

VECTOR

NO. 6

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF
THE

BSFA

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This issue of VECTOR is published from: 41, North End Road, Fitz James' Ave., W.14. Editorial staff: Roberta Grey, Michael Moorcock, Sandra Hall and John Phillifent. Artwork and lettering by Jim Cawthorn, Michael Jones and Mike Moorcock.

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WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK OF VECTOR.
All letters should be sent to the Editor at the
address given above and not to North End House

VECTOR, The Official Organ of the British Science Fiction
Association is published and produced by the BSFA 1/1/60

EDITORIAL

ROBERTA
CRAY

We had hoped to have Vector ready for you by Christmas, but one or two holds up have occurred so we can only say now that we hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and wish you the very best for a happy and prosperous New Year.

Once again we have Mike Moorcock to thank for helping with the material and arranging for the artwork with Jim Cawthorn.

Two regulars do not appear in this issue - Bow Bells and General Chunterings - but we hope to have them back for the next issue.

The main subject that members will no doubt be interested in is the forthcoming Convention. This will be held in London over the Easter weekend and a tentative booking for a hotel has been made. The manager is Convention minded and has no objection to a little more noise than usual and, if possible, will book all Convention members into one block, but we can book as many rooms as wanted. No doubt the price will sound high to some members, but for London it is reasonable. Bed and breakfast is thirty-five shillings, but we are hoping to persuade the manager to let us have a reduced rate where there are several beds in a room. This is to help out the eighteen year olds and under, who would not otherwise be able to come. Anyone who wishes to attend the Convention should make their own bookings with the manager and should head their letters "National Science-Fiction Convention, Easter, 1960." As soon as all arrangements are finalised a newsletter will be issued to all members and fanzine editors. This, we hope, will be early in January.

Convention entrance fees will be 15/- for non-members of the B.S.F.A. and 10/- for members. Members and non-members who are eighteen and under will be charged half these fees. No doubt these prices will be criticised in some quarters, but it is suggested that if members pause and consider for themselves they will realise that the B.S.F.A. is doing its utmost to put on a really good Convention for them. Start saving now and it will be easier on your pocket at Easter. Our method is to put all our sixpences and threepenny pieces in a milk bottle and you will be surprised how quickly they mount up.

Now remember that the B.S.F.A. is for you and that if you write and tell us what you want we will do our best to supply your needs. Criticism is welcome as long as it is constructive criticism. The B.S.F.A. is still a young organisation and has its teething troubles and you can help us to overcome these by writing to us and telling us of your ideas and suggestions. The sort of thing we do not want is the kind of letter received by the officials last year in which the writers stated that they were perturbed because one of the officials had had no experience and offered to take over his job. This was despite the fact the official in question had been unanimously voted in at Kettering where the B.S.F.A. was born. As it happens, the official did an excellent job of work and is still one of our hardest working members. The B.S.F.A. officials then running the Association very properly refused this somewhat left-handed offer of help and events proved they were right and the writers wrong. One of the writers, still not a member of the B.S.F.A., is still criticising the Association but in a private publishing association to which very few B.S.F.A. members belong. As already pointed out, we will welcome criticism, but fair criticism, and first consideration will be given to members who, after all, do pay to belong to the Association and are entitled to first hearing.

One other thing concerning the Convention. We have heard that some people are concerned because inexperienced people are running it. It should be pointed out here that we do have an Advisory Committee, consisting of Roberta Gray, who was Secretary of the 1957 World Science Fiction Convention, Ken Bulmer and Frank Arnold, both of whom have had a deal of experience in running Conventions. The Secretary of the 1957 Convention has given the B.S.F.A. Secretary advice based on her own experience and at the moment is trying to get someone as Guest of Honour whom you have all heard of and some of you probably know him. When the Newsletter is sent out we hope to be able to tell you the name of the Guest of Honour and also the winner of the Trans-Atlantic Pan Fund.

Lastly, all contributions and letters should be sent to Roberta Gray, 14 Bennington Street, Cheltenham, Glos. And please write - this is your magazine and we want you to have a say in it.

Roberta Gray

DON'T FORGET - LETTERS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO ROBERTA GRAY.

NEW MEMBERS

-5-

- M. 139 D.J. Spiller: 4 Clarence Road, Wallington, Surrey
 O. 140 D.E. Ford: Box 19-T, RR # 2, Loveland, Ohio, U.S.A.
 A. 141 C. Dale: 20 Raleigh Rd, Wallisdown, Poole, Dorset
 M. 142 Dr E.B. Spratt: c/o Mathematics Branch, Royal Military
 College of Science, Shrivenham, near Swindon, Wilts
 M. 143 H.W. Atherton: 40 Water Tower View, Boole Lane, Chester
 A. 144 M. Smith: 32 Southdown Road, Wimbledon, London SW.20
 M. 145 F.G. Alford: 12 Glenrosa Street, Fulham, London SW.6
 M. 146 J.R. Hautz: Mona Vanna, Galtrim Park, Bray, Co. Wicklow, Eire
 M. 147 D. Henderson, 98 Hennall Street, Epping, Essex
 O. 148 B.R. Trotter: 2 RD, Palmerston, Otago, New Zealand
 M. 149 R.W. Cooper: Flat 3, 11/13 St Leonard's Road, Ealing, LondW.13

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- M. 108 J. McGovern: now c/o Jones, 51 Oxbgangs Avenue, Edinburgh 13
 M. 130 J. Fairley: now 131b Durham Rd, Spennymoor, Co. Durham
 M. 43 Miss A.B. Eversfield: now "Cameron", Gordon Rd, Leckhampton,
 Cheltenham, Glcs. (Audrey is requested to cooperate
 in future by arranging not to change her address until
 Vector has caught up with her previous one).
 M. 14 P.A. West: now 154 Constitution Hill, Norwich, Norfolk
 M. 44 (J.R. Humphries) and A. 11 (B. Jordan) are now indulging them-
 selves respectively in soldiering and higher education, but
 their home addresses are of course still valid and less liable
 to alteration than their true geographical addresses.

TREASURER'S REPORT

I was under the fond impression that my Report in this issue would be mainly devoted to the final (audited) accounts for the period to June 1959. That it is not so can be attributed entirely to the fact that the audit is taking a trifle longer than was originally anticipated. In fact, at one point not so long ago, one of my colleagues on your Committee was heard to suggest that it looked as if the auditor had absconded with the accounts. Happily this proved not to be so, and every now and then a few more items of the treasury records drift slowly back into my hands. The approved final account, however, has yet to make its appearance - so what is a poor Hon. Treasurer to do?

It must be borne in mind, of course, that the auditor, who is not a member of the B.S.F.A., is giving his services free and in his own time - which latter phrase however has turned out to be as ambiguous as it looks. In the mean time, we remain solvent, and you may look forward to a report on the half-year to December 1959 (on the same lines as the quarterly reports already published) in Vector 7.

Finally, if any of our German members know who might have sent an International Money Order for five shillings from "Frankfurt Main Pacha", would they please identify themselves for me - otherwise I can't do anything with it. I don't even know if it's B.S.F.A. money or not.

(A.E. Mercer)
 Hon Treasurer, B.S.F.A.

