

VOL. I. No. 4

SEPT '52

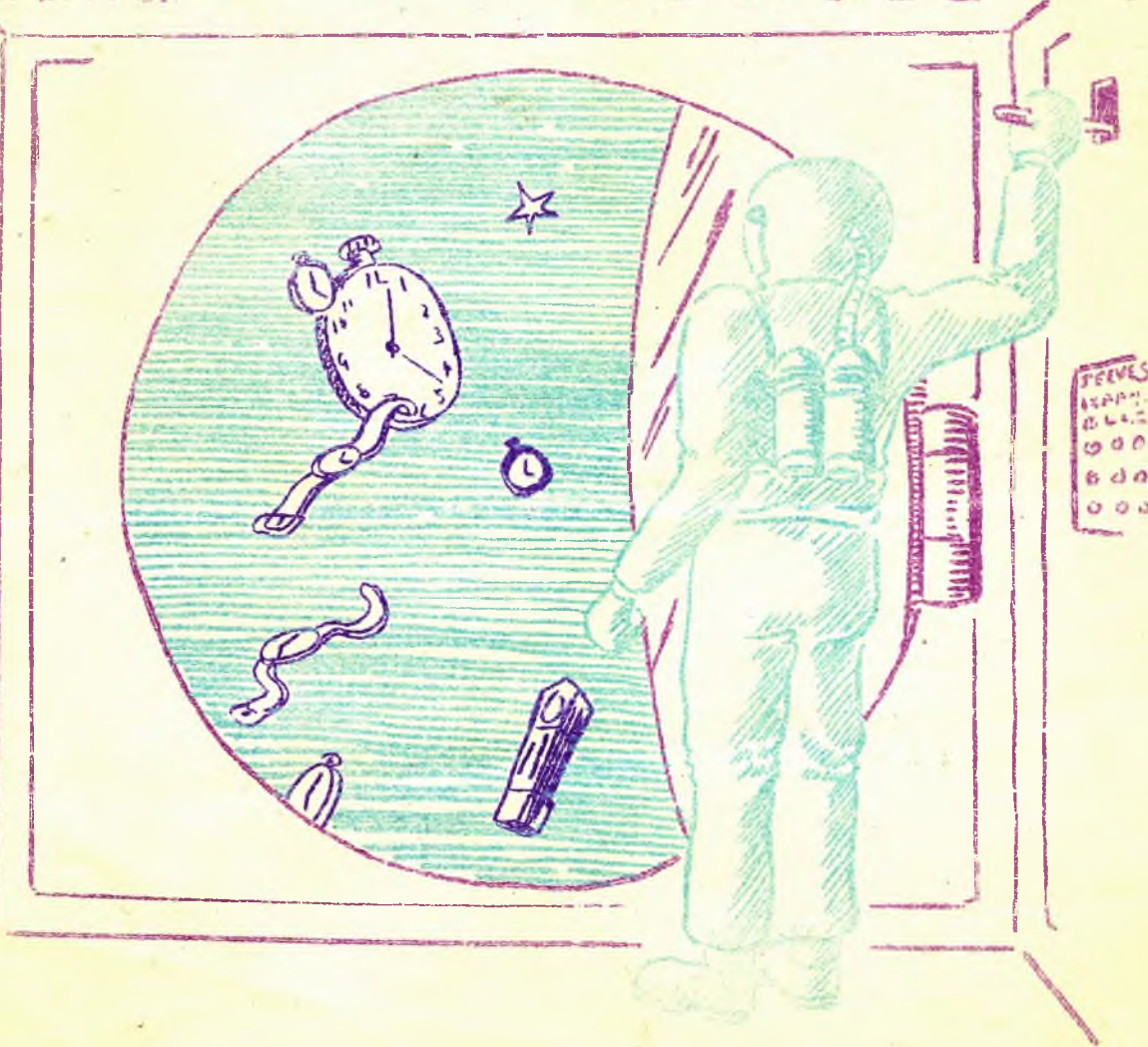
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SPACE TIMES

