

NOW WE ARE TWO.

A year has passed by since I started a Bulletin off with the heading "Now we are One" (and it will be observed that I still can't think of another way of starting an Anniversary issue) and I suppose that all and sundry will be expecting me to give a review of the activities of the Society during that year. A typical specimen, if I may say so, of the notorious callousness of all and sundry.

For the cynical amongst our midst, the Aneurin Bevans and the Shinwells who specialise in asking awkward questions, will be asking harshly "what activities?" and I cannot even plead that I must have notice of that question, let alone refer the right Honourable members to the statement made by our Great Leader the last time he oped his lips and forbad any dogs to bark. There are drab facts which cannot be denied, and which I shall have to face in the end, wiggle and squirm among involved metaphors as I may. The membership, for instance, has only increased by seventeen new members in the past twelve months, and even that meagre gain has been partially counterbalanced by the resignation of two members. There has been no Advisory Board and no President for this period. The Library was in the doldrums for a long time through the Librarians suffering an unprecedented run of ill-health. The Science Discussions Chain made one laborious circuit and part of another before it faded into the empyrean. A less rugged secretary would have cut his throat before now.

But why should I play the Roman (or Japanese) fool and perish by my own sword. All is not completely rotten in the state of Denmark. The Library has continued in spite of hold-ups, and some library is better than none. (Have I not even now four early "Amazing Quarterlies" waiting to be read as soon as I can finish this goddam Bulletin?) The Magazine chains have continued most successfully under the patronage of Ken Chadwick. The Weird Section is flourishing under the enthusiastic lead of Arthur Hillman. Thanks to the efforts of Frank Parker and a number of enthusiastic amateur authors and illustrators the first issue of the RED BEYOND came out and has been circulated to an approving audience, while a second issue is well on the way. The Magazine Mart has been opened under the guidance of Walter Horcott, - it is not the fault of the sponsors that customers have so far been few and practically impossible to satisfy. The Bibliophiles Chain still circulates - according to my latent information it does anyway. There have been Conventions - notably the one put on at Easter by the Cosmos Club. And by its mere existence the BFC does represent some sort of a bond between nearly a hundred fantasy fans in this country - and the establishment of that link was our primary objective.

There is another point on which we may claim a little glory. If we haven't done much, then we haven't spent much money either. As you will see from the financial statement expenditure works out at about threepence per head per year. (For the purpose of the demonstration we will ignore the fact that if you want anything you have to pay for it.) There are not many societies run cheaper! Besides, Don't You know There's a War On?

I now have much pleasure in presenting an article from our mutual friend and ex-President Sergeant Edward J. Carnell, who has gallantly snatched a little time from his military duties to labour on our behalf. So over the page for a feast of wit and wisdom!

FAN -- THE MEMBERS!by Ted Carnell.

As a historian I probably make a very good undertaker, so don't expect this to be a true history of what has happened to fandom during the war years. At the best it can only be an angle, and not a good one at that, because I have been away from the country and active fandom on and off during the past two years, thus losing many of the contacts I had for information. Perhaps, however, a fresh mind will see things more clearly, not having been involved in very much correspondence or fan work, or article writing, or even reading for that matter.

I have four notes on outstanding events taken against the broad background of the war years. No -- five. The last one is the outstanding factor that the coming of war and the resultant curtailment of publication and the fact that large lumps of fans and readers were whisked away to places they had never even thought existed on this mud-heap of a globe, did cause the death of fandom or fantasy literature. That in itself is an outstanding feature. You all know how active fandom had been continued despite almost insurmountable obstacles, by a chosen few, and their praises have been sung elsewhere upon numerous occasions. But fandom and fantasy have survived, and now that the future looks brighter there is no need to doubt that fandom will come through with flying colours and probably a lot of new Order ideas to be exploited as soon as the fans get back into circulation.

