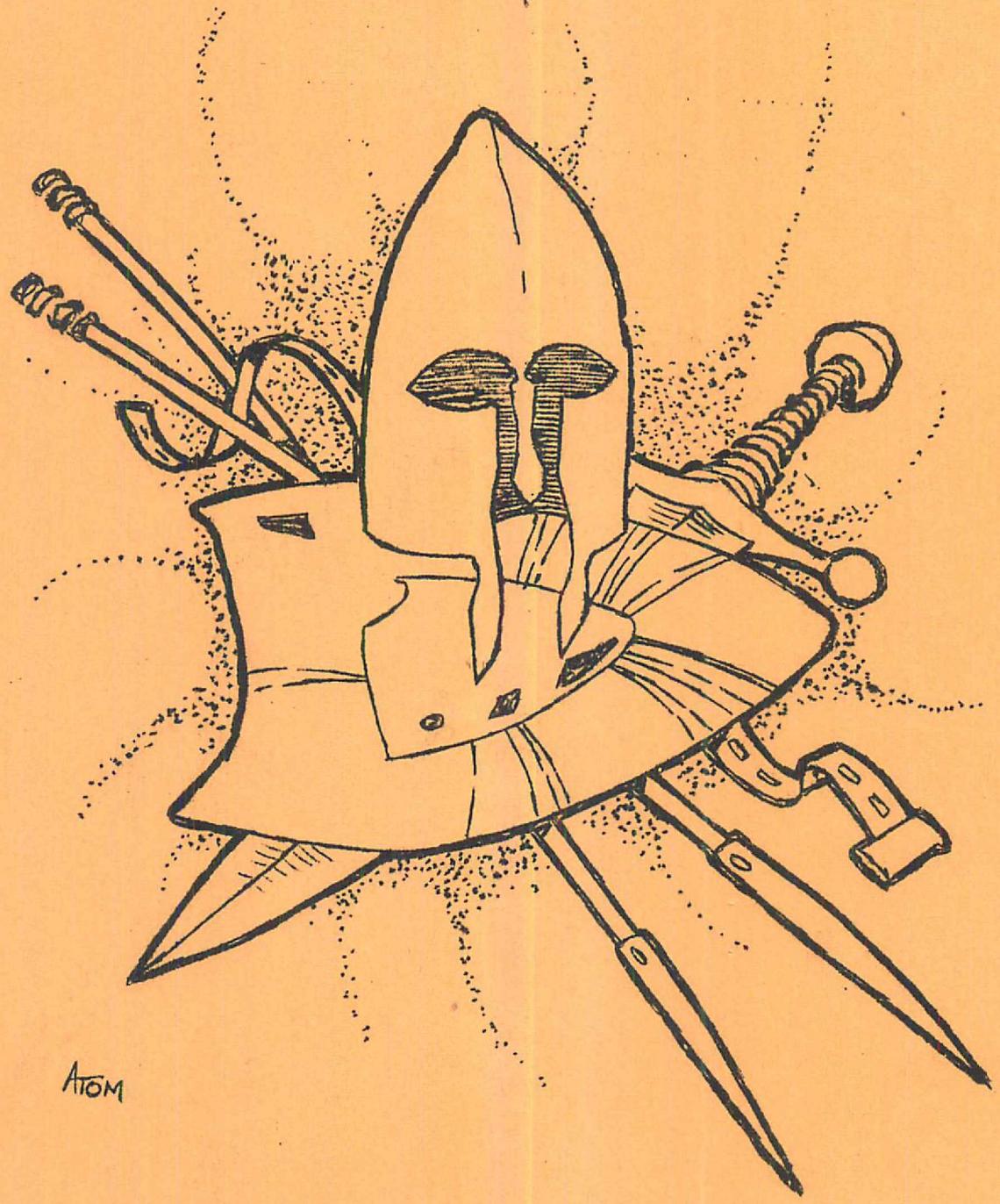


SPORTSKE



ATOM

SCOTTISHE 51



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This is an EDDIE for TAFF zinc
Feb. 1969

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CREDITS

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Nibblings

I'd like to rave about a book which I have just finished reading. It is Norman Mailer's MIAMI AND THE SIEGE OF CHICAGO. This covers the two American Presidential Conventions of 1968 - the Republicans in Miami and the Democrats in Chicago. So powerful is the writing that you can almost smell these cities! I think that Mailer is a much better reporter than he is a novelist; but of course he is always an interesting writer. I liked the style of this book; he refers to himself throughout as "the reporter" and in this way seems better able to describe how he felt than if he had used the normal first person. He can be dryly humorous whilst showing considerable perception. He decides to open his coverage of the Miami convention by watching the arrival of a baby elephant—that truly Republican symbol. His explanation for this, tickled me immensely....

"Unless one knows him well, or has done a sizable work of preparation, it is next to useless to interview a politician. He has a mind that is accustomed to political questions. By the time he decides to run for President, he may have answered a million. To surprise a skillful politician with a question is then approximately equal in difficulty to hitting a professional boxer with a barroom hook. One cannot therefore tell a great deal from interviews with a candidate. His teeth are bound to be white, his manner mild and pleasant, his presence attractive, and his ability to slide off the question and return with an answer is as explicit in the work of his jaws as the ability to bite a piece of meat. Interviewing a candidate is about as intimate as catching him on television. Therefore it is sometimes easier to pick the truth of his campaign by studying the outriggers of his activity. Therefore the reporter went to cover the elephant."

His views of the various politicians are quite ruthless and always acute. His descriptions are masterly. There is, however, the added bonus that he truthfully describes himself at all times whether this be flattering or no. To be with him in Chicago with his conscience is an illuminating experience. I do urge you to obtain a copy. It is published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson in Britain; I do not know the American publisher.

An American publisher—HARRIS-WOLFE & CO—has just issued two books that I can also recommend. The first is ONCE AND FUTURE TALES. This is a collection from Fantasy & SF, and is edited by Edward L. Ferman. \$5.95. There are 9 stories of novella length so I do think it is worth the money. WHEN YOU CARE WHEN YOU LOVE by Sturgeon is easily the best. Told in his inimitable style this story of a woman determined to beat the death of her husband

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is really haunting. I was also intrigued with the idea of a family who is immensely wealthy and whose wealth is kept a secret by almost fanatical means. The other highly original story is Philip Jose Farmer's OPEN TO ME MY SISTER, a tragic encounter between aliens. THE MANOR OF ROSES by Thomas Burnett Swann is pure fantasy of course, but a well-written tale of the time of the Crusades which conjures up the then forested land of England. The Mandrake people of Swann's imagination have a weird reality. JOURNEY OF TEN THOUSAND MILES by Wil Mohler is a pathetic story. In a way quite a few of the stories leave a lingering sadness; so I was glad that the book finished with a sort of romp called THE MASCULINIST REVOLT by William Tenn. This looks to a future where women have used up all men's fashions and dress for the sexes is indistinguishable. Men revolt against this by wearing codpieces! I had to laugh at this one; and the men had my sympathy. This is certainly one future that at times seems almost upon us!

A GLASS OF STARS by Robert F. Young is the other book published by Harris-Wolfe & Co at \$5.95. This has a very fine introductory essay by Fritz Leiber who points out that the stories by Young often are about something rare in SF - "romantic love". Leiber says, "Solving is an important word here, for love stories with happy endings, if they are not pure cliché, are problem-solving stories. And problem-solving stories are the finest that science fiction has to offer us." In this book there are 13 stories and the love stories are set in many well-imagined futures. There is a future where Dan and Helen are so bored; a future where Dianne and Warren have to continually move and hide because they are the parents of twins; and a future where Danby can fall in love with an android. One tale, very relevant for today is STAR MOTHER describing a mother watching her son become a star in the sky. There is a new version of the Jeanne L'Arc story. One couple meet and fall in love on the River of Death. It's hard to choose but I think I would pick TO FELL A TREE, in which a tree-cutter meets a dryad, as the one most full of imagery and meaning.

