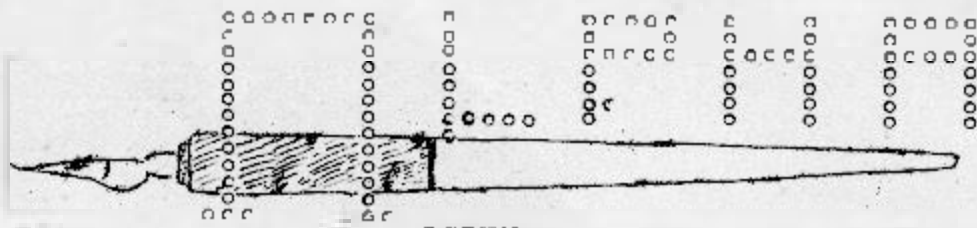


Vol. I - No 8

cccc

February 1955

cccc



SCIENCE FICTION FAN COLLEGE.

Treasurer :

Harry W. Roscoe
124, Lange Beel-
dekenstraat,
A n t w e r p .

cccc

Branches in :

HOLLAND :

Wim Struyck,
Molenwyver 40
Rotterdam N.

FRANCE :

Marc Thirouin
27, rue Etienne-
Dolet, Bondy
(Seine).

U.S.A. :

Dick Ellington
171, St. Marks Av.
Brooklyn 38 N.Y.

U.K. :

? ? ?

any offers ?

cccc

Cheapest col-
lege in the
world...

Yearly only :

60 US cents
4 UK shillings
2,5 Dutch fls.
225 French frs.
30 Belgian frs.

cccc

Cover: Ben ABAS
Back/

Cover: W. ROMBOUT

cccc

PRINCIPALS:

DAVE VENDELMANS
130 Strydhof Av.
BERCHEM

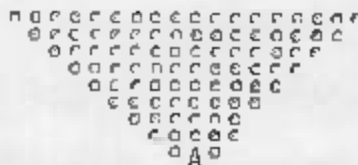
JAN JANSEN
229, Berchem led
BORGERHOUT

(near ANTWERP-BELGIUM)

(in spite of statements by
A.V. CLARKE to the contrary)

Class	Subject	Prof.	Room no
Oratory	CALLING AT PAGES	The 'Ead	1
Folklore & Witchcraft	GUY FAWKES' NIGHT	Allen	3
???	EV'RYFAN'S EDUC. ENCYC.	Nutthauze	4
Economy	SIMPLE SCIENCE	Smith	5
History	ALL-NIGHT PARTY	Ashworth	6
Amateur Journalism	COMMENTARY	Jansen	8
Archaeology	THE "AKMAR" MYSTERY	White	11
Literature	CURRENT READING	Jansen	13
Psychology	AMERCSJA	Sigheos	16
Philosophy (?)	LAST PAGE	Jansen	25

Various Artcourses by ABAS/ROMBOUT/STEER & ALLEN.



en 'ed' by "THE HEAD".

HULLG ECYS AND GIRLS,

I just want to say a few words before you leave school for the Christmas holidays, to spend a few happy days with your Mammies and Daddies, and a few happy nights with... sorry, I slipped. You'll be playing games and singing carols and eating and drinking nice things and you'll be sick and you'll have horrible nightmares...

- A night mare is a horse that is definitely not a lady -

First of all, I want to say how proud I am of the boys and girls of ALPHA College. You have all put up a very good show so far and have shown great tolerance and understanding and you should pass this week's exams with flying colours.

Mind you, I won't say you won't have difficult moments... Who hasn't? Especially when you get to class 14, where advanced science will be inflicted on you and classes 8, 13 & 25, where Professor Jansen will be inflicted on you. However, no matter how difficult the problems you have to face may appear, just remember your old college slogan "You may drive a horse to water, but a pencil must be lead", and everything will come out all right, maybe...

You will have noticed a couple of new names on the notice-board outside : Profs Nutthauze and Rombout. The latter I will introduce to you presently. The latter, an escaped West German (I'm not sure what he escaped from) will familiarise you with some modern definitions, assembled, for your benefit, from the far corners of the Globe (OK, I know a globe hasn't any corners).

Owing to lack of space, or time, or both, the professor will not be able to offer you many of these delightful definitions this term, but he'll be back with another batch next toime... These definitions, by the way, are guaranteed to broaden your outlook on life (and liven your look-out for breads).

Some of the Art courses will also appeal to you. In my opinion, the best are those handled by Abas and Steer, although those by Allen and Rombout are also very good.

I shall now acquaint you with the latest developments at the college:-

On November 29th. I was sitting at my desk, when the Usher came in and told me there was a gentleman to see me.

An "Usher" is a person who "ushes". Not to be confused with a "pusher". Wondering what Fate had in store for me this time, I proceeded cautiously in the "ushed" direction and... there he stood... an expectant look on his face, a fanatical gleam in his eye and a copy of "AUTHENTIC" (Advt. for Bert) in his hand...

I said "You wished to see e?" He said "Are you Mr. Vendelmans?" I didn't see any point in denying it, so I said "Yes"; whereupon he explained that he had seen my name and address mentioned in Authentic and hastened to look me up, because he too was a fan. He introduced himself to me (and I to you) as Willy RÖMROU. I told him I was mighty glad to meet him and would he consider subscribing? Also, could he attend the next meeting of the various club members?

He answered "Yes" to both questions - bless his heart - and thereby Alpha became the eighth by one whole member, thanks to the excellent review by our mutual friend Professor Campbell of the Authentic College. Needless to say, I warmly recommend Authentic to all the fans and I'm sure that Harry Roscoe will agree with me.

Incidentally, Willy is an artist, as you will find out in due course. There is an illo by him on p.6, which I think is very good, but which didn't come out too well on stencil, so I'm afraid it will be a bit faint.

The following evening, as I was leaving my office, I noticed a tall, bespectacled young man standing in the waiting-room (presumably he was waiting for something) and as I passed by, he wished me a "good evening", yes, that's right, in English...

"English" is of course a language the Scots, Irish and Continentals speak fluently and which is understood by Britishers and Americans...

I replied in the same language (polite that's me) and we got to chatting about this 'n that. After a bit, I suddenly had a crazy idea (don't interrupt please) and said "Do you ever read s.f.?" and to my surprise he answered "Yes". Well... to cut it short... I finally induced him to become a member too.

The chappie's name by the way is Florent VERMEESCH and he too can draw...

Anybody want to buy or borrow an artist ???

This issue should have been out a week ago, but has been slightly delayed owing to the fact that the editor wanted to edit something that the publisher refused to print. After fighting a duel - the outcome of which was not decisive - (we both missed) we made a compromise and shelved the matter for the time being. Well, you're still getting it a month too soon, so what are you grumbling about?

Gosh, I almost forget to mention Jazz this time. Shame on me, although you'll find quite a few references to this worthy subject in Ambrosia, so I'll make it brief.

It seems that I have found another kindred soul in the person of Len Allen, who it appears is also a modernist - that right Len?

For those of you who are members of OMPA and are true jazz fans, there is an interesting "expose" in Mal Ashworth's contribution re. the possibility of organising a "Jazzcon". I should appreciate it if you would drop a line to Mal or myself, expressing your opinion on this vital and world-shattering proposition. Ta...!

That's all I have to say for the moment, except that I wish you all a Very Happy and Fannish New Year and may all your wildest dreams be realised - yes even that one.

'Eve now,



Guy Fawkes night went off with its biggest bang ever for me. I thought that fame could be a good thing, but after that blessed night, I'm not at all too sure! You see it's all right for fans to point you out in the street and say: "There goes so and so...", and then have them follow you for miles before they pluck up courage to address you. When that happens your head swells, but naturally, you give credit to your fame.

There was the time when I was leaving a Frankie Laine matinee. As I pushed my way through crowds of drooling females a voice perked out: "There goes Don Allen!" I flushed, and looking around, quickly hid the Vargo Statten mag which I was taking home for my kid brother.

A couple of fifteen-year-olds crashed into me. They immediately introduced themselves as members of Nez-Fez and had seen me at the meetings once or twice. Standing in the middle of a crowd of chanting "We Want Frankie" females is no place to discuss sf. (For that matter what place IS suitable for talking sf?) So I promptly suggested that we all go to a nearby cafe and that they treat me to coffee and hot-dogs.

However we are (at least I am) supposedly talking about what happened on Bonfire night, fireworks night, Guy Fawkes night or whatever you call it.

A few days before Nov. 5th, I received a letter kindly requesting if I would be the Guest of Honour of the Science Fiction Galaxetcers, and would I light the bonfire? Well now, I had never heard of the S.F.C.'s, so to quench my curiosity I decided to go along. Besides, they had enclosed 6d for my bus-fare.

November the fifth came around, and it was after six o'clock before I remembered my engagement. The street in which I was to meet my host seemed deserted until somebody set off a giant roman candle, which of course illuminated the whole area. The street was a sort of cul-de-sac with a huge bonfire in its middle.

"Welcome, Mr Allen!" a voice rung out. I looked about me and saw a mob of... of people. I can't call them fans because they just didn't look like fans at all! The chap who had welcomed me had pockets full of fireworks, while gathered about him were about two dozen assorted humans, including a couple of delightful femmes wearing dressless-evening-strap.

"You'll not know me, Mr Allen," the chap with the fireworks said, definitely proving that he was not a fan. That was something no fan would ever say. "My name is Tom King. I don't write articles or suchlike as I have not completed my course on English Grammar yet. But I do subscribe to about twelve fanzines." More proof, I thought. Ah well! I'm here, might as well go through with it.

