

V
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My thanks once again, to all the kind people who have helped with the production of this issue...either by cutting their own material on to stencil, or by cutting stencils for the material of others. Either way, it was a great help.

Incidentally, for anyone wondering why this page appears in red..the reason is simply an effort to reduce the amount of 'show through' on the front cover.. I hope it works.

Contributions are always welcome, and if you can supply a return envelope (and postage) in case they are not suitable, then so much the better.

For the time being, the Secretary has offered to run the information bureau, and of course our Treasurer is always ready to accept new members...remember, those joining for the remaining half-year, do so at a reduced rate...Go out and preach.

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From the previous list in Vector 2, delete M.1. (D.J.Newman) who was originally listed due to a misunderstanding.

-o-o-o-o-o-o-

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VECTOR

Edited by
TERRY JEEVES

3

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION

Winter 1958

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Cover by Jim Cawthorne

4 EDITORIAL :-

"ARE YOU
DEAD ?"

"The Atomic Energy Authority has stated that the Strontium 90 level in Britain has grown by 2.3 units per year since 1954. The present annual rate of 20,000 deaths from leucaemia and bone cancer is therefore bound to rise."

All of which, happens to be an extract from the Great Pan, G-180, 'Atomic Energy', by Egon Larsen. A must-have book, for any reader of

science-fiction, whose thoughts go beyond Buck Rogers. Naturally the book covers practically every field of Atomic Energy, but the point I wanted to raise, is the fact that, since Strontium 90 is a substance which accumulates in the human body over a period.... we could all be under a death sentence right now. I don't intend to dwell much longer on this point..it just came to mind, that many of the readers of Vector may be dead right now....at least, I had such a whimsical thought, at the dearth of letters following the second issue. More letters did arrive, than for the first edition, but I'd still like a lot more if I'm to know what you want.

For instance, it has been suggested that we have a fanzine review column in each issue. How many other members feel the same way? For that matter, do we have anyone willing to do the job? Response to the idea of a badge (and a competition) scored a neat zero, so that project goes on the shelf for the time being. Tape recording competitions seemed slightly more popular, though no entries were received. Shelve that one too. Opinions on magazine reviews are divided, so we'll keep them until a majority vote has it otherwise.

B.S.F.A. projects are coming along faster than expected at first. With this issue, you will also be getting a copy of the Constitution. Very soon after that, there will be a heavy thump at your letter box, and the first part of the checklist of Nova publications will have arrived. Close on its heels will be part 1 of our Galaxy checklist. Compiled respectively by Brian Burgess, and Karl Dollner, we venture to suggest that both items will be well received by members.

The current assortment of satellites in orbit, culminating (at the time of writing) with the American 'Atlas', seems to have made science fiction, not only respectable, but responsible. For several years now, I have been giving two or three lectures on Space Travel, to the Sheffield Astronomical Society, and one or two smaller bodies. Each lecture has concluded with plenty of questions ranging from "What are Flying Saucers", to "Do you really believe that we'll get into space?". These were phrased politely, but in much the same tone as one would use to humour a lunatic.....this year, I have been invited to be Guest of Honour at the Annual Dinner. I suppose this proves something.

Along with this copy of Vector, you will have received (if the envelopes can take the strain, not only a copy of the BSFA Constitution, but also a leaflet giving details of the annual get-together....THE CONVENTION.

The Constitution was delayed owing to a slight loss of chair man, so we hope you'll bear with over this delay. Previous news of The Convention has not been forthcoming, owing to a search for a suitable hotel. Many people have expressed a wish to 'Give the George a rest'...this, coupled with the sad fact that the 'George' has only 48 bed-spaces, made it essential to find a new site for this year. Bob Richardson returned to base, with a pair of shoes with soles as thin as paper...BUT, he also returned with news of what may be a new fannish Mecca. The Imperial Hotel in Birmingham is just about as central and easily reached as fandom could wish for. Add to this, 80 bed rooms, and you're more than half way to a good time. Being accustomed to conventional types, the manager should have no difficulty in getting used to us. According to Bob, he seems a 'ood type'. There is only one possible fly in the ointment.....The Imperial is a popular hotel, and the manager can not reserve rooms indefinitely, without a definite booking. This simply means that if you want a room, then don't leave it until you have watered the ducks and perforated the pantograph...GET WEAVING NOW, book your room, and be sure of a good time. My own room receipt is safely locked in the safe, so I'm all right Jack. How about you ?

Members who have not attended a Convention before, may like to know a bit about the general routine. The affair proper will begin on the Saturday, and finish on Sunday...by this, I mean that if you only come for the programme, you only need a room for the Saturday night. On the other hand, if you want to make a really good week-end of it, meet other fen (buy me a drink), talk your hind leg off, and generally have fun, then copy the regulars and arrive on the Friday night, and stagger off home again some time on Monday. This reminds me of one important point....DO introduce yourself if you arrive early. Once in the Temple Room, it won't matter, but if you sit off in a corner on Friday night and nurse a glass of beer while silently bemoaning the fact that no one talks to you..then you'll have a poor week-end. After all, if we don't know you, then as far as regular con-goers are concerned, you must be local inhabitant, who thinks we're all a b-nuisance...join one of the natter groups, and you'll be welcomed like a long lost sheep.

Which just about brings me to the end of the available space, so the only thing left to say is...See you in Birmingham, and here's hoping you have as good a time as I'm going to have.
Be seeing you,

Harry Felvel

COMPETITION ENTRY No. 1.

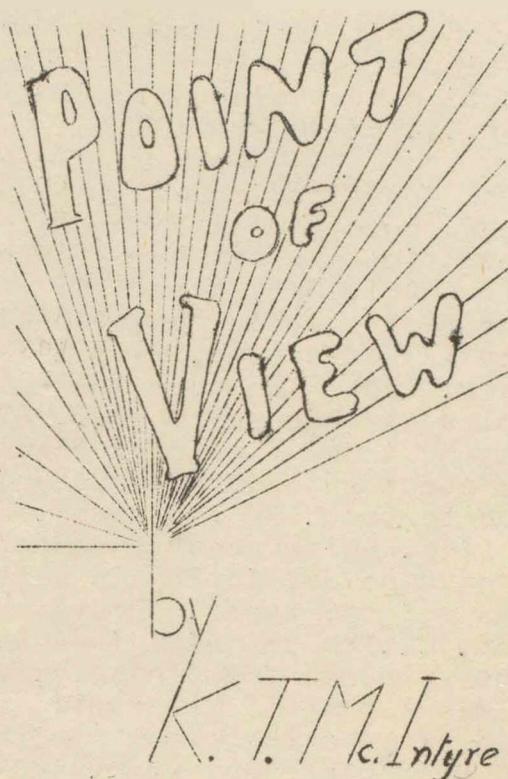
THE SARRO was motionless, crouching in the lee of a Nart tree, a strange diaphanous plant that some called "Flame Tree"; in fact, that was the first name given to it by the early visitors to this tiny world. For indeed, mused Bendix, it did look like flame, and as he watched the beast, he noticed - it seemed for the first time, that the plant was undeniably lovely.

The fronds appeared to shimmer and glint, and fascinating subtle changes were occurring continuously, blends of yellow, red, gold, blue and green, and back again to the predominating red, varying from a full deep tone, up to a dazzling bright scarlet with scintillating patches at the extremities. He felt dizzy, and shook his head confusedly - he knew that he only had to maintain his watchful pose a few moments longer and the animal was his. Agreed Sarros were not very handsome creatures, in fact they were nightmarish horrors, but their flesh was delicious, and unfortunately for them they were first class hypnotic subjects.

It was only a matter of holding it's attention for a little longer and then it would be an easy matter to - - of course he would have shot the beast long ago, but he'd left his rifle behind in the Station armoury, thinking only to stroll a few yards from the camp. It was well known that Sarros never came within a mile of a man made settlement - - so perhaps there might be some new and succulent fruit - just in these bushes, or perhaps that tree -- or perhaps ---

At any moment now the creature would waver and topple over unconscious, and then it would be quite easy to kill it by pressing his fingers on a certain nerve-centre located in the monster's neck, and incidentally the only soft spot in it's otherwise steel hard exterior.

He could then drag the fanged and spiky horror over to the Station. How the fellows would cheer at the prospect of this unexpected delicacy. It would be a rare delight after the canned and synthetic stuff - the woody fruits and bitter pulpy berries that had been their fare for weeks past.



He realised that the object of his attention was moving, ever so slightly - it was not now quite so rigid; so statuesque. It seemed to sway, very slowly - first to one side and then the other and - - shimmer - and waver - - like the tree - - -

But the beast did not fall, and Bendix did not seem inclined to make any attempt to approach it. He felt - - uninterested. With a swift scurrying crablike movement the Sarro was upon him, sinking twin sucker-probes into his jugular vein !

Some six hours later a large man armed with a powerful rifle and using a machete to cut a way through the clinging leech vines came cursing and sweating out into a clearing. His eyes fastened immediately on the obscene toy that lay huddled in a small depression. Like a dirty rag doll ravaged and discarded by some wilful child, it lay there - little more than a skeleton, a bloodless caricature.

"Harvey", he shouted back over his shoulder, "I've found him - or rather, what's left." He gazed down moodily and as his companion joined him added, "Poor devil!" The other slung his rifle on his shoulder and mopped his face. "Look Ryder", he breathed, "that's the fourth." He looked bewildered - and frightened. "--- but I don't get it; Bendix was too damn' careful, and yet ---" His voice trailed away, while the expression on his face changed to amazement - and fear. He glanced at Ryder, who was examining the body. "Hell," he burst out, "We'd be better off this God-forsaken planet." He swung around, his eyes wild as they searched the surrounding shrubbery. He looked as near to panic as he'd ever been.

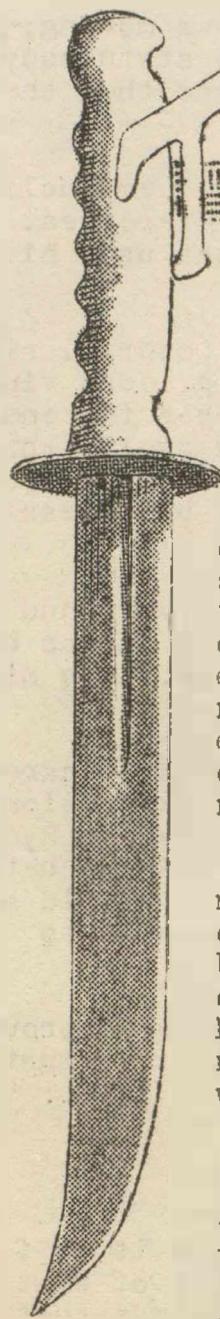
The big man straightened up, wiping his hands on his trouser legs. "How in the merry hell did he get so far away ? It must be at least five miles back to camp." He appealed to the other: "And why didn't he use his bloody knife ?"

