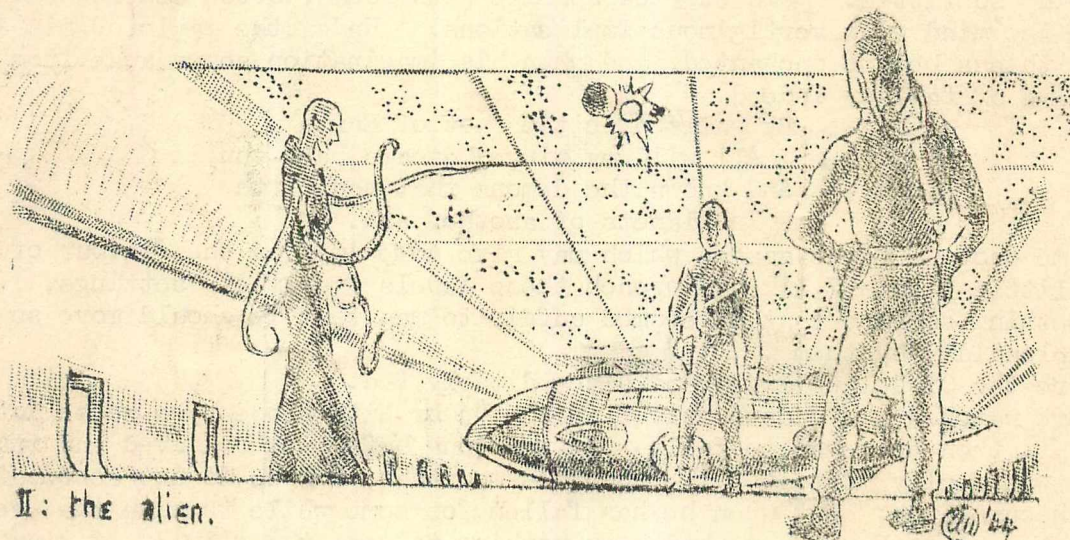


I: The meeting.



II: The alien.

~~YOU TOO, can be at a meeting!~~ Not quite as dramatic as that portrayed above, perhaps but an enjoyable break in the monotony of a year or so of lone "fanning". Anyrate here are the latest details.

This year's HORCON will be held at LEEDS from Friday Dec 29th to Monday Jan 1st. If there is any chance of you coming write at once to J.M. Rosenblum, 4 Grange Terrace, Leeds 7. If you don't get in touch quickly there is little chance of booking hotel accommodation in a place. Gus Willmorth, Eric Hopkins, Allan Miles Ron Lane, George Ellis, JMR, Ken Chadwick John Millard are all almost certain to be present. Non-attendees can show interest by donating material to the auction, to be sent % JMR, which has already a number of items from Claude Verler, including some original illustrations, a copy of the Wallace Smith portfolio donated by Gus, and the Lovecraft "Weird Shadow over Innsmouth" from Paul Searles. The programme has not been finally fixed yet so suggestions are still welcome. Business sessions will be held at the Ditch Sheppard Centre, Leeds, and receptions at 4 Grange Terrace.

futurian ---- which is rapidly ceasing to be a digest at all & blossoming forth as a
war digest good & proper publication dealing with & devoted to fantasy fiction.
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AUTHOR APPRECIATION

— by — Arthur C. Clarke

Dunsany - Lord of Fantasy

This is not an analysis of Dunsany's place in literature, nor even a summary of his work as a whole. It is no more than a series of notes, a collection of bits and pieces of information dragged up from the corners of memory and fortified by the few books I have beside me. For what I think may be the most important of Dunsany's works - TIME AND THE GODS and THE GODS OF ELEGNA - I have never read nor seen, and how Dunsany will be regarded - if at all - in a hundred years I cannot dare to guess.

Dunsany is a poet in the truest sense, but it is in prose rather than in verse that his finest work has been done. No-one has ever approached his skill in suggesting, so flawlessly and with such economy of means, that the world is not exactly as we suppose. No-one can make the blood run cold with a simpler phrase, no-one can suggest so much while saying so little. His stories sparkle with ideas, often single sentences that challenge the mind with vertiginous implications. Under the magic of his art, the commonest things become enchanted, and when his imagination soars away from earth we enter realms of fantasy indeed.

By walls of cities not of Earth
All wild my winged dreams have run,
And known the demons that had birth
In planets of another sun.

Let me quote a few passages which may give some idea of the flavour of his finest stories, little though I like to wrench these jewels from their settings.

"Something so huge that it seemed unfair to man that it should move so softly stalked splendidly by them . . ."

"There the Gibbelins lived and discredibly fed."

"There watched him ceaselessly from the Under Pits those eyes whose duty it is."

" . . . then he began to fall. It was long before he believed and truly knew that this was really he that fell from this mountain, for we do not associate such dooms with ourselves; but when he has fallen for some while through the evening and saw below him, where there had been nothing to see, the glimmer of tiny fields, then his optimism departed."

And one more passage, the conclusion of THE EPICUREAN ADVENTURE OF THE THREE LITERARY MEN, who were so rash as to try and steal the golden box of poems from the house at the End of the World.

" . . . and then it befel that as they drew near safety, in the night's most secret hour, some hand in an upper chamber lit a shocking light, lit it and made no sound.

"For a moment it might have been an ordinary light, fatal as even that could very well be at such a moment as this; but when it began to follow them like an eye and grow redder and redder as it watched them, then even optimism despaired."

"And Sippy very unwisely attempted flight, and Slorg even as unwisely tried to hide; but Slith, knowing well why that light was lit in that secret upper chamber and who it was that lit it, leaped over the edge of the World and is falling from us still through the unreverberate blackness of the abyss."

Perhaps - and it will not surprise me in the least - all these extracts leave you unaffected. For it is sad but true that Dunsany's peculiar genius is all too rarely appreciated. One of his earlier books has the pathetic preface "These tales I gather together here for the few that seem to read my books in England." This lack of

appreciation may in part be due to Dunsany's unfortunate choice of parents, for an artist with a title is regarded as a dilettante and is not taken seriously. The critics have not always been kind to Dunsany.

From little fountain-pens they wring
The last wee drop of inky spite:
"We do not like the kind of thing
That loads," they say, "most likely, write."

But who can deny that the man who penned those lines is a true artist:-

So much there is to catch,
And the years so short,
That there is scarce time to snatch
Pen, palette, or aught,

And to seize some shape we can see,
That others may keep
Its moment of mystery,
Then go to our sleep.