Dobson Books have quite a batch out this time - six in fact! NEW WRITINGS IN SF No 14 is again edited by John Carnell who points out "Many years ago, as a magazine editor, I quickly found out that the most any editor could hope to do was please half the readership half the time!" Although he adds that reviews and reports look as if the average for this series is higher. This one starts out very promisingly with James White's BLOOD BROTHER a new story of Sector General's Dr Conway. Highly enjoyable, but I think it is high time the Dr married Murchison. There is a cat story in here IF YOU'RE SO SMART by Paul Corey - one that will horrify cat-lovers! Sydney Bounds has THE BALLAD OF LUNAR LIL and very cleverly shows the distortion of history and its unravelling by a future historian. Of Vincent King's THE ETERNITY GAME, Carnell writes "I felt this story was like an abstract painting - the longer you look at it the more you see". I do not think I could possibly improve on that description of a story which encompasses a galaxy. These I felt were the highlights of this part of the series; the whole deserves its good reputation. It costs 18s.

MOON OF TRIOPUS by John Ranke, the second Dobson book costs 21s. The hero, Kirby, is a military man who wishes to prevent emigration from Earth to a new-found planet; and he finds himself alone in this. When he acts as

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as skipper of the escort for the advance party; I was very much reminded of Hornblower on escort duty! After the landing on the planet, however, we meet a really alien culture and the story becomes more interesting.

~~THE~~ by Brian Ball. 18s. again from Dobson Books. This visualises a future where there is nothing new for men to do; when all discoveries have been made. One of the favourite diversions is the "Frames" in which there is a re-creation of earlier society's in which people can participate. This idea the author left too quickly for my liking. Instead of his expanding upon this theme, the main characters take off on a search for the Planet of Forever--where Time stands still. This intriguing conception of Time is well explored. My one complaint is that the motivations of the characters were, to me, very unclear. I certainly couldn't empathise with any of them.

CATHARSIS CENTRAL by Antony Alban. 21s. Again Dobson Books has chosen an original idea as the base of the novel. Everyone is hooked up to Catharsis Central every night and are "brought tranquility to the disturbed, comfort to the grief-stricken, reassurance to the insecure". Everyone tranquilised in fact! When someone turns up who has not been affected and who decides to wreck the system a rather ghastly story unfolds. When people are no longer tranquilised, after being accustomed to it all their lives, you can imagine what chaos could reign.

The fifth Dobson Book is DIGITS AND DASTARDS by Frederick Pohl. 21s. This is a collection of widely varies stories. I was most held by the first called THE CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT as it described the use of a public relations firm to put over an 'image'. I was interested to see what techniques Pohl forecast for his future..after all PR is a growing phenomena! The last two pieces are non-fiction on how to count on your fingers by the binary method. I hate figures..but Pohl makes an elequent plea that the reader try and go through the articles at least once. I did as he asked; but it was as I feared... it would take more than one reading by me before all was clear. One of these days though, I will tackle it; for it looks as if it would be a great help.

The last Dobson book I want totell you about is THE POWER OF X by Arthur Sellings. This is undoubtedly the best I have ever read written by him; which makes his sudden death all the more tragic. It does seem as if he had been getting better still with every book he wrote. I hear there is only one more yet to come. This book, which also retails at 18s makes the others look small beer. For one thing the characters come alive at the very first page.



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The story is told by Max, an art dealer, who describes the discovery of "Plying". This is a new process of duplicating in which it is impossible to tell the real original from the duplicated one. Fortunately for the art world there is a limit to the number of duplicates that can be made. This is done because of the theory that "every object has an extension into the fourth dimension". The fun starts when Max discovers the ability to distinguish between the real and the duplicate. Well plotted and with room for a sequel which, alas, we shall never now see. I really liked Max and his formidable Aunt Clarissa; and even minor characters throb with life. I promise highly entertaining reading with this one.

Ace Releases:

THE OUTLAW OF TORN by Edgar R. Burroughs. A-25.75¢. The continuation of this series now reaches a historical romance of 13th century England.

THE MOON OF GOMRATH by Alan Garner. G-753.50¢. This is the second in the series that began with THE WEIRDSTONE OF BRISINGAMEN and tells the further adventures of Colin and Susan. For the lover of fantasy this offers elves, dwarves, and evil magic. I have lately been reading an article about the author which mentions his house is called TOAD HALL; it is situated in Cheshire near the Alderley Edgedistrict featured in his books. I guess you might like to hear this quote.. "To Garner, fantasy that is not rooted in the modern, material world is sterile (he finds C.S. Lewis's moralising Narnia books "insufferable"). One day last year a stranger introduced himself at Toad Hall as Thain Dick Platz, founder of the Tolkien Society of America. "He said he had come 5,000 miles to see me. He had a Frodo badge" - Garner's lean face puckers - "with lines written in elfin rune. It was obvious we had nothing at all in common and I put him on the next train back to London". To be honest, to someone like myself not all that keen on fantasy --there doesn't seem much difference between Garner and Tolkien. If anything, I believe the latter has a harsher treatment..but folk who believe in magic are not just what I'd call rooted in the modern, material world!

The Far-out Worlds of A.E. Van Vogt: H.-92.60¢. Plenty examples of Van Vogt's fertile imagination; and this collection contained many new to me.

STAR WELL by Alexei Panshin. G-756.50¢. This is the first of a series featuring Anthony Villiers, gentleman. Star Well is a planetoid which provides a stop for ships; and it is here the first adventure takes place. I might like the hero better if it were not for his name.. Villiers. Reminds me of Jeffrey Farnol - not one of my favourite authors - and indeed there is a strong flavour as the Farnol style of swashbuckling about this.

THE PROXIMA PROJECT by John Racham and TARGET TERRA by Laurence M. Janifer and S.J. Treibich. H91.60¢. In this ACE double Rackham wins hands down. The other side is entertaining enough; but the Rackham half I shall certainly re-read. It tells of Horace McCool who fell in love with Yum-Yum the singer of a rock-group. The rock-group are called The Trippers and the changes in the pop-scene that Rackham foresees very believable. The characters are both fascinating and enjoyable.

THE RING by Piers Anthony & Robt. E. Margroff. A-19.75¢. An ACE Special. This future revolves around the placing of a ring upon convicted people. It then acts as an "Ultra-Conscience". When this happens to the hero he cannot do any wrong -- if he even thinks a wrong thought -- the ring hurts. It is rather a dreadful idea; and the complications are well explored. I felt this central idea was rather obscured by the plot. I would have liked more details

Nibblings 5

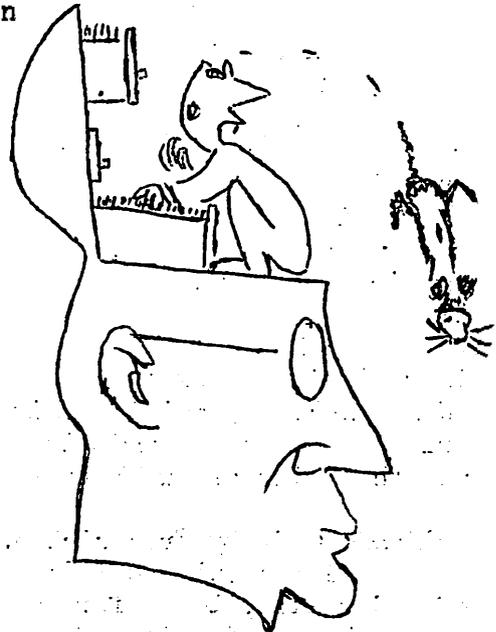
PROPHECIES ON THE WORLD EVENTS by Nostradamus, Translated by Stewart Robb. H-99.60¢. Predictions of the 16th century Frenchman. Robb not only translates but also interpretes them in relation to known events. Also has a handy biography of Nostradamus.

THE THURB REVOLUTION by Alexei Panshin. G-762.50¢. I enjoyed this less than the first Villiers tale. It seems to me the author indulges himself too much. I've no doubt he is vastly entertained..but the object of the exercise is to entertain me. I began to get exasperated at the many chunks of self-satisfied rhetoric that advanced the book not a jot nor added to my knowledge. Such as.. "Learning, Playing, and Loving and combinations therof, are a good way to spend a lifetime". Tell me something new! Villiers has yet to come alive for me, he seems but a lay figure around whom the author can spin his philosophy.

