

VECTOR

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Science Fiction Association

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Illustrations by Ian Aldridge and Gerald Kirsch

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This is the magazine of all members of the British Science Fiction Association, and all members are cordially invited to submit articles on all aspects of their hobby to the editor, to comment - preferably constructively - on this magazine or any aspect of the Society, and to advertise their wants or anything for disposal. Those members publishing amateur magazines are requested to send copies thereof to the B.S.F.A. Library. And don't forget that the 1963 Easter Convention will be held at Peterborough. Contact Ken Slater, c/o Fantast (Medway) Ltd., 75 Norfolk Street, Wisbech, Cambs. for all details.

EDITORIAL



You won't be getting much in the way of an editorial from me, this time. Not if you are expecting me to give you the latest news of SF and the allied subjects, that is. I do have information to give you, though, on some different matters, and not much space in which to impart it.

First, let me apologise to you all for the lateness of this issue of VECTOR; it is entirely my fault. For

the best part of a year now I've been expecting the local council to move me from here. This event looms ever nearer, so that I've been spending all my spare time packing in readiness. Thinking I would have been gone from here long before now, I delayed writing this to you, intending to give you my new address, to save money as much as anything else. I still don't know to where I'm being moved, or exactly when. In any case, the Friday night meetings have been stopped. I can't take the risk of having any of you come to town for nothing. You wouldn't get much of a welcome out of an empty house.

Most of you will have heard by now that Peter Mabey, our Librarian, has moved from Cheltenham and got a new job much nearer London. This has been good for us, as it means we see him more often than usual, but it means he had to give up his work on the library. Until recently the work has been done by John Humphries, with help from others in the Cheltenham Circle. Now John has been moved. We are moving all the books etc. to Liverpool where the scheme will be run by two of our younger members, John Nash and Joe Kevin. You are asked to hold on to anything you may already have from the library until further notice, and don't please, try to get my further orders filled until you have been contacted. Magazines and fanzines will be kept and administered by John Nash, 5, Whitehead Road, Garston, Liverpool 19. Books (including pts) will be dealt with by: Joe Kevin, 77, College Road North, Blundell Sands, Liverpool 23. Unavoidably, it means that all library services will be suspended until the contents of the shelves can be transported from Cheltenham to Liverpool, which will be as soon as possible. On your behalf I thank these two lads for what they are doing. If they hadn't come to our rescue it was quite an onerous task that we would have had to dismantle and sell what is an extensive collection. Here's to you, boys, and Good Luck.

I would like to remind you all that it is getting near time for renewal of memberships. You send your money to our Treasurer who's name and address are on the front page beside the 'Contents'. It does help if you get these in as early as possible. Thank you.

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THE 'DOC WEIR' MEMORIAL AWARD.

Those of you who were in Harrogate for the Convention this year, will remember there was some discussion and agreement that we should institute an award to commemorate the too short time Arthur Ross Weir - better known to us as 'Doc' - spent among us. Had he lived he would have made a name for himself in our small world of Science Fiction and Fantasy. Your Committee had two aims in view. The first was to perpetuate the name of Doc and the good work he did in the short time we knew him, the second was to ensure as far as possible that

the award would be capable of continuance without repeated requests.

A Goblet has been purchased, and this will be engraved with the title of the award. Each year, at the annual Convention, this will be ceremoniously presented to the winner, together with an illuminated scroll. The goblet itself will be preserved by the BSFA. In this way, it will be ensured that there is no added expense, either to you or the BSFA. The details on how to nominate and vote are as follows:-

- 1) you must have paid your 5/- Convention Membership.
- 2) All votes must be in to the existing BSFA Committee before noon on the Saturday of Convention weekend.
- 3) your nomination is your vote.
- 4) one vote per Convention Member.
- 5) no proxy votes.

Simple, isn't it? Anyone known to you, either as a fan or as a member of the BSFA, is entitled to be nominated, whether in this or any other country. Voting forms will appear in the next VECTOR and in the Convention Programme Book. Only these forms will be recognised, except in the case of overseas fan who can use the write-in method. Please send all votes to the Treasurer, Jill Adams. Now is a good time to start thinking about your choice for the Award. I've already made mine, but that's a secret.

All for this time. Happy reading.

F.H.A.

NEW MEMBERS:

M.334	George James Billing, The Fines, Rushmore Hill, Knockholt, Sevenoaks. KENT.
M.335	Miss Valerie Ann Purnell, 57, Rowner Close, Rowner Estate, Bridgemery, Gosport. HANTS.
A.335	Paul John Street, Maitland House, 114, Liverpool Road, St. Crosby, Liverpool 23. LANCs.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

M.43	Audrey Eversfield, 18 Rue Nungesser Et Coli, Paris 16 ^e .
M.3	Archie Mercer, c/o 13C, London Road (Basement), Cheltenham. GLOS.
M.18	Peter Mabey, Murgan Guest House, 54, Wolsey Road, East Molesey. SURREY.

RENEWAL:

M.337	Frank Herbert, 104, Rodden Road, Frome, Somerset.
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JOHN RUSSELL FEARN

THE FORGOTTEN MASTER

PART
III

AN ESTIMATION BY PHILIP HARBOTTE

Part 2 -- KINGPIN OF THE PULPS

The late thirties saw a change in magazine trends, set by Campbell, who towards the end of 1937 took over from Orlin Tremaine as editor of *ASTOUNDING*. Campbell began to make his presence felt as he cleared the backlog of stories bought under the old reign, and began to remodel the magazine along more adult lines. To him, this meant the cessation of the thought-variant and associated stories. He also considered the spate of Weinbaum imitations to be a retrograde step. In other words, Campbell was against the very type of material that Fearn had been selling to the magazine.

He wrote to Fearn and suggested changes in style. Fearn was piqued at this new turn of events. He had built up a following as a producer of fantastic stories. Should he throw it all overboard? Whilst he was thinking things over, something occurred which changed the whole situation. Teck Publications sold *AMAZING* to Ziff-Davis.

In charge of *AMAZING* under the the new ownership was prominent fan Ray Palmer, who also wrote sf under the pseudonyms of A. R. Steber, Luke Campbell, Palmer circulated the the better authors, outlining his requisites. With these he laid the foundations for vastly improved stories, demanding better story quality and human interest. However, he also insisted on fast readability, and even stream-lined stories before publication, introducing footnotes to expand some censored discourse. Whilst beneficial in some ways, it was not really conducive to good literature. Ziff-Davis also doubled the rate of payment to contributors, and treated readers to a back cover.

Fearn was quick to realise his ability to produce stories conforming to the Palmer policy, yet which still embodied a lot of his own style and personal preferences. He began to contribute a steady stream of material to *AMAZING*; none to *ASTOUNDING*. Perhaps it was this decision which has led to Fearn's virtual oblivion today. Later anthologists have shown a definite bias to the latter magazine, I suggest that they have done so in order to present work by authors still writing in their day. In this way they have reckoned to achieve higher sales than with actually selecting the best stories of earlier years.

As it happened, Fearn's first stories of 1938 were published in *ASTOUNDING*. January was indeed a collector's issue, with a novel and two short stories by Fearn. Campbell had evidently decided to clear them as soon as possible, in an attempt to placate the author, who, however, remained intractable. There would be no more Fearn stories in *ASTOUNDING*.

Three stories necessitated yet another pen name, and 'Polton Cross' was born. "The Mental Ultimate", by Cross, was a type of sf which Fearn handled particularly well - the personal narration. In these stories, the narrator is made to fall victim to some scientific nemesis or phenomenon; with Fearn it was usually some uncanny evolutionary process. Such stories have later become an established branch of sf writing, and it would be true to say that Fearn was one of its pioneer exponents.

The other short, "Whispering Satellite" was an interesting, though minor effort, in the Weinbaum vein. Ironically, the one original idea - that of musical plant-life - was later used by Clifford Simak in "Ogre", published in ASTOUNDING in 1944. Of course, "Ogre" found its way into an anthology.

Fearn's novel, "Red Heritage", was another spacial extravaganza. The exuberant ideas in it - chief amongst which was the transference of oceans and atmosphere from one planet to another - was used over again many times in later years. Suffice it to say that it embodied the speculative and explanatory angles analysed in my previous article, on a grand scale. It is also notable for the fact that human emotions engendered the plot, i.e., revenge. Strictly speaking, the motivators were alien, in this case the vanished martians, but in their thought processes they were almost entirely human.

The February issue contained "The Degenerates" by Polton Cross. It had something of the Weinbaum touch as regards locale, but in it was an experimental mystery angle which was Fearn's own; they were competently handled. This was the last story he contributed to ASTOUNDING.

Over at THRILLING WONDER his somewhat revolutionary "Lords of 9016" appeared in April. The new development lay in the science being employed merely as a background, as subordinate to the human interest. With such a technique the author is free to rework any 'old' sf plot, his handling of the human interest providing a new slant. All this may seem a trifle pedestrian today, when it is standard practise, but it was still largely unknown at the time Fearn was writing.

The old ideas in this case were chiefly time travel, and giant ants of supreme intelligence. Fearn cleverly linked up the two to produce time-travelling ants, which was almost a new slant in itself! Scientific discussions were kept to a minimum, the dominant elements being the adventures of two men in the underworld of the ants, and their link-up with a beautiful girl from the future - for plot purposes the daughter of the human ruler of that time.

June 1938 marked Fearn's first appearance in the new AMAZING, with two long stories, "Master of Golden City" and "A Summons From Mars", the first one under the byline of Polton Cross. Ziff-Davis initially favoured a slight horror element and the Cross story duly supplied it. An interesting idea was the conception of the Sleepers - an alien race who had achieved perfection, and placed themselves in suspended animation so that they could roam the universe in a dream-like mental state. Leigh Brackett took this theme for her novel in STARTLING some years later, the oft-reprinted "Shadow over Mars".

In "A Summons From Mars" Eric Sanders is a young recluse living with an old manservant. The reason for their isolation is Sander's intensive radio research with Mars. At length he picks up a message from a Martian woman, Yana.

