



Where it not for the fact that I feel it necessary to bring to you some Christmas message of good cheer this inside front cover would have been the blank dirty white of driven-over snow. Having already mailed out some 135 very expensive greeting (no, Helen, it has another meaning) cards, and having still to produce the essential cash to pay for another two score to cover the immediate circle of my wife's family, I feel that O.M.P.A. will have to do without a Christmas card from me. Even a self-produced one seems impossible, I lack the energy and the time. (By the by, did you know that "mell-ow" in one sense means "soft" ?).

It is to be hoped, therefore, that all of you will not take it amiss if I do not send you a special and individual token of goodwill at this season; consider, in your undoubted charity of heart, that the thought is as good as the deed, and that although I lack in eloquence, my expression of feeling is none the less intense.

In short, my friends, I bid you a right merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Kenneth F Slater

Editorial

The salvation of ghod resulted in odd Remarks anent which I will now bitch. Ron Bennett in "Burp" doesn't act like a twerp; he makes the point but won't wreck the joint. Whilst John Roles' "Morph" gives a gentle sound-off. Over a year ago now I took a vow to think things out - and then to say nowt ! But the rest are so shy that it better be I. This gift of activity has too darn much liberty. An account of his fault is given by Walt, and he's covered we know so he won't have to go. But had it been thee - well, try it and see !

INSCREW TIBOBBLE

Kenneth F. Slater
Leach's Farm,
Lynn Road,
Walsoken,
Wisbech,
Cambridgeshire,
England.

Published for
Off-Trails MPA.

Mailing No. 10.

DECEMBER, 1956.

Highly Irregula

-r.

Lapsing into normal sort of scribbling, this type of "giving" away of activity-to could lead to membership of O.M.P.A. being a sort of popularity contest. The more prolific of fandom's OMPA-ns providing "activity" for their ghods and heroes. That is hardly what we are aiming at, and the suggestion is taking things to an extreme, but it is conceivable that a member could carry on as has Walt without the reasonable grounds which exist in this particular case. WDA being in the fifth instead of fourth mailing certainly makes a difference - but the fact that Walt didn't notice this until it was too late hardly strengthens the popular belief of his intense interest in the activity of fandom in general and OMPA in particular. Can it be that Walt, like me, has rather lost interest in this particular microcosm, and now just hangs around the fringe taking - when he must - a certain amount of embarrassing adulation ?

But that has little to do with the main point of issue, and is purely an aside - not intended to be offensive, all you champions of the right, so keep your chargers in their stables.

The main point is, how do we control the actual activity of the membership, so that they do DO something to be members ? As things stand at present it is perfectly possible for a fairly wealthy fan, desirous of retaining the "honour" of membership in OMPA, to get other fans to write stuff for him - or to dredge out of old and forgotten 'zines articles and stories to which no copyright is in existence - pay for these to be stencilled, duplicated, etc., and shoot the lot in. Doing veddy veddy little work on it himself.

I think that some percentage of the production must be done by the member himself. In those cases where he does not do the actual stencil-cutting and duplicating, at least 50% of the pages counting for "activity" should be written by him; when he does his own stencil-cutting, etc., then let him get by with 25% of his output being his own admirable (or otherwise) work. Those of you who

attended the meeting at the CYTRICON II will recall we had some discussion on the question of what constitutes "publisher" and "publishing", etc., in connection with a different matter - that of the "awards". As the "awards" were out, most of this went down the drain, anyway, and I am personally at a loss to recall just what - if any - decisions on definition were taken.

But it most assuredly (sorry, no correctine handy) is necessary for us to reach a decision now, insofar as this has a bearing on activity requirement, and to embody that decision in the Constitution! According to the Constitution (article 9) amendment proposals should be in the hands of the Prexy for the December mailing. This gives us a year to kick the thing around, and to decide something on which the majority can agree.

My suggestion two paragraphs back is just a suggestion. It is, I think, a fairly sound one, in that it covers the need for a member both to write a fair proportion of his material himself, and also allows those of us who do not have the equipment to qualify - provided we are willing to do a little more writing. But you may all kick the living daylights out of it if you wish - it is not, in itself, a proposal, just a suggestion. I'll make the proposal when I see what you think, if noone else makes a better one. If you understand me.

