available non-fan, we obligingly moved. To Eddie Jones' room, which was about seven by ten feet in floor area. When I counted there were 38 people in this room and a few more came in after that. I did make the suggestion that someone might climb onto the top of the wardrobe and I was immediately accused of being a disciple of John Berry's. After about twenty minutes the inevitable happened; one of the femmes fainted so we all had to clear out of the room and allow a little breathable air in. Some of us returned to Ethel's room for an hour or so where we talked quietly in an effort to avoid disturbing either Brian Burgess or the hotel staff.

For some reason that escapes me now, though it probably seemed logical at the time, this party broke up at about 4 a.m. Several of us were proceeding down one of the hotel corridors when we came upon a group lying on the floor and talking. Feeling that it would be a good thing to join forces we lay down too. Passing bottles from hand to hand and from hand to mouth, we talked about sf, Kingsley Amis, and what a magnificent con it was. About five o'clock we split up with the generous intention of permitting the occupants of nearby rooms to get some sleep. Five or six of us sat in my room until five thirty, when I poured them into the corridor, had a last cigarette and went to bed.

I overslept a little on Sunday morning and didn't get down to breakfast until almost quarter to ten. Judging by the deserted appearance of the dining room, plenty of others had overslept, too. Brian Burgess was observed in deep conversation with

two non-fans who were looking around with glazed expressions and trying to restrain their small daughter from covering Brian with her dish of breakfast cereal. Or perhaps they were encouraging her to cover Brian with her dish of breakfast cereal.

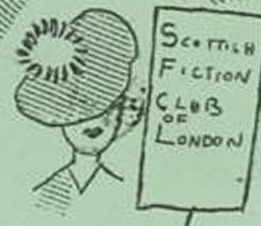
The official programme that morning consisted of the BSFA meeting. At this it was decided that next year's con will be in Harrogate at Easter, Ron Bennett and a committee doing the organising.

I lunched with Ken and Pam Bulmer in the Chinese restaurant down the road from the con hotel. The waiter treated me throughout this meal with unusual deference and it was only later that we realised that this was standard Oriental politeness as exhibited to fathers of small children. Ken was not given this treatment, so it's



obvious that the con was taking its toll of me; I looked more like a harassed father than he did.

After lunch, a short play was performed by the London group. The stars of this were Ethel Lindsay, Bruce Burn and Jimmy Groves, with bit parts going to Ella Parker and Joe Patrizio. The theme of this musical epic was that fandom was in danger of being taken over by the Scots. It was apity that the audience was rather small for this, even though the script is to be published later.



Next we had Eric Bentcliffe's "This Is Your Fan Life", Eric Jones being the unsuspecting victim. This well thought out half-hour introduced several fans, both in the flesh and on tape, playing the part of lurid characters from Eric's 'past'. At one point, when Eric Jones had been alleged to be an expert hypnotist, Dave Kyle stood up and walked around the con hall with outstretched arms saying, "I am an Englishman! I read science fiction!" The highlight of the performance, though, was the connection of Eric to an elaborate and almost frightening "psionics" machine; this had unwittingly been constructed by Eric himself and he was shaken to find it being used on himself.

Ron Bennett conducted the TAFF auction after a break for tea. The expression on his face when "The 27th Day" by John Mantley was returned for re-auction by the buyer for what must have been almost the 27th time was one of almost indescribable horror. It seemed that he could all too easily imagine himself being doomed to spend the rest of his life trying to find a buyer for it. However, somebody finally took pity on him and decided to keep it for their crud pile.



A couple of fannishly oriented competitions followed. These were Ken Slater's Initial Quiz in which contestants had to identify authors from their initials (I competed and covered myself with ignominy), and a fannish variety of Twenty Questions during which everyone hotly debated whether the Dean Drive should be classified as animal, vegetable or mineral.