She tells him that she is the last survivor of the race, who were wiped out when Eric's father made the first landing on the planet some 20 years earlier. Although Gerald Sanders died from the journey, his instrument cases had brought with them terrestrial germs which caused a fatal disease amongst the martians. Yana, a young child at the time, was undergoing a standard operation and had been placed in suspended animation. Slowly recovering, she wakes to a hospital of the dead. A very similar plot was used by Fredric Brown many years later for "The Last Martian" - which has been both reprinted and televised.

Introduced into the story was the mysterious girl angle which Fearn was to put to good use in innumerable stories. Yana demands that Eric becomes her mate in order to atone for the disaster.

But the situation is complicated when Eric falls in love with a girl visitor, Sonia Benson. Love or duty? Eric wavers from one to the other, but is finally decided to go through with the interplanetary 'marriage'. To this end, following instructions from Mars, he operates to adapt his metabolism to the Martian ideal. Sick at heart, he imagines the martian as a revolting gargoyle. Devotees of Philip Jose Farmer are hereby advised that their favourite's astonishing 'new' plot of interplanetary relations was devised by Fearn 25 years ago.

Such are the machinations of pulp editors, however, that in the denouement, Yana turns out to be none other than Sonia, and things end up satisfactory to both sides. The surprise ending is legitimate though, because it serves to resolve several loose ends and shaly premises earlier in the yarn.

Also in June, "Wings Across The Cosmos" appeared in THRILLING WONDER, under the pen name of Pulton Cross. It was a story told in the first person once again, and it marks the peak of Fearn's short stories, not merely in plot, but in the sheer quality of the writing. This was perceived by no less than Groff Conklin, who included it in his notable collection of A TREASURY OF SCIENCE FICTION ten years later.

Instead of extravagant writing in order to achieve effect, Fearn employed his facility for effective and incredibly apt detail, simply written. The narrator, Amos Latham, discovers an object resembling the half shell of a walnut lying at the bottom of a neatly drilled five-foot hole in his best sweet pea bed. Assuming it to be of meteoric origin, Latham is yet utterly perplexed when he is unable to move it - the thing, though tiny, is immensely heavy. He calls in scientific advice, in the shape of a physicist friend, Bradley.

Bradley has the foresight to bring along a powerful breakdown truck, complete with a crane. The 'walnut' is hoisted on to a huge stone block that had once been part of a wall at the bottom of the garden. Bradley guesses that the object must be made of neutronium, and the author again made use of the writings of Eddington. They decide to arrange for the meteorite section of a museum to pick it up. On departing, Bradley promises to arrange this, but points out that it may be some days since he already has a special job awaiting his attention.

Latham is curious, and that night he goes to inspect the thing. He finds it to be alive. Then occurs an incident which, if badly written, would have been absurd, but is instead most effectively and concisely put:

"I shall never know if it was impulse or plain curiosity that prompted me to extend an ingratiating hand towards it. Not knowing what type of intelligence the thing possessed that seemed the only way I could show friendship.

"A second later I regretted it. The tiny head shot forward toward my outstretched hand, faster than the striking paw of a cat. Before I knew it the creature's terrible mouth had scissored open and shut. There was a momentary gleam of small, needle-pointed teeth, then I was gazing at a numbed, crimsoned finger from which the top, to the first knuckle, had been completely severed."

That night Latham has a strange dream. He beholds a vast, airless plain

under alien constellations. The creature is there, surrounded by the dim outlines of a deserted city ...

"Suddenly I was awake, feverishly hot, with a name burning in my brain, the oddest, most astounding name. It sounded like - Yithan Kan."

In the morning the creature substantiates an extra-sensory contact, and Latham learns that she is the lone female survivor of an extinct race. Living chiefly on radiations, they were wiped out by the sudden influx of an abnormal radiation, a perfect cosmic Black Plague. When the disease stopped, only Yithan Kan was left. Locating after many years the nearest source of life - earth - she embarked on an incredible journey: -

"Yithan Kan seemed to come to a decision. Her head and legs folded inside her shell-like body. She generated gravity neutralisation as simply as a spider spins its web, and hurtled bullet-like into the swirling dusty emptiness above.."

Her purpose begins to take shape. With the bite, she had injected strange energies which began to change Latham into a being identical with herself save in the matter of sex. The eerie transformation is cleverly underwritten in such a way as to sound completely convincing. Intent on a meal, Latham reaches for a tin of beans with his injured hand:

"The can felt like pulp in my grasp - I found myself staring in amazement as juice and squashed beans spurted from the cracks in the tin, so tightly had I gripped it! I doubt if a hammer could have flattened it more effectively. I dropped the battered can in stupefied horror, then looked at my hand. It wasn't scarred or cut by the can's sharp edges - only weighted, almost without feeling, horribly numb. I flexed my fingers that I could hardly feel - all save the injured one which wouldn't move at all."

Gradually, not before the author has outlined Eddington's theory that we are but a "fortuitous concourse of atoms in the shape of a man", Latham becomes a tiny, densely heavy alien being. Yithan Kan's dominance becomes complete. In this story we see clearly the author's subconscious longing to meet a woman who matches, and outstrips, his own intelligence. At the time the story was written, Fearn was unmarried.

"I am no longer an Earth being, for I am not breathing - only absorbing radiations. The entity of Amos Latham has gone and instead I am - What?"

"At last I grasp the purpose of Yithan Kan's visit. I can feel her mental radiations coming to me, and with those radiations the faint left-over traces of my mind evince a certain admiration for the nobility, the relentless purpose, of her aim.

"For the perpetuation of her race and science she needs a mate - a male.. She needs me...and I need her! I know I do, I feel it. She is compelling to me now - fascinating. Our children on that far distant world beyond Sirius will carry on the heritage of a race entirely eliminated excepted for this indomitable one - Yithan Kan. Afterwards, the nucleus of a new race, a reaching upwards toward achievement.

"I must go to Yithan Kan. Earth no longer holds me. At will I can, and shall, leave it behind - wing across the cosmos with Yithan Kan to her distant planet

"I shall go. I must go. Now!"

In its plot outline, this story was similar to "A Summons From Mars", yet how different the two treatments. The AMAZING story was adroit, but it fell far short of the Cross story, which evinced a depth and quality of writing that

Fearn was rarely allowed to reach again. With the Yithan Kan story, Fearn was writing more or less as he wanted. At that time, **THRILLING WONDER** could not match the rates of **AMAZING**, and its editors were only too glad to accept stories from leading authors.

The stigma of Weinbaum imitation against Thornton Ayre still rankled with Fearn, who prided himself upon his original ideas. Presently he came up with the idea of webwork, that is, several strands of mystery woven into a story. The mystery story is one of the purest forms of sf, and it was surprising that few, if any, authors had hit upon it. Fearn embarked on a series of webwork stories, which he sold at first to **AMAZING**. Thornton Ayre went on to become Fearn's most popular byline.

The first of the 'new' Ayre stories, "Locked City", appeared in the October 1938 issue. It told of the rebellion on earth against a dictatorship; a rebellion that failed. By a logical piece of plot contrivance, Fearn had the leaders of the revolt, Rod Caleb, his wife Eva, and a young chemist Boris Rengard, banished to Mars on a one-way rocket.

They arrive safely, discovering a vast shaft going thirty miles down. Flying down it with the remaining fuel in the ship, they encounter weird natural suns. This was almost certainly derived from Edgar Rice Burroughs, who was then a powerful figure in the fantasy world.

The mystery element is introduced in that there is a silent, seemingly deserted scientific metropolis on the cavern floor. Throughout the city is a system of cultivated lakes and streams. The three exiles, completely without provisions of any kind, run forward impulsively to drink from a nearby stream. Rengard gets there first, and drinks deeply, but before the other two can follow suit, they are interrupted by the arrival of seven small figures, moving timidly towards them:

"Rod stared at them, blinked as he saw that in their slim-fingered hands they held the melon fruits, extended forward as though in the form of a gracious offering. The feet of the little creatures, encased in soft, vegetable-like shoes, hardly made any sound on the mossy turf.

"Why, they're - they're only kids! Rengard cried. 'They're not even fully developed yet!'"

The Martian children, by pantomime, take them on a tour of the otherwise deserted city. They discover it to be a veritable scientific powerhouse. The mystery deepens when they find that all the machines are inactive, and evidently the keys to their operation are on a massive central switchboard fitted with seven master locks.

They set about learning the Martian language from the children, and to this end Rengard works with a relentless energy. Indeed he seems to have become endued with genius. By logical stages, they uncover some of the mysteries. The new slant on the old plot of vanished Martians is worth examination.

Forced underground by the atmosphere expiring on the surface, they constructed canals from the poles leading down into the cavern. For ages, the race lived below, until even the canals dried up as the polar ice caps receded. However, the water balance in the cavern had by that time been fixed.

But during the ages, as the atmosphere thinned out, something happened that the Martians did not suspect. Intense radiations from the sun, unhindered by the atmosphere, reacted on the canal waters. These ceaseless rays gradually produced electrolysis in the Martian water. The difference was never noticed, chiefly because there is no difference in taste.

Heavy water is called such because it has more electrons than normal water. The solar radiations broke down the water's oxygen and hydrogen, and left a residual isotope: heavy water. Little by little it spread through the entire water supply.

The water speeded up the body's molecular activity. Drinking it gave what seemed to be an extremely good state of health, a sharpening of the mentality amounting to genius. With this genius, they built the city and fixed its machinery, until they discovered it was not anabolism they had got, but extreme ketabolism. They were burning up, living at a furious rate of energy, cramming entire masses of knowledge into a short time. At last the body succumbed to the telescoped evolution, broke down into old age and death. In a dramatic scene, Rengard, in his turn, dies an old man. Caleb and his wife were fortunate in that the children were able to convey earlier to them by dumb-show not to drink the water.

In order to preserve their heritage, the last Martians created the children synthetically. Embedded in their minds were certain instructions and commands... including seven separate combination codes to the locks. Upon reaching maturity, the seven - who lived entirely on the fruit - would by common consent unlock the city. Learning this, Caleb and his wife got the children to open it up then. With its super-science and machines, they are able to travel back and destroy the dictatorship on their home planet.