ADVERTISEMENT

A MUST FANS, MUST ———

That's the Science Fiction Book Club. No really devout fan can afford to be without these bi-monthly books which comprise the best S.F. of the time. Books published a few months earlier at large sums are for you at a mere 5/6d each. All are attractively and strongly bound in good uniform format, printed on fine quality paper and are remarkable value.

On top of which, we do EXTRAS from time to time, and there is a whole long backlog of exciting past issues to choose from, in addition to the six books you get in the year, anyway. Most fans are well aware of this. Look, for instance, at our new list, 1960 version —

'The Clock of Time'	by Jack Finney	12/6
'Non-Stop'	by Brian Aldis	15/-
'The Day it Rained Forever'	by Ray Bradbury	16/-
'A Case of Conscience'	by James Elish	15/-
'Best S-F 3'	by Crispin (ed)	15/-
'The Deep Range'	By Arthur Clarke	13/6

Price, to S.F. Book Club members, complete and unabridged, 5/6 each
and

EXTRA item

'The Neon Halo' by Jean-Louis Curtis, 15/-
to members — — 7/6

See what we mean when we say you get the best? The books are chosen by Arthur C. Clarke; Dr. J.G. Porter, the famous astronomer; and John Carnell, editor of NEW WORLDS and SCIENCE-FANTASY.

One more thing. If you can enroll a new member, we have wonderful gift offers! Write for details.

Well, are you going to write for details? Do it NOW!

The Science Fiction Book Club; Dept O 95; 20, Irving Street, London W.C. 2.

This article is being published simultaneously in VECTOR 6 (Organ of the British Science Fiction Association) and BURROUGHSIANA 19 (the Fantasy fanzine).

Reason is because we feel that with the more limited circulation of BURROUGHSIANA, it will be unlikely that many readers of VECTOR will have already seen it and *vice versa*.

Write to Miss Sandra Hall, The Secretary, 41, North End House, Fitz James Avenue, London, W. 14. for details of the B.S.F.A. and to Dick Ellingsworth, 69, Queensway, West Wickham, Kent for details of BURROUGHSIANA.

MASTERS OF FANTASY (Third series) No. 1.

jim

by Mike Moorcock

The Complete Enchanter

You can't 'take-it-or-leave-it-alone'. You have to like it or hate it. Perhaps that's a compliment to the work of an author. Anyway, if you don't like the work of L. Sprague de Camp, well then, you can't stand it. On the other hand, if you like it, you'll read him voraciously.

I guess I'm one of those voracious people, ever since I read THE QUEEN OF ZAMTA, serialised in ASF during the late summer of 1949.

For all my admiration of this gifted writer, I think that probably his best work was written in collaboration with Fletcher Pratt; particularly the hilarious Harold Shea stories published in 'Unknown' during the early 1940's.

Recently, de Camp's weakness for name-making has rather spoiled his latest (and possibly last) Krishna story. This is THE TOWER OF ZAVID which, in places, becomes little more than a confusing Krishnan travelogue. The plot is certainly weaker than most, even though the main character involved is one of my favourite regues Anthony Fallon. For all of that, it's still streets ahead of a lot of stuff of this type.

L. Sprague de Camp was born in New York City on the 27th November 1907. He took an B.S. in Economics and Engineering at college and later turned his hand to a number of different jobs. After working in a shipyard, a sawmill and having a go at surveying, he travelled through the U.S.A., Europe and the Orient, returning to become editor of several journals in the U.S. Eventually he became editor for the American Society of Engineers and around 1937 decided to try writing fiction, becoming a free-lance in 1938.

When America joined the second world war, he entered the U.S. Naval Reserve as a Lt. Commander assigned to engineering and continued in this capacity for some time after victory.

He is married and is still an active attendee at SF Conventions in the U.S.A. He has remained a free-lance writer ever since he began.

De Camp is, above all else, a professional. Like Alfred Bester, Tony Boucher and our own Sam Youd, he does not simply concentrate on the SF field. Sometimes, when a fantasy author, often excellent within his chosen genre, leaves the SF field and tries his hand at, say, a western novel or a detective novel, he falls down hopelessly. It is these professionals who generally turn out the most competent SF stories, possibly because they can draw on experience gained from writing in other mediums. The success of THE STARS MY DESTINATION and DEATH OF GRASS tends, I feel, to prove this point. Although, of course, to compare properly Bester's classic with 'Christopher's' best-seller is well-nigh impossible.

As did Boucher and several others, de Camp made his fantasy debut in the now sadly defunct UNKNOWN. Campbell should be complimented on 'discovering' such a host of talent during UNKNOWN's wonderful career.

During those years, de Camp turned out innumerable shorts and many lead novelettes of the quality of NOTHING IN THE RULES, LAND OF UNREASON, WHEELS OF IF and (with Pratt) THE CASTLE OF IRON. You don't find stuff like this any more, which is a great shame. Campbell seems at present to be taking his SF just a little too seriously.

Probably the most popular series de Camp has penned outside of his Pratt collaborations, are the Viagens Interplanetarias stories, which, of course, incorporate the Krishna novels and shorts. I remember that a while ago someone asked de Camp whether he actually thought Brazil would become a principal power in a world of the future. He replied that he didn't give a damn one way or the other - he simply decided to have a change from the normal set-up which generally makes

America the leading power and English the official language. Whatever his reasons, de Camp certainly presented a far better balanced picture of things as they might be in a couple of hundred years. Most writers, admittedly for the sake of what they are trying to put over, create their future civilizations in extremes of black and white. Viagens, without losing any of its sense of wonder, can be accepted as commonplace in the same way in which a description of England's Empire-to-be, at a later date dominating half the known world, could be accepted by a Roman soldier doing his stint on Hadrian's Wall.

Another interesting point is that de Camp has had a great deal more of his stories published in hard covers than most writers of SF and fantasy. Which obviously proves his popularity with the public. Publishers might put out one or two novels by an author before they find he does not 'sell', but it is unlikely that any hard-headed business man would back a novelist beyond this limit. De Camp is the author of some twenty works of fiction and non-fiction in hard-covers (in cases collaborations with Pratt, Miller, Howard and Nyberg) and quite a few soft-covered books and collections.

These include Viagens and Harold Shea stories, THE UNDESIRE PRINCESS, DIVIDE AND RULE, LEST DARKNESS FALL, THE WHEELS OF IF, THE CARHELLAN CUBE, GENUS HOMO, THE RETURN OF CONAN etc. and in the non-fiction field LOST CONTINENTS, THE EVOLUTION OF NAVAL WEAPONS and INVENTIONS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT (with Alf K. Berle). Few writers in the fantasy field can claim such an impressive list of books to their names, outside of old 'masters' like Haggard, Edgar Rice Burroughs and Abraham Meritt.

De Camp, I have said before, is a professional. Being such, he depends entirely on his writing for his income. So who can blame him when he states, as he did in a recent letter to me, that he doesn't plan to write any more Krishna stories 'except in the fantastically unlikely even that somebody will pay me ten cents a word or better to do it' ? SF isn't a well-paying field and I know of few writers who can exist entirely on an income deriving solely from it; unless they are in the lucky position of being editors as well. Payment is better than the States than in this country, but



nevertheless, you are lucky if you make three cents a word (about the highest) and the general rate is two cents or one cent - no better than rates existing in 1939!