THE SUNDIAL by Shirley Jackson. H-96.60¢. I hope this means that ACE will be publishing all the books by this highly original writer. Her books are very rare birds indeed. She has the ability to mix humour with weird horror in a way quite her own. This one is the story of 12 people waiting for the end of the world, and it is one of her best. It can be read and re-read because behind every meaning lurks another. The writing is superb; towards the end you can almost hear the wind that heralds the end of the world. Can any of my readers tell me anything about Shirley Jackson? When I feel this enthusiastic about a writer I want to know more about them.

A TORRENT OF FACES by James Blish & Norma L. Knight. A-29.75¢. This is the first ACE Special in which I have been disappointed. Perhaps the fact that this started out as three short stories explains it. There are various groups of characters and I no sooner got interested in one lot than I was whisked off to another lot..so that I soon lost interest in them all. This future Earth is over-populated and we are shown the various problems and how they are dealt with by the leaders. Some glimpses are given of the lives of the ordinary people; but not enough to satisfy my curiosity. My main reaction was to wonder why the only person who is trying for space-flight as a solution is made the villainess. Nor could I believe that tackling the problem by the use of contraception would fail. My mind wandered to my own family..my grandparents had five children, five grand children, six great-grandchildren. A total of 17 descendants in four generations. But note that, whilst they had five children, the most that any of their children had was three. And that, according to my Aunt Alice, was a mistake! Oh well. you can see it is a thought-provoking book at anyrate!

CATCH A FALLING STAR by John Brunner. G-761.50¢. No need to complain that one doesn't get involved with the characters in this one. Crechan, the hero, is firmly in the picture at all times and we see this future world through his eyes. A time when the Earth



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is broken up into different cultures with little contact. Some of the scenes are engrossing ..the group of people who go on herding the meat down to the city without knowing whether there is anyone there or not. One city is no longer inhabited and it is a grisly scene that describes the shambles there. Another lovely piece of imagination is the Trees of History in which people can experience previous cultures.

SO BRIGHT THE VISION by C.D.Simak and THE MAN WHO SAW TOMORROE by Jeff Sutton. Ace double. H-95.60¢. One of my favourite quotations is "Begin at the beginning, go on to the end, and then stop." I am of the firm opinion that this is the best way to tell a story. It engages the interest, does not distract it, and gives a satisfactory climax. However, no doubt most authors chafe under such a simple style; at all events there are many who depart from it. Sutton begins his tale by giving the ending; and spoiled it all for me. A mathematician is shown planning to kill a labourer whom he has never met; we are shown another man about to kill a powerful millionaire. Just as the trigger is squeezed the millionaire vanishes. Ergo - a time dimension story..but why tell the end first? It detracted from the story in every possible way. After such an opening surely the author could not expect the reader to be surprised by the end of the book. My other complaint is that the vanishing man is never placed before us directly. His motives and actions are only guessed at by other characters. For once I enjoyed the short stories of Simak more than the novel half of this book. The stories are four in number anyway, and so long enough to be satisfying. They all featured aliens of one sort or another; but the last lot..the Brownies..were a little hard to swallow.

MOONDUST by Thomas Burnett Swann. G-758.50¢. Very much a fantasy tale and a very intriguing one. It is set in the days when the Israelites were wandering in the desert; and takes place in the city and surroundings of Jericho. Intertwined with history, as we have it from the Bible, is the story of two non-human races hidden from sight and living as Master and Slave. This unusual story concerns one of the slaves who becomes involved with the humans. THE GREAT RADIO HEROES by Jim Harmon. A-27.75¢. This is described as "a nostalgic re-creation including actual scripts of your magic hours lived with JACK ARMSTRONG, TOM MIX, I LOVE A MYSTERY, INNER SANCTUM and all the other radio immortals." At first sight this might be classed as for American readers only as it only covers the American radio scene. You won't find anything about ITMA here. However it is written with humour as well as nostalgia - and if you know what dreams a child was raised upon..you might understand him better. So I would recommend this to those interested in American history.

Dobson Books have issued another two books since I started this column, and there is just room to tuck them in....

TWIN PLANETS by Philip E. High. 18s. An adventurous tale of twin planets and twin males. Earth and Firma, the twin planets have to battle with Aliens; and the twins are well to the fore in the battling. Light and entertaining

UNDERSEA CITY by Frederick pohl and Jack Williamson. 21s. This is the third in a series about Cadet Jim Eden of the Sub-Sea Academy. It is really more of a juvenile, ideal for young lads. Men may like it too, of course, for the technical details of undersea living. Not for this gal though, I can put up with the technical details if there is just a little bit more subtlety in the characterisation.

)))))))))))))) Ethel Lindsay

this Stately Crumbling England

by Terry Jeeves

I happened to read an old book once - one of those Gothic mystery novels written between the wars in the leisurely days of the 30s. Suddenly I realised how much the world has changed since those far off times when I came across the lines:-

"He rang the bell for the butler" Now how many of us ever did a thing like that? And why the hell couldn't the butler ring the bell for himself anyway? Just a lazy flipping lot these butlers..and in any case, if you did ring a bell for the butler, then the Butler's Union would call the lot of them out on a demarcation dispute in five minutes flat.

While on the subject, just what did a butler do anyway? Did he buttle? I presume so, but did you ever see butling defined?..or declined or conjugated or whatever it is we used to do with those French and Latin verbs... should it be:-I buttle, you buttle, we buttle all three, or is the correct version. buttlo, buttlas, buttlat, buttlamas..etc? Nobody ever comes straight out with it, and so we read on through the ever deepening mystery.

....He rang the bell for the butler, and within less than twenty minutes the door creaks slowly open (all doors creak in this sort of story - oil hasn't been invented then) and in creaks the butler. He shambles across the carpet, and stands beside Lord Elpuz.

"You rang milord?" Which is a stupid thing to say, as why the heck did he come if the bell hadn't been rung?

"Ah yes, Splodgers" (Another common name for a butler is Jeeves) would you bring me a whisky-and-soda?"

The door closes silently (oil has now been discovered) behind Splodgers (or Jeeves), and re-opens a scant half-hour later to reveal the butler bearing a silver tray laden with whisky decanter, soda-syphon and some glasses. With a discreet cough, he places them beside Lord Elpuz and withdraws.

All we can get from this little lot, is the information that Splodgers (or Jeeves) is a damned slow cretin with a touch of bronchitis, who, if treated properly will oil doors and double as a bar tender. From his query about the bell, we can also deduce that he is a bit deaf. But is that all a butler can do? Not by a long chalk, as I propose to prove. However, let us digress for a moment to examine some of the other people

THIS STATELY CRUMBLING ENGLAND 2

around Lord Elpuz

First there was a valet. A man who was paid to undress people. You try and get a job doing that today, and you'd be arrested. Pity, there are quite a few people (all women) who could sign me on at rock-bottom wages.

Then there was the scullion. I gather she performed skullduggery in the scullery... which was where the skulls were kept I should imagine. According to most old books, they were always being got into trouble by their masters, which only shows how democratic old England really was in those days. Then there was a man servant who served the men, and a maid servant who served the women. No doubt there were some interesting variations on this theme.

Another famous character was 'Jock' Strapp, an old and trusted retainer. He looked after the keys of the manor, and generally looked after her Ladyship when his Lordship was away. As a sideline he also emptied the cigarette ash out of the suits of armour at regular intervals.

Scattered around the grounds you could always find a gamekeeper or two. Their duties were to supervise the fun and games around the mansion. Many a gamekeeper has livened the party by handing out packs of 'Snap cards', or a few Monopoly sets.

Incoming letters were transported on a silver tray. Nowadays, the postman shoves them through the letter box, and the dog grabs a mouthful and chews the lot to bits. Visitors were invited to stay for the week, whereas today's host is damned glad if they buzz off home before tea-time, in case they scoff all the crumpets... Very fond of his crumpet is Lord Elpuz for instance.

