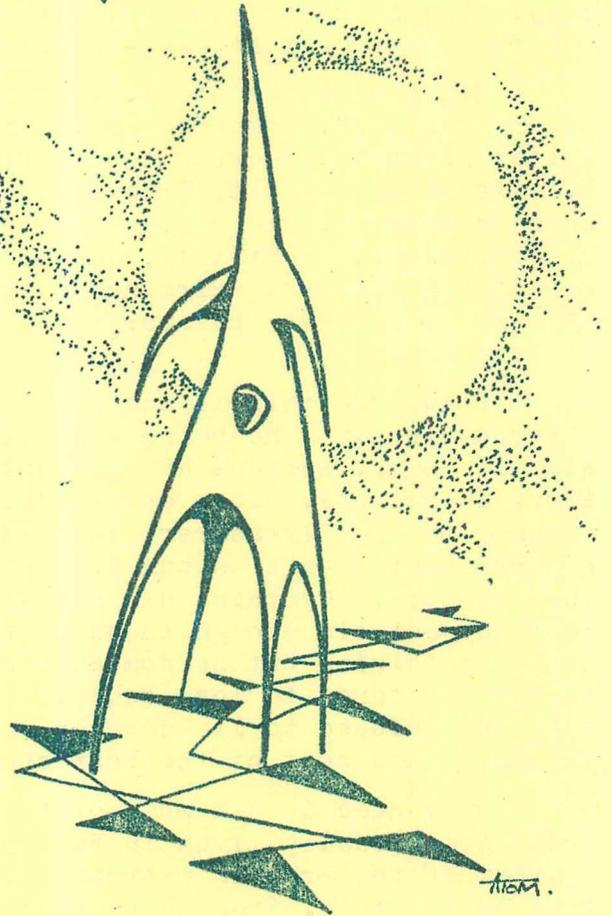


# les Spinge





# B.S.F.A. Convention Peterborough 1964



## SIX DAYS ADRIFF ON A FLI ISK SEA (or "AID FOR FOR RISPIN'S LUGGAGE")

The shortest distance between two points is a straight line --  
in the opposite direction.

Therefore, when at half past four on the Thursday I quit work an  
hour early, saddled my trusty scooter laideronette and set off for  
Peterborough - which lay towards the north-east - naturally I travelled  
south-west. Peterborough was pulling hard in the opposite direction,  
however, and Laideronette responded strongly to its attraction. First  
I found it hard to stay in top gear, then impossible. Before long I  
found it increasingly difficult to stay in third gear, then in second.

Abandoning all thoughts of circumnavigating the globe to approach Peterborough from the far side, I coaxed Laideronette into Bridgewater at not much more than walking pace and drew up thankfully outside the alsh abode. There the Mercatorial effects were off-loaded and transferred to the mighty alsh automobile, and soon in company with Tony, Simone and Sarah I was following half the milk tankers in the South of England on the road to London.

Pausing only to offload Sarah with her aunt in Berkshire and frighten their cat, we continued on i to london. Pausing (in turn) only long enough to stay the n t at George Locke's palatial apartment overlooking the Chelsea Royal Hospital, we continued on with George and the auction material to arrive in Peterborough at around mid-day on Good Friday. And at this point all attempt at chronology goes by the board. Conventions get me that way - every time.

Right from the start, the hotel seemed to be overrun with Brummies. "Easter Brummies", somebody (me, I think) dubbed them, though "Peterborough Rabbits" might be as apposite description. For every ten new faces one saw, fifteen belonged to Brummies. They have now taken over the BSFA and fandom in general, and will probably command a working majority in the next parliament. Certainly, fandom didn't have a chance against their overwhelming numbers. Birmingham and district now contain the BSFA's Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Editor, besides the Committee for the 1965 Eastercon.

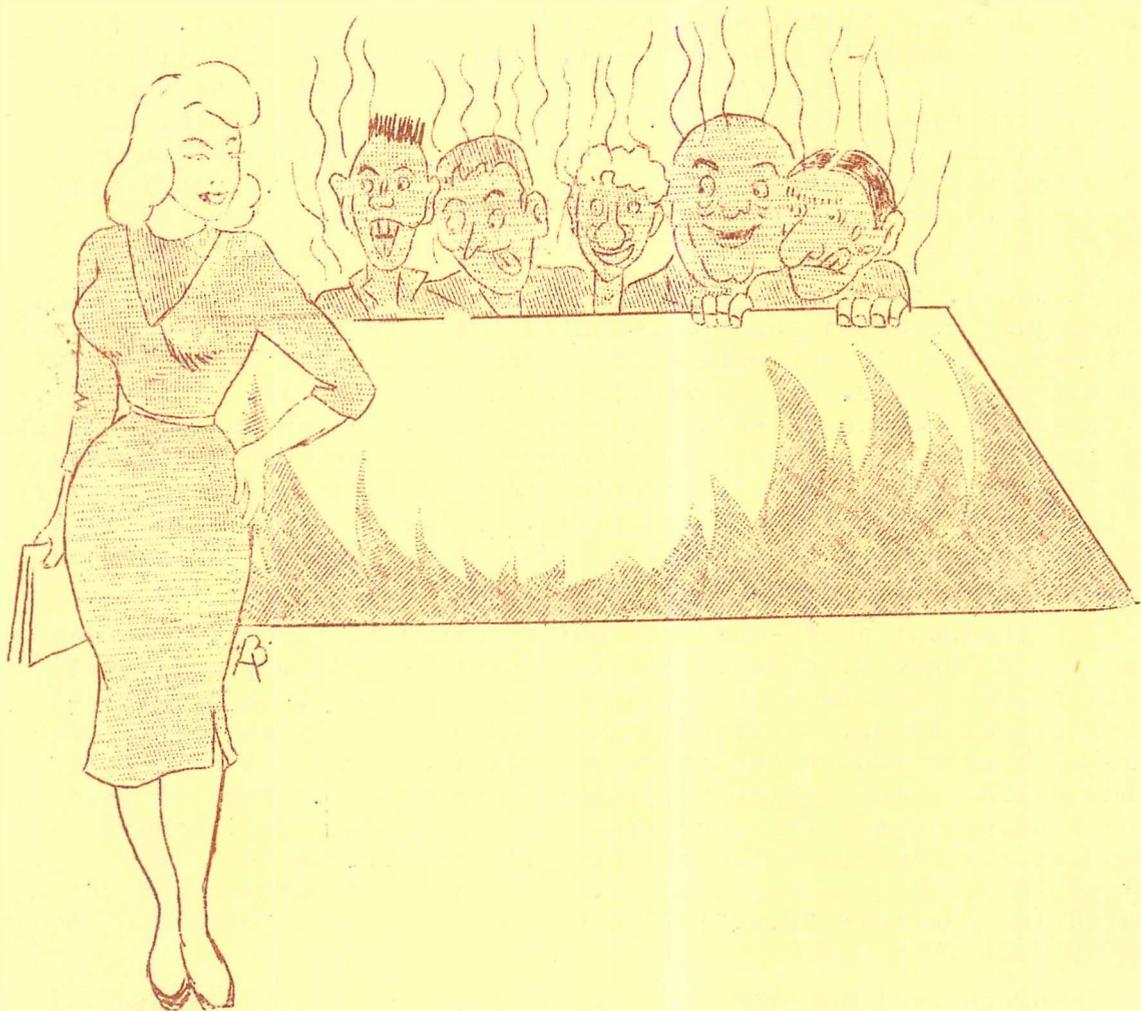
I suppose this is the point to begin describing a few. Len Cheslin one knows already he being a survivor from a previous age. Pete Weston is young, serious and slightly vague. Rog Leyton, the BSFA's new Editor, is slightly older and exudes an air of quiet competence. Charlie Winstone, the new Treasurer, is small and obliging. Mike Piggs "MIK" the cartoonist swears he was drawing that way before he even heard of Arthur Thomson. Cynthia, his girl-friend, has a lovely smile. Mike Turner is just old enough to have grown his first beard, Ed James is capable of talking but seldom admits it, and I'm sure there were more than that but one tends to lose count. (Yes, come to think of it - there was Cliff, who refused to lie down on the floor so that everybody could jump over him.) And some of the best ones, so I hear, didn't turn up at all.

Mary Reed is a member of the Birmingham SF Group, but being a Geordie she actually lives in Banbury, well outside the normal sphere of influence of the Brummie metropolis. She arrived together with her friend Julia Stone, from Chipping Norton. Julia (who weighs rather more than her surname might suggest) is about sixteen, has a rabbit called Fred, and spends her mundane nights chasing pigs round the Oxfordshire countryside. Mary's a couple of years older, and is already known in fandom as something of a letter-writing phenomenon. Both girls had got hold of the notion that the way to spend a Con is by going for three whole nights without sleep. This makes them somewhat difficult to carry on a meaningful conversation with at times. They'll learn - I hope. Both seem to be well worth talking to.

Even younger than Julia is Brian McCabe, from Slough, who admits to being only fourteen. He came with Pete Mansfield - it turns out that they're cousins or something. Brian seemed very shy, but if he develops as he matures, he soon be an artist of considerable repute. The stuff he's doing now, at fourteen, is nothing to be sneezed at.

Terry Pratchett, who sold a story to Carnell at that age (14) is a comparative veteran - though this was his first Convention, too. I was interested to have my suspicions confirmed that he is indeed an Oliver Anderson fan. Dave Busby, who has also sold to Carnell, is one of a trio of tall thin youngsters, the other two being Peter White and Chris Priest. Charles (don't call his "Twisher") Platt deserves a paragraph to himself, but we don't all get what we deserve in this world. I can best sum him up, I think, by comparing him to myself. He is much as I was at that age - except that he's extrovert enough to try to do something about it, whereas I wasn't.

Some of last year's newcomers have survived to this year, too, and I'm beginning to put faces to them. The Alien group from Salford are at least easily distinguishable from everybody else, if not from each other. (Particularly when in costume). Brian Allport, who last year came from Nottingham, now comes from Liverpool instead. I've dubbed him Brian Export, and can even vaguely remember what he looks like now. His friend, Mike Booth, also from Nottingham, is nowadays mainly from Bristol. It goes without saying that I never meet him except in Peterborough. This could probably be better organised.



Tyneside, too, sent its cohorts. Some, like Con Turner, have emerged from the dust of the years. Others, like Phil Harbottle, are not so dusty. Phil (another New Face) looks about as u like one's mental image of him as it is possible for one to look outside Salford and environs. (No, Mary - I know Salford isn't on Tyne Refer back to the previous paragraph and all will become clear to you - I hope.)

I seem to have dwelt at some length on the new faces - and still haven't mentioned Dick Howett who can draw and things. As a matter of fact, I seem to have spent more time in the company of youngsters half my age or less than in fact of fans nearer my own generation. This could be due to my retarded nature, or to the onset of second childhood, but I prefer to ascribe it to the fact that over the past year I've found myself corresponding with a lot of them and this was the first time I'd met them face to face.

Plenty of the older hands were there as well, of course. Ron Bennett (who lost his voice specially for the occasion - to him, a fate indeed worse than death. He had a good name for it, though - "Vox Pop".) Ina Shorrocks (I always like to mention Ina Shorrocks) - likewise Norman of that ilk and several lesser representatives of the species. Madeleine Ellis, who brought her husband with her. She twisted my arm - needn't have bothered, though, because I'd already voted. Still, I can think of plenty of people I wouldn't be nearly so keen to have my arm twisted by. TAFF delegate Wally Weber, an ethereal creature most unlike his on-paper image. Jim and Marion Linwood - who had got married only a day or two earlier. Ethel and Ella and Jill (it was her turn to come this year) and Peter Mabey (likewise) and scads of assorted Jeeveses, Slaters and the like.

As usual, there were a number of notable absentees. Brian Aldiss had just departed for a six-months' stay in Yugoslavia, so he couldn't make it. I'm not sure where Harry Harrison had gone to, but he wasn't there either. Val Purnell also had to miss it. I asked Marion to express my condolences when she wrote, and she said she would but she intended playing down the fabulous time everybody was having so that I wouldn't feel so sad she'd had to miss it. This, however, in the interests of accuracy I cannot do. Val - it was an excellent Con. would have been better still if you'd been there of course. See you at the next one, I hope.

The layabout quote-card has now returned to favour. All weekend long we were deluged with no end of the things - somebody said that 10, fredlike,000 (ten fredlike thousand) of them had been printed - by the Liverpool Group. Most of them ended up finally on the floor of Charles Platt's room - but there was still enough left over to paper the walls of the entire hotel three cards deep. Some of them were independent quotes (YEM mcINTYRE GIVES YOU STRENGTH), others were connected series (AND NOW FOR RISPIN'S HAT....AND NOW FOR RISPIN'S HEAD....AND NOW FOR RISPIN). One of my favourites was one attributed to a certain "P.R.": I HAVE JUST WON TAFF. PLEASE SEND THREE MORE JOHN THE ADS.

Inasmuch as I won the Doc Weir Award, I suppose I'll be expected to say something about it here. My general attitude to

# the Doc Weir Award

competitive polls and things is pretty well known, if not (I rather gather) universally believed. The fact remains that I'd prefer to win a few worth-while friends than win a prize to prove it. In the event, of course, a winner of the Doc Weir Award must have done both. So I am touched - even though I still value the friends more than I do the Award.

I can't honestly say that it came altogether as a surprise. I can think of a good dozen people who, in my estimation, have done at least as much as I have either during the past year or during their fannish careers. Nevertheless, it seems that most of that dozen would include me in their dozen - and this past year I have been sitting in a somewhat prominent position. So setting all false modesty aside, what I said at the time about my having been expecting it for the past two years was basically true. Fandom's collective mind seems to consider I deserve it - and whether I do or not, it's nice to think I have so many friends.

I'll say a word about the BSFA at this point, if I may. In my opinion, the takeover by the Brummies is a very good thing indeed. I'm pretty sure that three of the offices are in good hands (I haven't met the new Secretary, who wasn't there, but his colleagues seem satisfied to have him with them), and the fact that there will be constant personal contact between everybody for a change bodes well for the future. Incidentally, I take personal pride (and so does Jill Adams) in the fact that only 24 (twenty four - you can almost count them of the fingers of one hand if you happen to have almost twenty four fingers on one hand) of the 1963 members failed to renew their subscriptions. This is apparently an all time record, and the membership is now higher than it have ever been for this time of year.

It takes the best part of a week to get over it, but I have now acquired the habit of going to bed (during Cons) at approximately six a.m. and making a couple of hours' sleep per night suffice. I always like to be up for breakfast. Not only do I revel in the typical English hotel breakfast - particularly the strong coffee - but drifting into the dining-room by ones and twos as they're wont to do, fans find themselves sitting at table with other fans that for one reason or another they might not have had a chance to talk to otherwise. The cynical may remark who feels like talking at that time of the morning anyway? Let them. Breakfast in randomly assembled fannish company makes an excellent start to the day. Breakfast in bed may be more essentially civilised - but it's a very poor substitute.