"What do you want me to do, Tom?" I asked. He beamed, and said he'd introduce me to all the S.F.C. members, then I was to give a speech and after that light the bonfire and begin the celebrations. What a set-up, I thought, what a corny set-up. But here I was, and having my eyes on one of the dressless-evening-strap girls, here I would stay.

In front of the massive bonfire a platform had been erected, and onto this I was hustled. The leader of the throng, Tom, thrust a wad of papers into my hands. "Your speech," he said, Nice of him, I thought, everything

arranged fine and dandy. Standing there on the platform, the huge bonfire towering at my back, in front the silent mob, my eyes scanned the members for the dame I'd had my eyes on before, and found her in the back row. Oh, yes, this mob was all spick and span, they stood in neat rows. I began...

"Ladies and gentlemen, members of the SFG. I am honoured to be here as your guest, and before I light this magnificent bonfire, I must say that the realm of Fandom looks towards you as future leaders." I was stunned by this, who did these people think they were? The Vargo Statten Fan League or something? I plodded on. "The name of this gathering is known throughout fandom, and Walt Willis himself would have been here tonight, had not he been suffering from Leprechaun sickness." I felt all sick inside. This was TOO much! "Some of the Southern fan detest the presence of SFG in Fandom. They speak harshly of the club, calling its members nec-fan. That they are not! Why, amongst this gathering there are many members of the VSFL, some have even been to a convention. But the SFG shall outsmart these southerners for they are wrong. The SFG is powerful, almighty, and its members are the best that Fandom can buy!" I sank weakly back into the chair that wasn't there. Dazed, I sat on the platform. This was a dark-horse, a nightmare in fact. I had to get away.

Then I became aware of the shouting going on around me. "Bring out the Guy" and "Light the bonfire". I clambered to my feet and decided to slip away. I failed. A flaming torch was forced into my numb hands, and shouts of "light the bonfire" echoed in my head. My eyes fell upon the Guy being propped into position by two youths. There was something strange about this Guy.

"That doesn't look like Guy Fawkes!" I said to the chap next to me. "It's not supposed to be," he answered, "it's a dummy of Chuck Harris..."

"WHAT...!!!" I exploded, "Chuck Harris to be burnt? You can't... Stop... You don't know what you're doing...!"

"Oh, yes, we do. It was Harris who started it all, and..." I didn't hear him. I was too busy trying to figure out whether this was in fact a nightmare. I threw down the fiery torch and stamped it out, but in doing so I set fire to my feet. I jumped up and down yelling for the mob to stop that which they were about to do. Instead of taking notice, I was called a traitor, and then they all took up the chant of "Burn him too!"

It was then that I ran as fast as my burning feet could carry me, away from that crazy mob of ? people(????).

Well, I got away, but I'll never forget that night. And it all just goes to prove that...er...what does it go to prove. You work it out, huh?

The D.A.



EVERYFAN'S EDUCATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- ADULTERY : Two wrong people doing the right thing.
- ALIMONY : The screwing you get for the screwing you got.
- BABY : A gadget that makes a lot of noise at one end and has a complete lack of responsibility at the other.
- BRASSIERE : A device that makes mountains out of molehills and vice-versa.
- CHIVALRY : A man's inclination to protect a woman against everybody but himself.
- DIVORCE : What happens when two people cannot stomach each other anymore.

D. Matthews

SIMPLE SOLUTION :
=====

$$\log 0,352 \sqrt{\frac{\cos^2 AB}{\sin CD} + (ax + bc)^2} x (\cos^2 - \text{tang CD}) =$$

by DOLF R. SMITH.

The pressures and complexities of modern-day living extend even into fandom. Preparing for a final exam or attempting to convince an employer that you are sadly underpaid requires a great amount of time. Eating, sleeping, consorting with the opposite sex and drinking, accounts for a major portion of the remaining time. This is tragic for the true fan. He - and sometimes she - is forced to treat the privileges and responsibilities of fandom with too little effort only because there is not sufficient time.

A solution to this problem is possible. The solution will vary in minor aspects depending upon the particular activities in which any certain fan is most interested. Changes can be made by the fan to meet individual requirements without destroying the effectiveness of the plan.

The solution is not only possible; It is quite simple. And assistance is the key word. For a fan whose main interests lie in collecting and contributing, the following basic staff is recommended :

Secretary, personal, female, young (but not too).
Takes shorthand, types and reads only Mickey Spillane;

Librarian, must have clean hands.
Catalogues and cares for all publications (backs, pre-mags, fan-mags & "art" magazines);

Field Agent, must have own car and be free to travel.
Searches for out-of-print books and back issues of mags, especially NIRVANA;

Subscriber, must have infinite patience.
Keeps tabs on all fan mags and gets subs to each and every one, excepting NIRVANA

Reviewer, must have strong stomach.
Reads all editorials and letter columns in pro mags and all non-fiction in fan mags and prepares digest for your use;

Ghost writer, must be able to write like an amateur.
Prepares drafts of all letters and articles you feel required to write after reading digest prepared by Reviewer:-

This total of six (6) assistants is the minimum number required to produce and maintain a BNF having limited time. But six would certainly not be sufficient if one is also interested in producing a fanzine. However, it is felt that the list above will provide a nucleus upon which any truly interested fan can improvise so as to achieve the desired results short of being invited to sub to NIRVANA.

My staff is far from adequate - especially in the Ghost writing department. Applicants please send qualifications to the editor of ALPHA. Don't call us. We'll call you.

D.R.S.

≠ I could do with a few applicants myself. Any offers? (Editor of ALPHA)

ALL NIGHT PARTY

BY

MAL ASHWORTH



Rain curled under the edge of the cave's rock roof and dripped down the neofan's neck, making a hollow "splroof" as it hit the rotors of his beanie.

He had been sitting at the mouth of the cave for about three hours with only the driving rain and the wind - howling through the moss-covered valley below him - for company, and his enthusiasm was the only thing about him which was not dampened. Now, as he spied a slight

movement in the encroaching darkness from the valley, his anticipation pushed his heart up into his mouth afresh. He kept in the shadows, watching the figure approach the cave until, when it came within less than a hundred yards of the spot in which he was crouching, he realised with awe that it was a stately, grey-bearded BNF. The neofan dashed out of his hiding-place and reverently, without speaking, took the oldster's elbow and assisted him into the shelter of the cave.

"Thank you, my son", the BNF said gravely, when he had caught his breath. "May Chu or Rebecca, or whoever you're with, bless your ink and stencils".

The neofan blushed to the bottom of his beanie at the Great One's attentions. "It was nothing" he stammered, only able to restrain himself from adding "Sir", because he knew that was frowned upon.

"This is your first convention?" queried the BNF.

"Er... yes... Yes, my first con", the neofan stammered, his bright eyes shining from the raindrops.

"No other Convention quite like your first one", said the old BNF reminiscently, "I remember my first Convention..." He broke off into ghoulish chuckles. When his mirth had subsided, he went on: "But conventions aren't what they used to be; not by any measure. I suppose you know they used to be held in hotels? Yes, yes of course you will; the last one was only five years ago. "Though", and he chuckled again, "You could hardly call that ramshackle old pub in the Outer Hebrides a hotel. Still it was better than this, and the whiskey they had was... whiskey. As though the thought reminded him he pulled a flask from his inner pocket and gulped at the liquid. "You'll still be on Bheer of course?" he asked, regarding the neofan almost severely, as he tucked the flask away again.

The neofan nodded wordlessly.

"They could see it would come to this eventually of course", the oldster continued, as though talking to himself. "Even in the early days, a couple of hundred years ago, it was obvious that someday the time would come when there were no more hotels in which Conventions could be held. And you know they weren't held in every one then". He spoke as though the words left a bitter taste in his mouth; as though

he, personally, had failed to achieve an objective by not holding a Convention in every hotel. "They passed word on to one another, and there were five hotels which we were never able to get into under any pretext. Yes, as I was saying, they knew it would come sooner or later, but did they care? Not they... They were faaaaans".

The neofan was overcome with pride in the honour of his kind.

"Even in the beginning they were unable to hold them twice in the same hotel you know (though they managed it once just for the Hell of it, by booking the hotel, the second year, for a "Friends of Florence Nightingale Conference", but that's another story). Naturally, they started running out of hotels in the big cities pretty fast. What a night it must have been when the Provincials and the Scutherners held a pitched battle with fire-extinguishers on the main staircase of the Dorchester in London! He sighed. "That was before my time though of course.

It wasn't just in Britain either; the same thing was happening wherever there were fans and you've read in your Fannish Histories of course about the Second Deluge, as the New Yoocon at the Waldorf-Astoria became known."

The neofan nodded vigorously, with bated breath.

"And of the Roofcon on the Empire State Building? Yes, naturally you have. Well so it went on. The hotels got harder to find and the porters got larger and tougher and more numerous, and even more incorruptible eventually." He laughed into his beard. "The fans were forced from the big towns to the small towns and... to the villages. From thence they were forced to find hotels almost completely cut-off from civilisation out in the wilds. Ghod, if only you'd understand the joke I'd say "places like Manchester" ... he gasped, doubling up with laughter. The neofan, full of concern, dashed to the cldster's side and proffered his Beer bottle but the ENF waved it aside with a rye face and swallowed another mouthful from his whiskey flask. A few minutes later he went on "The end was very near then and we all know it. We were forced to take over small pubs in any remote or inaccessible spot for the Cons. The very last time, at the "Duninton Porpoise" in the Outer Hebrides, we managed to pack the landlord and all the staff off for a week's holiday while we ran the place ourselves. Many's the time I've wished before Ghu that I could have seen that landlord's face when he got back and found a pile of flooded rubble where his hotel used to stand." He chortled to himself and the neofan laughed in/polite and rather awestruck manner.