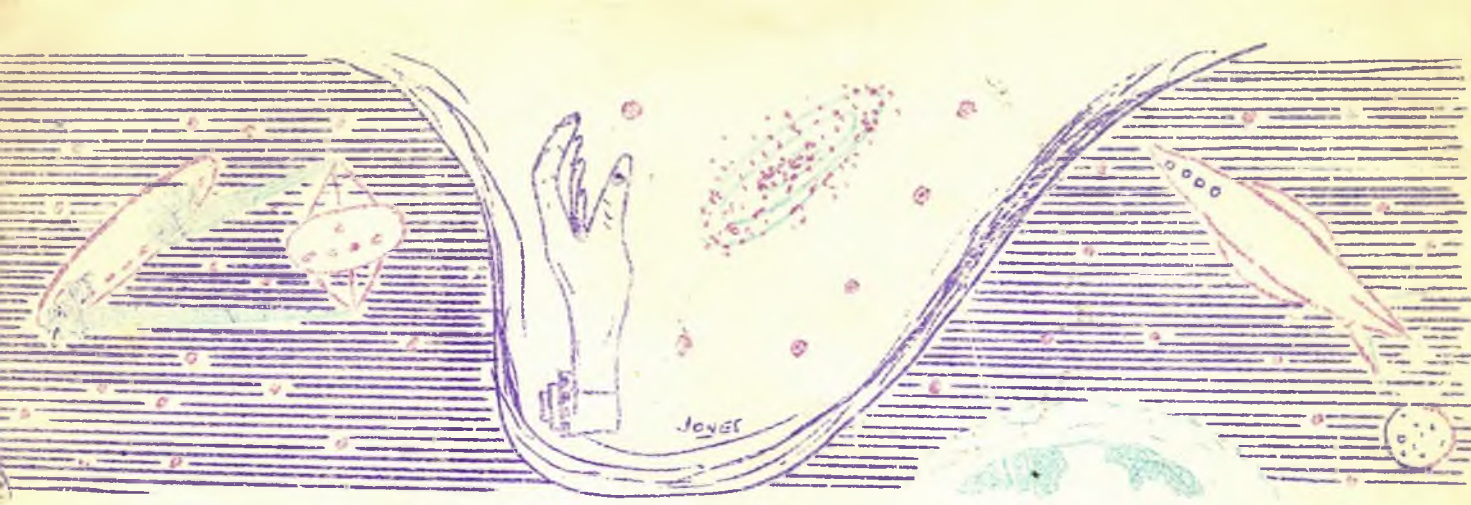
N.S.F.C.

NEWSLETTER

FOR A MINUTE A THOUGHT IT WAS THE
SAME IN THE ABYSS BUT ON SECOND THOUGHTS



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COVER BY JEEVES

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Space-Times is published by the Northwest S-F club on the first of each and every month. Editor Eric Bentcliffe, editorial address, 47, Aldin St, Woodmoor Stockport, Cheshire. Printed at the Space-Times Press by Eric Jones, 79, North View, Eastcote, Pinner, Middx. All MSS to be accompanied with a suitable bribe to ensure publication. Subs to the N.S.F.C. of 5/- per year will bring S-T to your door every month, write E.B. All binds means and groans to be sent to E.B.; for publication, not later than the 20th of each month. This periodical is registered with the G.P.O. as scrap paper...

EDITORIAL.

(1)

We are progressing. With the fourth issue of Space-Times the Roneo is producing black and white copies instead of the 'orrible purple that some folk have complained about recently.

Now that we have a better system of reproduction we want more material, this month we have hardly any, won't someone write us an article?

The club has somewhere in the region of 80 members to date, and from this colossal number only FIVE have written anything for us to print.

WAKE UP AT THE BACK THERE! The very life of your periodical is in danger!! Only two letters were received commenting on the third issue, we want FORTY TWO at least to give us some idea of what YOU want to see in this 'zine.

This is in the nature of a last request. If you don't want a periodical then don't write, the inference will be clear enough. The club has just spent a lot of cash on the duplicator and supplies for it so please do not let us down..... E.J.

NEWS AND VIEWS.

The news this month will be very scarce due to insufficient contact with the 'gen' suppliers, Eric Bentcliffe is on vacation in the tropic isle of Jersey, soaking in the sun and by-products of the same, tells me he is on the way to France for a day, -don't suppose he'll be looking for S-F tho'. Lack of room in the foyer of the "Gaiety Cinema" prevented an exhibition of S-F being held in conjunction with "The THING", but some good work was done with some posters supplied by Les Jackson. Six free passes were doled out for the good work, but the film, in the words of Dave Cohen, was a 'chromium plated Frankenstein'.