But if one goes to bed at six a.m., what of the hours between midnight and then? Ah - that can be, and often is, the best part of the Con altogether. Noisy room parties, where one has to carry on conversation at the top of one's voice. Drunken room parties, where conversation is impossible anyway. Quiet room parties, where three or four people sit or lie around, with or without the odd drink or two, discussing such basic problems as the state of the world or of themselves. Corridor parties, where any of these states may likewise prevail. Carefully-saved-for bottles of alcoholic beverages, home made wines laid on in b-u-l-k by the Liverpool Group and others, pleasant fannish companionship - what more can one want? (If you can think of anything well, try the room next door.)

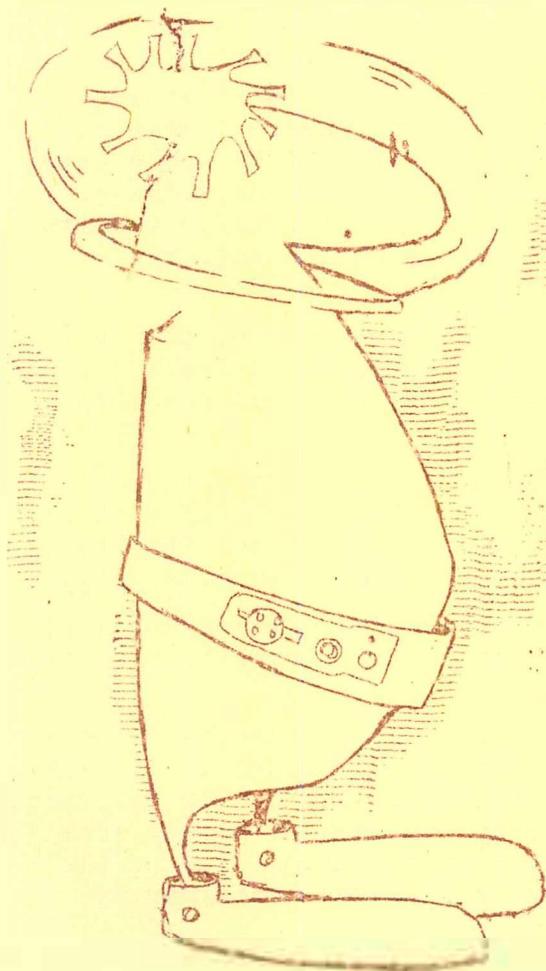
Came Monday at last, and that damned anti-climactic feeling as one by one, and squad by squad, the fans steal quietly on their way. The Walsh carload left reasonably early, not lingering for a last mid-day meal in the old Convention city. Besides the quartet who had come with us (Tony, Simone, George Locke and myself) it this time carried Norman Sherlock (not to be confused with) and Alan Rispin. Arriving at London in the early afternoon (the number of bent lamp standards on the way down requires counting to be believed - somebody must have a grudge against the things), most of us went into an Indian restaurant in the Kingdon Road area for a meal. Then we said goodbye to Alan Rispin, delivered George back to Chelsea Bridge Road where we'd got him from in the first place, and reduced to a trio again turned our faces once more to the west.

Four days previous, when we'd dropped Sarah with her aunt and grandmother, the household cat had given me a wide berth. (No cracks about my figure, please.) When we called back to pick the baby up again, however, it (the cat) came over and introduced itself to me. I don't ask you however to believe that this spontaneous gesture of friendliness gave me quite as much satisfaction as did being the holder of the Doc Weir Award - and in any case, if the cat had had a vote it would have voted for Tony or Simone. (Since they had well deserved something of that sort anyway.)

And so back to Bridgwater, where reposed Laideronette. After I'd checked the plug, we hauled her out of the inside outhouse (if you'd been there you'd agree that there's no other expression quite as descriptive of the Walsh scullery) and back on to the road. No go - she was behaving as she had when I arrived. Since my mechanical knowledge extends only to changing the plug or the back wheel, and there was no expert scooter mechanic in the house, that was that. So Monday night I slept at the Walshes'. As we were sorting out our respective belongings, however, it transpired that one jacket and one haversack pertained neither to Walsh nor to Mercer. A search through the contents revealed that Alan Rispin was the owner. He'd got out to have lunch with us, then forgot to unload his belongings before taking his departure. Kingdon Road is on the phone, so Tony and I went out to ring him up. He said he'd hitch-hike down for them the following day, on the way to his Lancashire home town for a visit.

And so Tuesday arrived. I had first contacted 1964 convention-going fandom on the previous thursday -- this was therefore the sixth successive day of it. Laideronette spluttered along to the Bridgwater scootereries for a decarbonising or something. Then I rang up the office in Bristol. "I'm speaking from Bridgwater," I told my boss. "Well, stay there," he retorted. No, it wasn't a polite way of giving me notice - it was simply that none of the rest of them felt like working either. Which was just as well, because the repairs took until 2.30, and by the time I crossed the Bristol city limits it was nearly time to go home anyway.

There was one last final touch to round out the week end though. As I scooted slowly and interruptedly along the Bedminster Down Road (or possibly the Bridgwater Road, which is almost the same thing), my roving eye caught a bearded figure standing with rampant thumb on the opposite pavement. I hooted and stopped, and Alan Rispin came across



for a moment. Then I parted from my last fan of the Easter season, he to continue the pursuit of his haversack, I to catch up on some much needed sleep.

I'm missing the fans, though. I think I'll go to Stourbridge tomorrow.

-- Archie Mercer

This year's EasterCon at Peterborough was my first-ever Convention. I thoroughly enjoyed it, despite the fact that I had been looking forward to it so much that it seemed it could not possibly live up to my expectations. About half way through, I suddenly realised it wasn't at all an anticlimax after all.

My overwhelming impression was one of friendliness and interest on the part of all the fans there. Even when parading in fancy dress, I felt perfectly at home.

The programme was very well planned, except for a rather long gap on Sunday between the "Tribute to Nova" and E.C. Tubb's speech. This was unfortunate as, being Sunday, there was little going in Peterborough. As a newcomer to such things, I found all the programme items quite interesting and some were very good. The films presented by the 'Alien' group were the funniest I've ever seen. "Frankenstein's Xperiment" was simply marvellous - I still go off into surreptitious giggles when I think of it. I hear that the 'Aliens' are doing a film show for the '65 WorldCon. They should set Hollywood back on its heels.

It was a good thing that the professional films were shown first - they would never have stood up to the comparison. I have a feeling that "The Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film" would grow on one, however. I certainly enjoyed it more at the second showing. The solar sequences of the factual film (typically, I've forgotten its name) were spectacular. "The Day the Earth Stood Still" was, by comparison, a mere pot boiler.

The costumes for Saturday's fancy dress competition, though few, were excellent. The judges must have had an extremely difficult task to choose five, but I think that the choices were the best possible under the circumstances.

The BSFA Annual General Meeting was more interesting than I had expected. It seems that Birmingham is going to be the new seat of government. I was favourably impressed by what I saw of the Brun boys - they seem a very level headed lot. The best of luck to them, anyway.

If anyone is still owed money from the Sunday morning auction, it's all my fault. Just think what a good cause it's going to, and try to be tolerant.

I have heard only one person criticise the programme - Twisher Platt. He said that he thought there was not enough planned. I think that anymore items would have made it overloaded. The Con is essentially an informal get together of fans who probably see each other only that once a year. So why should they put official items in front of people seeing and getting to know each other. Anyway, see you next year at Brun!

-- Sheila Barnes

A NEO'S GUIDE TO THE PETERBOROUGH CON. (or HELP! I AM A PRISONER IN A  
TOE CARD FACTORY)

It is now four days since I got back from the con and I am now sitting in front of my typewriter, trying to make some sense out of the confusion and disorder that exists in my mind about the events that took place at Peterborough. I'm not even sure as yet whether I enjoyed myself or not. This is one of the reasons that I want to get my impressions down on paper so that I can sort them out and decide finally what really happened. If you're expecting a report full of details of the programme, I'm afraid you're going to be out of luck, since, for one reason or another I seemed to see very little of the official programme; there seemed to be too much going on outside that I didn't want to miss.

My con started early Friday morning. I had arranged to meet friend Lang Jones at Ealing Broadway station at half-past nine so as to be in plenty of time to catch the 11:05 train from King's Cross. Let me state here and now that I take no responsibility for this unearthly hour; I blame it all on Lang Jones. He's one of those people who have to get to their destination well ahead of time in order to be sure of being on time. I tried to dissuade him but he must have a magnetic personality or something, ( I received further proof of this as the con progressed ), for I finally found myself persuaded, against my better judgement, to fall in with his plans.

I don't know if any of you have ever visited Ealing, the queen of the suburbs, but if you have you'll know that it doesn't look its best at this time in the morning. It was depressing just having to wait for buses: the semi-gloom weighed heavy and the hold-all, clutched in my hot sticky left hand, dragged more and more as I stood waiting outside the new, modern, improved Ealing Broadway station which was just as depressing as ever. Suddenly I saw the dark-suited figure of Lang Jones approaching me. Anyone who has seen Lang's normal appearance, his old dilapidated jacket, revealing his elbows in all their naked splendour for all the world to see, and the baggy, creaseless trousers with the hole in the knee, will know just what sort of traumatic shock this was likely to cause. I had always enjoyed going out with him, Lang; next to anyone else I would have looked my usual sloppy, casual self: with Lang I looked as if I'd been dressed in Saville Row, which is very heartening for the old ego. To see him now a picture of sartorial elegance just spoiled my day for me. The only cheering thing I saw was that he had been conned by Norman Sherlock into carrying his tape-recorder for him. Heh, heh, heh.

Little did I know at this time just how susceptible I was myself to the Lang Jones persuasive powers. Had I known, I would hardly have laughed as I did. Before I knew what I was doing, I was offering to help him with it, out of the goodness of my heart.

I received another jolt when we changed trains at Acton Town. Lang bet me a snilling that the Picadilly Line train would be in to the station within three minutes. Thinking I was on to a good thing, I took him up on it. He must have been coming there for weeks, timing how quickly the trains came in; right on three minutes the dad-blasted train drew in.

I did consider claiming a foul but decided against it. I paid up like a gentleman, a fixed grin on my face ( more of a sneer I suppose, really), Two young girls then proceeded to throw themselves at my feet - I have these sexy toe-nails, you see. Lang of course, the unromantic clod, was convinced that they were simply in a hurry to get onto the train and I happened to be in the way but I refused to listen. Killjoy!

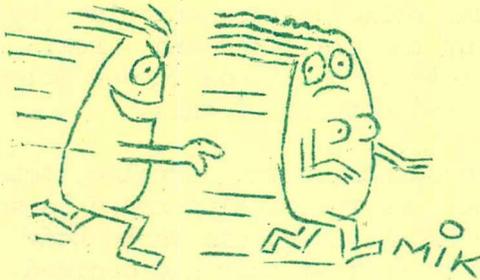
We arrived at King's Cross with fifty minutes to spare! I then proceeded to berate my friend soundly for having dragged me up at this time. He smiled sickly and suggested that we at least were in plenty of time. I smiled back and pointed to a sign that informed us that the 10:50 train for Peterborough left from platform 5. Not only were we in time for our train but in time for the one before ours. Were it not for the fact that we had arranged to meet most of the others of London fandom, we could take our pick of about three trains. I was beginning to think that this was not my day. Lang, still smiling sickly, hastily changed the subject and suggested that we look for a buffet where he would buy me a cup of coffee. I agreed that this was the least he could do in the circumstances.

The one bright thing that had happened so far was the sight of Lang struggling up the stationary escalator, still carrying Norman's tape recorder. In a wild fit of enthusiasm, Lang had decided to make his way up the one escalator that wasn't moving. I felt that this was a bit rash and walked over to the other side where the escalator was moving and proceeded upwards in style, passing poor Lang on the way, puffing and struggling under the weight of the tape-recorded. I waved gaily and said that I would wait for him at the top. Unfortunately, I couldn't get over to his side quickly enough to welcome him aboard but the sight of his panting, dishevelled form removed all the pain I had suffered when paying up the shilling.

In the second buffet - the first one we had found closed - we met Jill Adams, Jim Groves and Chris Priest. The first thing Jill Adams said after the introductions were over was: "Have you paid your subscription to the BSFA yet?". Materialist! Lang wanted to pay on the train; he has to be different. He then went off to queue for coffee and didn't return for some minutes while I talked to Jimmy and Chris. When he did return, he actually brought a British Railways hot cross bun. What's more, he ate it. Though hardly with his usual gusto. The mad crazy fool! He must have a strong stomach though, for it hardly seemed to affect him at all.

We then went out to the platform where a fairly large group of London fans had already gathered. Ella Parker was booming her customary way across the platform, closely followed by Ethel Lindsay and Walt and Madeleine Willis, and I think Wally Weber. Mike Moorcock had somehow wangled his way to the other side of the barrier and looked as if he were about to start taking money at any moment. Strange how editors have that mercenary look about them. We went through the barrier and then I noticed that Mike had his guitar slung over his shoulder. I turned to Lang to point this out to him, as I knew he'd be pleased, but he was no longer there. Mike, who knows Lang's infallible ability to get himself lost at the drop of a hat as well as I do, - he's suffered too - suggested that Lang had probably marched off in the opposite direction, loudly shouting, "Follow me!" No such luck though; he soon came wandering up the

platform with a bemused expression on his face, as if he were wondering where everyone had gone; a favourite expression of Lang's when he's on one of his pathfinding expeditions.



We found on getting into the train that we had the whole section of the compartment to ourselves except for one seat. This was occupied by a character in a Sinatra-type hat, vaguely resembling Lionel Bart. He had all these copies of Superman,

Batman, Green Lantern, and various other comics, strewn over the table in front of him. I thought at first that he was one of us but a strange expression came over his face as soon as we all came trooping into the carriage, which showed that he could hardly be a true fan after all. This strange, (strained even) expression increased as Ella came striding manfully down the aisle, yelling, "Whothellareyou???" Now he began to cringe in his seat; it's a painful sight to see a man crumble like that. Somebody tried to explain that this character had a perfect right to be in this compartment but whoever he was he was brushed aside in Ella's zeal to protect whichever member of the London group might be sitting there. At last someone managed to convince Ella that we hadn't in fact booked this seat and she calmed down slightly. By this time, our sad friend was looking wildly round the compartment, searching for some means of escape from this horrible danger that he now faced. I took pity on him and suggested that he might be happier - I didn't say safer, but the inference was there - if he changed places with Mike Moorcock, who had found himself a seat in the next compartment. He agreed only too willingly and hastily gathered up his tattered comics, which he had begun to tear in his nervousness, and then rushed off, dropping his ticket, to Hull, in the process. This was found later and passed back to him.