"So that's it. All the hotels, pubs and any place like that, are finished and we've got to make the best of old caves like this far away from the haunts of normal people. That's not the end though of course; not for Fandom. When space travel rates become more reasonable, we shall get out to some frontier dives on one of the planets for the Conventions; There should be some that havn't heard of us. Fans don't give up that easy". He patted the neofan on his beanie. "One day even you may bear someone else's fanzine to pieces on a platform in an inn somewhere on Mars... Think of that Son", he chuckled. Anyway, I'd better get some sleep now; the others will be rolling in anytime and there's bound to be some serious, constructive speeches to face up to-morrow..." He found a dry patch against one of the cave walls and prepared for sleep.

The neofan sat up far into the night, fngering his zap gun and listening to the rain, as he lived again the mighty battles of the Waldorf-Astoria and the Dorchester, for he too... was a FAN.

THROUGH THE
11 of 11

ABSTRACT n^o 6 Convention Issue - as from Jan '55 bimonthly at 25¢
----- per issue or \$ 1.20 per year. (For \$ 1.50 under envelope)
from Peter J. Vorzimer Univ. of Cal. at Santa Barbara - 104 Toyon -
Goleta, California.

So the issue heralded so long ago arrived with a thud that shook
the building. The 100 pages were there - the promised material - a
few too many convention reports - but some exceedingly interesting
articles having nothing to do with cons to compete with them. It was
a thud, fete, but not the dull one you wondered about.

Your own convention report was just that - a straightforward report
on the daily happenings to you and party. Interesting as such, though
I can't approve some of the actions you described, and seemingly
were very proud about. The other reports were read, more because of
the insight in the lives of you fans they give, than for anything
else. As such - good fare.

Far better however were the articles by Carol McKinney - the 3 stages
of stf enjoyment and I can Grennell's Filler 97. Others were very good
as well, in fact there is hardly anything I can grumble about in the
whole issue, which is the best compliment you can expect from me I
suppose. I'll mark you one notch higher on the next fanzine poll.

Remark on page 60 - see farther in this.

COUP n^o 1 - bimonthly at \$ 1.50 per year from The Coup Group -
----- Dave Mason 14 Jones Street New York City.

A new fanzine to which I, much to Dick Ollington's surprise, imme-
diately took a liking is described as the Voice of Panarchy. Implied
therefore left-wing leanings - this as a warning to the right ones.

I personally enjoyed most of the articles: from Kim Chi (notes on
the political, the religious and the sf scene) to Aunt Albert's
Cocky Kock. An excellent recipe this issue, but one I've already
practised since I was about four. Best of the issue: The Soap Box by
Dan Curran - a treatise on the recent space platform views put for-
ward in Imagination's letter column this summer. The 50,000 murders
of Dr W. (unsigned) is all about an investigation into the 'horror'
comics by the Senate in the US. Comparison between the titles of
attacking books and the attacked comics is carried out convincingly.
I'm looking forward to further issues.

HEDGE-FODGE n^o 12 - monthly 15¢ per copy or 7 for 1 dollar, from
----- M.L. & W. Share - PO Box 51 Danville - Penna.

This is Hyphen's competitor to the "most words to a page" competi-
tion. You girls certainly manage to get a load of stuff crammed into
each issue. Hasn't Gregg grumbled yet? Whereas I had hoped to find
plenty of Marie-Louise here, in addition to Nancy's artistic capa-
bilities, I had to be satisfied with a one-page editorial each. Not
that it spoils the issue completely, but from Caprice I'd have thought
M-L would write even better stuff (is it possible?) in HF. Neverthe-
less Walt Klein doted on the Rhine, giving us a wonderful description
of scenery and castles. Those that were interested in them, anyway.
More fannish of nature is Chuck Harris' duplicator troubles, and the

columns by Ed Cox and Art Rapp. Stu MacKenzie has turned politician and discusses the present situation on our peaceful earth. Well-done Stu. Nearly half of the issue is taken up by one of the most interesting letter columns I've yet read - in this issue mainly devoted to varied opinions on the segregation v. non-segregation (i.e. the Negro problem in the US) following an article in issue 11.

Hodge Podge wouldn't be complete without Nancy's art, capably assisted in this by Plato and Fruchey. A wonderful mag 'girls'!

HYPHEN n° 11 - monthly (well, sometimes) at 1/6 or 25¢ for 2 issues.
----- From Walt Willis 17C Upper Newtownards Rd Belfast.

The surprise of the year : Damon Knight with a serco-review of two science fiction pts, and a new set of View Masters Reels of sf interest. Elsewhere I have enjoyed Damon's reviews of books, though I sometimes felt they had been a bit harsh - but having read neither of the two under discussion here I'll just state that his criticism certainly makes good reading. I'm on your side for continuing this sort of reviewing in Hyphen, Walt.

Yet another with an invasion of the immortal Eve as Gloria Fanhurst Femfan one. A delightful, if unexpected, short by Pamela Bulmer. But do not think that Hyphen has left the path of trufandom. No, Bob Shaw, George Charters, Chuck Harris, John Berry, Irene Gore and still others provide us with the high quality fan-ish material we've come to expect in each Hyphen.

Best in this? Bob Bloch's letter, of course!

MINI n° 1 - Jacob Edwards 1010 N. Tuckahoe Str Falls Church Va 10¢
----- How to review a zine like this without a/being called names by the editor - b/being called a philanthropist with a soft spot for undeserving fan-cds - that is the question.

Lock Jake, why charge ten cents for 16 half-quarter sheets (one of which remains blank at that) where you only present some stuff obviously jotted down in an odd moment. If you took longer you'd better pack. You want subscriptions and contributions - CK, so do we - only we're sure we'll publish another issue, which you are not according to your own editorial. Think this will get you much of either?

To top it all, you just pick some fanzines, and with only one exception play merry hell and say they're a waste of time and money. If you absolutely wanted to do a review, why not pick some others, ones which you could recommend? One good point is the reproduction, for a first issue it's quite good, but then, that wasn't your work.

Jake, grow up, and have a look at some other zines - like the ones reviewed here - you won't make their standard overnight, but do try to come just a wee bit closer before passing again.

All right - so I am a sucker - and you get your trade. So what!

THE NEW FUTURIAN - n. 3 quarterly - 9d or 15¢ per issue - from
----- M. Rosentlum, 7 Grosvenor Park, Chapel-Allerton Leeds 7, England.

Mike has turned out another exuberant serco-issue, which certainly keeps up the standard set in his two previous ones. Even improves, I'd say. Walter Gillings blithely continues his revelations, Ernest Thompson defends his opinions on science fiction, and the Phoenix rambles merrily along as if it had never been sacrificed on a funeral pile. Other articles by Viná Clarke on collections of long ago, and

far away (in time), John Brunner on literature & sf, with various book reviews. Magnificent stuff really, and neatly presented.

But that letter section. Such elite! (What was that?)

OOPSIA no 15 - bimonthly (more or less) at 15¢ or 2/25¢ ; 4/50¢ from
----- Gregg Galkins 2017 11th str Santa Monica California

I'd like to say I like this or that in preference to the rest, but practically every page is as good as the preceding or following one, and they're all united in an effort to produce a thoroughly enjoyable issue. And succeed. The editorial deserves mention for its "new year resolutions" for the fan. Neat that.

Extrapolations has the caustic Harlan Ellison doing just that. Bob Tucker presents Hot Romance and Cold Turkey, a tale of a honeymoon. He devotes one para to the romance and one to the turkey, in between taking us on a trip through the US.

The Harp that once or twice... Willis still going strong, but now worrying about ever getting anywhere on time. I hope people never expect anything like this travel journal from me, should I ever cross the Channel to attend a British convention. Walt's further comments on the Mancon, especially on the Pat Mahaffey hoax, are a fan's delight. (But Gregg, page 11 there, awful hard reading. One page from top to bottom, small print, and but ONE break! Makes one wish to get to the bottom.....)

Fanzine reviews by Bob Silverberg, the fanzine poll, Therbliggs... all in all a wonderful issue, Gregg. Congratulations.

VARIOSO no 11 - bimonthly (?) at 10 cents or 10 for one dollar
----- John Magnus Jr - 9312 Second Avenue - Silver Spring Md.

The mag I manage to keep forgetting. Apologics John, for seemingly being uninterested in trading - don't know how, but your name sort of vanished from the trade list. In the meantime I have had ish 7 sent to you from New York, this direct from here.

More surprising when Varioso is one of the neatest mags from the US and contained such high quality material. A new arrangement of an elder tune - Variations is the place where the editor has his say about air raid precautions - rockets and history of today tomorrow, music tastes - Varied indeed. A Midwestern report, by John himself, enlivens the issue, well supported by a letter/article from Shelby Vick, and the "Paper Moon Caper" origins as explained by Dean Grennell.