END

COMMENTS

This story fails on two counts; first because it is fifty percent too long; second because the author lost sight of what he was supposed to be writing about. The stated subject was that of A Knife. Point of View is not about a knife at all - the weapon is only mentioned at the very end and the speaker could just as well ask "why didn't he use his bloody nail file ?"

The length could have easily been adjusted by cropping the too-wordy beginning but, despite its faults, the story is a story in that it tells something. Not, unfortunately, about a knife, but about something else. Hunters, perhaps, or Sarros, or conditions on an off-world planet. What doesn't matter; for the purpose of the competition the story had to concern itself with a knife. It didn't and so it does not win first place.



The Knife

by
Arthur R. Weir

Missionaries, decided Jameson, were his greatest enemies; they had followed immediately after the troops who had opened up this part

of Africa over forty years ago, and had ensured that all the old legends and ritual had been so forgotten that only a few of the older people retained even a distorted memory of their past. Now, as the first ethnologist allowed to enter the district he had, in nearly five months work, been able to glean just enough to give a tantalising outline of a highly organised negro civilisation whose details it would never be possible to obtain.

At this point his host, Roberts, the medical missionary who also ran the district school, not only interrupted this rather dismal train of thought but raised his hopes anew. A very old man, the son of a former fetish priest, had announced that since he was going to die before the week was out he was now prepared to answer such questions as they might wish to ask.

His father, the old man explained at their interview, had been one of the royal sacrificers, the guardian of the special weapon used, which had been the direct gift of the gods; yes, it had been in use throughout all the twenty-two generations of the last royal dynasty, and the fifteen generations of the dynasty before that, and even then it had been immemorially old. Between sacrifices it had been kept hidden from the vulgar gaze, and the song of its ritual hiding had been:

"The first full moon after the rains,
At the Shrine of the Hunters,
Where the leopard falls upon the bush-pig,
There lies the sacred thing."

"Convenient," commented Roberts, "You already know the Hunter's Shrine, and the first full moon after the rains is just three days from now."

9

Jameson spent two days in clearing bush from the roughly carved stone pile of the shrine, and invited Roberts to accompany him there shortly before midnight on the third evening. Within twenty minutes of their arrival the shadow of a projecting carved leopard's head fell on the carved head of a bush-pig lower down. Digging where the combined shadows touched the ground, they unearthed a great mass of congealed rubber latex, which, ripped open by Robert's knife disclosed at its centre the weapon they sought. Jameson, picking it up, all but dropped it: "Feel the weight!" he ejaculated, "It's not aluminium, but it's far too light for steel; and," he continued trying it on the mass of rubber, "it's got a better edge than most Sheffield razors."

Roberts, having spent the rest of the night making a rough analysis of some filings from the handle of the knife, appeared just after sunup, almost too excited to speak. "That knife's an alloy of titanium," he almost shouted, "Think of it, man! Some civilisation goodness knows how far back must have known how to work a metal we've only found out how to deal with in the last twenty years.!"

"But no human civilization," rejoined Jameson quietly, "Look at that handle - - eleven inches long, oval section, six evenly-spaced indentations on the one side, and one at each end of the other; made to fit a hand over twice the size of ours, with six fingers and a thumb at each side."

THE END

COMMENTS

This story is the better of the two received but there is still tremendous room for improvement. The length is exact but again we get the coy shyness in mentioning what the story is supposed to be about until the very end when it is sprung as a punch line. As the story was supposed to be about a knife, there is little point in keeping what the story is about secret until the very last moment.

One great point in the story's favour is that it ended on a high-point without unnecessary wordage. From then on the reader is left to use his imagination. The story is not good but as already said, is the best of those received. Therefore it earns the prize - which has already been forwarded.

In view of the above comments, an example has been provided. It is hoped that it will prove more helpful than comment.

KNIFE by E.C.Tubb

The knife was a thin, tapered sliver of steel, razor-edged, needle-pointed, cunningly designed to stab, to cut, to throw. It was the knife of an assassin. It belonged to me.

I held it in my hand, letting the cold steel caress my naked thigh as I honed the paper-thin edge in a continuous habit-formed reflex action. And, while I honed the blade, I waited a

shadow amongst shadows, invisible against the mound of debris before which I stood.

It was raining, the icy drops falling in an unbroken curtain from the heavens to the earth below. They stung my naked flesh as if they were whips wielded by some angry arm, but I ignored them as I had learned to ignore the other physical discomforts of the new age. And in this I had help. Hunger is an exacting taskmaster.

I did not dislike the rain. The wetness of it reminded me of blood, of the fresh, ruby liquid spouting from a gaping wound. Once perhaps, I would have felt horror at such a thought but not now. Not since man-made fire had ravaged the world and driven men into strange paths in order to survive. And so I waited and felt no shame, no horror, at the reason for my waiting. I was hungry and I waited for food.

He came at last, splashing past where I stood, his breath reeking of the raw alcohol which had numbed his senses to danger. He did not see me as I stepped behind him. He did not appreciate the deftness with which I lifted the knife . . . And drove it home.

It was still raining when I returned to the cave which I called home. I stepped carefully, wary of traps, eager to return to snugness and warmth with my burden. I eased it from my shoulder, letting the rain wash the stain from my flesh, then tensed as an alien odour reached my nostrils. I was not alone. Someone waited for me in my cave.

Whoever it was was a fool; the knowledge gave me comfort. I had a knife and the possession of that knife gave me an advantage over any that I could meet in this place at this time. Weapons were scarce aside from clumsy clubs and awkward spears. There were other blades, true, but mine was a master of its kind. I could throw it with a flick of the wrist, cut, stab, weave a curtain of death around anyone I could meet. And so I was not afraid of who it was waited for me in my home to despoil me of what I had won. It was almost ironical, that he should wait so for food when he, himself, would provide extra for my store.

My knife adjusted itself to my hand as I entered my cave, the glow of the fire bright to my eyes. I smiled as I saw him turn towards me. Smiled and poised the knife, giving him time to see the blade, the redness on its edge, the redness of my mouth. I did not speak, did not move, merely waited for him to cringe, to sag, to beg perhaps as the power I held in the shape of the knife shocked him to awareness of what was to be his destiny.

But he did none of those things.

He had a gun.

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GERFANDOM

by

The B.S.F.A and the Science Fiction Club Europa, have been linked by the exchange of two members on each side - Walter Ernsting and myself have agreed to further co-operation. Now, I'm kind of trying to produce an article introducing you to Gerfandom.

Rainer Eisfeld

Coming down to facts, the SFCE, then SFCD, D for Deutschland, was established on August 1, 1955, in Frankfurt. Its founders were Walter Ernsting and Walter Spiegl (Germany), Julian Parr (England), and as a guest, Raymond Z. Gallun (USA) - and the foundation would have been impossible without Forry Ackerman's help - the ALDEN LORRAINE ACKERMAN FUND.

Sci-fi-fandom is impossible without the literature, to be exact, without magazine-literature. Why that restriction? Because Dominik wrote in the 30's and no fandom formed; because the Rauch Publishers, well known in Germany, published four good and expensive novels back in 1952 - among them Asimov's I, Robot and Williamson's The Humanoids, and never sold them. So the answer had to be Utopia, whose first edition was published in 1954 featuring first British, and then American authors. By now in 1958, we have 9 or 10 sf periodicals.

The fact that I was able to give the exact date of the beginning of Gerfandom indicates already its character. It is centralised. A national organisation was the start, local groups and local fanmags followed. It was serconfannish, which was used temporarily as a reproach. Its connecting fanzine was ANDROMEDA, now (BLICK IN DIE ZUKUNFT), compiled by Walter Ernsting, till December, 1957, editor of UTOPIA. The SFCD offered reduced prices for sci-fi mags and books, and other advantages, and it is quite possible that there were - and still are - more members than fans, but nevertheless, there's a lot of fandom over here. The foundations of the SFCD didn't happen by business considerations. Ask Julian Parr about it !

As I recall, Jan Jansen, Dave Vendelmans and Eric Bentcliffe were quite sceptical during the first time, not to mention Anne Steul. After her attacks in FANannia, the 'Wetzcon' was organised on January 14/15 1956. You will have read about it, so I'll just mention that Miss Steul is now Member 353, that I met her in London last year, and that -well, that's that.

The SFCE grew rapidly, and its influence on publishers was mounting. The first convention, a holiday con, was held in Bavaria, from September 1 to 3, 1956, attended by 60 fans.

During the next year, argument arose about 'adult material' or 'space operas'. A couple of younger fans attacked Ernsting and UTOPIA sharply, demanded that he leave UTOPIA and that only adult material be published, which wouldn't have been bought. It came to open rebellion. Business quarrels between Ernsting and Heinz Bingenheimer, 2nd chairman, were adding to the confusion. It was then that the SFCD for the first time appeared officially on a World Con. - London 1957, immediately followed by the BIGGERCON in Bad Homburg, September 14 to 16, with Forry Ackerman there and the SFCD shortly before breaking down. But the will of the members won: Ernsting and Bingenheimer made a 'gentleman's agreement', the 'rebels' were quietened down. Shortly afterwards Bingenheimer complained again. He left the SFCE and formed a book-club - strictly with business-goals.

When the SFCD was formed into SFCE in April 58, the board of directors was replaced by Ernsting as president, and Wolf Rohr, a German writer, as managing director, signing for the SFCE. Scheer, another writer, who had been in the board of directors, left and took three local groups with him. He founded the second German Club..STELLARIS - on June .1. 1958 - Gerfandom was split ! But since then, I haven't heard a word of STELLARIS, while the SFCE is now approaching a fifteen hundred strong.

Rainer Risfeld
Effertzstrasse 56,
(22c) Bonn
GERMANY

-o-



Corgi Science Fiction - S631

THE ISOTOPE MAN
by

Charles Eric Maine

This new Corgi, should have appeared on the bookstalls on the 2nd. of January. Like earlier Corgi productions, this boasts an excellent cover, and format. Having previously read the American edition, the only change seems to have been to substitute, 'a Maclean's smile' for, 'a toothepaste-ad smile'.