Arising out of this is the question of whether OMPA, itself, is worth continuation. The object at present seems to be to scrape up the bare minimum of "activity requirement", and then to rest until the approach of the next dead-line before one is flung out on one's ear. I admit that I'm no damn better than the rest of you. The question is why? A good many of you show considerable interest in the mailings - to be honest, with very few exceptions, the majority of the material that appears bores me to tears - and it follows that it must be to your liking. Why, then, the sparsity of production? Are we all too busy? Have we all so many other interests which take precedence over OMPA? Are we just sticking with it to keep it alive? Are we old and veddy tired? GAFIA? If we are - all or any of these - I think it would be best if we got out, and made room. Or even shut up shop completely. But I hate to think so. From my own angle, the jazz section of the mailing leaves me cold - so, for that matter, does any musical matter or natter. A personal blind-spot. Some of the personal reminiscences and anecdotes interest me, others do not. I'm very deliberately avoiding mention of any specific items, for often two different items by the same person have opposite effects on me, and the mention of one name or one article might be taken to infer that I cannot tolerate any of that particular persons output - very definitely untrue.

The inclusion of letters in OMPAZines is one thing I do not care for, personally. If you have something to discuss - and it is not urgent - write it up in your own mag for the next mailing. If it is urgent, deal with it and then leave it out of OMPA mailings. Stale correspondence can be very dreary. That is one thing that would improve the mailings for me, at least.

Another improvement - for me - would be to see a little more accent on science-fantasy. I'd appreciate people's opinions on books, mags, films, people, and activities - if any. We seem to have a dearth of such material, by and large.

Some of the humour these days is very strained - perhaps we are overdoing this "bright young thing" attitude? A rest might do us good?

I've listed there a few of things which have discouraged me. You may have other objections - you may (very probably) object to my lengthy dissertations on a subject I'm not too darn clever at myself. Well, it could have a bearing on the general lethargy of OMPAns, so if you think so, tell me so in your next mag. Don't write me on the subject; write an article in your mag on what you think is the cause of a less-than-200 pp mailing. Your opinion should be good for at least a page, and that will give us 45 pages for the 11th mailing. And you can fill up the other side, I hope, which brings us up to 90 pages.....

But, for ghod's sake, lets do something with it, now we have it.....

SNUG IN A FUG IN '57

LEACHES FARM

Having pointed out that oft such personal accounts as this leave me cold, it is only fair that I should chill some of you - the few who bother to read it, at least.

It is, I suppose, a matter of semantics that when a farm is mentioned, people think of sheep, cattle or corn. Around the fen country nothing could be less accurate. This is actually a farm, and at one time in the dim and distant past it did belong to a family called Leach. Currently it belongs to my sister-in-law, Mrs. Joan Pollard, and we are inhabiting a part of the farm house (divided up into three houses, or cottages, or whatever you care to call 'em).

But - gazing over the flat land hereabouts - you don't see any humps in the field which turn out to be cows, bulls, sheep or even horses. We did have a horse on show a couple of fields down when we first came, somebody's riding-pony grazing in a fallow field, but even he has moved on to other quarters. If you take a very low view of things, you'll see plenty of slugs humping their backs slowly along to make a feast on the farm produce. But not on the waving corn, oh no!

On the acre or so of lettuce; or mayhap they have a taste for "maiden" strawberry plants. I doubt they'd like the peas - no one around here likes peas. They won't dry, and so they just lie out in the field in swathes, when they should have been put through the "combine" weeks ago. Oh yes, peas go into the "combine", which most

folk associate with threshing of cereals. They do grow corn and barley and oats around here, but Joan didn't sow any this year. She is going to next year, she says, but she is darn glad she didn't this year.

The tomatoes ripen slowly in the greenhouses - so slowly. The chrysanthemums are almost ready to go in, but they will have to wait a week or so - there doesn't seem to be much chance of frost yet - in order to get the most from the tomatoes. The cauliflowers are doing well....

