

ERC number ten





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OF THE
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ERG is the
product of
the master
mind.

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E A A L E
d o p
T a o o



ERGITORIAL

This epistle is being typed in the Stately Crumbling Jeeves' Mansion, set like a jewel on the mudflats of South Yorkshire. What is probably even more obvious, is the fact that it is being typed on the Stately Crumbling Jeeves' Typewriter. This machine, having served me faithfully since my sixteenth birthday, is now overdue for Public Assistance (or Death Benefit). Having reached the venerable age of 23, I feel we'll have to part (It's the typer, that's 23, not me). Therefore, I'M inaugurating a new scheme which I modestly call TAFF which stands for Terry's Auxiliary Fanning Fund. I am going to try to raise the lolly for a new typer. To that end, I'M going to start flogging certain items of 3-f. There'll be a list somewhere in here if I can get it done in time, but if not, do any of you want to make concrete offers for :-

A complete set of Galaxy (usa)

Science Fantasy complete

New Worlds complete save 1 & 2

Nebula complete

Naturally, the full list will contain more variegated stuff, but this is to start with. Remember it's for TAFF.

Valerie and I wish to send our warmest thanks to all those of you who sent cards and letters of congratulation on the birth of the baby. For those who missed the news, we accepted delivery of a 7lb baby girl on Oct. 8th (4 p.m.) Both Valerie and Sandra Mary are doing well. Our particular thanks go to Ron BENNETT, who mailed us a beautiful little dress for Sandy, along with the explanatory

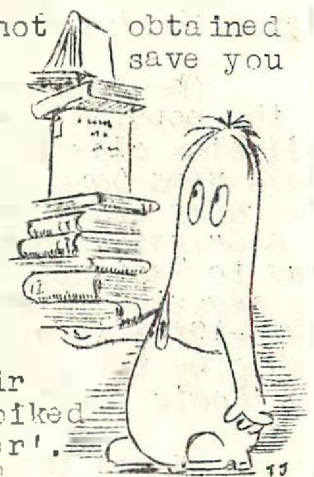
note that the parcel contained 'fan wrappings'. A further tag supported NGW for TAFP. Very many thanks Ron, and we hope to have you come a-visiting to see us all in the near future.

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No names, No pack-drill is a well known phrase, and it came to mind very forcibly after I had mailed out the last issue of ERG. In addition to the OMPA copies, I also mailed out a large number of copies to assorted friends and the like. The local newspaper replied with a very encouraging letter. A letter from FRED HUNTER in the Shetland Isles raised my morale 100% it was so complimentary. On the other hand...and this is where the 'No name' routine comes in...I sent copies to certain people on the OMPA waiting list...I presumed THEY would have been even more interested than either our local newspaper, or non-member Fred. Seems I was wrong as they never bothered to acknowledge the thing, let alone comment. Fred will soon become a member, as his name is nearing the top of the list, if his future mailing compliments rather than comments are as good as the letter I received, Ompa is due for a pleasant surprise.

In case I didn't say so anywhere else, let me quickly point out that in the 29th mailing, I award my own personal Oscar to Atom's cover for Scottishe as the best cover in the mailing, and the cover for 'The Wall' was the most striking one in the issue.

The Sexton Blake piece in this issue was not via either Perry Mason, nor a time machine, and to writing, I don't know where Tony is these days either. This piece was from the reserve emergency Triode file, and since TRIODE looks like staying somnolent for many a long moon, I thought I had better use it up in this issue.



Recently had a Pocketsred from Ken Slater to the effect that he has finally secured for me the final two Amz. episodes of Doc Smith's serial 'The Galaxy Primes'. I am now eagerly awaiting their arrival so I can discover if the good Doctor has hoiked himself out of the depths plunked in 'Vortex Illaster'. Since I'm a plutton for punishment, I've also asked Leroy Hausrud to get me the copies of 'IF' with the good Doc's latest serial inside. I hope he's improving, but methinks he would have been is asf if so.

Three new authors are to grace NEW WORLDS in the near future (or at least, NOVA Publications). Leroy Hausrud has sold a story to Ted, and will probably appear in SF.50. ALAN BURNS has also joined the ranks, and finally, our Department Head of English, BRIAN WALL after pestering me for weeks for literary criticism (hah!) has placed a story with Ted Carnell. Now I have to buy a story which I had a hand in forming. Life gets tedious.

A final word in your shell like lug 'oles. Ethel Lindsay is a good lass, but have you ever considered that we don't want to lose her? In view of this, may I venture to suggest that you vote EDDIE JONES FOR TAFP....and save Ethel for the home market.

TTFN.

THE MURDER OF

SEXTON BLAKE

by Tony Glynn



It is with deep regret that I announce the recent death of the celebrated Baker Street detective, Mr. Sexton Blake.