Grayson & Grayson have offered to give the New Books which will be on exhibit at the 'MANCON', to the Mancon, presumably for auction purposes.

Covers of Future issues of Space-Times will have a different illo for each month. The illos will be done by several well-known Fan artists.

PROJECT FAN CLUB. A pet project of Orv Mosher, Shelby Vick, Nan Gerding and Dick Clarkson. (full details not known at the moment of typing, but the full gen, I hope, will appear further in this issue.)

Anybody seen Curtis-Warren's latest, "Black Infinity"? Compare covers with "New Worlds" No. 5. Somebody has been pinching ideas.

The two letters mentioned in the Editorial will appear in a new column called "THE PRESSOR BEAM", a column devoted to the letters we receive. Another new column is FLOG 'N WANT, members adverts, mags etc to sell and buy, this column is free to members, rates for non-members will appear in the next issue..... Eric Jones.

THE EGO SPOT.

The Hyper-beam is set this month on another of our founder members, to wit, the very active and exceedingly efficient ERIC BENTCLIFFE. Eric is a sales Manager by trade, age 28, known amongst his friends as 'The Hair', due to his flowing locks. He is the 'action-rather-than-words' member of the club, a keen collector of AsF's from the moment he dropped out of his cradle,

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his "X" ray eyes read, 'on sighting', an ASF he hasn't got. His favorite Authors and Stories are many and varied, and he doesn't mind as long as they are good writers, and good stories. His main ambition is to have all ASF's from the year dot. He is also a collector of G.C.C.D. hard cover Books, and has a correspondence stretching from here to the Moon, and loves it. His other Hobby -apart from S-F- is WOMEN.....Eric is still a Bachelor. D.H.C.

AMERICAN COLUMN.

By Dale R. Smith.

This is the first of what I hope will be a series of reports from the States. I am going to try and give you facts and figures while they are still news. - Suggestions welcomed.

Science Fiction is on the air. Willy Ley will discuss Science Fiction & Facts in informal chats about Rockets, Guided Missiles, Planets, Space Travel, etc., every Saturday for 15 minutes on the A.B.C. Network. Sponsor is Galaxy Publishing Corp.

PLAYER PIANO, a new novel by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. was placed on sale Aug 18 by Charles Scribner's Sons at \$3.00. The story concerns America in the coming "Age of Electronics" and is good, adult science-fiction. It is a tale of the clash between man and machine technology at a time when the machines do almost everything.

The Winston Science Fiction Series will produce 5 more titles this Fall at \$2.00 each. ISLANDS IN THE SKY, Arthur C. Clarke; VAULT OF THE AGES, Foul Anderson; ROCKET JOCKEY, Philip St. John; SONS OF THE OCEAN DEEPS, Bryce Walton; and MISTS OF DAWN, Chad Oliver.

Shasta Publishers is planning a series to be known as Shasta Juniors which will include stories by Murray Leinster - the To-The-Stars-series. The first title, SPACE PLATFORM is scheduled for Sept. SPACE TUC is planned for Feb, and SPACE FERRY and other titles will follow. Pocket Books plans to eventually print the Leinster stories as adult titles.

FRONTIERS IN THE SKY, another Shasta Junior by Roger Phillips, will appear soon.

CHECKLIST NOTES.

A Review copy of part one of the listing was sent to the "Publishers Weekly", which is one of the main organs of the trade here. To our surprise and gratification, it was listed therein recently, and has pulled in orders from such places as the "Cleveland Public Library", "University of Illinois Library", and the libraries of the Universities of Texas and Wisconsin.

The mention in "Publishers Weekly" means that Eric Bentcliffe and Eric Jones now have their names recorded in Literary History as Editor and Printer respectively. D.R.S.

A CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE.....

By Ken Slater.

LET US GET TO THE POINT.....IF ANY! !

SCIENCE FICTION is something you read, or else you wouldn't be reading this, I guess. Why do you read it? What is the point of your pro-occupation with this 'literary form'? Why don't you read detective stories for preference?

Please take a few minutes out, and summarise your reasons, before you go any further.

Okay? I wonder what they were, those reasons you have thought up. I very much doubt if they were true!