Maine's central gimmick, is a nuclear physicist, so filled with radioactivity, that he can fog photographic film. His ability to live with this (and two bullets, plus a 'clinical death') is attributed to a build up of radioactive immunity. Not explained, is how such a walking radiation hazard was ever allowed out without his concrete shields. Accepting this, the story proceeds at a hectic pace, as the science reporter hero unravels the plot. For once, the reporter doesn't (quite) outsmart the police. The atomic physicist suffers a mental time-slip through his 'clinical death', and is thus prevented from spoiling the plot by solving the puzzles in advance.

Really a rattling good whodunit, barely converted to science fiction by the 'time-slip'. Normally, I don't like Maine's work, but in this case, it is better than normal, and who can quibble at getting decent s-f for a mere half-crown ?t.j.

FILE 13

.....Eric Bentcliffe

This time I'm going to concentrate on two topics; a forthcoming B.S.F.A. Publication, and a piece of initiative by one of our members.

The publication in question is going to be a History and Check-listing of NEW WORLDS, the leading British s-f magazine. The member who has been demonstrating a spot of initiative is A. 53 J.G. Linwood.

There have been in the past various magazine Checklists published by s-f fans, some large some small, this first B.S.F.A. publication however, will be a little different from those previously issued. I've always thought that a mere listing of the stories, authors, and contents of each issue of a magazine (invaluable as they are) have lacked a certain general appeal. Some weeks ago I had the idea of combining such a Checklist with a History of the magazine in question. I wrote to John Carnell editor of NEW WORLDS and asked him if he would be prepared to write the History of his magazine, the answer was in the affirmative, I'm pleased to say.

As I write, Arthur H. Tavinder (M.59) has already cut a sizable portion of the Checklist onto stencil preparatory to your editor duplicating this. It isn't possible at the moment to announce a publication date for the publication, but we hope that by the time you receive the next issue of VECTOR it will be possible to announce both price and date. Dependant on the cost of production the HISTORY AND CHECKLIST OF NEW WORLDS will be available either free, or at a considerable discount to members of the Association.

It is possible, of course, that this publication could be the first of a series dealing with the s-f magazines; NEBULA and AUTHENTIC are two titles which leap to mind, but I'd be interested in hearing suggestions ?

And now to Jim Linwood. One obvious medium through which Associations such as ours can get publicity are the Public Libraries. However, it is not very easy to get publicity through these as permission is required from the respective Local Authority before the Librarian will agree to display posters or distribute leaflets. This permission is exceedingly difficult to obtain. Recently Jim wrote to me enquiring as to whether there was any possibility of getting publicity through the public libraries and I explained the rather pessimistic position.

I suggested, however, that Jim try his particular local Public Library on the off chance that the Librarian there was a reader of s-f himself. The next communication I had from Jim was an S.O.S. for leaflets suitable for distribution in the library (which was promptly seen to), followed by a letter which informed me that the particular Librarian was quite fond of science-fiction, and was prepared to risk the possible wrath of his superiors by arranging a display of s-f titles together with some B.S.F.A. material.

The Librarian, H.F. Steele, F.L.A. was as good as his word, and with Jim's help an eye-catching display with the general title of 'Journey Into Space' was arranged. This featured both factual books about spaceflight and astronomy as well as s-f, and a wad of B.S.F.A. leaflets was prominently displayed.

At the time of writing no new memberships have resulted from this publicity, but of one thing we can be assured the users of that particular library now know of the existence of the Association, and should they be readers of s-f they'll be interested - and when next they see one of our ad's they are all the more likely to join because of the display.

I'd like to thank Mr. Steele for his cooperation, and Jim for his enthusiasm. Obviously, librarians like Mr. Steele are few and far between, but should any of you be willing to tackle your local librarian with a view to arranging such publicity for the Association you can be assured that it is not a hopeless task. It is though a chore which has to be undertaken locally by personal contact, but with the Committee's backing, of course. I'll be most pleased to hear from anyone who is willing to have a go in their locale.

As a certain Mr. Lincoln one said to his wife; " We have created a president!" Now it's up to you.

In the last issue of VECTOR I announced a competition for people who own tape-recorders. So far the reaction to this has been most disappointing, however to give any laggards a little more time I'd like to announce that the date for entry in this has been set back to February 17th. (See VECTOR 2 for details) To spur you on I'll mention that our American Representative, Dale R. Smith, has kindly offered a prize of 3 Dollars...depending on the number of entrants this may be the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd prize.

To finish of the column for this issue - Jeeves is stood over me with a blu-pencil to warn me that I must'nt go over the two page limit! - I'd like to mention a couple of recent fan publications which you might find of interest. THE DIRECTORY OF 1958 S-F FANDOM is an annual listing of fans produced by Ron Bennett. This latest edition contains some 430 names and addresses and is obtainable for 1/9 from Ron at 7, Southway, Arthurs Ave, Harrogate, Yorks.

And that it would appear is all I have room for - kindly mention that Bentcliffe should have more space when commenting on this issue of VECTOR.

Good Reading

Eric Bentcliffe

HOW

15

GREEN

WAS MY
NOTION

By

Dr. A.R. Weir. D.Sc.

"The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be. . . and there is no new thing under the sun," wrote King Solomon, and a wail of agreement goes up from S-F editors, accompanied with a tongue-in-the-cheek yodel from John W. Campbell Jnr., who, having sold more S-F than anyone else, knows that what the public wants is the mixture as before, with merely the trimmings in the latest fashion.

But, seriously, do we progress?

Reading John Christopher's much-advertised "Death of Grass" caused me to reach down and re-read a "futuristic romance" first published in 1923 -- J.J. Connington's "Nordenholt's Million." The plots are parallelvegetation is threatened by a mysterious disease, and the threat of starvation touches off the collapse of contemporary society.

Christopher vaguely describes the plague as a Chinese virus and a "mutation". Connington is more explicit and far more believable. An amateur scientific journalist with a view to writing an article starts experiments with the denitrifying bacteria which break up nitrogen compounds in the soil, returning the nitrogen as gas to the atmosphere, from which plants cannot normally recover it. His laboratory is struck by lightning, and he receives a request from an editor for an article on a different subject, so his experimental material goes onto the rubbish-heap. But the electric discharge has caused a mutation, and the normally sensitive bacteria are now able to live under almost any conditions, and to multiply with fearful rapidity. Also the rubbish-heap is only a few yards from Hyde Park, and the feet of tourists from all countries spread the deadly mutation far and wide.

In both books the principal characters find a refuge in which they hope to hold out till things get back to normal. Christopher does not make clear how this is to be accomplished. His refuge is a Westmorland valley whose single entrance is easily blocked; when the disintegration of society starts, his group of characters make for this, and their journey is the main part of the action. The book is gingered up to modern tastes by the inclusion of a quite un-necessary rape, which has no particular bearing on the story, and concludes by leaving us in the air. The party reach their refuge, and we are left to imagine for ourselves whether they survived, and, if so, how happily or otherwise they lived ever after. While it is competently written as one would expect of Christopher, no incident stands out as specially memorable.

Connington's refuge is on the heroic scale, being the whole Clyde valley, selected for its well-equipped factories and coal-fields, in which "Nordenholt's Million" -- a million skilled men, who, with their dependents, total some five million souls -- are holding out with food supplies for some eighteen months, which have been secured for them by the foresight and wealth of the book's hero, Nordenholt, a millionaire psychologist who has made his wealth by the application of the principle "Every man's nerves have their breaking-point; find it and you can do what you like with him."

The whole story is rich in detail and in incident, some of which is disturbingly difficult to forget, especially the pictures of starving London, in which cannibalism has become a commonplace and mania and perversion openly walk the streets -- the barricade round a block of streets in St John's Wood, surmounted by a crucified corpse, with the legend daubed below: "WE LIVE HERE -- YOU KEEP OUT!"; the emaciated figure of a research student staggering out of University College with his comment, "I'm living on the glycerine and fatty acids from the chemical stores -- pretty sickening stuff -- but I've got the structure of the hormone I was investigating taped, all but one hydroxyl group, and if I can last another week I'll have that too"; the cannibal Voodoo Dancers who run down their prey in the open streets, led by a giant negro who calls himself Herne the Hunter.

In a few places in the world the bacterium is less active, and all these localities are furiously attacked by starving people and equally desperately defended, but with the topsy-turvy logic of the time the inmates are anxious to suffer the maximum possible casualty rates consistent with successful defence, since thus food will last longer. The refuge is a race against time on starvation rations. Nordenholt's experts have established that once all nitrogen is removed from the soil the plague will die out for lack of nourishment, so the "million" are working furiously to manufacture huge quantities of nitrogenous fertilisers and humus-forming material, so that crops can be sown and a harvest obtained before food supplies give out altogether.

The strain of this existence produces a large-scale outbreak of religious mania, led by a hell-fire Baptist Minister, who begins to preach the destruction of Nordenholt as Anti-Christ in person; he is executed, but his followers dynamite the shafts of the coal-mines, thereby threatening the complete collapse of the refuge and reconstruction programme for lack of power.

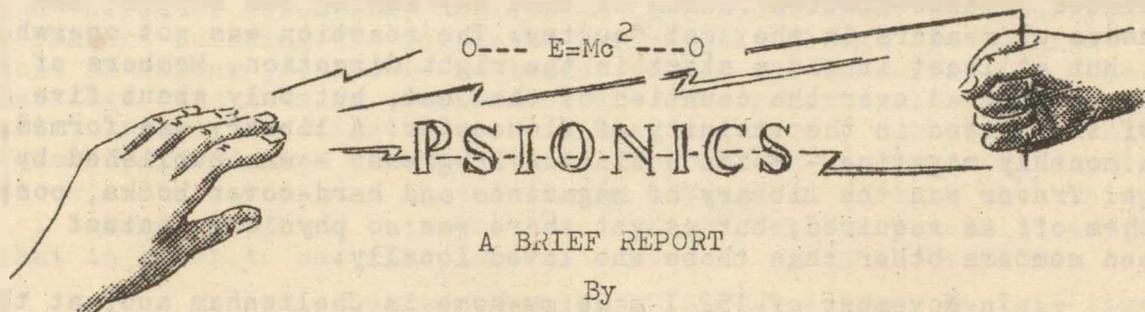
Nordenholt's scientists accordingly embark on a high-speed campaign to tap atomic energy, and considering the period at which it was written, this is one of the most remarkable pieces of prophecy in the book. Scientist after scientist, each detailing each step he takes into a microphone, to be recorded at a safe distance, is blown to pieces, incinerated or dies of radiation-sickness, but the torch is handed on to ultimate success. When the engineers have their turn of frantic effort and agonising disappointment as machine after machine, unable to stand up to the giant forces released within it, explodes or melts to radioactive slag.