He was in his day, perhaps the world's greatest scientific fighter of crime. In a 60 year long heyday, he was frequently to be found with a microscope close at hand; there was a laboratory installed in the Baker Street headquarters of the celebrated investigator, and if you should doubt the scientific prowess of the brain behind the balding cranium, I would refer you to a 1928 case, "The Problem of the Broken Stick" in which a quick glance at an unidentified evening suited corpse enabled Blake to

inform a baffled Scotland Yard man that not only was this an out-of-work saxophone player (shades of the Goon show) but he invariably played the heavier, base instrument.

The creator of Blake is unknown. The detective first appeared in the popular periodicals of the Amalgamated Press in the 1890's, following closely upon the advent of Sherlock Holmes. That he was based upon Conan Doyle's detective can hardly be doubted: consider the rooms in Baker St., the pondering over knotty cases while garbed in a dressing gown, the preference for a curved pipe, and the tendency to "scientific" methods. Blake grew quickly in popular appeal. The magazine which carried his adventures weekly, "The Union Jack" (1894-1933) is claimed as the longest running popular weekly to be issued by the Amalgamated Press apart from the comic-papers 'Chips' and 'Comic Cuts'.

As was the case with Holmes, many people believed that Sexton Blake was a living and breathing man. His battle against crime took him to just about every corner of the globe, Brighton, Honolulu, Calcutta or Bear Creek, Idaho and every point of the compass between were anti-crime battlegrounds on which Blake encountered the 'shadowy' form, or the 'dull thud'..... And now he has passed!

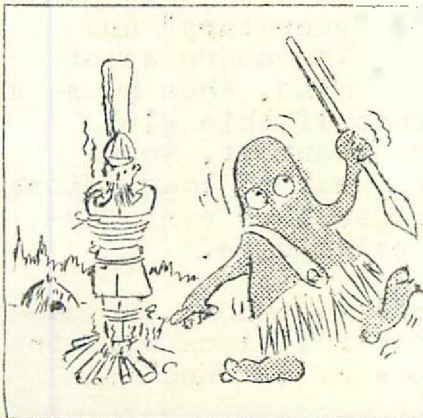
A less severe critic than myself would say Sexton Blake has merely been reborn - but I say that he has been murdered. He has been chewed up and spat out by the grindstones of the Chandler and Dashiell Hammett school of detective fiction. Those who knew him in his heyday as the relentless, aquiline nosed, gentlemanly detective would not now recognise him. Even faithful Tinker, the cheery faced youth who never aged a day in sixty years, has gone - cast off in favour of a pretty secretary whose legs the new Blake would appear to find most interesting. It must be confessed that the new Blake

seems to have broken the long restraint; he no longer battles the 5 great unprincipled with the highest traditions of the playing fields of Eton in mind. Let us consider the Sexton Blake of tradition.

Mr. E.S. Turner, author of "Boys will be Boys", the most entertaining volume on popular English fiction a sociologist or anyone else ever wrote, gives us a clear outline of the distinguished career in a chapter devoted to the celebrated detective. He tells us that the earliest known appearance of Blake seems to be in a short story of 1893, but he is not satisfied that was positively the first appearance. He was then working in a not-too-firm partnership with a French Investigator. In the early 1900's he was working at top pressure with an office and a staff, such high pressure indeed, that he was forced to take a rest and what Mr Turner describes as "the great purge of 1904" resulted. The detective's staff was dismissed with the single exception of Tinker, the bright-faced youth. Mr Turner quotes the story which ended the established order of Blake's life, but set up a new and long-lasting order: "Tinker would always remain. They were part and parcel of each other's lives". Worth remembering those two sentences.

Prior to World War One, Blake was called in by a great number of highly placed personages - not excluding the Kaiser himself. The first war to end wars saw him firmly at grips with the more cunning of his country's enemies and the 1920's saw him solidly entrenched as a popular favourite to the extent that Sexton Blake plays and films were touring the land. The thirties and forties, saw the Baker St. pair no less determined in their battles against criminals and Nazis.

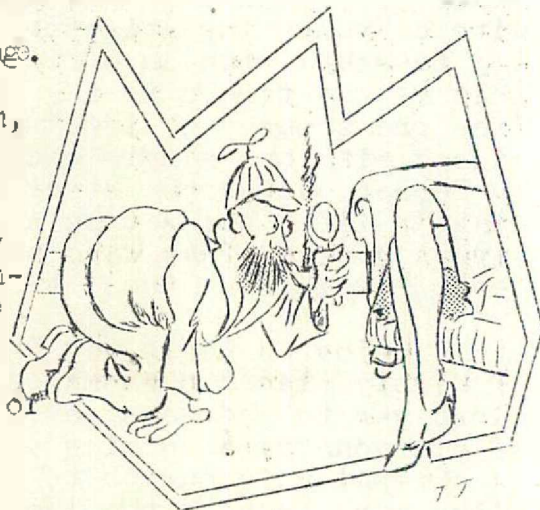
The Baker Street set-up, which existed from 1904 to 1956 was one known to thousands of readers almost as well as their own home circumstances. There was Mrs. Bardell, the bosomy landlady. Her name was a theft from Dickens and her manner of speech taken from the mouth of Mrs Malaprop. There was Pedro, the faithful and very useful bloodhound. There was the Gray Panther, which was a motor car to end all horseless carriages, and there was, of course, Tinker - Tinker who through fifty odd years, was bludgeoned, shot at, gassed, tied down in a cellar while it slowly flooded, left abandoned on the grating of a Parsee death-tower in India and faced almost every other peril that fiction can devise, at the side of his beloved "Guv'nor".