Thus, de Camp hasn't written any fantasy or SF for nearly three years. And it isn't likely that he will do so for some time. He is at present concentrating, 'for crassly commercial reasons', on historical novels - and when not doing this, his time is taken up by picture-books for children.

De Camp's first historical novel, AN ELEPHANT FOR ARISTOTLE, was published by Doubleday in April 1958 and for those who are interested, it is still in print. Its successor, THE BRONZE GOD OF RHODES will be published by the same firm about January 1960. The third one, de Camp is currently working on. It will be called THE DRAGON OF THE ISHTAR GATE.

Some mention should be made of de Camp's connection with the Conan saga. Around about 1952, de Camp found himself with a number of Howard's unfinished manuscripts. One or two were Conan stories, the rest were not. Gnome Press had by this time published some of the Conan stories in book form and it was obvious that Howard fans wanted more. Thus, posthumously, de Camp teamed up with Howard to polish up the Conan tales and rewrite the suitable non-Conan manuscripts into stories featuring the Cimmerian. These included THE BLACK STRANGER, THE ROAD OF EAGLES, HAWKS OVER SHEM and THE FROST GIANT'S DAUGHTER. Originally published in magazine form, they were later incorporated into book form and published by Gnome. A young Swedish airman, a great admirer of Conan, was meanwhile trying his hand at writing a Conan story, he sent it to de Camp and this was later published, after seeing magazine publication in FANTASTIC UNIVERSE, as THE RETURN OF CONAN, Gnome, 1957. Since then, I believe, THE LEGACY OF CONAN has been written and will be published eventually by Gnome.

It is an unhappy thought, but it is unlikely that we shall be seeing much more of de Camp's remarkable and wholly original Fantasy and SF stories, his time these days is devoted to keeping his wife and kids in bread and butter, and this can be done more successfully in other fields.

However, there is a wealth of material by de Camp and I haven't managed to read it all, yet. What's more these stories can be read over and over again, they never cease to entertain. De Camp is truly fit to be called a Master of Fantasy.

--Checklist Over--

of *Vlagers*, Harold Shea stories

HAROLD SHEA

THE ROARING TRUMPET Unknown May 1940
 THE MATHEMATICS OF MAGIC Unknown August 1940
 (Book: THE INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER, Henry Holt 1941, republished by Prime Press in 1950).

THE CASTLE OF IRON Unknown April 1941
 (Book: THE CASTLE OF IRON, Prime Press, 1950).

THE WALL OF SERPENTS Fantasy Fiction June 53
 THE GREEN MAGICIAN Beyond Oct. 1954
 (As yet unpublished in book form, they may be brought out together and are at present in the hands of de Camp's agent).

VLAGERS INTERPLANETARIAS

Novels

THE QUEEN OF ZAMBIA ASF Aug-Sept 1949
 (Book: Pb. COSMIC MANHUNT, Ace Books 1954.
 German edition: MENSCHENJAGD IN KOSMOS by Pabel).

THE HAND OF ZEI ASF Oct. 1950-
 (Not republished) Jan. 1951.

ROGUE QUEEN (non-Krishna)
 (Book only: Hard cover: Doubleday, 1951.
 Pb. Dell, 1952, Pinnacle Books, London
 (pb. also) 1953. Banned in Eire 1958!)

THE TOWER OF ZANID SF Stories May-Aug 1958.
 (Book: Thomas Bourgey (Avalon Books) 1958).

Short Stories

THE INSPECTOR'S TIEBH	<u>ASF</u>	Apr. 50
SUMMER WEAR	<u>Startling</u>	May. 50
FINISHED	<u>ASF</u>	Nov. 49
THE ULTRASONIC GOD	<u>Future</u>	Jul. 51
THE ANIMAL-CRACKER PLOT	<u>ASF</u>	Jul. 49
GIT-ALONG!	<u>ASF</u>	Aug. 50
WIDE-OPEN PLANET	<u>Future</u>	Aug. 50
THE CONTINENT MAKERS	<u>Thrilling Wonder</u>	Apr. 51

(These stories were published in the order listed in the book; THE CONTINENT MAKERS, Twayne Publications, New York, 1953. Ultrasonic God and Wide-Open Planet were retitled The Gattor Whistle and Perpetual Motion respectively).

Two other Viagens short stories were published in 1953 in H. J. Campbell's collection; SPRAGUE DE CAMP'S NEW ANTHOLOGY, published in both hard and soft covers by Hamilton's of London.

-END-



— THE

SECRETARY

REPORTS —

This file strictly speaking is a continuation of Doc Weir's File 13 1/2. It should be labeled 'The Secretary Reports - ' or some such thing. So here we go with the report though that word 'report' may prove to be slightly out of place here.

I have been growing ever more and more despondent at the present spate of 'Science Fiction' horror films which continue to invade our local cinema. The depressing part is that such films are advertised as S.F. A considerable section of the general public will therefore judge S.F. from the horror films now on release. It is therefore small wonder that people think fans are peculiar.

I take for an example "The Day the World Ended" because I've just seen it today. Actually the story is the same as the "World, the Flesh and the Devil" except that there is an atomic war and a few mutations crop up just to horrify the audience. But mutations of what? The mutation which tried to make off with the heroine didn't resemble and animal on earth today. There is a natural limit to the mutation factor but not, apparently, in this film. It was probably made on a low budget and badly acted as well. What are the general public and the potential fans going to make of this so-called S.F.?

Of course it isn't a science fiction film - it's a plain horror film and any resemblance to S.F. is a co-incidence. How try to explain that to the general public.

"The Day the World Ended" and "It Conquered the Earth" (which it didn't but never mind) both left me in horrified convulsions. Of course both films had monsters but why? It is not strictly necessary. Not every S.F. story or novel has a monster lurking in the nearest cave. It may indicate a certain lack of imagination on my part but the studio monsters are all beginning to look the same. The most horrifying film of all is one where the aliens or monsters or invaders remain unseen. An alien that remains hidden has far more terror than anything the film studios can dream up.

Now there may be a remedy for this deplorable state of affairs. For instance fans can always write to the studios and complain. Any studio which is deluged with mail from irate fans should pause to consider its policy. This, however, is step

One. Secondly, forward nominations of S.F. books which, in your own opinion, might be worth filming. If you are writing to a studio then give the names of authors, publishers and all possible details. Try not to suggest impossibilities like "Childhood's End" at least not yet. About the best I can think of off-hand is 'The Dragon in the Sea' which was serialised in ASF as 'Under Pressure' by Frank Herbert. Most of the action takes place in a submarine. The cast would be small. It could be made in black-and-white and still be the S.F. film of the year. You've probably got some excellent ideas of your own so get cracking and write to the studios NOW.

As a last step in this S.F. film campaign, I suggest that the B.S.F.A. awards a diploma to the best S.F. film of the year. This, naturally, is dependant on any one studio producing a film above the present average. Any nominations for the best film of this present year should reach the secretary sometime before the 1960 convention.

Convention News.

Rumour has it - and has it correctly - that London will be 'doing' next year's con at Easter.

Now this is your convention. The B.S.F.A. is running it for you. London members of the B.S.F.A. will be responsible for all arrangements except for the programme.

What sort of a programme do you want? Do you want a couple of lectures of the Doc Noir vintage, would you like a fancy dress dance? Do you want films and if so of what sort? Contests and competitions? If so, write and tell me your ideas on this and write soon. We anticipate a big attendance. We hope to see you there and we want to give the best convention ever.