One outstanding feature I have in mind (not for the new Order), is that British, American, and Canadian fans have met through the war, and have been able to discuss each other's outlook on fandom and get to understand the other's point of view. They have swapped ideas for the future, these ambassadors of fandom, and many of the differences of opinion which, from a distance of three to six thousand miles have seemed incongruous and alien, now drift away into the limbo of small things not worth raising a dust over. I foresee a more closely knit Universal fandom after the war based on the corner stones already set during the past couple of years. The wandering tribe of fandom have also brought new members into the flock, as well as cementing personally correspondence friendships. Yes, that's one good thing that has come out of this war.

Another point that stands out sharply is the fact that the pro-mag has become almost extinct. By itself that isn't so monstrous - there were plenty of mags that could have been exterminated comfortably and still not missed -- but the fact that in Britain particularly, where fantasy was kept alive by the influx of American pulp magazines, the flame has lived on without the help of the original fuel. True, this country has been and still is a great book reading one, as opposed to magazine fiction, and has been supported during the war years by considerable numbers of "escapist" novels, but the majority of fans were Americanised enough to prefer the type of stories which the American pulp market ordered. A more mature type of fantasy built up over many years of careful reader nurturing. That fandom and fantasy should still survive despite the curtailment of 90 per cent of its literature is also a milestone in history.

Just what changes will evolve after the war I cannot ~~perhaps~~ prophesy. Obviously the publishing firms will endeavour to get back to their old

peacetime productions with as little delay as possible, but I do not think they will achieve their ambition. First, I think that the authors will go to wider fields for their markets, because there will be more publication upon the market -- people will want more fiction after so many years of book-starved and propaganda-pumped. Secondly, world conditions and commodities will not revert to normal as quickly as people estimate -- I expect quite a long period immediately after the cessation of hostilities before commerce, and in particular the publishing trade, will find that the raw materials are available in sufficient quantities to allow publication of the vast amount of new periodicals that will inevitably come.

Yet another outstanding feature I find is the large number of writers who have left the country, and, through their war activities, been unable to keep up with fandom in any shape or form. Some, well-known and on the active list just prior to hostilities, have dropped out of sight from even their closest friends. Others have been reported as missing, or even killed. Yet despite this exodus fresh fans and readers have continued to crop up and take their places. It is for this reason that I feel the work done by the British Fantasy Society stands out as a pillar of support during the recent years. Quite obviously without an organization of some kind, fandom would have dwindled to a matter of correspondence between a few fans -- but to have a live organization endeavouring to answer every one's needs was more than any of the old Science Fiction Association members imagined.

Which brings me to the final outstanding achievement. The fact that despite deplorable conditions, the lack of adequate supporting literature, inadequate travel facilities, and the war effort in general (whether in the forces or the factory), this country managed to run a Convention over the Easter holidays! And that not the first during the year, although the biggest and most imposing. From my own experience of Conventions I feel sure that it could have been an overwhelming success, better even than expected by the organisers, but even in peacetime things cropped up to prevent people attending in large numbers. With a war on, the watercooler gave everyone their answer ..... fandom will stay for ever despite its changing face.

#### Footnote to the above.

I would like to mention, while the iron is hot, that possibly Ted's isolation from fandom through his Army career has caused him to take an overdim view of the supply of pro-mags. Admittedly those odd persons who go in for a complete collection of every magazine on the market have felt the cold somewhat, admittedly it has been almost impossible to obtain the magazines without some degree of skullduggery, but the generous help of American fans has sent over a sufficient supply of the magazines to enable most fans who would take a little trouble to read sufficient of them to keep up the tradition. They have been circulated under various schemes, of which the BBS magazine chains are the most recent example, and as serials are comparatively few the missing or odd numbers has not been a tragedy. I might suggest, in fact, that the strongest force drawing fandom together during the war has been a desire to share in this slender supply!

drs.