Thus Lang and I found ourselves traveling up to Peterborough with Mike Moorcock and, (he said with bated breath) Walt Willis who condescended to travel up with us mortals. Ednod actually sat opposite me all the way to the con! It took me a long time to really take in that this was the Walt Willis. It wasn't until, in fact, he made one of His puns that I was brought back to reality. Somebody had stuck a notice on the carriage window; ANNUAL OUTING OF THE ESCAPED PRISONERS SOCIETY AND SURVIVORS FROM GERMAN POW CAMPS....or something like that. A guard saw it and expressed surprise, saying, that most of us would have had to be child POW's. At which point Willis spritely suggested that we must have been stalagmites... I'm still wincing.

I sat there for some time just staring at him, frightened by what he might utter at any moment, determined not to turn myself into a foed for one of Willis's puns, even if I had to sit silent for the rest of the journey. I recieved some satisfaction though when Mike took out his harmonicas (two of them yet) and proceeded to practice. I enjoyed watching the agonized expressions on Willis's face, enjoyed seeing the mighty man crumble. Suddenly, I noticed the same expression on Lang's

face; knowing his fondness for music, I was somewhat surprised by this turn of events. In desperation, he finally seized Mike's kazoo from its pigskin case and proceeded to try and drown out the noise of the harmonica by playing some Schoenberg on it. Mike took up the challenge and a real cutting match began. The musical battles between the bands in New Orleans around the turn of the century could have had nothing on this.

Fortunately for the rest of the occupants of the carriage, this musical afray was brought to a half by Ted Forsythe passing round some pictures taken at the last meeting of the SFCOL. Lang, his whole body racked as he gasped for breath, explained to me that they had decided to take Victorian photographs at the last meeting and had painted on whiskers and side-boards for the occasion. They were very good and were later shown at a slide-show during the con. Burgess particularly was excellent, the very image of a Victorian policeman, bowler hat and all.

The slag heaps of the industrial north had appeared in the pastoral scenery outside and we knew we were nearly there. Actually, we were only a few miles outside London but it seemed that we were nearly there. It was around this time that Max Jakobowski appeared in the carriage towing a friend, another Frenchman, who could speak very little English. Mike, in his usual xenophobist manner, began to explain Norman's amplifier (which he'd been conned into carrying - amazing fellow, Norman, really) to the French character, getting over the language barrier by shouting. It seemed to come over as a sort of Hieronymus machine. He was twisting the knobs violently, left and right, spitting out information as he did so. All the time the French boy watched intently, even stretching out his hand once or twice to twist a few knobs with the best of them, only to be slapped down by Mike who showed himself the real master of the machine. Hell, he almost had me convinced; at any minute I expected a shower of sparks and a Karlof-type android to rise like a phoenix out of the ashes.

The train was by now slowing down for the entry into Peterborough station - an imposing sight. Lang and I struggled with our cases and Norman's tape-recorder to the nearest door and made our way out of the station, where we met George Scithers and a big burly friend called Dave Williams.

We then started on the long weary trek to the Bull Hotel ( and this is where the story really starts ). We signed in after a lot of apparant fuss, especially from a miserable (censored) of a receptionist who handed me my key. Key! I've never seen anything like it! it weighed half a ton. It had this enormous metal tag, I suppose to discourage people from walking off with it when they left the hotel. Lang saw my white man's burden and immediately fished his own key out of his pocket and displayed it to me with a grin; it had a small slim plastic tag. "I had one of those things last year" he said sardonically, as if this made everything all right. I wandered off upstairs muttering under my breath about justice and retribution.

After dropping my things in my room, I came back down stairs to find Mike, Lang and Max all ready to go off for lunch. We agreed to go across the road to a pub where we would get what we laughingly called

beer and sandwiches. This was a most distressing experience. I've been out of London before; it wasn't as though this was my first time in the provinces, but this..... Firstly of course, they didn't sell sandwiches and we had to take these little packets of biscuits and portions of Kraft cheese. Then we sat down to drink our lunch and realised that we were the focus of almost constant stares from most people in the pub. The landlord looked at us as if we'd come in asking for protection money or something. And it wasn't the effect of the new, all-spruced-up Lang Jones in his sharp suit; they'd never seen him any other way. We finished our drinks hurriedly and went into the bar of the hotel.

There were a few people already there propping up the bar, none of whom I knew. I discovered later that they were fans but I thought them residents at the time. We settled in one corner and soon a goodly crowd developed. George Locke appeared, then Ken Cheslin, Dick Howett, Charles Platt, (selling copies of BEYOND), then Jim Linwood came in and we discovered that he was now married Jim Linwood, and that he and his bride Marion, were on their honeymoon. That's fannish dedication for you. Around this time puns began to flow, as is their wont at such gatherings. The word "incense" was mentioned and George Locke immediately made some remark about being "incensed" by such behavior. So, purely as a means of self defence. I told him he was "insensitive". That shut him up.

Nothing much was happening around the registration desk, Phil Rogers apparently not having yet arrived with the con-badges - Phil Rogers for TAFF, hah! ( he says, aside ). Someone put on a tape-recording of a version of the Third Man, (made by the LiG I think) featuring Harry Slime. I enjoyed it but unfortunately knew only one voice out of the whole thing, Peter Mabeys. As nothing was happening down in the registration hall we decided to go up to the pro room, but on the way Lang was collared by Ethel Lindsay and coned into looking after the art show. I chortled as Lang protested his inexperience, to no avail against the steely Lindsay stare; I chortled further as we went up the stairs to the pro room, where the art show was to be held; I chortled still further as Lang continued to stream forth a string of invectives against steely-eyed Scottish maidens and art shows in general. I stopped chortling however when I discovered that I had been impressed as his assistant, that, in fact, I had been singled out as well. I didn't like the idea of being an assistant to Lang as I could see that it meant that I would be doing all the work, while my so-called friend sat back and issued instructions - and so it proved to be. I have to admit my attention wandered from thoughts about the art show once we had entered the pro room. Ken Slater was esconced there and had set up tables full of paper-backs, all, ( dare I say it in a fanzine? ) science fiction. My eyes popped, I boggled. I immediately started going through the various stacks. Half-way through I met Ted Forsythe coming the other way and we compared notes. I recommended "Witch World" to him and he showed me a new



collection of Sturgeon shorts that he'd found. I let out a yell and searched frantically for another copy. I came away with about six books:- Leiber's 'The Wanderer', Sturgeons' collection; a sequel to 'Witch World', a collection of stories from Unknown Worlds ('Unknown 5'); and a new Philip K Dick novel, 'The Game-players of Titan'. Even Lang, that wellknown despiser of science fiction, was so caught up in the mood of enthusiasm that he bought a novel too - a hard-cover yet!. I've even heard it whispered that Ella Parker came home with 23/- worth of SF. It must be catching.

Once the acquisitive mood had left us we returned to thoughts of the art show, only to find that no art-work was present. There were various pictures knocking around but none in the pro-room where they were supposed to be delivered. We found a number of pictures already on display in the convention hall; these belonged a cousin of Max Jacobowski, and were not for sale, fetching twenty and sixty guid a time in France. They were pretty superb though. I'm surprised that he hasn't been snapped up to do cover work ( though, now I think of it, I believe he has done a few for the French magazine 'Fiction' ). We decided to leave it for now and let whoever wanted to put in pictures come up to us. Meanwhile, back in the registration hall..... The committee had, by now, decided to hand out programmes and allow people to register, even though the badges and Phil Rogers had still not arrived. So we registered.

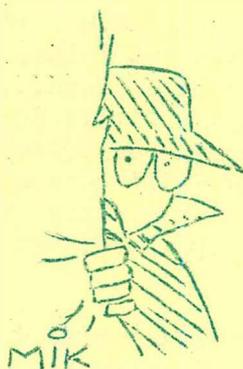
Then we went out for something to eat, at the Great Wall, the Chinese restaurant. And what did we have?, why, Curry! Chinese curry at that! On returning Lang decided he'd better go and look for Max and ask him to move his cousins' paintings into the pro-room in case someone walked off with any of them from the ever-open con hall. I decided to go and have a drink. In fact George Locke ( good old George Locke ) bought me a pint and introduced me to Simone Walsh, the most devastating and disconcerting woman I've ever met. The first thing she said to me was, "Why are you smoking that cigarette?" She then went on to quote all the medical reports proving that smoking is a cause of lung cancer, making me feel more and more uncomfortable; hell, I started feeling guilty. After this, I discovered that she had lived in Ealing and had actually known Lang; she could, I suppose, be considered a honorary member of Ealing fandom. We then discovered that we had been to the same school, though she a few years after me. We spent about five minutes tossing names of class mates at each other, but none seemed to click. Fortunately we could swap notes on the teaching staff; that much we had in common.

At this point the programme proper started, and Lang and I went upstairs to hear the opening address. Various members of the convention were introduced to the audience after Tony Walsh's opening remarks ( Lang still can't see his resemblance to David Frost, but I found it uncanny ). The most amusing interview was between Tall James White and Petite Ethel Lindsay. They had some initial difficulty with the height of the mike but this was solved when James picked the whole stand up, like a fishing rod, and raised and lowered it according to who was speaking at the time. It started off with Ethel interviewing James but the tables were soon turned as James, in his soft Irish brogue, began asking Ethel about the first convention she had attended, and continued asking her the very same questions she had intended to ask him.

The TAFF race had obviously started, everywhere you went there were notices displaying "Phil Rogers for TAFF". Arthur Thomson had less in the way of notices ( maybe he doesn't need them, with the support he's liable to get ) but there was a beautiful ploy in the programme booklet, perpetrated ( I presume ) by a certain nameless lady whose initials are Ella Parker. One one page there was a glorious advert for Phil Rogers, consisting of large lettering and an Eddie drawn profile of Phil, while on the facing page the page was blank, except for a tiny little Rostler style figure standing on some minute words, which read "Atom for TAFF"- I thought this was very clever! The Phil Rogers supporters had managed to get a plug into the scenery/background in the con-hall itself though.

Lang and I sat through the questions, directed at Ken Slater, on various SF stories, until a rather vociferous lady got up and described the plot of Heinlein's "The Puppet Masters" ( interjected with snippets of information on how she found the book etc., ) when she got to the point of the creatures from outer space settling on the shoulders of the Earth people I could feel her directly behind me settling further and further onto my shoulder, and decided that discretion was the better part of whatever it is, and cut out, dragging Lang with me. I'm no chicken but.... I guess I must be over sensitive or something. I heard that the lady went on describing the story of her life after the question had been answered in loud stage whispers to all those in her immediate presence, until George Scithers siezed one of the placards that were held up at intervals during the meeting, ( calling for 'Applause' or something ) This one read; "Silence please" and he marched with this to the back and held it before her. To which she is supposed to have uttered those immortal words; "The story of my life".

While this was going on Lang and I were down in the lounge and somehow I got into a long discussion with a very pleasant young American girl called Rosemary, ( I think ). We were discussing capital punishment and either the Americans have a particularly good system of education ( which is probably true ) or I was more under the influence of my drinking than I thought. My usual generalisations were recieved with little enthusiasm and she kept chucking this jargon back at me, all the phrases like 'ponal correction' and 'what are the ethics involved in this?', and I was just too tired ( or drunk ) to be able to take all this in. Fortunately Jim Linwood was there so together we spewed forth a stream of emotional generalisations against capital punishment, but still we seemed to be getting in deeper, until finally Lang suggested that we go out for a snack with Simone and Tony Walsh. I gratefully accepted. I was sorry later that I didn't meet her when I was feeling more awake and with my mind in a more preceptive state; because I enjoyed talking to her. I just hadn't been able to do justice to the argument at that particular time. A return match, Rosemary? ( if you read this ).



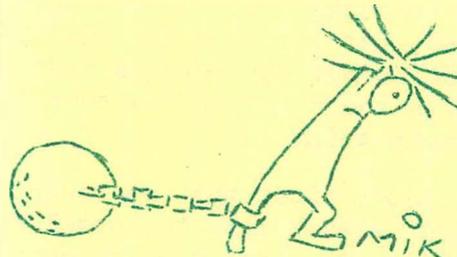
Anyway, we went back to the Great Hall amid long discussions on Lang's next issue of Tensor, which was described very well and succinctly as 'a half-yearly quarterly'. Simone and I decided on a snack of egg and chips (snack, - it cost five bob) while the others went off into the realms of exotica by ordering things whose names I couldn't spell, let alone pronounce. The discussion now turned to free-range as opposed to battery eggs, and all the other inhumanities that are practised by our glorious food producers in the name of higher productivity. Here we agreed but soon got off again, onto the subject, again, of cancer. I now found myself under attack from Tony Walsh as well. Apparently he had just given up smoking and felt the need to spread the gospel to others; (in other words, he wanted someone else to suffer).

We returned to find strange sounds issuing from the con-hall; Mike Moorcock was there with the 'Bellyflops' (as far as I could make out Dick Ellingsworth was on the bongos, Norman Sherlock on second guitar, and Alan Rispin was making strange sounds with a harmonica). Every now and then the particular number they were playing (such good old ones as "Jungle Man" and "Oh didn't he ramble" - they don't write songs like that any more) would collapse into chaos. Mike would turn round and say "Norman!" or "Wouldn't it be better if we all played the same tune?". He did try to extend his repertoire to some of the new hit-tunes of the sixties, but he was much happier with tunes from the old skiffle days - so was I, come to that; I was wallowing in nostalgia and would have loved to have been able to get up and jive, as in the good old days.

Somenow or other the concert (!!!) degenerated into a wrestling match between Max (the French Fiend) Jacobowski, and Pat (Mauler) Kearney. The bout went on to the accompaniment of Norman still playing the guitar, Ava Magueta...I don't think he'd realised they'd finished all that. Anyway, there was a superb improvised commentary on the bout by Mike. Repetitive it might have been; influenced by drink too; but it was the most hilarious thing I've heard in years, and he kept it up for about half an hour non-stop. Fantastic! It's not funny on paper, but if you can get hold of the tape, listen to it. It started as a mildly satirical thing, micky-taking the glorious British public who are able to indulge their own little sadistic and homosexual neuroses by taking in a wrestling match. "If you folks have got the same kind of bent that I have I think you're going to enjoy this. There's going to be blood tonight folks, so you should really enjoy this, and this mass of sweating male flesh...." No, it's not funny on paper, and I can't remember enough of it to do it justice. The whole piece ended up as a moralistic, screaming diatribe against the hypocrisy of our society, which bans 'Fanny Hill' because it says it's 'evil' and yet finds outlets for its own sick mentalities by watching wrestling, reading James Bond books and Micky Spillane, and watching "The Avengers". As I said, it was fantastic.