"Secret of the Ring" which followed in November rocketed Ayre to the top. Once more the solid, mysterious plot. Sound characterisation, with several plot twists, many of them embodying actual scientific facts, proved an irresistible combination to the readers, who voted it into first place ahead of Weinbaum's posthumous serial. Four years later the story was again printed, as the first in a series of "AMAZING Classics".

The following year Fearn dominated the magazine with stories by himself, Ayre and Cross. AMAZING took on a new life. With the April issue, they inaugurated their policy of awarding an extra \$0 dollars to the author whose story was voted best in the issue by the readers. Fearn had an astonishing record:-

April: "World Without Women" by Thornton Ayre - first place
May: "Secret of the Buried City" by J. R. Fearn - second place
June: "World Without Length" by Polton Cross - first place
August: "World Beneath Ice" by Polton Cross - first place

All of these stories contained unique ingredients, and throughout many of them ran the theme of the supreme woman, such as Phyllis Bradman in "Secret of the Buried City". With Ayre and Cross, Fearn established precedents, built up a solid reputation. But what was almost unbelievable, and still largely unknown today, is that these pseudonyms played only a part of his career; in actual fact, he employed at least five more as he covered the field of the American pulps. In the three years '38, '39, '40, he had the distinction of appearing in no less than five of the first issues of new magazines, and also in subsequent issues of six others. At the same time he contributed several weird or straight mystery stories to other pulps, such as DEFECTIVE MYSTERY.

He might truly be said to have earned himself the title of Kingpin of the Pulps - remarkable, surely, for an English author.

When SCIENCE FICTION, edited by Charles Hornig, appeared in March 1939, Fearn wrote for it three specially-commissioned stories, and three new pen names were created. John Cotton, with "Outlaw of Saturn", Dennis Clive, with "Valley of Pretenders", and Ephraim Winiki with "Leeches from Space". Then a fourth, Don Passante with "Moon Heaven" in the second issue.

To a certain extent, Fearn emulated Weinbaum again with some of these names - and in "Moon Heaven" I believe he surpassed him - and then, as with Ayre, produced brand new slants with their very next stories! Especially so was the case of John Cotton. His later "After Doomsday" and "Onslaught from Below" rate amongst the finest stories of the day. This is not only my opinion, but was shared at the time by such famed names as Isaac Asimov.

In his long letter published in the November 1940 FUTURE FICTION - which again contained three stories by Fearn - Asimov enthused:

"I began reading "After Doomsday", and for the hour I spent on it, I was a kid again. Don't ask me to analyse the yarn; I enjoyed it too much to take it apart. All I know is that the writing was so smooth, it slid down my gullet with nary a hitch. Characterisation was fine, and the love interest was handled beautifully - Asimov says so!

"It's worth something to me to read a yarn like this these days. One that will make up for the seventeen issues of punk stuff, read merely out of loyalty and habit. "After Doomsday" takes up an honored position in my list of classics - I repeat, classics."

In the same issue author Basil Wells wrote; "Cotton had a really fine story, including the human element that so many authors forget."

No less brilliant was Cotton's next story "Onslaught from Below" in that same November issue. This yarn took up where, two years earlier, "Wings Across the Cosmos" had left off. There was a compelling atmosphere about the story, a choice of detail and style that was at once arresting and gripping. The opening scene in the story was masterly. Alan Shay motors up to a cabin in the Black Hills on a vacation. He is surprised to find it occupied by a gobbing woman. Gently, he tries to engage her in conversation, without much success...

"Won't you tell me what is wrong?"

"My-f-father-" she choked, and could say no more.

He waited for a moment for her to continue, then saw she would not be able. Hunting accident, he thought. He looked at the object she was holding so tightly to her breast. It was small and black.

"What is that?" he asked with the notion of getting her to talk of something else.

"My-f-father-" she wept and lifted the object from her breast so that he could see that it was a black figurine, a tiny statuette not more than six inches in height. It seemed to be a representation of a man, but it was so dark in the cabin that he could not tell for sure.

He stepped to the table, lighted the lantern, then turned to look again. He gasped, and stooped to peer closer. It was exquisitely done - a tiny black figure of a man. But the pose was indescribably horrible. It was fear!... greater fear than Shay had ever thought possible. The tiny figure was that of a crouching man, turned half-away, with one arm raised to ward off some terror. The teeth were bared, eyes horribly distended, and the face was rigid with fear of some escapable menace.

"God! Whose is it?" he whispered.

"M-my father -"

"Then your father is a great artist," Shay said sincerely. "What is his name? That's the best work I've ever seen. A person could swear that it was alive!"

A shrill chattering of mad hysterical laughter escaped her lips; she was laughing uncontrollably while tears streamed from her eyes.

"This is my father," she shrieked.

The four new pseudonyms were confined to stories in FUTURE and SCIENCE FICTION, and two of the Olive stories were later reprinted in the well-known series of SCIENCE FICTION CLASSICS booklets.

The early years of the war saw Fearn appearing in all the leading magazines experimenting with various techniques all the time. As Thornton Ayre he wrote a series of stories around a scientific detective, Brutus Lloyd, beginning with "The Man Who Saw Two Worlds" in the January 1940 AMAZING, and he also created his character The Golden Amazon with four stories in FANTASTIC ADVENTURES. Other notable fiction under the Ayre pseudonym included "Mystery of the Martian Pendulum" written with Raymond Palmer for AMAZING, and "World in the Wilderness" in SCIENCE FICTION for June, 1941. The latter had as its theme the destruction of all life on Earth, and told of two men who returned from space to find the Earth deserted of every living soul. Their reactions to this, and how they eventually uncover the cosmic agency responsible, form part of one of Fearn's most ingenious stories. The ending, where the last man alive discovers his former fiancée in a deserted, snow-swept city, is at once as moving as it is skilfully contrived. Ayre's "Vampire Queen" in the Fall, 1942 PLANET, was a similarly poignant story, with a strong feminine element. Fearn was never afraid of having his characters die when logic demanded it, and his stories were all the more realistic for this, setting them well above the general level of pulp fiction of the day. Outstanding examples of this, apart from "Vampire Queen", were "Twilight of the Tenth World" (PLANET, winter, 1940) and, as Bolton Cross, "The Man From Hell" in the November 1939 FANTASTIC ADVENTURES.

Many of the new publications which were springing up had former prominent fans as their editors, and Fearn at times obliged them by the writing of stories along the same lines as earlier ones of his that they had applauded. In THRILLING WONDER for June, 1939, Frederick Pohl wrote:

"In the February issue, "World Without Chance" was great. a better story than any other in any science fiction magazine for the past year. It was based on a theme which has been insufficiently exploited for fictional purposes: that of entropy, the most basic of functions. Author Cross deserves a permanent niche in the s-f Hall of Fame..."

It was no coincidence that "Prisoner of Time" again as Cross, was published in SUPER SCIENCE for May 1942, with which Pohl was then associated. The story, a lead short novel, was based on entropy.

Fearn's output of stories during the height of the war, and their quality and variedness, is nothing short of amazing. Although he was only able to put out two stories in 1942 - as opposed to ten the previous year - he re-emerged in the summer of 1944 to contribute a steady stream of short stories and novels to THRILLING WONDER and its companion STARTLING, as well as being represented in the British market which emerged at the end of the war. These stories, which formed the final surge in Fearn's threefold dominance in the pulps, and were climaxed by a further anthology inclusion, will be discussed in my concluding article.

END OF PART TWO

BOOK REVIEW

GENUS HOMO. By L. Sprague de Camp and P. Schuyler Miller (Berkley/Thorpe & Porter, 2s. 6d.)

This is an old title, written in the forties, published between covers in the fifties, and now making another bow - a somewhat stiff bow.

A coach load of people climb out of a tunnel and find the world about them vastly changed. Small wonder; they have been asleep for a million years. After presenting us with this bit of data, Genus Homo has nothing else quite so startling to offer.

However, it jogs along pleasantly and unambitiously. The party comes across giant mammals that have evolved from present-day species like chipmunks, and encounters with them are interleaved with de Camp jokes. Perhaps the two authors wrote alternate chapters.

Best part of the book is when civilised gorillas capture the humans and put them in their zoo. This is sensible fun, though I regretted that the gorillas should have acquired the vile genus homo habit of smoking. I did like the gorilla with a monocle, and the Swiftian comment of a gorilla historian on the history of man: "Apparently they spent most of their time killing each other because of differences in their beliefs about what you call supernatural beings, whose existence none of them was ever able to prove, or else to further the interests of a few who dominated the rest, and whose orders the rest obeyed for no reason that I can see."

In the end, the whole thing is rounded off by a war between gorillas and baboons in which the men take part. It is as if the authors thought this up at the last moment and said, "Oh yes, that sounds fun - let's write that!" Such amateurishness becomes oddly beguiling, possibly because the authors seem more interested in amusing each other than in having any damn nonsense about pandering to a hypothetical reader.

Brian W. Aldiss.

LITTLE FUZZY By H. Beam Piper (Avon/Thorpe and Porter, 2. 6d.)

Let's suppose that a science fiction author wanted his work to gain the attention of a wider audience than it had been reaching. How could he do it?

He could elaborate his natural style until the surface of his prose sparkled. That was how Ray Bradbury, with a friendly word from Christopher Isherwood, did it. Unfortunately, the surface glitter was achieved later at the expense of story content.

He could write on themes that were important and current. This Wells generally did in his sf. H bomb novels, from "Shadow on the Hearth" to "On The Beach" have this sort of attraction.

He could write an ordinary sf novel, but in terms that would render it acceptable to an audience that would scoff (perhaps rightly) at its origins. Hoyle's "Black Cloud" is a straight punch of a 30's pulp shocker, but effectively

done, with a lacing of mathematical astronomy and the Hoyle obsession with the ability of scientists - and Cambridge scientists in particular - to rule us better than politicians.

None of three methods of attracting a wider public is an easy one to execute. None is open to any but a professionally capable author. (Nor is there any guarantee that the audience would be attracted, were the novel written; readers are conservative creatures, once they are out of their teens. In particular, a diet of best-selling authors like Thomas Armstrong, Montserrat, Howard Spring or Georgette Heyer is not most conducive to the flexibility of mind needed to enjoy science fiction.)