The radio has done much to make Dunsany known to a wider public, for he has written many plans for broadcasting as well as for the stage. GOLDEN DRAGON CITY and THE USE OF MAN have been broadcast several times: those who are familiar with the latter and its implied denunciation of hunting may be surprised to know that its author is a Master of Fox Hounds.

Mr. Joseph Jorkens, the well-known club raconteur who can always be relied upon to produce a good story in return for a drink, is Dunsany's best known character and his adventures seem to be popular with the general public. At any rate such statistical studies as I have made in libraries appear to show this. Jorkens thinks nothing of finding icebergs in the Red Sea in mid-summer, or a diamond which fully justifies his description of it as "a large one" - he walked across it for many hours under the impression that it was a frozen lake.

Nevertheless, much as I like Jorkens, the far rarer stories of World's End and other places, related in TALES OF WONDER, A DREAMER'S TALES and THE BOOK OF WONDER, appeal to me more strongly. And of them all this is the one that at the present moves me most. It is called THE FIELD and was written more than thirty years ago.

Not far from London is a field, beautiful and peaceful, where the poet loved to rest. Yet as he grew to know it better, there seemed something ominous about the place and the feeling grew with each successive visit. He made enquiries and found that nothing had ever happened there, so that it was from the future that the field's trouble came.

"Once to distract my thoughts I tried to gauge how fast the stream was trickling, but I found myself wondering if it flowed faster than blood. . . . And then the fancy came to me that it would be a terribly cold place to be in in the starlight, if for some reason one was hurt and could not get away."

So at last he took to the field a friend who would be able to tell him what evil thing was going to happen there.

"By the side of the stream he stood and seemed very sad. Once or twice he looked up and down it mournfully, then he bent and looked at the king-cups, first one and then the other, very closely, and shaking his head.

"For a long while he stood in silence, and all my old uneasiness returned, and my bodings for the future.

"And then I said 'What manner of field is it?'

"And he shook his head sorrowfully.

"It is a battlefield," he said."

Is this only a story? Or is there such a field? There is foreboding there, matched equally by another line of Dunsany's:-

"Over mossy girders the old folk come back."

Much of Dunsany's best work was done before or during the last war, and very apt

today is the preface of TALES OF WONDER, published in 1916.

"These tales are tales of peace. Those who remember peace and those who will see it again may be glad to turn their eyes, though but for a moment, away from a world of mud and blood and khaki, and to read for a while of cities too good to be true."

I cannot leave Dunsany without making some mention of the incomparable artist, S. W. Sime, who has illustrated so many of his stories. No-one has ever captured the spirit of fantasy more perfectly than Sime, though sometimes Finlay (whose style is similar) has approached him.

And now before we part let us gather one more quotation to take upon our separate ways. These words of Dunsany's prefaced the first volume of E.N.'s GEORGIAN POETRY when it appeared in 1912.

Of all materials for labour, dreams are the hardest; and the artificer in ideas is the chief of workers, who out of nothing will make a piece of work that may stop a child from crying or lead nations to higher things. For what is it to be a poet? It is to see at a glance the glory of the world, to see beauty in all its forms and manifestations, to feel ugliness like a pain, to resent the wrongs of others as bitterly as one's own, to know mankind as others know single men, to know Nature as botanists know a flower, to be thought a fool, to hear at moments the clear voice of God.

A.C.C., 19.7.42.

Postscript

This was written two years ago (1942). Since then I have obtained, thanks to D.W., TIME AND THE GODS, and also learned a good deal more about Lord Dunsany. However, I have nothing material to add to my note except to draw attention to the entertaining chapter of autobiography WHILE THE SIRENS SLEPT which has recently appeared. This, and the earlier PATCHES OF SUNLIGHT, reveal the sources of much of Dunsany's inspiration, a point touched upon by Lovecraft in his masterly SUPERNATURAL HORROR IN LITERATURE.

I might also mention that Hollywood has at last acknowledged the Master, for he has credit title in the Rene Clair film, IT HAPPENED TOMORROW. From this small beginning, who knows.....?

+++++

GODMOTHER, GET SET!

Post-War Prospects As Seen by the President of the British Fantasy Society-----

Walter H. Gillings

Several years ago some bright fan conferred upon me the title of "Grandpoo" Gillings. I still can't make up my mind if this appellation was intended to indicate my long association with science fiction in this country or whether it referred to my prevailing habit of reminiscing about the days gone by. The days when British fans were few and far between, completely isolated from one another, grubbing around market stalls and backstreet bookshops for remainder copies of AMAZING and SCIENCE WONDER at threepence a time. The days when Keller, Verwill and Vincent filled fat Quarterlies, price sixpence (and which I paid half-a-crown for in Fleet Street at one time--and gave up smoking to do it). Dear, dear days, long before such things as B.R.E.'s and the B.F.S., or even SCIENCE FICTION and TALES OF WONDER, existed.

Note that I do not say "were thought of"; because all these things were thought of very often, though as yet they were but rosy dreams, the Things to Come. [Aren't you confusing BRES with DEMs, old cock? ---DW] Postus Pragnell was writing to AMAZING begging them to bring out a British Edition. Les Johnson, John Russell Fearn and myself were trying, by correspondence, to link up scattered groups of science fiction readers (we did not call ourselves fans in those days) in some kind of organisation. I was investigating the possibility of a printed fan magazine (before ever having seen an American one), wondering at the same time if there were enough fans to sell it to. I even had visions of a "pro" mag., was putting the idea up to British publishers--and champing at the mouth at their obstinate refusal to entertain it on the ground that

Yarns and Wells had covered the ground quite adequately, thank you, before Mr. Gornsbuch came along.

But I'm reminiscing again. Though perhaps I may be excused, just this once, for looking back over fifteen years of steady progress towards our present situation--which is one where we are just as badly off as when we started. At least, on the face of it. Fans are isolated as never before, some of them by thousands of miles. We have no British "pro" mag., the American prints are harder to get hold of than they were in 1928, and the sole surviving B.F.S. is practically as rare. The only things we have are the B.F.S. and its fan magazines, struggling against the throttling restrictions of a land in which science-fiction's holiest horrors have materialised all too well and too long.

Of course, it doesn't look as bad as that to the hundred-odd members of the B.F.S. who have availed themselves of such inestimable books as the American magazine chain and had their interests remarkably well sustained by the few to whom we owe so much--at the even more remarkable cost of threepence per head per week! That this privileged circle is well satisfied with things, under the circumstances, is evident from the fact that none raises his voice when those who have catered for his war-time comforts remain to carry on their self-appointed tasks by common consent, and even the appointment of a President is accepted without beam! (Here, let me interpolate to all concerned that I am deeply conscious of this honour and the responsibility it carries with it, and assure them I shall do my best to bear it to the general satisfaction. Thank you!)