And lastly.

This issue of Vector comes out at this time in a frantic effort to get back on schedule. It is published from North End House. Credit for this issue goes mainly to Mike Macroock and John Phillifont. If this issue looks faintly obscure, it is due to the words we have used on our new duplicator.

I hope some fans saw my letter which recently appeared in the Daily Express on S.F. I didn't see the letter myself but I gather it was published because I've had a mass of letters about it. I thought at one time that half the readers of the Daily Express were writing to me.

And very last of all, the secretary presents her compliments to the rest of the B.S.F.A. members and wishes them a happy and fannish Xmas and the biggest hangover ever on New Years Day.

— MAGAZINE

REVIEWS —

ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION ... Oct. 59

THE LAW BREAKERS (Anvil) Concerns a couple of aliens (what else?) sent to sabotage Earth and soften it up, ready for an invasion fleet. As in the last 23 stories of this type, they find their job is tougher than it looks, and wind up working for the opposition. Another well-written .. C

DODKIN'S JOB (Vance) Wherein a man works his way to the bottom of society, raises a complaint, and follows it through channels, right to the top echelon, and finds out he is in a position to be top boss by working at the bottom. Improbable yet plausible; very nearly a grade B .. C+

UNSPECIALIST (Yaco) A space crew are given an unpleasant cargo, then saddled with a 'Bean Brain' (whatever that is) which shows them how to destroy an enemy base they happen to uncover. Hackwork .. D

THAT SWEET LITTLE OLD LADY (Phillips) Conclusion of serial. The F.B.I. are hunting out telopaths, in order to ferret out spies in secret jobs. Unfortunately, telopaths are all living in nut-houses, and the best one, (a woman) is convinced she is Queen Elizabeth, and insists on the F.B.I. dressing as her courtiers before she will help out. All logically whacky and the spy is found. Definitely .. B

ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION ... Nov. 59

THE UNNECESSARY MAN (Garrett) An ex-officer intriguing behind the scenes in order to forward the plans of a Constitutional Monarch who is lacking in actual power. The Monarch is a 'goodie', and therefore better able to rule his people than the elected representatives almost a pocket edition of 'Double Star', but lacking the canvas. Still, a competent C

I WAS A TEENAGE SECRET WEAPON (Sabia) An accident-attractor (like an accident-prone who misses the accidents) causes so much trouble to those who dislike him that he is called up into the army and manoeuvred behind the enemy lines, where he causes so much chaos that peace comes almost immediately. Good fanzine stuff. .. C-

PANIC BUTTON (Russell) explains how it is possible to preserve a planet by using only one man, an ex-convict. Earth uses such men, in a Universe shared with another, equally powerful, civilisation. The convict's only weapon is the 'panic button', which is pressed when the 'Others' appear. Not knowing what it does, they daren't harm the man, or try to take over the planet .. bet you can guess what it does, right from the word GO ... (and it has aliens) .. Rating d

A FILBERT IS A NUT (Raphael) Concerning the lunatic who could make atom bombs from clay. Scientists chase their own tails to find out how (and fail) and after a few off-handed words a monument takes off like a space ship .. which is where the 'psi' gimmick is very gently inserted. Better than most recent 'psi' stories, and worthy of a C+

CERTAINLY (Silverberg) is a story which deals with a military Commander faced with the problem of evicting (by order or by force) aliens who have landed on his planet. They are capable of mind-control, and each messenger in turn is converted to their side. Finally, the C.O. has a bash at them, after setting up his own safe-guards. Up to this point the story is rattling on at least in the B grade ... then we meet my old hate, that missing ending. The C.O. also succumbs, without even a fan-fare, other than a wet slurp. End of story. I'm not agin a down-boat ending, but the story is not patterned that way, and it left me adding another .. C

GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION ... Oct. 59

(Which has reverted to its old title for two issues, owing to a printer's error. Incidentally, the Dec. issue bears a 50¢, and the Oct. a 35¢ tag; bet that one cost Galaxy much lolly on the news-stands !)

SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME (Grim) This exceedingly involved story starts off with a spaceman who returns to marry the 'joy-girl' he sampled in his youth. The delay was occasioned by the fact that, in the interim, he has picked up a partner from another dimension, who has made him rich. This marriage makes out fairly well until a relation joins his crew and eventually seduces (I think) the wife. The spaceman packs them both off, and returns to his repulsive 'alien' pal. Feeling he can't got any lower, he decides he wants to see the alien's real shape, with surprising results. Definitely a B, and written in any other vein than the Galaxy matrix, it might have made 'A'

DEATH IN THE HOUSE (Sinak) A farmer with plenty of gold pieces finds an alien. The gold is used up in building a new space ship for the poor odd character, and the farmer is left friendless, godless, but with a queer little ball .. D*

SILENCE (Brunner) Hesketh has been a prisoner of aliens for 28+ years, in near solitary confinement. Finally he is rescued, but is so conditioned to life in a safety capsule that he can't be happy 'til he gets back into one, and without any hope of rescue. Another story too long for its 'up-in-the-air' ending. Pity, because the rest went so well .. C

WAY UP YONDER (Satterfield) A poor (but good) man visits the rich estate of the girl (not-so-good) he is to marry. The family are slightly bonkers and the girls useless. He marries her sister .. D

LAT OF THE MORTICIANS (Tubb) People don't die, so they don't need morticians. Just in time, the last mortician finds he can make a living by giving visiting aliens a demonstration of how, on ancient Earth, people were buried .. D

TRUE SELF (Borghese) This story has something to do with a beauty parlour and a customer who becomes so lovely that her boy-friend loses interest, so she is offered a job in the shop .. I think. Find out for yourself .. E-

GALAXY SCIENCE FICTION ... Dec. 59

PROSPECTOR'S SPECIAL (Shockley) Concerning a prospector who is in the predicament of having struck it rich, but lacks the cash in hand to pay for a phone call to start selling the stuff, or even to get rescued from the perils of the wilderness. (A wilderness with robots, telephones, teleports and all the comforts of home .. if you can pay) By committing a felony he gets his phone call, AND his dearest wish .. oodles of water. Story ends. (Presumably he gets off the felony rap) Here agin, this goes exceedingly well, until the weak punch-line, but, at least, it's understandable .. C+

THE UNDETECTED (Smith G.O.) The interesting psi problem of how to trap a psi specialist turned criminal, AND convince the law that he is a psi-man well carried out .. B

CHARITY CASE (Harman) An outstandingly insignificant story about a man who gets 'hoxed' by time-travellers, freed of disease, made immortal, and yet unhappy, and unable to earn enough money to get himself off the hook. Rating .. C

BLACKWORD (Offutt) Blackword is one of those secret agents (Occupation, Dictator) who tie up the opposition by perfect timing, outrageous schemes and split-second timing, without ever putting a foot wrong. In this case the operator joins two hostile planets in peace (and nets a few millions, personal-type, dollars) Entertaining .. C

FLOWER ARRANGEMENT (Brown) One of those domestic-type(hobby-fied)married women, and her flower-competition antry. Helped by her young son, they produce an extra-dimensional effort, via Carrollish double-talk. It can't be reproduced, because the child is now interested in something else .. D

SALES TALK (Blomberg) Where 'Life-Experience' salesmen try to sell their (vicarious experience) outfit to a customer. He withstands their patter, and the story winds up with the revelation that the whole lot are actors, making just another Life-Experience recording. Give it .. C

WAR GAME (Dick) Testing toys from Ganymede before putting them on Earth's market, a suspicion of more-than-nests-the-eye leads to a very careful investigation. However, the red herring technique was used, and the insidious weapon looks through .. C

THE SNOWMEN (Pohl) A wide boy (and his girl) have to make their way in a world starved for heat .. starved through excessive use of heat-pumps for power. An unfortunate alien falls into their clutches, and it is revealed that they are after much more than a little bit of power .. C

SABBATICAL (Block) is where a professor goes travelling in time. Nothing much happens, but we seem to reach the conclusion that the best era to be in is our own .. D

Currently from the U.S.