Finally, at the end of the test run of the first successful atomic motor, Nordenholt, who has long known that his heart is weak but who has relentlessly driven himself and his followers at sit-on-the-safety-valve pressure, is found dead in his chair.

The love interest, considered essential when the book was written, is tucked neatly away where it does no harm, but the weakest point of the book is its last few pages, describing the reconstruction of society in a state of starry-eyed perfection that even H.G. Wells at his most optimistic might have found difficulty in swallowing.

In the main, however, the author (a Professor of Chemistry who has done much research work on the radioactive isotopes) is both thrilling and convincing to an extent all too rare in S-F, and the whole work gives a startling picture of both the heights and the depths to which human personality can attain under the stimuls of widespread disaster.

Both the original edition and reprints have been out of print for a long time, but S-F Fans wanting to read it can either hunt the second-hand bookshops or else write in large numbers to PENGUIN BOOKS asking them to reprint No. 582.



Although the subject of Psionics is not receiving the publicity it had a year ago, this does not mean that the subject has been dropped entirely. Far from it, for, as far as the Cheltenham S.F. Circle is concerned, investigations are still going ahead. Since the first two machines were constructed here - and results obtained from them - it has been decided to complete investigations into the 'theory' of Radionics and similar psi devices, correlate the data on work already done in these fields, then attempt to add something new to the concept before giving a full report.

So far, work has started on what we think will be a new psi-amplifier, the concept behind it being derived from the Radionic field. If it is successful you will be hearing more about it in the near future, meanwhile, you can try out your psi abilities... Obtain two rods 18 ins. long, iron or copper seem to be the best, have them about 1/16th of an inch in diameter. Bend the first six inches of each rod at a right angle, now hold this six inches lightly in your hands, curling the fingers around with the long part of each rod horizontally away from you. Get a friend to hide a penny or some metallic object, WHICH YOU HAVE SEEN. The rods will point towards the object, follow them, they will cross when you're over it. You must, however, THINK of the object as you search...good luck!

10

WESTERN APPROACHES



by

E. Jones

Tracing the history and development of the Cheltenham S-F Circle does not necessitate a lengthy journey into the past, in fact if we set the dials on our time machine to September 1952 we shall just arrive in time to witness the birth of the C.S.F.C's ancestor and the beginning of it all.

George Whiting (then of Stroud) and Trevor Davies (then of Gloucester) got together and formed the WEST COUNTRY S-F GROUP. They circulated science-fiction fandom of that day asking for support and addresses of readers in the West Country. The reaction was not overwhelming, but at least it was a start in the right direction. Members of the Group were spread over the counties of the West, but only about five or six of them lived in the vicinity of Gloucester. A library was formed, and a monthly magazine - "Science Fiction Progress" - was published by George. Trevor ran the Library of magazines and hard-cover books, posting them off as required, but as yet there was no physical contact between members other than those who lived locally.

In November of '52 I made my home in Cheltenham and, at that time, being the printer of SPACE TIMES for the Nor'west S.F. Club, the news of the W.C.S.F.G. was a bright star over the mud and slush of the new housing estate into which I moved. Alas, too soon, that star began to lose its brightness.

January 1953, and a meeting at Trevor Davies's house in Gloucester brought in all the local members - all six of them. It was to be the first and last meeting in a long time, for in the summer months of that year George Whiting left the country for Greece - the home of his wife - from there they moved to Cyprus and after a while all contact was lost. Meanwhile, I took over the monthly magazine which eventually reduced itself to a one-sheet newsletter as contact was gradually lost with those members of the Group living far away.

The next physical meeting of the Group came about in early 1954, when we met at a pub in Gloucester. It was decided that - as only local members remained now - if the Group was to acquire its own premises perhaps recruitment might be easier. Both Gloucester and Cheltenham were investigated. At Gloucester we drew a blank, but in Cheltenham we had the option of a centrally situated basement, however, the life of the Group was drawing to a close as those members in Gloucester would not travel to a meeting (nine miles) and so the already grating mechanism came to a grinding halt - and the project abandoned.

The wheel had run full circle.

In the summer of 1955, provoked by an advertisement which had appeared in the 'Gloucestershire Echo' a year previously (and his wife) Bill Nelder, a neighbour, came to make enquiries about the W.C. S.F.G. After some discussion with the remaining local ex-members of the old group, it was decided to try again with a purely local organisation, and so, on one wet Thursday night in the Umbrella Inn, the Cheltenham Science Fiction Circle was born.

In the beginning we were an informal group, meeting to talk about s-f over a glass of beer. At that time there were ten members, local publicity brought in two more, but then local publicity costs money and so a small subscription was made to cover expenses. Bill nelder produced two hand-painted posters, one was sent to the U.S.A.F. base at Fairford, the other repeatedly rejected from the Public Library -- because it advertised A PUBLIC HOUSE! With suitable modifications it was eventually accepted, but meanwhile two American readers had appeared -travelling 40 miles to a meeting! They came regularly - until they returned to the States.

The Umbrella Inn in those days as a temporary building - on the new estate - but work had already started on the permanent site, and there, we were told, would be a club-room. When, eventually, the permanent building was completed the nightly rental was so high (25/-) that in silent protest we no longer met at the Umbrella. For some months meetings were held in members homes - on a rotational basis - and during this time we investigated - and almost acquired - a club-room in the form of a condemned basement flat. After I had received various telephone calls warning me that I should proceed no further with this idea (I have never found out who these mystery callers were) it was found that in order to use the place we'd have to spend about £100!

We had acquired the old W.C.S.F.G. Library by this time and were doing displays in Cinema foyers of S-F, running in conjunction with such films as 'The Watermass Experiment', 'World without End', and found that the manager of the Regal cinema at that time was a long-time reader of S-F himself. Although masses of hand-out literature was prepared for these occasions it brought us no more members, but a new era for the Circle was at hand.

In September 1956 the great turning point was reached with the Cheltenham Hobbies Exhibition at the Town Hall. It was decided to have one last effort at recruitment.....a case of do or die.

We had a large display stand which featured many gadgets to attract the public. Chief amongst these was the first British model of J.W. Campbell's version of the Hieronymus Machine (Psionics). This drew so many people that at times it was impossible to move anywhere near the stand. When the four-day Exhibition was over, we had an impressive list of 30 people who were interested in the Circle, and the first meeting at 44, Barbridge Road on October 7th was so crowded that many had to sit on the floor.

Unfortunately this state of affairs was not to last. The next week we acquired the use of a room at the 'Prince of Wales', in the Town Centre, and the meetings eventually settled down to a regular 20 members each week. The subjects discussed were many and varied - from

S-F to Hypnotism (with demonstrations) - but one of the main troubles was the Library. A portion of it had to be transported to each meeting, and so it was decided to have another move of abode - if one could be found - if somewhere could be found to house the Library.

At the beginning of 1957 we moved into the Pitville Hotel, where we had a cupboard to house all the books and magazines. Just before the move, one of the members who had the equipment suggested that we make an amateur S-F Film.

A short 8 minute monochrome film was made to send to the Midwestcon in the U.S.A. in June that year, to publicise our activities and to encourage people to come to the 15th World Science-Fiction Convention to be held that September. During this time, however, work had already started on the film set for the main colour film which had been suggested.....a nissen hut interior was disguised as a space-ship cabin and just at the time we were ready to start shooting, our leading actor had a motorcycle accident which put him in hospital for a month. So we never made our deadline which was to be the Convention.

Once again it was time for the Circle to move its home - but this time it was to be permanent. On the 18th of October 1957 we took over a five-roomed basement in the town and work on the film ceased in order to make our club-rooms livable. The work of damp and disuse took many months to combat, but on February 22nd this year the Liverpool S-F Society were invited down to help us open the premises officially. We started with nothing in the way of furniture and practically the same in the way of funds, however, generous members gave once again and now we have the rooms well furnished - even a piano! The largest room has been fitted out as a cinema, this will seat about 40; the kitchen still has all its facilities, cooker etc, and the entrance room is at present being fitted out with shelving to house the B.S.F.A. Library.

But the massive amount of work in which the Circle has been involved since its move to the new premises has, unfortunately, has taken its toll of members, and now that we are settled publicity is going ahead at full speed to draw those extra members in to the Circle. Our numbers have fallen to 12, and funds are not so good either, but despite everything we still have hopes.

We have country members too, but they are not obliged to pay any subscription providing that they are members of the B.S.F.A. but, of course, we don't sneeze at donations anytime.

Our film should be ready to show at the Convention next year, and also, we hope, some taped science-fiction plays which we are working on. So if you want to see and hear don't forget to come along.

And if you would like to join us when you are way out West one of these days, don't forget its every Thursday at;

130, London Road, Cheltenham, Glos.



*John Spencer & Co
have submitted:-*

SUPERNATURAL STORIES No. 20

and

THE QUEST OF THE ~~SECRET~~

for

REVIEW

by

Dr. A.R.Weir DSc.

SUPERNATURAL STORIES No.20 appears to be much the same sort of thing as the "Not at Night" series that came out in the late 1920's at the same price of 2/-. Like its predecessor, it is largely run-of-the-mill stuff.