By now you'll have gathered that a farm around here bears a very close resemblance to what you and I would call a "market garden" - but don't say so out loud, or mention it in the local. Not if you hope to hold your head up next time you go out. The mere suggestion that there is any similarity will bring you into disgrace.

Oh, well, for anyone who has pictured me watching the lowing kine wending slowly o'er the lea, please consider yourselves disabused. All I can watch is the steady - and noisy - progress of Tim working up the long lines of a strawberry field with a rotor-hoe; the broad and beany posterior of one of the "girls" as she stoops through the rows of chrysanthemums "tying'em up" and disbudding them. The latter a sight not conducive of any thoughts except how horrible some women look in trowsis.

Do I have any part in this agricultural activity, you ask? Nope, chums, not when I can help it. On occasion Tim asks me for a spot of assistance - as when we had that one fine morning in August, and it looked like there be some drying sun, and he wanted to turn the peas; being a Saturday (union hours, chums) the labour was "off", and so I was conscripted. Then I've been doing a few jobs like repairing the barn doors - the damn things stand over ten feet high and are about six feet wide, each - and putting new guttering round said barn. But they are hardly "farm" jobs - just something in which my army engineering experience comes in handy. I've also contracted to help Tim build a brick wall - but the weather we are getting!

So, folks, if you want a holiday on a farm - don't come to the fenland for it.

.....
VERY BRIEF TALE

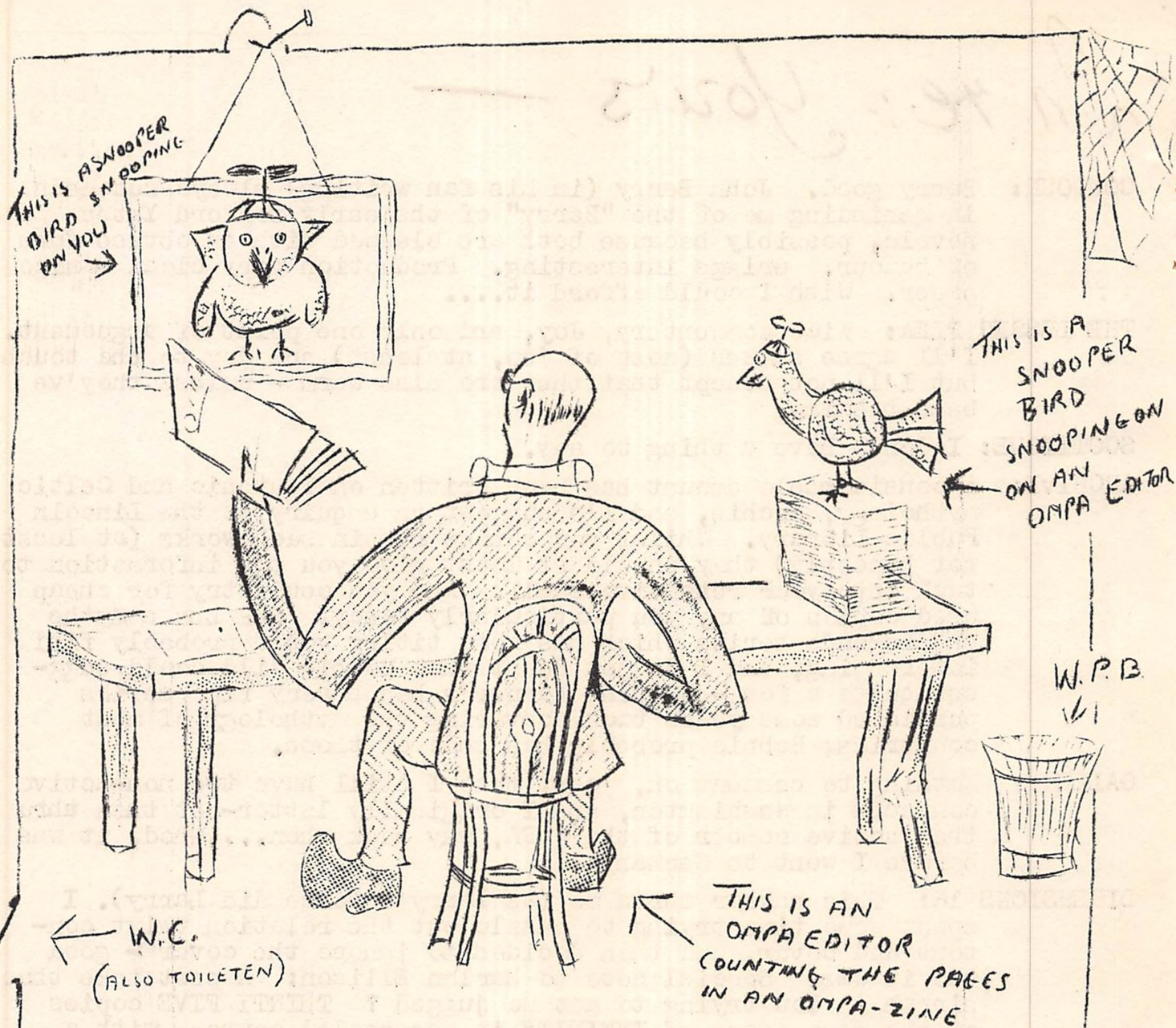
A guinea pig.
.....