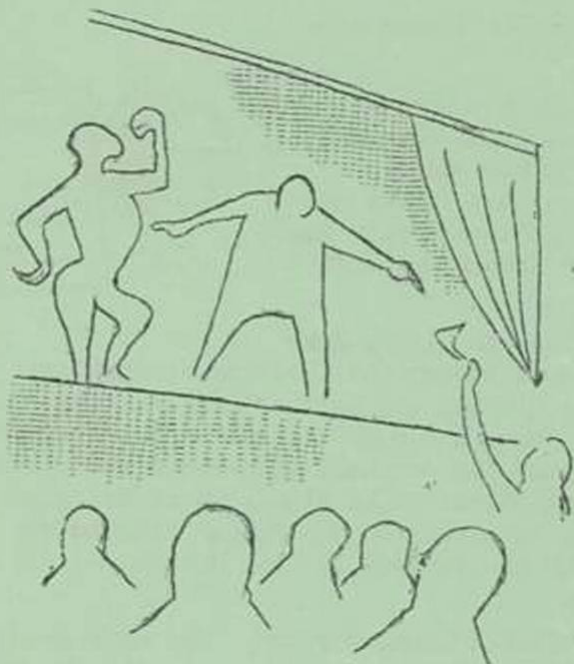
I spent teatime, again at the Chinese restaurant, with Margaret Manson, Brian Aldiss, Ken Slater and Dave Barber. By an odd chance, we spent most of the time arguing about a story of Brian's called "Hothouse". The argument was inconclusive.

The first item after tea was Eric Bentcliffe's TAFF Talk; this was extremely interesting and Eric managed to get across very well his pleasure at going to the States and meeting many of the fans over there.

Eric was suffering from a severe sore throat as an aftermath of 'flu and was compelled frequently to quaff drafts of soda-water during his talk in an effort to fend off complete voice failure. The mere thought of drinking straight soda-water upset several members of the audience so badly that they made an immediate dash for the bar at the end of the talk. This impetuosity might have had serious repercussions, but I managed to get to the bar first so all was well.

Eric then conducted the TAFF auction. Among the items sold were an unpublished original manuscript by Brian Al-





diss, a copy of the 'Harp Stateside' and the time of various authors, both pro and fan, Kingsley Aris gained the highest price, possibly by virtue of haranguing those present until he felt the price was getting to a reasonable level. In spite of the fact that I was prepared to do without refreshments for the rest of the con and give free subs to Ryphen, I wasn't able to raise enough to outbid a combine which included Ron Bennett and the London Group.

I did think of putting in a bid for Walt's time in the hope of getting something out of him for Ryphen, but decided to try the threat of withdrawing his Scrabble first. Ethel Lindsay finally obtained Walt's services and said that she was going to demand an hour of his conversation so that he'd have to come to the next con. (I'm trying to persuade him too, Ethel!).

The auction was followed by the big film show. This started off with two Shall scientific films in colour; these were excellent and drew deserved applause from the audience. Then there was the American fan film, The Musquite Kid. This was marred by a sound-track so bad that only an occasional word could be heard. A pity, because it could have been very enjoyable.

The full-length film was 'Forbidden Planet' which was a popular choice, even for those who had seen it before. By a natural trend, a large bar party formed after this to discuss just about every sf film ever made. Kingsley Aris gave vivid impressions of enraged film monsters tearing down the Golden Gate bridge with such enthusiasm that the hotel staff were seen to look cautiously over their shoulders every time they moved away from the group after bringing fresh supplies of alcohol.



About an hour passed in this pleasant fashion, but then Brian Burgess arrived trailing a very drunken retired colonel type. Brian announced that this non-fan had expressed a desire to meet Kingsley and that he had felt it his duty to do everything possible to advance this noble cause.

The non-fan stared at Kingsley and slurred out a remark to the effect that he too had been at Swansea University B'Jove and was interested to see a real Angry Young Man. Kingsley blanched. Nothing would suit the retired colonel type but that the "Angry Young Man" should come out and be exhibited to his friends. He went, rolling his eyes and muttering imprecations beneath his breath. When he came back later, his pithy version of the affair convinced me at least that "Lucky Jim" was at any rate partly autobiographical.