There was a time when one could say with a fair amount of truth that you learned something from science-fiction; it was sugar-coated science. That was back in the days when yarns had footnotes explaining what distance Mars was from the Sun; what was meant by "albedo", and so forth. Such footnotes are rare today, and most fans read s-f without any true idea of just which parts are fact and which are fiction. So, frankly, that reason is pretty useless.

That was one of the trite old reasons, my friends. Not water-tight today, I fear. What were your others? Because you believe in the future? And just what does science-fiction have to do with the future? Oh, I see, prophesy of things to come, like the way the atom bomb was 'guessed' at; guided rockets were foretold, and so forth. Not accepted. The reason stinks! You add up the "forecasts" of the last thirty years, and then take those which have come true, or which show any signs of coming true, with any accuracy; now compare them, and if you get a figure of anything much over 1% you'll surprise me. You've probably forgotten quite a few non-realised forecasts.

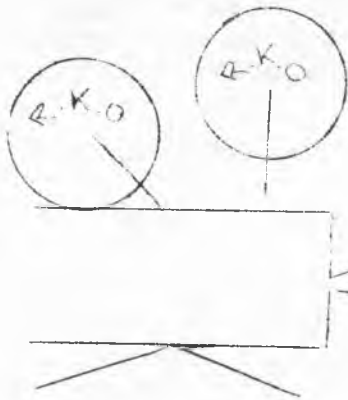
Then take the unforecasted items, and see what you get! The "Biro" pen is a very simple little mechanism.... I don't seem to recall any mention; but I've a big load of memory of "electric stylos" and "metal-foil". Rockets are with us, yes, but what about the jet? Can you honestly recall a yarn preceding the jet which even approximated it in description? There was one - but it was written a long while outside the thirty year limit of forecast that I have set. Hydroponics. Artificial foodstuffs. Transatlantic tunnels. Look at a few of these big things. Just how have they materialised in accordance with prediction? Not that hydroponics ever was a science-fictional prediction, in truth.

Nope, that reason doesn't hold much water either. Pretty much the same reasoning can be applied to all the stock 'reasons' given for a prediction for s-f.

Reasons are trotted out by anthologists, by the car load. Most of 'em by-pass the issue, but one or two brave fellows have stated it very simply. In science-fiction, anything is possible. Therefore the reader can make a complete escape from the toil and trouble of his everyday life; from the burdensome bother of wondering just how long he can hold down whatever he is holding down. The old-style adventure yarn is no longer a satisfactory dream-world. It doesn't take the psychopathic case far enough away from reality. Science fiction does. It therefore permits the imaginative release of the inhibitions; the reader can equate himself into a scene where his problems bear no relation to his 'real' problems - and where he makes out successfully, every time! Not always by winning, of course. Sometimes by self-sacrifice, by martyrdom. But still, he overcomes his opponents, one way or the other, in this far-off dream world. And the

sth)

sooner all the prating little fans realise this, the better.
Science-Fiction is Escape Literature, nothing more.



Film Reviews

"FLIGHT TO MARS"

by

Terry Jeeves.

If possible, "FLIGHT TO MARS" was worse than "ROCKETSHIP X.M." Unfortunately, fans are in a doubtful position over such films. No one wants to Boycott 'em, firstly, because after all by doing so they have to rely on someone else's opinion, and there's always the thought, "One man's meat.....", and the second reason for avoiding the boycott is the fact that even if fans were sufficiently numerous (and dependable enough) to affect box office sales, the most likely result would be a clear indication to the studios to drop such things altogether. Perhaps the only real solution is to see the good films several times. Having just seen DESTINATION MOON for the third time, you can see what I mean. Anyway, this 'ere film FLIGHT TO MARS, Corny opening, rocket obviously painted as in the last sequence of "WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE", models are also used, but never convincingly. The Rocket's crew board the thing, close the door - with an ordinary 'dog' - and blast off. Next we see them just as one character is explaining over the Radio that they have got the 'magnetic gravity compensators' working, ergo, no floating. Next comes a shower of red hot meteors, just like R.X.M., you can hear 'em, but these of course are different. They would be to stay red hot in empty space. Okay, one of 'em clouts the ship. An investigation shows that it has severed some cables and damaged the landing gear, which are all miraculously packed into a metal sphere about 3 feet in diameter. (Actually a re-painted ball turret from a war plane) All this is done without causing a leakage of air. Eventually our heroes crash land on Mars, and are met by a number of Martians wearing space-suits borrowed from Destination Moon, including zip fasteners. Dead clover these Martians, they even learned English by radio. Praise the B.B.C. Our heroes rocket having been wrecked, and there being no 'atomic power head' on Mars, or atomic power for that matter, they persuade the Martians to build them a new rocket, whilst they invent a new fuel. Oh, they don't rush it! It takes them all of two months before they're ready, in which time the Martians have split into two factions, the leading one of which intends to seize the ship and duplicate it in order to kill everyone on Earth and then move in themselves. They are thwarted by ye Hero and his Martian girl friend, and the Hero, having more strength than a mere girl, is able to force over a remote control switch so hard that the motor understands that more effort is needed, and so opens the dome to allow them to escape. Why the Martians