But what of those miserable beings who are not members of the B.F.S., who may not even justify the name of fan, but to whom fantasy is none the less an important factor in their well-being? That agonies they must have endured throughout the present impasse, especially if they indulged their tastes only in the few years before the war, when British science-fiction threw off its cloying Cinderella rags and went to the ball with the rest. Meaning, of course, those "ordinary readers" for whom I have always had the deepest concern, since they are numbered in thousands; apart from the hundreds of fully-fledged fans who have been so misguided as to let their interest flag under the pressure of events.

Recently, quite out of the blue, have come to me heart-rending appeals from some of these poor starved wretches who once boasted the name of fan, and are now filled with remorse at allowing themselves to become divorced from the greatest of their pre-war enthusiasms. How bitterly they regret the demise of Britain's own hard-won magazines! How nostalgically they recall the halcyon days of British fandom and look forward hopefully, but not very optimistically, to a revival of these things after the war! I have not been slow to inform these prodigals that things are by no means as dead as they have imagined, and that those who have clung tenaciously to the remnants of pre-war glories (and been so fortunately placed) have even dared to hold a Fan Convention amid the wreckage. Those lost souls, who have not been denied the freedom of action which fans in the Services have had to contend with, will doubtless be gathered back into the fold when they have recovered from the shock and the sense of shame which this revelation must have given them!

As for the rest, and the future of British science-fiction, we have no cause to fear that the revival we are all so anxious for will not come, or may not be upon us before the more pessimistic of us expect it. Though as yet there is but little indication of it, at least on the surface, the signs and portents are there for those who know where to look for them, and they promise even greater glories than we have known before--as, indeed, we deserve if we are to reap the reward of our patience and perseverance.

We should be fools to expect a return of everything we enjoyed before the war, all at once. Yet if those who would benefit commercially from such a resurgence of interest as is certain to arise in the science fiction field were able to contrive it, we would get just that--and more! Not one, but several post-war projects of publishers on both sides of the Atlantic have their inspiration in our erstwhile Cinderella, whose vast potentialities are now fully recognised in this land where she was so long

neglected. That silver slipper she left behind on the stair, when the midnight sirens compelled her return to ragged obscurity, wasn't overlooked by our publishing princes. And when the peace bells ring, Fairy Godmother will be waving her magic wand again hard on the first peal!

*****endofwally*****

Hesterian note:--

For reasons known only to himself, the editor has asked me to write a comment on the following article by Malcolm Ferguson. Since my extensive ignorance precludes this, I'd like to add a note to the foregoing instead, for the benefit of such fans (Americans, provincials) as can know Wally Gillings only through his writings, TO7 editorials, and letters. The impression they must get of him is in many ways quite distorted. Actually, Wally is quite human. More than that, he is a very nice guy. He may write screeds of eloquent rubbish like the above (on occasion he may even speak it - see reports of his Teddington Convention speech), but when he forgets about science-fiction and remembers about being a human being, he makes a big success of life. I say this fully remembering the days of SCIENTIFICTION, and the good work Wally has done for British fandom, for which a great deal of thanks is due to him. In person Wally is cheerful, sociable, a good talker, witty and wise. As for the "Grandpop" tag, he looks far too young to have a son as old as Ronnie; but I daresay he will be a grandpop before many of us confirmed bachelors have started out in the family way. As I say, he is quite human: like other real human beings, he boasts many queer abilities and scraps of knowledge: such as, being able to quote the quality of beer sold in about three-quarters of the pubs in London at any time through the last 10 years. As he himself says, he is a powerful reminiscer. And no doubt he has other faults. But those who have known him only by proxy should know that the worst of these, the stub bug, is tolerated or discreetly ignored for the sake of Wally the Man. Just as, I daresay, our friends tolerate and manage to overlook such faults as George Medhurst's pride in being unsociable, my dislike of beer - and even skittles - Michael Rosenblum's compulsive collecting and even reading of books of no value whatsoever, Ted Carnell's belief that he is a rake, and . . . well, name your own.

I thank you for your attention.

*****endofmaalmeh*****

SUBJECT SURVEY

Folk-lore and Legends

---by Malcolm Ferguson

(Note:-- I think this is an interesting aspect of the fantasy field; perhaps it will stimulate someone else. The editor, for example, writes of Sabine Baring-Gould, and my ignorance of his writing reflects my sketchy knowledge which invites rebuttal.)

The main sources of fantasy writing today seem to be:

(1) An analysis of human problems under the influence of the suspension, intensification, or alteration of certain natural laws, such as the normal rate of death as Lloyd's statistics have it, the law of gravity, the ability to travel to other planets or imaginary lands, the speeding-up or retrogression of time, and the alteration of dimensionality. Often these artificial-seeming devices serve to point up contemporary problems, to berate contemporary society for its shortcomings in business, the law, the church, the army and navy, the legislative chambers, and the like.

(2) Age-old lore and legends expressing basic human desires, reflecting human shortcomings, revealing social, sexual and financial ambitions, delving at the roots of human fears, totems, taboos, in short, the eternal struggle between Prometheus and Zeus. Here, at the least remove from the first person singular, is the mother-lode of primordial religious belief, of social and ethical struggle, and of the sex-urge and the conflicting life-

death urges that is the driving force and the fly-wheel of human existence.

That the first premise is the child of the second seems to me undeniable. I have been more concerned with the latter and propose to deal with it in a general way by mentioning a few books and writers that have interested me. With some measly notes, an unexercised memory, my remarks will be even more limited than my parochial knowledge. Lacking further collation, I beg your indulgence.

Undeniably the best book about folk-lore is Sir James Frazer's *THE GOLDEN BOUGH*, whose half dozen [13? -IV] volumes, more or less (with convenient abridgements), as you probably know, arose from a footnote at which the author found himself failing at a complete explanation of the intricate pattern. Man's personification of instinctive and natural forces is often complex and skilful. Attributes are assigned to living persons until Quisling or Judas or Modred or Benedict Arnold means only one thing, complex though man actually is.