Lang was so overcome that he had to go. He said afterwards that he was afraid the taping might spoil it, but it didn't. We heard the whole thing through again on the Sunday. After ten minutes or so I decided to follow Lang into the pro-room, where I found him talking with Wally Weber and Pete White. I'm glad I came in because this was one of

the few opportunities that I had to talk to Wally throughout the con. He came across as a highly amusing, mildly spoken American, and endeared himself to everyone who came into contact with him. We talked for some time about future and past cons. I asked him about the worldcon, if the Americans weren't afraid we'd keep it once it got into our hands. Why, Lang and I were even thinking of putting on a world-con in Ealing, at the Kent



Hotel. Then someone suggested we could hold a con on the tube, suggesting the slogan; "The Circle Line - In Sixty-nine!". A number of slogans seemed to be flashing around the con. I remember Archie Mercer suggesting, at one point, "The Parker Pen in Sixty-ten". From there the conversation turned to universities, as Peter White, from what I could gather, is thinking of going to one. We compared notes on American and English education in general. Once more my conviction that the American system was the better of the two was enforced.

When this broke up I decided to pack it in for the first night. I'd read that it was best to take it easy on the first night, and I had a couple of things I wanted to do, including reading a letter from my wife. I found, the next day, that I had missed Mike Moorcock editing the Bible, this I'd have loved to see, but I don't regret going to bed early that first night; especially whenever I looked at Lang during the rest of the con. Alan Rispin may have looked like Christ, but Lang summed up the whole of Easter in one day, every day. Each day he was alive in the morning, died around four o'clock, and rose again around ten in the evening. It was awe inspiring to see this process.

The next morning I was woken by the most horrible banging on my door, those responsible, Lang, and Alan Rispin insisted that I got up. They didn't seem to believe that I had actually got up but went on banging away even when I was wandering around trying to force my tired brain into the correct framework to meet the coming day. I agreed to meet them up on the landing for a cup of tea..... On the landing I met Mary Reed, she of the crazy letters - she should write to CRY, she'd be at home there. Lang pressed a cup of tea on me but I could only squeeze out the dregs. After this came breakfast. Here Lang had trouble with a couple of obscene-looking poached eggs; he found himself unable to stick his knife into them.

After breakfast we decided to do the town and go out on a shopping expedition. This was really crazy; I seemed to shed about six years, and was doing all the crazy things I used to do when I was at college. I found Mary Reed and her mate, Julie Stone, were big beetle fans, and this endeared them to me. The way we were darting about all over the pavement and shouting weird comments to each other made the mundane passers-by stop and stare; they're strange people down there. Suddenly we found ourselves outside a Woolworths, a branch of which, to their pain, employs Lang as a trainee manager; this actually means that he spends all day numping boxes around the stock room, but its a start. Anyway, Lang decided he needed his daily fix of Woolworths and tried to go into the

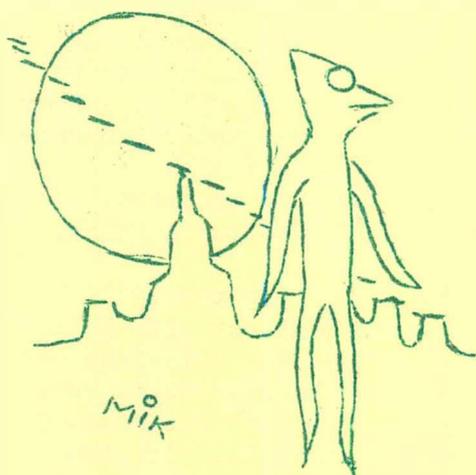
shop. Mike and I decided that we'd have to be cruel to be kind, to start him on the cure; we grabbed his arms and held him back while Mary and Julie yelled encouragement. We even tried to get him to go into Marks and Spencers instead, but this was too much for his poor tired frame and he almost broke down. But our methods have had their effect because since he came back from the con Lang has been thinking of changing his job. It's a proud and lonely thing....

Soon after this we bought some booze in one of the arcades and smuggled it back into the hotel for the room party that evening. We then decided it was about time we went and did something about the art show. I've already mentioned the famous persuasive charm of Lang Jones, but it never occurred to me that he could actually get it to work on a sturdy character like Mike Moorcock. But...there was the famous author and editor of New Worlds, down on his knees making frames to fit the pictures to. The pictures were now beginning to arrive. Ah, the relationship between an editor and one of his up-and-coming authors is a wonderful thing to behold. As I said, Lang sat back and gave instructions until Mike and I ganged up on him, ejected him from his chair, thrust a hammer into his hand and made him help us. Then we pinned what seemed like thousands of paintings on to the frames we'd built. By this time we'd managed to collect paintings from Eddie Jones Terry Jeeves and Dick Howett. These, together with the pictures Max was showing for his cousin, and some of his own work, added up to a fine display.

Realising that the auction was about to start I collared Mike and we slipped off, leaving Lang to it. We thought he deserved it. There were a couple of items in the auction that I was mildly interested in - there wasn't a great deal worth having - and that I hoped might come within range of my meagre finances; a set of three books on witchcraft, though nothing very unusual, and some fanzines. I was very taken with some of the artwork especially one called "The Wishing Tree" by Gerald Quinn, but these were going for around thirty bob a throw so I sat quiet. Even the witchcraft books went for around ten bob. Still, I managed to pick up a small parcel of fanzines containing three copies of Redd Bogg's DISCORD that I hadn't got. When the auction was over we decided to go and find something to eat. We were joined by a couple called Jean and Neville Brock whom Lang had asked to join us. We started off with a large group but this suddenly split in two when a difference of opinion arose as to where we should go. We parted company amid shouts and a great waving of hands.

Again we went to the Great Wall. I asked Lang to order me some Chicken Chow Mein while I went over the road to Boots to get a comic version of The Sword in the Stone for my little daughter; someone had told me it was on sale there. Unfortunately, because of its connection with the joke Norman Sherlock had told about the Kamikaze pilot, Lang found himself too embarrassed to ask for the Chicken Chow Mein. Luckily by the time I got back - the service being what it was in the Great Wall - the waiter still hadn't turned up to collect the order. We talked about fandom in general and discovered that, like me, Jean and Neville were attending their first con. We asked them to come up to our room party after the fancy dress competition. They were unfortunate in not knowing any fans at all. I was lucky that I had met most of the London fans before the con and could usually find someone I knew to talk to if things got a bit dull. It must be very difficult for people coming to a con and not knowing anyone. I'm not sure that I could do it.

After lunch we attended the film show, where we saw a rather juvenile film about the planets, the commentary being spoken very slowly. This is the kind of thing that I have to sit through at school and I'd rather not during the holidays. Still, there were some rather fine shots of Solar prominences. After this they showed "The Day the Earth Caught Fire", or, as Pete Taylor suggested afterwards, "The Day the Daily Express Caught Fire"...and it can't happen too soon for me. I didn't stop for this as I hadn't wanted to see it when it was on general release. There seems little point in getting this kind of film for the con. It has been shown on the major circuits, twice in Ealing, and only a short time before the con. It seems to me that unless it is possible to get hold of films that are quite old, or are very scarce, or have never been seen on the major circuits (like Zazie Dans le Metro, as someone, probably Pit Kearney suggested) there is little point in having a film show at the con at all. Lang and I had, in fact, only come up to see "The Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film", which we hadn't seen. We found that it was to be shown last so we went back to the lounge.



This was where we met old-time fan Pete Taylor. He was sitting with members of the Kingdon Road group, Dick Ellingsworth and Nell Golding. Lang, by now, was beginning to droop more than somewhat; he didn't look as if he'd last through the rest of the con. Dick, however, found a way of waking him up. You see Lang had regaled us, over breakfast, with some of the happenings of the previous night, and had laid particular stress on the fact that Don Geldhart had slobbered in his ear. The very thought of this brought him out in cold snudders. Thus, whenever Lang started to doze, Dick would simply lean over and slobber in his ear. This had a miraculous effect; he shot out of his seat, his eyes staring and wide with horror. I was

convinced at one point that his hair was turning white. Then Don Geldhart, himself came into the room. All thought of sleep was immediately thrust out of Lang's mind; he was so busy making sure Don didn't do it again.

Soon after this we went upstairs to see the film. I found this to be vastly entertaining, pure surrealist humour in the best tradition of the Goon Shows. After the film we returned to our former seats in the lounge, where we were joined by Mike Moorcock. Now Mike and Pete (Taylor) are both funny on their own, but together they seem to draw something extra out of the other. They were soon into renditions of take-offs of various pop songs, things like "These Ghoulish Things". Then they went into character stuff; suddenly they were two old men, two obscene, throaty old men, talking entirely in monosyllables.

"Look 'em all up!"

"'oo?"

"Them. All of them"

"'oo?"

"The Beatles; them with the long 'air"

"Oh".

And so it went on, all in these throaty, whoozy voices, and every now and again they'd go off into wild paroxysms of cackling, coughing .. laughter. Suddenly we realised that behind us had sprung up one of those crazy intellectual conversations that seemed to spring up all over the place during the con. Mike and Pete disappeared suddenly, and then they reappeared, having started all over again next to this serious discussion. It was wild and had us crossed, but it didn't seem to deter the talkers one little bit. Mike and Pete gave up and came back, to go off into a new routine about two officers from the First World War discussing the number of casualties the one officer had caused. As an embellishment to this Mike had his officer equipped with a deaf aid, which now and then went into loud screaming noises. On top of this they suddenly went into a wild conversation that consisted entirely of facial expressions, gestures, and moving the finger against the lips as a child does. It was amazing the nuances of expression they managed to convey in this way. Suddenly a young, dark-suited slim, mittish-looking individual thrust his way into the lounge and shouted; "Can't you keep your noise to yourselves? This is a hotel, not a childrens' playground!" and with that he turned smartly on his heel and disappeared once more. There was a stunned silence for a minute and then Mike said, rather puzzledly, "How can I keep my noise to myself?". I gather he waged a personal vendetta against this under-under-under-manager - someone suggested that he was the boots, but I think this can be discounted as prejudice - by staring at him fixedly whenever they met. We discovered his name to be Nigel; it suited him too. He looked a Nigel.

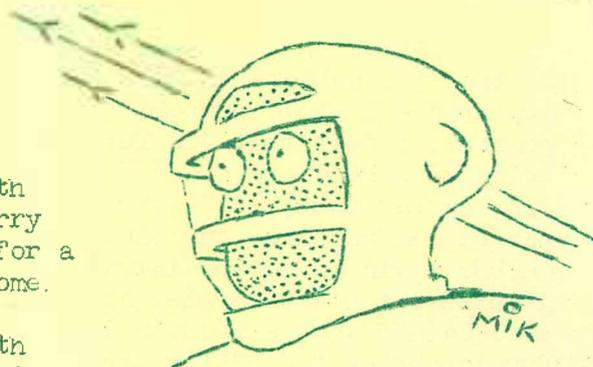
Soon after this excitement Lang went upstairs to help the SFCOL prepare the bar for the evening's fancy dress party. I went out with Nell Golding and Dick Ellingsworth to get a cup of tea. We spent a hilarious half hour studying and mingling with the inhabitants of Peterborough. We came to the definite conclusion that the majority of them were retarded. I felt Nell tended to voice this decision over-loudly, especially with the large number of people in the cafe who might take exception to this, and we beat a rather hasty retreat.

We talked then until about seven, when Lang came back downstairs and suggested we visit a greasy cafe with pretensions. Apparently he had seen this cafe the year before and wanted to go back there. I agreed, though I should have known better. We were joined by Peter White. Lang and I were, I suppose, being particularly stupid around this time, fooling around as we went down the road. Every now and then though I'd be brought up short by the staggering thought that Peter White could so easily have been one of the sixth formers I was supposed to teach at school. Fortunately this did not last long, especially when Pete began to fit in with our mood. Of course the greasy cafe was closed, so we decided to go to a Wimpey Bar instead; it seemed the nearest thing to a greasy cafe that we could think of at the time; another mistake.

When our impeys were delivered by a fat overblown waitress I found that by holding my Wimpey up off the plate and turning it sideways a flow of grease was allowed to fall onto the plate where it congealed horribly. I thought the flow was never going to stop. I couldn't finish the Wimpey.

After a short rendition of a modernistic poem, written by Lang in a spare moment, that had Pete and myself in fits of laughter ( though Lang didn't seem to see what we were laughing at ) we returned to the Hotel. Here in the con-hall the fancy dress parade had already started. We each collected a glass of wine from the bar; I gave George Soithers a sub for AMRA; then we studied the costumes. There was an excellent turn-out. Ian and Betty Peters ( as Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser ) and Simone Walsh, as some kind of alien, presumably out of one of the de Camp Krishnan stories, were particularly striking. Suzie Slater was very cute too and received the prize for the most beautiful costume. Sentimentality perhaps, but she did look cute. The Alien group from Manchester were very striking, especially as a group. Tony Walsh deserved real recommendation for bravery for wearing his rocket costume in that heat ( though I believe he came out of it for long periods - it was difficult to tell whether he was in it or not as it stood up by itself when untenanted - a good costume ).

Soon after this we adjourned to Max Jacobowskis room for our own party and things thereafter are rather vague. I can remember the room filling up very quickly. Nell Golding and I at one point were discussing the old days when trad groups ( ones that sounded different, and not all the same, as they do now ) were the rage all over the country and you could go out jiving in these smokey little clubs until all hours. Lang was knocking back his drinks at a furious rate and it was obvious he'd never be able to keep up for long. I remember having a competition with some of the Manchester group about who could slide down the bannisters for the furthest distance. I can even remember going down double, with George Locke. Lang got in there somewhere but he seemed to be disappearing more and more often around this time. Someone came rushing past me screaming that Charles Platt had been sick as if this was great news. At one point we decided to hold a roof con but I don't think I went any further than the stairs. I remember discussing with Ron Barrett, who I met on my travels, the prospect of my changing over to teaching in a junior school for experience, but this seems rather incongruous. I remember one of the Alien group coming up to me and swearing that I looked like Rolf Harris; this I wasn't sure how to take. I remember meeting Harry Nadler and, I think, Charles Partington, - was he the one with that silver paint all over his hair? Harry Nadler even offered to take us all out for a ride in the car he'd brought, but for some reason this didn't come off. Instead we held a carpark-con, and Dick Ellingsworth was there... Then we tried to get tea, at three o'clock in the morning, and were



refused - unreasonably I thought. We went back to Max's to find his friend sprawled all over the floor. We trekked to Alan Rispin's room and discovered Lang sitting there in the dark, bolt upright and not moving a muscle. As soon as the light went on though he got to his feet and staggered off once more on his endless quest for rest, rather like the Wandering Jew. The 'evening' ended for me around four in the morning in Archie's room, where he was handing out offerings from a Drambuie bottle. Soon after this I went to bed.

I woke up the next morning and found the glass of Drambuie still there. It seemed a pity to chuck it away so I drank it. This was when I realised how easy it would be to become an alcoholic. I then proceeded to wake up Lang; now anyone who knows Lang realised just what a hopeless job this is. I woke him and then went down and waited in the lounge; after ten minutes I went back up and woke him again. I can't remember how many trips I made but I reckoned I earned my breakfast that morning. One nice touch; George Locke came and joined us and wanted to order grilled fruit juice. This perked us up. Obviously most other people were feeling the way we did.