The latest report is an announcement by John W. Campbell, Jr., editor of *Astounding Science Fiction*, that the magazine will change its name. With the issue of February 1960 it will gradually change until, in about a year, it will have become 'ANALOG SCIENCE FACT FICTION'
from 'Science-Fiction Times' Issue #326

There is also news of a forthcoming 'CHECKLIST OF SCIENCE FICTION ANTHOLOGIES' According to the ad., this is a listing of very nearly three thousand stories, published in over one hundred anthologies. It is in the form of four sections; one, an alphabetical listing of all the anthologies; two, a listing by editor by-lines, with information about each anthology; three, an alphabetical listing of the stories anthologised; four, a listing by author, of all stories anthologised.

Publication scheduled for late Spring 1960. Pre-publication price \$2.00; post-publication price is \$5.00. Ken Slater can probably get it for you, at the cut rate, if you order right away.
from 'Science-Fiction Times' Issue #325

OFF-TRAIL SCIENCE-FICTION-FANTASY.

THE NIGHT LAND by William Hope Hodgson.

First published, Eveleigh Nash, London, 1912, at 6/-
Republished (abridged) Holden & Hardingham, London, 1921, at 2/6
Republished by Arkham House, Wisconsin, U.S.A., 1946 at \$5.00, as 'THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND' an omnibus volume, containing 'THE BOATS OF THE GLEN-CARRIG' 'THE GHOST PIRATES' 'THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND' and 'THE NIGHT LAND' all at full length, with introduction by H.C. Koenig.

In any of the above editions, this is a collector's item of considerable rarity. It is one of the longest science-fantasy novels in existence, being nearly 600 pages long in the original edition. It can be read as an idyllic love-story, an adventure story, or as science-fantasy, and is outstanding from all three points of view.

The hero, living at the end of the sixteenth century, falls in love with his cousin, the Lady Mirdath, they having found (as did the hero and heroine of Kipling's 'Brushwood Boy') that they have dreams in common. The Lady Mirdath dies in childbirth a year later, leaving him broken-hearted.

Then consolation comes to him, since he finds that, in his dreams, he 'wakes' into a life in the incredibly far future, on this earth, after our sun has become a dark star.

The people of this time regard the period of darkening as the mythical past, just as we might think of the Bible story of 'Creation'. During the period, mankind, seeking to develop 'psi' powers, but ignorant of the dangers involved, had gone beyond the limits of safety, and had let loose the powers of Evil in the world, in tangible, bodily form.

The remnants of mankind are now living in the 'Last Refuge', a huge mountain-like, metal fortress, guarded by barriers of 'brain-scrubbling' radiation, surrounded and attacked by fearful dinosaur-like monsters, bestial half-human tribes, giant hounds, and, most dreaded of all, invisible, intangible evil forces that can destroy the soul, leaving the body and intelligence unharmed, but possessed by the powers of evil.

The hero, in this dream world, finds he is an ultra-sensitive telepath, such as are born only once in several centuries. He receives mental messages from outside the Refuge, and finds they come from a second Refuge of whose existence there is nothing more than a vague historical tradition. The sender of these messages, Nagni, herself a similar telepath, is, they both realise, the reincarnation of Mirdath, his love of untold eons past.

After some months of mental contact, an agonised appeal for help is sent by Nagni. The power-source of the Lesser Refuge, which has been got-

-ing slowly weaker over the ages, has suddenly failed altogether, and the outer monsters are breaking into the Refuge, and slaughtering the inhabitants.

Driven nearly to madness, the hero sets out from the Great Refuge, to fight his way across hundreds of miles of unexplored darkness, to find his love and bring her back to safety. Against frightful odds, he eventually accomplishes this.

S.F. readers will find the devices used to protect and maintain the Refuge fascinating enough, as also the hero's weapon ... tuned to his own personality, and therefore unusable by anyone else ! The book is handicapped, however, by the author's attempt to write in an artificial archaic style, which is sometimes irritating. However, for oddly convincing love-interest, and wildly exciting adventure, it has few equals in the SF field, while its back-ground of nightmare, and evil-haunted, pitch-dark, frozen loneliness give it an atmosphere all its own.

LAND UNDER ENGLAND by Joseph O'Neill

Gollancz, London, 1935, 7/6

The hero of this book, Anthony Julian, claims descent from one of the last commanders of the Roman garrison, on Hadrian's Wall. There is a family legend that, from time to time, members of it have gone 'down through the Wall' into some underground country, inhabited by descendants of the Roman colonists.

Anthony's father, a monomaniac on this subject, mysteriously disappears when the boy is about nineteen. Some years later, Anthony, who is now a prosperous automobile engineer, finds the one-way entrance to the underground country, by accident.

This consists of an extensive cave-system, not quite dark, since a lot of the vegetation is luminous, and with a copious fauna of lizards, and fish, giant slugs, great spiders, etc. When the Roman colonists were first entombed in this fantastically hostile environment they were almost exterminated, since many of them either went mad or committed suicide.

Then, some genius thought of employing hypnosis to counteract their terror, and, through the systematic use of this for centuries, by the time Anthony encounters them, they have developed into something quite 'other' than ordinary humanity.

Though none of them take any notice of him nor answer him when he

speaks, their first actions are to provide him with a bath and food. They also remove his worn and tattered clothes, which they scrupulously clean and repair, providing him with others, meanwhile. Then he is taken before a 'commander', who observes him intently, and with whom he is able to talk in Latin.

He says he has come in search of his father, but gets the uncomprehending answer 'Why should you wish to find your father?' Eventually, the commander tells him 'You are sick in your mind .. you have only small, personal thoughts, instead of the great universal thoughts we have. You will be taken before the 'Masters of Will and Knowledge', who will re-make your mind'.

The 'Master of Knowledge' proves to be a terrifying compound of detailed knowledge, keen intelligence, and sledgehammer willpower, who tries to invade Anthony's mind, read his thoughts, and dominate his will. Asking after his father, Anthony is told 'We have re-made his mind. There is now no such person as the man who was your father'

The term 'brain-washing' did not exist when this book was written, but when Anthony refuses to let the 'Masters of Knowledge' have domination of his will and mind, they, with good intentions, put him through what is neither more nor less than brain-washing raised to the 'N'th power. There is a horrifying description of the state of semi-insanity to which he is finally reduced. Finding he will die rather than yield, those people, who regard destroying human life as the supreme crime, tell him 'We can find no place for you, as you are untameable. If we let you go, what guarantee is there that you will not return with more of your people, of whom you have told us, and destroy our community ?