To take a specific example, John Fiske, in *MYTHS AND MYTH-MAKERS*, claims that whether or not there was an actual William Tell, his feats bear amazing similarity to others going back to central Asia that is the cradle of culture. Sigmund Freud in *MOSES AND MONOTHEISM* contends that Moses may well have been an Egyptian, draws parallels to other heroes who have been honored with legendary virtues and powers. While mentioning Freud, it is noticeable that he used legendry as a case-book of race-history and psychology, as does Oswald Spengler (*THE DECLINE OF THE WEST*) and to a lesser extent William James in *THE VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE*. Andrew Lang's *CUSTOM AND MYTH* and *MYTH, RITUAL AND RELIGION* deserve mention.

Virtually every race has books of legends, folk-lore, some of which were written as true, to be believed and used as examples, which others are compilations of twilight tales told to or salvaged by scholars. Recently to reach the market is Manuel Komroff's *THE GREAT FABLES OF ALL NATIONS* (Am. ed. Tudor Pub. Co. - I haven't seen it yet.)

The student of the subject should be able to get at copies of the Bible, the Bible Apocrypha, a Bible Dictionary, and Cruden's *CONCORDANCE*. Another source is *THE APARTAN NIGHTS*, and *A THOUSAND NIGHTS AND A NIGHT* by Richard F. Burton (in 16 vols.). (Here's a strange contrast - Cruden who was so nice as to carry a wet sponge in a small box to wash out naughty words that children had scrawled, and swashbuckling Burton, whose wolfish reply to the question of an anxious dowager as to his intentions toward her daughter is famous - "Strictly dishonorable, no'man, strictly dishonorable." For writing of the corrupt places in a near-eastern city, in a report requested by the British government, his impolitic details banished him to a consular hellhole on the African west coast, but did not stop his deft pen as much as his Jane Eyre-like wife.)

Most of us get our Greek lore from the *ILLIAD* and the more-colorful *ODYSSEY*, and a few delve into Hesiod. Bulfinch seems over-rated to me, but there's no substitute that has as much flavor. Writing today lacks the colorful classical allusions - a Bellerophonic letter, Rhadamanthine judgment, &c., showing that our interest is diminishing.

Egyptian mythology is usually poorly presented, and its beauties come to us second-hand and shopworn, instead of renovated. I don't know how worthwhile Pudge's translation of the *BOOK OF THE DEAD* is. Some of Theophile Gautier is interesting, but as much for himself as for the lore. Cinderella's story - which is probably *THE* story of human ambition - is reputedly found in an Egyptian version.

France is distinguished by several collections, as well as what is probably the major attempt in this field, by Charles Perrault, who preceded the Grimm brothers by three fourths of a century. He was also the French "Mother Goose". (Incidentally, the English Mother Goose story's political implications have been written up in several books.) American associations with Mother Goose are a lot of hogwash.

The brothers Grimm have taken over the German field, with Teutonic thoroughness and considerable help from their friends. I believe it was the nephew Grimm whose

compendious writing on mythology, as well as that of Max Müller, falls heavily and solidly in the category with Frazer's lighter, more readable work.

It is noteworthy that the national stories such as Anatole France's *TRIALS*, Goethe's *FAUST*, or Shelley's *FRANKENSTEIN* are either based on legends or have become such.

Ibsen's *PEER GYNT* (suggested by the feats of Old Bull, the musician).

In the Scandinavian, Hans Andersen is the best-known, although some of his stories are of his own embroidering. Jean Marsholt's recently completed translation is well spoken of. A nice collection is to be found by the eminent Scot, Andrew Lang, and very well illustrated by Henry J. Ford. Appearing round the turn of the century, they include the Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Grey and Crimson Fairy Books, as well as the Icelandic (which abounds in trolls, giants, powerful creatures who leaped around for various dubious reasons). Some of Harriet Martineau's and Selma Lagerlof's writing is in this genre, too.

There have been several collections of Russian tales. R. Nisbet Bain's *COSSACK FAIRY TALES* are well considered. Paul Gairus has been working in this genre, as well as translating Chinese and Indian language stories. Nicolai Gogol has contributed fanciful as well as realistic tales from the Ukraine.

The older Japan, whose heroes remain imprisoned on a silken battlefield in the very act of overcoming some remarkable ogre or ghost, is well-represented - a volume of Lang's series, a collection of Japanese ghost-stories by Lang himself, a volume by the British consul, Mitford, Basil Chamberlain's *AMU FOLK TALES*, John Le Farge's writing (I believe touches on this) and Lafcadio Hearn, who cooperated on a distinctively-printed cheap-paper series.

I don't know of any outstanding collections on the Amerind. On the Argentinians there are two excellent volumes, *TALES FROM SILVER LAND* and *TALES WORTH TELLING* by the late Charles J. Finger, illustrated by Paul Honore. From the West Indies, the writing of William Seabrook, Theda Kenyon, Zorah Neil Thurston, and I believe Frank Estoven, are good. The black magic, voodoo, zombie, are found here. Whether Callaway's *NURSERY TALES OF THE ZULUS* has any interest making it worth my while keeping it on a curious list of mine I don't know. I wonder if Grey's *POLYNESIAN MYTHOLOGY* is the source of the yarn in Laing's supernatural omnibus.

I have purposely kept until the last the legendry of the United States and the two most haunted islands of the world - England and Ireland - although much has been let out of the bag already.

Barham's *ENGELSDAY LEGENDS* is the leading collection of England itself. Outstanding are Malory's *LE MORTE D'ARTHUR*, and the even more enticing *MABINOCHION*, translated by Lady Charlotte Guest which begins by urging us to thrust our way through the hedge-row and find ourselves in fairyland. The task of translation made it a thorny hedge, but in English the tales such as *SIR GAWAINE AND THE GREEN KNIGHT*, with a dash of *cherches la femme*, make it an interesting country.

Scotland is distinguished by its border ballads (*ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS* by Child is scholarly, copious, other versions by Scott, Noyes, &c. are pleasantly presented), which are compact, potent legendry. William Sharp (Fiona MacLeod) deals with the Celtic and Gaelic myths and legends as carefully and neatly as any.

William Morris and Mrs. E.V. Lucas have done considerable translating, as have others, bringing us the old languages of England and north-west Europe. Ireland is best characterized in William Butler Yeats' *IRISH FAIRY AND FOLK TALES*.

American legendry is to be found in widely-scattered books. Nathaniel Hawthorne and Washington Irving are thought of first, and then the stylized, pretentious poetry of Longfellow. Whittier is read by some who speak well of him. The characteristics of the writers are in the foreground, but legends have been used successfully by Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Joel Chandler Harris, John Hay, Stephen Vincent Benet, Frank Stockton, and Howard Pyle.