HIZZY no 1 - irregular or quarterly at 9d per issue from
----- Don Allen 3 Arkle Street Gateshead 3 England

So we finally have a comic-book section in fandom. With this first issue, Don presents an excellent array of cartoons, most of which are subtly worked out and nicely reproduced. Special mention here to Fip Up girl no 1, as portrayed by Cawthorn (?). (I can't check as I've mislaid my copy.)

Far from being a collection of cartoons all by one close group, I was surprised to notice that fans from just about everywhere had sent in material. My favourite? The photographer on the moon, taking a picture of Earth, saying: Someone moved.

Good work, Don. I'm looking forward to the next issue.

THE

Akmar

MYSTERY

by
TCM WHITE

The ever increasing tabulated results of archeological research are bringing to slow life whole civilizations of the remote past; many of which have been hitherto completely unsuspected.

It is only very rarely that an archeologist makes a startling discovery which is of sufficient common interest to be featured on the world's headlines; and it is even more rarely that a discovery is made which defies all reasonable explanation. The Akmar Helmet (as it has become known) and the accompanying tablet are within this class.

In January of last year I was present at the opening of a mound - or "kitchen midden" as they are sometimes called - which at first promised to be no more mysterious than the usual Mesopotamian rubbish dump. These mounds are the results of the lack of dustbin-men in the earliest of villages. Refuse was thrown out of the house and, accumulating through the years, finally reached - in some cases - sixty feet in height.

The mound in question was that at present day K'mar, which was - although at that time it was not proved - the ancient Akmar, mentioned frequently in the merchant's accounts found in the ruins of Babylon.

The first few weeks' work revealed nothing of unusual calibre, in fact the discoveries if anything were even more unexciting than usual. The first three layers of the debris we dated (by means of the pottery sherds) from roughly 300 B.C. to 200 A.D.. After that time the site had been abandoned and not re-settled until the fourteenth century when modern K'mar had its beginnings.

It was when we removed the walls of Akmar VII and dug down into the debris of the sixth town that we began to wonder... we struck clay! Thick yellow clay that covered the site to a depth of between 4 and 6 inches! And there was no doubt about it being a diluvial formation... at some time before 300 B.C. Akmar had been subject to a flood.

Disregarding the clay deposit for the meantime, we dug deeper into the strata, and immediately below the clay, in some instances mixed with it (thus proving them contemporary) we discovered the remains of the pre-Ptolemite town.

One unversed in ancient history would, no doubt, immediately jump to the conclusion that this was evidence of the Biblical flood. Well, strangely enough, there was a biblical flood; excavations at Ur have proved that; but the flood described so well in the Scriptures can be dated no later than 3,000 B.C., whilst the clay deposit at Akmar can be definitely settled between 500 and 300 B.C. - a discrepancy of, at the very least, 2,500 years.

The excavations at Alkamat and Midana, towns settled during roughly the same period as Akmar, and within easy distance (40 and 67 miles respectively), have thrown no light upon the subject.

At Midana in particular we have discovered many clay tablets of the time of Akmar VI, yet none refer to any complete inundation of the neighbouring city; although this of course is only negative evidence.

But the geographical position of the town itself makes the whole idea preposterous. True, the river flows within a mile of the site, yet even at that time, the mound must have been some twenty feet in height and, though fairly low-lying compared to the surrounding country, the broad, flat plain running for many miles in all directions makes the possibility of a flood of any duration very remote indeed.

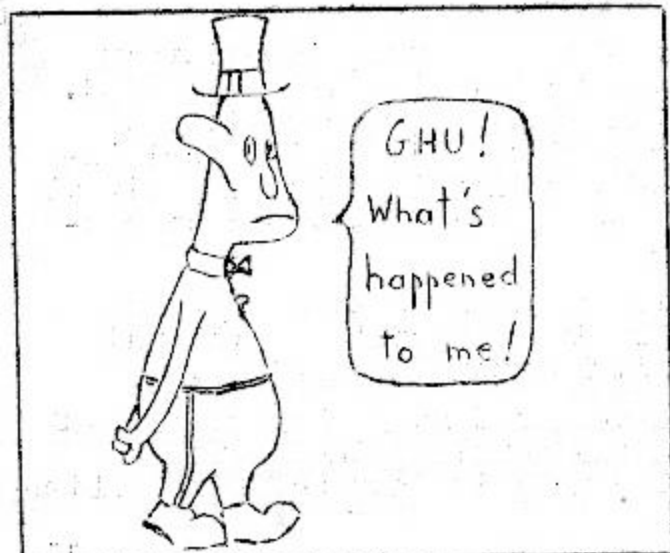
Hoping for some clue from the site itself, we hurriedly pushed on with the excavating, removing the whole of the clay deposit and carefully scrutinising each inch of earth. In the topmost layer, in fact the very first item discovered, was the Akmar Helmet. This head-piece (if indeed such it is) resembles nothing ever before discovered in the field of archeology. It seems to be a helmet, a kind of metal skullcap, made to fit snugly over the crown of the head; at the apex is fitted a tubular metal rod, which contained the rusted remains of some kind of crest, probably (according to Professor Kutts of the British Museum), intended to revolve.

This alone is strange enough, but lying just below it in the detritus, and almost touching it, was the Akmar Tablet.

This small writing sheet, some eight inches square and made of sun-baked clay, has been the subject of much argument amongst the learned men of the world. Signor De Vignor, of Madrid, until lately the acknowledged expert on cuneiform characters, has given to this tablet - which is obviously complete - a completely nonsensical meaning.

I, on the other hand, and most of the learned men of my profession, am inclined to the view that the characters inscribed upon the Akmar tablet are in some hitherto unknown script, for indeed, this can be the only explanation. Otherwise, if we take the word of Signor De Vignor seriously, the whole thing becomes a farce...

Surely we cannot believe that the ancient scribe who laboriously cut this tablet was a practical joker? Yet what else could he be if the translation of the gentleman from Madrid were correct?



Lib's Corner



DCWS IN THE SUN by Chad OLIVER
Ballantine Books 404 Fifth Ave New York 18 NY
Pocketbook format 35 cents - also in hardcover ed. at 2.00 dollars.

Thousands of stories have been written about peaceful and war-like attempts at the colonisation of Earth by alien races from farflung star systems. With this book, Chad Cliver gives us an entirely fresh approach to the possible existence on Earth of hundreds of alien colonies, under the logical disguise of being just another community, lost amongst the thousands upon thousands similar small towns throughout the world.

Perhaps it is a bit far-fetched, but Chad Cliver certainly makes it sound quite commonplace. Paul Ellery, the hero anthropologist, acts in a believable, though sometimes naive way, and holds our interest throughout the book. The other characterisations are not usually so well done, but the vivid description of various events and scenes makes up for this. Especially noticeable is the relating of the dance in town, where Paul is unconsciously showing off with a jitterbugging session. The write-up and interpretation makes one live through it as if one were present.

So far, Ballantine haven't made many mistakes in their choice, and this certainly maintains the excellent quality.

+++Though some Ballantine Books have recently been on sale at Antwerp I have not noticed any of titles amongst them. Should any member want to buy them, they can always contact us though.

ENTERPRISE 2115 by Charles GREY
Merit Books - 98 Great Russell Street London WC 1
Pb edition at 2/- also available in hardcovers.

Some contrast! This is straightforward action and suspense. Totally impossible situations, solved at the spur of the moment by our hero; the first man to attempt the moonflight, gets lost in space, and is found centuries later, perfectly preserved, and resurrected. Strangely enough, the first part of the book, describing the preparations and the take off for the moon make plausible and excellent reading, but after that... I'm not saying I disliked it. Far from it, it makes a nice change to turn to this type of fast action yarn once in a while. As such, recommended.

AUTHENTIC n° 51 - November 1954

I imagine I should give thanks here for the review of Alpha in Authentic's pages, as it brought us to the notice of a local fan, Willy (no connection with apples) Rombouts, whose artistic capabilities have already been put to work on this issue. Thanks!
But continuing with Authentic: and fanzines: seems to me there's quite a difference between calling people names in a 100 to 250 copy circulation fanzine, or in doing the same in a prozine at sale most everywhere in Great Britain, and even in the wilds of Antwerp.

The fiction content is far below average this issue, at least in my opinion. With THE ENVIED Jonathan Burke presents us a story about a type of super zombies, artificial bodies in which the resurrected brains of dead people are built. These are called the Greys, and our hero is dedicated to finding the truth about them, when his girl is killed in an accident and transplanted (?) in a robot. Quite good this. Which I can't say about the three other shorts, excepting perhaps for the Blackdown Miracle, which however seems rather off-trail in a sf magazine. An illness much in evidence in late Authentica.

FICTION n° 13 December 1954

This magazine proves that science fiction in France at least manages to hold its own. Beside the translations from F&SF, which Morrison, Henderson, Abernathy and Bretmor, it also brings one or two original tales. Disappointed of course, this time, because Bouquet's otherwise enthralling story, is pure fantasy. Georges Chaulet's story is well written but makes me wonder just what this is doing here. I am getting critical. The regular departments on books, science and films keep us well informed on the respective activities in and around Paris. Recommended to anyone able to read (and understand) French.

IF Worlds of Science Fiction. December 1954

Another fantasy tale in a mag with such a lovely title. And "the Jungle" certainly is fantasy, where C. Beaumont tells about the struggle for possession between black man's magic and white men's technology in a future African wilderness. Andy Offut won the College Award with his "And gone Tomorrow" a fairly plausible tale about the future state of the world, with a dictatorial uprising. Well written. Coppel's story is way ahead of the rest, humorously treating the first alien divorce case on Earth. Several other stories and features round off a good magazine. No fans around though!