If we let you meet this man you say you seek, and you find, as you will, that he is no longer your father; that he neither knows you, nor has any wish to know you, will you then leave our land, and not return?' He consents to this, and is, accordingly, taken to interview the man who has taken the place of 'the man who was your father'

The results of this interview are unexpected by all parties, and are rather more horrible than anything that has gone before. In the end, Anthony, barely surviving an ordeal worse than anything preceding it, is allowed to go. It is quite impossible to return the way he came, but while in one of the uppermost caves, he is found by a hunt terrier that has followed a fox into a 'bottomless' cave, and so makes his way back to daylight.

While this book was meant as political propaganda against the Nazi-Fascist State, it reads as 'psience-fiction' of no mean order, and copies of it are well worth looking out for.

... Arthur R. Weir.

Science-Fiction and Fantasy in Portugal

Science-Fiction, as such, first appeared in Portugal in 1954, little more than four years ago, so we have not yet had time to develop anything of a 'tradition' about it. Of course, in our youth, we read the major works of Verne and Wells. Every Verne novel has been translated into Portuguese, as well as Wells' 'Invisible Man' 'The War of the Worlds' (the greatest SF ever written, in the opinion of many a Portuguese fan) 'The First Men in the Moon' 'The Time Machine' and other classics.

But we have never had a science-fiction 'anthology'. Such names as Olaf Stapledon, Robert Sheckley, Balzer & Wyllie, Damon Knight, A.L. Merritt Chad Oliver, Theodore Sturgeon and Sprague de Camp (the man who tried to make Portuguese the universal language of the future) are almost meaningless to our fans. On our present SF series, here is what was written in comment in 'NOTICIÁRIO', the official organ of the 'CLUBE DE LITERATURA POLICIARIA'

'Portugal, at last, discovers SF. The first, and best series was called 'ESCALAS DO FUTURO'. It published only two books. 'A CIDADE NO TEMPO' (City) by Clifford Simak, and 'A UNIAO DOS UNIVERSOS' (Ceux de Nulle Part) by Francis Carsac. As this series folded, three others were born. Poorest of all was 'ROBOT', imported from Spain. Only an author quite as unknown and poorly gifted as 'Alan Ccmet' could have put out such horrible stuff. Another series, 'CIENCIA E FICÇÃO', was entirely dedicated to Roy Sheldon space-operas, and was very poor. Best of the three, 'ANTECIPAÇÃO', was a translation of the French 'Fleuve Noir . Anticipation' The main authors . Jimmy Guieu and Jean-Gaston Vandel. All three are now dead.

The biggest and most regular of the current series is 'ARCONAUTA' Some sixty good books already printed; many top authors, such as Ray Bradbury, Robert Heinlein, A.E. van Vogt Frederic Brown, C.M. Kornbluth, A.C. Clarke, Pierre Verne Isaac Asimov, Clifford Simak, Curt Siodmak, Alfred Bester, Edmond Hamilton, Murray Leinster, E.G. Tubb, Eric F. Russell Charles Eric Maine, Festus Pragnell, Yves Derméze, R. Sorez and P.A. Hourcy. '

We know very little of such classicists as the French Maurice Renard, J.H. Rosny, Jean Ray, Ernest Perochon, Jacques Sternberg, and others. As an occasional gift from disinterested publishers, we get a few SF titles to enlarge the fan's library; 'ADMIRAVEL MUNDO NOVO' (Brave New World) by Aldous Huxley; '1984' by George Orwell; 'O PORCO TRIUMFANTE' (Animal Farm) by the same author; 'RECORDAÇÕES FANTÁSTICAS' (Souvenirs Fantastiques) by Maurice Sandoz; 'OS MORTOS PODEM VOIAR' (The Case of Charles Dexter Ward) by R.F. Lovecraft; 'HOMEM OU VAMPIRO?' (Dracula) by Bram Stoker, and two detective-ghost stories by Igor B. Maslowsky and Olivier Sechan; 'QUEM MATOU?' (Vous qui n'avez jamais été tués) and 'QUER MORRER COMIGO?' (Voulez-vous mourir avec moi?)

Our Club intends to publish a SF & Fantasy magazine, and some works of (as well as an) science-fiction.

Now, a brief account of original Portuguese SF. In his well-known checklist, Everett Bleiler includes two Portuguese works, two romances of chivalry; 'PALMEIRIM DE INGLATERRA' by Francisco de Moraes, and 'AMADIS DE GAULA' by Jono de Lobeira.

Our first modern S.F. novel, as far as we know, is 'D. 22300' by Amílcar de Mascarenhas. It is a romantic story of the future. Portugal and the Portuguese are its heroes, and, we might proudly say, rightfully so. Another pro-war novel is 'A TRAVÉS DO ESPAÇO' (Through the Universe) by Frederico Cruz. It is an illustrated report of a very improbable trip 'through the Universe'. It was written in 1942.

The post-war period.

1952 - a magazine with a very short life 'GATO PRETO' was partly dedicated to fantasy. It published some stories by well-known authors, but not one by any Portuguese writer.

1955 - The only novel published during this year was 'VIERAM DO INFÉRITO' (They came From Outer Space) by an unknown writer with the pseudonym 'Eric Prince'

1957 - Two short stories in a foreign magazine. Lima da Costa had two humorous short-short stories in the Swiss fanzine 'AILLEURS' (In our opinion, the best fanzine in Europe, edited by Pierre Versins) They were

titled 'VINCI LMS AVANT' (20 Years Before) and 'Flat Gorgon and the Death Rays' Also during this same year, a good novel 'O MENSAJEIRO DO ESPAÇO' (Messenger from Outer Space) by Luis de Mesquita, a story in the Bradbury tradition.

1958 - Another Lima da Costa short story, published in Switzerland 'The Werewolf' Other pieces by this same author are to be published in the French SF magazine 'Fiction', one of the best in Europe, and the Austrian 'Sirius'. The same author has written an excellent article on SF, published by a well-known cultural magazine, and another, about Portuguese fandom and S.F., published by 'Science-Fiction Times'

'LADONAUTA' published 'MUNDO DE VAMPIROS' (I am Legend) the first of Richard Matheson's novels ever published in Portugal.

In recent months another series has appeared, this time a 'fantasy' series. Entitled 'Suspense', its purpose is to introduce the works on the Frankenstein monster, written by Bonoit Bochar. The first two items are.. 'O REGRESSO DE FRANKENSTEIN' (The Return of Frankenstein) and 'OS PASSOS DE FRANKENSTEIN' (The tread of Frankenstein)

A new series has just emerged from a popular publisher. Its title, 'ESPAÇO' (Space) and the first authors to be published will include Tingusa Celany and Andre Tagorell.

ERIC BENTCLIFFE, together with his co-editor TERRY JEEVES, was responsible for three excellent issues of VECTOR. He has been a reader of Science Fiction for many years and, with Terry, is also editor of TRYODE, a well-known 'fanzine' which has been in circulation for some years now. He now writes about something which has been a sore point with many people for quite a while, both writers and readers...

PSIONICS FICTION

by Eric Bentcliffe

X X X

I'm sick to death of 'Psions-Fiction' ... fiction that purports to be science-fiction, and then turns out to be nothing more than some thinly-veiled message of what Psionics Can Do For Us.