Some living American legends are to be found in her music - Carl Sandburg's *AMERICAN SONGS*, Downes & Siegmeyer's *TREASURE OF AMERICAN SONG*, Iomax's volumes and

recordings, and the recordings of Dyer-Bennett shed light on lumberjack heroes like Bunyan, railroaders like Casey Jones and John Henry and pirates like Captain Kidd.

Addenda: The Columbia University Press has just published TRADITIONAL CHINESE TALES by Chi chen Wang, which may help fill the gap my ignorance has left in that nation's folk-lore.

A TREASURY OF AMERICAN FOLK-LORE, by B. A. Botkin (U.S. - Crown Pub. Co. 1944, \$3.) is a bumptious collection of tales of a more rough and tumble nature, but may add to some collections. I like it.

*****endoffergy*****

SIGNIFICANT ROCKETS: The Future of Travel Beyond the Stratosphere.

BOOK REVIEW By Willy Ley (New York: The Viking Press. \$3.50.)

Willy Ley's long awaited book need not be recommended to all who are interested in astronautics - and presumably all s.f. fans are included in that category. It supersedes at once all earlier books on the subject in the English language, and it comes at a time when the rocket has done all and more that its most enthusiastic supporters predicted. In one way, Willy Ley has been unlucky in the date of publication (early 1944). Developments since the beginning of the year have already made some of his conclusions out of date, and two of the most important events in the history of the rocket - the first pure rocket aeroplane and the giant long-range rocket shell - were not revealed to the world until after the book was in the press. Let us hope that the first edition will sell so quickly that subsequent printings can be brought up to date.

The first fifty pages of the book contain a detailed history of interplanetary fiction since the first imaginary voyage to the Moon, written in A.D. 120. It is a little odd to think that these stories, which have been popular for eighteen centuries, will soon be written no more.

The history of the rocket in warfare is much more extensive than generally realised and Ley devotes a chapter to it. How many people know that in 1807 Copenhagen was largely destroyed by a bombardment of 25,000 rockets? But the development of rifled artillery closed the history of war rockets for a century, and only now are they coming back into their own. Ley shows a curious conservatism in his remarks about rocket weapons, and he makes no mention of the extremely important rocket boosters now used in many aircraft.

Under the appropriate title "Prophets with some honour" Ley traces the history of the spaceship on the scientific rather than the fictional side. Most of the credit for the serious conceptions appear to be due to the German Ganswindt and the Russian Ziolkovsky. It is pleasant to know that for the last ten years of his life, Ziolkovsky was a famed and respected man in Russia, certainly the first astronaut ever to win national renown for his work.

However, the real foundations of astronautics were well and truly laid by Oberth in 1923 with his mathematical study DIE RAUETE ZU DEN PLANETENRAUMEN. In this book, for the first time, the fundamental equations of astronautics were set out and the problem was analysed as an engineering undertaking which might be achieved within the next few decades.

Oberth, a Rumanian, is just over 50 and a lot of rubbish has recently appeared about him in the British press. He may or may not be associated with V.2. (that would help to explain the delay in its appearance - as a practical experimenter Oberth left everything to be desired), but he will certainly be honoured in the years to come as the founder of modern astronautics.

Ley devotes two fascinating chapters (reproduced with some alterations from the ASTOUNDING articles, THE FALL OF THE ROCKET SOCIETY) to the history of astronautics in Germany. It contains many lessons which all interplanetary societies would do well to bear in mind.

The German rocket society, the "Verein fur Raumschiffahrt", had succeeded in virtually perfecting the small liquid fuel rocket motor when Hitler came into power.

seems likely that the Nazis took over the society on principle rather than through realisation of the rocket's ultimate possibilities. That came later, and the purely scientific work of the VFR is undoubtedly responsible for the enormous interest the Germans have shown in reaction propulsion during this war.

Only the last seventy pages of the book deal with the spaceship and the problems associated with it. Ley points out that it is not difficult to send an unmanned rocket clear outside the earth's atmosphere, though when he wrote he certainly had no idea just how quickly it was going to be done. It is, however, immensely more difficult to effect a landing on even the nearest body, still less return to earth. With the fuels we possess today, interplanetary travel is barely possible using complicated engineering principles and tolerating shocking overall inefficiencies. For it to be practicable, we must have higher exhaust velocities and/or refuelling stations in space. Both of these will come in time, though when Ley does not venture to predict.

Ley makes no mention of the B.I.S. cellular design which overcomes some of the limitations of present day fuels, in particular the impossibly large rates of combustion at take-off. The ARS will probably take a poor view of the paragraph he devotes to their work. However, as they have officially deserted astronautics and are now purely a rocket society they deserve it.

One of the most interesting parts of the book is the Appendix, which contains amongst other things a very extensive bibliography. Ley points out that "a complete literary history of that variety of imaginative literature which is based on facts and theories of a scientific nature - so-called "science-fiction" - still remains to be written." When the extent of this class of literature is considered, this is certainly a remarkable oversight.

Ley's book is written for the popular and semi-technical press but nevertheless contains a good deal of "meat". It is extremely well-written and readable, with occasional flashes of wit. There is no doubt that it will admirably fulfil the author's intentions.

Arthur C. Clarke.

*****endofego*****

Delvings into the Weird and Imaginative--v.

-----Jack Banks.

Reflections on the "Weirds".

What is the essential magic of Abraham Merritt or H.P. Lovecraft, that lifts their writings out of the realm of ordinary "escapist" fiction? For it cannot be denied that much of that which pretends to be "different" in the world of fiction, and especially in the "pulp" field, relies merely for its effect, upon cheap physical thrills, the reiteration of meaningless blood-shed and the introduction of ephemeral sexual episodes.

Undoubtedly there exists a market for such productions, but that fact should only be a reminder that the task of fully educating the peoples of the countries concerned still remains to be accomplished. (And obviously, not solely in this sphere is the urgency of the task apparent. It is only a minor facet of the universal need for new standards of intelligence and behaviour throughout the world.)

However, my present purpose is not to prescribe for the ills of the whole world, but to examine briefly some aspects of "weird" fiction. The masters are well known; Lovecraft and Merritt represent the peak, but clustering around the lower reaches are many whose work at times makes a worthy comparison with that of the two acknowledged leaders. Kuttner and Bloch, for instance, have produced several excellent stories of great imaginative power, based upon themes as grandiose and fascinating as anything from the pens of those who wrote CREEP, SHADOW! and AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS.