The Death Note provides the material for the cover illustration. Explorers in the Amazon jungle find mysterious ruins, inhabited by murderous-minded descendants of the Incas..(when will people realise the Incas were a mountain people, who avoided the jungle country like a plague ?), who attempt to kill

them with a trumpet-like instrument that produces a noise which causes an agonising disintegration of the brain. (Dorothy Sayers used this trick in the 'Nine Tailors' in 1934, while the old Amazing Stories had it in 1929, and also in the Amazon jungle, but it was a drum that time !) The cover artist might note..(a) there were other exotic clothings for the female form besides the Bikini, and (b) a South American Indian does not look in the least like a West Indian negro ! Grade C

SINISTER STRANGERS is the one about the overworked author who suddenly finds himself living the plot of his half-finished thriller. Quite well done, but I won't believe that any single man could hold out inside a mediaeval castle against all its garrison for a week ; he'd have to sleep ! Also, after devastating a pack of his enemies on a stairway by felling down a pile of 'massive roundshot' he then for good measure hurls down the cannon, blocking the stair. A six-pounder cannon weighs just over half a ton, and these were massive round shot. C +

VALLEY OF THE VAMPIRE a vampire haunted, Central European castle, plus a witch vendetta. It gives the impression of having been hurriedly cut down from a longer tale, and would probably have read better at its original length. The coincidence that saves the heroine is too far-fetched, but not unbelievable. Grade B-

THE OTHER DRIVER. Some of you may remember Peter Hawkins' 'The Tools of Orlas Boyn' in NEW WORLDS' No.57, about a set of tools that had so absorbed the personality of their owner that nobody else could use them. This is the same idea, applied to a sports car, and by a long way the best in the book. Written quietly and factually, without any striving after effect, it is an almost perfect tale. Grade A-

THE SPAWN OF SATAN A boxer, just beginning to go physically down hill, is offered the world championship by Satan..on the usual terms. Run of the mill, marred by the author's obvious

intention to bring the landlady, with her hell-fire religion into the tale somehow, but failing to find a way to do it. D.

THE QUEST OF THE SEEKER by J.Elton

This is space opera, of the sort that most long-term s-f fans outgrew in the early 1930's. Shan Karkoran, an apprentice in the 'Seekers' - a secret semi religious order of scientists resembling the 'Heralds' of Kornbluth's 'That Share of Glory' - leaves their headquarters in Antarctica to explore the Solar System for himself, to see what conditions are like after the collapse into barbarism of the former Terran hegemony.

He finds Mars ruled by a half-crazy degenerate, and eventually brings about his downfall, helped partly by his own hypnotic powers, partly by the friendship of the former civilised race of Mars, the Kzat.

What could have been a good story of its kind is spoilt by utter carelessness by the author, suggesting that it was written in haste and printed without revision. For example ; the space ship Jovian Star, becomes on page 25, the Jovian Queen ; the humanoid conquerors of Mars are described on p.31 as having, "wide, lipless mouths, slit-like noses and fish-like eyes" while their ruler has "lustrous black eyes and a curling beard", but from p.23 onwards, these same Martians are described as "snake-headed", which description is also applied to the ruler, on page 147.

Also, in the earlier part of the book, the hero is able to dominate armed Martians by his hypnotic power ; during the last fifty pages of the book, they are able to knock him around as they please...possibly because of his injuries and ill-treatment, but the book does not say so.

It is to be hoped that the author, who can find a good story to tell if he pleases, will also devote the extra time to check over what he has written and avoid such quite un-necessary lapses, which go far to spoil the effect of his work. If space opera is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well !

Both books suffer from their lurid covers, but these do at least have the merit of bearing a definite relation to the contents . The paper is poor, but the print is good and clear, with fewer printing errors than is usual in this class of work.

Arthur R. Weir.

The fanzine reprint for this issue has been selected by Walt Willis. His choice, is an excerpt from the Bob Shaw column in Hyphen No.20.

SERVICE WITH A SMELL

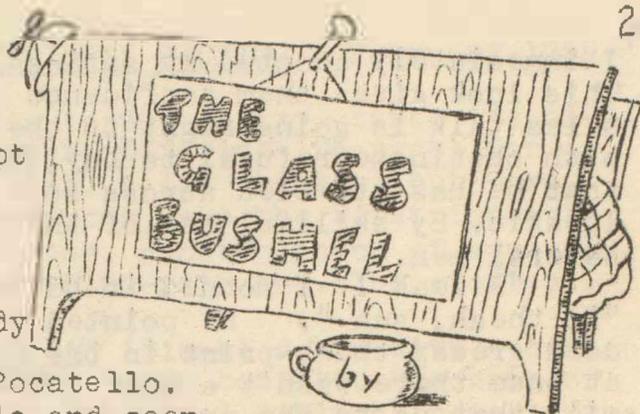
I always felt sorry for Judy Garland when she sang that song about being born in a trunk in Pocatello. Now that I have been in Pocatello and seen what it is like, I realise that Judy's parents must have been pretty well-off. I can quite believe that it was only privileged cases who were admitted into any trunks that were available - the rest would have to make do with Pocatello's grimy little buildings. - - That's right, I don't like the place.

It was a pretty grim and grimy place, but on thinking back more carefully, perhaps it is all because of the service station there. That morning we had left the Calkins and Salt Lake City peacefully acquiring a thick coating of cold, wet snow, and driven North into warm sunny weather. Coming into Pocatello I saw this service station in which everything, right down to the attendants' uniforms was coloured blue and brown. The combination was so jarring to my sensibilities that before I knew it I was stopped outside the place. At the sound of a bell, two men came running out, separated, and came at the car from each side. A second later they had jerked the doors open and were sitting one on each side of Sadie and me, sweeping at the floor with little brooms.

My theory about cars is the same as for shoes and bicycles - they are clean when you get them, and that is enough. At this particular time, due to a recent muddy spell, there was so much dust on the floor that the control pedals looked like three strange mechanistrian flowers growing on a bank. The dust billowed up around us, obscuring everything and getting into our eyes and mouths. I had the satisfaction of hearing the man at my side giving dismayed little moans as he realised what he had started.

In time they got most of the stuff shovelled out onto the ground, and I told them to fill the tank. This request was ignored. One of them got a pail and rags and began washing the windows; the other lifted the hood and began poking round the engine. When the window washer was going around the front end he stopped and began pounding on one headlight with his fist, then he came trotting round to me. "Did you know that you have a big hole in your Sealbeam?" In his voice there was a note of wonder - how had I driven so far with the car in this state ?

I got out and examined the headlight in question. Sure enough, there was a hole there; but it was so small that it took me a minute to find it. While I was trying to shred a match down fine enough to fit the hole, the other man bounced out from under the hood. "Ah've got some bad news for you suh," he said. "What's wrong ?" I asked. "Theah's a big leak in youah hose."



BOB
SHAW

I immediately adopted my anti-salesman look - utter stupidity. This look gives them confidence and makes them think that the sales talk is going right to the mark, but when it is coupled with obstinate refusal to buy, the salesman gets a panicky fear that he has stumbled across some kind of potentially dangerous lunatic. By skillful use of the "look", I have almost broken several men.

"A leak!" I moaned in bovine consternation. "Where is it?" "In theah, suh". He pointed to a place where he had left a dark greasy thumb-print in the dusty hose surface. I could see at once there wasn't a hose leak, so I said, "I see it. What will that do to the engine?"

"Why, when you drive it, all the water will run out and the engine will overheat and the bearings will all melt and the whole thing will burst into flames."

I intensified the look and said, "Oh".

"Well, suh, do you want me to put in a three-dollar hose or a five-dollar hose?"

"But I don't want to buy a hose. Just fill her with gas, please."

"But, suh! The engine.....the bearings.....fire....."

"Fill the tank please." Shaking his head, the tall one went away to fill the tank. There was a baffled look on his face. I turned expectantly to the other man who had been crawling around the car on his hands and knees. Dead on cue, he jumped up. "I don't like to tell you this, but those front tyres are just about to blow out." But he had a hopeless sort of look in his eyes, and his voice faded away at the end. I didn't bother to speak to him. I paid for the gas in silence and drove away, leaving the two of them staring after us.

"Good-bye, suh," the tall one called out. "Hope you don't run into too much trouble. He didn't sound too optimistic."

If this had been a fictional account it would be easy to finish off in humorous tradition. There is only one ending possible, i.e. the tyres all burst, the headlights go out and the engine burns up within a hundred yards of the service station. But in actuality, nothing happened at all.

When we got back to Calgary, after a 2,000 mile run, we had not even had a soft tyre. If any fan happens to be in Pocatello, Idaho, and sees a horrible brown and blue service station, would he drop in and tell this to them?

Please ?

.o.o.o.o.o.o.o.

CLASSIFIED ADVERT.

WANTED.....One spare Ford engine, length of rubber radiator hose, one Sealbeam headlamp, and four spare tyres. Will buy or trade. Send your offers to Vector, c/o box 123½

THE
AMERICAN
MAGAZINES

reviewed
by
Harry James

GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION February 1959 25

With this issue, Galaxy starts its bi-monthly career. Offering 196 pages for a 50 ¢ price tag. A lot thicker, but more sloppily produced, was the first impression. The cover, a hotch-potch of adverts slogans and third-rate art. The stories..

INSTALMENT PLAN (Simak) deals with a trader re-establishing trade contact. His crew of robots (with the usual Biblical names) runs into difficulties when the natives won't trade. Why they won't, takes up most of the story, and brings in a never very real race of extraterrestrials. A competent pot-boiler Rating C.

I PLINGLOT, WHO YOU ? (Pohl) wherein a rather fantastic alien sets out to let Earth destroy itself. Earth naturally co-operates right to the end - when the alien gets unmasked. I never did find out how, as it was all made so easy. Another C.

INSIDEKICK (Bone) A tax investigator unearths illegal operations and is only saved by the unlikely intervention of a life form designed around Hal Clements' 'Needle'. Having established a new home, the symbiote sets out to improve its host...an item overlooked by Clements. The difference gets the story a B.

PASTORAL AFFAIR (Stearns) The Russians go after the secrets of an island dwelling scientist who can make humans. The humans remove the bother, and we get a cute cloying Galaxy ending. This wouldn't even pass for a fanzine. Rating E

FOREVER (Lang) Concerns a scientist who discovers a serum for eternal life. He gets snared by a group who suppress all such discoveries (including the everlasting razor-blade) and just when a good story is in the making, the author gets fed up and concludes the thing in a typically Galaxian flop. Rating D

TIME KILLER (Sheckley) concludes this issue. A 20th Century man gets killed in a car accident, and re-incarnated by scientists of a future era. He runs into a world where zombies, and re-incarnation walk hand in hand with a spiritual telephone exchange and organised suicide. His own particular problem is why does a zomby follow him. This gets sorted out in the end, but would have been better in a shorter length. Charitable, give it B

ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION

MINISTRY OF DISTURBANCE (Piper) concerns a monarch who works with the subversive elements in his realm, in order to stimulate riot and unrest. The theory being that such stimulation will eventually lead his subjects to the stars. Interesting.... C+

THE QUEEN BEE (Garrett) is another sex-in-space yarn. Castaways from a space wreck must populate a planet (the law says so) and their efforts in this direction are frustrated by a female who

kills of the other competition, so that she can live a life of luxury. Problem, let her have her way, or defy the law, by executing her (and thus cutting off future supplies of females) The problem is solved in a gruesome, but practical way. Personally, in such a situation, I'd be inclined to say.. "Hang her, and the future". Nevertheless, another C+.