NEW WORLDS n° 30 December 1954

Continuing to pick the winners... this time P.W. Cutler's delightful riot as a reconnaissance party from another planet lands here, and meets up with a young kid, reared on sf comics and TV shows. Delirious! I nearly wrote the editor about it! Then again, with its new serial Ted seems to have chosen well, presenting Charles Dye's Prisoner in the Skull in three instalments. Contrary to custom I've read the first part, and enjoyed it tremendously. Page 43 especially where our hero turns out to be a future Vin & Clarke, collecting quotes at a party.... The rest of the stories quite good, though Tubb rates bottom this time. Perhaps the others were too good!

BOARDMAN PUBLICATIONS: have published TRIPLANETARY, the first of the Lensman series. I don't believe it necessary to introduce that to you. At 9/6 a bargain. Forthcoming: Spring: anthology Best from New Worlds, to become a yearly regular pocketbook. Autumn will see a similar title, but taken from Science Fantasy. Presumably priced 2/-.

In Belgium: Well, all the newspapers carry notices about flying saucers, and half the current adverts seem to mention PS somehow or other. Perhaps it is a start?

XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX
XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX
XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX

The present batch of letters - for which we are most grateful - seems to have broken all records, and therefore will take up a considerable amount of space. How much it will take up I don't yet know, because I'm typing them directly on stencil, including the comments, to save time. Top of the list we have, of course, the women. And a bewitching bevy of beauties they are too. This first one just missed the last ish. It's from :

PAMELA BULMER: " You got a nice friendly atmosphere through the whole sine which is good, very good. Pride of place must of course go to Vin's "Grunch...". Actually of course it was my account; I took it down verbatim and Vin just read my shorthand. He was incapable of doing it himself since he was under the influence of some peculiar disease which turned him green and sent him staggering all round the deck. I don't know much about Vin and Bob trying to harness a duplicator to the engine but there was an awful noise like clinking glasses and suddenly Vin leaned out of the door, threw me a bottle of beer and yelled "I name this ship ss. Jolly-Con" (the lodger was away). "Cheer up old boy, you've only got 999 to go..." I said. Now I know how he got there before us. Some of those quotes were almost as good as those made in a certain London taxi... not surprising when you consider who made 'em.

Liked the little man on the cover (A.6) and the £'s and \$'s at the end of Vin's article. Do you think the shopkeeper was a non-fan? he wouldn't accept them, said they weren't legal tender. Letter column coming along nicely, but I wish they'd start arguing...

BOB - so you wanna fight eh? Well girls and boys, what are you waiting for? I'm afraid I won't join you. You see, I've met Pamela and I'd much rather be friendly and gentle to her than fight her... Ch gosh, I nearly forgot... Beg pardon Ken. Beg pardon Yvonne... Gosh...

MARIE-LOUISE SWART says " I wish I had a good photo to send you. But all of them - you know, the flattering ones - are all gone. And this one makes me look sullen and hoydenish ((whazzat?)) C well, it's me. Now I hope you remember to send me one of yourself ((I did)) and Jan ((ca no...)) for my scrapbook. I have some marvelous ones, sent me by practically all the fans in fandom. My album is fat with faces. You know Robert Bloch? ((who doesn't?)) I think I'm in love with him ((what has he got that I wish I had?)), he's such a darling... well. I've at least six different shots of him, one sent a few days ago by Dean Grennell; and in this photo Tucker and Bloch are playing footsie in their stockinged feet. But as I said don't forget to send some...

I've got a job in town ten miles from here and I work at my music a great part of my spare time and when I spend an evening at home, I hardly get to the piano before Nance pulls me into her den to stencil issues of Hodge Fodge - incidentally have you received the numbers eleven and twelve I sent you last week or the week before? When they arrive please Dave, send us a letter for the letter-column will you? and Jan too. You are both so nice and friendly ((hear that boys?)) I'm looking forward to the next OMPA mailing. I sent mine over some time ago, not a big one after all in spite of my smug remarks in the first issue.

Would you like to try some of my music? I write mostly sentimental ballads, but you'd never have guessed it eh? and I'd love to have you try some out and tell me how terrific I am...

**** - The gal's got everything... She writes, composes poems and music, likes to dance, likes coconut cake, thinks we're both nice and friendly, is in love with Robert Bloch and is still single...

SHIRLEY MARRIOTT inquires: "Have you read "Hole in Heaven"? There is only one hole it's fit for and that's the nearest drain. CRUD... they certainly had a knack ((dash it)) to label it SIF. Also read "Gateway to to-morrow" an anthology edited by Ted Carnell. Nowt else available except Vargo Statten - excuse me whilst I am sick- ((Surely it's not as bad as that is it? or is it?))

So your wife has her own name for fan parties has she? Perhaps I had better write to her and explain our views on 'life' ((Perhaps you can convince her Shirley...))

We top - much to the disgust of the local inhabitants- ((tsk tsk)) at the local club. Our band has just won the South of England Jazz Club band competition ((is that good?)) so you can guess that we support them well ((I guess they need supporting too - musicians usually do))

ffff - I've said it! And now for the Lords of creation: MEN. First of all a very nice letter from:

WALT WILLIS: "Another fine cover and it's nice to see Ren in fanmags. I was tremendously impressed by his stuff at the London Convention in 1951? ((I wouldn't know Walt)) and have been looking out for him ever since. Incidentally I'm sorry my comment on the last one was obscure. When I said you were going Dali it was a little pun on "daily" and the surrealist painter "Dali" whose work that cover somewhat resembled. I realise it was a "wee pun too horrible to be used" Sorry.

I suppose I am a jazz fan but at the moment I'm in a passive state... I just listen to the stuff. No one else here is interested in it so we never talk about it ((Shame on youz)) But you people please carry on - I'm still interested.

Petter's little story was lovely. I wish I'd thought of this idea myself. I only hope most of your readers appreciate that it's based on Chuck Harris' mutant idea of handing Mancun "quotecards" to strangers in the street.

Marrer was funny too but Shirley's piece seemed somewhat disappointed. If has I suppose a sort of clinical interest if it was actually written on the train on the way home. It bears all the hallmarks of being genuine in that respect.

Best thing in the issue was Ambrosia, I thought, and I take off my bonnie in admiration to whichever of you wrote that comment on Ellik's letter. Beautifully put, and I think we can take Ellik's face as red. I must say he's a hell of a nerve to say he hasn't time to read other people's fanzines. I expect I'm just as active in fandom and as busy outside of it as he is; but I read every fanzine I get from cover to cover. Perhaps Ellik would have more time if he wouldn't waste it writing stupid and pointlessly offensive letters like this.

Another fine issue Dave, keep 'em coming.

cccc : As I explained in my letter Walt, the pun eluded me at first mainly because I pronounced it "Dally" for some unaccountable reason. So you only listen to Jazz eh? That's the most important point. Do you know there are innumerable "fans" who can't even do that properly. As to Ren Ellik; Well, I guess he didn't mean any harm. One musn't be

too hard on the poor guy. After all, it's his first offence.

Poor BOB BLOCH has had a difficult time of it, and still has by the locks of things. He writes:

"I shall be in a sad position regarding articles for some time to come. My wife returns from the TB sanatorium this Sunday, but she'll be on crutches and restricted in her activity. Running the house alone has taken a lot of time, but the addition of wife, daughter and dog will complicate matters. At least, when alone, I didn't have to adhere to regular hours for set duties, but now I shall. So something has to go... and that's fanzine articles.

In '55 I fear I'll be represented only by letters, or by the articles already in the grubby hands of fanzine editors for future publication. There won't be time nor, I suspect, energy. I had thought of merely cutting down, say 80%, but that's a good way to make for hard feelings; whoever would be eliminated would feel unhappy. Not because of the quality of my articles, understand, but merely because all fans love all articles on account of the opportunity they afford for filling the space between inter-lineations.

Besides, the only titles I presently have in mind (WHY I HATE STIAN KENTON.... COOL JAZZ IS FRIGID... MY ANTWERPREIATION OF BCP) would probably not be suitable for a publication with your avowed editorial viewpoint. I have often wondered at the cosmic irony implicit in the fact that "American Jazz" was originally popularized in Europe by a negro musician who himself was named Europe (Jim Europe to be exact). But I can't say that I share the European enthusiasm for Americanischer Jazz per se: I do think it is a good thing in a way, because it has influenced so many European composers in their work -- cf. Milhaud, Ravel, Weill, Krenak, Honegger, Auric, Stravinsky, etc... and led to a greater appreciation of certain American composers over there than they enjoy here -- cf. William Grant Still, Janssen ((any relation to Jan ?)) Grofe.