After breakfast we went back to the lounge, just in time to catch the dying embers of a conversation between two of the residents. The amazing thing was that they sounded just like Moorecock and Taylor the day before, doing their old retired officers routine. The last thing we heard from them was; "Well, they go home again tomorrow, I believe". I talked to Roy Kay about the Round Robin idea he had inaugurated in the BSFA. Soon after this we were joined by Charles Platt, who seemed to get a lot of peoples backs up during the con. Apparently at one point he had stated, at some question and answer programme I think; "Does fandom need SF" I think it was called - that fans were unable to speak authoritively on any subject except SF. This was his reason for wanting fanzines that dealt solely with SF. There was in fact a large group at the con who felt this way, it was unfortunate that this attitude made them seem rather difficult to talk to, if you didn't want to be restricted entirely to talking of SF. This is a rather restricted viewpoint. So Charles Platt, who might be considered the high-priest of the new fandom ( they have real enthusiasm, which is to be admired, at least ) came and talked to us. He told us why he'd decided to quit Cambridge after only two terms, and why he'd decided to go into printing. I can't say whether he's been misquoted at other times as this was the only time I've spoken to him. He didn't live up to his reputation anyway.

After this we went up to the AGM. There was discussion as to whether the subscriptions should be raised and the bickering that I had expected - I would probably have been disappointed if it hadn't been present. I felt that Ted Tubb and Ken Bulmer who had some good points to bring up were disregarded because they were not members of the BSFA. Finally Ted Tubb, in desperation perhaps to get himself a hearing, took out papers and rejoined the BSFA there and then; immediately upon becoming a member again he began distributing leaflets encouraging everyone else to join too. A heart-warming sight, this. There was an unfortunate part of the proceedings when a faction in the hall were trying to get rid of all the foreigners on the BSFA books. "because its the British SFA after all and what do these bloody foreigners want; horning in on the British SFA - let



them form their own association if they want one instead of spongeing on us. My God, it was real Empire-building stuff. If it hadn't been so pathetic I'd have bust a gut laughing. Then came the bids for the Easter 1965 convention sit. Harrogate and Birmingham both made bids. Harrogate was supposed to have been proposed by Ron Bennett, but unfortunately he'd lost his voice quite early in the con, so he prompted Ethel Lindsay as she made the bid for him. As Ron said afterwards; "I'm a fairly quiet man during the rest of the year. The only time I really talk is at a con. And what do I do as soon

as I get here?! - I lose my voice!" It was great talking to you, Ron, even if I did find myself talking in a whisper - in sympathy, I suppose. Ken Cheslin put forward the Birmingham spiel, the main point of which seemed to be that Birmingham, being a bad town as far as con hotels were concerned, would find it easier to put on the smaller convention which could be expected in a Worldcon year. A good point, and one that might have swayed the vote, Birmingham got the con by one vote...about 27/26, if I remember correctly. There was even a bid for the 1966 Eastercon. Dave Barber, who seems to have been bitten by the con bug, submitted a bid on behalf of Yarmouth, where he already had a suitable hotel lined up which was willing to take on the con. This bid, after a little discussion, was accepted too. So now we're fixed up for two years, (and three cons) in advance, which must be unprecedented in Anglofandom.

This was followed by the "give away" auction, though the prices still seemed pretty high. People were bidding more than face value for items they could have purchased from Ken Slater in the pro-room. Still, I got two prints of Krenkel illustrations, from AMRA, that were suitable for framing. Ted Forsythe did an excellent job, especially when he was holding up two identical items and receiving bids for both; things tended to become rather chaotic around here.

After the auction Lang and I, together with Pete Mansfield and his cousin, Brian McCabe, went to a greasy restaurant (without pretensions but with a juke box) that had been recommended by Arthur Thomson. It was definitely greasy. From here we returned to the bar and here Pete and I discussed sword-and-sorcery while Lang went to sleep. I enjoyed this part of the con almost as much as any other. Pete was an interesting and amusing conversationalist and we were both discussing something we both enjoyed without any interloctual pretensions. I'm Glad I met Pete. I should perhaps mention here the quote-cards which had begun appearing on Friday night, fixed to picture frames and various other places. This trickle grew to quite a steady stream on the Saturday, and by Sunday we were practically up to our ears in the damn things. There was even a series of fake quote-cards, spread by one, Pete White. These usually said

something like; "Keep Langdon Jones out of fandom" or, "Retain Langdon Jones's Amateur Status".. though he couldn't spell amateur. ( I don't know what they're teaching sixth formers in schools these days, he says sadly ). Apparantly the bulk of the quote cards, ( other than the fake ones, that is ) had been brought by the Liverpool Group, and numbered some TEN THOUSAND in all. These consisted of 194 different quotes. It was a fantastic sight to see them all over the floor of the hotel wherever you went. I had an almost traumatic experience the week after the con when I attended the Friday night meeting at Ellas. In the lift I found a bloody quote-card; for a moment I was transported back to the con.

Lang, by this time back into his afternoon stupor, was away from it all. I kept telling him to scintillate, but it was no good. After a while went to see the films shown by the Alien Group. These were purely amateur films and I enjoyed most of them while they were being shown, though I felt that much of the humour was the sort my kids at school would use - lets face it, a group of fourth years at school did practically everything from the Frankenstein film, though as a medical skit, at a recent concert. I did like the Junior Birdman and much of the animation techniques. I was completely staggered by the reaction afterwards though. I'll admit that I went expecting the worst, and was pleasantly surprised, but the films were nowhere near as good as the audience led them to believe. I'm not knocking the Alien Group, I liked the ones I met very much, but I'm still surprised at the reaction they got with these films. Everyone went overboard about them; the convention gave them a third of its profits to allow them to make a full-length feature for the World-con. I must be completely out of touch with the tastes of fandom. Fortunately for my own peace of mind, I did meet people afterwards who agreed with me. I still think people were carried away by their admiration for the work the boys had put into the film making. Some people even said they were better than the Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film, of the day before; now this is just crazy.

We had dinner in the Hung To (?) restaurant. I can remember Lang, Des Squires, Simone and Tony Walsh, Pete White; and George Locke being there but there were two other people, at least, whose names I didn't get. This was an interesting meal, full of good chat. I talked with Tony Walsh about moving to Bristol, which we were both considering at the time, and his desire to find time to sit down and try to write. Meanwhile..... Back at the bar...( sometime around here, I think, we heard Ted Tubbs interesting and amusing speech...but my time sense is shot to hell ), anyway, in the bar Mike Moorcock and Pete Taylor were doing their version of a typical Amazing story of the Thirties era, full of phrases like;- "we shall travel in space, which, as you know, is a vacuum" and suchlike scientific information. Hilarious! Ivor Mayne and Don Geldhart soon joined us and we continued our drinking until closing time. After the bar was closed we stayed where we were, just chatting. This didn't seem to meet with the barman's approval, and he kept turning off the lights. We had to sit in the dark until someone from outside could be persuaded to put them on again for us. Some time later the barman would come back and switch them off again. This guerilla warfare continued until he came in and switched off the fire. I suggested that he might be hinting that we should leave. This was tut tutted by those present as being unfounded prejudice, but we left anyway when the room cooled down.

Soon after this things began to happen in the con-hall. No-one was allowed in; the doors were held tight and dim figures could be seen moving about inside, bearing phallic swords and wearing strange garb. Everone outside was eventually told that they were about to witness the Hum and Sway ceremony, not performed for ten years. Only those people bringing glasses were to be allowed in. Once inside we were



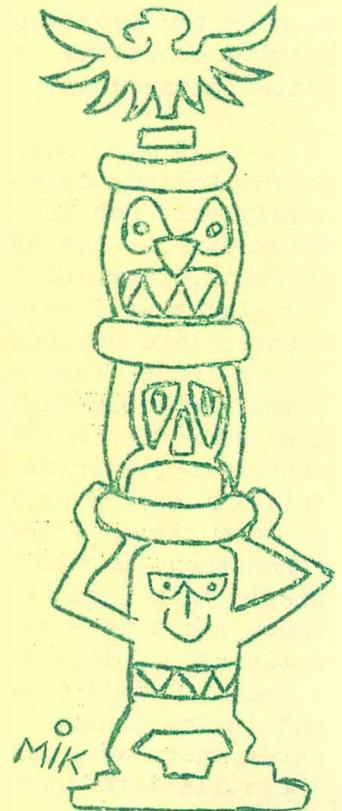
instructed to sit on the floor, in a great semi-circle. Tedd Tubb, a well-oiled Ted Tubb, was issuing instructions. Eddie Jones and Norman Shorrocks, the Cup Bearers, were dispensing this innocuous-looking liquid from great vats. I took one sip and discovered that this was the genuine Shorrocks home-brew - a real fanish experience this. I sipped it to get some idea of

its taste and then took a hearty swig as it didn't seem too potent. We all had to, of course, Hum and Sway, and then, on a note from Moorcock's kazoo, to drain our glasses. We had a few practice runs first, then the ceremony started in earnest. Ken Bulmer was doing the spiel while Moorcock and Taylor stood there trying to look like high priests or something. They all had these weird titles, but I've forgotten what they were. The point was that in the ceremony a virgin was to be slain by the sword, and then to be resurrected by the power of faith. The numbing and swaying bit was just, we were told, to make us lose all earthly ties so we could believe more readily and our faith grew the stronger, the sacred wine having the same purpose. It worked too! Nell Golding was led forward as the selected virgin and obligingly lay down on the floor. Pete Taylor stood over her with his sword poised high. At the appropriate moment the signal was given and the blade flashed down, at that moment the lights went out and a shriek rent the air. Immediately the lights came on again and the humming and swaying was renewed with increased fervour. Then after enough faith had been dispensed Nell was raised to her feet, alive and well again. Goshwowboyoboy!! Some of the effect was spoiled when Mike, overhasty, fell over the table, but otherwise the hum and sway went with a real swing. It convinced Lang. For a long time afterwards he was wandering around wild-eyed and shouting "I believe! I believe!" Norman Sherlock, who had been swigging back half-pints of the home-brew, was well on the way to being paralytic. He kept coming up and saying; "I'm drunk. I've never been like this before." in a sort of awed voice. Everybody by now had really loosened up and we spent a hilarious half-hour round the tape-recorder. What went on I'll never know because I've steadfastly refused to listen to the tape. I can remember Lang saying - screaming rather - into the microphone; "Here we have that wellknown reviewer, Jim Linwood, who seems pleasant enough at present, but as soon as he gets behind a type-writer he becomes a ravaging tiger, tearing into every fanzine received". Jim replied that the business of being a reviewer was very easy. "All I do is to take a few words, like; 'amateurish', 'badly produced', 'sercon crud', 'pretentious rubbish' and 'overpriced' and mix them up with words like; 'Tensor' ". Lang, for some reason, missed this; I think he was too busy arguing with Pete White about how to spell 'amateurish'. From here on again things become rather hazy. At one point Tony Walsh was shouting into the taper about how we should all think of those poor lonely creatures who slave to provide the nation with light the electrical workers, that grand body of men. From here we joined the corridor party. Practically everyone at the con seemed to be there. Even Keith Otter, sitting on the floor and looking drink-dazed. Jimmy Groves came up to me at one point and told me how he'd been reformed by a good woman's love. Romantic fool! I met up with my Manchester friends from the night before, the amazing thing was that we recognised each other. The character with the hair still insisted on calling me Rolf Harris. By this time, if he hadn't had white hair I'd probably punched him. Peter White and I had a long discussion as to whether teachers or sixth formers were the more depraved. We came to the conclusion that the youth of today is actually in pretty good shape. Soon after this Lang and I started reminiscing about our fabulous rendition of 'Bits and Pieces' in the lift at Ella's place. Someone persuaded us to try it here, the only place comparable to the lift we could think of was one of the toilets, that were so strategically scattered over the hotel. So we all piled into one of them and Lang sang 'Bits and Pieces', the chorus bits while I sang the refrain against his background. The fact that I forget

the words after the second line and simply sang the first two lines over and over again seemed to deter no-one. The stamping bit went over really big, though God only knows what it sounded like from outside. Des Squires came out saying that he had been exhilarated. It's nice to have an adoring public, Lang and I were all ready to start signing autographs, but nobody bothered to ask us. Somewhere around here Norman was found wandering around the corridor clothed only in his underpants.

The evening ended in the con hall once more; the place was almost completely filled. I can remember sitting there with Pete White and Tony Walsh trying to flick quote-cards into glasses people were holding in their hands - it's more difficult that way. At one point in the evening Lang and I had found a large wine jar containing what we took to be a white wine. I poured some on top of my home-brew and refilled Lang's glass, which was empty. I thought when I started drinking it that it had lost its taste, but I put this down to the fact the real wine would always taste insipid after you've been drinking home-brew. Then a really horrible thought struck me. I took a quick swig out of Lang's glass to prove my theory - I was right! it was water! Someone had filled the wine jar with water, What a dirty trick! ( and Rispin wasn't passing any miracles this year on account of a C of E ruling ) The amazing thing ~~and~~ that Lang was actually getting tight on the stuff. When he found out what he was really drinking it hit him hard. He went off screaming that someone had poured water into his cornucopia. The evening ended as I say, in the crowded con hall, with a rendition by Pete and Mike of their famous duet, "We Met On The Steps Of A Moscow Latrine" - another fanish experience. After this I listened as Pete and Mike talked about the old days of London fandom. I've always enjoyed listening to people talking of the old days of fandom, and this was no exception. Lang would have enjoyed it too if he'd been able to stay awake. Finally, around 4am, we called it a day.

I woke up the next morning, the Monday that is, and it seemed just too much effort to get up for breakfast. I finally got up around nine o'clock and went to wake up Lang. This time I did not make the mistake of leaving him to get up on his own. I made sure he got up to open the door to me - Lang is hardly a pretty sight in the morning, but at least he was up. I then went down to the lounge to order some tea for us. ... It was strangely depressing. Everywhere you went you saw signs of the happenings of the past few days, it was impossible to walk around the hotel without treading quotecards under foot. Now the con was on its last legs.