TRIGGERMAN (Bone) Atomic warfare is just a button's push away, when Washington gets wiped out. Tension builds up, and pressure applied to the man whose finger rests on the button. Within its very short length, a good tension builds in this story. Rating C

PIECES OF THE GAME (Reynolds) Espionage inside the Iron Curtain of the future. Much cloak and dagger work. Loads of important and clever actions. Throw in a large slice of red-herring, and you have a story which must be s-f....it appeared in Astounding. In which case, I'll give it a D rating.

SELLERIS MARKET (Anvil) Warfare against extraterrestrials with the power to convince you of whatever they like. One also inhabits the Pentagon. These beings seem impervious to our weapons, and the only way to prevent them from taking over Terran minds, is to kill them with their own. In spite of this (I don't know how) the Terrans win, and even take prisoners back....Ghu knows how they switch off their mental powers first. Definitely a D.

A BICYCLE BUILT FOR BEER (Anderson) concludes in this issue. An almost Sprague de Camp style at times, it has an Irish speaking League taking over a planet...in a very friendly manner.. and the crew of a spaceship landing there ends in prison. The engineer sets out to rectify the manner ...IN A BEER PROPELLED spaceship. This particular sequence is delightful...quote.. "...the first stage beer keg dropped away". A delightfully bird brained heroine adds to the fun, and all in all, the story is a vast improvement on de Camps 'Zamba' horrors. Definitely worth a B.

Lack of space prevents a review of another magazine, so a few general comments on Galaxy and Astounding may be in order. Galaxy still has its horrible art work, and the latest cover is several degrees below normal. The interiors do show a slight improvement. Asf on the other hand, has excellent interior illustrations, and normally good covers. Since Emsh has taken over, even these are on the decline.

As to actual production technique, my copy of Galaxy suffered badly, from bad trimming and off centre pages. A fault rarely seen in Asf. Once again, Galaxy is running a reader vote to determine just what readers would like, and editor Gold seems to be plugging for a Reader's column. Maybe I'm churlish to suggest that this would provide several pages less of crud...or pages not requiring stories. Still, it's a good sign, and shows that there is not too much complacency. Maybe Galaxy will improve after all.

THE

BROTOSH MAGAZINES

reviewed by

Roberta WildNEW WORLDS 77

THE TROUBLE WITH EMILY. JAMES WHITE. Another "Sector General" Hospital story in which a human doctor finds out why an e.t. doctor is so anxious to cure a dinosaur like animal from a young raw world and of how success was achieved. The author seldom fails to interest. Rating "B".

SEND OFF. ROBERT PRESSLIE. This author writes very good dialogue and is wise to tell his stories by this method. This tale is about a highly intelligent android and how the people who have known him say goodbye when he leaves them. Humanity still has much to learn. Rating "B".

CARRION COUNTRY BRIAN W. ALDISS. Another P.E.S.T. team yarn, this time about the ingenious method by which other world beings protect themselves from their natural enemies. Worth reading, although not up to the standard of "Segregation." Rating "B"

THE DUSTY DEATH. JOHN KIPPAX. Of how the moon can be a dusty death trap for the men who go there. The story falls down on the premise of one of character's phobias. A man with the phobia described would surely never want to go to the moon, knowing what it would entail. Rating "E".

FLAT IRON. ARTHUR SELLINGS. The ending lifts this story out of run of the mill s.f. It is a modern version of the fairy who is done a good turn by a mortal and grants a wish, in this case the fairy being an extra terrestrial who proves to be just as careless in granting wishes as the fairies used to be. Rating "D".

WHO'S THERE? ARTHUR C. CLARKE. Arthur in a light mood. Well written although the ending is fairly obvious. It will serve as a reminder for would-be spacemen to check their suits properly before leaving the space station. Rating "C".

LIFE PLAN. It seems to me that this story suffers from compression and if COLIN KAPP. expanded the characters could be more finely drawn. The idea is good - that of finding and training minds past genius level and the problems the scientists face when they try to do this without destroying the minds. It should be read in conjunction with the "A.F. 102" article in the following issue. Rating "C".

28 A MAN CALLED DESTINY. LAN WRIGHT. A serial to be reviewed when complete.

SIGNORA PORFIRIA. JOHN. W. ASHTON. A time travel story in which the author leaves how it is done to the imagination. Well told but, oh, the dreary futures the s.f. writers can think up! the characterisation of the man of the present and the woman of the future is well done. Rating "C".

ANOTHER WORD FOR MAN ROBERT PRESSLIE. Medicine is indeed a science and this is the story of an e.t. doctor just as dedicated as many of his terrestrial counterparts. At a terrible cost, the alien cures and convinces a bigoted priest of the many meanings of love. The story is told with compassion. Rating "B".

INCENTIVE. BRIAN W. ALDISS. A tale of aliens who tried to help the earth and how one of them tried to persuade one of the human "cranks" against them to understand the lemming "racial memory" complex in Man they were hoping to cure. Not quite up to the usual standard. Rating "C".

THE STILL WATERS. MURRAY LEINSTER. A rather sad tale, but with a hopeful ending. A man (and his wife and ship) grows old in space and he cannot afford to buy shares in the progress that overtakes him. This tale tells how he utilised what he had to help an aging outworld. Once again the writer shows his deep feeling for humanity. Rating "B".

NEBULA 35

WISDOM OF THE GODS. KENNETH BULMER. The last part of the serial. The whole story tells of a Galactic Intelligencer which has been buried on the earth for millions of years. Embedded in a piece of coal, it is accidentally thrown into the fires of a railway engine, when the highly intelligent men who are members of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Railways are taking a load of people on a trip. The G.I. explodes and everyone in vicinity receives vast chunks of knowledge from radiating mental lines of force. Nobody receives the complete answer to anything - just half - and some die and some are driven mad by the effect on their brains. It is a swiftly moving story of a man who receives the most knowledge and a girl who receives too much knowledge. It would be unfair to reveal what finally happens to all the people who were caught in the blast, but although the story is well told, with a good leavening of humour, I was left with the feeling that the author had to keep within a set number of words, which detracted from it a little. If it is ever published in book form, it should improve with expansion. Rating "C".

THE CAPTAIN'S DOG. E.C. TUBB. The story of a poetry loving android who badly wanted to do something for humanity to prove that he, too, could be human, and of how he achieved his wish and gained a last and lasting respect from the crew of the spaceship crew. Rating "C".

BITTER END. ERIC FRANK RUSSELL. Two men went to Mars and one came back, and a whole country searched for him. It is fairly obvious what happened to the missing man. E.F.R. can do - and has done - better. Rating "D".

DARK TALISMAN. JAMES WHITE. About two brothers, one brilliant, the other a fool, and of how the latter stole from the former an invention that gave him near immortality, but would not let him die when he badly wanted to do so. In the end the brilliant brother tries to kill him out of sheer pity. Rating "C".

THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY. WILLIAM F. TEMPLE. In which the author postulates that there could be life on other planets not based on the terrestrial carbon atoms. A spaceship crew kidnaps such a specimen from Pluto, but finds that the life makes up for slow movement with a terrible psychokinetic energy. The alien both wins and loses the struggle with the earthmen. Rating "B".

NEBULA 36

WALLPAPER WAR. E.C. TUBB. Concerning rivalry between a future unethical interior decorator and another decoartor with an unethical girl friend. The story points out that it is not wise to meddle with something about which one knows nothing. A good tale in Ted's lighter vein. Rating "B".

IT. JOHN KIPPAX. Two men who detested each other, but who had at different times been entangled with the same woman, and who were detailed to open up a new planet by a vengeful husband. There is an unseen alien to add to their troubles, but the ending is painfully obvious. Rating "D".

SIGHT OF A SILHOUETTE. BRIAN W. ALLDISS. Sometimes even Homer nods - and writer has done so this time. If the lesser women's magazines ever print science fiction they may accept this sort of story about immortality and unrequited love, which is the kindest thing I can say about it. Rating "E".

SELL ME A DREAM. STUART ALLEN. "If there were dreams to sell what would you buy? Some cost a passing bell, some a light sigh." This one cost a deep sigh and is fantasy not science fiction. A slow beginning and rather pedestrian. Rating "D".

THE HARD WAY. DAN MORGAN. About a mental healer struggling to get through to the thoughts of an alien who crash landed on the moon, but who could not communicate with ordinary humans because he lived on a faster time plane. The healer finally makes a terrible breakthrough to the alien's mind and many dreams are shattered, including the alien's own. Rating "B".

SCIENCE FANTASY 32.

No room to review all stories, so I'll take the best in the issue.

CITY OF THE TIGER. JOHN BRUNNER. This is good, but does not come up to the standard of "Earth Is But A Star." The plot concerns characters trapped in someone else's mind fantasy and the attempts of telepaths to cure them. "B".

LADIES' MAN ROBERT PRESSLIE. About an all-too-human amoral android who is irresistible to women and who uses the gift to defeat various nefarious purposes of two out-worlds. Robert Presslie does this sort of story very well. Rating "B".

30 GENERAL
CHUNTERING

*by
Kenneth F. Slater*

Perhaps the two most important items of news (fantastically speaking) are the decisions made by two editors in the USA and one editor in England, on the fates of two magazines.