Here in America I get the impression that Jazz has become the vehicle for a large snob-quit: many extol a Brubeck and then jump to Bach with a profound sneer for anything "in between": these are people who simply cannot understand why on earth Toscanini would want to record GRAND CANYON SUITE or how he could ever bring himself to regularly perform THE PLANETS. Of course I am ancient enough to remember the long-ago days when Bix and Tsch were actually playing; when the Quintet of the Hot Club of France was bringing out its first recordings; when ESQUIRE magazine was born and started the whole religion, with emphasis on what was then called "Swing". ((Gosh, Bob, I didn't know you were that old)) Perhaps that, plus a long-ago acquaintance with a number of nightclub musicians, has taken some of the dewy-eyed wonder away from me; fact remains I can't enjoy listening to too much of the stuff without the accompaniment of liquor or dancing-- whereas I can listen to most of the detested arranged and stylized pops in lush orchestration without any environmental support ((with me it's just the opposite...)) or the necessity of being surrounded by a crew of enthusiasts who herald each forthcoming lick with a "Now dig this Dad" or "play that part again, it stuns me"... Not being a musician (fiddle a bit on my small electric organ) I cannot adjudge virtuosity per se; but from what I've heard, I enjoy the playing of English and Scandinavian jazz ensembles more than American groups; at the same time realizing that many of them are composed in part of expatriate American musicians. However, there is a discipline inherent in their work, a cleanness of technique which seems lacking in this "crazy, man, crazy" shouting-type-watch-out-he'll-throw-up-all-over-the-place" American approach.

In my mind it is too similar to the alleged "comedy technique" of a Jerry Lewis (viz., juvenile hysteria) as opposed to the work of a Chaplin or a W.C. Fields, who needn't rely on exaggeration, meaningless grotesquerie, or any form of excess to gain a reaction. We over here have, I fear, come lately to adulate completely meaningless exhibitions of dexterity: for example, there is a widespread admiration for a form of simpering sublimated-sexual-exhibitionism called "baton-twirling", where ridiculously costumed young ladies, garbed in a manner that would excite Sacher-Masoch and other fetichists, parade around tossing a gilded phallic symbol. Great ecstasy is evinced by onlookers at the sight of the difficult and involved gyrations, but to me it's just stick-tossing and about as significant as engraving the Lord's prayer on a pin head. And in this category, I fear, I place a lot of the instrumental technique so applauded by jazzophiles. If the jazzophiles (and I refer, mind you, to the avowed cultmembers) were as tolerant of other musical forms, I wouldn't take such exception to their tastes-- but most of them are a lot harsher on a Gould than I'd ever be on an Armstrong...

Anybody want to discuss hymns?

\$\$\$\$ - Well Bob, to use an American slang expression "You sure slobbered a bibful. In other words there's food and drink in this missile of yours. I think I could add another composer to the list influenced by American Jazz: Dvorjak. Yes no?

I'm inclined to agree with you on most points, although I can't be bothered much with this "popular" stuff. Mind you, I'm not condemning it (I don't believe in condemning any music, because it all has its particular use) but I prefer to settle down to something I can really get my teeth into. Now, this Bach business: I think that Bach is one of the greatest (if not the greatest) composers that ever lived. He really gets to the heart of music. He doesn't bother with the little trivialities that make up a melody but goes right down to the foundations of harmony... and there, believe it or not, is where there is an affinity with "hot" musicians. When a "hot" musician really gets "sent" he can produce some remarkable "variations" on a well-known "theme" - meaning he improvises. And to improvise well, you've got to know the basic harmonies of the tune you're mucking around with.

Holl. I'll have to dry up or I'll be harping on this theme all night. Besides, I've just had another letter on the same subject; it's from:

JEAN CARR: ... "This question of musical tastes is rather peculiar. I've found there is often as much snobbery amongst "lowbrows" as there is amongst "highbrows". A large section of each group deliberately won't try to understand the other point of view ((That's what Bob Bloch said)). I'm liable to get as much enjoyment out of Creole numbers as I do from Chicago style jazz- or Dizzie Gillespie- or Stan Kenton- or Rimsky Korsakov- or Beethoven- or Stravinsky ((ette girl)) As long as it has mood or feeling and rhythm I can enjoy it to a varying extent. I've even found a peculiar fascination in the weird wailings of some of the Arabic types out here. Maybe one of these days I'll specialise in one musical form or another - but not if I can help it ((wonderful...)) There's too much specialisation as it is without the world of entertainment being added. (On second thoughts maybe I do have some kind of "Taste". As I mentioned to Harry Turner when the subject cropped up - I can't stand the popular dance music and its stupidly ridiculous lyrics ((hear hear)) or the folk tunes about Devon and Somerset and Drake's Drum ((what about "Dave's Drum?")) and the Morris dance and the rest of that stuff. They leave me cold. ((And re'coo!))

Alpha 7: The best item was the Potter piece (Good boy Ken) I suppose it just had to happen. We have had innumerable descriptions of the distribution of these enlightening cards, but this is the first time we have witnessed the effect from the viewpoint of a recipient.

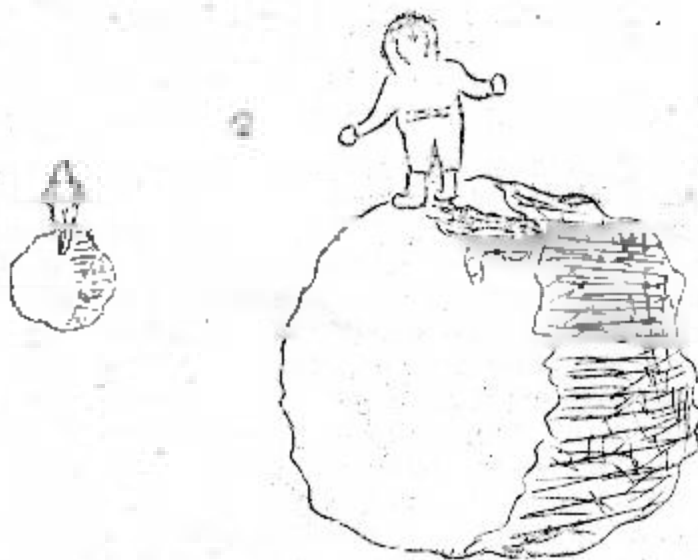
Also enjoyed Ah Chee's item, but how uneconomical to maintain three of these creatures. Now I have just one - by the name of Khamsin. "You can take your choice of fennish Ghods but you can only go to one Devil. Khamsin is Lord High Much-a-Muck Chief Devil and JaCa is his prophets". (From a campaign speech) This sand-devil has all the attributes of Ah Chee's Sticky, Wrinky and Moldy- with a few more besides. Imagine for a moment a long wooden hut. Down the centre are placed three tables touching each other. The windows are closed and the door is locked. The various pages of FEZ 3/4 are produced and placed in order along the table already, for collating. Now, who picks that moment to whistle through a narrow crack in the boards forming the wall of the hut and pick up the top dozen sheets from each pile and distribute them under the tables and chairs? Why, Khamsin of course, curse him...

Ron Elvik's letter rather shook me. I didn't know there was anyone in tandem with such a bloated ego. Hope there aren't many others...

EEEE - Well Jean, seeing as you sent me not one, but two pictures of yourself (hear that girls and boys, two pictures) I just had to include an extract of your letter in this. I heartily second your musical tastes, because I too am liable to delve - at the most unexpected moments - into the most remarkable musical adventures. I can go from a sublime and blissful contemplation of Bach's "Tocatta & Fugue" or Sam Barber's "Adagio for strings" (a beautiful piece this), via some Spanish "Flamenco" folk songs, to Stan Kenton's "New conceptions of Artistry in rhythm" (not actually jazz, but modern music), or Max Roach's "Sfax" (remarkable drumming), or Albert Ammons' Boogie woogies.

I think we should have quite an argument in next ish what with all these divided opinions... Any more offers?

Dave



D.A.N.

"Even if I could get across, what's the use? There's no air...."

And now, ... over to Jan, who's got another lunch. :

With the speeding up of Alpha, several comments from overseas arrived too late to be included in our last issue. One or two letters however deserve mention here, as their content has not yet been outdated.

GREGG GALKINS for instance: I do wish you wouldn't follow the footsteps of most European fanmags and fill the page from top to bottom, tho'. I'd like to see double-spacing between paragraphs, at least. It breaks up the solid print and doesn't make you wish quite so much to be all the way to the bottom of the page. One solid page seems like so much work, whereas separate paragraphs are easy to take one by one. You know....divide and conquer!

I'm against interlineations. Which would make a good one in itself, I suppose. But I feel that there are few really delightful interlineations. I think a good int'l (my abbreviation) should be a comment out of somebody's letter NOT INTENDED FOR PUBLICATION OR INTERLINEATION which would seem funny to a reader seeing it for the first time, and even funnier if he happened to know the background behind it. But it should always, to be genuine, be made "off the cuff" and with no idea whatsoever of writing it for publication. Get me?

Overall opinion on Alpha: up and coming. Would greatly improve by more work on layout--with special attention to this--and better spacing and delineation of material: a malady, incidentally, from which most European fanmags, notably Hyphen, suffer. You would do well to avoid it, even sacrificing the extra material you can get in by not-spacing and close layout.....

§§§ This opinion has been mentioned a few times recently, and Dave already started in issue 7 - I obviously forgot - though I hope I'll manage to keep at it for my share this issue. Let's have your comments on the present layout. And how about some other guys working on the outlay. We're still deficient on that! How many letters are written, in fandom today, without intent (or hope) of publication? One percent?

BOYD RAYBURN requests and imparts information: Ron Kidder and I have just been discussing whether your name is Dutch or Flemish or Walloon or what. What is WALLOON anyway? (§ Judging by Maurice, closely related to BALLOON. §) We have both decided it wouldn't be very nice to be Flemish as people could say to one "You Phlegm!" (Ron is now singing "My old Phlegm".)