There is another and an easier way to attract new readers. One can incorporate in one's fiction some attraction that has already proved its merit in the libraries in terms of audience appeal. The religious sf novel is already with us; Mack Reynolds regales us with Cold War sf dramas; and I don't doubt that the arrival of the first homosexual sf novel will not be long delayed. But Mr Beam Piper has had the brightest idea. Possibly with the success of Elsa the Lion in mind, or having seen the saleability of animal books like "Ring of Bright Water", "The Incredible Journey", "Cat in the Window", and the Gerald Durrell books, he has decided that sf should have its own cute little pet, Little Fuzzy.

Nor, having once come to this decision, has he stinted us. He has called his novel itself "Little Fuzzy". The publishers, to make sure we get the point, have put Little Fuzzy's picture on the front and the back cover.

That is not all. Shortly after Holloway, who is prospecting on the planet Zarathustra, finds Little Fuzzy, Little Fuzzy introduces the rest of his family, who are called Mama Fuzzy, Baby Fuzzy, Mitzi, Mike and Ko-Ko.

Fuzzies are as cute as they come. They are covered with long golden fur and have none of the attributes that embarrass us in the ape kingdom - indeed Mr Piper does not even tell us how Holloway distinguishes between the sexes. Though they have never been in houses before, Fuzzies are born house-trained; the call of nature sends them scurrying outside to dig neat little holes. When two more females appear (to be named, with a sentimentality entirely consistent with the rest of the book, Goldilocks and Cinderella), Ko-Ko, the unattached male, takes a fancy to both of them, but the episode is as innocuous as an exchange of fraternity rings on a 1920 campus.

The charms of these little creatures cannot entirely fill a novel. There has also to be a story. Although your reviewer turned to this story with relief, he has to report that he has read something very like it before.

The story rests on two premises.

One, that a Trading Company has a charter to Zarathustra as a class III planet which enables it to have life and death sway over its denizens. Two, that Zarathustra would be regraded to class IV (in which case the charter would be rescinded) if it proved to have sapient inhabitants.

If you have been reading sf for long, you will have met these monopolistic Trading Companies before. They are one of the myths particularly dear and valuable

to sf writers hearts. They are generally represented by tough, unscrupulous men who crumble under pressure with surprising rapidity; Piper's Dr Leonard Kellogg behaves in this way.

If the fuzzies can be classified as sapient, then Kellogg and the Company are finished. Prospector Holloway (who by now is referred to even by Piper as Pappy Jack) wants to classify his little pets as sapient. Consequently he and they are threatened by the Company.

Let me delve no more into the plot. As can be seen, it is - in more senses than one - a little fuzzy.

One thing should be pointed out. There is an attempt at the end of this novel to introduce a note of seriousness, to pose the question "What constitutes sapience?" and to answer it, but it is soon sidestepped. Here is a crucial and extremely interesting question, a question, moreover, that should appeal to a general reading public while being peculiarly suited to the context of sf. Given a little more - what? - encouragement, perhaps - Piper could have concentrated on this and mitigated the cuteness of the fuzzies.

Akin to this question of what constitutes sapience is the question of what constitutes humanity. This was the problem honestly dealt with in Vercoors' "Borderline" (also known as "You Shall Know Them" and "Murder of the Missing Link") Since then, it has been treated very tepidly in F. J. Bone's "The Lani People", and now in "Little Fuzzy". It remains a good theme, but Piper adds nothing to it.

Here is one example of how he can turn it into rubbish. Dr. Kellogg, as chief of the Division of Scientific Study and Research, is a rich man. Yet when a pair of his shoes is impounded as evidence (because he kicks a fuzzy to death), he has to appear in court in "a pair of borrowed moccasins". Little touches like this sap a reader's confidence in an author.

All in all, this is not the sort of sf novel I would want to fall into the hands of non-fen just because they were attracted by the Big-Eyed Monster on the cover. Sf fans will probably dissect the book to their own satisfaction.

After all, if you have bought "Little Fuzzy", you have a right to examine its contents. Remember the old saying, He who pays the Piper turns the corn.

Brian W. Aldiss.

"The Primal Urge" by Brian W. Aldiss.

Ballantine Books 2/6.

This book is apparently another of Brian Aldiss' experiments in writing, more science fictional than the last ("The Male Response") and to my mind, more successful. The gimmick is an electronic device, the ER or Emotional Register, which is embedded in the forehead and connected to that portion of the brain where the emotions reside. The emotion particularly concerned is that connected with sex and the ER lights up whenever its possessor is sexually excited. Since the connection is direct it bypasses the conscious part of the mind and cannot be suppressed. The intention behind the device is to remove some of the tensions of life in our modern world.

My thoughts at this point are somewhat confused. Viewed proly and simply, as a science fiction novel this book is somewhat of a flop. It has the same

major defect as another recent novel ("The Trouble with Lichen" by John Wyndham) in that it stops where it should have begun. It is fairly obvious that the ERs are going to have a drastic effect on life as we know it. However instead of giving this his full attention Aldiss has concentrated the major part of the book on the struggle to get the ERs accepted. Some of it's effects are discussed and we do see how it affects the hero during the struggle, but the major changes are bound to occur after the deadline for everyone to have one is past. This deadline, and the abortive counter-revolution, constitute the end of the novel. And that is that.

To succeed as science fiction proper this story should have been drastically cut and an equal or greater portion dealing with the aftermath of the ER regime added. A sequel would be in order I think. Since the book appears so unsatisfactory I feel that it is in order to look around for an explanation other than incompetence on the part of the author. Such an explanation is forthcoming. "The Primal Urge" is character- rather than idea-centred. We read more about Jimmy Solent than we do about the ERs. This is characteristic of modern mainstream fiction to my mind. "The Primal Urge" then looks uncommonly like an attempt to bridge the gap between science fiction and mainstream writing.

This then is the crux of the matter, I don't personally know enough about mainstream writing to adequately criticise this attempt to cross it with sf. I do however feel that any gain of mainstream readers will be offset by a loss to sf fans.

I recommend that you read "The Primal Urge" and see what you think.

Jim Groves.

HUMAN ?

"The Lani People" by J. F. Bone. Corgi Books 2/6d.

"Although most palaeontologists agree that the assumption of an upright posture was sufficiently important to justify separating the hominids from the great apes, few would maintain that it is possible to distinguish on purely zoological grounds between those hominids that remain prehuman and those that have attained the status of man. To qualify as human, a hominid has, so to say, to justify himself by works: the criteria are no longer biological so much as cultural." 1

Thus a palaeontologist dismisses the, to him, theoretical problem of distinguishing man from animal. But sooner or later the problem will have to be faced in reality, and, as many times before, science fiction has been there first.

In "The Lani People" man has spread across the galaxy and the human inhabited worlds are linked in a loose 'Brotherhood of Man'. The main qualification for membership is that the race belong to the human race and the proof of that is interfertility. The Lani are of human form except for the fact that they possess tails. They have however been declared non-human on the grounds that test Lani-Human matings were infertile. As animals they are bred and sold as servants. The trouble occurs when a veterinarian hired by the company selling Lani fertilises one of them.

There is little doubt that the main theme of this book is this question of how one defines a human being. A major sign of this is the lack of a villain. The only character who might fill this role is the owner of the company, and when it comes to a show-down he is shown as a basically honest but ignorant man. Once he is shown that the Lani are human he is as anxious as the vet to restore their status.

The question then is twofold, first are the Iani members of the human race according to the fertility test, and second is the term 'human' to apply only to that species and not to all intelligent beings?

First then what distinguishes a member of the human race? biologically speaking inter-fertility is as good a starting place as any. It must however be backed up by the possession of a large number of similarities in anatomical structure. That then would normally be sufficient for most animal species. But not for man. Man is different from all the other life forms we know. This difference may be more quantitative than qualitative, quite a few animals use tools of some nature, but it is a definite gulf. But there was a time when it was hard to distinguish.

Other criteria of humanity have been postulated. Fire is one such. The possession, and creation, of fire has been suggested as a sign of intelligence, which on earth means a sign of humanity. Speech is another. Indeed in one story² the 'talk-and-build-a-fire' rule is mentioned as applying to a race on the borderline. The fight to get these creatures, the Zarathustran Fuzzies, recognised as a sentient species is documented in a rather more recent book³. Other considerations verge on the spiritual and philosophical. For instance in Vecora's book⁴ the beings concerned are sub-human Tropis (*Paranthropus Erectus*) found still surviving in New Guinea. They are an intermediate species and are inter-fertile with both man and the higher apes. To settle once and for all their status the hero of the story has a child by AID from one of the females and then kills it. He admits the crime and stands trial in the UK for it. The jury in the case must then first decide whether the Tropis are human before they can consider whether he is guilty or not. The solution is a bill passed by the House of Commons defining man. The bill runs as follows:

"Section 1. Man is distinguished from the Beast by his spirit of religion,
Section 2. The principal signs of a spirit of religion are, in decreasing order of importance; faith in God, science, art and all its manifestations; the various religious creeds and philosophies and all their manifestations; ritual cannibalism and its manifestations.
Section 3. Any animate being that displays one or more of the signs mentioned in Section 2 is admitted to the human community....."

The classic story in this field, "Jerry is a Man",⁵ turns out, on re-reading to be a hodge-podge which ends by solving nothing.

The definition of what constitutes an intelligent being, as opposed to what constitutes a member of our own race, must sooner or later be made. For sooner or later we will come up against the situation envisaged by Ed Hamilton in his latest story⁶ and we will be faced with a situation where an animal race shaped like ours is being domesticated by an alien race. And what do we do then? In this story the hero is faced with a planet where a sub-human race, who don't even possess fire, are being kept on game reserves by a reptilian race with a fairly advanced technology. Towards the end of the story he sums up the situation:

"He stopped again, then said, 'The people out there in the corral have my form, and my instinctive loyalty is to them. But instinct isn't enough. It would have kept us in the mud of Earth forever, if it could. Reason took us out to the wider universe. Instinct tells me that those out there are my people. Reason tells me that you-' he looked at Bregg, '-who are abhorrent to me. who would make my skin creep if I touched you, you who go by reason - that you are my real people. Instinct made a hell of Earth for millennia - I say we ought to leave it

behind us there in the mud and not let it make a hell of the stars. For you'll run into this same problem over and over again as you go out into the wider universe, and the old parochial human loyalties must be altered, to solve it."