The bi-national decision is that by which SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES, although a Stateside casualty of the distribution devilment, will continue to be published in Britain under

the editorship of John (Ted) Carnell...using original material from both continents....this is something new; altho the continuation of an American title by its British edition long after publication of the US edition has ceased is not new, the continuation using original material is very definitely a new departure...UNKNOWN was continued for almost six years by Atlas in UK...but was all reprint...even reprinting it's own reprints ! The other big decision is that of Hal Gold, in respect of GALAXY MAGAZINE, which gets a price hoist to 50¢....196 pages....bimonthly,...and the first "new" GALAXY will be dated February, 1959, I understand....all best wishes, Hal, and we hope it works out the way you put it in your editorial....a letter from Howard Devore of Dearborn, Mich., asks me to mention the 17th World S-F Convention in anything I happen to be writing... and I gather that British membership subs should be sent... (7/5 ?)...to Ron Bennett....I guess the address will be given elsewhere in this austere publication, and so I will not take up my space with something I don't seem to have ! ...incidentally, talking of addresses I've moved...those I have not yet communicated my new address to can carry on...the mail is still collected from the old address every other day, as I'm still building shelving for the collection and stock at the new address, and shifting items by a car load every 48 hours approx.....a recent letter from an old-time British fan some of you may remember, Don McCornick, contains one comment which may be of interest....Don went to Canada two years ago, and he says: "what seemed to be a nice jump in salary has turned out to be worth very little more than I was getting in England, under Canadian cost of living"....tuck that application for passage back in the folder, son....Aussie fan J.D.Eyre will be visiting Norway in 1959 ... I think he arrives about January 1st.. and hopes to make a side trip to UK....GOOD NEWS !....the subscription lists of IMAGINATION and SPACE TRAVEL have been turned over to Ray Palmer, who offers to to complete the subscriptions with with his FLYING SAUCERS and/or his SEARCH...no mention of money refunds in the offer....well, I only said "good news"...I didn't say for whom it was to be "good"...next GALAXY NOVEL is THE FOREVER MACHINE by Clifton & Riley...I'll give you one guess what that is a

reprint from....the "horror" count now totals five...there is the original FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND, then WORLD FAMOUS CREATURES, MONSTER PARADE...SHOCK TALES...MONSTERS AND THINGS....magazines, these are classed as, yet !....how non-strous can a periodical get ?....ACE pocket books seem to have introduced a new series s-f items, "Science Fiction Classics"...first of these I noted was THE ISLAND OF DR.MOR-EAU by H.G.Wells, 192pp for 35¢....latest to reach me is Ray Cummings' BRIGANDS OF THE MOON, 224pp, also 35¢....numbers of these, respectively, are D-309 and D-324...annoying reprint is a new edition of Max Ehrlich's THE BIG EYE, from Bantan... plenty of copies of the "Popular" 25¢ edition are still floating....FANTASTIC UNIVERSE SF did not publish a Decemb-er edition, and from Jan '59 is bi-monthly....a letter on hand from Peter Campbell, editor-publisher of off-trail mag "EAST & WEST", informs me that he'll be pleased to let BSFA members use his organisation's services on the "Pay As You Like Plan...F.E.W. has a set-up rather like the old O.F.... including a Contact Bureau, Stamp Bureau, Mailing Service... for details, write Peter Campbell, Birkdale Cottage, Brantfell, Windermere, Westmoreland....yes, this is the same Peter Campbell who run the O.F.C.B. one-time, back in the golden days....in VECTOR 2 I mentioned the forthcoming Don Day (Perri Press) publication INDEX TO THE SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINES 1951-1957...compilation of this INDEX has been the work of Norman Metcalf....Don Day informs me that the publication date is a little uncertain at present, but he hopes that it will be not later than next August.....the first volume, 1926-1950 (which Don did compile himself) is still available at the old price of \$6.50....but will be in-creased to the \$8.50 price of the 1951-1957 volume on pub-lication of the latter....on the subject of Dons who com-pile things, the next edition of Donald H. Tuck (Tuck of Tasmania) -'s HANDBOOK will probably appear in 1959 also, and will be available in Britain thru Messrs G.Ken Chap-man, Ltd.during November the only British hard-cover titles I could find which even approached science-fiction were Elliot O'Donnell's latest collection of ghost stories, TREES OF GHOSTLY DREAD (Rider, 18/-, 200pp) and THE OLD MAN AND THE SKY by Robert Portune (Barrie, 277pp, 16/-) in which an old nan in a small American community announces the inn-inant arrival of the Martians...the yarn deals with the tension and hysteria of the people....there December list includes one title which looks more promising, THE UNCER-TAIN MIDNIGHT by Edmund Cooper (Hutchinson, 224pp, 12/6).. ...but from the slight information I have on this title it seems quite possible it is a reprint of the Ballentine tit-tle, DEADLY IMAGE....British author Charles Eric Maine has the long novel spot in December's AMAZING STORIES, with THE BIG COUNT-DOWN, about 85 pages of small print....whilst the other Ziff-Davis mag, FANTASTIC, is reprinting John Wyndham 's "The Troons of Space" series....I regret I've had no time to check on any off-trail items....moving, y'know....KFS

FILMS

IT! The Thing From
Outer Space

The Curse of the
Faceless Man

These films are a double feature in every sense of the word. Both are made by Vogue Productions; both are released by United Artists; both in black and white; both screenplays are written by Jerome Bixby, and naturally, both are X films.

reviewed

by

J. E. C. Tubb

IT! THE THING FROM OUTER SPACE

IT! is the better of the two. A space ship crashes on Mars and there is only one survivor. A rescue ship is sent to pick him up and return him to Earth where he is to be court-martialled for murdering his companions. The crew of the rescue ship - including two women - do not believe his story of some wierd, unseen thing which has snapped up all the first crew but himself; a disbelief heightened by the discovery of a bullet-holed skull.

However, just prior to take-off, an emergency port is discovered open - the thing has entered and hidden itself on the ship. The ship takes off; the thing emerges, murder is done and desperate efforts made to kill the thing. It resists grenades, bullets, gas, electric shock and atomic radiation and only towards the end do the remaining crew members figure out that, as it breathes, then evacuating the ship will cook its goose. They do. It does. Fade out to clinch.

THE CURSE OF THE FACELESS MAN

A workman excavating Pompeii discovers a strange, stone like figure of a man. The figure is alive, commits a murder or two before investigating professors suspect what is happening. A beautiful artist happens to be the reincarnated girl friend of the shape and it wants her. It kidnaps her and makes for the beach. Impervious to bullets, it wades into the sea and is promptly dissolved; the girl is saved by her fiance; fade out.

As set out, the plots are sheer corn, but photography and acting are good. Bixby has tied up loose ends and made the plots credible. In IT, he makes clear there is artificial gravity in the ship. In THE CURSE, he gives a reasonable if pseudo-scientific explanation of the life of the Faceless Man.

LETTERS

Members of the Association still seem to be a trifle on the reticent side when asked what they would like. On the other hand, several people

have come through with some quite varied ideas for consideration.

L.J.TAPPER "In Vector No.2., John Roles says he is 'irritated at the erratic choices made by British Publishers'. Later in the same issue, Mr.Slater suggests that members write to a publisher and try to persuade him to print a certain book. This suggests a valuable function for the BSFA. "Would it be possible to run a poll of the members and find out which books they would most like to see in a British edition? Then the Association could write - in its official capacity as representative of British fandom - to various publishers, listing the desired titles as items which would probably be well received. In this way, publishers would learn what sort of stuff the SF readers themselves want, and we would have no reason to complain if the standard was low - assuming the publishers followed our suggestions."

Personally, I favour everyone writing, plus the BSFA. Even so, many more members are needed before we will be able to have any influence. Also, how do you know which book you want until you have read it...then why buy the thing? What do YOU think?

S.BIRCHBY "A better issue than No.1., although I shouldn't like to belittle Ted Tubb's one-shot. After all, it takes time to warm up with a new publication...especially a sercon one that tries to give its readers what they want, instead of what the editor pleases...."Wilson's cover was excellent for its purpose. I don't personally like symbolic covers too much, but then I'm cynical, and, I'll bet, in a minority. To show willing, I'll ask you to get Jack to do the next cover too. Besides, you could not do better for Vector's purposes...Another good idea was the fanzine reprint article...Slater's column of chitchat is another good scheme. I never saw the original Operation Fantast that Ken mentions, but he doesn't have to worry about having gone stale in the meantime. He puts over a nice easy personality and that's what counts...Reviews of British magazines seem somehow unnecessary, although I can't for the life of me think why. In fact, seeing that they have made me want to read some of the stories mentioned, the reviews must be doing some good. Maybe it would be better if Roberta merely reviewed the best stories in each issue...Lastly, a credit to you for the editorial matter and general production."

Cawthorne has this cover, but Wilson will be back. Also, I blush at the kind words...I love 'em. Most people seem to like the reviews entire..after all, your tastes may not coincide with the reviewer's.

ETHEL LINDSAY "I never wrote after Vector No.1, and so feel a little guilty. Anyway, I can now say that I see a vast improvement. Much as I love Ted, I hope you are to remain editor ((I love you...Ed.)) As a member, I want a society, what I want is a society which will introduce folk to fandom as I was introduced through Operation Fantast. I am grateful enough for that entry, to subsidise an association that will do the same for others....I'm pleased to see Ken Slater associated with you... Give book reviews, and mag reviews, but add some fanzine notes and club news...Ken's best idea, was welcoming letters. Eric's article on 'What's it got to do with s-f' was just the type of thing wanted. I think printing the list of members and the selected items from a fanzine, were good ideas too."

I like the welcoming idea too. How about everybody dropping a line to one member who is a complete stranger to them. Further on those lines, would anyone like to welcome new members to the 'BSFA ? Fanzine reviews..who wants them ? Who would like to tackle them ?

Dr. A.R.WEIR DSc. "hat I want from the society, is mainly means of getting in touch with other people who read s-f. Means of finding how to get second-hand and reprint stuff to complete my own collection; also a nation-wide society of good repute which will cut more ice in getting rid of the 'holier-than-thou' attitude that some people adopt towards s-f....Tape recording competition - good idea....Time Capsule, excellent idea. I think we should continue to print reviews of the current s-f magazines, for the following reason. The BSFA should sooner or later, be regarded in foreign circles as representing the best trends in British s-f, so that foreign s-f circles will take in Vector, and will look to it to supply a worth-while and impartial criticism of British and American s-f. "

Another supporter of the 'meet-the-members' idea, and the idea of the future of the BSFA is a pretty sound one, as the alliance with the SFCE shows. Dr. Weir had no knowledge of this, at the time of writing, so it looks as though his prophecy is already coming true.

E.C.TUBB "Many thanks for Vector No.2., and if there's one thing I'm now sure of, my yielding the editorship was a good thing. The issue, as a whole, was far more satisfying than No.1. maybe because it wasn't No.1., but I'm speaking more of the atmosphere of the thing, the editorial policy, call-it-what-you will. Anyway, congratulations on a fine piece of work. Let's hope you are inundated with 'what you want from the BSFA'..."

Which makes me feel nice and warm inside. Even so, it's a great pity that Ted couldn't stay with us, and I hope he can still appear from time to time, as he does with the competition entries in this issue.