A few of us left about this time and went up to the SFCOL's suite to "finish off a few left-over bottles". About half past twelve we came to the reluctant conclusion that this would be



beyond our powers, even though we were prepared to give our all in a good cause. Eric Bantcliffe and I were despatched to round up reinforcements, a mission in which we were singularly successful. Soon, the party was really swinging and I was deeply involved in discussing logical fallacies, Feynman's approach to quantum physics and the square root of  $i$  minus one. I also talked about some of his stories with Brian Aldiss, particularly one called 'Hothouse'. Surprisingly, we refrained from assaulting each other.



Eventually the mental strain from these conversations caused me to adopt a reclining position (that's my story, anyway!). The fan Guest of Honour, Archie Mercer, was in the midst of a discussion with Ian Sherrock and Phil Rogers just to the right of me and I was soon included in this, all the time balancing a glass full of refreshment on my chest. After a while, I made the unfortunate discovery that my left leg had gone to sleep. Prudently remembering to finish the drink that I had on my chest (not that Ethel Lindsay allowed me to forget it!), I sat up, found my left leg amid the tangle of limbs and straightened it out smartly. An anguished scream from behind me imparted the news that the leg I had straightened out actually belonged to Phil Rogers. When he had satisfied himself that no permanent damage had been done, he assisted me generously to find my own leg and place it in a somewhat less cramped position.



At about four thirty quite a few of the party chickened out and went to bed, but some of us stayed on talking and quaffing the occasional glass until just after five thirty. As we set off then for our own rooms, Phil made a parting remark to me as he limped away down the corridor. He said, "I'll call you at nine o'clock". I laughed at this little jest, which seemed quite funny at the

time.

I wasn't laughing at nine o'clock when I was awakened by a pounding at my door and the voice of Phil Rogers bellowing and giving every indication of continuing to bellow until I was completely aroused. After trying unsuccessfully to remove the ancient horse blanket that had somehow got into my mouth, I succeeded by a code system of moans in imparting the information that I was now awake. I staggered from the bed and decided I would be able to face breakfast in spite of the ridiculously early hour. When I entered the dining room I could see happy, smiling faces all around me. Unfortunately, these faces all belonged to the hotel staff, who seemed to be bearing up remarkably well in the face of the knowledge that the con was almost over.

Any fans who had managed to make the effort to get as far as the dining room this early looked as if they had only done so to be sure of not missing a single instant of the last mowing of a fabulous



week-end. There were quite a few in the dining room which would seem to show that most of the con attendees didn't want to miss anything.

After breakfast, some of us sat around reading and discussing the first con report to appear (in the "Guardian"). This had been written by Geoff Doherty and gave a very fair account of the proceedings, in spite of a certain amount of awe at the phenomenon of fandom.

Sadly, it was now time for me to leave the con, so I spent about half an hour going around and saying good-bye to everyone I could find. Then I went up to my room, collected my suitcase, brought it down to the hall and paid my bill. I went around saying a last goodbye and eventually came back to the hall and put on my coat. I kept on hoping that everyone would decide that they should abandon their jobs and carry on the con for another week or so, but there was no such luck. After a final farewell, I walked out reluctantly and made my way to the station. For me, the LIXICON was over.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yes, my first con was over and now I'm back among Irish fandom. The others look at me enviously when I start rhapsodising about the wonderful time I had; I always end up by saying "You should have been there" in the hopes that maybe next year they will. Of course, somebody (who lives not a thousand miles from Brockham House) has put around a rumour that I was actually seen to consume alcoholic liquor at various times during the con, so I think Walt may come along next time to see that the traditions of Irish Fandom are not flouted to an even greater degree!