Consider the new Blake. Here he is in "Dark Mambo" by W. Howard Baker, a recently published adventure. We find his headquarters have been transferred to Berkely Square, though he still lives in Baker St., in an "apartment" where there would appear to be no Mrs Bardell to watch over him. The curved pipe appears to have gone, Blake apparently preferring cigarettes which he taps slowly on his thumb-nail while reflecting on what a damned sordid world it is.

6 The Berkely Square office has two typists, Marion Lang and Miss Pringle. Tinker, who was once "part and parcel" of Blake's life would seem to have followed Mrs Bardell and the curved pipe into oblivion. It is of some comfort to note that Blake still wears a dressing-gown even if it is red silk, covering blue linen pyjamas.

The style of this Blake is distinctly Chandlerish. He moves through the world with a chip on his shoulder. He is given to contemplating ladies' legs, a thing in would never have done in the days when you could see only their ankles, or in the twenties when there was no cause to complain of a lack of feminine undercarriage. Worse still, the police fail to recognise him. In "Dark Mambo", a constable asks him, "what's your name, sir?" a question which would be unthinkable in the salad days. There was a time when his friendly rival, Inspector Coutts of the Yard, would hardly consider taking after a bicycle-thief without calling in Blake; and policemen on the beat would salute him as a reflex-action which after all, is fitting for one who (in fiction at least) was made Lord Mayor of London in 1928.



Mr. Baker has given him a nervous twitch of the eyebrow which, taking the sixty years of flooding cellars, Parsee death towers and being tied to a rocket which was being shot at the moon - is not really out of character, although a little late in showing itself.

Blake now drives a Bentley, Tinker would seem to have driven Mrs Bardell, Pedro and the curved pipe away in the Grey Panther. Replacing the ever youthful Tinker is Paula Dane, who appears to be to Blake as Della Street is to Perry Mason. I am not happy about this replacement of Tinker by the wench Paula - it has brought out something in Blake which few thought was there. In "Dark Mambo", he dances with her. She seems to be considerably concerned with pressing herself to him while he tightens his arms around her. When he introduces Paula to a Spaniard, the Iberian repeats the word "secretary" and smilingly mutters something about a colloquialism. The nearness of Paula seems to have a disturbing effect on Blake's mind. When he sees a cigarette girl in a tight dress, he reflects that if this girl changed so much as her mind, the world would know about it. Worse follows. He buys cigarettes from her, "and allowed her to lean against him for one brief moment. The pleasure and the cigarettes were expensive". This is certainly not the Blake of the salad-days.

Not that Blake was ever insensible to feminine charms. He had his moments even very early in his career, but his relations with the ladies were always in the most laudable traditions of the English gentleman.

Mr Turner's researches reveal that there was an affair with a

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lady named Lily Ray very early in his career and the Union Jack of March 15th 1930 let us in on the scheming wiles of Madame Roxane, who wanted Blake to herself and had him carted aboard a yacht while unconscious. In this story, the work of George Hamilton Teed, Blake did a stint of wench-holding. "Blake scarcely realised how closely he had been holding her", reads a sentence. Blake can be seen to be acting in a correct gentlemanly manner when it is explained that he has just picked the girl up (literally) after a road accident, and is calming her. No taking pleasure in allowing Adam's rib to lean against him for a brief moment here.

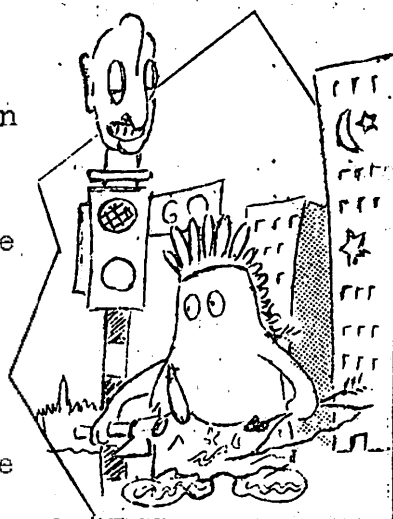
In the great days, Blake faced and liquidated a succession of gangs and sinister criminal master minds. Not the least of the latter was the bearded buccaner, George Marsden Plummer who was always one leap ahead of Scotland Yard, which is not surprising since he was once one of that institution's cleverest officers. Plummer was, like Roxane, the creation of G.H. Teed. Mr Teed appeared to have a weakness for fetching and not noticeably law-abiding womanhood. When Plummer was not battling society in company with a beautiful spy-type named Vali Mata-Vali he was doing so with an American film star named Muriel Marl, titled the 'super vamp'. To quote Mr. Teed she was "not of the type that threw themselves about heavily, crudely; not of the quieter, yet still flashy type of their successors. She was in a class by herself" She was further presented to the audience as "the mystery blonde of Hollywood". That she "had thrown over her whole film career, contracts worth hundreds of thousands of dollars and retired, apparently to her palace in Beverly Hills to lead a life of apparent nun-like seclusion" was merely a blind for the most un nun-like of activities. That she fell heavily for Plummer can hardly be wondered at, since, Mr Teed tells us; "George Marsden Plummer was a magnificent figure of a man."