## Elections and All That.

Dearlly beloved brethren, I am sorry to say that you responded to my appeal for nominations for the Executive Committee in your usual brilliant style. Maurice Hanson gallantly made a few suggestions which unfortunately do not get us anywhere as the only change suggested to the present line-up involved bringing in a gentleman who has many excellent qualifications but not the essential one of being a member of the Bros. (I refer to no other than Douglas W. L. Webster.) So it seems as if we shall have to carry on with the present set-up until the strain causes one or more of us to collapse. The executives for the next year are, then :-

President. Mr Walter H. Gillings.  
Director. Mr J Michael Rosenblum.  
Secretary. Mr D. K. Smith.  
Treasurer. Mr Arthur W. Lusby.  
Librarians. Messrs. Fred Goddard & J.P. Doyle

The above list is subject to alteration.

The position with regard to the Advisory Board is even less satisfactory. For this defunct body we have one volunteer in the person of Jack Gibson, who we are happy to welcome back to active fandom after his recovery from the illness that emceed his retirement from the position of Librarian. Reviewing the situation, though, we - I - can't see him getting much action as a member of the Advisory Board, for the only other suggestions for members of this body (again by courtesy of Corporal Hanson) are Messrs Frank Parker and John Aiken. I have not made any specific enquiry of the gentlemen in question about their reactions to this proposal as yet, but although their qualifications are admirable they are both very busy men. I doubt their being able to accept. In any case three people, however willing and competent, do not make a very hazzard substantial committee. What would you do, chums?

## Financial Statement.

receipts to date	.....	5 - 0 - 0
Expenditure.		
By stencils for Bulletin etc.	21 - 6 - 1	
" membership cards .....	18 - 6	
" Notepaper for secretary.	4 - 9	
" Carriage on Library.....	10 - 3.	22 - 19 - 7
Cash in hand.		22 - 0 - 5d

Any questions?

## BFS Beyond.

Owing to a change in the nature of his work which necessitates his absence from home for considerable periods of time Frank Parker is having to relinquish the editorship of this reluctantly. This promised to put us into something of a spot, for it is not a job that everyone could do (even if they were willing, said he laughing bitterly) but Arthur Hillman has gallantly agreed to have a smack at it in spite of his existing commitments as director of the Weird section. As far as my pen goes the change hasnot yet actually taken place, as Frank is trying to get number 2 into circulation first. Those of us who read and enjoyed the first issue will owe a debt of gratitude both to Frank for his past efforts and to Arthur for taking up the torch.

Library.

Harry Kay, the SFA Librarian, has suggested to us that this considerable collection of books and magazines which was left in his charge at the outbreak of the war when the SFA suspended its activities might well be made use of by the BFS, an offer for which we are all most grateful. In considering this matter it occurred to me that libraries, being material things, are likely to be of greater duration than societies, which are subject to many diseases. The remainder of the Executive Committee agreeing, we have therefore suggested to the Cosmos Club, who possess a very considerable library too, that all three libraries, Bis, CC, and SFA, be combined and placed under the care of a board of trustees made up of the best-established firms of the country with a view to maintaining it as a permanent body irrespective of the rise and fall of societies. At the moment that would mean that the books would be available to members of both the present active societies, the Cosmos Club and the Bis, under the usual conditions as regards the payment of postage, the benefit to all concerned being obvious. Firms outside both societies could be admitted too on payment of a suitable fee, and the collapse of either or both societies would not mean the dispersal of hard-won collections should no succeeding body appear at once.

The reactions of the Cosmos Club have not yet arrived. We would appreciate the comments of any of our members who has anything to say on the matter.

Assistant Librarian Doyle, having recovered from his lu bago, is now waiting for a vacant bed so he can return to hospital. Fred Goodier, in giving this piece of information, says "what a bloody awful life", and I think that this is one instance when the strong language is justified.

Overseas Department.

From our old friend of the BS&WS, John Cunningham, now P.O. J.M. Cunningham No. 38243760, comes a copy of *Weird Stories*, July '44, for the Library. Thankyou, John, as much for the thought as the gift.

From Honorary Member F. J. Charles we have a courteous acknowledgment of his election to that rank and his best wishes for long life to the BFS.

From Edwin Macdonald, now training in Canada for flying duties in the RAE, an airgraph conveying the news that he likes Canada, likes the course he's on, but sometimes has to rise at 3 a.m.

From Bob Gibson, in Italy for the last six months, a sample of genuine Italian grit (I thought it was some exotic flower seed and nearly planted it!) and a most extraordinary request, which, as others are involved, merits a paragraph to itself.

Astonishing behaviour of sundry members.

The request from Gunner Gibson which shocked me so was to the effect that he wanted to know when his next subscription was due. Before I had recovered from this a letter from Mr C. Ashmore Baker arrived with a P.O. for 1/- in payment of the subscription he assumed to be due. And when Jack Gibson wrote to me volunteering for the Advisory Board he enclosed a P.O. for 3/- for assumed back subscriptions.

However, in the Prospectus it is laid down that "subscriptions will be asked for by the Executive Committee whenever they consider that the financial state of the society demand additional funds being raised" and as will be observed from the financial statement, that is not yet the case, so the money has been returned. But we very much appreciate the spirit!

Michael Lord.

Elsewhere in hido appears the sad news of the death of Michael Lord in an accident whose nature, at such a point in his career, must surely rank as one of the bitterest jests of malignant Fate. One can but record the facts of such a tragedy, nothing more is required to produce in the sympathetic reader those moments of silent sorrow that are the only tribute we can pay.

.....  
LITTLE PAN & WHAT NOW?

When I somewhat reluctantly (but not half so reluctantly as I would have been if I could have foreseen the future) took on the task of BFS Secretary, I was very vague as to what a secretary did and what a society was for. Well, I know now what a secretary does. He returns home tired and weary after a fortnight's holiday to find his garden entirely obscured by fifty-seven different assortments of weeds, a ton of coal to be stacked in a coal-pit, a postcard from the local librarian threatening legal proceedings if he doesn't return a book he borrowed some time ago and hasn't had time to read, a stack of letters to be answered, and a letter from the director asking for the stencils for the next Bulletin to be sent not later than the previous week-end. But I am not quite so clear as to what a society does.

Perhaps I should expand that somewhat into "I am not clear as to what the members of a society think it should do". And this is a serious matter, for I have heard by this way and that of a feeling abroad among some members that the BFS does not do all it should. Library, magazine chains, third section, Bibliophiles Chain, BFS beyond, bulletin - always available for member's advertisements, occasional small Conventions, these and other features aren't enough. So what I would like to hear from anyone interested is their idea of what a society should do, and how it should do it. Which, of course, is what the Advisory Board should do. If only we had an Advisory Board.

Another topic which is getting ripe for discussion is what to do after the war. There will be, I foresee, a tendency for local groups to arise, particularly in London (apart from the existing Cosmos Club maybe). But there will still be a large number of more or less isolated country-fans who will want an organisation like the BFS, who have a tendency to feel rather out of things if they are hangers on of a central group, and to sulk accordingly (as I did as a BIS member). Do we, then, resign ourselves to a number of different bodies with a separate one for country members, or can we organise a combined society in which everyone will feel happy? This too ought to be discussed in time so that when we recover from the Armistice celebrations to face the complications of peace we shall be prepared, and ideas would be welcome. I propose to print all/any letters dealing with this subject - or the parts of letters dealing with it, in the Bulletin.

Apologies.

What this has been typed straight onto the stencil (apart from the Carnall spasm) will be so evident that I feel it almost superfluous to offer it as an excuse for the mistakes - especially for the mistakes which I have missed, and shall not find as it is too late to read through the thing again. But there may come a day when I can devote full time and care to a bulletin, until then a fond farewell.

Dns. ITHESECRETARY