Everyone was about to leave. I sat down in the lounge, having ordered tea, to wait for Lang. We intended to travel back on an early train with Mike and the Kingdon Road mob, but this didn't pan out due to the fact that Lang and I are true gentlemen and always ready - well, up until then anyway - to answer the distress cry of a lady...or, in this case, Ella Parker. She wanted a hand with her packing and we agreed to help. By the time we got downstairs again Mike and the Kingdon Road lot had gone. So we decided to travel back with the rest of the London crowd around 12-30. I even offered to carry Ella's case down to the station - another mistake, it weighed a ton. Fortunately Lang and Des Squires were with me and spelled me lugging the great heavy thing to the station. On the train what was virtually another corridor party existed, as there were too few seats on the train for us all to sit down. I couldn't take much part in this one due to tiredness, and the fact that trains do not agree with me at the best of times in any case. Lang was kind enough to allow me to sit with him on his case, which I'm sure will never be the same again. We finally rolled into London around 1-30 and made our fond farewells and agreed to be at Ella's the following Friday evening. Then we got a tube to Ealing Broadway. Both Lang and I were too tired to carry on any kind of sparkling conversation, we just sat and reminisced quietly. It seemed like a week since we had left home. Lang was very sorry to be going home, but I have to admit that I was rather pleased. It would be marvellous to be with my wife and daughter again, and just relax for a few days without a mention of fans or fandom. When I got on the little bus at the other end, I felt quite out of place among the mundane people of this world, I kept expecting to find quote-cards on the bus, or to hear the people behind me discussing science fiction or fanzines.... Talking about the weather and the boat race, as they were, it seemed quite incongruous.

So what reactions have I got towards the con now that the post-con apathy towards fandom has worn off. I must have enjoyed myself, since I can hardly wait for the World-con. I'm grateful for the fact that I met, for the first time, a lot of fans I really liked, such as Pete Mansfield, Norman Snorrook, Tony and Simone Walsh, Pete Taylor, Ivor Mayne and Jill Adams; I'm glad that I was able to renew the acquaintance that I'd met but briefly before, like Ron Bennett, Ken Cheslin and Wally Weber. I'm glad I saw some of the London fans with their hair down, as it were. I'm glad I saw the famous Moorcock-Taylor due in action for the first time. I'm grateful to Mike Moorcock and Norman Snorrook for helping to make it such an enjoyable convention, both in their different ways. I have few regrets, I find on thinking back over the three days. I regret that Marjorie hadn't been able to come with me; that I saw so little of Walt Willis and Wally Weber, as I found these two to be fabulous people; that I didn't get to talk to more people than I did - there were many people that I never met at all; that there was this - to my mind - definite split between those who were interested solely in SF, and those who are of the more fanish frame of mind - that I didn't have a tape recorder when Mike and Pete were doing their act in the lounge. I even regret that I didn't pick up a few more quote-cards, there were thousands lying around; I could probably have papered the walls with them - a fine fanish gesture.

Taking everything into account, you can quote me as being - but definitely- in favour of conventions.

Charles E. Smith.

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# DAY OF THE WILD GELS

Fred Hunter, 13 Freeland Rd., Lerwick, Shetland Islands, Scotland,

Ken Cheslin - apart from sounding completely unlike Ken Cheslin - read most entertainingly. I thought it was a bit hard on Profumo, though, just because he told a "bare-faced lie" as Ken puts it. If one decides to bump off politicians for telling lies...heh, ain't gonna have no more politicians p.d.q. Personally, I reckon that if I'd have been in Profumo's place, I'd have lied, too. Meantersay, if I were sure that no breach of security had taken place (hey, there's a helluva subtle pun there if you want to look for it) I'd have said, "I don't see that it's any of your business how many old pros I've shacked up with, but seeing as you've asked, the answer is 'None.'" If, however, Parliament had pursued with the question, "Well, how many young pros have you shacked up with?" I'd have had to come clean. Seriously, though, I can't quite follow the logic which demands that a man should ruin his career simply because his private life hasn't been 100% moral. If a man is doing a good job for his country I wouldn't care if he spent most of his spare time visiting every brothel from Fermondsay to Birkenhead.

I haven't read anything by James Baldwin, although the literary mags I eyetrack with great regularity claim that Baldwin is Something Else Altogether and is The Very Man For The Thinking Man. Me - I have Weighty Matters such as "When will I get the next "Outpost" out?" and "Who's to pay for the stencils, paper, etc.?" occupy me more than somewhat as of right now. However, speaking extemporaneously - that is, out of the top of my head - I reckon that John Baxter made an excellent job of the review. I know his film reviews please me mightily and I'm sure this review would have done likewise had I known what he was talking about.

Man, am I ever tired of reading articles telling me that SF is gimmicky, cliché-ridden, sensational and narrow. This fact is trotted out time and time again as if it were something new. What I'd like to know is how many people care? Frankly, it doesn't bug me how many gimmicks are packed into an SF or any other kind of yarn. If it entertains me - which is all I ask of it - that's quite enough. I don't expect the SF author to put the world right for me and I can't say I really want him to try. I read SF to be entertained as does, I imagine, almost nearly everyone addicted to the genre. And I don't know where Mike Moorcock found all those people who read nothing but SF. Must have been outside fandom or, at least, the part of fandom I know. And if Mike's prophecy that William Burroughs will one day be hailed as the saviour of SF ever comes true, that's the day SF and yours truly part company for ever. Burrough's doesn't trigger the mind, he triggers the stomach - puke-wise.

It was pleasing to see the inclusion of a letter from a genuine screwball - ol' Roc head Rackham. It's a slightly frightening thought that you'd have had his wholehearted approval had you issued a 'zine featuring nothing but mechanical nudes. Still, some grownups have the oddest ideas as to how young lads should spend their spare time, and I hope you can persuade John "I'm the Greatest" Rackham to spread further enlightenment in your next issue. I mean, as of right now we know that he's against fanzine pubbing. But what's he for? Yeah...uh...I suppose you're right, but that isn't quite what I meant....

Archie Mercer, 10 Worrall Rd., Bristol 8,

First THE SCARR, then THE DROP. However, the latter (or possibly THE LATTER) turns out to be LES SPINGE in disguise. Perhaps LES SPINGE is Stourmancunian or something for THE DROP. I wouldn't know.

It looks like the Stourbridge authorities have put into practice what Ken says. There's you in Manchester, Darroll Pardoe in Cambridge, and Davies and Kilvert in Siberia or somewhere. Soon the place will contain nothing but Cheslins and those who can lay claim to a Cheslin ancestor.

I've probably said this somewhere before, but the recent Goon-revival stories by Berry seem to be falling between two stools - he's trying to parody the hard-boiled story and be fanrishly meaningful at the same time. Again and again and again. This particular episode has an excellent denouement, but I found it hard slogging getting there.

To Jhim: I haven't read "Psychosomatic Medicine", but the extract quoted or summarised seems to be saying merely that if a substantial number of people are discontented with things and would like a change, then that society is unhealthy. That, I would have thought, is or should be, self evident, without it being necessary to write a book to say it. I would suggest, however, that "increasing intrusions of... sex" is not itself a sign of social illhealth. Increasing hypocrisy, however, is - the outward acceptance of one set of values combined with

the cynical adoption of an entirely different set. This can apply to sex or to anything else - but if a highly sexed society is an unhealthy society, then health itself is unhealthy.

Concerning the demise of TWTWTW, one notion I saw in some paper or other that should have known better is that the programme had to go because the one ITV had come up with for the same spot - The Defenders or The Assaulters or something - The Defaulters perhaps - was proving a bigger draw still. That this notion can be seriously held depresses me - apparently it's never occurred to its proponent (s) that two programmes showing at the same time should not try to cater for the same audience, that two programmes between them cater for as many people as possible should be the ideal to aim at, even if one of them has only half or less of the other's audience.



Jhim's blast agin the "New Wave" fanzines is somewhat less than fair, I feel. It should be remembered that "New Wave" is an anglicisation of the French expression "Nouvelle Vague" - and "vague" is indeed the mot juste there. The New Wavicles are groping their way through unfamiliar territory. Jhim encountered the fanzine world somewhat earlier in life than most people do, and thus people who are not so many years his junior (if, in some cases, they are his junior) are way behind him in that department. He should never forget that Percy was a pig.

Re the sticky question of ~~the~~ or not Val Purnell uses too much makeup; that, obviously, is a matter of taste, which in turn depends to a large extent on one's conditioning. Certainly she uses of it, more conspicuously, than do most women.

My own personal opinion of the matter of women and makeup in general is that women fall into three (not four) broad classes: A) those who look good whether they use it or not, B) those who are not particularly good to look upon whether they use it or not, and C) those who look alright without it, but who look considerably less so with it, and who use it nevertheless. (An unfortunately large class this last.) (All of which goes to prove that I, too, have a mind of my own - mainly because nobody else would tough it with a bargepole.)

As for this man being just as bad angle - I don't use perfumed shaving lotion, as Val knows perfectly well. Furthermore she could hardly (having met me) fail to be aware that I believe in letting my figure mould my clothes and not vice versa. And I don't use hair cream (perfumed or otherwise) talcum powder or deodorant. I do on occasions

wear padded shoulders - mainly because I've never yet met a sports jacket without. But then I'm not typical, perhaps. On the general subject of deodorants, I am not particularly qualified to discuss them as I have a peculiarly feeble sense of smell that is more likely to smell the deodorant than it is to smell the original odour that the deodorant is worn to suppress - which is ridiculous. It surprises me that Val, barricaded safely behind the assorted pongs she affects, can smell any external smells.

Talking about my sense of smell (what there is of it) - it brings out the sense of wonder in me when I remember that a dog, for instance, walking along a street or somewhere, can tell not simply that a man or a cat or a rabbit has recently passed that way (which is wonderful enough) but which man or cat or rabbit out of all those possible. This is fact. It's also, to me, utterly outrageous. Certainly, at least, as outrageous as telepathy. Which brings us back to Jhim again.

The whole trouble is that LES SPINGE is a provocative 'zine. I'm damn glad it's not an OMPAazine - that's three stencils I won't have to run off. Roll on (sorry Val) the next, anyway.

Harry Warner, 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, Maryland, USA.,

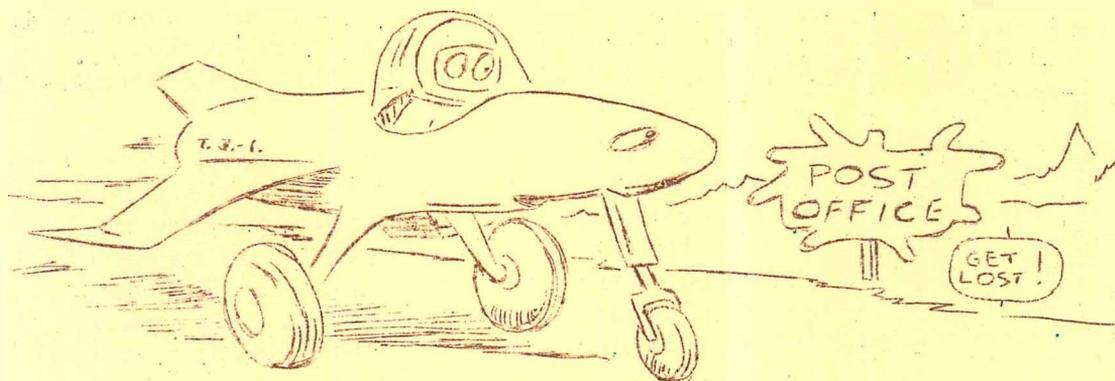
Hagerstown has a Tasmanian observing the educational television operations during the current school year. He has been telling us remarkable things relevant to Ken's guest editorial. They are so anxious to have a population explosion in Tasmania that the government pays the parent \$40 on the birth of a child and \$50 additional goes to the parent each year until the child become 16 or thereabouts. And I imagine that the Tasmanians would scream fearfully if a couple of hundred thousand Britishers were dumped upon them in that emigration procedure which Ken suggests I haven't read the Fred Moyle book, but I wonder if it considers the complications that would arise if the population were distributed in a sensible manner. A very substantial part of the national economy in this country depends upon the fact that people are so ridiculously crowded into certain small areas while vast fertile sections are almost wilderness. Britain might have a real convulsion if common sense were applied and there were no longer needs like complicated export and inport supplies, transportation networks to permit big city dwellers to get to their jobs, the annual tourist rush wherein all the city people try to get into the wilderness and all the wilderness natives come to the city to stare at the high buildings, and so on.

James Baldwin has undoubtedly thought and studied more about the Negro problem than I have. But the negroes I know seem quite anxious to have the same kind of life that the average white man can achieve. I don't know any who want to go around killing or want to set up a separate civilisation based on the alleged differences in outlook or even become astronauts. They want to be able to earn lots of money and to have the right to live in whatever house in whatever section of town they choose and to enjoy life in spare time according to their individual preferences. I think the whole civil rights problem could be settled much more easily and more rapidly if there were a

atrenuous effort to prove this to the white Americans and to convince them that realisation of this goal by the Negroes wouldn't make life impossible for white people.

Jim Linwood almost always bases his writing on a demonstrable false premise but he is an interesting writer to read and he sometimes makes an enexpectedly strong point, despite this handicap. Thus, his review of "The Bug Eye" completely ignores Gindorf's statement that "Genius, Anyone?" was intended humourously. Also the conditions listed as proof of the degeneration of the country are almost precisely the list of problems that used to appear in American newspapers during WW 2 when they accompanied a national waking up, and in more than two decades of fandom, I have never encountered or even heard of a fan who was a firm believer and champion of most of the causes Jim lists: general semantics and Mensa are the only things on his list that have won any real attention in fandom.

Mike Moorcock also produces one of those wild premises when he says that a large percentage of fans read nothing but science fiction. We've been hearing the opposite so regularly that I've almost become to believe it. However, Mike rambles and swerves so frequently in his contribution that this blooper doesn't matter too much. I can't believe that there's anything appealing in the William Burroughs style except to those who want rebellion wherever they can find it, even against the premise that writing should produce some kind of effect upon the reader. I think it was Chesterton who said that a walk to the post office is really more romantic than an aimless ramble that gets one lost in the country, because on the latter nothing is likely to happen except that you stay lost, while the former presents twin possibilities: you may or may not get to the post office. Similarly, "swamp delta to the sky that does not change" and all the assortments of similar words, can produce only one result: their similarity to the groups of words that you find if you copy off the answers to a crossword puzzle.



Jim Linwood, 5a Kingdon Rd., London NW 6,

Firstly the serious and most outstanding item in the ish: Moorcock's "By Spaceship to the Psyche." I agree whole-heartedly with the general idea Mike is trying to put over, but I think he is taking a big risk in assuming the three novels of William Burroughs to be SF. Without denying the genius of Burroughs,

I find the SF connections in his novels very tenuous (gibberish mentions of planets going nova), and his claim to be an SF author very pretentious. As with Burroughs, fans pick on authors like Kafka and say, "Gee, this guy is writing SF." and then point to writers similar to Kafka, and say, "Ph, the Kafka influence." But Burrough's style, as it might affect future SF writers, has been used mightily effectively for some years by Alfred Bester; his 'Fondly Fahrenheit' dates back to 1954 when Burrough's first novel was published (and this was non-experimental.)