There was too, Zenith the Albino, who led Blake a series of merry dances, created by Anthony Skene. There was the Crime Minister created by Robert Murray. There was the Green Gargoyle, of the ugly verdant features; Paul Cynos, the scheming ex-convict for whose arrest huge posters offered £5,000; Waldo the Wonder Man, an illusionist turned crook and there was the "Criminals Confederation", a gathering of master minds who having disappeared apparently for ever in a debacle on a place called Volcanic Island, turned up some little time later all alive and kicking with renewed vigour at the foundations of law and order.

The Sexton Blake authors were not averse to taking a real-life case as the basis for a Blake adventure. Take "The Man on The Stairs" for instance, based under the thinnest of veils on the famous Oscar Slater case. Oscar Slater was imprisoned for life in 1908 after being charged with the murder of Miss Marion Gilchrist, found battered to death in a Glasgow tenement house. The evidence securing Slater's conviction was flimsy, consisting mainly of a pawn ticket, supposedly for Miss Gilchrist's stolen jewellery and the vague identification by witnesses of Slater as a man seen briefly on an ill-lit stairway in the house. Slater claimed he was across the Atlantic at the time of the murder, and indeed, before the Oscar

Slater story was played out, witnesses were brought from Canada to prove he was there at the time in question. Nevertheless, Slater was jailed, to be released after more than twenty years of public and press outcry. When "The Man on the Stairs" was published (1928), he was still serving his sentence.

In the story, the innocent victim of the miscarriage of justice was "Otto Slade"; the location of the tenement house in which "Miss Gilbertson" lived was Edinburgh. Her death was identical with that of Miss Gilchrist and the evidence against 'Slade' was substantially the same as that against Slater. It was left to Blake to track down the real killer and restore Slade's good name after his release from "Calderhead Prison".



To show how varied was the life of Blake in his heyday, the week following his unravelling of the Slade mystery, he was to be found in New Mexico, up against intrigue featuring Apache Indians. The unknown author of this epic, incidentally showed himself to be none too happy in his Southwestern location. He was under the distinct impression that New Mexico is prairie country, for one thing. Nor was Mr Eric Parker the excellent illustrator on very sure ground, the trappings and wigwams of his Indians belonging to a culture of a far more northerly tribe than the desert dwelling Apaches. To pursue criticism on these grounds is possibly churlish, however, for whatever the discrepancies of detail in this story, the readers were given full measure of action and mystery.

Eric Parker deserves further mention, his style was a loose style which gives it a sketchy vigour and he is still an active illustrator. Throughout the latter days of the Union Jack, his work illustrating the Sexton Blake saga was immensely popular and the editor devised a scheme whereby the writers of the most interesting letters were given Parker originals, a practice to be later found in some American science fiction magazines. Parker was also the designer of the Sexton Blake bust given as a prize in a competition, one of these was later to turn up in the booth of a fairground phrenologist with the cranium marked off into various areas. One wonders how the possessors of a 30 year old Blake bust, or a Parker original (and there must be some somewhere) would feel towards the new Chandlerised Blake.

Eric Parker was not the only artist to delineate the adventures of Blake, however; others were Kenneth Brookes, Arthur Jones, Alfred Sindall, and Fred Bennett, to mention but a handful. Fred Bennett drew comic cockney costers in Punch before the first World War and it was possibly because of this that almost every male character he ever drew had hideously baggy trousers. Blake however, was spared this indignity, but Bennet's illustrations were never quite free of a comic quality.

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For year after year in the Sexton Blake heyday, eight Blake epics - four issues of the Union Jack and four titles of the Sexton Blake library appeared every month, so it can be seen that a battery of writers were engaged in keeping the saga moving. Possibly there is a detailed list of Blake scribes in existence somewhere, if so, it must be impressive. To mention a few who produced Sexton Blake stories between the two great wars alone, there were Antony Skene, Robert Murray, Lewis Jackson, G.H. Tweed, Gwyn Evans - it is on record that this author, who dies young once turned out a full length Blake novel in the short space of a weekend when he was hard pressed for funds. David McCluire, Gilbert Chester, Anthony Parsons, Warwick Jardins, Rex Hardinge, Donald Stuart, who also wrote at least one Blake play. Hugh Clevely, R.L. Hadfield, C. Malcolm Hincks and John Hunter. It is significant that the new Blake stories bear names comparatively new to the field: Howard Baker, who did however turn out some of the last of the Baker Street, Tinker and Mrs Bardell order - Arthur Kent and Peter Saxon. The remainder of the old guard who worked until recently in the field: Hardinge, Chester, Hunter, Clevely, Parsons and Walter Tyrer, appear to have been jettisoned.

The 'Union Jack' was not afraid to embark on novelty, the "Proud Tram Mystery" series being an example. In this, a number of favourite authors were given a set of facts touching the death of one Alfred Mowbray Proud, whose corpse was found on the top of a Tram. They were supplied with a list of the contents of Proud's pockets and each turned out a story with Proud's death as the basis of a Blake adventure.

If, as Mr Turner has suggested, authors of considerable standing 'ghosted' Blake stories for ready cash, their names would seem to have been kept a closely guarded secret. Margery Allingham however, had a back-of-the-magazine serial running in the "Union Jack" in 1932 but the "Thriller" which appeared as a companion paper in the "Jack's" latter days, was essentially the province of the big names in detective fiction, giving its readers. Edgar Wallace, Agatha Christie, John G Brandon, and Leslie (The Saint) Charteris for two pence a week.

For all his scientific deduction, the old Blake was sluggish on the uptake if we hark back to his feminine encounters once more. When he met June Severance, "a new force entered his life", Perhaps it was her "wonderously beautiful slimness, the lovely turn of her throat" that did it. Blake having pulled June out of intrigue was faced with the moment of goodbye at the end of the story. "She gave him her hand, there was an enigmatical expression in her deep violet eyes which Blake could not fathom. Nor was he to understand it for a long time. Ah yes, the old Blake has faded away, the new smart-alecky Blake meeting up with June in her knee revealing skirt would fall head over heels to induce her to lean against him.

And if an epitaph for Blake must be written, let it be the sentence which recurred many times throughout his long story :

"He is dead - murdered !"

THE END

IMPA VIEWS

FOR MAILING NO. 29

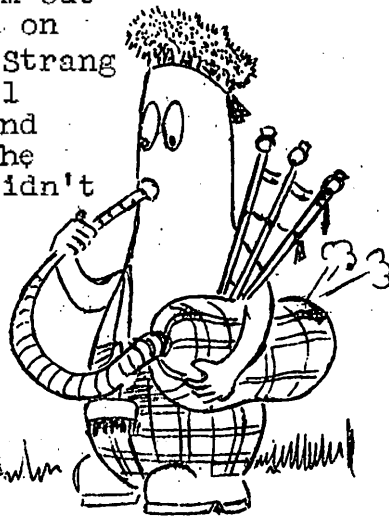
Best Cover.....Scottishe
Most Striking Cover.....'The Wall'
Most Interesting Magazine.....Vagary

The above listing is my own little contribution to adding a little more interest to my mailing comments. I'll try and keep it up if members think the idea worth while..to my mind, it shows just a trifle more appreciation than a straight revue..what do you think?

OFF TRAILS. No great comment here, except to say that I'm pleased to see a bit of humanity in the interpretation of the rules..(viz Gerber, Shorrock, Roles etc), but I do deplore the crediting of surplus pages to another member...if this is to become general, then I calculate I could keep at least one fully NON-active member in Ompa by paying his dues, and slipping him my spare pages. Only under extreme circumstances can I see any excuse for being unable to produce 8 or 12 pages per YEAR..and if such a case can be proved to exist, then the OE, Chairman, or what have you, should have the discretionary powers to cope with it.

HUNGRY.4. A well produced interior spoilt by a rusty-nail cover. Shame..... I see that Sandfield is still kicking jazz around... his reference to Arthur Strang reminded me of one story by that author. Called '1,000 Miles and Hour'; it was a hard cover present to me at a tender age. The plot concerned a pool of water discovered in S. America, which when anything was dipped in it, gravity was nullified. An aeroplane was built using this principle..involving spraying the liquid on wooden balls which lifted the craft..an air jet dried them out for descent...horizontal flight was achieved on the downward glide, and reached 1,000 mph...Strang had obviously never heard of sonic or thermal barriers....Even so, I refuse to admit s-f and jazz have anything in common. 'A Day With The Beats'...this was right out of my orbit..I didn't know whether it was a farce, or intended to be true - if the latter, Ghu help 'em. The best thing in the issue was Mercer's piece on welcoming Bruce....why doesn't Ah Chee produce more stuff like this ???

CONVERSATION.13 What a fuss to make about those words (yup I managed to read mine and assuage my curiosity)..on the other hand, I'm not in favour of any



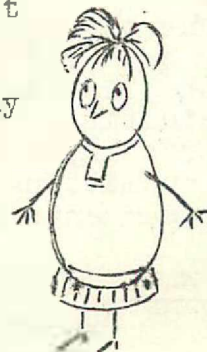


off-colour words in general circulation, but I'm also aware that a full scale semantic discussion could swing around this point, so I'll leave it. What is wrong with Gene Duplantier's art ?? He obviously has talent, but doesn't develop it..see that horrible illo desecrating page 7. I don't profess to cope at all well with figure work, but I could beat that thing with its out of proportion figure...give him 50 lashes. The little red-men on page 9 are far more satisfying as they don't set out to be more than they are. More of em, and less duplantier..his cover was far better though a trifle too meaty for me, and apart from its gory aspect, the bacover the best of the lot.

SCOTTISHE Luvverly cover..Nope, didn't send Amis a copy.. never thunked of it..hast got his latest address, as I believe he has moved. Beautiful production..Brian Jordan tells me that you have a special arrangement with Gestetner to obtain ink at 12/9 a tube rather than around 19/- (Yes I bought a load of Brian's 10 bob stuff) What about spreading the gen..and if it is a purely local offer, can you get me a load of red, at the same price ?? WAW was interesting, though not very nostalgic. I much preferred Varley's 'Camp Dazy'...Varley is a sort of quiet atom bomb...the poor man's Mal Ashworth...lash him to the typewriter full time. I agree with you wholeheartedly on enjoying EFR, yet finding modern s-f full of cardboard people. I agree even more when you castigate the current yen for the simple life...why does it never rain, snow or get cold in these pastoral idylls ? Me, I rather relax on a studio couch and read a good book, than hump around on a bumpy stretch of damp grass and sing folk songs while a cold breeze blows down my neck. As to your remarks about the latest F&SF...Ethel take eighty-six house points, I couldn't agree with you more.

ZOUNDS.5 I'm afraid the blue ditto work is rather oikid to read, but is an occupational hazard of this work. You ask why we (Eric and I) no longer publish a genzine...well, as you know, Eric does (BASTION..advnt). Actually, TRIODE would still be appearing, but Eric rather jumped the gun. When I got engaged, I told Eric that work on Triode might get held up indefinitely, and the tly schedule would have to go poep. Eric must have taken this as a gentle hint that TRIODE was through, and the next thing I heard was he'd coerced Norman into Bastion. This rather suited me, but had it not occurred, TRIODE would still be g rearing. On the other hand, a genzine does tie you down a trifle as you owe something to subbers...with ERG, I can go my own sweet way. And now to your poll.

1. YES I would accept \$1,000 (or equivalent) per month, and I would use it NOT to benefit society (except indirectly and unintentionally) but purely to further my hobbies. I'd make more amateur movies...and do more amateur pubbing of a generally higher (printed) level. I wouldn't set out to benefit society, for several reasons.



By and large, I don't think society is worth wasting time on. Moreover, if large scale cultural type organisations can't do much (UNESCO, BBC etc) who am I to fritter my \$1,000 a month away?

2. Would I want to survive a nuclear war? A difficult question and since an adequate visualisation of either case is virtually impossible, I'm inclined to vote for life, rather than give up without a struggle...otherwise, why not cut one's throat right now? Library Notes...time permitting, I think these are a good idea, but I just couldn't start on mine (someday I hope to make up a catalogue) but from where I sit, I can see 4 sets of Encyclopedias. 10 vols, 10 vols, 8 vols and 6 vols. 'Conquest of Space' rubs shoulders with the 3 vols of 'Aircraft of the Fighting Powers'. Then Leroy Haugsrud's cat book rests beside 'The Book of Plants' and 'The Book of Animals'. 'Mathematics for the Million' 'Intermediate Physics' 'Calculus Made Easy' and so on...my tastes are catholic. Yes, my US space superiority project was made before Shepard I believe...but Shepard wasn't part of the upsurge I predicted...that is to come when Saturn, Apollo and Nova get rolling and Dyna Soar and ASP supply manoeuvrability in space. Would I go up in a capsule?? This is an easy to answer question but not so easy to answer honestly...however, here goes. If you had asked me ten years ago, (fewer grey hairs) and said "Will you go in 1961?" I'd have said 'yes', and basked in all the publicity for ten years...the last one would have been an agony of apprehension, and hope that the flight would have to be fully and irrevocably cancelled for some reason beyond my control, so that I could stay earth bound without loss of face....If such a reason did not materialise, then I would be too scared to back out...so I'd go...chewing my nails all the way. Does that answer your question?

AMBLE.7 I agree with your sub heading Archie. Gee, you're a crummy poet.....how about a review of Erg sometime huh?

MORPH It's good to see you back John...let's have more of you huh? Whoa back there...I'm not in EFR..he is one of my top four authors (with Heinlein, Smith and Campbell) I think his Sinister Barrier is terrific, his Dreadful Sanctuary only a mite less so. 'Metamorphosite' is a great favourite of mine, as is 'Hobbyist' and a host of others...my quibble is that of recent years, he has got in a rut...entertaining, maybe..but still a rut. E.g. Wisecracking omniscient Earthman deludes stupid aliens who are too literal and logic minded. Now you list how many such yarns Russell (and Anvil) have written on that theme in the last ten years, and see if I'm right. I found 'Eye Balls' fascinating, and would like to read more in this vein..and can you recommend any book which tell you the mechanics of writing and submitting a book to a publisher? Lower your lead, after your comments on RC's, the brickbats will fly...I'm on your side.

THE WALL Although in favour of this idea, this particular episode put me off owing to the duping and lack of illos..it also

verged on the frantic.....was it composed on stencil ?

13

VAGARY.14 is without doubt, the best and most meaty (in both literal and figurative sense) in the mailing. So much so that I'll NOT have space to comment on all that caught my eye. I didn't care for the cover, but that is the only weak point. Camp Crazy proved rather a let down, as after the previous instalment, I had expected some logical explanation (foreign spies hidden in the basement, or local real estate man trying to drive you away so he could buy the property before the rail road came through)...Instead, the logical explanation is over in a few lines...'someone called up a demon and couldn't get it back in the jam-jar' I'm surprised to have that coming from you Bobbie. I thought you were too level headed to take that line. Personally, I do NOT believe in demons, possession and the black magic withhercraft kick, so I refuse to settle for such a glib explanation. Why not publish the name of the camp and see what other German travelled beds have to say ? Personally I feel this was a hoax type article. -o- ~~to~~ your comments on obscenities (page 13) I'm fully in agreement with you..we all know these words..we may even use 'em under certain circumstances and in our own little in-group..but that doesn't mean they are words which we use anywhere and everywhere. Going to the extreme of such argument, why don't such abusers of language follow the principle that since we must all excrete, why not do so in public. I'm with you in keeping Ompa clean. Many ta's for the New Zealand address...Keith is in the throes of composition right now...page one completed, and page two proving hard work. Had I not given him an AMLeard, your nephew would have got little more than a pc I fear. -o-o- Your treatment of the Rev Wray was superb..I got his screed, and dropped it in the WPE. Eric and I did toy with the idea of asking him why he didn't use his system to make him rich, but never got off the ground with it. TOP OF THE MAILING TO YOU.

PARAFANALIA It was nice to see the con sketch in print, but in future sketches, please omit the singing parts...unless you have a real singing voice, the audience fail to enjoy the words owing to an agony of apprehension and sympathy with the singer. Ethel did her very courageous best, but I was in agony for her the whole time.



OPHIDIAN..and welcome to Ompa..liked your heading..is/was it done by shading plates cum letters ? I was fascinated with a dog whose name is Anheiser, but gets called Budweiser for short..tho' usually called 'Buddy', and registered as Budweiser XVI...doesn't the poor thing wonder who he is ? Thanks for the kind words on the illos..by this time you'll have got the stuff I mailed you..hope ya like it.

14 JETSTREAM.2. Duping was rather rough, but the illos on page 4 intrigued me..did you use sandpaper as a backing sheet, or were the dark areas cut out with a knife ? Either way, it could prove useful if it can be controlled-o- Liked the movie review..now I know I don't want to see the film.

WALDO I rate the art work very highly, and enjoyed re-visiting San Remo even if only in print. 'Due Lemon-soda' and like that.

BRIAN BURGESS..Congratulations on putting out one of the most enterprising OMPA ideas in many a decade..mailing from Hel. I was furious to find our postman had tried to removed the lovely stamp...and having torn each corner beyond repair, gave it up as a bad job.



EDDIE FOR TAFF

AND FROM OUTSIDE OMPA CAME : -

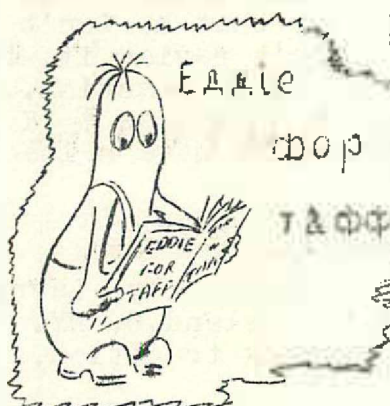
LES SPINGE (so cunningly disguised as Hyphen, that I turned to Val and said..."Looks as though Willis has got another editor to produce '-' for him"). Well produced, three colours (of paper) Interested in your views on 'Hidden Persuaders' and advertising in general...like many other things, advertising is with us to stay...and like many other things, as long as the vast majority of the public is moronic (remember that near 50% sub normal rate) in some sphere we'll have to live with such stuff...before someone points out that a majority can't be below 50%, let me point out that I didn't say that it was...I said the majority of people were moronic on something

I'm moronic on football and jazz f'r instance..on the other hand, nigh on 50% of the the public is below normal in brain power...put the two together, and advertising has something for nearly everyone.

WHATSIT.1. Boasts a multi colour (paint job) cover, and again emanates from Ken (I'm going gafia for a while) Cheslin...is really an Ompazine, but arrived with the aslo-rans...please go quarto for number two huh ?...it's easier to handle, and won't give the OE a fit. Have watched that TV 'Pencil and Paper' and become infuriated by that knee showing female who reads off the solutions in the bored manner as if saying "Here's how I worked them out"...bet she couldn't count her fingers. Candid Camera ranged from 90% ridiculous 8% entertaining and 2% of the sublime....remember Routh trying to fly ? The lady warned not to put firelighters near a naked flame ? The locked door through which Routh passed a pair of steps to enable the bloke outside to clamber through the skylight ? For real entertainment, I put 'Maigret' and Hancock at the top of my list...they're the only programmes we watch.