The signs of intelligence are many and varied and we must learn to distinguish them and to treat all intelligent beings with the same consideration we expect them to accord us. We must learn to write as Melisande did that:

"Intelligence is like candy. It comes in an endless variety of shapes, sizes and colours, no one of which is less delicate than the others." 7

Conclusion

"The Lani People" is recommended as a good piece of science fiction.

Bibliography.

1. "World Prehistory" by Grahame Clark, Cambridge University Press 1961.
2. "Ministry of Disturbance" by H. Beam Piper, Astounding Science Fiction (ERE) March 1959.
3. "Little Fuzzy" by H. Beam Piper. Avon Books 1932
4. "You Shall Know Them" by Vecors (trans Rita Barissa). Pocket Books Inc. NY 1954 (and in many other editions both in UK and USA)
5. "Jerry is a Man" by Robert Heinlein, Thrilling Wonder Stories Oct. 1947.
6. "The Stars My Brother" by Ed Hamilton Amazing SF Stories May 1962.
7. "Fast Falls the Eventide" by Eric Frank Russell. Astounding Science Fiction (ERE) October 1952.

Jim Groves.

LIBRARY CALLING ... Peter Mabey reports that the B.S.F.A. Library have the following issues of "Weird Tales" for disposal as duplicates

1938, Feb. (no covers); 1939, Feb, May; 1941, July; 1944, Mar, May, Jul, Nov; 1945, July; 1946, Nov; 1947, Mar, Nov; 1948 July; 1949, Mar, May, July.

All are in good condition except for back covers missing in some cases. Offers are invited for any or all of them. Write direct to Peter Mabey at Cheltenham.

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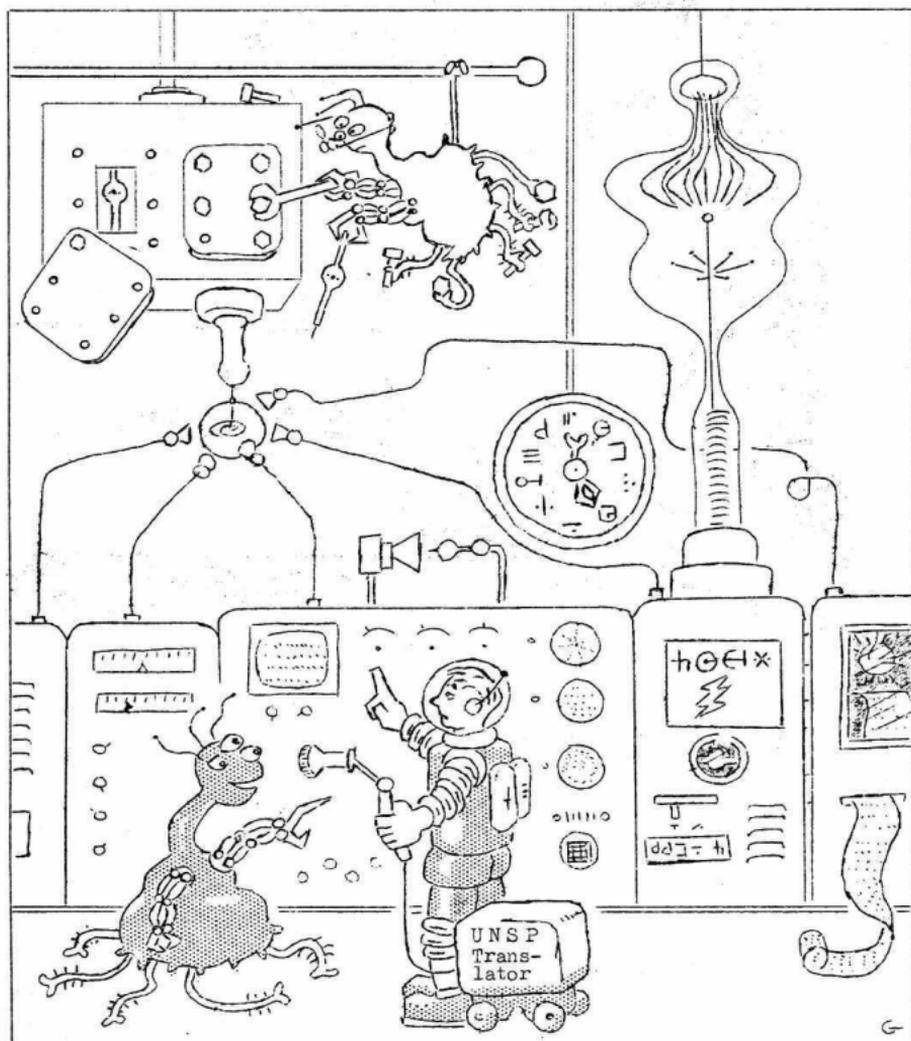
I would like to get in touch with anyone possessing a file or individual copies, of the American edition of Weird Tales for the period 1923 to 1930. I require information about and from these issues for the purposes of research.

..... James Groves, 29 Latham Road, East Ham, London, E. 6.

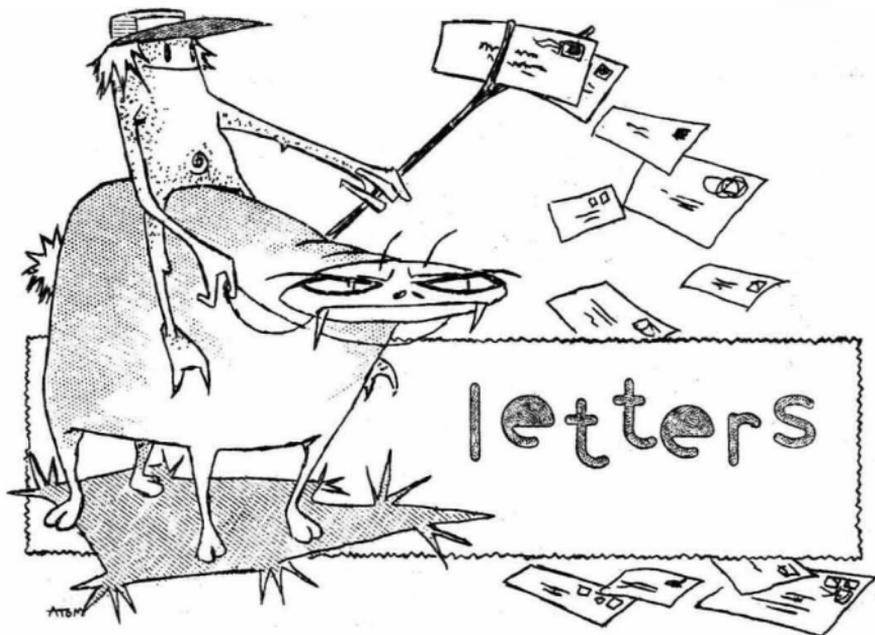
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Don't forget that all B.S.F.A. members are welcome to use the pages of this mag. for their announcements, requests or advertisements, free of charge.



"Oh, we use it for computing permutations
for our tentacle-ball pools."



Don R. Smith, 226 Higham Lane, Munceton, Warwickshire.

This time I can reasonably put my delay in commenting on VECTOR to the shock of seeing the grand old name of Rosenblum once more appearing as a fannag publisher. Alfred, Mr. Road's educated horse, would have had a word for J.M. - indefatigable would have been the one. It almost spurred me into producing a contribution to the highly esoteric discussions which fill the pages. I had just observed, as the result of reading the Jeeves omnibus and Skylark Three almost simultaneously, that there is adequate internal evidence to support the theory that P.G. Wodehouse and A.D. Smith are one and the same person. When I have cracked the code by which Jeeves can be transmuted to Mentor I will release the full details of my stupendous discovery to the world.

For the nonce I will restrain myself to comments on those aspects of V16 which I find most inspiring. This, I fear, does not include the prospect of Peterborough in '65. I was about to say ditto to the minutes of the AGA, when I recalled that there was some grist for my mill in these.

Notably, in the account of the library. I need not re-iterate the fact that this is my chief interest. I find it most encouraging that the books from the pre-war library have joined the collection - and most heartening to find people willing and eager to undertake the very considerable work involved. I feel almost inspired to contribute another parcel of my own books. And if this

Doc Weir Award business is proceeded with, you'll find my vote by the name of Peter Mabey.

As for Mr Boardman's startling offer, I am abashed to say that my knowledge of the present generation of British authors is so scanty that I have no idea whether there is enough talent in the ranks of the BSFA to make such an anthology worthwhile. The lamentable fact is that for over ten years I haven't read any of the British magazines. The only British authors I can name off hand are Clarke, Christopher (Youd), Temple, Baynon, and, of course, Aldiss. I believe I read the work of others in the Mag of Fantasy of SF, but I have the habit of ignoring the tedious blurb at the head of each story in that so strongly that I rarely notice the name of the author either.

Since JMR will doubtless recall the time Fearn threatened me with libel for some excessively outspoken comments on his stories I dare not be such a turncoat as to join Mr Harbottle in his appreciative estimate.

What's this? Nothing else in the magazine but book reviews? You must be publishing the magazine exclusively for me. I dote on book reviews. Well done, they save me the tedium of reading the things myself, and may even direct my attention to something I really ought to read. And my mind seems to run on the same track as that of Aldiss, to judge from his comments on Foundation and Empire, which I still recall from the magazine publication.

Very brief letter section - and the topics seem real oldies. Sex in SF? Better characterisation in SF? Reminds me of the refrain to "luv and marriage - you can't have one without the other." Up to a point at least. And I think that, up to a point, characterisation, like beauty, is where you find it. Frinstance, I go against the mainstream and find many of Arnold Wesker's characters corny beyond all enduring. And, for the kitchen sink school, he's a good dramatist. Of course, I'm a Shakespeare man myself.