His Lordship invariably had a country seat, and delighted in showing it to his friends. It generally had an East Wing, a West Wing, and only lacked a Certificate of Airworthiness to get it airborne. Such places were deep in the country, could only be reached by one road which crossed a raging torrent by way of a rickety bridge, and boasted a single telephone. More on this later.

The hallway was festooned with suits of armour, and the trimmings of many a battle. Battle-axes, halberds, moustache cups and empty sardine tins rubbed shoulders (or edges) with Helms, crossbows, frinkles and Indian clubs. In contrast, the home of to-day is stuffed to capacity with hats, coats, gum-boots, life-jackets, distress rockets and an inflatable dinghy, together with all the other paraphernalia necessary to cope with an English summer.

In those halcyon days of peace, a dinner gong would give the early warning as a signal for the house guests to go to their own rooms and dress for dinner. A further bashing on the gong indicated that the gnosh was ready, and was followed by the soft shuffle of many feet hurrying to the table. How decorous was the meal. Soft footed waiters (specially imported from Pakistan and ferried up the M.I) serving courses and retrieving dishes. Stiff white table napkins, candle light glinting softly from the cut-glass and silverware, and above it all the soft hum of genteel, intelligent conversation as the aristocracy discussed topics of the day... "ought to send a gun-boat up their river bai Jove"; "Yaas, jolly well teach 'em what it is to be civilised"

THIS STATELY CRUMBLING ENGLAND 3

...."oh Mr Smethers you are a one"...and do you know, Colonel Chokka thinks the world of the common soldier, he assured me the Army would be lost without its privates"

Beaming glassily at his entourage from the head of the table sits Lord Elpuz himself. Toying negligently with a hogshead of brandy on the one hand, and his secretary Miss Phitt on the other, he converses deftly with her while keeping up a conversation with his wife.

To his wife...."Yes M'dear"

To Miss Phitt, "Would you really like a fur coat?"

To wife....."Yes M'dear"

To Miss Phitt.. "Perhaps a part in a big musical?"

"Yes M'dear"

"I have a nice little flat in town" His Lordship's head is swinging left and right like a rubberneck at Wimbledon. This, coupled with the brandy and the success of his amatory finagling with Miss Phitt cause his head to spin. His blood pressure mounts and the spinning increases until with a sudden gasping gurgle, Lord Elpuz slides gracefully beneath the table. The other guests are too well bred to comment upon this, and the temporary absense of his Lordship is soon forgotten in the general brouhaha.

An hour or so later, the guests adjourn for a jolly game of ping-pong. Someone stumbles over the recumbent body of his Lordship and discovers the ghastly truth....I quote....

"A sinister shaped Malayan Kris had been driven forcibly into His Lordship's body, entering between the third and fourth ribs on the right hand side, penetrating both lungs, severing the wind pipe, perforating the aorta, stopping the heart, and finally emerging through the left clavicle. Death had occurred immediately, if not sooner..."

At this tage one of the guests removes his false moustache and reveals that he is really that great amateur detective 'Ruffles', who steps in to help out the FBI, the Surete, and Scotland Yard whenever the going gets rough. He stoops over the body.....

..."Dead", excalimed Ruffles as he straightens and faces the guests. "Probably stabbed with a sinister Malayan Kris..the only weapon capable of going through all those places in one try." He paused for effect, and looked around before hissing through clenched teeth, "That makes one of us a murderer!"

Immediately, there is a clap of thunder, a storm breaks and rain pours down. A flash flood carried away the rickety bridge and someone cuts the phone line. They are isolated with a himicidal maniac in their midst. Ruffles follows up clues...each one leads to another body. Eventually, when only a handful of players are left, he pins the crime smack on the shoulders of old Splodgers(or Jeeves) who did the old boy in because he was fed up of answering bells and carting booze.

As I said, that is what the butler really did.

We don't have parties like that these days.

Terry Jeeves

Letters

Jhim Linwood
18 Kew Bridge Court
London, W4.

"By a strange coincidence Scot arrived whilst Dave Hake was staying with us. He grabbed the copy as it fell through the letter-box, instantly recognising it as a fanzine, and read it avidly cover to cover. After a few minutes with Scot that old magic fannish twinkle flickered momentarily in his eyes. He said nothing, but I knew from his silence he was deeply moved by nostalgia..sigh!...Dave is now working as a psychology lecturer at Aston University, and has recently become the father of a baby girl. We see him about twice a year when he's down here for conferences, he looks on fandom as a vagrancy of his youth, but still shows interest when I fling an occasional fanzine his way. He leads a fairly staid existence these days but still manages to get involved with things like the Paris riots..I tend to agree with you about the overuse of the word "fuck", no matter how liberal we like to think we are the word in print sets up a certain reaction in the readers mind that dislocates the flow of the story. I think this is the result of writer's being only recently allowed to use such words. when the teething period is over perhaps the so called obscene words will be used in their proper contexts a la Lawrence and Miller and not used to shock...John Brunner's letter was the best thing in the ish, a return to the excellent standard of LOC writing so long absent from fmz....I think a fan history is needed before all our yesterdays becomes myth and later fan generations think it all began with the BSFA. There must be enough fans still active and willing to produce an history based on first hand accounts...Ted Carnell, Mike Rosenblum, Archie....."***That poor old psychology lecturer..no time to play any more..oh those poor old married men...Yes well, those three people you mention could certainly write a history between them..but do you think they ever would? Having spent his life professionally dealing with SF; I gather that Ted likes to relax off-duty well away from the subject. Mike has a very busy time too, I know. That leaves Archie, who is likely to tell me that he has plenty to keep him busy, thank you very much.***

Letters 2

Robert Coulson "Juanita and I were visiting with Jim and Lee Lavell
Route 3 when the final episode of "The Prisoner" was shown.
Hartford City We sat through it, paying careful attention, and when
IND. 47348 it was all done Jerry said "Well, I'm certainly glad
they explained everything!" I didn't watch the series regularly, but I
did get a kick out of that "explanation". An advantage of British tv; US
producers would never have the gall to put over something like that.....
"Clear tenor singers"? Well.. "Whenever I think of Lincoln

I cannot well forgive

The guy who would shoot a man like that

And let these tenors live"

That's from

an old hobo song of the 1930's; it seemed appropriate.... Betty Peters
confuses me. In one line she says Charles II had "political genius" and
in the very next sentence she says he "deliberately antagonised his poten-
tial allies". Make up your mind, Betty... On JUDGEMENT OF EVE, I doubt that
Pangborn had any of the three men "in mind" as Eve's eventual partner, any
more than Frank Stockton knew which door the princess would choose in "The
Lady or The Tiger?". The book was deliberately designed to have no specifi-
c conclusion, and I suspect that Pangborn would be more interested in dis-
covering which man his audience would pick than in guesses on which man he
would pick... If the American dream of Europeans was built on the things Pen-
elope Fandergast cites in her column, then it certainly has soured, and
about time. I suppose it's because American writing portrays Europeans as
sophisticated, wordly types, but I keep getting mild shocks at examples of
their overwhelming naivete (I should be over it by now considering the number
of radio and tv shows Dodd has taped for me and the number of European fan-
zines and professional magazines I've read, b t I guess it's hard to over-
come one's early education.) Not that Americans aren't naive, too, but I
expect that." ***I wonder why men so often dislike tenors? Mind you—I
can't stand sopranos. And I'd choose Kenneth if I were Eve. Fannish psy-
cho-analysts can have fun with that information..***

Archie Mercer "Lunar orbiters may go up and lunar orbiters may
10 Lower Church Lane, splash-down, but I'm still not quite up to date
St Michael's with my letters of comment. So herewith a word
Bristol, BS2 8BA or two concerning SCOTTISHE 50. (Fifty? Fifty? That's
not too many, at anyrate.)... "I would not like it if every time a Frenchman
spoke his words were given in French..." Very well put. Serious social docu-
mentary is one thing, but a little verbatim vernacular can sometimes go a
very long way. When I read "Restoree" I too got the impression that the
author's main interest was in the romance between her heroine and the dict-
ator Harlan; that the rest of the action was only put in to appease the
general sf readership." ***Yes..fifty..let's see at four a year..that works
out at over 12 years..dear me!***