Jan old friend (§this is the first letter I received from the guy! §) to put you out of your most flattering misery, I must tell you that the A BAS index was on the same lines as the Alpha Twerpeen. An elaborate hoax was planned, but I decided not to put it through, as there would probably be too many hurt feelings (O.K. so I split infinitives) but the Index was full of all sorts of esoteric gags, so I decided to run it anyway. It served a good purpose by making the Silent Types who never acknowledged the mag think they had missed a lot of issues and do something about it. (§ Thanks! §)

Actually there have been four issues of A BAS so far. Vol. 3 no 3 was the first to come out under my complete control (that was when it ceased to be a clubzine) and I am most flattered by your comments on its superiority. The next issue should be coming out very shortly. (§As with most, I disagree with your concept of "a very short" time. §)

§§§ Boyd confesses also to a talent of pulling people and things to pieces. P. Howard Lyons (PRE-APA) your next victim?
Walloon: French speaking inhabitant of southern Belgium. If you don't like Flemish, try VLAAMS:

NIC COSTERBAAN gave us the surprise of our lives: Alpha 7 hit my mail box this morning, and with unexpected and unexplainable energy I hasten to comment. From your 'Cast and Credits' page I see that Mr Roscoe is still being mentioned; so he turned up again, huh? Must have been a pleasant surprise.

I'm still not sure about that cool jazz. Would that be beb or some thing? I have always had the feeling that jazz died when be-beb was invented. Can hardly be jazz, that be-bob stuff I mean. And if it's Stan Kenton's progressive music you're so hot on - or should I say 'cool on'? - forget it. That ain't no jazz, buster. 't Heeft ernstig gelegen we say....

What's this 'Ad to Europe' slogan that's plastered all over the place? Don't refer to postage rates for letters from England to the Continent, or does it? That's really something that Englishmen will never learn. Scotchmen will learn, but are inclined to try it with loss stamps and Irishmen just don't care. So you seldom get a letter from the British Isles with postage fully paid. Better accept that as one of the unalterable facts of life.

Keep up the good work, and stay where you are. Easy on the licker, tho'.

§§§The translation of the old saying quoted above: It has bedded with it. What's the matter, Nic, you scared of us? Surprises never come alone, and

DEREK PICKLES, with THREE (3) pages and TWENTY SIX (26) paragraphs of comments deserves a very short mention: The cover is brilliant - it is the best cover you've ever had - and if you ever print one 90% as good in the future I'll kill you. Here I am bashing my brains out thinking up stick men scratchings, and A turns up with a beautifully finished satire. Grrrrrrrrrrrrrr (gnashing of teeth!)..... (§ I suppose I should be glad this one only covers half-a-page, or 50% ?§)

Archie's article - clever - definitely clever - it's very funny but none of our windows have broken yet - what might this peculiar affinity with archie be, perhaps we've published something of his - I wonder what would happen if one were to reject something???? Empty frames within the hour.....

I'm afraid I'm becoming bored with Shirley Merritt's adventures - especially when retailed in a semi-pornographic manner (with pornographic editorial comments). If there was anything worth telling, apart from the fact that a gang of people got drunk, damn it tell it. Don't hover around the fringes. (§ I always thought hovering around the fringes an excellent stimulant!§).....

what a dirty trick Dave pulled - my tongue is hanging out a foot wanting to know what he censored from page 17. It's like the rows of dots in the expurgated edition of 'Lady Chatterley's Lover', the imagination works overtime fitting people and confessions into the space....

I've been translating the heading on page 21 and append it below: - "a jolly fish met a man, they sat on a seat, under a tree, they found a football, a little boy came up and axed fcf it back, he wore an accrn on his head, obviously Oakay; then the clock struck eight."

I received your letter by despatch rider - Malash tearing down Cutler Heights (a practically flat road) Lane on a pedal cycle, delivering letters for you. How much did you pay him? Or did you bribe him by promising to print his letters?

§§§Neither. He hopes to be able to blackmail you for that duplicator of yours. Didn't you know?

MAL ASHCWORTH, having been mentioned, can't be kept quiet: I should say something about it? I should?... Well, it had twenty-two pages (white) some covered with illustrations and some with typing (some were covered with a combination of the two), it had the title in the top right hand corner on the cover and inside it had a contents page. It also had some contents. It came from Belgium - in an envelope. (Filthy capitalists!!!) Is that all you wanted me to say? No????

Yes, I'm sorry I forgot to mention Ben Abas when I said how distinctive Jean Steer's covers were. Ben also has my profound admiration for his work in the last Alpha - the fine cover and that terrific two-page cartoon.....

The last Weekend could have been a lot better if Shirley hadn't worried about trivialities like being slung in jail or deported from the country, and had been more specific. It's these little considerations that can make or mar a thing.

On perusing your letter-column several things struck me (frying-pan etc. wielded by people desiring me no longer to clutter up the living room). One was that you got a polite letter from Chuck Harris. I'm not sure as yet what this signifies but we had a polite letter from Chuck Harris in the last issue of BEM and the duplicator broke down while we were running it off. Second is, why do you allow that lousy letter-hack Mal Ashworth to creep into the same letter-column twice? Believe me I wouldn't even publish his name on a subscription list - assuming he subscribed, which he won't. (§ Are you jealous because the guy evidently doesn't consider BEM worthy of a letter of comment? And even the worst writer gets quoted if he writes letters every other day to both editors!§)

Next congratulations on getting a letter for Ambrosia from that pin-naculous (I don't think that was a proper word before I just invented it) ENF - Dave Vendelmans. Heck, you are lucky getting a name like that in; I wish we could get Vendelmans for BEM (to turn the mimeo handle) - but the best thing of all was the distinctive way in which you printed his letter - illegible. I think that was a stroke of genius! Can't you see your way to print ALL his material in the same manner? He deserves special treatment. (That should give you a chance for a crack about "Yes - in a mental hospital," Jan.) And then there's Tom White. (Alas). Jan why don't you, in order to provide some egoboo for the writers of letters in Ambrosia, run a competition for the biggest liar in each issue.? If you decide to I should like to nominate my friend Tom for the first award. I know he'll say he's not worthy and he doesn't deserve it and I shouldn't embarrass him with such honours, but believe me, he deserves every syllable of it on behalf of that master piece of his telling you that he's not really absent-minded. Ha. I could give you innumerable examples to prove otherwise, but I'm saving them all up for a book I intend to write on the subject. Actually I'm exaggerating when I say "innumerable examples"; as far as I have only collected enough to fill half of my eight-hundred page book. It will be at least a fortnight before he provides me with enough examples for the other half.....

§§§ That idea for an award looks all right at first glance. But after careful consideration I won't do it. Tom will be picking you all the time, whilst you try and find something to be able to award the next one to Tom again. The other fellows just won't have a chance.

As for your most vile, proletarian accusation: I received the brown paper free; bought the gum; had cuts and sticks 'em together. You call such cooperative work capitalism?

ARCLIT... practically always first with his comments, didn't disappoint us this issue, saying amongst other things: Don't agree with Chuck that Ben Abas is better than Cartier - not on present showing anyway. Good, I'll agree, but personally I prefer Steer. (§ Prejudiced fishbowl ?§) I miss any more manifestations of the little Iwerp. (§ He will be starting reproduction any day now. §)....

The Visitors is exceedingly brief and to the point - in fact all that a short story ought to be. Not that the point's all that original - but it certainly came as a surprise, as did the fact that the end was on the same page as the beginning. I was expecting the thing to drag out interminably in usual fan-short fashion. Mons.D. needs heartily congratulating. I really mean it....

Fity he doesn't like jazz....

Lastly, finally, etc., there's that idea of yours re number of fanhours per week. I detect a subtle (or not so subtle) trap - surely any trufan worthy of the name could not possibly attempt to divide his time up into fanhours and non-fanhours. Like asking a parson how many hours per week he devotes to religion.

I, however am not a trufan, so I don't in the least mind telling you. It varies from week to week of course, but during the last six months it averages around 19½ hours per week. Not counting time spent reading promags, books etc. of course.

In total, despite the activities of Messieurs et Mesdames Crotter and Marriott, but due largely to the efforts of Messieurs Delplace, Jansen, Abas, Vendelmans and Potter, together with sundry letter-writers (especially the jazz-inclined ones) Alf 7 in no way lowers the standard of its predecessors.

Only one thing - suggest bigger zines less often. (Seriously!)

\$\$\$ That last suggestion is rather unexpected. Do you mean we should go back to the two-months routine (I won't say bi-monthly as we're still supposed to be on a b-m schedule) or only issue quarterly? We have worked the present size and the cost cut so that with 100 copies and 100 subscribers we would cut even. Unfortunately we have exceeded the printed copies - and failed miserably in even obtaining half the expected subbers. The cost was based on six issues of 20 pages - costing us 5 frs a copy.

We could alternatively have four issues of 30 pages. I doubt whether you'd get much support for it. - Of course Archie didn't mention his own effort, so I'll quote

DICK ELLINGTON (lost his duchess some time ago) Ah-Chee leaves me in stitches, but pleasantly so. I like his stuff. And that goes double for Shirley M. Some of the US rags would do well to start a liaison with these two and scrounge some material. (No puns on a liaison with Shirley please!) Razor-edged comments weren't had either....

Lynn Hickman has one of those cars-that-do-everything. He had a brand new one but as you know the lousy ashtrays keep getting filled up... When they invent one that will neck automatically Lynn may just buy it and experiment with it... (If I had a wife like Lynn's I'd probably do it automatically all right....

\$\$\$ Well, that's the only letter from the US in at the time of writing this column (Sat. 11/12.) which ought to teach us not to be late one issue, and on time the next. Until then, cheerio.