'The Drowned World' was a good novel, and so was the short story of Ballard's, 'The Voices of Time', but all of Jim's other stuff, like 'Wind from Nowhere' just rates, by Mike's scale, as only good within the SF field. I was sorry to see that Mike has ignored several major literary novels written by SF authors in the last few years. Particularly, Vonnegut's 'Sirens of Titan' and 'Cat's Cradle', both of which have drawn tremendous praise from even the most SF prejudiced of critics, and the former has many claims to being the best novel the genre has yet produced. Also there is Miller's 'A Canticle for Leibowitz', Heinlein's 'Stranger in a Strange Land' and Budrys's 'Rogue Moon' and 'Who'.

I'm glad to see someone at last giving praise to Cordwainer Smith, I was beginning to think that I was the only one who likes his poignant Future History Stories. Beautiful is the only adjective that I can think of to describe his prose.

The Lettercol was really GOOD. But as most correspondants stick to the controversial subjects of the previous ish, why not have a symposium on each particular subject? I really liked Pete Mansfield's letter, which showed a fine flair for humour....a pity it doesn't show more in his magazines. Pete is to be complimented on a well balanced and reasoned defence against an unreasoned and unbalanced attack.

Pete Singleton; I used the word cunt most unsensationally. Partly condemning Miller's use of it, and partly to show how to beat Post Office regulations. POWise 'Alec H\*me is a c\*nt' is out, but 'Cunt is the Anglo-Saxon word for the hole in a grindstone' is acceptable. Stare at the word for five minutes and you'll realise the sheer stupidity of censorship.

I've never taken Ken's political ideas seriously, thinking and hoping that he is joking. But from this editorial I think he's deadly serious. His statement that the private lives of politicians are of minor importance to the lies they tell to cover everything up reeks of hypocrisy. Does he really feel indignant about the lying of Profumo and tolerant about his amours? Oh, what a lovely country...everything underground, a mere 20 million people and a bloody robot running it all!

Ron Bennett, 17 Newcastle Rd., Wavertree, Liverpool 15.,

The main item for me was the return of the Goon. The Goon stories, to a fan like myself, appear all too infrequently, so that any Goon story nowadays is automatically termed, to me, a return of my favourite fannish character. Has faannish fiction ever produced such a well drawn, well-

defined, well loved character as the Goon, before? I don't think so, but I was glad to see the Goon wuddle through in such a wonderful up to standard manner. Even the old superficial superiority of manner (which creates a greater climax for the muddle solution) was there in the out-witting of the card sharps. Though, to tell the truth, I was just a little disappointed in the description of the card play, on two separate counts. First of all the solo players add to the kitty, pool, ante or call it what you will, on every pass round. In this particular instance they increase the pool stakes at every pass...good enough, but why does the Goon wait until "Fours" has been reached before asking "What does that mean?" He would have asked them when "Doubles" came round if he wasn't accustomed to the practice. The second point is that I have never heard of a game of solo being played with jokers, and can't envisage how the game can be played under such circumstances. The game is played with a full pack of 52 cards, each player of the four being dealt thirteen cards. If there is a joker which card is left out of the game, and why? I'll take odds that Colin Freeman, uncrowned king of Yorkshire solo fandom asks the same question. Though, to tell the truth, in his case he wouldn't know a good solo hand if it hit him in the solo plexus. \*\* Colin Freeman says "As a fanatical card player I can't let John Berry's story go by without remarking that there is no such thing as jokers in solo -- unless Bennett is playing, of course.\*\*

Ken Cheslin should stand for Parliament. I'd support him all the way, except to vote for him. But wouldn't it please me to see him lose his deposit. We should have gone on belting into Chira, he argues. What, more bloodshed! If Ken had been fighting in the front line in Korea, would he have wanted to go on fighting? Well, thank you, but I wouldn't. And what's all this about after 20 years "This country would be a solidly loyal vassal?" After the Tribunal, I wonder how he dare mention the word.



I've decided that I don't like Jhim Linwood. He's been in Fandom about ten years and why has he been denying us the pleasure of reading something as good as his column before now? I don't know that I agree with everything he says, mainly because I haven't the background knowledge or experience to do so, but he said it very entertainingly, and personally I'd even go so far as to say that the column came up to the standards of the old Penelope Fandergaste columns. I think that if I did, however, at least seven fans would shoot me. Jhim would probably be their leader. But I was especially glad to see him jump on Kenith in this way. Every so often some new fan appears full of bright promise and clean individuality. Peter Weston and Charles Platt appear

to be such promising newcomers. It has been more and more the tendency, lately, to praise every move of such new fans, those with promise perhaps as Ken Cheslin points out, these days the wealth of fannish talent is virtually non-productive. And so the promising newcomers are thrown to the lions without a proper apprenticeship, as it were (if one need practice in being thrown to lions!). And what happens? The PMs become as blase as the rest of us, and all too quickly. So, I feel it's a good thing to trample on PMs occasionally. Have 'em learn the hard way. It'll be worth it to fardom as a whole in the long run.

Two points come to mind re Jhim Linwood's letter. The first is that he needn't worry on my account about crossing swords with Leon Collins and the second is that he should read again the sentence he has quoted from Bobbie Gray. Note that she did not criticise either Lawrence or Wesker, but would-be writers of the ilk. I think I'm correct in saying that Bobbie has the highest regard for the writings of D. H. Lawrence, as have I. I still haven't read a better short story by an English author than "The Woman Who Rode Away".

Val Purnell's statement that "ignorance bred religion and religion breeds ignorance" strikes me as being just a little on the side of generalisation. For example, there are different types of religion. They did not all begin in the same way. Some religions began as a code of ethics, a law of living, devised by educated men. Accordingly, the sweeping statement that "ignorance bred religion" is just not true in every case. And just how does religion breed ignorance? The first schools were established by the church, the first as early as AD 596, directly following the arrival in this country of Augustine. In the USA one of the first laws passed by the Pilgrim Fathers, a highly religious sect, was that schools should be established. This, the "Old Deluder" Act of 1647, was so called because it began on the lines of 'It being the will of that old deluder, Satan, to undermine....' No, the ignorance of religious persecution and prejudices is an altogether different thing and cannot in every case be blamed directly on the religions themselves. There are people in the world who are merely ignorant. Some people are lacking in intelligence; they just can't help it. 15% of the population is backward, possessing an IQ of less than 85 points and that 2% has an IQ less than 70 (as many people as have an IQ of over 130). This is ignorance. How did religion contribute toward it, Val?

Your terse note with the magazine, ordering, demanding, begging, requesting or pleading that this time I read the magazine before reviewing it, certainly took me back. Nine or ten years ago I was reviewing fanzines for the Leeds SF Associations wonderzine - and that might bring in an odd horse laugh or two - Orbit. The gag in those days used to be; "Ron Bennett, who reviews fanzines without even reading them" and it might be that things don't alter very much over the years.

Seth Johnson, 339 Stiles St., Vaux Hall, NJ, NY, USA.,

I'd like to put in a word for the care and handling of neofans. While Charles Platt is not yet an accomplished fanned, and probably won't be until, like you, he has been publishing for quite a few years, he has gone to considerable trouble and expense to produce a fanzine, and for this alone should get encouragement. Encouragemrnt, anyway, is better than being slapped down

whatever he tries to do.

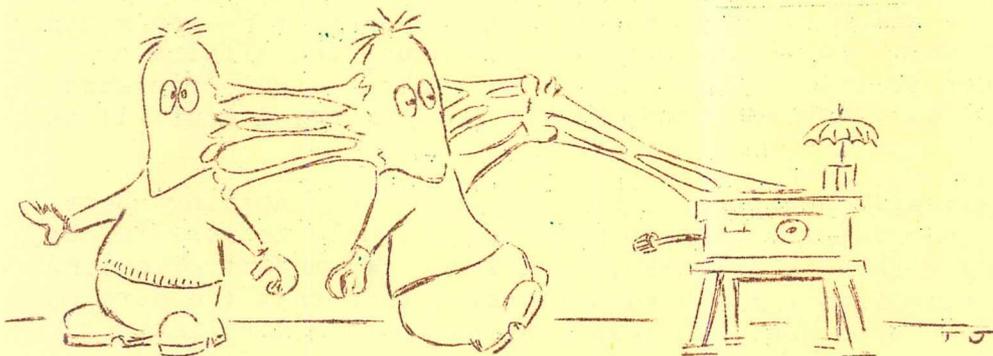
What I'm afraid of is that if all neofans come up against that attitude they will quickly lose interest and this could kill fandom right at its roots. Granting that a certain percentage of older fans gaffiate as time goes by it is in the neofans that we have the future fandom and it would be best to cultivate, encourage and nourish them as much as possible. That doesn't mean necessarily praising a crudzine, but it does mean encouraging the kids, helping them solve their technical problems and even giving them a hand in showing them how to get better literary results. If you must hurt their feelings, do it in a personal letter rather than burst into print with it. And try even then to keep it objective and constructive. (( You are right, of course, Seth, if you want a serious constructive fandom -- in other words a fandom which will be as boring as hell.))

Baxter's article on the American Negro was most interesting. The danger is that if enough negroes were to follow the Black Muslims we might have genocide here in America. This could not happen, of course, unless the overwhelming majority of the White people were terrified, but any such programme of violence as the Black Muslims seem to be advocating would certainly result in just that fear.

There seems to be no solution that doesn't present more problems. I would, however, go along with them in setting up a separate Black Muslim State, where they could rule themselves and sink or swim by their own efforts, with no outside interference.

Do you trade fanzines with John Boardman? It'd be most interesting to get his reactions to Baxter, and Baxter's reactions to him.

Campbell demonstrated his Heironymous Machine at the New York World Con., and I heard E. E. Smith remark that there definitely was a fuzzy sticky feeling when the dial hit one point. Not that this proves anything, as far as I can see, but some people did get results with the thing, but not results that could be put to any constructive purpose.



Mike Moorcock, 8 Colville Terrace, London W 11,

If I thought they were serious, I would be appalled by Ken Cheslin's weird ideas about politics. His odd ideas about shipping us all off to the colonies ('transportation' I believe is the word used once) read like some Hitlerian master plan and are about as practical. At the current rate of population increase I doubt whether many of the commonwealth countries will require any

immigrants with 25 years, anyway, I agree that our form of democracy makes the idea impossible, thank god. But it wouldn't be a question of politicians losing votes. A government ministry responsible for such a programme could need to use force in some form or other to make it work. People are notoriously unwilling to move from one part of the country to another -- how would they feel about being completely uprooted? I think we know.

He says "25 years is farther than most politicians think" and then says he prefers laissez-faire Conservatism to Socialism with its accent on long term planning. Traditionally, Socialists are committed to long-term views -- the trouble is that they never remain in power long enough to carry out their aims. There is only one humane answer to reducing the population (admittedly a worthwhile aim) and that is to encourage birth control and abortion.

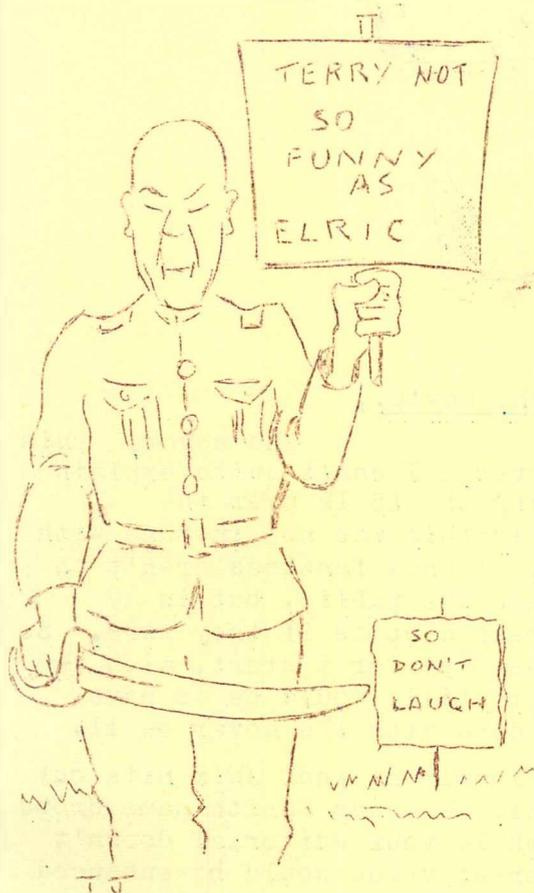
As for Ken's anger about the conciliatory attitude taken towards Hitler in the 30's, it is rather paradoxical. Presumably by 'dealing firmly' he means we should have marched into Germany. In which case, there would have been a war anyway, wouldn't there -- in 1936 instead of '39 (when everyone was better prepared to fight Germany). And as for the thick-headed politicians who arranged the truce. Thousands of lives were saved by this arrangement and the threat of a more general war averted. To give some idea of the average soldier's attitude to war after he's been in it for a while, I recommend Heller's "Catch 22" available at Public Libraries everywhere.

The old and rarely substantiated statement "People are too stupid to see...etc" is usually made, in my experience, by the kind of people, who, if they got into power, would behave similarly to the Hitler's of the world, given the opportunity. People may be inarticulate and non-logical -- but this does not mean that they aren't capable of doing the right things intuitively. Secondly, if Ken's so much brighter than the average voter, why doesn't he try and get elected to Parliament? To stand a chance, of course, he would have to ally himself with one of the more powerful political parties, and to be accepted as a candidate he would be expected to familiarise himself with the complexities of modern politics -- which might do him some good, even if he never made the House of Commons. As it is, most of this country's affairs are run by shrewd, non political Civil Servants. If these were replaced by computers, and put into the hands of the government, I doubt if we would last long.

It is fantastic how people who know absolutely nothing about modern politics are always coming up with these simple answers to our problems. Having worked in politics, from local government elections through to operating from party headquarters, I know that the more one discovers about our problems, the less easy it is to generalise.

I liked John Paxter's "Review of an Explosion." He had some pretty sensible things to say about Baldwin. I have no comments to make on this and only one to Jhim Linwood. His comments on 'in-group' fanzines are rather in-group in themselves. I think as the editors of Zenith and Beyond get older and wiser, their fanzines will improve. They only suffer from what Jhim and I were suffering from seven or eight years ago when we were young and foolish and thought we could produce better fanzines than anyone else.

Glancing at Rackham's letter, I wonder if you'll print this in the next issue: "I DID NOT WRITE THE PIECE ATTRIBUTED TO ME IN LS 11." I am, admittedly, ashamed of nearly everything I've written -- professionally or otherwise -- but I don't want to feel ashamed of something I didn't write. Oh, and I wonder what Rackham means by 'grown up'? If he knows about them, he's certainly never had one as a character in any of his stories. Backstreet abortions? They are usually expensive, but one rarely hears of anyone dying on contracting a disease after one. It is not in the abortionist's interest to perform a sloppy abortion, after all. Knowing several people who've had them, I've never known anyone to suffer physically. The mental suffering varies -- and to legalise the operation would help to alleviate a considerable amount of this. I agree with Jhim's comments on porn. If anything has to be banned, I would suggest the horribly unhealthy American men's magazines and pocket books which are swarming into Britain these days. These, by equating flagellation, sadism and violence with virility are probably doing considerably more harm than, say, "Fanny Hill" -- and they are presented in a format more likely to attract and hold someone who could easily be influenced by them. Would Bobbie rather see depravity thinly disguised in a lurid format than honest sex and sexual deviation presented in a fairly conservative format...and often at fairly high hard cover prices?