LONDON IN SEPTEMBER, A DATE YOU MUST REMEMBER

.....
(The above slogan is contributed free to the LonConCon, in whom all copyright is hereby invested. Or would be if I really thought it was oringinabobble.)

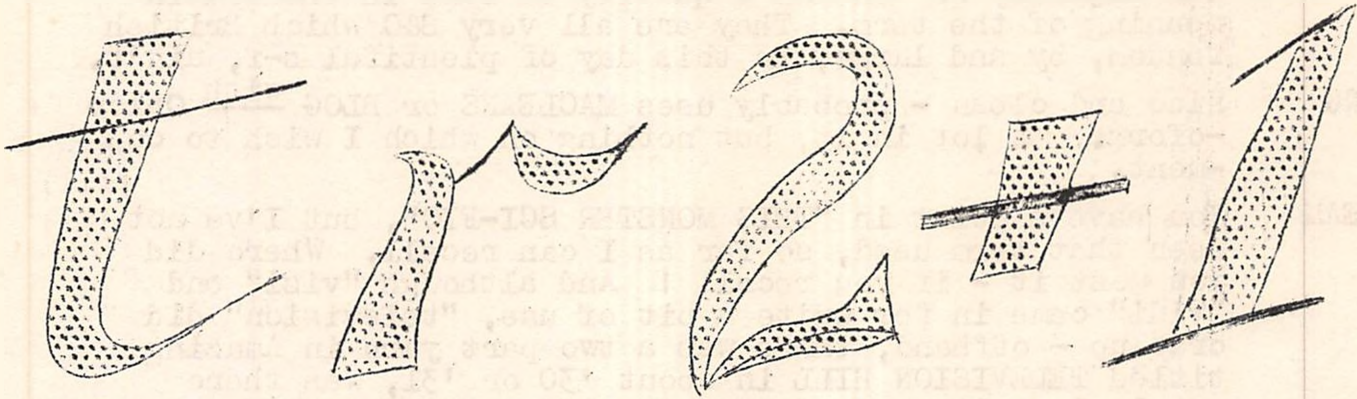
In re: Yours —

- CONTOUR: Berry good. John Berry (in his fan writing) always succeeds in reminding me of the "Berry" of the early Donford Yates novels, possibly because both are blessed with an obtuse form of humour. Griggs interesting. Production very clean - nice paper. Wish I could afford it....
- THE LESSER FLEA: Nice commentary, Joy, and only one point of argument. I'll agree snakes (most of 'em, at least) are dry to the touch, but I'll not accept that they are also warm - unless they've been basking.
- SCOTTISHE: I don't have a thing to say.
- ARCHIVE: A considerable amount has been written on Teutonic and Celtic mythology, Archie, and I'd suggest an enquiry at the Lincoln Public Library. Whilst you cannot retain such works (at least, not honestly) they should at least give you the information to tuck into your retentive skull. And you could try for cheap used copies of any you particularly fancy. OUP has a Myths and Legends series which has some titles you'd probably find interesting, and I do not doubt that Bobbie Wild could suggest quite a few - I think Harper's had a very fine series published some years back, covering the mythology of most countries; Bobbie probably has some of those.
- GALLERY: Nothing to comment on, 'cept that I still have two non-active contacts in Washington, and I originally letter-net them thru a then active member of the WSFA, way back when.... Ghod, it was before I went to Germany....
- DIMENSIONS 16: This rather threw me (as Larry's horse did Larry). I spent some time trying to puzzle out the relation twixt content and cover, and then decided to ignore the cover - good tho it was. Special note to Harlan Ellison: A pest take thee, sirrah! You trying to get me jugged? THIRTY FIVE copies of the same issue of INFINITY in one sealed carton, with a price label attached!
- BURP ! Keep up the good work on address revisions to your Anglo-fan Directory (belated congrats on that, too, Ron). Your complaints noted. Seems like you are getting in swift digs all round ! Up the Rebels ! Bennett for Prexy !
- VAGARY: That Wandrie yarn was Finality Unlimited, I think, Bobbie. Can't place the others without some research, and you could not care less, anyway. Agree with you on "historical" films, but - try converting the producers - and the public ! In re mythology, dig into your library and give ole Archie some recommends; if you haven't any yourself, you'll find some references in some of Lewis Spence' general stuff.