I think I can divide the people I met at the con into three categories; (1), the people I talked to a lot and wish I had talked to more. (2), The people I talked to a little and wish I had talked to more, and (3), the people I hardly talked to at all and wish I had talked to more. The Cheltenham Group, headed by Eric Jones, did a marvellous job of organisation, everyone was friendly, the London group are a fine bunch of fans and, oh heck, I could go on and on like this for hours. Let's just say I don't believe there could be a better con, though you'll all see me at Harrogate next year, since I hope it'll be as good.

In the immortal words of Brian Aldiss, celebrated author of (ugh!) 'Boothouse',  
"See you, mate - at Harrogate."

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ATOL ATOL ATOL ATOL ATOL ATOL ATOL ATOL ATOL ATOL ATOL ATOL ATOL



and from inside front cover) in the evening the Gate Theatre and intellectual conversation in Georgian houses. For gracious living, Dublin is hard to match. For instance on Sunday morning on the way to golf we called on Johnny Hartz, whose acquaintance you made briefly a few Hyphens ago, and Ian spent the morning with him and his pretty new wife Helga lying in the sun eating ice cream, drinking Benedictine and playing Scrabble. In my dear Northern way I deplored the hedonism of this Sabbath program when it was mooted, but Johnny promised they would use only words to be found in The Bible.

All too soon the end of the holiday drew near and to shock us back to sordid reality we resolved to wash Ian's SLWD Car. After some hard scrubbing we found two doors Ian had forgotten about and that the car had originally been fawn, except for some rusty fragments of old iron which we surmised might once have been chromium plated; though not of course the front bumper, which was obviously a legacy of some collision with an iron bedstead. All our efforts with chrome cleaner and metal polish merely converted the rough brown finish into a smooth brown finish, until Mrs McAulay sallied forth from the kitchen with a Brillo steel wool soap pad and attacked the car with it. I commented sotto voce to Ian that he would at least be driving the most expensive suceptum in Ireland and Ian, fearing that she would work her way down to the bare upholstery, diverted his mother's attention to the front bumper, so that the deluded lady might the sooner be discouraged. An inexplicable phenomenon then occurred, which even Ian's brilliant scientific brain was unable to categorise. The rust-eaten surface was replaced by one of gleaming scratch-free chromium! The only explanation we have been able to think of is that by some masterly machination at the Ford head office where he works, our old friend Chuck Harris had caused the front bumper of Ian's car to be made of solid chromium, plated with a thin layer of steel. In any case, Hyphen endorses Brillo Soap Pads.

But now, bronzed and fit we're back at work (using the pale white slugs in the office I stand out like a pale brown slug) and ready to face the problems of fandon. First, I have been asked by Dr. Ian Ross McAulay, PhD and bar, formerly of Ballycorus Grange, Co. Dublin, to say that he is not and never has been Ian T. McAuloy, -SRD, formerly of Atlanta, Georgia. People keep so steadfastly writing in to say how nice it is to see Ian back again and when is the next Cosmag coming out, that I tell Ian he had better just accept the situation by taking over this ready-made fannish past and actually publishing the next issue of Cosmag. So if any of you old friends of the old Ian are at the next Convention, just introduce yourselves to the new one. You'll recognise him by the reincarnation in his buttonhole. X

Talking of Conventions, you may have seen in Orion a proposal to nominate me for TAFF, and this is to make it clear that I will not stand. Thanks, but for one thing I feel that having made the trip once I shouldn't do someone else out of it, and that I should take my chance on the unofficial fund which has been started to bring Madeline & me to Chicago in 1962.