I've read Astounding Science Fiction for some fifteen years now, about, and am the proud possessor of a complete file of the magazine from 1938 up to date, so I think I'm talking from a reasonable position. I've also had the utmost admiration for John W. Campbell, Jr. as an editor, until recently, but I think the stage has been reached where I cannot allow his former pre-eminence as an editor to obscure the fact that he is rapidly ruining A.S.F. For me, at least.

It all started with Dianetics and Scientology, but we'll draw a merciful veil over these examples of ecodology, and concentrate on the present bone of contention. Psionics. Understand this, I'm not attacking psionics as a 'science'. There may be something in it, although, personally, I consider it to be a mere re-labelling of the Psi Powers. I am concerned with the fact that psionics is ruining the majority of science-fiction in my favourite s-f magazine.

I'd have no cause to complain if the dissemination of the psionic gospel was confined to the occasional article or editorial. These I could quite easily ignore. It's the 'tainting' of the fiction that bothers me. Once upon a time, the s-f in Astounding could be praised, because the science in the stories was logically extrapolated from the present-day fact or theory (Certainly, all the stories weren't so well written, but the majority were) And, in the few cases where this was not the case .. where an imaginative flier was taken by the author .. one could generally follow the author's premise, which had to be basically logical, to satisfy J.W.C. Jr.

Today, however, things have changed .. and very much for the worse, in my not-so-invaluable opinion. No longer do we find the stories logically worked out. The 'science-fiction' of yesterday has become the new 'psionics-fiction'. Instead of our hero developing a new warp drive from believable premises, he merely rubs two water-diviners together and comes up with a psionic super-drive. Pahaw !

I don't blame the authors for this state of affairs. Naturally, if they know that John W. Campbell, Jr., wants stories with a psionics motif, then that's what they'll write. They're in the business to earn money, after all.

No, I'm afraid that J.W.C., must bear the full responsibility for the current state of affairs.

I'm at a loss to understand why he should allow his hobbyhorses to course into his stories. There have been plenty of examples in the science-fiction field to show that this does not pay.

The most outstanding one was Ray Palmer, and his fascination for the 'Shaver Mystery', and the Flying Saucer Cult. When these two items first started, in article format, they were quite interesting, and in their rightful place. But once they seeped through into the fiction, in, respectively, 'AMAZING STORIES' and 'OTHER WORLDS', those magazines slipped badly, after the initial impetus of the over-interest had gone. Their names are still a bad off-fluvium in the nostrils of s-f readers, as a result of over-indulgence in one theme.

John W. Campbell is a man of considerable intelligence. Surely he must realize, the quickest way way to do a thing to death is to over-plug it ? Psionics in article format (where it belongs) is all right (if you like that sort of thing !) But when psionics begins to dominate the stories, that's another thing. One begins to shudder as each story, started eagerly, ends in a denouement of yet another big triumph for psionics.

Ray Palmer had a reasonably good excuse for the 'Shaver Mystery' and for his hasty leap on to the bandwagon of Flying Saucers. He was building up sales. I doubt whether J.W.C. seriously believes that psionics is aiding him and Astounding Science Fiction to a similar end.

Since the circulation of his magazine is a closely guarded secret, I'd hesitate to hazard a conclusion in this respect. However, one thing I am certain of. If the fiction in Astounding continues to be pseudo-fiction, the magazine is going to lose a great many of its old-time readers, those people who prefer science-fiction.

I think I'll start a campaign for more science-fiction in science-fiction .

... Eric Bootcliffe.

For an example of the opposition point of view, read the 'Dog Concord' letter, on page 31 of this issue.

Incidentally, while we're on the subject of 'letters', and with reference to Sid Birchby's rather peevish comments, may we say, right here, that there isn't going to be a 'letters' column !

Not, that is, unless some of you take the time and trouble to write some letters ! If we don't get 'em, we can't print 'em ! So.. if you're at all interested, let's hear from you. Brickbats, bouquets blessings or blastings, you pick them for yourself.

Criticism, preferably constructive. Hints. Suggestions (so long as they are printable) Jokes, even (see previous limitation) We don't care what, so long as we can read it, and others might want to.

What we can't stand is the long, loud silence ! This is, after all, Your journal. May we expect to hear from you ?

... The Editors.

If things go according to plan, you should have this issue in time for IMAS. In the middle of giving and receiving gifts, why not do yourself a favour that will last all next year ?

RENEW YOUR SUBSCRIPTION ... NOW !

**EPIC HERO
AND THE BEAST**

By Mike Moorcock

However, I have tried to look at it from a non-partisan angle, and I still wind up being very favourably impressed by the whole production.

EPIC HERO (I suspect that The Beast bit was added to the title in order to draw the 'horror' film audiences) is a Russian wide-screen, Techni - cops, sorry - SovColour production. It has a 'U' certificate, for some reason, and runs for about two hours. I say 'for some reason' because this film has more 'horror' in it than a great number of films which are labelled as such. However, the bloodthirsty bits are treated in such a way that it is all part of the fun. But that this film is to be taken lightly, by any means; it must have been as difficult to make as Le Mort d'Arthur (or more aptly Le Chanson du Roland).

It's an epic film about an epic subject and the effects have been excellently done. Here's a list of what's in store for you if you go to see it (as I write, it's appearing at the Continental Cinema, Tottenham Court Road, London): A ghost, a magic sword, a super-hero of super strength, a bad goblin who is known as the Whistling Robber (when he whistles he creates a kind of whirl-wind which sweeps everything and everyone willy-nilly over the set). Also there is a giant eunuch (omissionary of the Villain of the Piece, Tsar Kalin, Tsar of the Tugors - Tartars to us). There is a magic table-cloth which gives its owner anything he needs to eat, Tsar Kalin's throne - a huge round shield supported by sweating extras - the monstrous pile of gold which Kalin exacts from Kiev via his dishonest followers (it reaches about five hundred feet high and the Wicked Tsar sits on top chomking avariciously); the fantastic pyramid of living bodies which measures the same height and is composed entirely of the Tsar's men piling themselves on top of one another so that the Tsar can ride up their backs to get to the top and see Kiev (which he plans to sack) and last, but not by any means least,

the other title role - The Beast. Actually a three-headed dragon which breathes unconvincingly realistic fire and smoke.

Some list, oh? And that's not all, by any means. There are parts of the picture which, due to the translation, it's sub-titled, are unintentionally funny. For instance, Ilyar in the opening of the film is paralysed, he is cured by some passing wise men who give him some Lion Grass and other herbs. He decides to go and help his mother and father in the somewhat arid pastures which they are busily tilling.

Off he goes and begins lifting great tree-trunks out of the ground by their roots, huge boulders he lifts above his head and hurls into the Volga below. A neighbour, standing beside Ilyar's parents, looks at Ilyar unconcernedly and turns to the parents. "I see your son has recovered..." he mumbles before he resumes ploughing.

The typically British understatement if ever there was one.

The thing which impressed me was the terrific national pride these Russians seem to have. Every chance every character gets (apart from Tsar Kalin and his boys, of course) they go off into rhapsodies about RRrrrrussia, Mother RRrrrrussia (or Rusa, if you're a purist). Doesn't detract from the rest of it, mind you. Also the Powers That Be in the Soviet have allowed some religious elements into the picture. Considering the Prince Vladimir who is Boss of Kiev in the picture was later canonised and is now Russia's national saint, I think these same PTB considered this permissible.