Michael Moorcock "Was interested in your comments on BUG JACK BARRON
87 Ledbrooke Grove I suppose if the language is, as it were, unfamiliar
London, W11 (presumably the language of BJB is not the familiar
language of hospitals!) then it could seem boring—but to tell you the truth
I didn't really notice (it is, after all, the familiar language of Fleet St!)
..Actually the Aldiss story is a sequel to an earlier story —THE CIRCULATION
OF THE BLOOD —which is perhaps why it seemed a fragment of something bigger!
The aim, though, of many NW writers is, in fact, to concentrate rather than

Letters 4

there are quite a lot of instances where apparently impressions of past events are left upon places, and occasionally picked up by other people long afterwards. There was a time in Fandom when there was an interest taken in psi experiments, or 'psychic investigations' as it was then called. I can recall, for instance, doing some dowsing along with Harold Chibbett, Eric Russell, and others, during a London air-raid. We were in the basement of Harold's office, and we used a series of ARP buckets, some of which contained water, and some not. We got results which we thought impressive. It was certainly a good way to pass the time during an alert. I presume that you concede that dowsing works? Sometimes anyway. I could name a number of local government authorities and civil engineering contractors who have sets of rods in use. And they don't come any harder-headed than that!...Have a riddle:-Q:Who works in Parliament and has an I.Q. of 144? A:A gross of M.Ps!" ***Sid, do you know that gal in LAUGH IN who says in outraged tones-'That's another chicken joke!?' Well; imagine me saying in the same tone -'That's a mathematical riddle!' All old-time readers of SCOT know I can't count...Having acquired respect for your judgement, I'm relieved to hear you do not believe in an afterlife. I can agree with your theory as I have a great belief in the capabilities of the human mind.***

Peter Singleton
Block 4
Broadmoor Hospital
Crowthorne
Berkshire, RG11 7EG

"I'm inclined to agree with you about the four letter expletives in BJB. This section of the forceful and realistic dialogue was definitely overdone in parts, but because it was merely boring, not shocking. I'm certainly no pride myself but I do find that the people I've met who say "f****" twice in every sentence, are the ones with strictly limited vocabularies who cannot express themselves articulately in any other way. As for the erotic passages, they left me completely unmoved. I can remember a dim and distant past at the age of fourteen when the merest hint of erotica had a profound effect upon me. Now that I am 29yrs old, one erotic passage seems much like another. The erotica in this novel is an integral part of Spinrad's superb imagery, though, so I'm definitely not complaining. I'm all for this avant garde realism. I'm sure Spinrad doesn't expect his presumably mature readership to get unduly excited over what is, after all, only a natural function which must have its place in any reasonably comprehensive portrayal of adult human characters....I'm glad to see you urging Britfen to join the next Worldcon on a supporting basis. I join Worldcons myself mainly in order to vote for the annual Hugo Awards and receive the various interesting progress reports. I've always considered the one dollar foreign supporting membership to be far too small to be of much use, so I'm interested to discover that this amount has been increased to 3\$ for the St Louis con. Hard-working Worldcon committees deserve all the support they can get" ***I can't say I approve of the raise in membership fees..\$3 now equals approx. 24shillings..and I can't see many British fans being able to spare that amount of money.***

Gray Boak
7 Elm Drive
St Albans
Herts.

"I too hope that Delany will expand TIME CONSIDERED AS A HELIX OF SEMI-PRECIOUS STONES, even though I am disappointed that he should pick a title so obviously derivative. Luckily he didn't allow it to influence the story: is he really laughing at NW?..I can tell you one British fan who joins world cons knowing attendance would be impossible-me! But then, I don't object to the

Letters 5

Americans calling their cons worldcons. There is more sf written and read, more fanzines published, in the US than there is in the rest of the world put together-and probably in the four-to-one ratio, as well. I would prefer the four year rotation plan to the five year though. A yearly European con is an idea I could support - though I would imagine that the UK and Germany would dominate it as much as the US dominates the World con - and for equally good reasons. For the other point - how many people read Rumanian and Spanish sf magazines or Russian or Italian sf writers? The Hugo is not an award for literary merit, but for popularity. The Hugo is awarded to the novel/novella etc that most fans enjoyed - not the best written that year. A minority of sf, read by a minority of fans, can't win the Hugo. Point: the more sf written in this country, the more the liklihood of a great story. So the US has it both ways, and anything else would be undemocratic, and we can't have that, can we?...I was annoyed because I believed that Ted White had criticised BADINAGE out of a fit of pique, and had paid precious little attention to fact, or the magazine in question. He didn't even know who edited it. He made great oaks out of little acorns, great controversies out of a personal grouch. Harsh criticism I approve of - but if this is the aim, then the criticism must be accurate. Ted White's was inaccurate and misleading in too many places. He did make useful points in between, however...I admit to not making sufficient use of Archie Mercer's fanzine files in my time in Bristol.. But even so, you are right. I don't think that it would be a great help. Joe Patrizio has lent me a boxfull of 8-or-so year old fanzines. The best ones then seem to have been much the same as the best now: SHAGGY.WARHOON, and ones along similar lines. Reading present issues of these, PSYCHOTIC (sorry, SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW) ASFR etc will prove more useful to any budding fan-ed than a boxfull of RETRIBUTIONS (very disappointing) BASTIONS etc. Joe suggested that these last were zines of their age, very good at the time because they were involved with what was happening at the time. Fandom has changed and they don't read so well now. SHAGGY does, DISCARD does. To those people still thinking in terms of RETRIBUTION days, modern zines dop't read so well. To those living in today's fandom, modern zines aren't as black as they are painted. (Far from shining white maybe). Some kind of balancing viewpoint is needed, but today's fanzines must have their roots in today's fandom. The problem is preventing the enjoyment of the day from hiding its inherent flaws: which is why fandom needs its history. Can't you persuade someone to write it, even if you can't find the time/energy yourself?****Name somebody and I'll try to persuade them!...I don't think I lack the energy but I sure lack the time.***

Chris Priest

103 Carshalton Rd

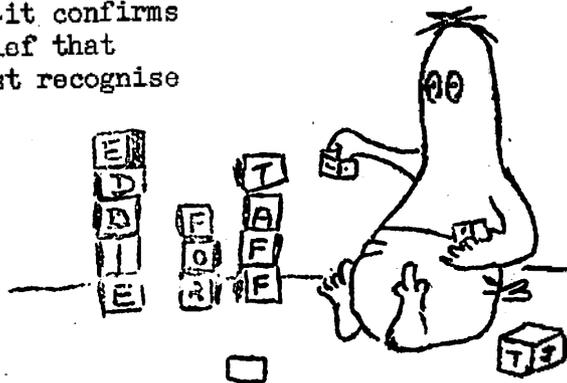
Sutton, Surrey.