For some years there existed but one magazine to supply the enthusiasts with their regular quota, and it is a tribute to the editor and the authors whose work appeared there that the standard remained consistently high. Many "classics" have been printed in WEIRD TALES, and several authors have made their reputation purely by their contributions to it. Today, the advent of FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES, with its reprint policy, has released a store of longer masterpieces, including several by Lovecraft, which have added considerably to the pleasure of readers.

dragged, in a market near Harrow), and Benson Herbert's latest, THE RED-HAIRED GIRL (full of space-pirates and knock-about) I've only seen in one shop in Faced Street. Though I shouldn't think anyone would worry.

More and more of these paper-backs are flooding out from Everybody's Bookshops and similar places. Justin Atholl is getting to be as prolific as Benson Herbert. Besides various crime opi /interesting problem for word purists and morbid psychologists: why did George, who certainly knows better, start to write "opuses", score it out, & substitute the horrible "opi"?/, which we shall not consider here, he's done THE MAN WHO TILTED THE EARTH (Mitre Press, 1/6, with a cover picture of an idealized New York toppling in all directions), THE OASIS OF SLEEP (Mitre Press, 1/6, described as "Another Grand Thriller", and all about nasty Italians and Germans, after this war, in a retreat packed with suspended animation, and so forth), LAND OF HIDDEN DEATH (Everybody's Books, 9d., about a lost civilisation - Inca survival - I like the look of it, though I haven't had time to read it), and a weirdie story called THE GREY BEAST (Everybody's Books, 9d., called an "Eric Vampire Thriller"). These Justin Atholl books are quite well printed on good paper, and relative to the Lloyd Cole booklets they are better value for less cash. /I get even better value for less cash still by not buying any of them at all. --DW/

"Everybody's Books" have also put out a booklet of 5 ghostie stories by Eugene Ascher, UNCANNY ADVENTURES, for ninepence. A previous publication, by the same author about the same "occult" gentlemen, was THERE WERE NO ASPER LADIES.

"New Saxon Pamphlets", year one, price 1/6, has a futurish story by John Atkins, THE APOPLECTIC REVOLUTION, in which all the people who permit themselves intemperate fury, from Radio announcers to Prime Ministers, die with a click and an unwinding noise.

THE CASE OF THE MISSING AIRMEN, in the series "Martin Speed, Detective" (Svan, Ltd.) is a horrid thing full of death rays and so forth.

One of the latest Swan productions, WEIRD SHORTS, FIRST SELECTION, price 9d., is not at all bad. Some of the stories are well on the way to being readable, and include IN ALIEN VALLEYS by Henry Rawle, THE KRAKEN by I. O. Evans (of "World of Tomorrow" fame), another W. P. Cockroft tale, THE REVENGE OF ARNUL, THE DEMON AND THE DICTATOR by David Alun, and things of lesser interest. I was pleased and surprised by this booklet, especially after a most unpropitious cover. Quite one of the best things Messrs. Swan have done.

THE MOON ROCKET, a tiny book measuring 2 1/4" x 4", with no page numbering (there are 9 pages of text and 7 full-page coloured illustrations), no author, no date, no price, and no publisher's name (I'm sure this is illegal) is the story of Bobbie and Brenda, how they built a rocket in the wood shed, flew to the moon, met the Man in the Moon, saw the factory where he made moonbeans, and knocked over the stool on which he sits, behind magnifying glasses, so as to look large to earthlings.

Cheiro's TRUE GHOST STORIES (London Publishing Co., no date, price 2/6) is solemnly sworn to be full of nothing but truth. The last two episodes concern a "mysterious recluse", the Duc de Ravigo, known as Edmund Savory D'Odiardi, "Occultist, Mystic and Physician." Cheiro, summoned before him, reads his hand with impressive exactness and is welcomed in as a comrade and brother. Ultimately, Cheiro finds himself strapped up with copper electrodes, and so forth, at the bottom end of a huge aerial, and, helped out by organ playing, he has a vision of Atlantis. A fairly orthodox Theosophical Atlantis. /Cheiro to Cheiro. Thank God. --DW/

*****endofbothgeorgeodd*****
((Editorial note -- Your editor possesses a copy of OLD MAN IN NEW WORLD & 3 further copies have left this address for USA. Mr. Ron Lane of Manchester is also known to possess a copy & has duplicated a review of it to be incorporated in the page-per-book bibliography file. Perhaps this will soothe Mr. Medhurst slightly. But the trade distribution appears to be erratic - only one bookshop in Leeds /the bookhunter's Gobi --D./ stocked copies, which may account for much of the silence. JMR))

"ARKHAM HOUSE" COMMUNIQUE, from August Derleth, September 1944.

The most recent issue (August) of the FUTURIAN WAR DIGEST has just reached me, and I hasten to set down for you the most recent news from this side. No doubt you have received the new Arkham House catalog by this time, and thus you will know that we are publishing not one or two but four new books this year. To supplement that catalog, I offer you the most recent news. This is the status of Arkham House books at present:

SOMEONE IN THE DARK, by August Derleth and
BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP, by H. P. Lovecraft
have joined THE OUTSIDER AND OTHERS (Lovecraft) and OUT OF SPACE AND TIME (Smith) in the out of print column. Don Wandrei's THE EYE AND THE FINGER is in print and so is Henry Whitehead's JUMBEE AND OTHER UNCANNY TALES. Smith's LOST WORLDS is now being bound, and Lovecraft's MARGINALIA will come in late November. We had 1500 copies of each of the first two, 2000 copies of each of the last. Reviews of the Wandrei and Whitehead books have been most encouragingly good, even in the leading book-review journals without reference to the fan publications, which have not as yet got around to judging the books. Approximately one-third of the editions of Wandrei and Whitehead have been subscribed to date, and one-fourth of the editions of Smith and Lovecraft have been advance ordered. The paper situation prevents larger editions, unfortunately.

Our list has more or less been set for 1945 too. It will contain at least three \$3 books; my own SOMETHING NEAR, Frank Belnap Long's THE HOUNDS OF TINDALOS, and Robert Bloch's THE OPENER OF THE WAY; and one \$5 omnibus, Robert E. Howard's SKULLFACE AND OTHERS. I much doubt that the paper situation will permit us to print, even if we can make the legal arrangements to do so, the projected William Hope Hodgson omnibus, THE HOUSE ON THE BORDERLAND AND OTHER NOVELS (containing apart from the title tale, THE BOATS OF THE GLEN CARIG, THE GHOST PIRATES, THE NIGHTLAND); so we will hope to do this one in 1946, and in that year also collections by Henry Kuttner and C. L. Moore. We hope also to do collections by Fritz Leiber Jr., Howard Wandrei, a second Whitehead (THE GREAT CIRCLE), a 3rd Smith, a Smith COLLECTED (or SELECTED) POEMS.