And if there is a Watch Bird watching me, please note my apologies, etc.

1171



PASSIFAN PAT Everest, with his wife Brenda, visited us, driving over from Leicester and bringing Mike Wallace with them. Perhaps it would be more truthful to say Pat and Mike came, and brought Brenda with them, as Mike rode in state and Brenda rode in a state of high compression in the small space behind the bucket seats of Pat's tr-2.

IT WOULD have been impossible for the Wallace to travel behind the seats - unless he ran behind - because he is too dam big. (They call him Mount Wallace around Leicester !). Even with Pat driving, and Brenda crouched on his side of the car, a definite list to the port or Wallace side was discernable when Wallace was installed. Some operation, that ! Pat pulls the bucket seat right back, Mike is lifted into position; then he takes his weight off his rearend (not to be confused with his big-end) by placing one hand on the prop-shaft cowling and the other hand on the door pillar. Pat then takes up a position to the rear left of the seat, grasping it firmly at the top and the bottom. On the command "Heave" Mike really exerts all his brute force, and allows some two-three inches clearance 'twixt the seat cushion of the car and the seat cushion of the Wallace trousers. Simultaneously Pat drives the seat forward with almost brutal force, making it travel as far as possible before it is firmly engaged with the Wallace behind. (The bottom of the Wallace, not another Wallace elsewhere - one Wallace is almost too much !).

MIKE IS THEN securely in position, his knees projecting upward past the dash, his firm and manly jaw jutting out over them in the general direction of the windscreen. Thus, and thus alone, can sufficient room for Brenda's tiny feet be found behind the seat !

I DID NOT witness this exhibition of the best way to get a quart into a pint pot until they were departing, natch, but I must say that it was worth all lousy puns that were injected into our five-way conversation. Five-way conversation ?

Perhaps "3-way + 2-way, with permutations" would be a correct description. Joyce and Brenda talked knitting and weather and children and food and husbands whilst Pat, Mike and I talked fandom and Suez and grafting and s-f and jazz and the profit motive and food and weather.

WE ALSO DID some business. Mike sold me some mags. I retaliated strongly and sold Mike some mags. Then Mike tried to sell me some books - but I got away with a tentative offer on that one, and made a new gambit by attacking on the other front and selling Pat some books and mags. Pat hadn't anything to sell, but pulled a real fast one by cancelling an order. Even at that, I thought I was ahead on the game, even though they were two to my one.