I'm not much for this stream-of-consciousness type of non-stop gabble. Ken Slater's is worth ploughing through for the sake of the interesting snippets of information included, but I resent the effort to extract them. I resent most forms of effort in fact. Just bone idle.

P. Oddy, 16 Newlands Avenue, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham.

Well, you asked me to write so here we go. Excuse the numerical system - it helps me to tick off the items.

1 - Scrap a separate VECTOR and Newsletter and send us one magazine-cum-newsletter, however small, monthly or bi-monthly. I get a kick out of reading everything in VECTOR and the Newsletter and four kicks a year isn't enough for me.

2 - Sex! Have it in moderation. It's all right for Jean Groman to argue that there is enough of it in other types of books and mags. I never read anything (well, hardly anything) but SF anyway. Plenty of alien-alien sex, though - it fascinates me. Why have all multi-sexual races 7 sexes?

3 - Literary Award. What a grand idea it is, and Ken Slater has the right idea of how to award it. I'm in favour.

4 - Thoroughly enjoyed Phillip Harbottle's article on Fearn.

5 - Can't think why people aren't using the library. It is much cheaper than buying the books and you can't get most of them in the County library - at least not up here. Wonderful service - I'd be lost without it.

Roy Kay, 91 Craven Street, Birkenhead, Cheshire.

Re R.S. Marsden's letter, well, yes, I suppose I am prejudiced - prejudiced in favour of good SF. Which, incidentally, I am still very stimulated by.

On the whole I'd say the American magazines are far richer in good SF ideas than are the British. One of my favourite magazines is GALAXY - and that usually titillates my sense of wonder no end.

Now to VECTOR 16. I hope all that new organisation works out for you. Talk about division of ~~labour~~!

I agree that if all the fans dropped out of the BSFA it would evaporate faster than it takes to murmur 'hyperspace'. It's something like a marriage that is nearing the rocks because one partner is taking all and giving precious little in return. Only, in our situation, it isn't a case of half the partnership, but of 97% of it.

The BSFA is an organisation formed not only for readers of SF but by them too. By which I mean, those readers can take what they want from the Association, in the way of VECTOR, information and library services, but they should give something in return. The BSFA is not 'him' or 'them'. It is 'YOU'.

Anyone can write a letter. I'm sure there are people who have the ability to write an article or two about their favourite literature. And how about all those artists? Anyway, I'm sending off my contribution to Fila.

Being what some might call 'one of the newer generation of SF readers', John Russell Fearn was just a name to me. A name I recognised when it was mentioned, but didn't know anything about. So I enjoyed the first part of Philip Harbottle's 'Estimation' very much.

Next came the book reviews, always very well written, always fascinating. I've just finished reading the 'Foundation' trilogy, and found them stimulating reading. Psycho-history is one of the SF inventions that seem completely plausible even after the story is over.

About this award. Yes, we should finance a trophy of some sort, and I agree with Ken Slater that it should be something other than the old spaceship. It really is quite a problem to find a suitable and original design. I did picture a small bronze statuette of a man, mounted on a stand, one side of which can be sloped to allow for an inscription. The man is standing, feet apart, with his head held back, his eyes looking upwards. The whole effect being one of straining upwards....Man straining for the stars.

We couldn't just call it the British Science Fantasy Award either. There would have to be a shorter, one word, nickname that people will find easy to remember.....

I can't say I go for this 'literary consideration' idea. Good SF should be judged on many levels other than plain literary merit. The popular vote is the simplest, and best, method.

After all, most of us read a helluva lot of SF, so we should be well qualified to judge the good stuff when we see it.

Terry Jeeves, 30 Thompson Road, Sheffield 11.

'Forgotten Master'..promises to be one of the best..and most worthwhile items in VECTOR for many an issue. Not only is the first part interestingly written, but it also does a long overdue job...it brings out the great part played in popularising..and writing sf which JRF played. Too often today, particularly during a Con auction..have we heard "Vargo Statten.. 2d, it's crud." It has become fashionable to scoff at Fearn, Statten etc. If you had a poll of all sf readers who have been reading since 1936, as to their favourite '35 - '40 author, I venture JRF would feature high in the list...and in the lists of those who took up sf in the years '48 - '58 for that matter. Admittedly many of the more recent stories were re-hashes, but when you consider Fearn also wrote Western, Detective, Romance and Confession Yarns, it is not surprising that he did re-hash frequently. I remember once mentioning this to him, and asking him how on earth he could keep it up. His answer was a real insight into the world of the pure 'hack' writer...hack, for want of a better word. I can't quote verbatim, but among other things he said..."I dictate one story into a tape-recorder..I do it straight off, time is money, and I can't afford to work out the fine details" "I type out another story while the recording is being typed by an agency" "Plots..I get them by copying out my old stories which are out of copyright"....I quizzed him further on this, and found that 'Mathematica' had just been republished by Curtius Warren (I think) under a new title.

Onwards...I liked the book reviews...a capsule type precis, and then the reviewer's opinion of it. Not 'This is bad', but 'I disliked this bit because...' Such reviews always suit me even when I don't agree with them.

David Sparrow, 1 Oolite Grove, Odd Down, Bath.

As a new BSFA member I tried to see what use I could make of the library. The library list is a long one and I chose 3 books which had interesting titles, and another by Gamov. When they arrived one look was enough, and although I read them I did not enjoy them. The cost - I sent 2/6d with the request (2/9d) and was told that I was still 2d in debt (2/11d) and paid 2/- postage back (4/11d).

I do not think a postal library, although good in theory, can ever be a success, except for books that are absolutely unobtainable elsewhere in the country. I consider that I have paid 5/- for very little - whereas the book I am now reading ("Mutant" by Henry Kuttner) cost me 3/6d and I will be able to return to it, and re-read it whenever I wish.

The free library at Bath has some sf in it - and if a book I read there is good enough, I would buy it for myself to reread.

*** I don't normally interrupt letter of comment with my comments but I'm doing it here because this is a long letter. You've hit the nail on the head when you say that postal libraries are not much use 'except for books that are unobtainable elsewhere'. In my experience Public libraries have a very limited selection of sf, even of British sf. Since by far the bulk of sf, good and bad, appears only in America it becomes necessary to get hold of it some way. Buying on title alone is very dodgy, not much better is buying on the author's reputation, likewise buying on the strength of reviews. Borrowing is the only sensible method left. A free library would be best but it is unfortunately not economic. In this case you just happened to draw a joker. Most of the cost consists of the postal charges, which are beyond our control.

I can only suggest that you keep trying. Pick authors whose names you know, authors whose other books you've liked. JAG***

The problem of dual names is also difficult. I had already enjoyed "Primal Urge" (and bought it) by our own President: seeing that he was also writing a serial in three parts in New Worlds SF called "Minor Operation" I ordered them. To my horror they were one and the same. There are countless others (I already had "The City and the Stars" and went to considerable trouble to get "Against the Fall of Night" by A.C. Clarke - again one and the same). But I expect we have all been caught like this.

*** You bet we have! Your first example illustrates a major crime often committed by editors and publishers, the deliberate change of name for no good reason that I can see. "Against the Fall of Night/City and the Stars" is an example of the only good reason for a name change on what looks like the same story. In the original magazine version "Against the Fall of Night" was a juvenile slanted story, as was the book. "The City and the Stars" on the other hand is the same basic story vastly improved and expanded. JAG***

I would wish to see a book before I spend any money on it - and then I would wish to keep it for re-reading. Does this answer the question "why isn't the library used more"? I'm afraid that I won't use it again anyway. I don't claim that I have no failures in my own small sf library, but they are few and far between.

At this point about the only thing that can be said about the library is that opinions are divided as to it's usefulness! JAG.

WEALSCHEARDFROM.

Corporal Hedger, now in Cyprus, with some comments on the complaints of apathy from the officials, and another vote of thanks to Peter Mabey. And Bob Marsden whose main concern at the moment seems to be the deplorable standard of the stories in ANALOG. At which I'll repeat a remark I've seen around to the effect that Campbell seems as willing as ever to publish good sf, if he can get it, but if he has to publish crud it's gonna be crud he likes.

score is not too bad...but if you havn't joined...NOW is the time....new CORGI s-f novel for October is THE GREY ONES by John Lymington...Digit have reprinted Charles Carr's COLONISTS OF SPACE and its sequel, SALAMANDER WAR...these were previously between boards and pbs from Ward Lock...also from Digit, THE WORLD IN REVERSE by Iuan Ranzetta...and I'm still to learn who uses that pseudonym..... two weirdies from Panther in October....TALES OF THE UNCANNY, which looks like a pretty standard collection (H.G.Wells, Algernon Blackwood, Lady Cynthia Asquith ...)...and GREAT GHOST STORIES edited by Herbert Van Thal.....several of Isaac Asimov's non-fiction titles of popular science are now available in Collier Book imports...selling at 7/6... WORLD OF CARBON, WORLD OF NITROGEN, and THE KINGDOM OF THE SUN...worthwhile for the reference shelf...particularly if you want simple explanations. ..either for yourself or to hand out to others...Charles Dexter's THE WORLD IN ECLIPSE comes from Consul in October....Four-Square Oct. title of interest to s-f folks is John Wyndham's JIZZLE, a fine collection of shorts not previously published in paperback in this country....nor in remainders either... and that about covers it...but - remember, that I rely on you people for information to use here and elsewhere...all sorts of odd items with s-f interest.