Meanwhile, SLEEP NO MORE is now ready; it officially appears September 21st, but it is in print, with 24 illustrations by Lee Brown Coye. Appearances are that it will sell well, and I understand that Farrar and Rinehart have given a large print order. Arkham House has bought 500 copies for redistribution to our patrons; we plan to buy 500 more in time. The Book of the Month Club has recommended the book. All this bodes well for WHO KNOCKS?, the index for which has been virtually completed. I should rather say the contents, not the index -- and all the stories in it are op.

But something that should be of great interest especially to those British fans who missed out on THE OUTSIDER AND OTHERS is this: about 60% of the material in that volume is coming out in Spring or Summer under the World Publishing Company imprint, cloth-bound, titled THE BEST SUPERNATURAL STORIES OF H. P. LOVECRAFT, with an introduction by me, at only forty-nine cents! The print order will be for 100,000 copies, and these should surely hold until after the war and conditions permit ordering in quantity from over there.

WALT LIEBSHER adds that Armed Services Editions in USA is planning a service man's edition of Lovecraft stories. He also mentions the forthcoming appearance of SIX NOVELS OF THE SUPERNATURAL in the Viking Portable Library series, to include; A BELEAGUERED CITY, Mrs Oliphant; THE RETURN, de la Mare; THE WHITE PEOPLE, F. H. Burnett; THE TERROR, Machen; SWEET ROCKET, Mary Johnson and PORTRAIT OF JENNIE by Robert Nathan.

Allan H. Miles has a fair number of pro magazines for sale, mainly war-time issues, US editions. First come, first served, and large orders preferred. All communications to be sent % 4 Orange Terrace, Leeds 7. List; Wonder; Sep 35; Feb, Oct, Dec 36; Jun 37; Feb, Jun 39; @ 9d each.

Jun 41; Apr 42; Feb, Apr, Jun 43; @ 1/6
Startling; Jan, May 39; @ 9d. Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Nov 40; May 42; Jun, Mar 42; Jan 43, Dec 43; @ 1/6 each.

Amazing; Jan, (Triplanetary) Jun 34; Apr, May, Jun 35; Apr 36; @ 9d each
Dec 40; Feb, Jul 43; Mar 42; Apr 42; @ 1/6 each.

Superscience; Jan, Feb, Apr 43; Canadian Feb 43; @ 1/3 each.

Famous Fantastic Mysteries; Mar 40; Feb 41; Mar, Sep 43; Jun 44; @ 1/6

" " Novels; Sep 40 @ 1/6. Fantastic Adventures; Feb, Mar, Jun

43; @ 1/6. F.A. Quarterly Spring 42 @ 2/-. Science Fiction Quarterly;

Spr 43; Winter 42; @ 1/6. Captain Futures Spring 41, 42, 40; Winter 42;

@ 1/6. Planet; Win, Spr 42, Win 43; May 43 @ 1/6. Future Feb 42 @ 1/6.

Cosmic Tales Jul 41 @ 1/6. Strange Stories Feb, Aug 39 @ 9d. Amazing

Quarterly Winter 30 (Birth of a New Republic) @ 4/-. Wonder Quarterly;

Winter 32 (Vanguard to Neptune) @ 3/6.

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Badly delayed by the interference of doodle-bugs, the souvenir booklet of the EASTERCON 1944 has made its appearance at last. A 14 page booklet, illustrated and printed by Bruce Gaffron (11 Erridge Rd, Merton Park, SW 19); it is a neat and worthy remembrance of the London Meeting earlier this year, organised by Toddington's Cosmos Club. The contents consist of a report of the Presidential Address by Walter H. Gillings, in the best parliamentary manner; J. K. Aiken's Convention Diary, or blow by blow commentary; Gordon Holbrow Goes Bang (his report) and Johnny Canucks (I.E. Millard's) Review. Also included is the Convention Quiz; without answers to my dismay. The whole enlivened by bonny little sketches giving someones opinion on the proceedings. Distribution system unknown to me but no charge appears to be visible.

To appear in November is the second publication put out by Benson Herbert's "Utopian Publications" (The first was a booklet of nudes!) This is presented to the trusting public as "Girl in Trouble", E. Frank Parker's full length romantic novel. Members of fandom have met the tale previously in the Cosmos Club "Beyond" where it was called "The Stolen Spaceship". However it is quite competent adventure fantasy of Planet Stories type and standard. Priced at 9d, it is nice to see it, anyway.

More bookhunting in Italy as told by Sgt Norman Lamb of Toronto, the other half of the Gibson-Lamb two-man blitz on Italian bookshops. "Bob Gibson and I spent a five day holiday in Rome last week. We went with the intention of bookhunting and were very successful. When the smoke and dust of battle had settled down we discovered that he had gotten 30 odd books and I had 47. I bought a few good items such as - a first ed. of Haggard's "Allan Quatermain", a first of Doyle's "Maracot Deep", A first of Crawford's "Little City of Hope", a good copy of a late 18th century "Aemodocus", and here's the best one - a copy of "The Flying Machine and other stories" by Ronald Belfort. It was privately printed by Elli Pallotta, Rome in 1912, I believe the author's right name is F. S. Arnold. Ever heard of it? (No - Ed). I also managed to get two of Verne's sf/fantasy stories that have never been translated into English so far as I am aware. They are called "Un Giornalista americano nel 2900" (An American journalist in 2900 ad) and "La Strabiliante Avventura della Missione Barsac" (The astonishing Adventure of the Barsac Mission). Also got a well illustrated copy of Twain's "Yankee at the Court of King Arthur". I was quite pleased with the trip, I can tell you." I Bethchawur.

NOVEMBER NOTES: A welcome to Britain is extended this time to PFC William H. Groveman, originally of Hempstead, New York. Bill has been moderately active in US fandom over a period of some five years, was a member of FAPA for two years in 40 - 42, and has had a try at putting out both a subscription fanzine - Fantaseer - and a Fapazine - Lovecraftian. But Bill has always primarily been interested in amateur journalism and has been active in the National Amateur Press Association, of America. He hopes to link up with Anglofandom during his stay and maybe meet some of us.