Not mentioned with the above, yet deserving full praise for good workmanship: Femizine, Sidereal, Satellite and Dizzy. Picy had the material, but was utterly ruined by the horrible mess Rcn made of the duplicating. Of course, I am forgetting to mention quite a few, and not everybody will agree with my opinion on the magazines, but you must be wondering, even as I am, where all that pent-up energy and cash has suddenly come from.

May I offer this as one explanation for the sudden drop in circulation for so many prezines?

For whereas fanzines crop up everywhere, even in the desolate wastes of Europe, science fiction itself has felt the ground shake beneath them. Several indeed crashed completely, and deservedly so, for there was a high percentage of trash.

With such a recent fall in mind, one cannot but wonder whether the same is not likely to happen in the fanworld. Though a variety of new names have come to the fore, the greater bulk of material is still being written or edited by the fans that led the fanfield last year (and are still doing so.) Will they be able to keep up the standard of material though, if they have to keep putting out more and more to satisfy the growing demand of new faneds. Or if they continue to supply quality rather than bulk, will the newly risen fanwriters be able to maintain the quality they have shown in the occasional material presented?

Let's not try and forecast: let's wait another year and see.

In between all these considerations however creeps the ugly aspect of money. Subscriptions are of course always welcome, and many a faned would have to give up his magazine if he couldn't count upon a certain amount of subs contributing to his outlay. I will even admit we couldn't do it. Yet it sort of hurts when one receives a letter saying: "I have had quite a time in the past year in subscribing to fanzines. I have sent dollars to about twenty five different zines and out of that amount I receive about a dozen. Some I received one copy and in most cases none at all. The editors don't even bother to write explaining whether their zine has folded or whatever the reason is I've not received it. So all in all it has kinda soured me on fandom in general, but I still like to receive fanzines. Most of them have something of interest for the fan in one way or another...."

Now I do in most cases acknowledge receipt of a subscription by letter or postcard - especially so if an issue has just been sent out and no further copies are available. One can't expect every faned to do so, but in cases where it concerns quarterly publications the delay between issues certainly justifies the use of a postcard in acknowledgement. Where the magazine has folded, due to lack of time or just because one has become fed up with it, is it too difficult to write out an envelope, and mail the cash back, or send a postal order?

It is definitely true that too many noofen are "soured" on fandom by just this sort of thing. When I personally started in fandom, I had the same happen to me, only I was luck enough to meet up with one (out of four or five) faned, who did bother to send a card and explain the delay. Walt went off to the US and informed me of the fact. If I had not heard from him, I would most likely have given it up there and then, as I never did hear from any of the other fans,

though I had sent them money, and in one case even s.a.e.. There are still a couple of these people that haven't given sign of life.

Isn't there anyone able to work out something to avoid this? For one thing fandom would be a far cleaner place, and perhaps more people would be integrated, that are now turning away after seeing their money vanish without trace. Nor can the claim that these people are not worth finding, if they won't find their way through this pitfall be considered. One doesn't know what one's missing unless one has an acquaintance with it.

But to get on to another subject. Gregg Calkins recently held a poll for the best ten fanzines published. The results were published in his last issue, (I hope it isn't, I meant latest of course!) and just to avoid possible suspicion I'd like it known that I didn't give Alpha that first place vote. I didn't even vote it in, sheer modesty. Even so, considering that at the time of voting only twelve of the forty participants had seen more than one copy of Alpha, I needn't say that we were mighty pleased with the result: still being listed in the top twenty. Now if I'd sent copies to all the others.... Or is this the department of idle speculation?

Continuing speculating I begin to wonder how comes the recent trend in fanzine reviews, in the US at least, is to hand these over to a second person, capable undoubtedly, but in whose opinion, I for one, am far less interested than that of the faneditor himself. If this trend is to continue, after all there have been four fanzines switching to this system lately, it won't be enough for me to mail out let's say forty copies for trade, I'd have to send out another forty if I'd want to see Alpha reviewed.... Dreadful thought!

Rereading all the previous material, I suppose some of you enlightened blockes will suggest I rename this part: Grumbler's Corner. Well, why not? Why be polite all the time to the annoyance of people like John Hitchcock?

Are there any Belgian and/or Dutch fan interested in attempting to make the next British large-scale convention? I am. And just in case:

The name: CYTRICON - the place: The George Hotel KETTERING Northants. Date: 8th, 9th and 10th of April 1955. A three-day con. Easter in case you hadn't noted.

Registration fee is 2/6, which entitles you to all bulletins and the programme issued on the convention.

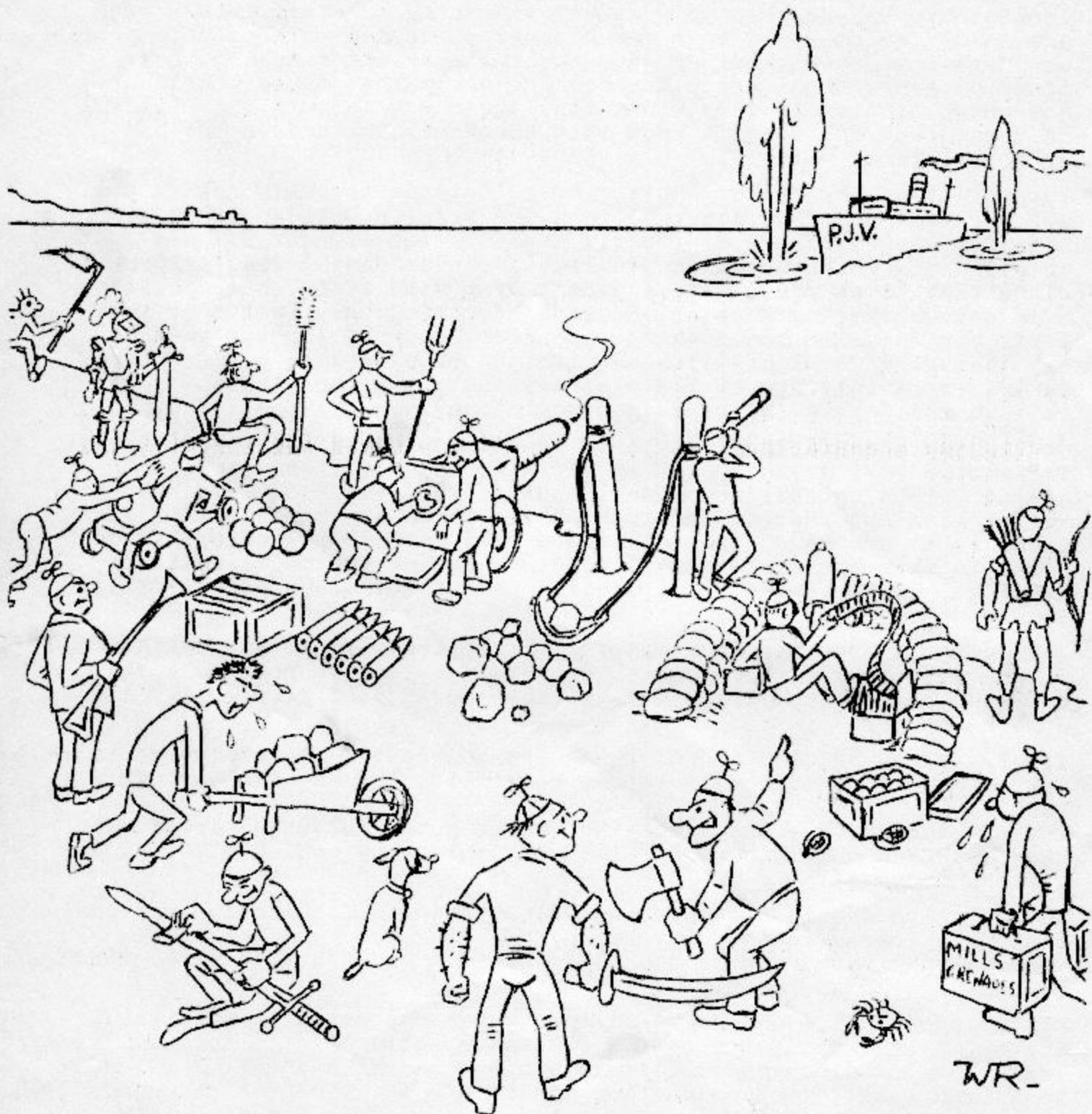
Rooms at the hotel can be booked in advance at 20/6 (150 Efrs) for Bed and Breakfast, per night.

Kettering is NCT a one-horse-village, but a respectable (well, until Easter anyway) town of about 39,000 unsuspecting gentle normals. Train fare from London is 21/4 return, by road it's about 72 miles. Admission fees to the convention itself: 6/- a day on Sat and Sunday, no charge for Friday. Your registration fee will be deducted from this.

In case there are any compatriots willing and able, you can have fuller details either from myself, or direct from

DENNY COWEN 42 SILVERWOOD ROAD KETTERING.

And a reminder: Any Belgian/Dutch fan wishing to obtain fanzines or promags/books from UK or US are invited to use our services. It helps us to convert stamps and foreign currency into Belgian francs for expenses made here. And this is the last line, so cheerio.



WE SHALL FIGHT ON THE BEACHES, WE SHALL FIGHT ON THE
LANDING GROUNDS, WE SHALL FIGHT IN THE FIELDS
AND IN THE STREETS, WE SHALL FIGHT IN THE HILLS;
WE SHALL NEVER SURRENDER !