General Chunterings

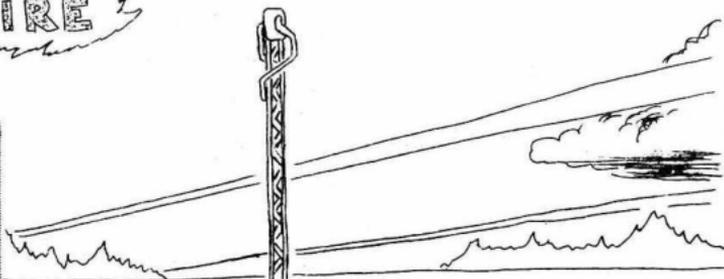


Recommended by Brian Aldiss as well-worth reading - provided you come with a mind not too filled with science-fiction writing-conventions - Naomi Mitchison's MEMOIRS OF A SPACEWOMAN.....second Penguin Anthology of SF due out in December.. ...regrets are passed on to Ina Shorrock, conveying a large party of the Liverpool Group on a Norfolk Broads holiday (via Oxford and Peterborough)..... her 20 horse 'reliable' Austin lost a big-end in King's Lynn,....give it a couple of hundred years and maybe there will be as many people around here searching for Ina's Big End as currently show up searching for King John's Laundry.....seems Ina was the only one in the party of - count 'em - eight who could drive..... Sep and Oct Analog (USA) run a two-part serial by James Blish which forms a new story in the "Oakie" series, titled "A Life For the Stars".....this comes in early in the series, and is not an extension of the story in time, just an enlargement in scope.....I hope for more.....a new Heinlein yarn is scheduled to start in the November IF, but I've heard no more than that as yet.....letter from Jon White (Buck's Work Camp, New Milford, Conn.) tells me he will be publishing INSIDE again, and is seeking adverts.....I've an idea that address is only temporary, and would suggest that you use his old address if you have it ...paperback edition of BODYGUARD out from Permabooks - this includes HOW-2 by Simak, DELAY IN TRANSIT by F.L.Wallace, THE CITY OF FORCE by Galouye, and WHATEVER COUNTS by Fohl in addition to the title story by Christopher Grimm - not a bad collection for 35¢.....same publisher has issued James M. Schmitz' AGENT OF VECA, same price.....and from Ballantine, CONDITIONALLY HUMAN by Walter J. Miller, Jr., which has "The Darfsteller" and "Dark Benediction" to make a trio.....50¢ this one.....some import snags and oversubscription has made distribution of titles imported through Thorpe and Porter a little uncertain... ..Kornbluth's A MILE BEYOND THE MOON docan't seem to have shown up at all yet, and was due for release 27 July.....Leiber's THE SILVER EGGHEADS and Congdon's ALONE BY NIGHT were oversubscribed (31 Aug release) and F(M)L received one-eighth of their quantity order.....which must mean that sales of s-f and fantasy are picking up in the U.K.or something....Panther are planning to reprint all the Asimov titles which they have previously issued.....a new transistorised tape-recorder which can be sold for as little as £7. 10. 6d. (we've also seen it at 99s)....is now on the British market....imported, of course.....at that price, it makes it easy for anyone not too finicky about reproduction excellence to indulge....battery operated and light weight....a few convention progress notes - membership now 95, not counting the committee and the GdH...programme items nearly complete, but a few gaps have been reserved for late-coming fan-groups who want to put on items...the 100 by September was not made, but the

- turn to opposite page -

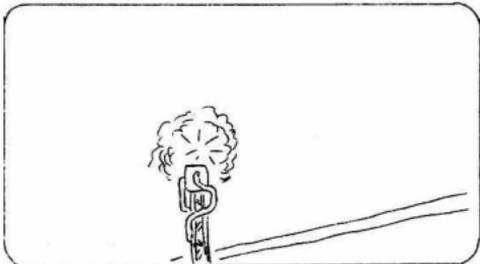
HELLFIRE

This was the first super-slow motion picture of an A-bomb explosion. The room darkened, noise ceased, as the film began ...

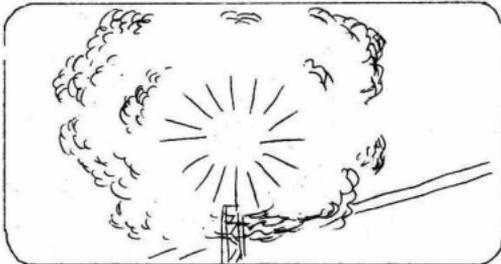


Jon Aldridge

A small point of light appeared ...



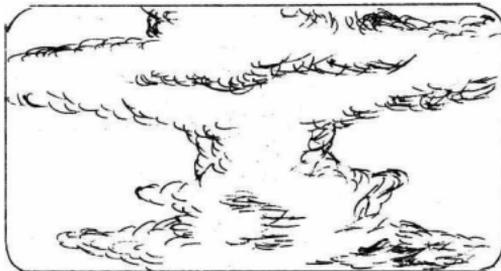
Growing larger ... brighter ...



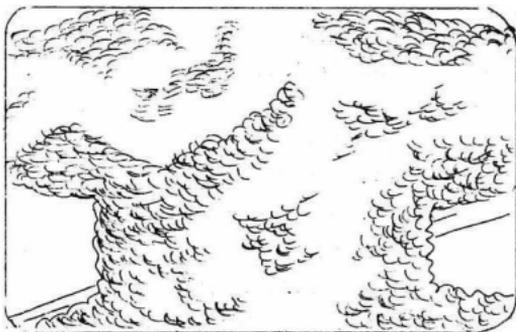
Beginning to take shape ...



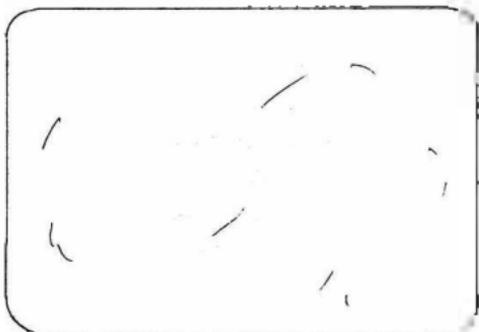
Into the mushroom so familiar ...



Blossoming out ...



Then a line, and another, appeared ...



Voices broke out ...



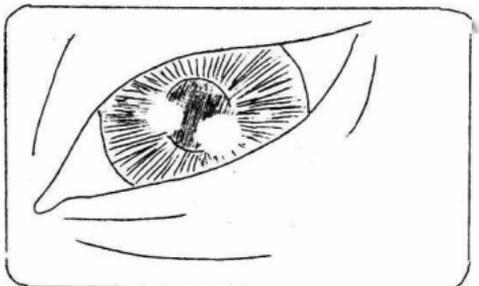
Chairs scraped back ...



Fear filled the room ... because ...



Who could mistake ... SATAN?



Membership List B.S.F.A.

- M.2. Eric Bontcliffe 47 Alldis St, Great Moor, Stockport, Cheshire.
- M.3. Archie Mercer 474/4 Newark Road, North Rykham, Lincoln.
- M.4. B. T. Seves 30 Thompson Road, Sheffield 11, Yorks.
- M.6. Ken Slater 75 Norfolk Street, Wisbech, Cambs.
- M.7. Ina Shorrock 2 Arnot Way, Higher Bebington, Wirral, Cheshire.
- M.9. Norma Shorrock 2 Arnot Way, Higher Bebington, Wirral, Cheshire.
- M.10 Dennis Tucker 18 Oakridge Road, High Wycombe, Bucks.
- M.11. Brian Jordan 86 Piccadilly Road, Burnley, Lancs.
- M.12. Gillian Adams 54 Cobden Avenue, Bitterne Park, Southampton.
- M.13. Norman Weedle 20 Palmerston Drive, Liverpool 21.
- M.15. Ken McIntyre 1 Hylton Street, London S.E.18.
- M.17. Ella Parker 151 Canterbury Road, London N.W.6.
- M.18. Peter Mabey 10 Wellington Square, Cheltenham, Glos.
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- M.20. Philip Rogers 5 First Ave, Ashfield, Scunthorpe, Lincs.
- M.21. Ethel Lindsay Courage House, 6 Langley Ave, Surbiton, Surrey.
- M.25. Joe Patrisio Flat 5, 11 Grosvenor Road, Watford, Herts.
- M.28. Keith Freeman Top Flat, 41 Park Road, Hayling Island, Hants.
- M.32. James Groves 29 Lathom Road, London E.6.
- M.34. Bobbie Gray 14 Bennington Road, Cheltenham, Glos.
- O.39. Dale R. Smith 500 South 10th St, Apt 114, Minneapolis 4,
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- M.41. J. Michael Rosenblum 7 Grosvenor Park, Leeds 7, Yorks.
- M.43. Audrey Everafield Cameron, Gordon Road, Leckhampton, Cheltenham, Glos.
- M.45. John Challoner 20 Windermere Road, Hattierley, Cheltenham, Glos.
- M.46. Eric Jones 44 Harbridge Road, Hesters Way, Cheltenham, Glos.
- M.50. Raymond Owen 6 The Jews, Gravesend, Kent.
- M.71. Peter Gough 326Q1061 Pte, Path Lab, 21 Coy R.A.M.C. Wheatley, Ox
Oxon.
- O.81. Gordon Van Toen 316 Maplewood Ave, Rossmore, P.Q., Canada.
- M.92. Dr Ian McAulay c/o 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast 4.
- M.98. Michael Sheppard 56 Kenilworth Crescent, Enfield, Middlesex.

B.S.J.A. Membership List; Page 2.