have a segmented dome opening into an atmosphere they need space-suits to live in, is never explained. Honestly, the whole thing stinks. If you haven't seen it yet, I know this won't stop you going, but you'll see.

"THE THING"

by

Eric Bentcliffe.

When you have seen this mighty Epic of R.K.O.'s, you can fill the final stanza in yourself.

OH! THEY GOT HOLD OF "WHO GOES THERE"
AND MADE A....@?!"&%%///.....:.....

At the premiere in Manchester of the "Thing", some members received free seats, afterwards, opinions of the film were rather varied. Ranging from "not too bad" to "Ruddy awful".

It can now be revealed that the "Thing" is a radioactive vegetable with cells similar in type to a carrot, it also has the power to re-grow any limbs hacked off by axes, or torn off by fans. After being shot at, hacked at, and partly fricassed in gasoline, the poor 'thing' is finally electrocuted and turned into a mixed grill.

I recommend that you see this film, afterwards you will probably turn to Vargo Statten and find him GOOD.

AN ODE TO AN ODOUR.

by

Eric Jones.

This is the tale of Sebastian Glazing,
- A chap that used to read AMAZING.
One night he climbed into his bed,
With a back issue he hadn't read.

From front to back, he read that ish,
And uttered to Ghu his favourite wish.
"Coo! I'd luv to 'ear them rockets roar
To 'ave a sword 'n blondes galore!"

"See some BEM's and Dero's too.
And 'elp clean aht a rocket's flue!"
That night Ghu heard our Sebby's cry
Whilst watching the current AMAZING fry.

"By Klono! He shall have his wish,
And follow the Epics in the latest ish!"
So, on the dot of a quarter to nine
Sebby went forward in AMAZING's time.

The Odour cont.

The ship was heading to deep space,
Warping at a hellava pace.
The meteors whizzing by - red hot,
Poor Sebby thought he'd had his lot.

A star loomed up in the visiplato,
Seb said to a Crewman, "Wots that nato?"
"That's Sirius", the crewman replied,
"According to this yarn we dive inside."

The ship went down, its journey done,
To the very fringe of that white-hot sun,
Seb's cry went up, "Cor! 'Elp me Ghu!
An' take me back to '52."

So Seb returned, his pants a'blazing,
Swearing, "By Klono! I'm thru with AMAZING!"
Today you'll hear our Seb expounding,
The virtues of GALAXY, and ASTOUNDING.



Terry Jeeves writes:

S-T No 3. Printing good and clear, but I think that black ink would be a great improvement on the blue, as it would give greater contrast. The "EGO SPOT" is a good idea, long may it reign. How about putting the Lancaster Boys on the spot sometime not to mention Gerard Quinn, Alan Hunter and Bob Clothier?

Gadgets in S-F by Taffy Williams suffered from the same trouble as the whole issue, namely, too short. It's a pity that you couldn't have let him spread a bit more, and done the same with your opening remarks. Oh well, maybe the next time huh?

What do you think of this issue Terry? We have got rid of the blue ink at last and are now using the Roneo. Ego Spot will expand as will the whole issue, when we have the material..... E.J.

Vince Clarke says:

Thanks for the third Space Times....my, isn't it coming out fast ! This third is definitely on the up-grade, and of more than local significance. In fact stop scooping SFN!!

Finally, Tony Thorne writes:

Space Times? Not bad. Liked Rymes. Gadget article only fringed a colossal subject but was good if taken as a delve..... Can I have any back numbers of S-T please?

There MAY be some back numbers Tony, but they'll be a COLOSSAL PRICE!!!!!! E.J

BOOK AND MAGAZINE NEWS

by

Eric Bentcliffe.