I could wind up by saying that this film is an epic to end all epics. In fact, I've said it, and that statement goes. It's a fantasy adventure to please everyone who enjoyed UNKNOWN (and who didn't?) and the battle-scenes and the camera shots are magnificent. It's a well-directed picture with some very imaginative production and the best animation I've ever come across. I doubt whether anyone in England or the U.S.A. would dare make anything like it. Look what The Morte d'Arthur became - 'Knights of the Round Table' starring Robert Taylor!

It's not my policy to give synopses of films, I don't consider this reviewing anything, so I'll just say that I can thoroughly recommend EPIC HERO. If you go to see it, you won't be disappointed.

X X X

FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION - New British Edition. Review of No. 1.

This, in effect, is The Best of F & SF in a 2/- edition. A glancing from many back numbers of the American edition - with a superb line-up including Poul Anderson, Fritz Leiber, Alfred Bester and Ray Bradbury.

The publishers, apparently, intend to take their pick from the USA F&SF booklog and then, after they've caught up a bit, start reprinting complete issues. This, I think, is a very good idea. Why recommend it, F&SF recommends itself. Buy it - it's well-worth two bob.

Like Moorcock.

Letters

Dear Mike,

Many thanks for Vector No 5, which arrived a short while back. The cover and artwork are excellent, and it's a pity that the duping side had to let you down. Let's hope you have that licked by next issue, and that you find an editor. I'm afraid I can't take the job, as I'm now tied to Erg and Triods, and the Secretaryship of the Sheffield Tape Society.

You had a nice variety of material in No 5, but my favourite was 'S-F. for Junior' with its nostalgia of boyhood reading ... but what about the 'Bulls-eye', a blue-paper printed 'two-penny-blood', which had at least one fantastic story in each issue? And the Boy's Magazine which often ran S-F stories? Second favourite was Bob Richardson's 'Confab'.

I enjoyed all the other sections, too, but, on the other hand, Ken Bulmer did make ONE remark that I can't allow to pass without comment. Page 36 "Apart from the bad timing, Easter is not a good time for a CON .." Now who says so? Ken Bulmer, obviously, but as he usually toddles off to Ireland to see Willis at Easter, how does he know? Presumably he means it is a bad time for Ken Bulmer, and should be changed. Much as I like Ken, I do not agree that Easter is a bad time. For practical purposes there are two CON times in a year ... Whit and Easter. For 90% of fandom, New Year and Xmas are out, and getting ten to take time out from summer holidays to give to S.F. is impossible .. as witness the CON-Vac scheme.

In a straight choice between Easter and Whit, Easter has it, every time. The idea of changing to Whit has been raised at nearly every Easter-Con, and by the same little group. Each time, the idea has been defeated, and Easter given the majority vote. It happened at Brum. Easter was voted but when the news was published, the date had been changed back to Whit. It is now back to Easter again, after much campaigning.

I don't know all the reasons for people preferring Easter, but there is one obvious one. Most people (not all) get Friday and Monday off, plus the regular Saturday. This gives a full weekend to the festivities, as compared with the Saturday start of Whit. Whatever the other reasons may be, it is abundantly clear that Easter is favourite, SO WHY THIS MOVE TO CHANGE?

Guess that's it for now, Mike. Hope you find a new editor for Vector.

Best wishes ... Terry Jeeves.

Dear Sandra,

It says here, all correspondence about Vector to be addressed to you. Not without misgivings, then, I am sending you a few lines about V.5, which may be useful for a future letter-column. The misgivings arise from doubt that there ever will, in fact, be a future letter-column, with the general air of 'Avidism' that seems to hang over the B.S.F.A. and especially this chore of turning out an O/O.

Be that as it may, V.5. is the best issue yet of a sadly soggy journal, and the cover, by J. Gauthorn, is worthy of colour. Do you happen to know if he does any colour work? If not, he should.

Weir's 'File 13½' displays unpleasant hints of Gallupism, up with which I will not put. I refer to his testy attitude to those members of the

B.S.F.A. who chose not to disclose their hobbies when applying for membership. May I say, as one of those due for wrist-slapping, I chose very deliberately not to comply with this singularly fugg-headed request, which serves no purpose, and is nobody's business but mine. Not that I have any hobbies to be ashamed of, save SF ! But these days, I try to ignore pollsters whenever possible, and I found it very easy in this case.

How charming to read among the list of new members the name of a Mr Willis of Belfast. I have often wondered if there were any fans in Northern Ireland, and it's nice to find the B.S.F.A. discovering them, at last. This letter is more than long enough. Regards .. Sid Birchby.

Editor .. Vector,

'Psi' is in the air just now, with some 'against', some 'for'. As it happens, the 'anti' faction has had all the voice, so far. And what is it all about ? Leaving out the more obvious arguments, which are sheerly 'smoke-screen' (I can't believe that so many could get so worked up about whether a certain mag sells well or not, or by being bored by a 'gimmick' After all, 'aliens' have been a gimmick for more than thirty years, and no one cries about them !) suppose we get down to the basics of this thing.

Down there is the root question ... "is 'psi' science ?" And that question, as it stands, is nonsense. Those who delude themselves into believing that they are asking it should think again. When 'phlogiston' was currently 'in', 'Haat-energy' was nonsense; sub-atomic particles were, once incredible; rockets and space-flight used to be wildly ridiculous, as was faster-than-sound flight .. or hypnosis (read about Mesmer, sometime !)

But 'psi' phenomena don't fit with current scientific theory, you may say. True. Neither did Darwin's theory. Nor, currently, does the binding energy in the atomic nucleus. So ? The planet Mercury doesn't act according to Newton's laws. So ?

Good SF, as we should all recall, with faint pride, has always been a few (hundred) years in front of orthodox science. Now, large areas of orthodox science are moving in on 'psi', convinced that there is something there. Some of their trial experiments are reminiscent of old 'S.F.' stuff. This has happened before. S.F. has often set the pattern for speculation.

So what are you afraid of, now ? Is it that soon someone will make a major breakthrough on 'psi', and then the 'forces of evil' will be located on the world ? Think of Alamogordo, of Hiroshima, of the creeping rotting death from radio-active fallout ! Can your 'forces of evil' top that prospect ?

Not that I'm holding a brief for 'psi' stories ad lib. But well-written, intelligent stories, no matter what 'new' discoveries they use, yes please ! And those of you who weep because a certain (scientifically trained) editor chooses to run his own (interesting) experiments with 'psi' should look again. Your superstitions are showing.

Cordially .. Don Concord.

STOP PRESS

The winner of the Trans-Atlantic Fund Fund is

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Any member who will/coming to the Convention with valuable equipment is advised that the Convention Committee is taking out an insurance policy against loss. Anyone who wishes to have his or her equipment included in this policy should write to our agent Mr. John Newman, 30 Bulstrode Road, Hounslow, Middlesex, listing the serial number and value of any camera, typewriter, duplicator, or any other valuable and attractive item. The Committee will not be held responsible for any item that the member has failed to protect.

Will fan magazine editors please copy?

A Newsletter will be issued in a few days giving details of the Convention, including bookings and here to write for membership cards, etc.