"Are people really as fed up with talking about the New Wave as Alan Rispin makes out? I see that the major part of the American scene is coming down heavily against it. After almost two years of cautious silence it is as if they have now read enough to form an opinion. But what I would like someone to do is select a story, and say why it is "New Wave". What is the difference? And if a difference, then a difference from what?..Getting back to the moon for a moment (how about that? 238,000 miles in the eye of batlid?) one thing that concerns me about future missions is the success of those between this last one (Apollo-8) and the one in which men actually

Letters 6

land. Just suppose Apollo-9 is unfortunate enough to have an accident? Not necessarily one involving fatality to human life (a crew-loss situation, as NASA calls it) but one which drastically points out the need for even more safety-systems? It is possible, because of the troubles in American cities and the mammoth expense involved, that the whole moon mission be called off. I think myself that the actual landing on the moon is a relatively fruitless event on the same sort of social level as climbing Everest, living in a cavern underground, and stuffing stupid students into phone-boxes. In other words, with the present state of technological and engineering development, the fact is belittled by the effort. In the old days, when rockets were real and took off from backyards, the landing on the moon was indeed an achievement. Is it not enough to have done what Borman, Lovell and Anders have done? Does this seem reactionary, I wonder? It seems to me that the development of orbital space-stations and laboratories is a much more worthwhile field of endeavour. Anyone who saw that PANORAMA programme a few weeks ago will know the results of crop-photography. At least 30% of one Maine farmer's potato-crop will be blighted this year, and he doesn't even know yet. At present estimates it would take only two years to have a 100%-functioning system of crop-and weather-photography on a global scale. Even if the surface of the moon were covered in gold nuggets and rich in uranium, present costs of getting them back would still make it an unworthwhile process. Anticipating the people who might argue the old cliches about going somewhere because it's there, surely it would be enough to let the Russians get there? After all, they're all Earthmen, and the Americans at Christmas were full of the unity of man, and all that razz. I think the problems of the world are now so critical that the only justification for space-research is for global betterment. It was fine to write about new frontiers and man's spirit of endeavour before the war, but things are different now. Just as you can no more build a cosmic-ray powered spaceship in the garden shed, so you cannot spend all that money just to go someplace". ***I don't quite follow your reasoning here..why should it be OK for the Russians to go ahead and yet not the Americans? Also seems a bit daft for you to write that they "cannot" spend all that money when it is manifestly obvious that they are—and that they will continue to do so. But I agree with you that the building of a space-station seems a useful idea..and apparently the Russians feel the same. Now how would you like a Russian space-station above you—and no Americans heading for the moon? I don't think I would***

Harry Warner "The material about the future
423 Summit Ave of the worldcon -it confirms
Hagerstown my long-felt belief that
Maryland.21740 American fans must recognise
the size and desires of European
fans, even if they can't under-
stand their languages. My own
preference would be for a real
worldcon, in geography as well
as name, rotating for the the
time being among continental
Europe, the British Isles, and
North America, later including



Letters 7

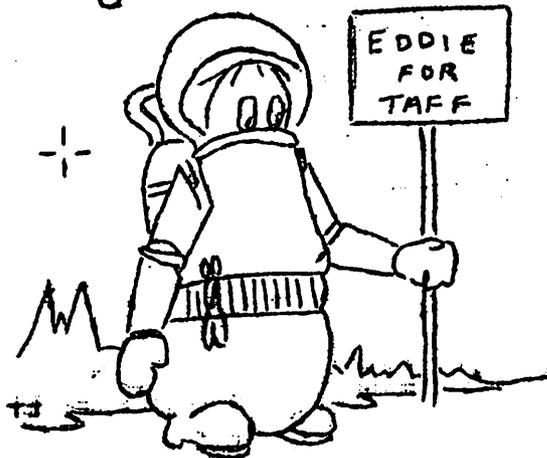
S.America or Japan if fandoms should develop sufficiently there. The US con could go back on its old east-midwest-west rotation plan, and would retain whatever traditions are not suited to the new worldcon...I read just the other day that trans-Atlantic air fare may drop to \$200 for a round trip in another year or so, when the enormous Boeings capable of carrying hundreds of passengers go into service; that would make it almost as easy for an eastern fan to attend the worldcon in Europe as he can now go to the "worldcon" in LA. If we don't work out some arrangement such as this, I have a suspicion that all of a sudden the European fans will kidnap the "worldcon" by a blitzkrieg at a business session some year when it's staged in Europe, changing the rules about rotation and awards and all the other things we've arbitrarily set up during the years when we've been so numerically superior.***I hope US fans don't get too het up over this issue. I reckon that Europe could handle the worldcon every four years now, but I doubt if it would be wanted more often for some time yet --but then again..a lot depends upon the success of Heidelberg!****

Andrew Porter
55 Pineapple St
Brooklyn,
New York. 11201

"John Brunner is partially incorrect. Newspapers have been dying because of union problems and antiquated equipment--however, TV stations have been steadily multiplying, because of the emergence of UHF, opening channels 14 to 83 for commercial broadcasting. And, with Community Antenna systems, small towns can erect large antennas to bring in stations broadcasting many miles away. By the way, the FCC has just refused to renew the licenses for an AM, FM and TV station in Salt Lake City, precisely because they are all owned by one company. The result of this action will hopefully cause several new stations to begin operating with the resultant variance in reportage and viewpoints. I notice, by the way, that British denunciations of American racial relations have stopped since Enoch Powell made the headlines...I was at the Baycon business meeting, and had campaigned for some time for adoption of the five year rotation. The argument I used was that, under a 4yr rotation, a two year hiatus would always fall between Midwest and East in the holding of Worldcons. More seriously, the same area would always have to go outside the US in order to present their bids. Under the 1 year in advance bidding, this meant the Eastern bidder would always have to go overseas; under the 2 yr in advance procedure, the one would always be the western bidder....Now, I think we attempted to sollicit opinions on the 5 yr plan from all people. I personally devoted an editorial in Algol, plus two issues of SFWeekly--one for the proposal, one for letters in response...So I resent this calling of the decision an "imperialistic attitude". It seems to me that is a political label for something which is nothing of the sort--the sort of thing that could be called "a manifestation of the American Imperialistic Goal" by someone oriented along idealogical lines. And the world is too full of dumb idealogical quarrels and political catch-phrases as it is, to use one now....In attempting to solve the problem that the 4 yr rotation caused, we felt that a decent thing would be a 5yr plan, which would spread the already existant problem among the 4 American areas --it would still be there, but as a common problem. We didn't think that foreign bids would arise on a more frequent basis...The American fans generally have come to expect a con with all the trappings of a big convention. And, may I remind foreign readers, American worldcons are in the top 10% of all cons held throughout the world

Letters 8

in terms of size--attendance now at least 1,000, as much as 2,000. So the basic attitude is that overseas bidders do not have the ability to conduct a major worldcon more frequently than every 4 or 5 yrs...If the evidence points to an ability of foreign fandom to bid for and conduct worldcons on a more frequent schedule, then I believe the rules will be altered to take this fact into consideration. Incidentally, I urged Dirk Schnee and Lief Anderson, two foreign attendees of the BayCon, to come to the Business Meeting and express their ideas. Dirk did so, quite effectively, I thought. I also spoke, both as a bidder for 1974 and on behalf of the Melbourne, Australia bid for 1975...Noting the comment that "if it(HeiCon) comes true it will be thanks to the cooperation of the fandoms of Germany, UK, Italy, France, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, etc," I might make the comment that it will also be because the con receives the majority of the vote of those fans who attend the consite voting. There is another bid: one from Bermuda. I doubt seriously whether it will amount to anything, but the way to win friends and influence people is not to charge them with "imperialistic attitudes."..There is a serious problem in the awarding of the Hugos. There are many foreign prozines and novels which receive little or no distribution among the majority of those who vote for the awards. This must be corrected in the future--perhaps separate but equal awards for domestic and foreign, or better still, division by language, for the awards-- Best English novel, Best German Novel, etc...However this last must come about only with more foreign members joining the worldcons. In a situation like the NYCon, where foreign memberships including England, came to only 5% of the total, increased notice will only come when a greater amount of foreign fans join and register their opinions..Too, with TAFF, only 13 votes were received from England in the race that elected Steve Stiles. This was a shockingly low percentage of the vote--and once again illustrates the low level of participation, in an international sense--causing a show of ready typewriters and stingy pocketbooks...I might add that NYCon had no members from Spain, only 2 from all Italy..This is only a further example of the low level of participation in worldcon affairs by European fandom. Canada generally leads foreign memberships. In the last few years, Australia has tended to have more members than England--a visible effect of the emergence of Australian fandom on the international front...Should international fandom show that it has the will to make the effort an effective worldcon bid takes, then I feel American fandom will support more frequent overseas worldcons."***I make no attempt to defend your strictures about TAFF--for years I have been commenting upon the shocking way British Fandom Supports this cause. As to the Worldcon discussion - I think it is rooted in the fact that ever since the first worldcon they have been carrying the wrong title. They have been, in every sense of the word National conventions. One can illustrate this by using the example of football and baseball. In Britain we have had an annual Cup Final in which all British football teams participated. Only