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M.116.	Ken Cheslin	18 New Farm Road, Stourbridge, Worcs.
M.124.	J. M. McGregor	11 Oxford Terrace, Edinburgh 4.
M.126.	Paul Andrews	1 John Street, Maidstone, Kent.
M.130.	John Fairley	132b Durhal Road, Spennymoor, Co. Durham.
O.134.	Daniel R. Folk	170 West Cedar Ave, Denver 23, Colorado, U.S.A.
M.158.	Cris Miller	101 Nancy Hill Road, Sutton Coalfield, Warwickshire.
K.164.	Ted Forayth	11 Ferndale Road, London S.W.4.
O.166.	David Kyle	W.P.D.K., Potsdam, New York, U.S.A.
O.167.	Ruth Kyle	W.P.D.M., Potsdam, New York, U.S.A.
M.169.	Anthony Walsh	29 Slater Street, Berkeley, Cal.
M.170.	C. Shute	Merlewood, Newport Road, Stafford.
A.172.	Angus Watt	47 Stanton Street, Luton, Beds.
M.175.	William Swan	Scotston Rig, Elyth Bridge, West Linton, Peebleshire
M.171.	Bruce Montgomery	Rock Hill House, Brixham, Devon.
M.182.	Terence O'Neill	37 The Crescent, Worsley Road, Worsley, Manchester.
M.186.	Charles Smith	61 The Avenue, London W.13.
M.187.	Andrew Salmond	50 Dallinghoe Road, Wickham Market, Woodbridge, Suffolk
M.188.	Mrs T. E. Shorter	Halcot, Porkellis, Helston, Cornwall.
A.189.	Douglas Small	166 Washmore Road, London E.5.
M.191.	Pat Kerney	33 Elizabeth Street, London S.W.1.
A.192.	John Campbell	40 Nook Rise, Liverpool 15.
O.194.	Dr Ellis Fasser	815 Government Ave, Arcadia, Pretoria, South Africa.
M.200.	John Nash	5 Whitehedg Road, Carston, Liverpool 19.
M.201.	Dave Barber	c/o Ken Slater, 75 Norfolk Street, Wisbech, Cambs.
M.203.	Ron Bennett	13 West Cliffe Gardens, Harrogate, Yorks.
O.204.	George Willick	306 Broadway, Madison, Indiana, U.S.A.
O.205.	Norman Metcalf	Box 1262, Tyndall A.F.S., Florida, U.S.A.
M.206.	Brian Rolis	62 Headswell Crescent, Emsbury Park, Bournemouth, Hants.
M.207.	George Ellis	69 Margaret Street, West Gorton, Manchester 12.
K.208.	Asymond Smith	228 Higham Lane, Nuneston, Warwickshire.
M.209.	John Gunn	The Queens Head Hotel, The Bridge, Matlock, Derbyshire.
M.211.	Ernest James	31 Castle Street, Skipton, Yorks.

B.B.F.A. Membership List: Page 3.

M.213	Bert Lewis	47 Queensway, Aston-on-Hibble, Preston, Lancs.
M.214	Norman Nicholls	1 Rasthall Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent.
M.215	Mrs Daisy Andrews	1 John Street, Maidstone, Kent.
M.217	Frank Barron	29 The Crescent, Bridgill, Consett, Co. Durham.
K.218	Gerald Webb	Acre End Stores, High Street, Eynaham, Oxen.
M.219	Ewan Hedger	Sellyport, Station Road, N.Ferriby, Yorks.
K.220	Miss K. Ballantine	318 London Road, Stanway, Colchester, Essex
A.221	Graham McIver	24 Crossmead, London S.E.9.
M.222	Stanley Dalton	70 North Lane, Houndhay, Leeds 8.
M.225	Michael Houghton	147 Fox Lane, Leyland, Preston, Lancs.
M.227	Marion Landsdale	12 Churchfield Road, Salisbury, Wilts.
M.229	John Oaten	Julls Down Farm, Wreak Hill, Whitstable, Kent.
M.230	Archis Potts	77 Helton Ave, Clifton, York.
M.232	Marjorie Harrison	76 Cobtree Est., Chatham Rd, Sandling, nr Maidstone Kent.
A.233	Roy Kay	91 Craven Street, Birkenhead, Cheshire.
A.234	Joseph Havin	77 College Road North, Blundellsands, Liverpool 23
M.235	Howard Leigh	296 Valley Rd, Basford, Nottingham/117 Iffley Road, Oxford.
M.236	David Wilson	69 Deeringa Road, Halmorton, Rugby.
M.237	Fred Hunter	13 Freefield Road, Lerwick, Shetland Isles.
M.238	Denys Wilson	Briar Cottage, Newyead, Welrose, Roxburghshire.
N.241	Keith Otter	149 Southwold Road, London E.5.
M.242	Geoffrey Walker	79 Ranelagh Grove, Wollaton Road, Nottingham.
A.243	Terence Bull	60 Kenfield Road, Northampton.
A.245	Harry Ball	Back House Farm, Hawdesley, Nr Ormskirk, Lancs.
O.247	Thea Grade	Wiest-Kastel, Hochmeisterstr. 1, Germany.
M.248	Ian Horton-Stephens	33a Clifton Terrace, Brighton.
K.250	Gilbert MacNeill	Planetree, Crawford Street, Largs, Ayrshire.
K.251	A. Knill	71 Inner Forum, West Derby, Liverpool 11.
M.252	Kenneth McMahon	33 Chauncy Road, New Boston, Manchester 10.
M.253	Shirley Mason	72 Tynewydd Road, Barry, Glamorgan.
M.254	William Dewson	48 Gallowhill Road, Kirkintilloch, Dumbartonshire.
A.255	Chris Holmes	39 Harmon Road, Birmingham 14.
A.257	Nicholas Austen	Pembroke Hotel, 4 Fystock Terrace, Exeter, Devon.

M.260.	Adrian Cook	Sunrising House, Shutta, East Looe, Cornwall.
A.261.	Robert Worrall	29 Highlands Avenue, Northampton.
M.263.	Mrs Helen Phipps	21 Nutbrooke Street, London S.E.15.
M.264.	John Evans	9 Wickham Street, Limerick, Eire.
M.265.	Alan Goodfellow	100 Gubbingsham Road, Longford, Coventry.
A.266.	Edward James	923 Warwick Road, Solihull, Warwickshire.
M.267.	Darroll Pardoe	38 Ferrins Lane, Wollescote, Stourbridge, Wores.
M.268.	James Scott	10 Coast Road, Harke-by-Sea, Yorks.
M.269.	Jean Cranan	7 Wayside, London S.W.14.
M.270.	Robert Parkinson	52 Mead Road, Cheltenham, Glos.
M.271.	Phillip Winterflood	29 Lakes Avenue, New Malden, Surrey.
M.272.	S. G. Kirach	Shenley Hospital, St Albans, Herts.
M.273.	T. Holt	7 Ash Grove, Weaste, Salford 5, Lancs.
O.274.	Ed Meakys	723a 45 Street, Brooklyn 20, N.Y., U.S.A.
M.275.	Norjan Sherlock	5 Dog Lane, London N.W.10.
M.276.	Peter Rapley	10 Princess Road, London N.W.1.
A.277.	Nicholas Srierley	27 Bindloss Ave, Eccles, Lancs.
M.278.	Robert Talley	31 St Albans Road, Westbury Park, Bristol 6.
A.279.	Charles Harsden	206 Park Avenue, Hull, Yorks.
M.280.	Kenneth Harker	28 Cobble Carr, Guisborough, Yorks.
A.281.	John Aldridge	13 Eldrick Ave, Fauldhouse, West Lothian, Scotland
A.282.	Peter Bathews	Wispers, Steins Road, Wraybury, Bucks.
M.284.	John Throver	c/o Ted Forsyth, 11 Ferndale Road, London S.W.4.
M.285.	Philip Harbottle	26 David Street, Wallsend-on-Tyne, Northumberland.
O.286.	Ron Smith	c/o Alan Rees, 38 Donaldson St, Braddon, Canberra, A.C.T., Australia.
M.287.	Gillian Holloway	81 Bevington Rd, Aston, Birmingham 6.
M.288.	H. H. Dhonsu	9 Cromer Road, Sheringham, Norfolk.
M.289.	James England	64 Ridge Road, Kingswinford, Staffs.
M.290.	Michael Skinner	Drana Dept., Iris Productions, Teddington Studios, Broom Road, Teddington, Middlesex.
A.291.	Gavin Dixon	279 Hertford Road, London N.9.
M.292.	R. P. Boore	41 Kay Street, London W.14.
M.293.	Edward McCubbery	229 Milburn Street, Glasgow 11.
O.294.	Louis Gomez	Box 2128, Kuwait.

GRAND CROSS

MAY BE OF SOME INTEREST TO B.S.F.A. CROSS PLAYERS ... says ...
 JOE HIRST

THE BOARD

The board consists of a chequered board 17 by 17. The 5th, 9th and 13th lines across are different colours, and are called rivers. The 5th and 13th are Minor Rivers, and the 9th is the Major River. In four symmetrical positions on the board, covering in one instance the nine squares in the first three rows and the 4th - 9th files, is marked a square with diagonals. This is the Fortress, of which each side has two.

THE PIECES

9 Draughts (D), 8 Soldiers (S), 5 Pawns (P), 4 Cannons (Ca), 4 Castles (C), 2 Horses (H), 2 Elephants (E), 4 Bishops (B), 4 Mandarins (M), 1 Queen (Q), 2 Generals (G), and 1 King (K); 46 pieces in all.
 They are arranged as follows:....

1st Row	C	H	E	M	G	M	B	C	K	C	B	M	G	M	E	H	C
2nd Row	O	O	O	O	O	O	B	O	Q	O	B	O	O	O	O	O	O
4th Row	S	Ca	S	P	S	F	S	Ca	P	Ca	S	P	S	P	S	Ca	S
7th Row	D	O	D	O	D	O	D	O	D	O	D	O	D	O	D	O	D

MOVES OF THE PIECES

The King moves one space in any direction. It may not cross the Major River, but crosses the Minor River by moving two spaces horizontally.

The General moves one space vertically or horizontally, but may not leave the nine spaces of the fortress.

The Queen moves any number of vacant spaces orthogonally or diagonally.

The Mandarin moves one square diagonally, but may not leave the nine spaces of the fortress.

The Bishop moves any number of vacant squares diagonally, but may not cross the major river.

The Elephant moves diagonally to the next square but one, but may not cross the minor river.

The Horse moves one square orthogonally followed by one square diagonally.

The intervening square must be unoccupied.

The Cannon moves any number of squares orthogonally, but may not capture unless it has first jumped a piece. It may not jump more than one piece.

The Castle moves any number of vacant squares orthogonally.

The Pawns move one square forwards. They capture by moving one pace diagonally forwards. They cross both Major and Minor Rivers by moving forwards two spaces. On reaching the opponents back line, they may be promoted to any piece which has been removed by the opponents.

The Soldiers move one square forwards on their own side of the Major River, and one square forwards or sideways on the other side. On reaching the opponent's back line, they can move sideways only, and are not promoted. They ignore Minor Rivers, and cross Major River by moving two spaces forwards.

(Concluded on the opposite - and previous - page)



MCINTYRE.