WE HAD TEA, sort of; unfortunately Joyce placed Mike and Pat on the side of the table so their backs were to the wall-high book-case....with the result that they spent most of the meal with their backs to the table. Pat has a good system of turning his chair to half-face, so that he can swing back and forth to grab the odd sandwich or cuppa without losing his place on the shelves. That boy's had practice... Mike, being somewhat more ponderous anyway, had to divide his attention. Joyce and Brenda talked weather and shopping and knitting and houses and children after tea, until they went round to see Joan (our sister-in-law..my sister-in-law, Joyce's sister, I mean...)

PAT AND MIKE and I talked world-con and read-any-good-books-lately and s-f and jazz and Suez and atomic development and electric-power-for-cars-if-the-oil-runs-out and s-f. Finally Pat decided that, as he'd announced his intention of starting back before dark on arrival, he'd better get the works on its wheels, and we walked round to his car; that, of course, was when I witnessed the previously mentioned performance of "installing the Wallace". It was also here that Wallace pulled a real swift one, which left me in some doubt over who really was ahead - he just casually mentioned he was expecting a large pile of magazines, and if I was interested I could buy them.... I countered with "Well, it all depends on whether I have a market for them", but I still feel that was a very poor return. However, I clinched the deal to sell him Tolkein's LORD OF THE RINGS trilogy, so maybe we are even.

THEY ALMOST left without Brenda -- but she and Joyce saw them out of Joan's window and came tearing out. Pat swore he'd no intention of deserting Brenda, and was only getting the car warmed up, but you know how disbelieving life-partners can be.

NEXT TIME Wallace comes this way I'm going to have a big pile of ancient Vargo Statten's and Volstead Gridban's ready for him....

:: ::

...THEN THERE WAS THIS STRANGER GIRL AT THE CONVENTION WHO SAID SHE MET A LOT OF FELLERS WITH A LOT OF LINES, BUT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME SHE'D HAD THE HEIN ONE TRIED ON HER....

EDITORIAL ADDENDA and NOTE.

Certain of the phrasing used in the second paragraph of the "Editorial" could be misleading. Let it be understood that I do not intend to convey the impression that I get any "embarrassing adulation". I don't. It is now, thank Ghu, at least three years since any neofan or other approached me for either assistance, charity or fan-information. I still give forth with a reasonable amount of all these (although the centre one is sadly diminished since I left the army) but primarily to my own contacts, the majority of whom do not belong with in the fanrococosm. Back to the point - my only possible comparison of myself with Walt is in respect of intensity of interest in the fan-activity of today.

So there ! And sucks to you, too !

APOLOGY

Also in this mailing you will discover a couple of sheets of paper intended as a postmailing to the ninth mailing. A copy of this did receive the OA of the OE, but for some reason or other the thing never did get mailed, and I have only now discovered it when assembling the prepared sheets of INSCREW TIBOBBLE. It was way down the bottom.....

My apologies. But this blow to my self esteem is somewhat tempered by consideration of the financial saving I have thus incurred !

BOOK INDEX: 1955

If anyone wants any further copies of same (Ghu alone knows why they should !) these can be gotten at 2/6 each. I regret that there are no more to "give away", but as I've re-imbursed F(M)L for these copies and some others I've sent as "complimentary", I can't fork out for any more. That will at least save me some postage....

BOOK INDEX: 1956

Anyone who cares to volunteer assistance for compiling this will get my thanks and a free copy. Something else I'd like help with is an index of stories published in anthologies. This is a rather monstrous task that so far I've only pecked at....

OTHER INDICES

I'm always happy to help other folk who are compiling indices, but please don't expect turn-round replies to queries. If I can't help I'll let you know pronto; if I can help I will as soon as possible, and you can take it that a silence of more than three days (or ten days overseas) means I will help but can't give a prompt answer.

RON BENNETT

If you are (as you mentioned in that last letter) intending to produce another DIRECTORY, why not dish out some circulars to go all round ? Give me a draft and I'll push it out in F(M)L catalogue, and I'm sure most fanzine editors will be glad to do similiar things...