Letters 9

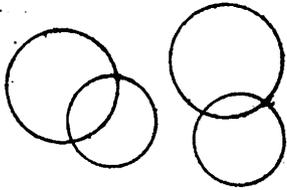
when other countries had sufficient activity to justify it did the World Cup come into being. In the US you have your World Series for baseball. Why "world" when not another country participates? Only now can fandom talk of worldcons as only now are there fandoms, in other countries than the US, who are big enough to contemplate organising such a thing. The size of the con is not the important point..the number of countries in it is the crux.. Let's ask Harry Warner to tell us the history of the world-cons, particularly its beginnings, and I think you will appreciate that what you have been running all those years is a National con under an erroneous title. Once grasp this and you will see that foreign fans like myself have supported them because there was nothing else to support!***

Rick Sneary
2962 Santa Ana St
South Gate
Calif, 90280

"Was surprised to see The Old Mill Stream turn up in Scot. As to what ever happen to the Dream..That is a pretty complex question and harder to answer.Especially as I have a very limited view of life. Let's say I think it is all a matter of degree. The pre-war picture of America as seen in movies was both real and unreal. It was still a pretty simple world for most people, especially in small towns. We were not in everyone elses pocket, via instant news and pictures. Materially people were much worse off, and the minorities were really oppressed; the difference being that most had never had it any better, and without TV fling their inequality in the faces all the time, the poor didn't think about being poor. And we pretty well believed as a country we had always done right and always would. The riches and oportunities are greater in this country now than they were in the 30's and more people have a piece of the action. But there is more strain and discontent. But it isn't just us. It seems to me that England has changed the same way. Everything seems better 20yrs ago? The Bomb was expected to be dropped in two years by many. I think maybe more people believed and acted as if the Dream were real, but a dream isn't reality. Things are quite harsh now; we are in the midst of a world revolution and many people are out doing something about their Dream. The trouble is there are a lot of different Dreams going around and it is very unsettling to try and live through. But the greatest times of advance in science, arts and inventions have been during just such times of revolution. We are living in the middle of the most exciting time in all World history..if one has but the wit to look around."About these advances..one of the things that puzzles me is why in art there is such a harking back to surrealism? It seems to me that a lot of what we call advance(and not only in the arts)should be termed fashion. That fashion is not only grimly tied to women's clothes!***

Ed Cox..again...."I think that Penelope simplifies. In that world she remembers, the great social injustices were lying dormant. The Negro was, when presented at all in that Great Old Dream, as a stupid quivery-kneed jerk. This land, today, which has lost that dream, she thinks, is that same land going through the turmoil of trying to make the dream available to everybody in the land. Some great men have lost their lives, men whose deaths agonized me as much as they did her. But that doesn't justify lumping us all together as a land that..etc. "****I've had to cut this one in a dreadful way..but 9 pages of letters! And I've still to get my oar in and natter.....Ethel Lindsay,

hatterings



Again, Grey Boak has started me thinking about British fandom. I'll quote from his fanzine as I am not sure how wide was its distribution. He wrote in TRANSPLANT...."I began with the premise that British fandom was in a bad way. There is next to no contact between the older, more established fans and their younger, newer brethren. These fanzines that are produced come from the younger group - divorced from the fannish mainstream and unable to benefit from the experience of their forbears. I'll make no attempt to portion out the blame: I think it equally divided."

When I came into British fandom it was much smaller than now, but even then it was not completely in accord. Yet each part of it knew about the other part. This is no longer true. Only the other day I was reading a fanzine CHECKPOINT by Peter Roberts. In it a fan called Bryn Fortey wrote ..."Mike Ashley was (is?) for quite a spell Britain's Mr Fandom". Now, I never knew that! What did this Mike Ashley do to earn this title? I don't know. Yet time was when I knew everything that happened in British fandom.

I haven't changed my ways. I still attend every con. I still go as often as I can to Globe meetings or any parties that are going. I still publish, I still trade, I still have a crew of correspondants as long as my arm. Yet, obviously there is a great deal going on among younger fans of which I know nothing. Why? Is it my fault?

I would say that one big loss is Ron Bennett's SKYRACK. This was the one sure place to look for general gossip of who was doing what around these isles. With its demise (or suspension I hope) suddenly there is a large communication gap. The only news that gets out now is via Jean Muggoch's LONDON NEWSLETTER, which makes no attempt to be as wideranging as was SKYRACK. Ron had a large circle of fannish correspondants and it had become a habit to send any news his way. He was Britain's grapevine and today's state of affairs shows how badly we miss him. I guess if Grey really wants to make British fandom more cohesive the best thing he could do would be to start a newszine. As it is, I can give you the latest American gossip as if I lived in New York or Los Angeles..but I can't tell you why Mike Ashley is Britain's Mr Fandom.

Natterings 2

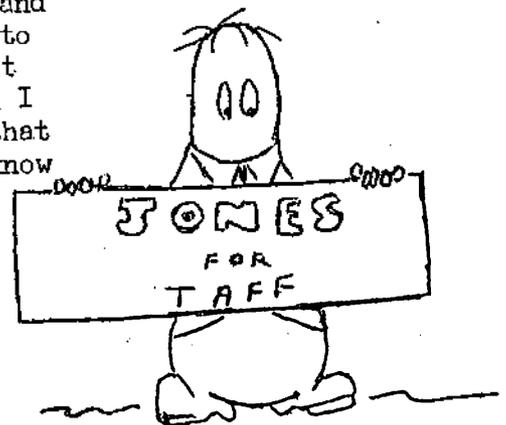
Grey makes no attempt to portion the blame for the gap between the younger and the older fans. Naturally I cannot speak for others but here is my own personal view of the gap. To hark back to the fandom I entered. It had one thing in common in all its parts..age did not matter. You were a fan and you were treated by how sensibly you spoke not by your age. Your fan friends ranged through all the age groups. You were a new fan because of the time factor; not the age factor. It is only in the last five years or so that I have been made to feel not wanted by younger fans. When Grey came up to me at the Globe and started discussing fandom and fanzines --it was the first time I had been so approached by a younger fan for longer than I care to remember.

I can clearly recall the day when I was first made aware of an age gap in fandom. I had been invited to a party thrown by Chas Platt. As I approached the door there was to be seen a queue of young people. Charles was being hit by gate-crashers. As I hesitated, Charles appeared at the door and I moved forward. He said.."Ah, I thought I spied a more matronly figure!" I quit him of all malice aforethought; but if he had sat down for a week he couldn't have come up with a more hurtful remark. It certainly didn't make me feel at home at the party and in fact it was the most divided into age groups that I have ever encountered. After that I guess I hesitated to approach the younger fans in the way I previously had.

I was alright with the ones I had known before--and I find myself on the same friendly basis with visiting American fans no matter what their age, But I grew circumspect. I waited to see if I was wanted; instead of my usual joining in every group. I felt this gap most of all at the Bristol con. That was when I felt that there was a whole area from which I was excluded; and the ground I lost there I have never regained.

I think it is sad that few of the younger or newer fans want to know what I could tell them of earlier days. Looking back on my own neofandom I know they are missing what I enjoyed so much--getting to know people of all age groups, all types, all degrees, and being accepted by them.

I can remember my second con..the first Kettering con. I was sitting in the lounge feeling a bit shy..over in the corner were a group of 'older' fans. Older in time, that is, as far as age went I was older than some of them. Ken Bulmer invited me over to join the group, the only other new fan there was Arthur Thomson. We were both kindly and easily absorbed. After that I never hesitated to join any fannish group --till now. Now I look at the groups of young fans and hesitate. For all I know they may think I have no time for them, that I fancy myself as a BNF, that I don't want to know them. Well - let me be honest--it is easier to talk with fans of long-standing we share the same memories. I can even talk easier with a visiting American fan because he is talking of a fandom that I know. In my fandom, if asked who is Britain's Mr Fandom the answer would



Natterings 3

probably be either Ted Carnell or Ken Slater.