"I had an idea for a story the other day," said James White. We listened respectfully, appreciating the privilege of observing the workings of the fine mind which has already this year sold a two-part serial to Fantastic, a short to F&SF, a novel to Digt Books and a novelet to an anthology series the first of which had an introduction by Bertrand Russell. In Irish Fandon we rub shoulders with the Great Thinkers of our generation. The story, James went on, was of an interstellar colonising spaceship where everyone was in suspended animation except for one man who kept watch for five years and then awoke his successor and so on. Naturally the great problem of this sole man was the temptation to revive a companion. He resisted it only by unfreezing a small domestic animal, which solaced his lonely vigil so that when the time came to unfreeze his successor he was almost sane. Not so the survivor, alas, for the hero's mere explanation of what he had done turned him into a gibbering maniac, endangering the life of the very ship itself. "How? why?" we asked. "What did he say when asked to account for the presence of the small domestic animal???"

"I thought I'd throw a puddy-tat," said James.



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May, 1961

From W. Willis & I. McAulay  
170 Upper N'ards Rd.,  
Belfast 4, N.Ireland

PRINTED MATTER  
(Reduced Rate)

# Eavesdroppings

SINCE HE JOINED THE ARMY, HE'S STOPPING HIS SUBSCRIPTION TO HIKING MAGAZINE...IT IS SOMEWHAT EASIER TO BE PRACTICE HENRY THAN NOT CHEAT ON YOUR INCOME TAX...TELL HIM TO RENEW HIS SUB BUT NOT TO BOTHER TO WRITE AGAIN.....I HITCHED MY WAGON TO .. SILE. ONLY TO FIND THAT STARS ARE USE- LESS FOR DRAWING WAGONS.....ONE BEGINS TO WONDER IF IT IS AT ALL WORTH WHILE ANYMORE TO STAND HERE KNEEDEEP IN MUCK HOLDING ALOFT THIS FEERLE TORCH....YES



THAT'S QUITE AN ACHIEVEMENT, MR. WRIGHT, BUT WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH MY RECYCLES?... NOT BEING A BIRD, I CAN'T BE IN TWO PLACES AT ONCE...IS IT TRUE THAT THE NLYS OFFICE

WON'T ALLOW SCENES OF A COUPLE IN BED UNLESS ONE OF THEM HAS A FOOT ON THE FLOOR? NO, THAT'S BILLIONS YOU'RE THINK- ING OF.....HISTORY IS A NIGHTMARE FROM WHICH IT IS TRUE WE ALL WOKE UP AND HAD A CLEAR LOOK AROUND.....YOU KNOW WHAT THEY CALL COUPLES WHO PRACTICE THE CATH- OLIC NATURAL RHYTHM METHOD? PARENTS..... UNTIL YOU GET TO THE POINT WHERE PEOPLE KNOW YOU I'M AFRAID YOU MUST KNOW PEOPLE .....

YESTERDAY I BOUGHT A GIRLIE MAG, MY FATHER FOUND IT AND READ IT; TO- DAY I BOUGHT AN SF MAG, MY FATHER FOUND IT AND TOLD ME NOT TO BRING ANY MORE OF THAT TRASH INTO THE HOUSE.....IF YOU SEE A FAN'S NAME IN A FANZINE AND YOU DON'T RECOGNISE IT, EITHER HE'S A NEOPAN..OR YOU ARE.....IT'S ABOUT A TRAPEZE ARTIST WHO CAUGHT HIS WIFE IN THE ACT..... FAN 'S SOMEONE WHO THINKS LOS IS AN YINGVI... ..MAYBE YOU'D TAKE A DOLLAR TO PUT MY NAME AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BLQUOTES....MY HEART'S IN THE RIGHT PLACE, BUT I CAN'T FIND MY WALLET.....YOU CAN'T GO THROUGH THIS VALE OF TEARS CRYING.....ROCKETS HAVE FINALLY EXPLAINED GRAVITATION; IT'S THE ANTITHESIS OF MONEY... ..dick schultz 2, rick sneary, james white, philip toynbee, raja bogge, dean mcLaughlin, irish mp, bob shaw, hamilton joimston, william rot- tier, dor allen, chris millar, sid h'wh- by 2, thom perry, bill carr 3



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Cady.

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