Ken's address...18 New Farm Rd., Stourbridge, Worcs

PARSECTION.8. Geo. C. Willick, 856 East St., Madison? Indiana and if you want to sub...I'm the UK agent, and it will cost you 6/- for 6 issue (published every 45 days...now work out why that gestation period) Far has 20 BEAUTIFULLY produced (Photolith ?) pages. Contains an analysis defying piece of peculiar dialogue by Harland Ellison and Joe Hensley -o- Reflections on s-f and Gafia by Parker (Ron) on a 'whithering note...-o- Numerous BNF comments on the proposed Fan Awards -o-o and a lettercol...how can you lose at a bob athrow?...and if you still want more, Sam Lundwall contributes an article on a 'Fake Fan in Sweden'.



BANE.5. Vic Ryan, 2160 Sylvan Rd., Springfield Illinois. 32 beautifully duped and well illoed pages. Vic's address is due to change soon, so watch out for the news. Marion Bradley has an interesting article on the 'Ultimate Fanzine', and I'm pleased to see that we both HATE sloppy production. Bob Tucker has something I didn't dig. Harry Warner + Look Reviews + fanfiction + a lettercol, all combine to make this a zine worth having.

SCRIBBLE.7. Colin Freeman/Ward.3/Scotton Banks Hospital/Ripley Rd./Knaresborough/Yorks. 10 pages, Atom Cover, but sadly lacking in layout and interior illos. A serious editorial runs smack up against a whacky type pseudo letter col with no other warning than a typed heading on the second page. This solid juxtaposition continues throughout the mag., and thus makes for heavy reading...if you can steel yourself to dig in, the result is worth it, but how much better it would be, if the layout made you keen to dig in. A magazine which can be made worthwhile with a little more work.

ESPRIT. Vol.2 No.5 Daphne Buckmaster/ 8 Buchanan St. Kirkcudbright/Scotland. 38 pages with virtually no illos, make this a trifle forbidding. Material is intellectual, and if you want faan stuff, this isn't your magazine. On the other hand, if you savour serious discussion on just about any topic under the sun, Esprit is your haven...samples here include :- 'Thoughts on Thinking Machines'... 'Private Hell of Kinglsey Amis...Superman ancient and Modern, and a host of other material 1/6, or 20 cents, and contributions welcome.

LES SPINGE (Whoever he is) 12 Belmont Rd, Wellescote, Stourbridge/ Wores. 18 pages of rather hit/miss duping, and this one is on the 'faan' side. Ron Bennett explains how to convert your mangle into a fan press...with the help of the lino from the Post Office floor. Lichtman has a good piece on

14 the home movie fan ..I enjoyed the piece, but as a home movie maker, I am mailing Bob a time bomb.. Spine is another of those zines which loses a lot by its appearance.. slick it up a bit, and you have a winner.

THEN some comment-zines arrived, so here goes :-

SIZAR fro Bruce Lurn..Thankee for the kind words, and I like you too.

BLETHERINGS..You're not abominable, Ethel, I was just agreeing that the generalisation had some grounds in my own experience. F'r instance, Yorkshiremen are reputed to like cricket ..I don't.

PAEK RAT..Jim Groves has the peculiar theory that he isn't going to comment on everything...if he doesn't review it, then he probably enjoyed it, but it elicited no other reaction...How come, Jim..do you only comment when roused to disagree ? I should have though a word of appreciation might have helped the struggling faned to know he's appreciated

BRENNSCHLUSS++ WHICH Doesn't have a review in it, and is good anyway....and Ken Potter's farewell to Ompa..a sad day.

AXE..The Pulletin of the Willis Fund, is published by Larry and Noreen Shaw, from 16 Grant Place, Staten Island, 6. NY. It features news and views in the Fanac/Skyrack tradition, and is in no way inferior to either.

ANCIENT MYSTERIES (published by the Mar-Vel-Us Fellowship) is a swami-ridden piece of bull, the sole purpose, thinly veiled seems to get my 5 dollars for the first monthly lesson, plus further dollops of dollars for 'books' NYET!

HAVERINGS No.8 from Ethel (not abominable Lindsay) is another Epistle from the Excellent Ethel, and contains an anaylsis/revue cum comment of fanzines received to date...a sort of full scale edition of this column..but better handled. Worth filin for completists, apart from its intrinsic merit.

PROJECT ART SHOW BULLETIN from Djo Trimble, 2790 W.8th St Los Angeles, Calif. Being a complete and fascinating breakdown of the Art Show at the Pittcon. I was crogled to see that Dave & Ruth Kyle had kindly exhibited a painting which I had given to Ruth. Details here for NEXT year, you artists.

Space for deep-breast hing brings us to BUG EYE, from Helmut Klemm 16 Uhlandstrasse Utford/Eick, (22a) Krs. Moers, W.Germany. Super Quarto size, and with over 30 well duped pages. BE could use neater margins and a few more illos. Material on the other hand is well varied and international. I particularly enjoyed Gindorf's account of the British fen he has encountered.

AND THAT'S YOUR LOT !