I don't know this new British fandom; and from my side of the gap it feels as if they don't want me to know!

In the letter column I have written at some length remarks about the worldcon discussion. I have hesitated to speak out too clearly on this issue for quite some time because there cannot be a foreign fan anywhere who has more generous American fan friends than I. Naturally I hesitated to seem to be attacking in any way the American fandom of which I am so fond. Yet, precisely because of this reason I felt that I should try to clear up some points. I should hate this discussion to become acrimonious. As various fandoms grow in size and start to flex their muscles--now is the time to discuss the whole question of worldcons. I hope that many fans will respond to this with their views--and keep it objective please! No anti-American or anti-foreign sentiments are welcome here.

Harry Warner can no doubt dot my is and cross my ts on this matter -if I remember my history correctly -the first worldcon was organised by very young American fans who hoped to give the show status by the title of "world". The tradition has been carried on because there was literally no other fandoms in other countries big enough to protest the title. And this has gone on for a very long time. The title has certainly not been carried on in any imperialistic attitude--but merely through the force of inertia and tradition.

I think that only the American fans themselves can do anything about all this and, as we see from Andy Porter's letter, it is being thought about and discussed.

I am cutting this stencil on Feb.16th. I have a cutting here from the New York Times telling of the hold-up of second class mail due to the dock strike at New York. So goodness knows when this will arrive in the US. What with the dock strike and our own Post Office strike over here--we sure are not getting a break in our transatlantic communication. 26 ships sitting in New York Harbour..and I suppose that is where my copy of YANDRO is lying.

The latest book from Rapp & Whiting has arrived in time for me to tell you about it here;

ORBIT 3 is edited by Damon Knight and costs 25s. It is a collection of 9 stories and is titled as "The best ALL NEW science fiction stories of the year." As editor Damon Knight has looked for new ideas and fresh approaches and none of the stories have appeared elsewhere. The opening story by Richard Wilson MOTHER OF THE WORLD takes the last man in the world theme and does give it a new twist. The twist itself is not all that important rather the fact that he tells a very simple tale in an undramatic and engaging way. Joanna Russ has a new story about Alyx telling of her life in pre-history. Interesting..but each time I read an Alyx story the woman seems different. Knight has provided little introductions to each story

Natterings 4

and I was very relieved to find him saying that he could not understand THE CHANGELING by Gene Wolfe. I did not understand it either; yet I could quite see why it was chosen. It leaves the tantalising feeling that you will understand it if you just hit on the right key. I should be hard put to clarify my meaning here; had Knight not done it for me. He likens this story to the writing of Shirley Jackson..and this, of course, is the perfect example. If you like Jackson, you will like this also. The stories in this book are all fascinating and deserve their title. Nothing here is humdrum; you cannot foresee the endings, they all make you think. At least one should exasperate you, I think, though we will not all choose the same one. For me that one was LETTER TO A YOUNG POET by James Sallis.

Sallis says he adopted the SF framework "as an intensifier of the poet's smallness against the huge, clanking 'out there' and as a symbolic reflection of his private strangeness ('in here, deep in')--to make it even deeper." He believes this is one of the legitimate ways in which sf can be used. I cannot lose myself in the poet who is writing this letter and forget the author. This might not matter if I felt drawn to the author; but I get an impression of a conceited mind, very self-aware, and this quite puts me off. Even as I can admire the effect achieved by the words used, I remain untouched and faintly exasperated.

Asimov's THE NAKED SUN was shown on BBC TV here this week; a very faithful rendering of the book which I enjoyed very much. It sent me to re-reading from THE REST OF THE ROBOTS Dobson Books. 35s. In this large book both THE CAVES OF STEEL and THE NAKED SUN are only a part! I re-read both with enjoyment. At the end Asimov says that he had really meant to write a trilogy. Only, in 1958, he stopped in the middle of the third book and began to write non-fiction. Since then he has written some thirty odd books, all non-fiction. High time, I would say, that he returned to that unfinished third book. I would really like to know what happened to Life Baley when he went to Aurora. Anyone out there who can help me persuade Asimov that it is not really fair to leave us without this third book?

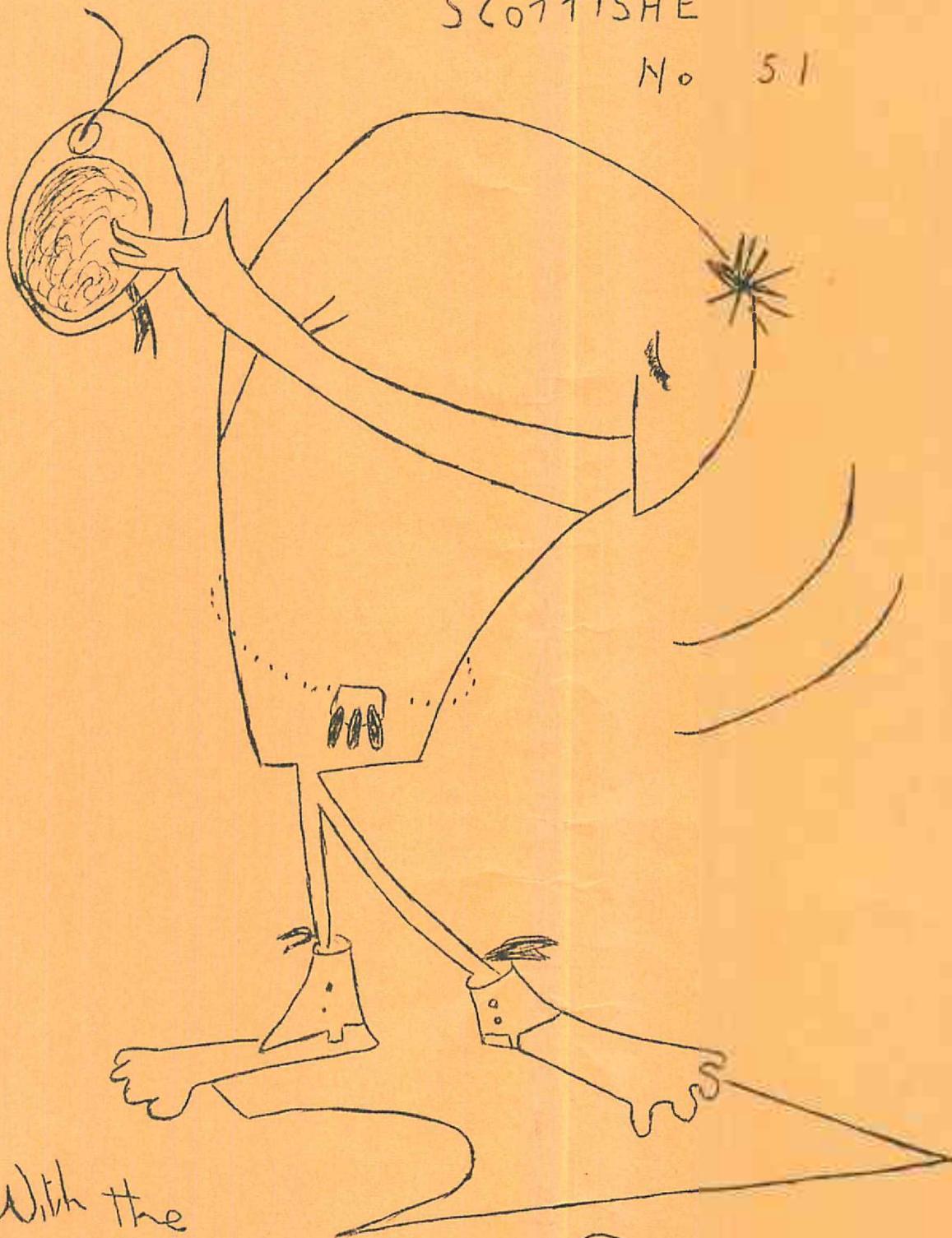
Ethel Lindsay.



This has been

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No 51



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