A new mag to be published by Standard, publishers of S.S and T.W.S., is SPACE STORIES which will appear bi-monthly.

AMAZING is strongly rumoured to be following in FAN.'s footsteps and going into digest size - but slick. Issue number two of FAN (Fantastic -using the initial F would be too risky) has two-tone headings plus a nice yarn by Tony Boucher, STAR DUMMY.

Bryan Berry, up and coming British Author, has sold a weird short to MAGPIE.

"MOON AHEAD", by LESLIE GREENER, is a juvenile shortly to be published by JOHN LANE, THE BODLEY HEAD Ltd. Due from the same publisher is KENDALL FOSTER CROSSSENS'

"ADVENTURES IN TOMORROW", containing stories from the ATOMIC age to the DELPHIC, 1,000,000 A.A. (After AMAZING)

In case anybody is curious as to where 'Illustrated' got the BONESTELL'S from which illustrated "egg's" recent series, the answer is 'Colliers', March 22nd issue.

You will be seeing these illo's again before long in "The Space Frontier".

DOWN SOUTH!!

by

Paul Sowerby.

The editor of "Astroneer" wishes to point out that during his visit to the south of this septic (sceptered,?) isle, he was NOT staying at 'The Pillory', Welling, Kent, and that though he had hoped to visit this noble edifice, the residence of the excellent Vincent Clarke, repealer of the anti-corn laws, time did not permit.

This might have been a blessing in disguise, as otherwise he might have arrived during that indigestible feast of fun, the 'Incon', full details of which will appear in the "ASTRONEER", out in a week or two.

However, the individual in question did visit, in company with Eric Jones- Editor of this edition of S-T -and his wife, the "Newport Bookstall" and the "Fantasy Bookcentre, at which "A's"Ed obtained some very good bargains. Passers-by looked askance at the spectacle of two persons animatedly discussing duplicating machines, with the aid of sketches on the backs of 'Mancon' Bulletins.

The following Saturday, the peregrinating editor explored several previously un-investigated corners of the Science Museum. The Astronomy Section, made no mention of Astro-nautics (not really surprising) nor were there any space-ships, though there were dozens of other types of ships just as interesting to him.

((He will now shut up until "ASTRONEER" comes out!!!!))

NEW MEMBERS OF THE N.S.F.C.

James Harper,
St Georges Vicarage,
Osborne Road,
Jesmond, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Tony Thorne,
21, Granville Road,
Gillingham,
Kent.

H.P. Sanderson,
90, Beresford Road
Longsight, Manchester.

Brian Varley,
11, Ramsden Street,
Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancs.



FLOG 'N WANT



ERIC BENTONLIFE WANTS:

"Rockets through Space" by Cleator.
"Dawn of the Space Age" by Harper.
"Between Earth And Sky" by Piccard.
(47, Alldis St, Woodsmoor, Stockport,
Cheshire)

ERIC JONES HAS TO FLOG:

Amazing. Apr, May, Jun, Jul. '52.
Fantastic Adv. Apr, May, Jun, Jul. '52.
Planet. May, Jul. '52.
Future. " " '52.
Marvel. May. '52.
S-F Quarterly. May, Aug. '52
2CSA Books. Summer '52.

ALL AT 2/- Each,
(79, North View, Eastcote, Pinner, Middx)

Last minute item from Alan Hunter, not listed in contents page.....

DESTINY.
by
Alan Hunter.

On fingers of fire, pointing past the endless sky,
EARTH sends her giants out in little ships
-to conquer, or to die.

The sun-bejewelled planets, expanding steadily,
Fill their horizons, pulse beneath their feet
- Fulfilling destiny!

Now standing tiptoe, while truths begin to fly,
Fingers of fire scratch at endless space
- horizons drifting by.

Closing all-unfolding hands, the last reality
Drifts between their fingers like a half-forgotten dream
- completing destiny!

STOP PRESS!!!!!

AT THE MANCON, you will see a new film "BLACK SATURDAY". Produced and directed
by John Russell Fearn and Pete Ogden.
This film is based on "Black-Out", a story which appeared in the second issue
of "Science-Fantasy", and concerns the encounter by a rocket to Mars of a 'fault
in the ether', and the crews' reaction to it.

SEND YOUR MANCON SUB NOW TO SID KLEPPER.