J.P.PATRIZIO "On your heartfelt plea of, 'What do you want from the B.S.F.A?', I would only say - anything to do with S-F. In Scotland in general, and the Edinburgh district in particular, fandom does not exist, and the B.S.F.A is like opium to a drug addict. I personally require the satisfaction of discussing s-f with others. Another point, Is our Association only for s-f, or is fantasy included...I haven't made up my own mind yet. What was each members 'book of the year'? Mine was the Tolkein fantasy.. 'Lord of the Rings'..In s-f, my best of '58, was del Rey's 'Nerves'. I'm sure an interesting article could be written on member's choices, and their reasons for the same."

Glad we're appreciated, but I'm a bit doubtful about the opium part...do you mean we're dopes? Any other members want to name their 'book of the year'? I'll offer one hard-cover, U.S. Book Club edition, for the best one page letter on the subject.

M.J.HARRINGTON "The second issue of Vector was as good as the first. I hope as the membership grows, we will see more original articles. I would like to see an author's 'profile' department, so we could learn something of our favourite writers.....I should like to put this question to my fellow members..'Do we think that S-F could, and should become a 'popular' form of literature such as Western or Romance?' My own view is that it couldn't and shouldn't. S-F is a highly specialised form of fiction. It needs a high degree of reader co-operation - such a form couldn't appeal to the general public. If S-F was to try to achieve popular appeal, it would only cheapen itself and rapidly lose the respectability that it is now beginning to acquire."

On the original article theme, we should have one in this issue if it arrives from H.K.Bulmer in time. For V-4, I have secured an article by Dr. King of the London Planetarium ..Who knows, the two may get exchanged. On the specialised literature theme, I rather feel it is inevitable that S-F will reach the 'popular' market...witness 'Flash Gordon', Quatermass, Journey Into Space and the like...not written s-f, I agree, but straws in the wind. Eventually, s-f will be accepted in just the same way as Western and Romance...both have 'popular' and 'classic' versions...the main difference being the publication price, and quality coming a poor second.Ed.

WANTED + +O+O+O+ + WANTED + +O+O+O+ + WANTED +

GALACTIC PATROL by E.E.Smith. Will pay cash for mint, or near mint, copy. M.J.Harrington, 32 Jackson's Court, Aldersbrook, Wanstead, London S.E.11

BUY OR LOAN...Vird Tales, for November 1937, and December 1939. also...ASF (USA) August and September, 1943. James Groves, 29 Latham Rd., East Ham, London.E.6.

PRE 1932 copies of Astounding Stories...will buy or trade for copies in good condition....The Editor.

BOW BELLS

by

H.

KEN
BULMER

The position of the sf field has changed radically - and is still changing for that matter - since the following notion struck my fancy. Although superficially this rejoinder is a childish gimmick - I'll get to it in a minute - it has a certain panache and is still sometimes necessary, and, given the right time and circumstances, proves a veritable culture torpedo or conversation stopper.

The attitude of the great gullible public and its guardian watchdogs, the critics, has undergone some modification over the past eight years or so.

Before 1950, when the hastily-labelled 'boom' struck sf, the field was, as we all know, a ripe subject for contumely when it was not ignored. Readers of sf grew accustomed to this partisan attitude. Even during the

period when it was no longer a sign of feeble-mindedness to own an acquaintanceship with sf, there still regularly appeared in critical reviews the not-so-subtle sneer and the clever-clever words: 'This neo-Wellsonian story,' or 'In the footsteps of Verne and Wells.' Reviewers of the nineteen fifties in commenting on a new sf book regularly dragged in good old Herbert George and whimpered that the good old days were the best.

This conduct is understandable if the history of the sf is considered and the peculiar relationship of subject to form is seen in the light of its effects on readers and bystanders. We consider that sf offers the widest scope for literary expression of any medium; we must admit that the general presentation is on perhaps the lowest level. This situation is being gradually remedied and, as is the way of the world, will one day make sense. So the next time someone babbles on about a modern sf novel aping and copying and plagiarising from the oldsters, you take this opportunity and, speaking with a perfectly matter-of-fact composure and a straight-faced sobriety, turn the conversation to a recent detective story and say: "Oh, you mean that neo-Conan-Doyle stuff?" or: 'Copying Sherlock Holmes still, are they?'

It behooves you to choose your victim carefully and to use this ploy on the rightful recipient; say one who has been shouting his mouth off about sf when he obviously has no notion of what he's talking about. And don't we meet them!

The stinger in the tail of this is, of course, that Sherlock Holmes is still first class, as is Wells; they have both worn in spots but are eminently readable today. The majority of the current detective and thriller and all the other laborious labelings of the crime story are, speaking frankly, little short of putrid. They exist in a tightly-closed hot-house world of their own, a fantasy world where the conventions are so rigid and so ridiculous that by comparison sf is full of dignity and common-sense. Much current sf is rubbish, a fact we all deplore; but at least we try to maintain some flexibility, some search after truth however it appears. I suppose it is true to say that the worst sf is the worst there is of any literature and the best sf is the best literature there is. At this juncture I won't go into the pros and cons of whether or not sf is literature; but you will understand what I mean. sf has not been caught up in the post-Re naissance preoccupation with the cult of the ego.

The Third Programme recently broadcast a talk called "Without Mercy or Metaphor" by a gentleman called Reyner Banham. You probably heard it. Mr. Banham evidently knows something of sf on the general readership level; but he was equally obviously unaware of the 'behind-the-scenes' picture which most sf enthusiasts take for granted. The most pleasant thing about Mr. Banham was his serious and sympathetic approach to sf; he talked about it as though it meant something to him and should mean something to his listeners; not as though it was the wrapper around a toilet-roll. In his talk - which tried to equate the Watson-Holmes relationship with the Lije Baley-Daneel Olivaw set-up in Asimov's Caves of Steel and the Naked Sun and went on to cover fresh and interesting ground - he remained on a highly intellectual plane, bringing in erudite references outside the field, and exhibited generally the sort of treatment sf might expect to claim from critics if the field could free itself from the aroma of certain encumbrances. I think most of us have writhed at so-called reviews in the National Press with their archness, their 'pseudo-Wellsian', their infantile beta-plusses, their phobias, and, above all, their sublime ignorance.

Those 'certain' encumbrances I mentioned above dog all types of literature; comics, films, strips and gutter publishing. The trouble with sf is that the intolerant reading public have linked sf with the lowest forms and condemned it out of hand, probably with good reasons to be found in the spate of trash that gushed forth when 'sf boomed', but without any fair winnowing. These days, when better-than-average material comes along it is lifted from 'that sf stuff' and listed alongside the ordinary mundane material.

The critics, the sharp-eyed cliché sharpshooters, thus very often miss-out and drop the chance of poking another derisory finger at sf. You might very well think that a course of critic education in sf might be useful; but I think most of you will

agree that sf needs to be assimilated and grown into in your own sweet time and that no amount of instruction is going to tell the cleverest critic how to crit sf; there are very few exceptions to this. There aren't very many sf enthusiasts who can review and crit sf with the skill this work demands.

I do not know but I suspect that Mr. Banham has been reading sf for some time - at least the hard-cover stuff easily acquired - and he is prepared to treat it with authority on the Third Programme.

I don't think we'll try the pseudo-Holmes ploy on Mr. Banham.

--oOo--

The Nova Triplets and Peter Hamilton's Nebula have been hitting the high spots recently and British sf publishing in the magazine field seems to be in a far more happy position than the U.S. Whilst hoping that the Stateside position improves rapidly, we must cross our fingers that our own zines carry on from strength to strength. Peter has a very good 1959 lined up, and Ted Carnell of Nova tells me that the year will be one of the best yet. Charles Eric Maine's first 1959 novel, 'Count Down' to be published in April by Hodder and Stoughton will be serialised in the New Year, followed by Kenneth Bulmer's 'The Patient Dark'. The February novelette will be filled by promising newcomer Colin Kapp's 'Survival Problem.' Science Fiction Adventures which has taken on a new lease of life has a 21,000 worder from James White 'Occupation Warrior' in #7 plus another welcome new comer Nelson Sherwood 'Sun Creator.'

Most of you probably recall the 1955 New Worlds 'Survey'. The new survey now being carried out shows some surprising trends, the response has been good and I urge you all, if you have not already filled in the form, to do so right away. 70% replies gave reading as a hobby - there were 2 replies listing TV as a hobby. Will the trends be so surprising when the next survey is carried out in 1963? This survey has been taken as a yardstick by all manner of outside-the-field authorities and it is of considerable importance in charting the rocky progress of sf; the peaks and the pits. Help out - today!

Science Fantasy is scheduled to go through a face lift, so look out for a restyled cover, with contents listing on the right hand side.

--oOo--

History was made at the Globe Tavern on the Thursday before Christmas, 1958. The world-famous 'London Circle' renowned for its lack of organisation and complete anarchy, on 18th December, 1958, became an organised body with cash subscription, positive purposes and a new spirit of cohesion sadly lacking in recent months. The meeting called for 1st January, 1959 will elect officers (officers in the London Circle! incredible) and I hope to tell you more of London's activities in my next column in Vector #4. Cheers,

Lillian C. Culbert

NOTES CONCERNING THESE ACCOUNTS AND GENERALLY

MISC RESERVES Only amounts actually known to have been incurred prior to the end of December have been included (one amount is a refund of postage for a donation to the library - some donation! - and the other is for VECTOR stationery). In this connection, it may be noted that neither the North American representative nor the Convention Committee have claimed for expenses - and of course each will be able to meet their own out of money they collect themselves.

RESERVE FOR OVERPAYMENTS This previously stood at 6/10d. However in view of the fact that the dollar subscription has now been fixed for convenience at \$1.50 instead of \$1.40, 2/10d (= \$.40) has been written back into the balance in hand. This 2/10d represents odd overpayments from six different people, and although they were individually informed that the amount was owing to them, it just isn't worth the bookkeeping involved.

The Member who sent \$2.00 still has four shillings owing to him which it is intended to offset against his next year's subscription, and a further ten shillings is now similarly held against next year's subscription of yet another overseas member.

SUNDRIES IN EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS The "general" sundries are mainly bank charges. The Advertising sundries are advertisements in various magazines. The Library sundries are to enable the Library to generally get itself more (space)shipshape, Cheltenham fashion.

SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS DEPARTMENT The Association year ends at the end of June, therefore anybody joining from now until then only has to pay half a subscription to start with. Thus a full member can now join for ten shillings, and an associate (under 18) or an overseas member for only five shillings (or \$.75). Members are requested to pass this information on to anybody who they think might be interested.

A.H. Mercer

(A.H. Mercer)

Hon Treasurer, BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION