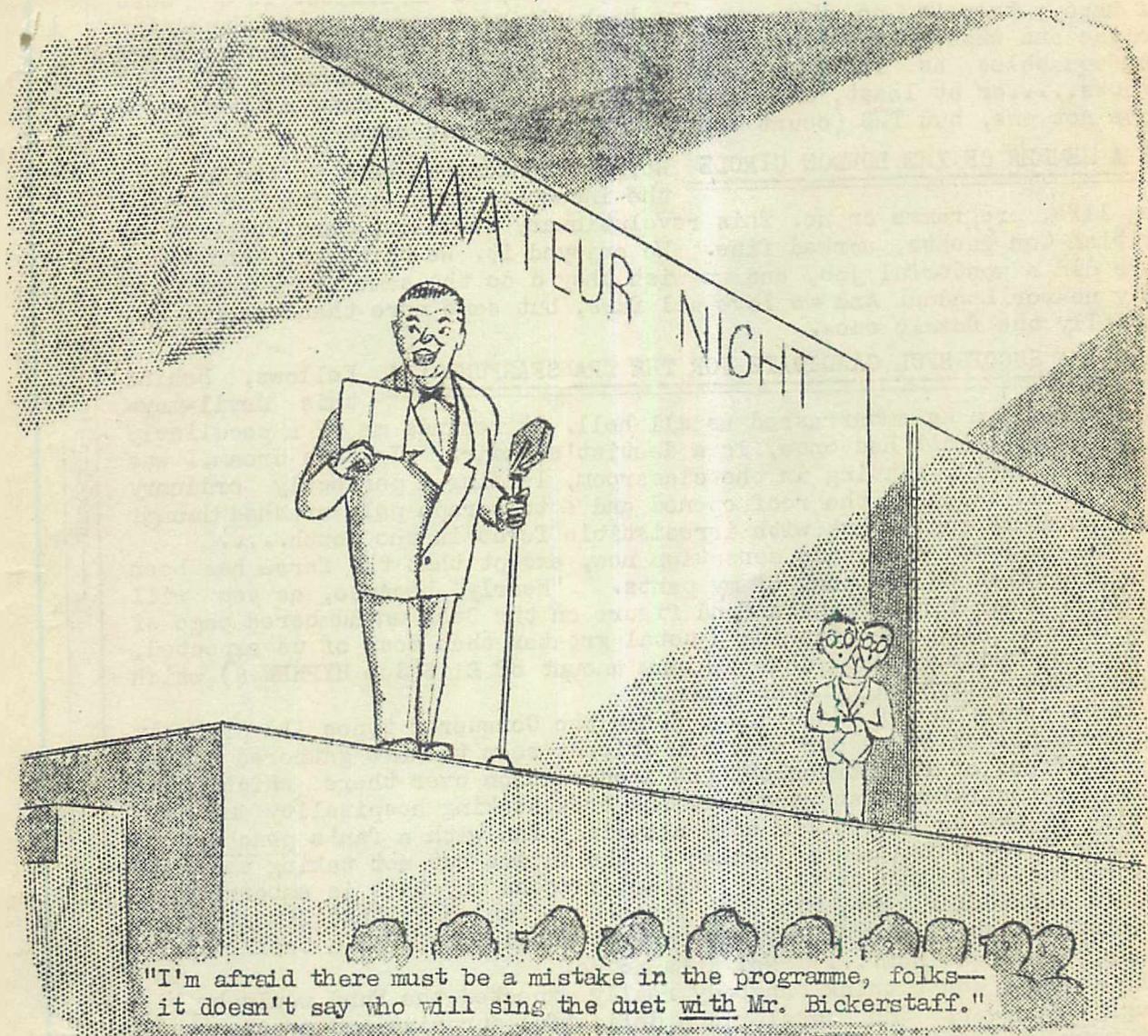


HYPERHEN

No. 9

July

1954



BRITISH ORIGINAL
EDITION

INCLUDING SUPERMAN CONOTES

THREE-SIDED ANGLE

Ving
Clarke

AS AN EDITOR OF HYPHEN Willis having stopped playing with his balls and rackets long enough to write a ManCon Report --- affectionately known in Welling-Rainham fan circles as The Apocalypse--- Chuck Harris and myself proudly present HYPHENs 9 and 9 $\frac{1}{2}$. Harris editorialised the issue, leaving me nothing to do but the easy jobs of mimeo-cranking, cutting the art-work (except for the cover) and filling this.

Power-mad, I immediately wrote a longer Con report than both of them combined. Looking at it in cold print, it's full of faults. It's sort of happy; there's no Message, no back-biting (except at the Manounian police and whoever holds processions on wet Monday mornings), no treating fan squabbles as if they represent the End of the Universe, no snide cracks....or at least, not many. But for anyone who wants a Message, I have not one, but TWO (count them ~~1~~ TWO!) laid on:

AS A MEMBER OF THE LONDON CIRCLE We, the Londoners, went to the Con with the intention of having fun and enjoying life, programme or no. This revolutionary technique, entirely new to British Con guests, worked fine. We enjoyed it. We think the Manchester boys did a wonderful job, and we wish they'd do the same every year.... only nearer London. And we love all fans, but some more than others. Especially the female ones.

and AS A SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE FOR THE TRANSFANFUND '54 Fellows, behind this devil-may-care smile I'm as embarrassed as all hell. It reminds me of a peculiarly vivid dream that I had once, in a dentist's chair. In this dream, I was at school again, sitting in the classroom, leading a perfectly ordinary life...and suddenly the roof opened and a telegraph pole crashed through and pushed me gently but with irresistible force in the mouth....

I've almost the same sensation now, except that the force has been nearly applied to the seat of my pants. "Nearly" because, as you will see from the final TransFanFund figure on the 8th. un-numbered page of this HYPHEN, although reaching a total greater than most of us expected, it has not quite reached that minimum amount of £115 (See HYPHEN 8) which would leave everything on the green.

If I were one of those happy Conan the Conqueror types I'd probably take a chance on it -- our American friends seem to have gathered a number of offers of free transport and accomodation over there which, once again, demonstrates that wonderful and breathtaking hospitality and generosity of theirs -- but I'm only a typical fan with a fan's penchant for The Long View--which means looking to the future but not taking unplanned action. Also, I've two or three personal reasons why this is embarrassing at this particular time, the most pregnant of which is that I'm at present minus a job. In ordinary circumstances this would be a trifle light as air, but right now... No, it's no go.

However, I don't think anybody really expected the Fund would be big enough this year; the total is a delightful surprise and means that, next year, the Atlantic crossing by someone in fandom is a certainty.

Leaving aside my own personal feelings at the honour done to me, I'd like to say that this gesture by fans on both sides of the Pond is one of the most wonderful things I've ever encountered, and demonstrates far more than words our essential unity; unseparated by distance or time or difference of personality, there's a non-verbal, undefinable bond which links us and makes up this thing called Fandom. I don't know what it is...but I'm glad I belong to it. Thank you, everyone. Ving

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THE

SUPERMANCON REPORT

M A G A N I F I C E N T

FLOP

walt willis

The sun was shining on Manchester when Irish Fandom arrived. Before we could explain to the bewildered inhabitants what it was, we were met by Fred Robinson and Terry Jeeves, plenipotentiaries for Eric Bentcliffe, and escorted to the hotel. After everyone has fed their sensitive famish faces we drifted along to the Convention Hall to make sure that everything was all right. It was...the public address system had just broken down. Pleased to see that all was proceeding on traditional lines we drifted out again and mounted guard on the front steps to look out for the motorised convoy of Londoners. After an hour or so the others--fake fans all--got tired of waiting and deserted their posts. I held my ground steadfastly, scanning the horizon with keen eyes and directing other strangers to Manchester to various places, and was eventually rewarded by the sight of a London taxicab tearing past loaded to the gunwales (the zapgunwales) with fans, the top layer consisting largely of Walter Gillings wearing a tropical pith helmet with a home-made aluminium propellor on top. My opinion of Gillings soared.

I waved and shouted at the taxi and it drew up at the next corner and began to discharge an apparently inexhaustible supply of fans. I welcomed them to Manchester and helped them in with their luggage. I got no tip, except that Bert Campbell's motorbike had broken down outside Rugby and nothing had been heard of him since. This was so completely what might have been expected that nobody believed it for quite a while, and the Northerners obviously expected Bert to materialise in their midst at any moment. I think it was this, and not the official programme, which was responsible for the general air of expectancy throughout the Convention that any moment something might happen.

At precisely 11.30 I went along to the Convention Hall to see if the Londoners would carry out their secret plan to draw attention to the official starting time with a rocket take-off count. Judge of my horror to find some brash Northern nofan called Harry Turner getting up to declare the Convention open and calling for witnesses that it had started on time. Some of the older fans would have collapsed from shock at this unheard-of breach of hallowed tradition, had not Dave Cohen swiftly restored an atmosphere of security with a few ritual apologies and by failing to introduce half the notables present.

One of the apologies was that because of the failure of the public address system it was not going to be possible to start the proceedings with a rocket take-off count as the Manchester Group had planned.

After this the lunch break was declared. When we got back we were told that the Convention Hall had been moved from the First Floor to the Ground Floor. I assumed at first that the Manager had been warned about sf conventions and had decided to move the Hall down a floor before this took place in the normal course of events, but in fact it turned out that his ignorance of Conventions was so blissful that he was only worried about his newly decorated walls being disfigured with cellotaped notices. He didn't seem to realise how lucky he was he still had walls. At any previous Convention the notices would have been fixed on with thumbtacks, nails or even daggers.

However the gentlemanly Manchester fans had spent the entire lunch break moving everything from one hall to another, and were still running around in little circles uttering plaintive cries. My heart bled for them, and for future Convention Committees. This was another Mancon 'first'. Many terrible things have happened to Convention Committees, but having to move to another Hall in the middle of the Convention is a new and ghastly weapon in the armoury of Fate.

I have already reserved my right to drop in the gutter on Monday. --Dave Keenan

Among the exhibits now on display was a fullsize water-closet marked "Vargo Statten" and a roll of toilet paper with the same marking fixed to a placard reading "Cause & Cure." I took this to be another courteous London Circle gesture to the Guest of Honour on the lines of the "International Fantasy Award" they'd proposed to give him---a tiny gallows--but they and everyone else I asked disclaimed responsibility. I'd like to have been there when Vargo saw it--I wonder if he'd have been flushed.

After some more apologies, including one for the number of apologies, the afternoon sessions started a mere 55 minutes late. The first item was billed as 'a talk on radio-activity by Frank Simpson'. Most of us owe Frank an apology for not realising this was a sublimated thiotimeline type of hoax, but there was an excuse. The first stages of a Convention--in fact probably any stage of a Convention--is not the proper atmosphere for this rarified type of humour. Poor Frank lost most of his audience during his deadpan introduction, while he was still waxing enthusiastic about the table of elements. Norman Wansborough walked out in disgust, but the restiveness of the others manifested itself in another Mancon 'first'---the passing of notes among the audience containing interlineation-type quotes and comments. I'm not sure whether it was Ken Potter or myself who started this, but the inspiration was probably Ving Clarke's 'quotecards'---small pieces of pasteboard bearing fannish messages which circulated all during the Convention. There were a thousand of them, with 100 different messages. Later Chuck Harris took to handing them gravely to passers-by in the street, sometimes with a muttered "Ghod bless you, Sir" and sometimes with a glance up and down the street and a finger pressed to the mouth. The rest of us lagged behind watching the victim's reaction to such items of information as "I HAD A POCTSARCD FROM GHOD THIS MORNING--Hypher or "BLOODY PROVINCIALS". While we were walking around the square one evening he gave one to an old man sitting on some steps and the expression on the recipient's face was so peculiar that we had to run after Chuck and find out what the card had said. It had been "DEFY THE DEROES WITH DIANETICS --Redd Boggs." Another made a wonderfully appropriate appearance at the Chinese restaurant where we had lunch, just as our orders had arrived and we were staring at them in a wild surmise. It was "IF YOU DON'T WANT CROTTLED GREEPS, WHAT DID YOU ORDER THEM FOR? --Filler." we left this one tucked inside the cellophane cover of the menu.

After a monologue by Geoff Lewis which went over very well in parts (the parts nearest the speaker) we had the Medway Group's offering. It suffered not only from the continued defection of the public address system but from the fact that the script and timing weren't adequately adapted to the slower reaction time of a large audience. As last year Tony Thorne was reduced to asking ruefully "Did anyone see that gag?" and it was no comfort to be interrupted two minutes later by a dazed shout of "My Ghod, I've seen it!" The slight diffidence of the actors, though disarming, didn't help either. Apparently to be funny in public you must above all have authority. Alistair Paterson for instance, who came next, made some of the feeblest jokes it has ever been my misfortune to be exposed to, but he produced them with such confidence that the audience was confidence-tricked into laughing.

He also made some good ones, like "I had some notes but I lost them, so I'll just have to B Natural" (this fell rather flat) and "The Vargo Statten Mag has a circulation of over 50000; if you don't believe me I can show you the cancellations." And on the pocketbook situation, "Some of them are incredibly bad; perhaps the ones I don't publish aren't any better."

After this, a day early and put on without announcement so that I hadn't time to escape, came the play I had written; brilliantly performed on tape by the Liverpool Group, who also deserve credit for the parody of US commercial radio inserted in the middle. This playlet seems to have become a yearly chore of mine, and it's a very welcome one--I can now refuse to make speeches with a clear conscience. I made up my mind a couple of years ago that I'd never speak at a Convention again--there's no point in trying to change one's psychological make-up at my time of life, and I don't see any

"Bitten any good backs lately?"
--Fred Smith

other reason why I should force myself to do something I dislike so much. I did it at Chicago and Los Angeles, where it was necessary, but that experience didn't make me like it any better. Any more than being successfully buried alive is a cure for claustrophobia.

Later there was a curious interlude when Cohen announced that the London Circle was now going to demonstrate how to put on a Convention. Nothing happened for a very long time and eventually most people got up and went out or stood around talking. Finally Ken Bulmer went to the microphone and announced calmly that "The London Circle, having thoroughly organised this Convention, now hand over to the Manchester Group." I didn't know quite what to make of this...whether it was deliberate sabotage or a piece of London Circle self-criticism.

The talk at tea-time was all about the startling news that the film show that evening was to be Things To Come—NOT Metropolis. Shocked murmurings were heard when the announcement was made. Small indignation meetings were held. Neofans staggered about, white and trembling, their world crashing to ruins about their ears. Old fans shook their heads forebodingly. No good would come from this mad craze for novelty. A Convention without Metropolis! It was unthinkable. As Rick Dalton was heard to complain, "It should at least appear on the programme!"

But there was even worse to come. No one discovered that the show was illegal under a twenty-year-old statute, the films arrived safely, on time, and wound the right way, no one ran around asking the audience if anyone had a 35mm projector, the projector did not break down, the film was not put on backwards, or even upside down. In fact the whole showing went off without a single hitch. It was terrifying, like the end of the world.

Unable to stand the strain, many people went upstairs to parties. The London Circle had one for which the admission charge was ten shillings, but the passports you got for this were the best thing about it. There was nothing that you couldn't see at the seaside for free with a pair of binoculars. I thought of making love to my own wife, but I was afraid the London Circle might be shocked, so we went upstairs to the Liverpool party. Someone there had taken to heart the maxim that the recipe for a successful party is too many people in too small a room. It was the Black Hole of Calcutta..with zap guns. It was a wonderful party though, especially after John Roles and others had run amok with soda syphons and schwepped half of the people out. Sometime previous to this we'd gone down to have another look at the London Circle, but we still had the feeling we should have brought a portable keyhole with us to watch them through. Besides the party was supposed to be exclusive, but Burgess had been issued with a passport and Ken Potter had been turned away. We felt we were in the wrong place and went back to the more congenial Liverpool gathering until it was broken up by the night porter.

Many interesting incidents occurred that night which I cannot report here because of my innate sense of decency and my respect for the English libel laws. I'll report them in Opsla instead. But I would mention the interesting affair of Burgess's entrails. These were several pounds of assorted livers, lights and other internal organs which Burgess had bought in London slightly too long ago, brought to the Convention, and deposited in Peter Hamilton's room for safe keeping. Unfortunately he had omitted to tell the occupant of the room about them and when Peter Hamilton found them he thoughtlessly threw them out of the window into the canal. Burgess came around later to collect them and was highly indignant at Peter for putting out his lights. He explained that he had intended to put them in Norman Shorrocks's bed. I am sorry to say however that this eminently reasonable explanation was not in accordance with the facts. Actually the entrails were part of the props for a highly secret item the London Circle proposed to put on tomorrow—a fake human sacrifice to culminate in Ted Tubb throwing entrails among the audience; just another of the wonderful London Circle ideas which when the time came they found they hadn't the guts to put on.

"I'm writing everyone to tell them I'm not a member of the London Circle."

Next day, Sunday, everyone was awakened at some godly hour by an unearthly din from the bells of the cathedral across the road. Indignation was widespread, and Vinç Clarke was heard to complain "Can't these bloody Mancunians afford alarm clocks?" It was a Good Thing that the parties had been broken up fairly early in the morning, because it meant there was still some fight left in the conventioners. I came in towards the end of the fmz session to be told by George Charters that someone had objected to reprints of my stuff because it would discourage young fan writers. I made a grateful note of this argument to use against faneds who ask me for original material, but honestly, you young fans, don't let my example discourage you. I was like this even before I started fan writing.

After this came John Gunn, who went off quite well, and then John Russell Vargo Stat-ten Fearn, whom George Charters had referred to as the Jest of Honour. He was interesting mainly because he was so disarmingly frank---but then he has so much to be frank about.

After this Ted Tubb began to take over the Convention. Little more was seen of the Convention Committee, and nothing of 11 of the 22 items listed on the official programme. Instead Tubb reigned supreme, first ad libbing his way through the remnants of Terry Jeeves' script for the mock trial of Bert Campbell---with goodhumoured and often brilliant co-operation from Terry himself, who struck me as one of the nicest people there---and then winding up the Convention with a riotous series of monologues and interviews, including one with Norman Wansborough. Tubb was wonderful. It seems to me it would be worth the while of any Convention Committee to hire Ted Tubb along with the hell.

Among this glorious melange of Tubb-foolery there occurred one of the most extraordinary events I've ever known happen at a Convention. No one, it transpired, had the slightest intention of bidding for the next Convention site and it began to look very much as if the Supermancon would adjourn without anything having been decided. Tubb fixed that. In the space of about thirty seconds he called for nominations, heard none, announced that the next Convention would be held in London, and appointed Shirley Marriot to take subscriptions. All this, apparently, quite on his own initiative. However, the London Circle appeared to accept it as their destiny.

People had started to leave for trains quite early in the evening, and the usual post mortem had started long before the Convention was scheduled to end. Dave Cohen and Eric Needham stood by the door with distraught faces and courageously asked representative fans what they had thought of the Convention. There was a startling unanimity in the replies. Every one that I heard was to the effect that the official programme had been a fiasco, but that they, personally, had enjoyed the Convention.

That was what I had thought too, but there seemed to me to be more to it than that. Usually I don't express any opinion about the merits of Conventions because whether one enjoys it or not depends so largely on one's own subjective impressions, but the Supermancon was such an extraordinary affair that I find myself getting all philosophical about it.

For instance, take the situation in British fandom just before it. Bitterness between one group of Northerners and another, hostility between both groups and the Londoners, tension between Hamilton and the London pro-editors, the Londoners full of diabolical plans to sabotage the Convention, the Northerners under a desperate compulsion to justify their contempt for London inefficiency. All this amid the greatest burst of British fanactivity since 1938. It seemed to be an explosive situation, one that would wreck British fandom. All the disenchantment, recriminations and bitterness which normally follow conventions would be magnified to cataclysmic proportions.

But instead the incredible happened. The opposing stresses met, surged briefly and silently...and dissipated themselves in an atmosphere of good humour. The Supermancon seems actually to have strengthened fandom, a thing which no Convention has ever done before.

Why do you think wrote the Programme---God?

Apparently the Supermancon Committee wrought this fannish miracle by staging the worst organised Convention fandom has yet seen. You can almost see a mystical symbolism in what happened. It was as if all the sins of British fandom—the smugness of the North, the malice of the South, the snobbery of the Old Guard—as if they were all expiated by the Supermancon Committee as they crucified themselves in the Grosvenor Hotel. The point was that they bore their agony in such a way as to demonstrate the inherent goodness of fan. If they had showed signs of bitterness or pomposity in their ordeal things might have been very different. Instead they met every disaster with such informality and good humour that they won people's sympathy. In face of this sporting attitude the London Circle (though admittedly things might have been different if Bert Campbell had arrived on schedule) dropped their plans for sabotage. Not one of the fiendish plots hatched over the last nine months in Operation Armageddon was put into effect. The official programme was allowed to die peacefully by mutual consent.

It was the way it died that was important. Last year in London it lingered on in agony. People sat around, bored and irritated, waiting for life to be pronounced extinct. This year people realised at quite an early stage that the official programme was already part of the pavement of Hell, and it was at this point in time that the British Convention completed the transition that had begun last year in the Bonnington. As I pointed out in 'Initiative Inc' two years ago, American fans have long been accustomed to regarding the official programme as a sort of running buffet. But such was the force of tradition that English fans, as long as an official programme existed, would have felt compelled to sit around and watch it. When the official programme collapsed at Manchester, British fans were forced into the American style of Convention. They took to it like a duck to water, and I don't think we'll ever see the old 'desultory lecture sessions' type of convention in Britain again.

The Supermancon Committee deserve credit for other things than committing suicide. They booked an almost ideal hotel—not too respectable, only slightly too big, and above all with plenty of lounges where people could talk, in a sort of perpetual party. The Liverpool Group also deserve a bouquet for their tour de force in booking a lounge for a latenight party—a completely new development in convention techniques. But the very success of the Supermancon as a social event poses, it seems to me, a new problem for British Convention organisers. If everyone is enjoying themselves the way they learned to do at the Mancon, who's going to put on the official programme? The Supermancon will go down in fan history as a success only because all the reports will be written by actifans. What about the neofen who turned up to see the sort of thing that was advertised in the promags and went away disgusted? Either we're going to have two Conventions, one for ourselves and one for the public, or we've got to let the pros take over the official programme, and run it as a commercial proposition.

There were some things I wanted to quote earlier, but decided to leave until I saw how much space I had left. Mostly about this question of post-Mancon goodwill. I don't think this is just a personal impression. Take for instance the opening of a letter I got from Mike Wallace: "Having arrived home from the Con in one piece, I now feel very famish and also somewhat lonely...As the Supermancon was the first Con I've been to I can't comment on it very much as I have no standard of comparison. But on the whole I think it was a good effort. I enjoyed myself anyway. I think a Convention is better if it's not organised too much..." That doesn't sound like the usual post-convention gafia and disenchantment. Or take the reports in BEM 2 (incidentally some of the best conreporting ever done) by Ashworth and White, fans who were also attending their first Convention and not only enjoyed it but were keen enough afterwards to publish their reports within 48 hours.

The reason for all this is I think startlingly simple. Fans are nice people. Old staggers like me have become so accustomed to hearing fans described (by other fans)

"Some of the things people say are like throwing a viri in your face." -JMG

as misfits, slobs and crackpots, that we have subconsciously come to half-believe it. But it certainly wasn't true of the people one met at the Supercon. At least for me it was a weekend of pleasant surprises...not only people I was meeting for the first time like Mal Ashworth and Tom and Betty White, but people I'd been judging..or misjudging..only from brief encounters at previous conventions, like the Liverpool and Manchester fans. And here's another letter I got soon after the Convention:

"..the hell with that letter of mine to you a while ago which got into Hyphen. I seem to recall arguing in it that the divorcing of sf and fandom was a Bad Thing. Well, I was nuts. Sf is a good excuse and that's all. I've seen the light, I'm saved--and that I mean almost literally... This weekend reminded me of what I'd forgotten--that there are people in the world who are sane enough to be crazy. I let go--I forgot about what the hell people could think and say and do to me, and I feel so much better I could cry, except that I don't want to rust the typer. I wish to God I could find the time and the money to get right up to the neck in fandom and then duck my head. It's like finding a friend after hating the world for twenty years; it just feels right---and it took this weekend to wake me up to it.

..Nowhere barring fandom is there a place where I believe I can be me. I think I ought to fit after all, despite everything; I think I've been trying to exist in my intellect too long--intellect is the wrong ward, but you catch on---and it can't be done. Next January I get out of this insane ratrace of the RAF, and then I'm going to spend a year at home writing---if I make £500 out of it in that year I shall go on---and fanning. I like fans. I feel that for too long I've been trying to live at an intellectual level way beyond my years because at first, especially at school, I was beyond my age group. But that's bound to be a pretence any way you look at it. I'm tired of it, and I know it, and I think that at long last I may really be starting to grow up.

Congratulate me on my first birthday."

A lot of people are going to be surprised to hear that the writer of that letter was John Brunner. I hope John doesn't mind me quoting from it, but I don't think it can do anything but improve people's opinion of him.

| THE TRANSFANFUND | |
|---|-----------|
| State of the Fund at 8/6/54 | |
| Carried over..... | £44: 0: 0 |
| N. Shorrocks..... | 3: 0 |
| Peter Hamilton..... | 1: 1: 0 |
| Stuart Mackenzie..... | 10: 0 |
| Fred Robinson..... | 10: 0 |
| Tony Thorne..... | 10: 0 |
| Mancon Ballot Wimer. | 10: 0 |
| Mancon auction..... | 1:17: 6 |
| Ted Tubb..... | 1:12: 6 |
| Paul Enever..... | 1: 0: 0 |
| Mancon collecting box | 3: 5: 2 |
| Mancon brantub..... | 1: 4: 9 |
| Liverpool femfans.... | 5: 0 |
| Ballot tickets..... | 7: 0: 0 |
| Total (sterling) | £63: 8:11 |
| By Don Ford..... | £31: 7: 0 |
| GRAND TOTAL | £94:15:11 |
| Grateful acknowledgements to Norman Shorrocks for donations to auction and to unknown winner of Mancon 10/- raffle. | |

There were several other things I wanted to print but I'm running short of space. Chuck Harris and Vinç Clarke, who are editing and publishing this issue, left a six-page hole for my bit and I daren't upset their pagination. The rest of this issue is all their own work and I accept no responsibility/credit for it. Any opinions expressed in it are their own, which is, when you come to think of it, more than can be said for Pogo comics has folded. // Did you notice how at the Mancon the incidence of pretty girls was far higher than you would expect from the law of averages? // Mike Rosenblum's FUTURLIAN is taking over the backlog and subscription list of FANTASY COMMENTATOR. // Derek Pickles told me at the Mancon that he has been invited to do a fan column for the BRE GALAXY. //

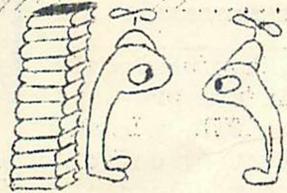
//Michael Jenkinson, 20 Range Green, Tipner, Portsmouth, Hants., England, is willing to comment on any US fanz sent him. //Dave Cohen reported to have joined the Liverpool Group. // Stuart Mackenzie, ex-editor of Space Times, said to be holding on to the ST duplicator against monies owed him. //Supermancon reported to have been financial success.

the only call it got the fanzine that tastes every salt. --Vinç Clarke

WITH BOTTLE & PENCIL THRU

THE CONVENTION BY

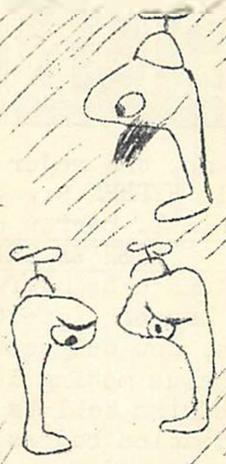
Pete Doyle



"-- I FOUND OUT I WAS BIDDING AGAINST MYSELF!"

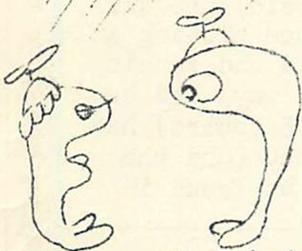


"WELL DON'T LET ON YOU KNOW, BUT LONDON SEEMS TO HAVE PUT THIS CON ON FOR A JOKE!!"

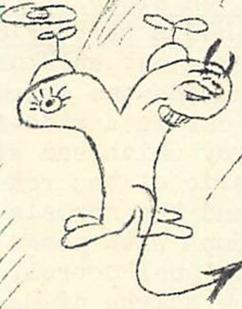


NO 'METROPOLIS'

WELL - I DON'T KNOW ABOUT JOHN GUNN, BUT I'VE BEEN DOING MAGIC WITH BOTTLES ALL WEEK-END!



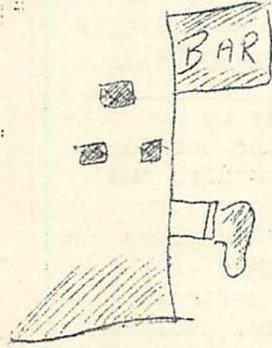
YES - FANARTISTS HAVE BEEN FORCED TO DIFFERENTIATE BETWEEN MALEFEN & FEMMEFEN



"AND WANSBURY CAME TOO ..."

"YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE SPUN IT SO HARD ..."

OH YES, TUBB WAS THERE, TOO



POTTER

"NEVER MIND PICKING ME UP - I CAN STILL DRINK COMFORTABLY!"

"WHEN DOES THAT DAMNED TOILET OPEN ANYWAY?"

GRUNCH

vint clarke

GOES TO A CONVENTION

To me, the major feature of the SUPERMANCON was its likeness to the DASHCON REPORT in HYPHEN 8....talk about nature imitating art....so with a bow to Mal Ashworth I'll borrow a thread or two and maybe even some phrases.....

WHEN WE GET THERE, BE KIND TO OUR WEB-FOOTED FRIENDS

It was a beautiful Whitsun evening when I went for the train, but that only made it worse. I felt lousy. I'd had a total of 15 hours sleep in the previous 3 nights, not only getting ready for the Con but helping to produce EYE, a London Circle 'zine making its first appearance there, and I couldn't get at my caffeine and ephedrine tablets because they were at the bottom of my bag under a load of identification badges, balloons, fumigating tablets, zappguns, sun-glasses, quote-cards, and ghod knows what. I had to run the last 200 yards up the station slope because the fuggheads controlling the railway hadn't bothered to put down the signal to show that a train was due, and when I collapsed into a seat the eyes of everyone in the carriage shot from me to the communication cord. I sneered at them and went to sleep.

IF ANYONE BRINGS A WATER-PISTOL THEY'LL GET A VERY BAD REVIEW IN AUTHENTIC (HJC)

I staggered out at Charing Cross, sleep-walked to Stu Mackenzie's flat where the fannish armada was assembling. Sixteen hours later I staggered out of the Buckmaster's car in a side-street by the Grosvenor Hotel in Manchester. Of the original convoy which had started from the flat at 12.30am, Bert Campbell had been left by the side of the road at 4 o'clock with a seized-up motor-cycle, the taxi, with 6 fans and two normals and most of the luggage on board had been hitting an average of 45mph with peaks of 60mph -- it was at least 20 years old and running on lower power'pool'petrol, the Tubb car (with 4 aboard most of the way) had been lost on the outskirts of Manchester, and the Buckmaster car (4 or 5 aboard) had stopped to replace an engine gasket. The account of that epic journey (and the trip back) which ranks with the voyage of the FooFoo Special, will be found in the second EYE...I'm damned if I want to mentally re-live it twice.

THAT'S TED'S CAR -- I RECOGNISE THE EYES IN THE BACK

Fans were pouring out of the hotel. We had a sudden wild hope that the Con. might have been cancelled and we could catch up on some sleep, but it turned out to be the lunch interval. We spoke to one eight-year old neo-fan who was clutching a pile of 'zines; he said the Con had been jolly good so far. We dragged our way into the hotel and figured that the prices they were charging must be for looking the other way at the right moments. I did get a double-room at a single price because they'd run out of the latter, though. Twin beds, unfortunately.

WELL, WE COULD ALL ENTER THE HALL ON ROLLER-SKATES

No one led me to my room, so I didn't have to disappoint anybody by not tipping them. I looked at the beds, but some fugghead shrieked along the corridor about "We'll meet for dinner in 10 minutes", so I tottered down the stairs and found the bar. Clutching a beautifully cold glass I spoke to three fans I knew and two I'd only met at Conventions, but before I could even finish the glass the hotel manager or somebody came up and asked us if we'd change the venue of the Con to another room. He couldn't find any of the Committee. Six months before, this would have been a London Circle dream come true; the Manchester group, madly intent on getting the Con themselves in spite of our warnings, had so disparaged London that we'd set up OPERATION ARIAGEDDON, "a plan for brightening up the Mancon without the aid of the Mancon Committee." We'd been so sure that they'd have a too carefully organised fuggheaded s & c programme that we'd thought up a succession of glorious ideas; these ranged from...well, (6c) hektographing a messy and cornily humorous programme and distributing it in the name of the Con Committee a couple of months before the actual date, then following it up a week later with a coldly indignant well-mimeod leaflet castigating the previous one and setting forth

"Oh ghod...Rick Snear's photos in a taxi-cab in Manchester!"

an utterly boring programme that would have disgusted even our hypothetical Northerners -- also, of course, with the Manccon Committee imprint...from this to...well, (23a), getting a large ball of string and in the middle of a sericon talk to go around measuring lengths. Not anything specific -- just lengths. ("We must get our reports accurate.") This finally involving encircling the audience half-a-dozen times.....

THE IDEAL CON BREAKS DOWN AT 11.30 ON THE FIRST DAY

We were going to be sure that everyone had fun...except, perhaps, the Committee. But as time went on, the Mancounians were so obviously disintegrating under the strain ("You mean Bentcliffe has resigned already?"), that we threw out the pre-con ideas and just waited on the actual event. Being asked to change the venue within 10 minutes of arriving at the place was so outrageous -- if the Manchester boys had come in during it they'd never have believed us and there would have been a pitched battle -- that we just clutched our glasses tighter and indicated that we 'no speakeee Mancounian'. The manager went off, looking bewildered. It was good practice for him, seeing what was coming later.

THIS SUN SHINING OUTSIDE MAKES ME FEEL UNEASY

I couldn't even finish the drink in peace. I got involved with Walt Gillings, Ken Bulmer and a couple of current pro-eds in a discussion about some uninteresting damthing like 'science-fiction - whither', or 'science-fiction--how much?'. I forget, because James White and Bob Shaw drifted into the lounge and sat there gaping at me, so I excused myself by saying I only wrote for tru-fanzines and the slicks and lurched across to them. They said someone was looking for me, but it was only Walt or Chuck, so I left them the glass and went to dinner with someone --oh yes, it was Ken and Pam Bulmer, because I romomber Pam saying she'd laddored her nylons seven times already and I thought this was fast going oven for a convention, but anyway we went to dinner and the waitress gave us a dirty look --Manchestor had so many of them to give away-- but we left her a good tip -- a quotecard under the plate reading THE POO IS NIGHTIER THAN THE YOBBER -- and went back to the Grosvenor.

PERSONALLY, I THINK HE'S GOT MENTAL DIARRHOEA

They were holding a meeting of some sort in one of the large rooms...there was a voice reciting chemical formulae, so I went up to my room and had a wash and came down to find the bar had closed. I don't know what the hell sort of a Convention those people thought they were running, closing bars like that, but I sat down in the lounge away from the yalcking in the hall and started listening to a neo-faned who wanted something -- I'm not saying what -- and then the doors of the hall burst open and a 7th fandomor bounded out crying "The London Circle have taken over the Convention! The London Circle have taken over the Convention!" and as this was way ahead of schedule I went inside the hall (for the first time) and found the boys doing something wild and extempore on the platform...I think they were advocating holding future Conventions in places beginning with 'B' because it was also the initial of Bhoer...but the absence of Bert Campbell stood out like a grunch in an eggplant patch and I started worrying about him again. He should have hitch-hiked in by that time. The Mancounians didn't believe anything had happened to him and they had worries of their own anyway, so I hung around and actually laughed at the Willis-scripted Liverpool group play and then went down to the local police station with Ken and Pam.

I THINK THEY ONLY HOLD CONVENTIONS TO GET QUOTES FOR FAN-MAGS

I told a cynical-looking cop how we'd set off in convoy, and the convoy had got separated, and how the motor-cycle on which I'd been riding pillion had siezed up and how I'd gone ahead to catch up the rest and get help and how I'd caught up the Buckmasters but couldn't get help..or at least, until it was a virtual catainty that Bert would have got tired of waiting and gone off himself, and how we hadn't heard from him and were worried. When the bastard started believing me, he lost interest. Bearded AUTHENTIC editors might have been scattered all over the country -- he and his fellows wouldn't have turned a hair. I asked if they'd phone through to the nearest police-station to where we'd left Bert, and he asked

"Talk about Alcoholics Anonymous... I was so anonymous I couldn't remember my own name" Norman

me where wo'd left Bert again and when I told him he winced. I could see the thoughts behind his boofy face; trouble over a non-Manxunian --and make a long distance phone-call at that! Who did I think he was...a servant of the public or something? He suggested that we make the phone call. We left,

THE MANCON SEEMS TO BE NOTHING EXCEPT A SUCCESSION OF UNCONVENTIONAL INCONVENIENCES

Back at the Grosvenor there was no word from Bert and only a rabble in the hall. We thought that the Con might have finished early...after all, the Willis script had been scheduled for Sunday evening and running through a 2 day programme in 4 hours would have demonstrated they wore on the ball, but it turned out to be the tea interval, so we joined 15 or so fans at the local Lyons teashop. I had some tea that was so strong the caffeine-and-ephedrine tablet floated on top, and we agreed that the afternoon's programme had been lousy. This tea-party was one of those wonderful things that can't be put down on paper, tho' maybe as most of the London Circleites had been over 30 hours without sleep it was just hystoria.

THE PROGRAMME'S THREE PERIODS BEHIND--IT MUST BE PREGNANT

Back at the Grosvenor again, I met Dr. Paul Hammett of Malta...you may recall that he searched the Maltose newsstands for SLANT...and when I told him whom I was he looked slightly puzzled and then said "OH YES, DIDN'T I SEE YOUR WORK IN SLANT?", and someone behind me said THERE IS ONLY ONE CRUD AND AMAZING IS HIS PROPHECY and a voice from a London group said IF IT WASN'T FOR ALL THESE BLOODY PROVINCIALS THIS WOULD BE A GOOD CONVENTION, so I went upstairs for a notebook as I was running out of the backs of old envelopes, and when I came down again walked out of the hotel and put in a trunk-call to the near-Bert police-station and they didn't know anything about him or his bike and weren't really interested.

THE BEST THING ABOUT THIS CONVENTION IS THAT DEREK PICKLES HASN'T ARRIVED YET

A London Group was, as usual, on the platform when I got back again, in a skit on preparing for a Convention. That was the outward design, anyway, but our idea had been to elevate it into a huge religious revival for GHU, with Bert and Ted Tubb leading the con into a mass outburst of Extasy (spelt like that), Brian Burgess to be sacrificed, and a few personable virgins from the audience to be invited up to do something or other....I forget what, but it involved the gradual disappearance of the LC and the virgins back to the hotel rooms. Owing to the non-appearance of Bert, the fact that the incense would have been too overpowering in the small hall and various other reasons, but mostly worry over Bert, this item was cut very short. Everyone drifted from the stage and went to the rear of the hall to make bets as to how long the audience would sit and wait. After a time people were chatting quite freely to each other and a suitable atmosphere of camaraderie had been established, and we handed the Convention back to the Committee again. They refused to take the hint, though, and the programme went on. However, the next item was the auction, conducted by Ted Tubb, and as everyone knows, an auction conducted by Tubb is an artistic experience. Walt left me to make notes....

TED'S GHODS ARE FOLDING ONES

Ted waved the audience to silence, solemnly opened the first magazine, nodded approvingly at it, shut it, and holding it out to the fascinated public said "IF YOU'RE RUPTURED BY A TRUSS....."

The next remark I heard above the shrieking was LET'S RUIN THE MANCON, SHALL WE? and after that TURGID TALES OF HUMAN EMOTIONS WHICH I DARE NOT PUT INTO WORDS....I SHAN'T COME HERE AGAIN IF YOU DON'T MAKE A BID....'AND SEARCHING MIND'--THAT'S WHAT I'VE GOT--HANDS, TOO....I'M FRYING IN ALL THESE CLOTHES; JUST KEEP BIDDING SLOWLY WHILE I STRIP; CHARLES ATLAS GAVE ME THIS BODY..... FOUR ISSUES, EACH VIBRANT WITH CLEAN, HUMAN EMOTION--THE LASH OF THE WHIP ECHOES IN EVERY PAGE--LOOK AT IT!--THAT'S DRIBBLE, THAT IS--MAKE YOUR BIDS BY SIGNAL IF YOU DON'T WANT YOUR WIVES TO KNOW....A BEAUTIFUL MAG, TATTERED WITH MUCH READING.....YOU TAKE THIS ONE AND YOU HAVE HALF A COMPLETE COLLECTION....YOUR GENEROSITY IS SICKENING ME....GENUINELY MOUSE-CHAWED....AN INTERVAL SIR WHILE YOU TAKE THAT SHOE OFF, TAKE THAT SOCK OFF, AND PEEL THAT POUND NOTE OFF THE LINING....BUY THE

Do you really expect another quote on a page like this?

MIDDLE ISSUES THEN BLACKMAIL HIM TO THE LAST PENNY... YOU KNOW WHAT DE CAMP'S IDEA OF HUMOUR IS---THE HERO GETS KNOCKED DOWN THEN TRAMPLED TO DEATH BY AN ELEPHANT...of a semi-nude cover: 'FATE'--I WISH IT WAS...WHY WASTE YOUR MONEY ON BEER WHEN YOU CAN BUY BOOKS?...to Londoner Jim Ratigan in the audience: LOOK, CLOTTY, ON THE SECOND BID SAY TWO SHILLINGS IN FUTURE--I DIDN'T PUT YOU IN THE AUDIENCE FOR FUN....to the dark and beautiful Frances Evans who was helping him: TAKE THIS, FRANCES, YOU BEAUTIFUL HOARY--H-O-U-R-I.....
YOU'VE HEARD HOW SLAINT WAS BURNT IN BELFAST,....?

There's nothing I can say about Ted's genius at an auction that hasn't been said before. I can only say I enlisted Pem's help half-way through to jot down some Tubbisms in shorthand, but at the time of writing they're undecipherable...she was laughing too much.

YES, BUT LOOK AT IT--A CIRCULATION OF THREE

After the auction they prepared for the film show; it wasn't METROPOLIS and the Committee weren't asking anybody for a 35mm projector...though I will admit that Dave Cohen was writing to everone three days before the Con, trying to borrow a tape-recorder...and tho' I'd only seen THINGS TO COME 6 times I wanted to see a glass-full of drink more, so I wandered out with some fans to find one. We passed the astral projection of 4e Ackerman coming in. We looked at the jet black waters of a canal that ran by the hotel and made some corny puns...I remember now, it was Walt, George Charters and Chuck I was with...and then went on to a station buffet where we sat at a table which had one leg propped up by an ash-tray, and George asked me why it was and I said it was to prevent the leg from going ashtray and Walt didn't say anything. I think he's getting o-o-old and tired. We went back, Chuck handing out quote-cards, and saw the last 10 minutes of the film with the "Is there to be no end?" speech, and after that met Ashworth and White and ghod knows who and after a time I found myself in 123 with a glass, trying to blow up a sausage-shaped balloon.

QUICK--TAKE HER WHILE SHE'S HOT--IT'S A PITY TO WASTE IT

We had a peaceful time in 123 for a little, drinking, talking, and watching the entwined bodies on the beds and betting on whose leg belonged to whose arm. Fans came in and out and one or two with zap-guns didn't come in at all, and we had a couple of calls from a hall-porter...after the second some of us started to go out to another room and got politely chucked back again by a porter in the corridor. About midnight, or it may have been one o'clock, we were feeling strong enough to go to bed...most of us had then been awake about 40 hours...but someone appeared brandishing a zap-gun and yelling "Let's go and raid the Liverpool party!"...this turned out to be in a large bedroom with out beds, called a lounge, so a motley group trailed upstairs to 133. When I arrived a pitched battle was going on in the corridor and there was water everywhere. I decided to go to bed instead, but when I got to my room I remembered that I had a six-jet gun in my case which I'd bought especially for occasions like this and it seemed a pity to waste it so I filled it up and went out again.

"WE MUST CONSIDER THE WOMEN FACTOR" "WOMEN FACTOR?" "A MAN WHO MAKES WOMEN"

When I got around the corner again the raiders had vanished and I was greeted by three or four zap-guns so I went into action with this six-gun and fought my way to the threshold, where they brought up Brian Lewis of the Mod-way Mob with a 1,000 shot sub-machine gun type which stopped me...Brian had been crowned with a glass earlier on by a dripping-wet pro-fan who had immediately shaken his hand, but he was still going...and I was ceremoniously welcomed in and presented to a couple of Liverpool houris wearing bathing dresses. This, as it turned out, was practically de rigueur wear at this party. There didn't appear to be anywhere to sit and the whole crowd was walking around on the principle that if you stopped in one place too long you got drenched. I shouted a few greetings to people I knew, avoided some one who was going around with a beanie-full of pound notes (I was not only near-broke but doubted whether I could keep a glass steady), and got my back against a wall. I must have blacked out then, because the next thing I remember is Rolos spraying all

"Not in Jules Verne...You may have seen my stories in some early AMAZINGS"

and fondry with a soda-siphon. Someone moving out of the way bumped into me and spilt half a glass of something down my shirt, but it was all right because the next moment a squirt from the siphon travelled 9 feet over two lots of shoulders and diluted the stain. Then two brave characters... Chuck and Stu Mackenzie I believe, jumped him. I'm afraid fandom has corrupted Roles.

Even the diverting spectacle of two pro-eds having a formal duel couldn't keep me in 133 without somewhere to sit, so I collected Chuck, who had developed a glassy-eyed look that was either drink or lust, and went back to my room to deposit the six-jet before having a final drink in 123. On the way we met Peto Taylor, a talented young London trufan; he looked as if he'd just wandered up from a coffin in the collar. We took his zap-gun away, hoping it would discourage him, but he insisted on saying 'good-night' to his dear old pals in 133, so we left him there in the care of Dave Wood and Ken Potter. I might have known better than to trust a 7th fander; piecing together the saga of Peto's night from 3 different sources, all probably fallible, it seems that after being hypnotised by a tin whistle in 133 he was led into some Northhornor's room and photographed in someone's undies, and finally, like a homing dodo, walked zombie-like into 123 at about 4.30am., folded up a coat in one corner of the room, put his head on it and fell into a refreshing sleep...this without saying a word to a small party having a final drink there.

DO YOU REMEMBER BEA MAHAFFEY?

Anyway, Chuck and myself went out to one of the nice large Grosvenor Hotel landings preparatory to going down the red-carpeted staircase to the floor below, and looking down into the stair-well saw one of the most incredible sights of the night --- and when you realise I'd already seen a pro-ed playing the bells on a bonnie with a pair of straws..... Coming up the stairs from the ground floor was the unmistakable, gangling goon-like figure of Brian Burgess. He was fully dressed in some sort of rubberised hiker's outfit, including a large rucksack, he was wearing a grinning yellow Chinese mask which we had brought from London in case we needed it, and was holding a large green plastic zap-gun stiffly before him. He stalked solemnly up that wide staircase, moving a little jerkily, like a mechanical toy, and passed out of sight on the landing beneath us. This was about 2 in the morning, and the place was (momentarily) deserted except for hotel servants clearing up. I clutched hold of the banisters and looked at Chuck -- he was rolling about the landing with both hands to his stomach, making faint moaning noises -- then sped down the flight on tip-toes. Burgess had obviously gone to 123. Before I could get to the bottom, though, there was the sound of a door closing and footsteps approaching, so I went back to the upper landing again and watched Burgess jerk into view, still wearing the mask, still carrying the zap-gun, and descend the stairs...jerk, jerk, jerk. He marched straight into the lobby where various hotel servants were vacuuming and dusting, still wearing the outfit, the mask and the large green zap gun, and out through the revolving doors into the street...jerk...jerk...jerk....

I DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT IT---I'VE ONLY BEEN TOLD

Wondering about the surrealist Alico-in-Wonderland world where Burgess was obviously spending the rest of the night I dragged Chuck to his feet and we went down to 123. We found that Burgess had just dropped in to say "Good-night"..... thoughtful of him.....and relaxed again with a glass. Dave Newman of the London Circle had been doing a wonderful job as liquor-keeper, his motto being 'never see a man with an empty glass', and there was still some for those who could take it, but one of the femme fans had been too confident...or her boy friend had. These two, a BNF and a poachy babe, had been lying nocking on the bed most of the evening...at one time they had usurped one of the beds completely, and someone (I'm not saying whom) stuck straws between the f-fans bare toes and lit them and someone else had turned out the lights and it looked awful pretty for the 15 seconds or so it had taken for her feet to warm up....but now the BNF had drunk himself sober and was looking disgusted and the f-fan was crying. It cleared them off the bed, anyway, which was just as well as a few minutes later a fan was dragged in by three others and stretched out flat there. The party was starting

I killed a zap-gun with Peto Taylor and found that it wouldn't stop squirting" Newman

to look like a casualty clearing station; victims of drunkenness, drenching and debauchery were drifting in and out, the BNF stood around looking helpless and his girl-friend was being comforted by two characters who presently suggested that they lead her to her bed. The BNF and I exchanged significant glances and drifted off after the trio; it wasn't that we didn't trust the helpers -- they were fans. We just wanted a walk. It says here.

THE PASSAGE WAS EDITORIALY CENSORED

However, around the corner of the corridor we were stopped by a couple of pro-eds, one of whom had the wrong slant, tho' I can't blame him. "Don't you know enough to leave a hysterical woman alone?" he booms to the BNF, carefully removing his glasses and tucking them in his top pocket. The other pro-ed removes his glasses too. The BNF looked glassy-eyed only. At that moment his motives were as pure as the driven snow, but he had about as much chance of convincing the other as I have of writing a GALAXY serial. Leaving him to sweat it out I pushed past and went on up the passage; around the next corner the femme fan was sitting on the stairs, being tended to by another femme fan and a fans wife. I decided to call it a night, and went to bed. It was about 5 o'clock, but for some reason I felt tired; in case you're wondering I heard that the f-fan was up at 8.30 as bright as a lark.

IT'S AS NOISY AS IF IT WERE ONE O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

I woke up at 9.30 and spent 15 minutes thinking about the previous day and worrying about Bert. I was then informed that the hotel breakfast ended at 10am., and ten minutes later, washed, shaved and fully dressed I strolled into the dining room...I don't know how I did it. We spent a pleasant half-hour or so discussing the things that will never see print in any fanzine until the waiters got annoyed and started removing the tables from under our elbows, and then everyone drifted around chatting until the Chairman or someone announced the lunch break. I went up to 123 and found the same old crowd lounging on the beds and chairs and after a drink or two we all went out to a Chinese restaurant, gradually accumulating a force of about 20 on the way. People were exchanging quote-cards and saying things like I WONDER WHO WAS IN THAT CHOP SUEY FAN and I LIKE THE SOUND OF GOO LOO YUK, and someone suggested that we hold the next London Convention in a Chinese restaurant and Willis said "You'd be able to auction some old junk", and altogether it was a supremely fannish meal.

IN EFFECT, I AM HAMILTON SPEAKING FOR BOSKOPF -Carnell

For some reason there were three out of the five official items delivered during the afternoon sessions, plus one that was brought forward from the previous evening; this caused almost as much confusion as not having METRO-POLIS. We arrived at the hall during the fan-ed's session, in which they were supposed to criticise each others' zines; the finest opportunity for feuding that I've seen since the Convention-venue discussion on the '53 LonCon programme. Everybody was disgustingly polite, though, so I went out to have a drink before the bar closed and came back in the middle of John Gunn's thought-reading experiments on various fans. Gunn wasn't carried out shrieking -- another disappointment -- so it must have been a fake, and we moved on to the pro-ed's discussion. This was extempore and good, Paterson in particular being the quote-taker's darling...IT'S ALL BEEN DONE BEFORE SO IT'S ALL REPRINT, EVEN WHEN IT'S ORIGINAL (or was that Carnell?)...THERE ARE ONLY THREE PLOTS IN THE WORLD...I AM THE BOYS OWN PAPER OF SCIENCE FICTION...UNTIL YOU'RE TWENTY-FIVE YOU HAVEN'T MATURED IN S-F

I UNDERSTAND ALL THE WORDS I PUT IN EDITORIALS BECAUSE THEY'RE ALL NASTY ONES

John Russell Fearn, the guest of honour, then appeared and made a casually brilliant speech, followed by an Author's Panel on which Ted Tubb made a number of casually brilliant speeches, such as his summing up on Bradbury...THE MAN'S A GENIUS--ANYONE WHO GETS WHAT HE DOES FOR WRITING WHAT HE DOES MUST BE A GENIUS, and John Brunner described a spiral staircase without using his hands. Everybody then dispersed, and about 15 of us made brilliantly casual speeches

He's been drinking Joy's non-alcoholic rhubarb wine --- help me pick him up

over cups of tea in Lyons. We then went back to the Grosvenor and after a short interval the 'Trial of Bert Campbell' started, Ron Buckmaster wearing a beard as Bert, Dave Newman wearing a beard and a topee with a prop on top as the Judge, and Ted Tubb wearing all the ~~ear~~-marks of an uninhibited extrovert as Counsel for the Defence. Terry Jeeves's Prosecutor was good, but this was Tubb in all his glory, whether he was passionately declaiming from the stage, running around to the back of the hall and passionately declaiming as a member of the public, or, as the trial merged into a series of knockabout interviews, conducting interviews with imperturbable brilliance. As a writer in the revived PHANTASMAGORIA of Derek Pickles has said since, THE WHOLE THING TOOK ON A FARCICAL ASPECT.

PARDON ME WHILE I DRIBBLE ALL DOWN MY SHIRT FRONT

When Ted left the stage the Convention closed, except for some kind of bargain-counter auction that was going on on the stage itself, and after everyone had said their farewells to almost everyone else most of the London group and associated fans homed on 123. The place got so noisy that the first warning was received from the porters quite early -- about 11.30 -- and there was an attempt to shift the party to the Buckmaster's room, but the advance guard returned very shortly and reported opposition from adjoining rooms or something ("The party got chucked out of one room before some of us even got in..."), and we eventually made our way in casual twos and threes to Ted Tubb's room, 219.

'SUNDAY NIGHT IN 219' -- THAT'S PRACTICALLY AN INTERLINEATION IN ITSELF

Sunday night in 219 ("Just dig that crazy shambles") combined everything; fan chatter, drinking, snogging/necking/petting sessions, low-joke session and pure madness. The BNF and the peachy babe, who were continuing from where they left off the previous morning, were about the only people who didn't say anything, and even then they contributed, as when someone pinched the BNF and he didn't move and someone else said X SEEMS TO BE USED TO THREE-HANDED WOMEN, and when they slipped suddenly out of the room someone said I BET IT'S THE FIRST TIME HE'S BEEN RAPED BY A FEMME FAN, and someone else said BETTER PUT IT IN UNCLOTHED QUOTES, and when they came back within 5 minutes there was a general chorus of YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TRYING. It was during this evening, night and morning that there was a timid knock on the door and a voice & Brunner said IT'S FEMALE--LET IT IN, and another fan made what he thought was a bright remark and said VINCENT! QUOTE ME! and lost interest when I refused and two minutes later said to someone else I CULTIVATED THAT WOMAN FOR FIVE SOLID HOURS AND TED TUBB PINCHED HER and LET'S LIE ON THE FLOOR TOGETHER, and from the tangle on one of the beds that was the low-joke session a feminine voice murmured ISN'T IT ANWFUL WHEN YOU REALISE IT WAS A DIRTY ONE?. Of the 250+ quotes I garnered in & around the Con, some 50 came out that night (and 80-odd in the taxi on the ride back, but that's another story)....HE QUOTES SHAKESPEARE AND BEHAVES LIKE WILDE....H.G. WELLS BORED ME; ACTION SCIENCE FICTION BORED ME; NOW I'VE MET BRIAN BURGESS AND HE BORES ME...THE TROUBLE WITH X IS HE DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING--HE JUST DOES IT *...YOU KNOW, YOUR TOE-NAILS ARE LONGER THAN SOME WOMENS FINGER-NAILS..... ALL I'VE GOT LEFT IS MY PIPE--WHERE IS IT?...GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS, THAT HE LAY DOWN HIS WIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.....IT'S AN O-O-OLD TAKI-- AND TYRID.....THE SPECTACLE OF FEMALE PULCHRITUDE CLOTHED IN NOTHING BUT AN EPIDERMIS IS VASTLY OVER-RATED....MY IDEAL HOTEL HAS GIN IN THE TAPS'... I THOUGHT ABORTION WAS YOUR FAVOURITE TOPIC....

ON THE LEVEL -- HORIZONTALLY

A Canadian reporter, Geno Loes, attended most of this session; author of a story in a recent NEW WORLDS, he'd booked in unknowing that there was an s-f convention. Ted Carnoll introduced him as another Ted Sturgeon, but he didn't have a board and he didn't play the guitar and he didn't know any faans, and after he had asked WHAT IS HYPHEN? we left him rather to his own devices, at which he seemed rather good and which led to at least two attrib-

All the best quotes are whispered in shell-like ears.

-uted quotes, one of which was MAY I INTRODUCE MYSELF ---WE COULD PRACTISE
BUDDING AUTHORS.

800 CONCUBINES, NO LESS!

The night drifted on to dawn. Soon after one of the femme fans had told us that one of the Northern femmes had approached her that previous morning and quite seriously said I HOPE YOU'VE READ MARIE STOPES, the drink in the room ran out, even an orange cocktail concoction that had apparently been diluted by rum and gin. There came the question of disposing of the bottles; there was the canal outside; DO YOU WANT TO THROW A BOTTLE OUT OF THE WINDOW.... DON'T THROW YOURSELF OUT--THE SPLASH MIGHT ATTRACT ATTENTION...I BELIEVE THERE'S A POLICE BOAT BELOW--LET'S SINK IT....I NAME THIS CITY--MANCHESTER! and the last thing I remember doing is discussing the feasibility of 'The Three-Ended Candle' as a good title for a Con account.

I DON'T LIKE FRESH AIR--IT GIVES ME A CLEAN MIND

Rain was beating down steadily when the cathedral bells woke us on Monday morning at about 8.30. We blinked bleary eyes at a clock tower across the canal that advertised 'Woolly Tooth Paste' ("Woolly toothpaste to match the fur on your tongue"). This was the last morning; it'd been a lousy convention we agreed but, damn it, it was over. Dave Newman, Jim Ratigan and myself decided that we wouldn't put the hotel staff to the trouble of determining whose room should be credited with our breakfasts, but would go out for a cup of coffee. Outside, in the pouring rain, we were astonished. The streets were thronged with people, side-roads were barricaded, and processions were assembling all over the place...MANCHESTER MUST BE SUFFERING FROM SOME KIND OF EXHIBITION-ISTIC MANIA...There were a number of religious banners about --it looked like Belfast on a Saturday afternoon-- and we discussed in loud voices the theory that the show was being put on to propitiate the gods and ensure a plentiful supply of rain for the coming year, but after a time we became irritated at the drably-clad masses who were actually sitting on small camp-stools on the pavements and solemnly clapping each small section of procession as it passed and at the fact that all the school-children in the city, from about 4 year olds up, were being herded about the wet streets under streaming umbrellas; LET'S GO AROUND LAUGHING AT THE PROCESSIONS said Dave, but we decided to have hot rolls and butter and coffee at Lyons instead. On the way we saw the gangling Burgess figure striding along one of the specially cleared roads ..jerk..jerk..jerk. No one clapped him, though.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN A PROCESSION THAT HAD TO HAVE SAILS TO HELP IT

Back at the Grosvenor we packed and finished up the drinks in 123 and hung about the hall exchanging post-mortems and quotes and waiting for the convoy vehicles to negotiate the processions. When the taxi arrived Vandy told us she'd been driving around the Lake District the day before and had been coming up to the Convention at night but had been stopped by people who had thought she was a regulation taxi, and had earned twenty-five shillings. We waited for a long, long time, (I'VE BEEN HERE WHEN IT HASN'T BEEN RAINING.... LOOK AT THEM, STANDING THERE LIKE NATIVE MANCUNLIANS....WE'VE GOT A REALLY BIG BANNER COMING ALONG NOW WITH A BEM ON IT OR SOMETHING....IT'S BEEN A MARVELOUS CONVENTION, DAVE, ARE YOU HOLDING ONE NEXT YEAR?...WE'VE LEFT NOTHING BEHIND US EXCEPT A REPUTATION...THE ZAP-GUNNER'S VADE-MECUM....YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU CHECK OUT AT FIVE PAST TWELVE...) but at last the convoy was all assembled and we moved off

AT LEAST, I'VE SEEN MANCHESTER

This seems as good a place as any to steal an extract from Dave Newman's Con report in the forthcoming EYE 2

"While talking to the Hall Porter on the Monday morning, I discovered that the hotel management had undergone a valuable(?) object lesson in the perils of acting host to a Convention.

"It appeared that on the Saturday a zealous type at the Reception Desk had counted all the people(?) coming in to the Con...it also appeared that the same zealous type had counted all the people going out of the Con. This

"You haven't lived until you've eaten Bonfelli's breakfast!"

was a very good thing from the statistical point of view and, doubtless, provided the basis for a number of interesting and esoteric calculations about 'pints of beer per capita' and things like that. However, in an ecstasy of enthusiasm and the small hours of Sunday morning somebody decided to correlate these figures with the number of rooms booked by Conventioneers. Alarm and despondency immediately became rife (or whatever it is they do when they're fooling their oats.) A brief glance at the appended (and neatly tabulated) statement should indicate why:-

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| Incoming Conventioneers | 100 plus |
| Outgoing Conventioneers | 25 odd (very) |
| therefore | ----- |
| Residue remaining in hotel | = 75 approx |
| but, | |
| Number of persons for whom rooms booked | = 30 or thereabouts. |
| this results in, | |

ALARM AND DESPONDENCY
Q. E. D.

"When the full horror of the situation was realised a mobile column of Night Porters was sent out into the uttermost reaches of the hotel with the fatuous idea of separating the Plutocrats (holders of rooms) from the Parasites (the other sort), and hurling the last-named into limbo. This sounded very easy in theory - all one had to do was to challenge the suspect and ask him what his room number was. Very easy (yak,yak). The discerning fan will immediately see the fallacy in this reasoning, and as there was a glut of discerning fan in Manchester that weekend everybody on being challenged just naturally gave the number of Eric Benteliffe's room. When the porters assembled to compare notes they decided that there was something rotten in the state of Fandom and once again set forth on their individual safaris. After the seventh try they got a trifle discouraged, particularly after they noticed the strange propensity of fan to be in about five places at once, and decided to allow the nuisance to remain unabated."

Thus Judge Newman, a gentleman of whom more will be heard if he can manage to stop sublimating his fan instincts.

THERE'S A FINE FIELD OF CORN OVER THERE AND A TAXI-FULL BEHIND

The convoy stopped outside Manchester for petrol and because, as one lady put it, WE WANT TO CHANGE OVER -- WE'VE ONLY GOT HUSBANDS IN HERE. After that....IF YOUR MIND IS BENT ON SCIENCE-FICTION, STRAIGHTEN IT OUT THIS WAY....WHAT YOU MEAN IS, WIPE EVERYTHING CLEAN OFF YOUR MIND...WE'VE ANOTHER 88 MILES TO GO, SO RON BUCKMASTER'S STRIPPING HIS ENGINE DOWN... WE'VE BEEN INSPECTED BY THE GARAGE DOG. HE JUST PASSED US AND STAMPED OUR REAR WHEEL...THOSE COWS LOOK LIKE NEO-FANS...THERE'S A TOTALLY DIFFERENT ATMOSPHERE NOW THAT WE'VE CAUGHT UP WITH THAT FLYING BEDSTEAD... 'STONEHENGE BRICK COMPANY' -- THAT MUST BE A VERY OLD ESTABLISHED FIRM... I'VE GOT DIRT IN MY EYES FROM TRYING TO READ HER MIND...THE ORANGE IS THE NATURAL PROTOTYPE OF THE ZAP-GUN...LET'S GET MARRIED AND CREATE QUOTES...BURGESS MUST HAVE PASSED THIS WAY...THE TREES ARE WITHERED....

We stopped to look at Lichfield Cathedral (I'M GOING TO COME INTO CONTACT WITH LIQUID IF I HAVE TO GO IN AND BE BAPTIZED), and stopped for lunch at a cafe where they had table-tops you could write on TABLETOP--A FANZINE FOR SQUARES...THERE'S NOT A SHEER CLEAN CRACK IN THE LOT OF IT.... YOU'LL NEED VERY STRONG STABLES. In the district where Bert had broken down we found he'd reported to a police station at 5.40 in the morning. Next Thursday he turned up blandly at the GLOBE. He'd hitch-hiked back home. No comment. Me, I arrived back at 5 past 1 on Tuesday morning. I felt tired.

Quotes in GRUNCH emanated from Dave Lemmon, Bob, Garnell, Fatlum, Oshertons, the Buckmasters, the Burners, Harris, Jay Goodwin, John Brimmer, Miss, Dr. Hammett, the Hackenries, Paterson Campbell, other acknowledged in the text and numerous anonymous geniuses.

AANW

BY VIC - HARRIS

A
SMALL
CON
REPORT

Like almost everybody else I'd gone to Manchester with an outsize chip on my shoulder. Anybody living beyond Lancaster was completely outside my pale, and I firmly intended to be cynical at the Convention and vituperative as soon as I got home to my typer. I was going to crucify Northern Fandom, ridicule anybody who wasn't a cash subber to HYPHEN, and state explicitly who got made. I was going to have two drinks each night, and spend my time egging on the suckers to quote themselves all to hell and gone.

I wish I knew what happened to that chip and the good resolutions. Even before the Saturday morning session was over, I'd gotten through my drink quota for the whole weekend, was happily posed on the "Volsted Gridban Fullsize Bedpan" for Fred Robinson's candid camera, and was clasping to my bosom all sorts of people that I'd been mentally reserving barge-poles. And it was wonderful.

Northern Fandom was just about the biggest surprise of my life. They didn't have tails, they weren't morons, and ---Ghod help us all--- they didn't want to trample on me or spit in my eye. Liverpool fandom especially impressed me as a bunch of Trufans. I met John Roles, Norm and Ina Shorrock, and hordes of other Liverpooldians whose names have vanished along with the beer, and I found them all likeable friendly people who were a pleasure to meet and to talk to. I came away from Manchester strongly approving of Northern Fandom. It goes without saying that I approve of Southern Fandom.

I mention this because since Whitsun there have been redoubled efforts to split Anglofandom into Northern and Southern factions with each hating the other's guts. I strongly disapprove of this, -- Anglofandom is not yet rich enough to be able to afford the luxury of a full-scale war -- and HYPHEN is remaining strictly neutral.

But this is supposed to be convention impressions or something. Ah well....

The actual programme was pretty horrible, but the Committee had done their best, and they did at least have the good sense to pass their weary burden to Ted Tubb as soon as he arrived. Ted is not always scintillatingly witty but he has enormous zest and such a rapid fire delivery that his poor jokes get lost in the laughter at his good ones. Auctioneering is his speciality, but he's perfectly willing to get up and ad lib about any damn thing at all.

I didn't see much of the official programme, -- I wanted to meet people instead of watching movies or listening to talks that I couldn't understand. There were quite a few people attending that I'd been writing to but had never actually met, and I'd asked them to look out for me. This usually developed into a sort of ritual with each of us staring at the other's name-badge and then simultaneously recoiling in horror like a couple of Ed Hamilton heroines. Best of all the new fannish faces though, was George All The Way Charters....

After leaving Walt to guard the hotel entrance and keen for the London Con-voy, Madeleine, Bob, James, and I, went off to mail some pocsarcs. The Post Office was right next door to the Airport Terminus, and as we came out GATWAC's bus drew up. (To save Archie Mercer writing in, - George flew over from Belfast, and the bus had brought him from the airport into the centre of Manchester.) Anyrate, as George arrived he was so overwhammed by what looked like a Reception Committee, that when

That was the only item on time, and that was full J-art-hour late. (P. Bulmer)

Madeleine introduced me, he stuck out his hand. My reflexes are pretty good, and before he could remember I'm a Pariah Dog, I'd grabbed it and shook it. Yes, I shook hands with George Charters, WHO HAS APPEARED IN HARD COVERS, -- and it doesn't make the slightest bit of difference that he wiped his hand on his trouserleg afterwards.

George, of course, wouldn't stay at a joint like the Grosvenor, so we had to leave him for a while, go back and collect Walt and some others, and then go to lunch. Willis tried to pass foreign coins at the cafeteria paydesk, but the rest of us behaved quite normally. I make no apologies for the rest of us, and anyrate, when we got back to the hotel after lunch, the bar was open again, the London Circle were in action, and we were all off helter-skelter down the primrose path.

Quite sufficient has been written about the official programme already, and I don't propose to add to the histories. Besides, the only thing I can remember is John Gunn and his conjuring tricks, -- and the only reason this stood out was because of Wansborough and Paul Enever... As Gunn worked up to the climax of his act, I was hoping that he was going to ask for somebody to be sawn in half. I had six fans ready to help me lift Burgess onto the stage, but Gunn just wouldn't co-operate. Instead, he wanted to Read A Mind. So, we gave him Abnorm's. Natch, he failed utterly, -- but it was a fine effort. Wansborough was esping like a slan possessed, Gunn was sweating blood, and the audience were nearly in hysterics. After this, Gunn turned the tables on us (figuratively) and decided to let us do the esping. Our Paul Enever was chosen from the audience, climbed onto the rostrum and was equipped with a Thought-Projector. He picked a card from the deck, concentrated on it, and tried to "think the card across." Paul was taking this fairly seriously, and when Stuart Mackenzie suddenly shrieked "Eight of Diamonds!" Enever nearly collapsed. His hand crept across his forehead as if searching for sprouting tendrils and he seemed to be mentally composing a thesis for Duke University. For almost thirty glorious seconds, Paul's guard was right down and he was "H. Superior, moving mountains with his mind." This alone was worth the fare from London to Manchester, and I think it must have broken Paul's heart when he turned the gimmick around and found a large eight of diamonds right there in the muzzle that he'd been pointing at Stu.

To hell with the official convention though. The parties were much more enjoyable. I was invited to the London Circle's party, paid over my £1 (I was there for the second night too), and found a large glass and a corner fairly near to the liquor supply. I thought it was a fine party, but I felt rather uncomfortable because everyone seemed to make a point of showing me their "passports" whilst I was the only person who didn't get one. Childish perhaps, but I got a sort of "gatecrasher" feeling every time people like Burgess and Cathy Overton were around and flaunting theirs. Everybody who wasn't being unconventional (see OOPSLA) though, were quite nice to me and there was plenty to drink and plenty to watch. I think that in future, fannish parents might dispense with the bees and the flowers line and instead, buy Junior a ticket to a London Circle party.

Just after midnight, Pete Taylor told me that they wanted to see me upstairs in the Liverpool party. All the way along the corridor he was shooting a line about how much they liked me and how much they wanted to see me, and when we got to the door, somebody peeped out and said "It's Chuck Harris! Come in Chuck." I did so -- and not less than twenty of the fiends were waiting for me with their water-pistols, -- I was drenched to the skin long long before I could get to the soda syphon and retaliate. After this fond welcome they gave me gin and beer and whisky, and then, tiring of running backwards and forwards, told me to help myself. All the liquor was out on a long table, there was absolutely no check on who drank what, but nobody was drunk or officious. I would have probably been both, but I just didn't have time, -- I was too busy talking to Mal and Ken Potter and trying to keep waterpistol experts from lousing up my drink. This, I thought, was a very fine party indeed, 'so

"If she believes in Group Marriage she can come" (IC preparing for the Harcon)

I went downstairs to the London party to fetch Walt, Madeleine, and James. I was completely sober of course, and it was just an unfortunate accident that on the return trip I knocked on the door and gave the password: "This is Abnorm Wansborough" before making certain that it was the right door. It was a genuine mistake, and there was absolutely no need for Walt to rush me off down the corridor before the door opened, instead of waiting so that we could make a courteous explanation.

After we got back to the Liverpool party, the rest of the London Circle began to trickle up. Vinz, Mackenzie, Carnell, Gillings, Patterson, and just about everybody else who wasn't otherwise engaged, rolled in and circulated. This open-house policy made for a far more successful party than London's "closed-shop." There was more than enough to drink in the London room, -- apart from the admission fees, they'd been given #5 beer-money by the permanent "London" committee, -- and it would have been a nice gesture to have invited a few Northerners in for a drink or two.

It's possible that they would have done this on the Sunday night, but by then most everybody had left except for themselves, so once again it was a private, happy straightforward saturnalia. It started in the same room as Saturday's orgy, but even before the bedroom athletes had gotten comfortable the hotel management finally rebelled and threw us out. We wandered vaguely around trying other rooms for size and finally settled in Ted Tubb's room on the top-floor. Ted left early to spend the night playing poker, and, I am told, lost fifteen shillings. I found this a little hard to believe myself. I mean, Ted is supposed to be pretty good at poker.

Compared with this, Saturday's effort was just a girls'-school frolic. The fan-columnists were strategically scattered around the room with open notebooks and sharpened pencils, the Respectable, the Impotent, and the Impossible, were sitting around drinking until the gin poured out of their ears, and the remainder were interested in nothing but "good clean wholesome sex." It was all terribly, terribly Bohemian and so utterly blase, with everybody taking a strictly logical view of Homo Sapiens basic instincts. There was even one guy sitting on the bed proclaiming his Innermost Thoughts. "The female epidermis," he said, "is a vastly over-rated spectacle." "Vastly, vastly" agreed his audience as they reached languidly for yet another pair of knockers...

However, who made who is no business of yours, Dear Reader. And besides, space and time are running short. Vinz and I are off to Belfast in five days time, and if this isn't mailed out by then, the Bhoys Himself will undoubtedly refuse even to speak to us, -- let alone help him to brew poteen in the kitchen.

GENUFLECTIONS ETC.

THANKS

To J. Stuart Mackenzie who donated most of the ink for this, -- and to his employers, Standard Oil, for the unwitting loan of their giant stapler.

APOLOGIES

To Walt for bulldozing him into doing a rush job on his con-report, and then discovering that we weren't going to have pagination after all. (N.B. Page 1 is right at the front. Start there.)

CONGRATULATIONS

To BoSh and Sadie. Marriage is probably the finest way of sublimating fannish instincts, and now perhaps White will be mad enough to follow your example.

CONDOLENCES

To Norman G Wansborough, whose Epic Poem "Dear Planet" was omitted after being specially written for this almost unwillised issue. We didn't have room.

To those people who had a burning desire to correspond with me just as I opened the first quire of stencils.

EGOBOO

To A Vincent Clarke who cranked the mimeo 29,988 times to produce this, -- and hardly repeated himself once. (If one of your sheets is faintly blurred, it's probably one of the 12 that I did.)

Why don't you just go back to writing stories?"

W A N T E D :

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OMPA! OMPA! OMPA! OMPA! OMPA! OMPA!

THE OFF-TRAIL MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION has been formed to provide British fans with an equivalent of the US 'FAPA' (Fantasy Amateur Press Association). Members contribute to a common pool fanzines of their own production, not necessarily dealing with s-f, and these are distributed once per quarter so that each member receives a copy of each other member's work.

Full details of the constitution of OMPA can be obtained from:

H.K. Bulmer, Esq.,
204 Wellmeadow Road,
Catford,
LONDON, SE 5

or

A.Vincent Clarko,
16 Wendover Way,
Welling,
Kent.

BOB BLOCH PRESENTS A PROZINE REVIEW

My attention has recently been misdirected to page 38 of the current issue of the VARGO STATTEN MAGAZINE (or as some would have it, the CHUCK HARRIS MAGAZINE).

Exhibit A on this page consists of a photographic reproduction apparently resulting from an intrepid cameraman's visit to Madame Tussaud's... or the archives of Scotland Yard. It bears (and I use the term as a synonym for "endures") the simple caption, Walt Willis.

It wasn't until I saw this photo that I realized Bob Tucker (in WILD TALENT) had not been referring to the Walter Willis I knew. His character, an Irish evildoer, I had presumed to be a lampoon on Walter A. Willis of Belfast. But I was wrong. Apparently there is another Willis, and as the picture so adequately attests, he's a professional criminal. You don't have to subscribe to the theories of the late Cesare Lombroso to see at a glance the Mark of Cain. Unless, of course, my first surmise is correct and this picture was snapped at Tussaud's -- in which case some of the effect may be attributed to the fact that the subject was improperly stuffed.

But one thing is certain... this isn't the Walter Willis I know: the Walter Willis whose face I so frequently saw (and at times even stepped on) in Chicago.

The accompanying text, which runs (or dribbles) down the right-hand side of the page, corroborates this belief. The fact that it is headed WHO'S WHO IN FANDOM leads me to surmise that this Walt Willis is cunningly aware of the fact that he has a namesake, and is attempting to pass himself off as Ireland's Lee Hoffman.

But the attempt is as transparent as Bob Shaw's head. All we need to do is select a few lines in order to realize that this is the fake Willis speaking.... in other words, a fake fake-fan.

Consider such statements as "in 1935 I was a starry-eyed schoolboy." It's not the chronology that counts: you could substitute "1812" or "1492" or "1066" for "1935" and it wouldn't matter: it's the notion that Walter Willis was, at any time, "starry-eyed" which is so palpably false. "Bleary-eyed" or "glassy-eyed", perhaps.... "wild-eyed" most certainly, but "starry-eyed"? Never.

Further on there is a reference to the writer acquiring "an unrivalled knowledge of all authors whose names begin with S, T, U and V."



That's not our Willis. He doesn't know the name of a single solitary author whose name begins with "STUV".

He goes on (believe me, he does go on!) to say that "for some reason it never occurred to me to write a letter myself" to the fan columns of sf magazines.

Can anyone imagine a time when it wouldn't occur to Walter Willis to write a letter to a fan column? Hardly! Or even softly. Our imposter betrays himself.

The pseudo-Willis, apparently hellbent to convince readers that he is the real Willis (one wonders why anybody would have that

"But...you should have seen the context!"

desire, and then one recalls how frequently various psychotics feel impelled to confess to murders they did not commit) goes on to talk about his appearance in Chicago at the Convention.

Apparently he is fully aware that the actual Willis attended this affair, but unfortunately for him he has no idea of what really occurred. He blithely represents himself as a sort of celebrity, and remarks, "E.E. Smith was asking for my autograph, and I was guest of honour at a banquet along with him, Simak, Williamson and Hugo Gernsback."

Hah! I happen to have been toast-master at the affair in question (and a very questionable affair it was, too) and I can vouch for the real facts. Which are: Hugo Gernsback was the guest of honour. Williamson and Simak never showed up, being detained by a poker game in Tucker's room. E.E. Smith was on the platform, yes, but he wasn't collecting autographs -- he was collecting the banquet tickets, due to a shortage of waiters. The real Willis had no ticket, of course, and was present only long enough to deliver a brief talk, after which he was quickly shunted outside by the Committee. I found him eating dinner in a hamburger stand across the street, the bar being closed on account of the holiday.

It is possible to find errors like this in virtually every line of this alleged "autobiography"...it is riddled with mistakes. (Or as Dean Grennell might say, of PEON, it is Charles Lee Riddled with mistakes. He might say, but I wouldn't let him.)

The closing paragraph, for example, begins, "Nowadays, having realised every ambition I had...." but why go on? We who are familiar with Willis are well aware of the nature of his ambitions, and can hardly imagine them being realised without the repeal of virtually every law of the land, and a general abandonment of common decency.

One more example. "I publish an unpretentious magazine called HYPHEN for my own and others' amusement."

Anyone capable of believing the last three words is capable of believing that this is the real Walt Willis. But those of us who know him and who know HYPHEN are not misled. No one could conceivably be amused by HYPHEN except a chronic masochist.

This issue of the VARGO STATEN MAGAZINE was originally called to my attention because it contained a work of fiction by Chuck Harris. With all due respects to Mr. Harris, nothing he or any of the other contributors can do in the fiction line equals the flight of fancy and pure imagination found in the alleged "autobiography" of Walt Willis.

BOUGHT ANY GOOD
MONSTERS LATELY?



J STUART
MACKENZIE

As all the world knows, I'm strictly a neofan, and as such still possess the enquiring mind which tends to ask the awkward "why?" at the least provocation, and for some time now there's been a small but horrid question sizzling in the rear areas of my cerebellum: to wit, which came first, fans or fandom?

Now, this looks almost as zany on paper as it sounds, but the point is this. As one gets to know fan, one gets to know them as people, and the s-f connotation wanes a little. Why is this?

The Electrocuted Fan has already supplied one answer, when he writes of 'the social side of fandom', and it's troubling me. I was in a dilemma -- I had to make a decision because I'm the sort of bloody-minded character who needs this sort of thing -- and the dilemma was to decide whether I was a fan because primarily (and therefore transcendently) I was a reader of s-f, or whether I was a

"It was like a one-shot fanzine in hard covers"

fan primarily because I liked the fan (or almost all the fan) I knew.

So I got down to trying to analyse fandom as I see it, and decided that what appears to be Trufandom is largely a conglomerate of Characters. Not just people, but a special sort of people, with a definite sub-genus label, 'off-track'. A connotation not, I felt, entirely reserved for the devotee of s-f, altho' particularly applicable to the repeat buyers of Vargo Statton epics. So far, so good. But a logical examination of the syllogism leads one to a choice of two eventual things, either of which may be right, but only to the exclusion of the other.

It's a simple proposition; either fans are fans because they are the sort of people who through the ages have had an irreverence for institutionalism, because they are mental rebels against what they think is an archaic system, or because they are essentially not normal (and one can write a book about the misuse of that word.), or they are first of all s-f devotees who become embroiled in fandom and then become characters.

The problem is further enhanced by the fact that not all fan are characters, and, of course, there are some characters who are not fan. So what I want to know is, is the fan a character de facto or a posteriori, or is it a priori? (Sorry about all this logical stuff)

Of course, most of us have known characters who weren't fan. There was, for example, a certain employee of my own illustrious company. This gont started his petroleum career as a very humble bod., a 'mate' on a tank-truck. However, ambition drove him on until he became a Sales Manager. This meant, at least, much lucre as well as a well-padded chair instead of the truck seat. Also, an office, a secretary, much glory and an expense account. He was a stickler for punctuality, and daily at 9 am would be seated in his chair, reading the morning mail.

Now mark this. Having read all his letters, he would then summon his secretary, remove his shoes and socks, place those latter in the waste-paper basket, put his naked foot in the opened bottom right-hand drawer of his desk, and dictate his replies and correspondence. A Character? Surely! A Fan? Somehow, I think not. I never met this gont personally, and he's dead now so I can't ask him yet whether he is interested in 'space-ships' and all that', but I can tell you about another man, whom I have met.....

A couple of months ago Connie and I went down to the wilds of Surrey, to a place called Camborley. Ron and Daphne Buckmaster had invited us for a clean weekend and as this was an entirely novel experience in our debauched lives (note to the Postmaster General -- we are married ~~now~~) (to each other, that is), we thought we might at least try it for size. Also, I have happy memories of the fennes who used to patronise the bar of the 'Cambridge' some twelve years ago when the Army, with its typical wartime ineptitude, classified me as a temporary gentleman....But soft - my over-loving reads HYPHEN too.....

I won't go into all the gory details of the expedition; suffice to say that it takes nearly as long to get from Camborley to Waterloo (35 miles) as from Nijni-Novgorod to Omsk, but after suffering for some hours we got there. We had a chat about this and that, looked at a couple of fanzines that had been sent me for free (there I sit, down in Chelsea, making noises like a BNF, etc.) with intervals when we went down to the garage to look at Ron's car. It seems that he has trouble with the steering, even when sober. Knowing nothing at all about such matters, I gave him much helpful advice... (if he'd taken it that's another vehicle that would never have reached Manchester) and nattered as fans do, and of course eventually talked about pottery. This has nothing to do with a certain North of England 7th fander.

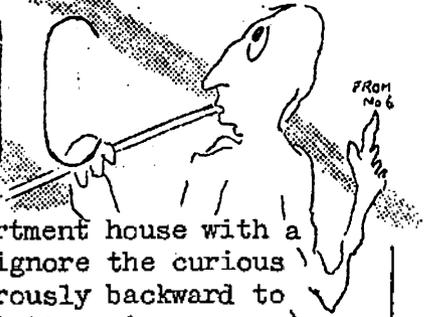
It appeared that in a nearby village called Frimley there is a Village Potter. Said Potter had all the usual appurtenances...wheel, pottery, shop-window, etc., and it was in this window that the Buckmasters had seen something they liked. At this point the air became so fetid with puns about saucers that I still don't know what the hell they saw, but my intelligent readers will at once perceive the denouement. We decided to go to Frimley and inspect this pottery, its life and works. This, we thought, would be even better than a biscuit factory.

TO BE CONCLUDED

LIFE

WITH

PSYCHOTIC



FRAM
No 6

One morning each month I stagger out of the door of the apartment house with a terrible load; the latest issue of my fanzine. Manfully I ignore the curious stares of passers-by and motorists as I walk (leaning dangerously backward to counter-weight the stack of freshly stamped envelopes that totters in my arms) toward the mailbox which is fiendishly located two blocks away. My eyes see only the blank wall of envelope edges that seems to extend to the very sky. My only concern is my feet and their precious footing; my greatest fear is a misstep, a fatal (nay, calamitous) loss of balance, and the shame of 150 brown envelopes scattered over half an acre of street and sidewalk. And if that mailbox was situated just one block further from my door.....

One of these months I won't make it. Each time I load up I know the trip will be less routine and more adventurous. Each load gets heavier and heavier with increased circulation. And one day the two blocks will seem like three.

Today is my day off. I view with distaste the mute evidences of the issue just mailed. On the desk both typers await my clumsy fingers. They know full well that a stack of unanswered correspondence lies beside them...waiting.

Scattered about the floor of the kitchen are scores of rejects from my reproductive monster, the REX-O-Graph. Letters that were used in the letter section lay in ungainly confusion and profusion on the top of the TV set beside the desk. And on the last of my four-in-line bookcases rests my despair and secret pride: a tremendous stack of letters that await my finding time to file them away. Eventually this stack will loom larger than the potential capacity of my two little partly filled letter files. And when that happens.... I'll go out and buy another file.

Cringing away from the Desk Duty, and cravenly avoiding the bookcase with its Terrible Burden, I sneak into the kitchen, withdraw a cold apple from the refrigerator, and flop upon the bed with a copy of the latest ASF or GALAXY. Plainly, the Glades of Gafia lure me with delightful promises of days and weeks of glorious irresponsible reading, eating and sleeping. And when these insidious temptations come (as they seem to at least once a month), whole days may pass while I yield to the sinful pleasures of the passifan.

But I have a conscience and a shockingly bad case of fanac which springs from an uncoiled egoistic thirst for praise and recognition. So, after a few days of freedom I get wound up in fandom again. This is a monthly run-down of the clock-like effort required to put out PSY. Foo on critics who insist that my zine is without balance. After all, I have no staff. And at least it comes out on time. I could do a lot better, of course, if I had a couple of extra hands to help when every second counts.

"One....two....three....four....five...."

BASH.....CRASH..... and SMASH.

(They never learn, these seconds, they never learn. Alla time they think they gotta count. They're not always important. But they don't understand. So I

BY

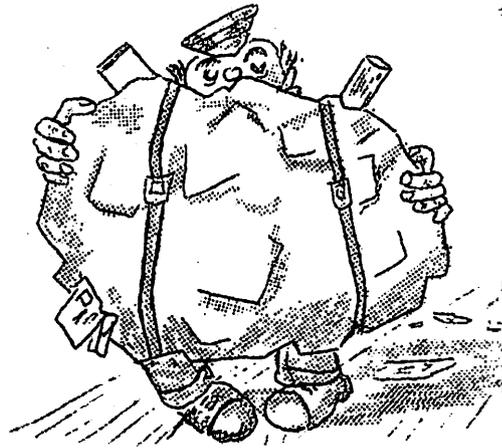
RICHARD

GEIS

"So that's how you pronounce 'poetsared'!"

gotta stand around after every issue killing time!)

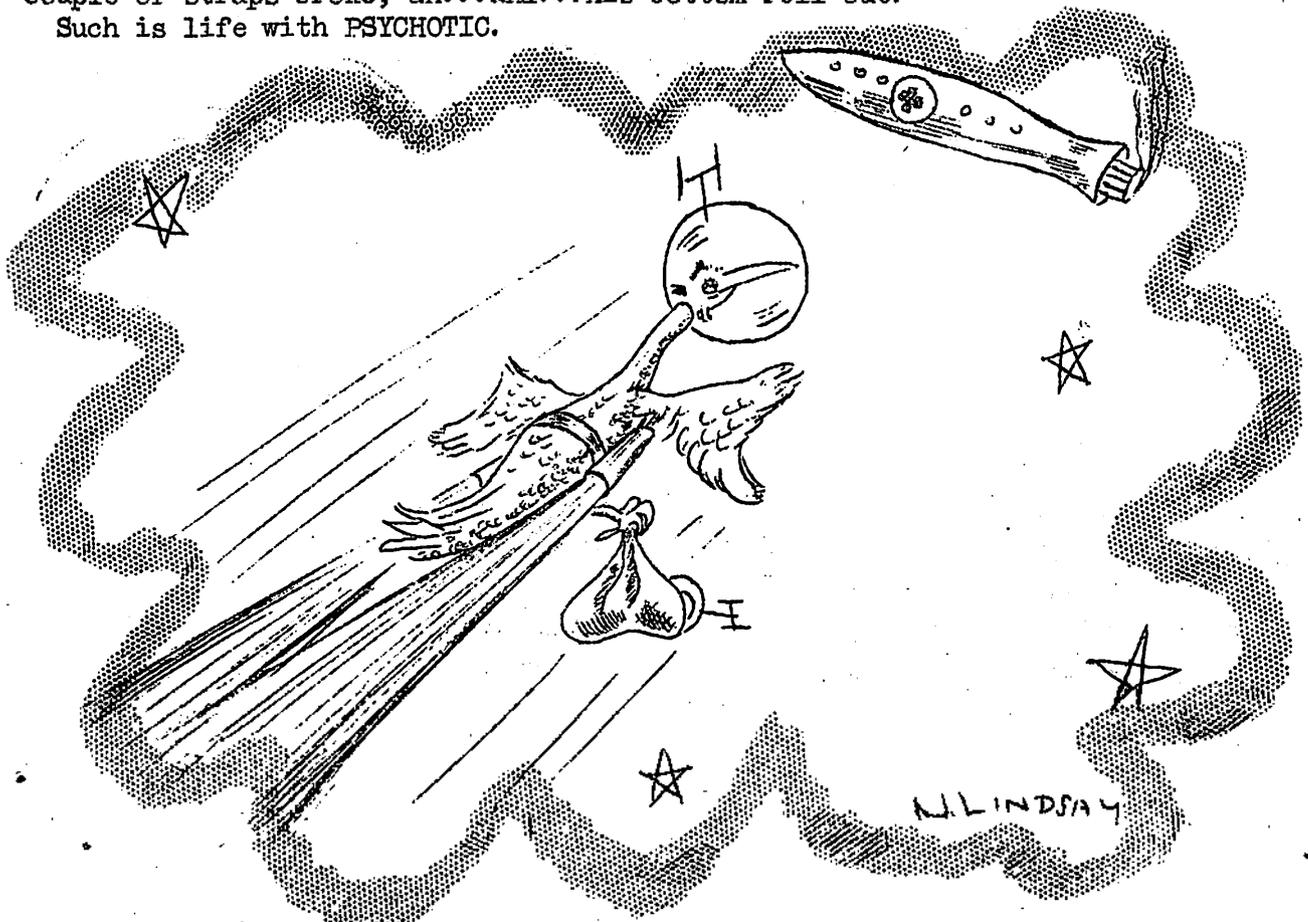
At about 11.30. a.m. the mail arrives. It arrives in a huge brown leather bag that walks like a man with a constant pain in one foot. Often I've walked up and beheld this bag dutifully filling up the tiny mail boxes with which our apartment is afflicted. I've spoken to it, commented upon the weather or the tremendous load it carries, or even (in a pinch), complained about how easy it is to get a hand caught in the tiny mail-box opening. The bag invariably agrees. At one time this bag commented on the fact that I received more mail than all the others in the apartment combined. The bag's straps snapped a little when it said this, and I got the impression that it didn't approve. But even after this stinging rebuke I couldn't be afraid. Its buckles were dull and lifeless, the leather was very dry and cracked in places, and its colour was not good. The bag didn't say it in so many words, but clearly it felt that my excessive mail was ruining its health. And I must admit that as time went on, the bag seemed to grow a sickly tan as it lurch-ed up to and away from our apartment house. I felt sorry for the old bag, but nothing as mere as a mail-bag-on-the-decline was going to keep me away from my fanatic.



Then, one morning as I went to collect my mail, I saw that a spanking new and well-oiled mail bag was toting the stuff. Boy, was he loaded

"What happened," I asked, "to the old bag that used to deliver the mail?" The new bag paused, then replied in a low sad voice. "Old Martin had a bad attack. A couple of straps broke, an...and...his bottom fell out."

Such is life with PSYCHOTIC.

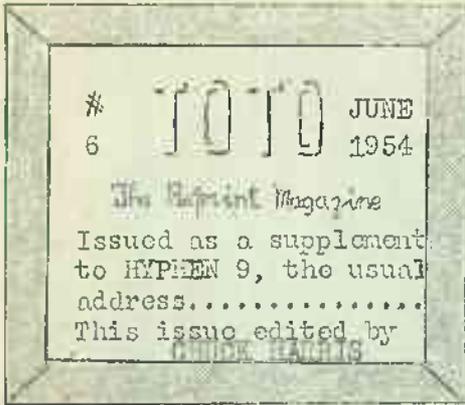


"The party got checked out of one room so fast that some of us didn't even get in" (Manson)

AL ASHLEY, ELFIN EDISON

by CHARLES BURBEE

(From "Burlblings Combined With Elmmurmurings" July '47)



Some of you may have heard of Al Ashley's hobby. As stated in a fan publication (which I published myself) -- the Pacificon Combozine edition of Shangri-L'Affaires -- Al Ashley's hobby is "making things."

I believed this statement when I stencilled it from Sneary's manuscript. I believed it later on when Al Ashley told me the same thing with his mouth. About 18 months ago this man told me of the mimeo-

graph he had designed. In his head, of course. It was to have the best features of all the mimeographs that have ever been built, plus a few ideas added from his vast store of knowledge. All the bad features were to be scientifically eliminated.

In fact, said Al, it will be the god damnedest mimeograph you ever saw. He wriggled with joy.

Will it have moving parts? I asked.

A startled look came into his eyes and for a time his brain lumbered on in silence, and then he finally said, Yes, I guess it will. Why, sure it will.

Well then, I said, what is so special about this mimeograph?

It will have nothing but good features, said Al, warming up again. Seems to me it could be portable. Fold up into a little square no larger than a portable typewriter. That'd be a handy feature if you moved around a lot.

I looked at Al Ashley in amazement. I believed he meant it. I had faith in this man, much as you may have had -- before you started reading this series.

Well, I said, I don't see how you're going to do that.

Al smiled tolerantly. Lots of technological developments have been made since before the war, he said. It's a simple matter of good engineering. I can design anything.

Yeah, I said, but will the finished machine work like the drawing says it should?

Why, sure, said Al.

But how, I said, are you going to iron out the bugs that crop up unless you build a model first?

All the bugs are taken out in the drafting stage, said Al. I once designed a gun that used dry ice as a propellant. That would've worked if I'd built it.

Perfectly, you mean, with no flaws anywhere? I asked.

That's right, said Al. Why not?

I doubt that, I said. (Some of my blind faith was ebbing away.) I doubt it like hell. Oh well. When are you going to build this mimeograph?

One of these days, said Al. Any time now.

That was 18 months ago.

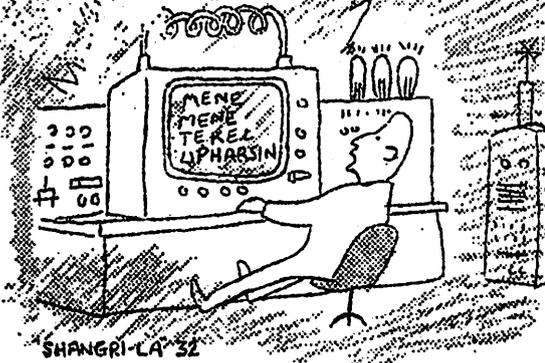
The other day he began to explain to me a complicated machine which had any number of gears, plus some relays. None of the gears seemed to mesh with any other gears (in the drawing he had made) and none of the relays had connections of any sort. The lettering work, though, was excellent. I naturally wanted to know what it was all about.

Well, said Al, it's a device I've designed to measure time.

You mean a clock? But that's already been invented. By Joseph J Bulova in 1703.

"The Still Office" "Saddle of the Spirit" "The Greatest s-j theory" "Great Machine"

You bastard, said Al. Now look, don't be silly. This machine has a definite purpose beyond that of a clock. You see, the subject sits here in front of it and I ask him a psychological question. Then he answers. Oh, something like a word-association test. This machine measures the number of seconds that it takes him to answer. When he answers, I press the button and the machine records it.



God, Al, I said. You've got something stupendous here. I can see millions in it. In fact, somebody's already made the money. You've invented a stop-watch. Somebody has already done this, Al.

This isn't a stop-watch, said Al, after some thought. This is a machine for measuring short intervals of time. By using this machine people will learn to think faster.

Oh, I said.

It beats a stop-watch, said Al, because it teaches people to think faster.

Well, I said, your results are going to be somewhat off the beam because with you pushing the button, the time intervals will be far too long.

Besides, I said, I saw a machine in a psychology class many years ago. A little magnetized disc rotated above another little magnetized disc. The subject, ordered to react to a given stimulus, pressed a button which stopped the discs. The stimulus, a light or a sound, energized the discs, which began to rotate at a given speed. The pressing of the button stopped them instantly. By looking at the position in which they stopped, you could read the time in hundredths of a second off the scribed lines on the discs. A super stop-watch. That seems better than your machine, with you pushing the button.

That machine you described is no good, said Al. It just measures short intervals of time. My machine teaches people to think faster.

Yes, Al, I said.

I'll show you another machine I made, said Al.

You mean you actually made it?

I mean the drawing, said Al. And he showed me a drawing of a very long rod on the end of which was a turntable like a phonograph. It seemed to be powered by friction drive off a roller which took its motive force from a singularly stupid-looking gear. Off bearings.

What the hell is this? I asked.

This is a machine to rotate spiral discs for the purpose of hypnosis. I am going to manufacture them and sell them to all the hypnotists in the city, said Al.

Well, Al, I said, somebody has beat you to the gun again.

What do you mean by again? said Al.

Well, this is a phonograph turntable such as may be found on a phonograph. You lay a disc or record on it and it rotates at 78 rpm's.

Oh no, said Al. This is entirely different, because it is built specially to play discs on.

Al, I said, you have some of these spiral discs, haven't you?

Sure, sure, said Al.

And where do you play them?

On the phonograph, said Al.

Well, then, I said.

Sure, sure, said Al, but this machine is especially designed for the purpose.

You mean it goes round and round, I said. Is that it?

No, no, said Al. For one thing, this machine will run vertically as well as horizontally.

And what else?

Well, that's all, but that's an exclusive feature.

You may have something there, I said. But a large mirror over a phonograph turntable at an angle of 45 degrees will give a vertical image of the turntable.

That's no good, said Al.

Why not?

Why, said Al, suppose you have a disc on which the spirals go inside out. In the mirror that would be reversed. They would be going outside in.

No they won't, I said.

Yes they will, said Al.

Al, I said. Al. Listen to me, Al. An inside-out spiral will also be inside-out in the mirror. The only difference will be in the direction of rotation. The phono turntable will be going clockwise and its reflection will go counter-clockwise.

Oh no it won't, said Al.

Oh yes it will.

So he sat there and thought and thought. At last he shook his head. No, he said. I don't visualize that. You may be right. Let it go.

You can prove it with a mirror right now, I said.

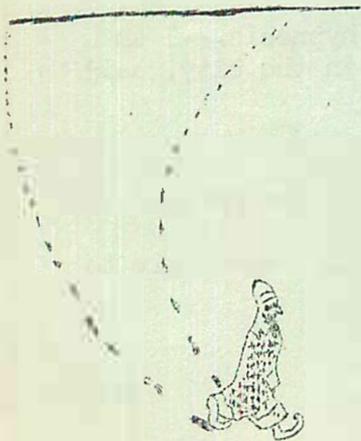
I don't have to, said Al. Besides, this machine I've designed eliminates the use of mirrors. You don't need mirrors with this machine because it's been specially built to operate vertically.

I said, What would happen if you were to turn a phonograph on its side? A small one, that is, like you have. You could turn a table model like that easy.

No, said Al. Their specifications do not call for that. What is needed is a special machine like the one I've designed.

Well, Al, I said. You may be right.

This has been a brief glimpse into the life and times of a busy inventor as he dredges up old and new laws of nature and twists them expertly into novel and bizarre machines such as stop-watches, mimeographs, and turntables that go round and round.



T The first of the fan magazines, Vol 1, No 1,
r May 1930, was titled The Comet, 8 x 11. Title
o later changed to Cosmology. Although it app-
m eared regularly every month for nearly a year,
S the last issues followed no definite scheme
F of numbering or interval of publication. The
B magazine lasted, in all, seventeen issues,
I the final one bearing the date, 1935, Vol.VI,
E No. 1.
L Copies are now so rare that they are almost
I unobtainable at any price. Featured were let-
O ters and articles by Willy Ley, the German
G rocket experimenter, Miles J. Brouer, R.F. Star-
R zel, Lilith Lorraino, and P. Schuyler Miller.
A Raymond A. Palmer was editor for almost the en-
P tire period. All issues, except the last, were
H mimeographed. The final number was published
Y by the Science Fiction Digest Company.
Volume 1, Number 1, 1935 (SF Syndicate, Texas)

The cover story is "The Secret" and what it's been discussed in all my life... (Subb)



A howling screech of displaced air and burning metal broke the unnatural quietness of the main street of Slopes' Gulch as Slim Destron's space-black ship sent up a wave of red-hot dust before settling on its tail. The airlock sprang open and Slim stepped out onto the deserted road, humming a lone spaceman's song to himself. There was a thud as a glass that someone had left in mid-air fell to the ground, and in the middle-distance a crippled waif that couldn't get under shelter was digging himself in.

Slim smiled, and his tough leathery features cracked across the middle. Pulling open a small door in the nose of the sleek little flyer, he brought out a chain and a clamp which he snapped to the hitching rail, locking as he did so the nasal lock that was keyed to his body odour. It was a strong lock.

Protestingly, the rickety wooden stairs of the Last Chance Saloon creaked under the weight of Slim's magnificently proportioned body. It was often said of his proportions that he was exactly as broad as he was long. His head was high-browed and intelligent, his steely eyes grey and piercing -- he had worn through sixteen pairs of spectacles, -- his jaw firm as a planet in its orbit. Greyish was the colour of the leather space uniform, -- it should have been white, -- and belted low across his thighs were two horn-handled sub-atomic deltron-ray blasters.

Shouldering his way through the swing doors of the saloon, he sent a sweeping glance over the crowd inside. Blinking the dust from his eyes, he saw his quarry slouched across one of the gaming tables with three of his cronies lounging on either side. Slim strolled to the long mahogany bar, and nodded at the barkeep.

"Four fingers of jet-swirl, pard," he lipped thinly. "I've burnt space to get here on time to meet Dione Ecro." He jerked his head towards the nearest gaming-table. "That him?"

"Shore is," said the barkeep, who was an old sailor. He looked curiously at Slim. "Got business with him stranger?"

Slim's space-tanned hand reached for the jet-swirl, and a flicker of his steely grey eyes gave the affirmative answer. With one gulp he downed the acrid raw spirit and sauntered slowly across the sawdust to the gaming table.

He smiled tightly as he saw what they were playing. Four dimensional Blasko, a card game originated by the inhabitants of Spudgtt, a far outlying sun system. Catlike grace was in his movements as he eased himself into an empty chair at the table and purred softly. An easy nod to the dealer sent eight four-dimensional cards skimming across to him. He picked them up. Four skags, three blursts, and one quash. A good hand.

He hefted his purse onto the table. The dealer opened it, and amazement rippled through players and spectators alike as he spilt a steady shining stream



of 1000 credit pieces onto the green baize. The dealer's hands trembled as he counted the sum aloud, (as was the custom), and when he hoarsely announced, "One million credits," Dione gasped. His lieutenant's mouth fell open and somebody stole his gold teeth before he could recover. There was a brief muttered conversation, then Dione leaned forward, pale phelgmy eyes glistening with greed.

"You gonna bet the works, stranger," he crisped.

Slim's eyebrows rose slightly. "Kin yuh cover me?" he drawled softly.

Dione nodded briefly and looked meaningly at his companions. The deal was on. Dione drew first and called on the second quash. Slim worked a skilful three-dimensional move and covered himself as he saw what their play would be..... three straight drooles, and a second-dimensional slurp. As he concentrated on the involved drooleplay, a flicker of ultra-energy caught his attention. He dropped his cards on the table, his steely eyes turning a fiery blue.

"Dione..... yuh cheated," he gritted savagely.

"Yeah? Prove it stranger. These folks didn't see nuthin', did yuh, folks?" He looked round menacingly and there were hasty head-shakings. He leaned back and leered at Slim.

"Dione," ground Slim, "I saw you urble those cards through the fifth dimension and out of the seventh. Yuh know that's cheating."

"Huh. So what? And what are yuh gonna do about it?" His hand strayed towards the micro blaster in the shoulder of his black alpaca jacket.

"Dione, I got proof yuh were behind them Snargo Gum hold-ups out beyond the satellite a couple of cycles back. An' what's more, yuh're an asteriod rustler.. ..no, siddown an' lissen..... if yuh ain't off this planet by the first sun's setting, I'm a-coming for yuh."

He rose and stalked out.

Came sundown..... At the far end of Main Street, Slim stood erect and ready, a light breeze ruffling his crisp curly hair. A figure appeared at the other end, and began to pace slowly forward. Slim dropped into a fighting crouch, the lines of his body converging instinctively to offer the smallest possible target. A flaming neutron bolt whizzed past his left ear. Slowly, he shifted his chew to the other cheek.

And then, swift as a Martian snurk, or the greater-crested snobblegook that roams the Jovian deserts, his hands flew at faster than light speed towards the well-worn leather holsters swinging at his hips. In a poem of easy motion the twin De Lameters leapt into his hands, and his fingers jammed the firing studs against the barrels.

But then, instead of the trembling, crackling roar of energy torn from the very fabric of Space itself, the barrels were cold, lifeless, dead. Instinctively, he glanced behind him to see Dione's lieutenant grinning balefully over a cone-shaped forcefield projector.

Despairingly Slim straightened up, --- if he had to die, then he'd do it like a freeborn Terran instead of spacelanes scum. He called the half-smile back to the corners of his mouth, and thought regretfully of the cool, cool green hills of Earth and the little Texas homestead that he'd never see again.

Coldly, ruthlessly, Dione burnt him down. With one contemptuous foot he rolled the lifeless body over in the gritty dust. "Another increase in Boot Hill's population index," he sneered.

Somewhere, in the sombre hills behind the town, a lone coyote howled.

* * *

○ READERS LETTERS ○

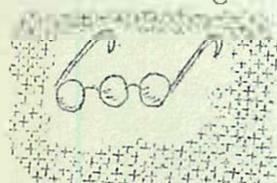
PAUL ENEVER I shouldn't be doing this, of course. Us big-time faneds oughtn't really to fritter away our valuable energies in mere correspondence, but in this instance I am impelled - nay, compelled to Say Something.

The compulsion overcame me on reading HYPHEN 8 -- an unusual occurrence in itself since as a rule I am overcome by all sorts of other things. In the first place there is the good news that Vinz Clarke has won the TAPT election. If we can get that mutant genius out of the way for a month it might give us others a chance to get a word in edgeways.

Bob has excelled himself with the cover, which conceals behind its facetious facade a grim and bitter truth. Vinz grunches along smoothly enough, with just sufficient erudition to fool the neofans into thinking what exalted company they keep...that is, until they get onto the Harris letters - then their thoughts must obviously do a volte face. My thoughts once did a volte face. At least, I thought they did. Harris himself gathers vituperative strength with every issue and I fully expect to see, somewhere about HYPHEN 11, that the RANDOM pages have fallen into acid-bitten holes.

But it is in the DASHICON REPORT that "-8" reaches its peak. You'll have to watch it, Walt. Apparently there is someone else with as keen an observation of fannish facets as yourself. Mal's malfesance has almost as much impact (and truth) as THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR. 'Slovely.

This all-in election sounds a good idea. It would probably give Conventioneers as much pleasure to meet a fan from across the water (either side) as one from their own backyard. Except that, Stateside having about three BNFs to our one, doesn't that give them an advantage? Or am I statistically misled?



((Yes, I think you are, Paul. If one country nominated more candidates than the other, it would only mean that the votes would be spread more thinly amongst them. And besides, the actual country of a fan's origin wouldn't, I think, make much difference to the voters.))

KEN POTTER I was going to do you a column, but at the last moment I remembered that you always reject my stuff, so I'll make it a ~~short~~ letter instead.

These days there is one sure-fire way to become a Big Name. You take one pen, one sheet of paper, and one warped and lunatic mind with accordingly warped and lunatic ideas, and sort of fuse the whole lot together into a letter for HYPHEN. If you do this for every issue during six months or so, and the letter is...er... frothy enough, Why! everybody's heard of you in no time at all. Me, I like fanzines. I'm going to do it the hard way.

You can print this. Honestly you have my permission to print every goddam single word of it. You can even turn it into a column, -- providing you can think up some sensible sort of title for it. Or, you can rip it into pieces and use one or two of the smaller shreds to adorn your bacover, or you could use the whole thing as an interlineation if you like.

Know what I'm going to do now? Well, I'll tell you. I AM GOING TO CRITICISE HYPHEN. I have to mention this Ashworth. The guy must have beaten his brains

I'm going to call her June, because she's bustin' out all over!!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
★ THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR ★
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

out writing that Dashcon Report. I like Mal. I like his 'zine. I liked the Dashcon Report. It was very witty, very clever, very well written. If you think I'm going to spoil all this by saying something offensive, you can... ((easy, Ken --this is HYPHEN not NEBULA))

The letter column was O.K. but why the hell has fandom suddenly started analysing itself? Fans way back were an oppressed minority, sf being something that was shunned by the higher income groups. Judging by fandom, it still is shunned by the higher income groups, but since more of the lower income groups like it, one is no longer scorned for reading the stuff. Fans used to bellyache at one time about the tyrannical oppression of the public. But, they loved it. They loved being an oppressed minority. Now sf is more or less accepted they can't be that so easily anymore. So they go mad. They publish esoteric fanzines. They make themselves into an oppressed minority. Moreover, they discover that they have a sense of humour. Well, the public hates us and we're happy.

That's fandom analysed. Take it or leave it. I'm not interested any further. I admit I may be wrong, but I don't want to argue.

Know anybody who'll help me revive 7th Fandom?

TOM WHITE Hyphen 8 I find, as usual, very amusing, with, shirring through the ordinary fan-genius, the brightness of Wansborough; he really has talent. I can't understand anyone not liking his work, I hope we can get him for BEM. I was almost in tears when I had finished reading his poem; thinking of those brave Earthmen OUT THERE, standing guard with gleaming, brooding eyes ---- makes me sit down and bode about things.

Oh, Wansborough, fair bard of Wilts,
How dost thy heaven-sent arts
Shine forth freely from sacred Hyphen
Upon the everlasting crud of Fandom.

PAUL MITTELBUSCHER Boggs never gives me an opportunity to rise up in wrath, -- his opinions are habitually extensions of my own. Any further commentary would be rather useless. Even as Redd, I grant the presence of such as HYPHEN and the lamented Q adds much to my personal appreciation of fan publishing, however in stating that the crude imitations of such serious efforts as SKYHOOK/SPACESHIP are to be deplored, you forget that even so are the imitations of such paragons of the unserious side as HYPHEN. Apparently fanmags en route to the Emerald Isle undergo some sort of sea-change, for most of what I receive are nought but the immature blatherings of adolescents..... "Gee, Gosh I'm a fan editor and aint 7th Fandom wonderful, satires and real funny stuff this ish and gosh we got a great fanmag yesterday, it's called "Slobberings" and as you all know is real hume - a-russ...HA HA... notice how we misspell words.. isn't that funny..ha ha...and Slobberings is our ideal and we are going to be as much like Slob as possible because as you all know it's the favourite mag of all the well-known fans and anyhow its editor Stan Spittoon has a letter in this ish and he sez he didn't like that two paragraph book review in our last ish because it wasn't humorous and so from now on we won't use no more serious stuff because we want GLUE to be like all the other top zines and Stan sez cut out that column by Joe Brittlefing because he mentioned Science Fiction and everybody knows that all the real good fanmags only talk about fans"...pass the bucket somebody so I won't get the floor messy....

((Paul, personally I agree with you up to a point, but what our ex-editor was trying to suggest was that even the type of fanzine that you satirize would be more enjoyable than one in which a half-baked teen-ager makes a fool of himself by attempting to write in the style of Boggs or Atheling.))

MAL ASHWORTH I'm real glad that the TAFFund has been such a success so far and I hope that the rest of the money is raised in time. Whilst on the subject of the fund I'd like to say with all due respect that I consider Ted Tubb's suggestion one of the best ever to come out of the back of anybody's neck. Not only is it of an 'undemocratic' and 'harking-back-to-feudalism' nature but it's just plain impracticable. It seems to me that such a method would defeat



its own ends within a year of inception. As you say, you'd get one pressure group almost paying for their own particular illiterate, uncultured moron to go over and then the next year they wouldn't be able to afford to do it again, nobody else would be interested in it any longer because some of their cash had helped to send over a chap they either didn't know or didn't like, the Americans (this is looking at it just from the British side) wouldn't want to see example of our Fandom like that, and the few who really are worthwhile personalities would have been completely overlooked in the scramble. Your own scheme on the other hand for making it wide-open so that the most popular world fan visits the other side of the pond is the seriousest, constructivest scheme imaginable for promoting Anglo-US fan liason and relationships; it's excellent.

....talking about Norman Wansborough's poem. Well, you know, being quite honest, I didn't like it quite as well as the one in the previous issue. Somehow he seems more at home with the medium of humour. I don't know why really....I'm not quite sure that his style is really suited as yet to a cosmic theme such as that he attempted in this issue; I think it needs to broaden just a little yet before he attempts such subjects regularly. Incidentally, quite without any boastfulness I will tell you that we have on hand for inclusion in BEM 2; a poem by Norman on the Supermancon which I consider to be his greatest humorous work, nay, his greatest work of any kind, to date.

Grunch was great and Random utterly lousy...((Tsk, --and after all that egoboo I lavished on your Dashcon Report too. You trying to bite the fan that heeds you too?))

TED TUBB Glad to hear that Ving won the poll, he deserves it and what a lead! On the voting suggestions; I like the idea of a two-sided effort but only if all voters contribute -- a thing essential. One point, - all American money could be held over there for candidates to use - currency regulations being what they are, some such arrangement is essential. More suggestions (I'm full of them) for comment, rejection, rehash etc. Trying to salvage the idea of "the more cash the more power" and while accepting that to a fan a small sum could, and often does, mean more to him than ££££ to vile hucksters, how about the following subtle scheme?

Votes to be hooked on the cash intake with one vote per double preceding sum. i.e. one vote = 2/6. Second vote for another 5/-. Third vote for another 10/-. So, if anyone wants more than one vote and is too honest to fake a false ballot paper (scum!) he can pay for the privilege. That way, it will cost 17/6 for 3 votes, -- not bad if you can get it.

On voting. I like the idea of a double vote against the sliding scale. One vote each on a straight list candidates without worrying who you'd like to go if Number One can't. Then, the first three to be voted on a second time for a straight result. After all, what's the good of anyone voting that Number Seven

"She was lying on the same intellectual plane with him..."

should go if no one else can? If they wanted the guy to go they'd have put him first anyway. (And a second vote would put the most popular three into order in case the winner was unable to go.)

ERIC FRANK RUSSELL After some thought I've come to a conclusion that should have been obvious without the strain of thinking, namely, that no faned can contrive more than 50% of the success or failure of what he puts out. The other 50% is completely beyond his control because it depends upon the mood of the reader and a mess of fortuitious circumstances. You don't mind multisyllable words, do you?

This ish of HYPHEN for instance may not be more than average for you. But to me it seemed extraordinary good because (a) it caught me in a mood to be humored and (b) it came same post as another much inferior farmag which I happened to read first, whereupon HYPHEN'S scintillating self-sufficiency was enormously magnified by contrast.

Obviously the very same publication, containing the very same material, may have been delivered the very same day to some other hapless wight (pronounced White) who has just crawled out of a booze-scented bed, has a tongue like half a yard of dull green tripe, piles like seaweed and no sensayuma. So he reads Hy-fan (God, a gag!), sincerely thinks it stinks and with equal sincerity writes you saying so. In these circs I don't see how you can get the real measure of your own efforts other than by trying to strike a possibly deceiving average between the (temporary) lively and the (temporary) liverish.

Added to which is the horrid notion that there's no way of telling what proportion of HYPHEN'S eminence as compared with other fanmags is due to exceptional genius in Belfast, and what proportion is due to sheer luck in happening to pick as readers the very people who keep their bowels open. The staff of O'Bleak House just don't know and cannot learn how much they owe to an invisible partner named Beecham.

DENNIS TUCKER Bob Shaw's BUSHEL was really interesting. I think it would be a most interesting idea to hear a lot more about fans' alternative hobbies. I don't collect coins seriously, --as Bob intimates, it costs too much, - but I do pick up any crown pieces I come across. ((Doesn't it take an awful lot of willpower to walk past the half-crowns and florins?)) I have five at the moment, dating back to Queen Victoria. Am also interested in looking out for any coin oddities, as, for example, some 1912 pennies which were manufactured by Heaton's Mint in (I think) Birmingham, when the Royal Mint found itself unable to cope with the demand for pennies in that year. They bear a very tiny H to the left of the date and are variously reported as being worth 13/6d and 1d. (Wish I could find out as I have one)



Wonders will never cease! TOTO, this time, was one of the best things in the issue; better let Vinç choose them all. Other columns and articles are up to the standard we have come to expect of HYPHEN. Chuck: What does a fully-dressed calendar look like? ((Couldn't say. From my experience of calendars I would imagine such a thing would be even rarer than 1912 pennies with an H on))

I see you have stopped using the Varityper for the letter section; has it fallen apart or something? ((No, it's still intact but it was taking 18 hours just to cut the letter section, stencils, and on top of that, the typeface wasn't really sharp enough.))

I wish this page I ever heard of finding it

(Tucker contd.) It seems to me that someone should tell Bert Campbell the facts of SF life. As if fans care when - or even whether - any promag. is published!.. Ted Tubb certainly has a point in regard to the Transfund, though I am inclined to agree with your angle as to the sacrifice involved. Do you think it might be an idea to raise the qualifying fee to 5/- or would the law of diminishing returns then come into operation? .. Come off it, Walt! "Some fanzines which are.. published.. to make money." This must be worth hearing about: details, please!... (Or is this something relating to the U.S. once again, that I haven't heard about?)... You're quite right about my lack of sisters: congratulations on a neat piece of deduction.

ARCHIE MERCER First of all, as to this Fundloving question. You say you've done well - or better than expected, anyhow. The second rings nearer the mark methinks. You ask for £200 and you get just over a third... However, I suppose it sounds a lot nicer to call a near-failure a triumphant success. ((Surely as long as a candidate does go, then the fund can be called a success. And it should be remembered that the fund is not yet closed, and that money is still coming in. If, after the Mancon, there is enough to send a fan across, then I think we are entitled to call the fund a success.))

As for Ted Tubb's idea - well, it strikes me that while some sort of cash qualification was inevitable, the lengths he's prepared to go are unthinkable. However, there's always the happy medium, particularly among spirituous spiritualists. I personally see nothing wrong in letting people buy a **SECOND** vote, at the same price as the first. And the price of the first **COULD** be put up -- say five bob. There could still be some arrangement whereby juniors could buy their **FIRST** vote at a reduced rate.

TOTO - well, it's not quite sunk back to its former level, but it's well on the way. The poetry's OK - but the article's just soso. I suppose you'll be sitting back beaming, having secured the Name. I remain unaffected. I've never been able to see what there is about him so extra-special anyway, and this is no exception. Pure mediocrity. ((Now look here, once and for all, Names mean damn all in TOTO or in HYPHEN itself. This is our fanzine, not yours, and we publish what we like. Our taste is fairly catholic and we manage to please most of the readers. Obviously we can't please all of them, but if you, or any others, are shocked, disgusted or, worse still, bored, then we are quite prepared to refund every penny of your 9d. Fair comment is welcome, but you make a habit of bitching at almost every issue, and we sometimes wonder why you ever bother to renew your sub at all.))

Grunch, - that Scotch poetry leaves me somewhat stranded - what's conturbat mean? Far's as I can see, bloke's just eaten three poets, who seem to be disagreeing with him. "Random." - oh no, oh no! It can't be. That poem **STINKS!** Nothing like the postman effort -- sheer driverel. No, come to think of it, I don't believe Norm W. wrote it at all. Bet Chuck made it up himself. ((Would somebody please tell me if that is libel or just slander)). **DASHCON** - A great improvement on his previous effort. And, so far as my own experience of my one and only Con can be equated with it, very true.

WORDSWORTH NEVER SAID IT BETTER - Good. ((You mean you liked it?))

Post Scripts - Well. About de Camp. For de Fence now. I have no praise((Hah)) to squander on his shorter efforts, which usually aren't worth writing, but I consider much of his longer stuff's very good indeed - **AND FUNNY**. Examples - the obvious one that springs to mind is where Harold Shea got his decimal point wrong and conjured up point ought one of a rhinoceros. Or maybe you think that one was straight from the Pratt? Then later on when the party find themselves
*or maybe it was a dragon.

"She's withdrawn into herself, a typical cotillion's info....."

(-still Mercer) stranded in the pleasure dome of Yanadu. Or in Solomon's Stone, where they think up all those apes and dinosaurs and things all of a sudden. Don't the Irish find such things funny? And there's a sort of merry atmosphere permeating a longer de Camp story all through, irrespective of whether it ever comes to the surface - as in the examples I've just quoted - or not. He's a Benny, not a Hope. Ken Bulmer finds de Camp insincere. What's he want - Fiction With a Message or nothing?

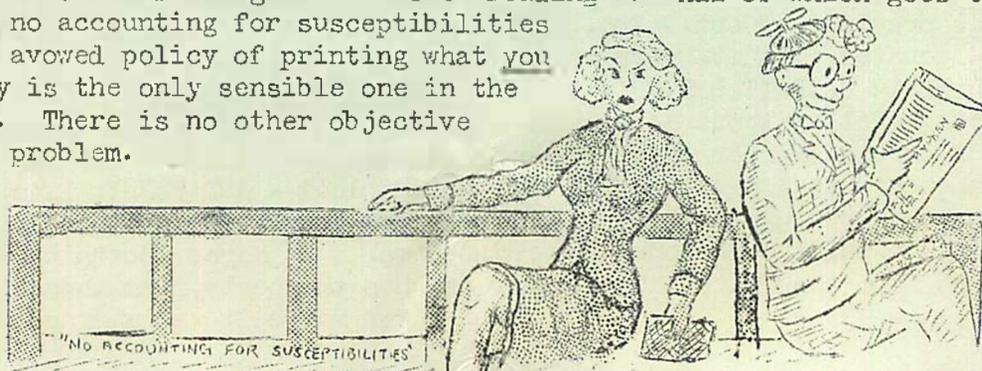
Your answer to Dennis Tucker - (Hyphen) "contains more concentrated substance than any other fanmag being published today." May well be true - out of those I read, I'll grant its accuracy - nevertheless, I maintain that statements of that sort ought, if made at all, to be qualified by a "In all modesty I think that" or something. Because nobody, even you, is capable of judging his own work entirely without bias. ((But Walt wasn't judging his own work. Surely "concentrated substance" referred to the way we pack the material into the mag, and couldn't be taken to imply anything about the quality of the contents? We never said HYPHEN is good, just that it has plenty of substance. Do we need to preface that with some coy retiring phrase?))

FRED SMITH Glad to see Vinø won the election. I didn't vote myself since I did not know any of the candidates well enough, but he seems a nice guy. He must be. He sent in a sub to HAEMOGOBLIN and saved us a complimentary copy. The two way Transfanfund idea seems okay to me and I'm inclined to agree that each contributor should have only one vote. In this issue Mal Ashworth and Paul Enever stood out. Toto was also as excellent, and I'm in whole-hearted accord with your selections and your reasons for keeping it on. Faugh! in fact, Pish! to these neofen who seem to dislike instinctively anything that happened before their time, or who can't appreciate sheer good fan-writing or both.

Bill Temple's and John Brunner's letters in this issue inspired in me feelings of nostalgia and nausea respectively. It seems to me that although fandom may be growing away from stf, it obviously couldn't exist without it. After all, it's the common interest which draws all these crazy wonderful people together, altho they don't always stick to it as a topic for discussion. I wonder if Brunner caught pneumonia from dipping that toe? Temple's phrase about the magic being trampled underfoot is very apt however, as is the cartoon that illustrates it. Do you ever get a slight sinking feeling when you look at your backlog of mags and books waiting to be read?

DAPHNE BUCKMASTER Congratulations on "The Enchanted Duplicator", a terrific piece of work, and much enjoyed by us both. More please! As one of your women readers (and a very enthusiastic one although I have always been too lazy to write and tell you so) I would like to say that I found nothing objectionable in either the Sweet Sue limerick or the bacover quote.

In this respect however, I think that Tucker's "Short Course of Art" was neither funny enough nor serious enough to be worth reading... All of which goes to show that there is no accounting for susceptibilities and that your avowed policy of printing what you think is funny is the only sensible one in the circumstances. There is no other objective answer to the problem.



"I've been insulted by bigger named fan than you..."

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Mr. Walter Willis

Dear Mr. Willis,

Your attention is respectfully drawn to Volume 2, Number 4, (whole number 10) of an amateur periodical entitled REVIEW, published by Mr. Vernon McCain of Kellogg, Idaho. Specifically we wish to call your attention to a statement appearing at the bottom of page five in that issue, a statement made by a member of your staff and one of our more distinguished clients. The gentleman in question is Mr. F. Chuck Harris, of Carolin Grotto, Lake Essex, England.

The quotation as it appears at the bottom of page five in REVIEW: "...my S-x drive is perfectly normal. And, if necessary, I will produce references to prove it."

Inasmuch as our client, Mr. Harris, has felt his honor impugned and his reputation besmirched, he has retained this firm to supply the necessary references mentioned in the quotation. They follow, and are verbatim reports from our confidential files. This report is being sent to both you and Mr. McCain, that each may see for yourself that the base canard uttered in a previous issue of REVIEW is indeed a base canard.

FILE 29-702: "Chuck Harris? The Chuck Harris? D'ya mean good old Chuckie? Lord love a duck, I'll say he has drive! Hardly gave me time to down my fish and chips, he did!"

FILE 29-703: "Chuck Harris? Wait a minute; I'll consult the records. Oh,---- that Harris! Well sir, he has been banned from this house. Couldn't control himself, you know. Broke furniture, tore up the bedding, spilled liquor on the carpets, that sort of thing. Very bad for the morale of the girls, you see. We never could understand him; put him down as a nut, really. One of the girls reported to me that he was attempting a crazy experiment. Something about mass reaction or something in free fall. I just don't understand it, do you?"

FILE 29-704: "Yeah, I think he drifted through here once or twice. Quiet sort of chap -- never said a word. Just popped in, bashed some poor girl over the head wrestled with her and popped out again. Sure would like to find him myself. Owes us half-a-crown, he does!"

FILE 29-705: "Harris? That unspeakable [~~***#0&!!**%~~] Look at my daughter, ---- go on, just look at her!"

FILE 29-706: "Mister, if I were you, I wouldn't mention that name in this town. The court docket is crowded, let me tell you, with new divorce cases. He came through here a while back and now look at the troubles we've got. Why, even old Squire Higgins is shedding his wife, and she's eighty if she's a day."

FILE 29-707: "Gee whiz!"

FILE 29-708: "Well, yes, I'll agree that he has, and he does. But he's a trifle near-sighted, I think. Look at this wound!"

FILE 29-710: "Yes, of course. We met on the boat-train, coming in from Calais. He offered to show me how the thing was docked, and by the time I understood his meaning it was too late. Perfect gentleman about it though..."

Now Mr Willis, you will readily realise from the above references that Mr. F. Chuck Harris is indeed all that he claims to be, and more. We have omitted those other references which have no direct bearing on this matter; references which

"When we woke up there was water dripping from the electric-light bulb" (Manson)

were volunteered but have nothing at all to do with his S-x drive. They have to do with falling ceilings, mountain climbing, convention programmes, unworkable mimeographs, lost leases, a periodical called Vagrant Statten's Magazine, and other trivia. The persons who supplied these testimonials were confused as to the exact matter wanted.

The case histories and files mentioned above may be examined in full if you care to call at our office. Naturally, we cannot permit revelation of the names and addresses of the participants, although those who have since fallen into the toils of the law and are now in durance vile may be visited at the regular hours provided by law.

Speaking on behalf of your distinguished staff member and our honorable client, may we say that this definitely settles the matter. The S-x drive of Mr. Harris is perfectly normal.

Service,

Oliver King Smith.

D.R. SMITH Let me be wrathful. Let me quiver with senile fury at the pusillanimity of the fans of today. Here do my popping eyes perceive one V. Clarke - a gentleman for whom I had conceived considerable liking and respect, - mentioning that at one time he sank so low as to read detective stories, and saying so in a feeble quavering tone as if he were ashamed of having done so. God's wounds! - if he needs any support let me assure him that I too have read detective stories, do read detective stories, and will read detective stories though I have to wade knee-deep through the fast-spawning hordes of secondrate S.F. to get at them. Nor shall I seek to excuse my liking for the works of Michael Innes on the grounds that sometime he may write science-fiction. I do not associate my enjoyment of him with his occasional floods of fantasy, anymore than I regard Gervase Fen as one of the great characters of the age because he once met a vicar who was troubled by a poltergeist. If it is to be regarded as treason in a fan to read anything other than science-fiction - or anything less than every word of the sometimes drivel - then cross me off the lists here and now!

I'm running a little short on time. I see you want just one example of something by de Camp that I find amusing. Well, I could take you back to Johnny Black and his struggle with the infamous chimpanzee McGinty, -- or don't you find that amusing? How about The Stolen Dormouse, - surely you find some of that faintly risible? I also find comic incidents in such light fare as The Incomplete Enchanter, The Castle Of Iron, The Undesired Princess etcetera. What's your grouch against Sprague anyway?

DANON KNIGHT The magazine's illegibility may be part of its charm,* but it was a near thing with me: I read the easy parts, passed over the back cover as totally impossible, & shudder to think what would have happened if Jim Blish hadn't picked it up and started laughing like a maniac. What unsung genius said, "You haven't really lived until you've been goosed with a copy of Fahrenheit 451"? ((It was overheard by our agent Terry Carr at a meeting of The Golden Gate Futurian Society.))

I was going to tell you what I like, but I like every damned thing in the magazine, even the verse. Since when has there been readable verse in farmags? Good lord, I have been out of touch too long. What's Seventh Fandom? Does it hurt? ((Yes)) Why aren't A. Vincent & Arthur C. the same person?

"Now about sex and smut" should have been an interlineation. So businesslike. Down Neptune! Up Uranus!

Just went back through the wilderness looking for something to deprecate, and thought I had it in the serious and constructive reviews, but struck that remark about, "the practised robot-spotter" and gave up...

* Is British mimeo ink grey to start with?

JIM HARMON Thanks for "4", I thought I'd write you a note about it but it probably won't turn out well -- that's the way things have gone today. I had to hunt a half-hour for a bottle-opener before I could have lunch. So I may sound like I'm talking through my hat, or at least writing inside of it -- and that's the story in a nut shell.

Does this mean that Ireland has recognized the state of ILLINOIS? I'm part Irish (about a fifth -- only you call them Miniatures over there, don't you?) and I doubt that I'd recognize it without help. It's a really lovely place though. Bradbury's spacemen always want to come here from Mars or some lunar crater or other. Personally, I'd rather be in Hell (that's in the fifth quadrant, I think). And speaking of Bradbury, he had a couple of shorts in ELLERY QUEEN'S this month all about a small Illinois town (much like this one) where all the women are kept in a state of horrified fear (that's across the river -- also known as Indiana) by the creeping monster known as The Lonely One (no, I'm the life of the party) and who all go to flickering gray shadows in the cold dark caves of Harold Lloyd in Welcome, Danger! This of course is nonsense. Small Illinois towns get newer pictures than that. There's a dandy double feature on tonight -- a Conrad Naigel spy and a Buck Jones cowboy... The reason I mention this is to prove that Ray has not forgotten Fandom. He makes a particularly interested remark in the first story: "In the downtown drug store, fans whispered in the high ceiling air."

You know, I guess I'm getting old. I was 21 on the 21st of April (sounds like a fixed match). The other day an old uncle of mine leaned through the bars and told me, "Jim, you're a man now. You can walk in and out of any saloon in town." It's wonderful what maturity will do for you. I've never found any saloon that I was able to walk out of before.

If you'll pardon me a few personal comments, have you heard that I AM NOW A PRO!!! I suppose not. I couldn't hire the public address trucks for overseas duty... Just think of it. You knew me when I was a miserable, ill-clothed, uncouth, unsanitary, neurotic, poverty-stricken, juvenile fan. And now I am a miserable, ill-clothed, unsanitary, neurotic, poverty-stricken, juvenile pro. How the mighty have fallen! Let's see, I left out "uncouth." Well, that's all right. I've couthed up some.

VERNON MCCAIN You know that I've always been a fervent admirer of the uninhibited Willis way with his own personality, but methinks in recent issues of "4" the playing up of the non-serious and constructive qualities of Willis and Co., is taking on the earmarks of a crusade, which, frankly, sounds pretty dreadful. Methinks you're in danger of appropriating the most odious features of what you are opposing, much as has our junior Senator from Wisconsin in his Holy Crusade against Communism. Maybe I'm a hopeless cynic but I can't really see anything in fandom sufficiently important to get that worked up over. Fandom is great fun but only as long as one relaxes and takes it as it comes. Or is this a hangover from Jophanish idealism...

I suspect you of a long-standing peeve at de Camp for having dared to analyze the components of humor, like some witch doctor of an African tribe who screams malevolently at the white scientist who insists on violating all the taboos and showing the scientific explanation of The Great Mystery. I agree wholly with D.R. Smith's comment that he wasn't aware that everything that de Camp wrote was supposed to be funny. In fact, if I'd gotten around to writing on the last issue I intended to say the same. I'll go further and admit that practically everything written by de Camp since World War 2 (with the exception of "Proposal") has been something short of sidesplitting. But I fail utterly to see how anyone with

"I am the only person who really appreciates you"

"ghost of a sense of humor can fail to be convulsed by most of the things he was writing for asf and Unknown prior to his military service during the war. You ask me to name one instance when he was actually funny? Unfair!!! Name me one instance when Walt Willis (or Charles Burbee, or Robert Bloch, or anyone else you find most amusing) was actually funny. I guarantee I'll be able to listen and find nothing amusing. Humor depends 99% upon the unexpected for its effect. When one is expecting the joke and trying to foretell the punchline most of the genuine humor is dissipated. Which is one reason people who go around telling funny stories, are usually such dreadful bores. ((But if this was so, wouldn't every radio comedian be out of a job? When Benny or Hope opens their mouth, none of the audience are expecting anything except jokes. And, furthermore, the cliched catch-phrase which some comedians use as a trade-mark, frequently gets the biggest laugh of all.))...So I won't give any instances. But I will mention some complete books. Personally I consider "The Incomplete Enchanter" and "Last Darkness Fall" to be high points in sf humor. Perhaps not as giggle-provoking as Thorne Smith fantasies, but sf takes less easily to humor....Nope, as a recognized humorist yourself, you simply resent someone who has discovered how you do it and are refusing to find him funny.

As for your ghod, Burbee -- admittedly he's hit some of fandom's highest peaks of wit, but you have to wade through so much crud to find the occasional jewels. ((Would you give instances in this case? I haven't seen a Burbee article yet that I wouldn't reprint and I find him far more consistently funny than Bloch, Willis, or Tucker.)) Personally I can't see how there can be any doubt as to fandom's greatest writer. Who else but Bloch? I quite seriously regard Bloch as not only fandom's greatest humorist, but as one of the greatest in the world. Even removing the special dimension of appreciation due to private fannish jokes (which I think you'll admit accounts for a very high proportion of your own output), I still find what remains of Bloch to be more entertaining than that of such mundane favorites of mine as Thurber, Benchley, and Cuppy. Maybe there is a more amusing person than Bloch someplace, but I don't know about him. It's a pity humor doesn't pay better since Bloch simply doesn't have anything like that quality in his fiction. In second place I would place you ((why, thank you Vernon, but I'm... er, you mean Walt?)) ... your batting average is much higher than Burbee's and to my mind your hits are much more effective than even his best ones. Third would come Tucker. And only then does Burbee stand a chance -- and I'm not sure there wouldn't be some other names in there.....

The only thing that ever really shocked me in the slightest in "-" was something everyone else seems to have ignored -- the use of the word "Jap" when you called Tetsu Yano a "bloody Jap". I don't know the connotations of the word over there -- I understand "nigger" is quite acceptable in polite company in Britain. ((It is not)) But I was raised in a section where a Japanese population was our only important minority and they were quite highly regarded by everyone who lived around there. There, "Jap" has the same connotations to Japanese as "nigger" has to Negroes, "wop" to Italians or "kike" to Jews. It simply wasn't used to anyone you had a good opinion of and not at all to the Japanese unless you wished to provoke a fight (and I never once heard it used around any Japanese during any of the fights that constantly occur on a schoolhouse playground)..and I rather recoil from the use of the word in one of my favourite fanzines.

((Although the words, "nigger, kike, or wop" are frowned on here, Jap is accepted as a perfectly normal abbreviation for "Japanese". "Nips" or "little yellow bastards" seems to be our equivalent of your "Japs". I believe Walt used the phrase "any bloody Jap who reads science-fiction" and it was no more derogatory than if he's said, say, "Any bloody Scot.." or "Any bloody Yank..." So there.))

"I'm one of the Old Guard, having started with the first ish of GALAXY."

BILL TEMPLE D.R. Smith has said one of the nicest things about me that ever set me purring. He opines I'm "constitutionally unable of being effectively abusive." Please, Mr. Smith, continue to think so. Never, never come to "The Globe" and be horribly disillusioned. Most of the people there look withered and blistered, like mutants after an atomic war. All my doing.

The quoting of other people with similar views doesn't arise from lack of imagination, but from a desire to make the quotee feel he's outnumbered. Mr. Smith would fail to see any application to himself, naturally: the hypercritical, oddly enough, are seldom self-critical. It's childish (i.e. not adult) of him to instance the opposite extreme and pretend that I suggest he abandon all sense of proportion whatever.

As van Gogh said (here we go again: Mr. Smith, you're surrounded!) when accused of praising second-rate painters as well as first-rate ones: "People do not admire enough." I think "appreciate" would be the better word.

I hope you'll be conventionally happy. I doubt if I shall go. I gather that polar bears roam loose in the desolate latitudes north of London. I'm getting too old and fat to run.

RICHARD E GEIS You know, fandom never ceases to amaze me. If even three years ago a fellow told me I'd be writing letters to a guy in Northern Ireland who I didn't even know by sight... or even that I would be writing numerous young men in this country whom I'd never met... well, I would have politely asked him if the rocks in his head were shifting again. But... here I am doing it day after day. And the funny thing is that I feel I know you and McCain and Gregg Calkins and Tucker, and many many more even better than I know most of the people I work with every day. This fandom, this amateur publishing, this microcosm...ah, it's wonderful.

I think I enjoyed "-" more this issue than any other I've seen thus far...the funniest thing to me was Vinç Clarke and his liquid duplicator. His description of the gathering of the fans at the housewarming party, plus the description of the Dashcon by Mal Ashworth, has, combined with the tales of the cons over here, made me extremely leery of going to any cons AT ALL. I am a very quiet fellow, introverted and not given to drink or loud noises. I am nervous. I am mostly anti-social. I am shy and bashful. ((Do people confuse you with Robert Bloch?)) BUT, leave me to confess it, if it should occur that a few Portland fans are driving down to Frisco come Labor Day... and there was room... you can bet I'd be going with them. It would probably be the first and last con I went to, but go I would just to see what it was like.

Got a bang out of RANDOM by Harris. There is one thing about the insult humor that is used by HYPHEN ... especially this case about the letters... I simply don't know for sure if there is actually a Peggy Martin and if she actually did write such a letter. But I don't suppose it matters much, does it? It was great fun and I enjoyed it. It might not be so funny if I knew all the facts in the case. Ignorance is bliss. ((But not in this case, Rich. Truly, there is a Peggy Martin -- you've heard of her sister Betty?-- and she really wrote that letter. James White is a real-life Character too, -- it was no phantasm that, clad in the top half of a pair of scarlet pyjamas, chased Shirley Marriott down the corridor of the Grosvenor Hotel last week))

There's still a heap more letters here, but that will have to be all for this time if we hope to get this into the mail. Maybe next time Walt will be able to squeeze more in. We badly want to hear from you though, even if we can't print your letter. We're far far more interested in you, than we are in your ninepence, so let's hear from you.

"I hate Burgess's guts; I hate them so much I'd like to examine them at leisure"

ANYTHING YOU SAY MAY BE TAKEN DOWN AND USED IN INTERLINEATION AGAINST YOU...BUT I KNOW SNEARY--HE TAUGHT KEASLER HOW TO SPELL...GO SLOWLY, POLISH EACH PHRASE, AND KEEP BOTH EYES PEELED FOR ITS AND IT'S...THIS NEW DEAL ABOUT 7TH FANDOMERS DESERTING AND 8TH FANDOMERS TAKING UP THE CRY MIGHT RUIN ALL THE GOOD...YOU MEAN TO SAY YOU WERE A FAN BACK WHEN OOTWA WAS BEING PUBLISHED?...IT'S LIKE BEING DRUNK WHILST WALKING UNDER WATER...SHE'D BE FERTILE GROUND FOR A WILD OAT...IT'S HARD TO WRITE ABOUT CONVENTIONS WITHOUT BEING RUDE TO SOMEONE...YOUR MAGAZINE IS SLIGHTLY OVERINKED--I CAN STILL READ IT...A NON COMPOS MUNDANE TYPE...WE HAVE A SUB FROM WANSBOROUGH AND ARE GOING SLICK...HAVE YOU A COUPLE OF ETHICS YOU COULD LEND ME FOR THE WEEKEND?...WITH HIS BACKGROUND OF ROSICRUCIANISM AND DIAMETICS HE SHOULD BE JUST THE MAN TO ORGANISE AN SF CONVENTION...GET UP ON YOUR KNEES AND FIGHT LIKE A FAN...BUT WHO WANTS TO SUBLIMATE SEX ANYWAY?...WHY DID THE ENTIRE BUNCH GET BLACKBALLED FROM THE WHITE HORSE, ANSWER ME THAT?...I FORESEE THE DAY WHEN FEN, MEETING IN THE STREET, WILL RECOGNISE EACH OTHER BY SMALL LABEL BADGES...NATURALLY I CUT A HOLE IN THE STENCIL OF P.2 OF HYPHEN 8 AND INSERTED A VIOLENT DENUNCIATION OF BELI -- AND RAN OFF ONE COPY FOR ASHWORTH...FANDOM APPEARS TO ME TO BE A HEALTHY PASTIME...AREN'T I AMAZING? CANADIAN REPRINT EDITION, OF COURSE...WE DON'T DRINK BHEER--WE WORSHIP IT...I MUST WRITE TO THE CREMATORIAL FOR A RESERVATION...CARE FOR A TRIP AROUND THE BISCUIT FACTORY WHILST YOU'RE IN THE VICINITY?...IS YOUR SISTER A LESBIAN?...I AM THINKING OF FORMING A FANCLUB FOR EX-EDITORS OF SPACE TIMES...SO INNOCENT THAT HE WAS 14 BEFORE HIS PARENTS LET HIM SEE A NAKED FLAME...HE WENT WEST, BUT ONLY BY OCCIDENT...HE BOUGHT 7 BOTTLES OF GIN IN ONE DAY--BY THE END OF IT THEY WERE PUTTING ONE ON THE COUNTER EVERY TIME HE WALKED IN...WHOSE BEARD IS THIS?...DO YOU THINK CHARLES MIGHT BE SOFTENED UP ENOUGH NOW?...SHE DIDN'T MONOPOLISE THE CONVERSATION--HER LAUGH DID, THOUGH...TURGID CRUD IS TURGID CRUD--EVEN UNDER THE OLD PALS ACT...WHAT FANDOM NEEDS IS LESS PEOPLE SAYING WHAT FANDOM OUGHT TO BE...CERTAINLY COME SUNDAY--UNLESS YOU'RE EXERCISING DROIT DE SEIGNEUR...DON'T LET IT LEAK BACK TO FANDOM THAT I'M READING SF...EVERY FIVE MINUTES HER MOTHER WOULD COME IN AND WATER THE ASPIDISTRA...DGOBOORISH...I WONDER YOU HAVE ANY FRIENDS LEFT THE WAY YOU STICK YOUR COMMENTS IN THE MIDDLE OF THEIR ARTICLES...IN A PROCESSION OF CRUD WE ARE THE BANNER-HOLDERS..."I" IS "ENEY" IN JAPANESE....

correspondents of e f russell, unknown fans, newman, clarke, willis, wells, bloch, harris, taylor, potter, geis, alan james, drsmith, bent-liffe, mercer, hoofman, pam bulmer, madelaine allis, daphne buckmaster, eney, tubb. ^{but not} in order.



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