Talking of meetings, here are a few which have occurred of late. Messrs Peter Hawkins and Terence Overton, having both managed to get stationed at Catterick Camp, Yorkshire, were able to say hello for the first time there. An impromptu meet took place at Manchester just at the end of September when Rank Parker landed there on his business tour of Britain. Benson Herbert slipped up from Cheadle, accompanied by a Czech girl friend and a portfolio of nudes; JMR managed to get over from Leeds and Manchester provided the old team of Lane and Ellis. Idlewild, Aberdeen has been busy, & Doug Webster has been host to Eric Hopkins, Johnny Millard and Gus Willmorth in rapid succession. The first and last of these also popped in at Grange Terrace; and Gus went on to Lincoln to spend a day with Harry Turner stationed nearby at Cranwell. The usual Selby-Leeds trips continued to be made by Allan Miles, now nearing the end of his tour of flying duty. And Pilot-Officer Edwin Macdonald ought to be wandering back any time now.

Last issue's surmise concerning the whereabouts of Eric Frank Russell turned out to be correct and Eric drops us a line from Holland. He reports a crime story dumped across the pond and a yarn to come up soon in Astounding, and says he is well set for being the first of Anglo-American fandom to set foot in Berlin. A cryptic PS on an epistle from Canadian Al Godfrey concerning Arnheim and doings there makes it appear that he may have a competitor.

Announcement; Arthur W. Busby of 40 Brooklands Road, Hall Green, Birmingham is in the throes of setting up a local chess club, and finds the present scarcity of boards and sets awkward. Can anyone help?

More postings. Manchester's Erik Needham isn't so far from home at Carnforth, North Lanes. Incidentally, Erik found a copy of Edgar Wallace's "Planetoid 127" in a bookshop there, with the signature of Eric Williams therein. How come? Somewhere near him is Peter Knott of Northampton, one of the victims of the RAF to Army transfer. Being near Preston, Peter managed to see Bert Lewis and "stare goggle-eyed at his wonderful collection" November 3rd who should pop over to Leeds but Ron Holmes of Liverpool, and the following Saturday Grange Terrace was the rendezvous for Eric Hopkins and Allan Miles stationed respectively at Selby and Brough and both airmen.

Correspondence Situation; This has just about reached the worst state yet. What with overmuch occupation, not-so-good health and a welcome plethora of visitors, I have been absolutely unable to deal with more than a small proportion of the letters received. What precisely can be done about it I know not, but I do want to reply adequately to all the interesting epistles received. So please accept my apologies, I'm doing my best.

Received from USA have been two publications of the National Fantasy Fan Federation. The first is the printed introductory booklet to fandom mentioned previously; a small size 40 page survey by half a dozen top fans of the fantasy field to be sent to neophytes by the Welcoming Committee of the NFFF. The other is the monument "Encyclopedia" compiled and stencilled by John Bristol (Jack Spear), the historian and chronicler of Amerifandom, before he went overseas to North Africa, and mimeographed by the Los Angeles group under the leadership of Forrest Ackerman. Its professionally bound 100 pages contain data on and definitions of practically everything known to or connected with fandom except such matter as available in yearbooks and Directories.

GEORGE MEDHURST REPORTS: If you send 1/8 plus 3d postage to "Freedom Bookshop, 132 Cheltenham road, Bristol, and ask for "A Martian Examines Christianity" you will acquire a paper bound volume by Arthur Levett, put out by Watts in 1934 (pp 118). It has a cover in black & blue presenting a humanoid Martian, with a metal collar, looking disapprovingly at a cross held between finger and thumb. The thing is Rationalist propaganda, not too badly done, using the device of a Martian who discovers anti-gravity and sets off to earth primarily to find out at first hand about Religion, which has eluded the understanding of Martians observing earth doings with "super-telescopes" "sensitive radars" and "long-since-perfected television receivers".

The November 10th issue of "The Guardian - the Church Newspaper" contained the first instalment of a new story by S. S. Lewis "Who Goes Home or the Grand Divorce" billed as a fantasy, and later to be published by Bles.

George also mentions that he has about a dozen wartime prozines to swap and particularly desires FFM for Aug 40 and April 41. 126 Finborough Rd.

S. W. 10.

And the usual final frenzy of oddments.

Two Xmas cards already received are from Sam Youd with the CMF and one of our Leeds people - Austyn Snowden with the MEF.

Some interesting news about "Herbert Strang", prolific writer of boys books including many fantasies, has just been released. Strang is a penname - worse an assumed name that covered the identity of two people; Mr G Herbert Ely who did the writing and Mr O? J? E? Estrange who thought of the plots. They are colleagues in a famous publishing house and nearly 40 years ago, put their heads together to write a story for boys.

Congratulations to Irene and Ted Carnell on the birth of a son, bright Michael John Carnell. All best wishes to them and him in the future.

The latest IAPA mailing included three book reviews arranged in the page-per-book style that JMR is advocating and contributed by Messrs Warner and Searles. Both of these gentlemen are in favour of the project and put forth suggestions for its working. As regards the British side, only Peter Knott and Terry Overton have asked to be included on the list of people sent copies of these reviews. But the following have also shown interest by contribution of reviews and presumably wish to receive the sheets; Bob Gibson and Norman Lamb (are Canadians classed as British?) Fred Brown, J.F.Burke, A.W.Bushy, Peter Clarke and Ron Lane. And surely our premier bibliophiles George Medhurst and Bert Lewis want to be included. But if anyone else does, better write at once.

Within the next couple of months it is hoped that the following will be published from 4 Grange Terrace. A new Prospectus of the British Fantasy Society, brought up to date. Stencilled by Gus Willmorth. Free.

A Directory of British Fantasy, compiled, stencilled and published by JMR. Free to members of the BFS. and IAPA. second copies and to nonmembers price 4d. A pamphlet entitled "Discussions on a theme, No 1: Some Words of Wisdom on the Weird" with contributions from J.K.Aiken, J.Banks, J.F.Burke, Malcolm Ferguson and Paul Searles based on an article by Edmund Wilson in the New Yorker. Arthur Hillman has typed and stencilled this opus which is a really serious and worthwhile discussion on the subject. Priced at 4d pr.

Now just another word on the correspondence situation. At the moment there are some 40 unanswered letters piled up here. Reason apart from pre-occupation is that I am now enjoying fibrositis (?) in my wrists and arms brought on by overstrain and am unable to write more than a page without considerable pain. At some future date I hope to catch up on correspondence but at the moment only the most urgent can possibly get attention.

News of two Amerifans; Fred Pohl ex-editor of Astonishing Stories, is in Italy, Mario Racie is in France, and Len Moffatt is on Saipan in the Pacific