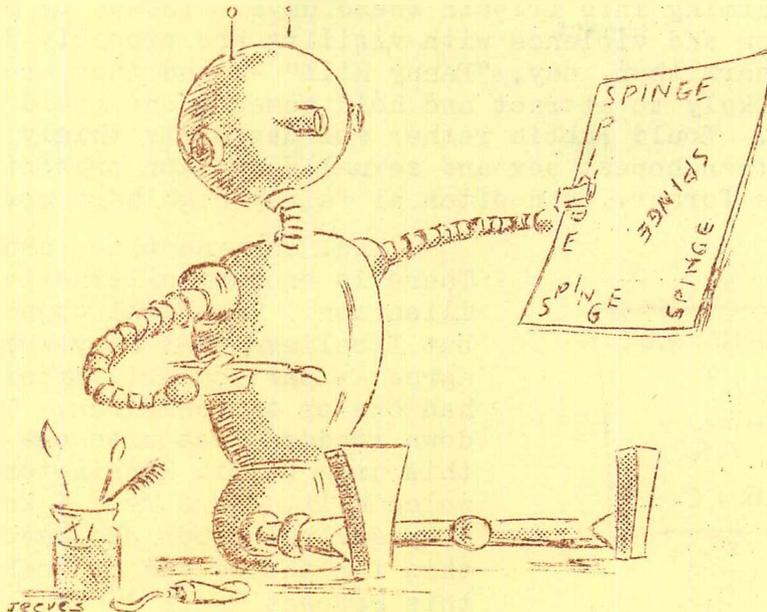


Re. contraception and abortion. There is another alternative -- sterilisation. Men might object to this, but I believe that many women would agree -- particularly after they have had one or two children. The poor down trodden creatures one sees in this area (North Kensington) would welcome it, I'm sure. I know personally several women who have advocated this for themselves and others. In this respect Terry Jeeves' cartoon is not funny....

Re. Harry Warner. I remember seeing on TV the scientist working on the original Bomb. He said that they just got carried away.. Originally, they worked on it because Germany was a terrible threat, yet even when Germany and Japan ceased to be a threat, they hadn't had time to change their attitude. The thing just built up. They were preparing to drop it -- they dropped it, and only afterwards did they realise that they hadn't needed to drop the thing. He also admitted that they may have also rationalised their desire to see just what the Bomb did when it was used. He struck me as a very honest man.

Re Re. Institutions raising kids. On the kibbutzes, apparently, where this was tried, they found that the mothers, not the kids, started to get neurotic. I know two bastards (two very close friends I've known since childhood) and both are normal and were normal. If there was a stigma, the other kids didn't seem to notice and the adults didn't mention it. Both are now happily married and are model husbands. In London, anyway, there are too many illegitimate children for the stigma, if it exists much at all now, to mean much. The main problem is over population, not legitimacy. We need to cut down people production and step up food production.

If people, as Pete Mansfield says, don't comment on art by Douthwaite, it may be because, like Cawthorn and Thomson, his stuff is always of such a generally high standard that, unless it goes below or above that standard, there is very little to say.



Charles Platt, 8 Sollershot West, Letchworth, Herts.,

The cover. This is not a magazine cover, it is a fanzine cover. I can't quite explain why, it just is. I liked your way of writing the LS 12 over the typewritten section very much. Unfortunately this was not in tune with the illo. They just didn't match properly. I know fanzines aren't on display on newsstands to be bought by the general public, but in my limited opinion I think they ought to be dressed up as if they were. So I would have had the title at the top of the page for a start, with the illo in the middle or at the bottom. Better still, would be to have had the title actually in the illo, as was done with the cover on 11.

The guest editorial was really an example of what Jhim hits out at my magazine and Zenith for: exclusiveness. He says Zenith name drops and is limited by its clique-ness. Well, while your editorial doesn't drop names until right at the end, its interest value would be enhanced many times if the reader was well acquainted with Ken personally, or an old devotee of LS under his editorship. It's an example of fan writing,

in that it rambles a bit; it's a monologue rather than an article or an editorial. This I think is not a point in its favour, but that's a matter of taste. A fanzine need not be professional in any way, but I think it should act as if it were, and aim at being so. Half the time Ken is talking through the top of his head, the other half he says some fairly well reasoned statements and follows them up. On the whole a good FAN editorial. The last half of the page is a lot too 'gossipy' for me, but in spite of the above comments, I enjoyed reading the rest of it, and thought it pretty good.

John Berry's piece annoyed me. Fans say they don't like fan fiction -- well, what the hell is this, then? It's very weak humour, that's what. The sort of thing I wrote some years ago for fun (and that's not saying much). It makes no attempt at being well-written or professional. I suppose Jhim would regard it as being 'unpretentious' and certainly not 'big-headed'. I think this is all wrong; 'The Goon Goes Under' is really rather amateurish and rather boring, I would have never let it into my magazine.

'Dumb Animal' was average good. A straightforward writing of a short round a plot. It was better than John Berry's piece because it was written with aims at being more generally acceptable under 'normal' criteria. It was also of reasonable length for the idea used. Not bad at all, really, although Terry has done better.

'By Spaceship to the Psyche' was good. I would have liked this for my mag. Of course, it threw out a lot of random and undeveloped ideas, but this, no doubt, makes it good for next issues lettercol. Yes, I liked this. But I didn't quite see the point about the little piece about films underneath it. Not very funny, and it had a weak ending.

'A Question of Plot' was good as it stands, however, even though I am biased in having seen a lot of Roy's stuff, all rather like this. Ignoring my bias I would say this is a pretty good story-article that makes something of a point, is entertaining, and reasonably professional.

'Non Opinionate' I thought very weak. No form to it at all, and too many digressions. Half the time I'm afraid I wasn't quite sure what the author was getting at. He didn't seem to have very much to say of value.

Now, your letter column. First, I don't like it. Even though I've read the previous issue I find a lot of the comments boring, and some of them annoy me because they ramble and name drop. This means that my reasons for not liking them are probably due to a deficiency in me rather than in your letter section. Half the time your correspondents are talking about big subjects using big words and not really making much sense. Now I would call this 'pretentiousness'. Some of the letters are much too long; I would like to cut out the 'asides' and digressions to make it easier going for the reader. It's difficult for me to say exactly why I find your letters boring, I just do,

I was a bit dissatisfied in the artwork, which in some places, I thought a bit below the standard of the previous LS. The illos in the Berry story were rather weak, and might have been better if they were a bit bigger. Thumbnail sketches don't add much and don't give the artist

much scope. The rest of the illos were all better-than-average, although they didn't really attempt much. Not quite ambitious enough.

If Jhim Linwood's write up was aimed at inspiring controversy, it went too far. If he really believes all he writes, he must be an insufferable person to be with. Not just the review of my magazine, but all his column was bursting with unsubstantiated generalisations and examples of insufficient knowledge of the subject in question. I won't bother to comment further; only that while I've thought his last criticisms to be quite good, suddenly they are all bloody awful. This is not just because he slammed my magazine, nor even because he slammed it for the wrong points, and things that weren't true. ALL his comments irritate me.

Sid Birchby, 40 Parris Wood Ave., Didsbury, M/C 20,

I suppose that if I can measure the worth of an issue by the number of controversial items it contains and with which I should like to argue, then this is a success. Nobody could say that you have not introduced enough incendiary material. There's enough choice of subjects to raise the hackles of almost anyone in fandom.

Trouble is that as far as I'm concerned, I have not the time at present to engage in wordy battle. Or perhaps there isn't anything on which I feel strongly enough.

What! You may say...isn't sex, four-letter words, colour problem and even SF, enough for the man? Will nothing stir him? What must one do? Well, you might try pouring petrol over yourself. I'd sit up at that. But exhaust other possibilities first.

John Baxter, writing about James Baldwin, mentions the Black Muslim movement, or as it's been nicknamed, the American Mau-Mau. I see that the new world heavyweight champion, Cassius "I'm the Greatest" Clay, claims to be a member. Says it gave him the peace of mind necessary to win. Funny sort of qualification for a fighter.

Apologies to Mike Moorcock, but I cannot share his enthusiasm for the British Catastrophe School of SF; Drowned World, Kraken, or Death of Grass or what-have-you. I know that British authors excell in this sort of thing. It is one of the themes we do better than anyone else. Maybe it's because living on a small island makes the British feel that they are out on a limb. It's not just a phase, it's something that goes back to the earliest days of SF (War of the Worlds, Poison Belt, Angel of the Revolution, etc). Personally, even the most skillfull example of the class effects me like the revelations of the Fat Boy in The Pickwick Papers, who, you may remember, crept up to his listeners and said in a blood-curdling whisper, "I wants ter make yer flesh creep!"

I'm all for a little more sophistication in SF. So far, the most promising book I've found is Alex Comfort's latest....the one inspired by the Kama Sutra.

Buck Coulson, Route 3, Wabash, Indiana 46992, USA.,

I admire Mike Moorcock's easy dismissal of the fans who disagree with him as "people with naive and distorted views." It shows that Mike has the outlook of the true modern artist, and I predict that he'll go far in his writing.

I might say that I have read "The Drowned World" (though, of course, I'm not a fan of Mike's acquaintance, and my reading the book doesn't invalidate his statement that few of his acquaintances have done so.) I thought it stank; that it was a pot pourri of Freudian cliches, overdone description and idiotic plot. So it asks questions -- I have the old-fashioned view that writing is supposed to answer questions. I can ask them; I don't have to pay money to some writer to have him ask them for me. I suppose that what Mike meant was that the book was supposed to make the reader think about Serious Questions of Life and Death and Such Stuff. The only thing it induced me to think was that it was a remarkably dull novel, but if it generated thought in others I suppose it'll all be to the good.



Of course, I don't really care to see SF become the "literary form of the future." Considering the amount of unadulterated trash published in little magazines, my hopes that anything worthwhile will come out of any literary form of the future are minimal indeed. God knows, today's science fiction is almost unreadable; when it starts imitating William Burroughs it will be completely unreadable and we can all look for another hobby.

Harry Warner is right about the interjection of editorial material ruining a closely reasoned argument. Put now that I think of it, I'm not sure that I've ever encountered a closely reasoned argument in a fanzine. Have you?

I'm in favour of contraception over abortion, but I'm in favour of either over the present practice of letting unemployed slum dwellers raise families of 16 kids for the government to support through the Welfare Department.

Pete Mansfield, 14 Whiteford Rd., Slough, Bucks.,

I know I should have written a helluva long time ago, but this is the first opportunity I've had - honest. And the only reason I've found time to write now is the fact that it's Leap Year and I'm hiding at home -- avoiding the female of the species, as it were. Damn these pagan customs....I'm not averse to most propositions made by the fairer sex, but marriage is going just

a bit too far. During such times of trouble I find a copy of spinge a companion par excellence (damn, these foreign phrases look so much better written in italics)...so handy for rolling up and beating off the women with. Rolling up spinge that is, not the women...though, I don't know, that could be interesting...

It's hard to know who to give top credits to, this time. A toss-up between John Baxter and Mike Moorcock, for certain. As Jhim Linwood points out in his column, John Baxter is somewhat of an exception in fannish reviewing -- a really lucid writer who makes a review into a highly interesting article. Now all I need to do is find a copy of the Baldwin book!

Alan Burns, Goldspink House, Goldspink Lane, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 2.,

John Baxter wrote a very fine article on one of my favourite (when I'm in a thoughtful mood) writers; James Baldwin. I commend Baldwin to anyone who thinks or cares anything about getting rid of the colour bar. John dealt with just one essay in detail, to deal with a whole Baldwin book in any detail you would have to write another book. Particularly strong in my mind is Baldwin's "Giovanni's Room". In my literary wanderings I've read so much disgusting filth about homosexuality that Baldwin's sensitive, intelligent and beautifully written study was as refreshing as a clean breeze blowing through a foetid sick-room. "Notes of a Native Son" and "Nobody knows my Name" are books of essays essentially for the bedside or train journey, very dependable at all times. John Baldwin's other books are mainly for making a meal of. The best I can say of Baldwin is what my coloured girl-friend said, "I thought I knew the problems of my race and yours, John Baldwin taught me that I knew neither."

Terry Jeeves "Dumb Animal" I didn't go for much. Not that it hadn't humour, it was quite funny, but that anyone would pick up a ringing phone and call down it "get knotted" bespeaks a purple state of mind far from the intellectual Jeeves I know. I can only think that Terry hired out his name to some literary hack.

Mike Moorcock's article was not up to the standard of his Elric stories which I rather like. His adulation of old World-Wrecker Ballard nauseated me. The Big Wind of Ballards was no better than his Drowned World. I hate world wreckers.

Peter White, 75 Ashley Rd., Epsom, Surrey,

Few people would deny that Fred Hoyle is one of today's great brains, but he is notorious for his adolescent political ideas and his oversimplification of human problems. This latter quality he seems to share with Ken Cheslin. Even if it were a laudable aim, the incapacitation of the USSR, as Hoyle suggests, would cause untold suffering inside that country. The mess being made by the respective governments of South Korea and South Vietnam suggests that the interests of the general population of those countries would be better served by communist leaders. What kind of a mess would China be in if she too was a victim of Western Militant benevolence?

John Baxter's review was excellent; but it should be mentioned that, great man though he is, Baldwin is a part of US racialism, not actually an objective observer.

Jim Linwood's comments on the 'new wave' fanzines are mostly fair, but he is a bit rough on the editors. Despite such dirty tricks as awarding prizes to his own pseudonyms, Charles Platt is unpretentiously friendly, if a little sensitive to criticism.

Mike Moorcock's article was by far the best thing in the magazine. It gave a lucid and intelligent account, only occasionally slipping into the equivocation and ambiguous semantics that mar so many attempts at serious criticism.

Silly little bastards, like John Foyster who go through life sneering, in self-conscious imitation of hipster jargon, at all idealism, really shit me, to put it in Foyster's virile vernacular.

Leon Collins, 72 Ellesmere Avenue, Lill Hill, London NW 7,

Some of the shortcomings of fandom were unintentionally revealed in the last issue of Les Spinge. I refer to Jim Linwood and his very biased review of the new wave fanzines.

Into fandom have suddenly bounced several highly talented and enthusiastic youngsters. They have said, "Away with all this talk of subjects fans know nothing about", and started a revival of fanzines that are serious and constructive. They realise only too well that fanzines such as Les Spinge are only vehicles for fans to pretend they are psychologists and sociologists knowing that nobody will question their pronouncements. In such subjects they are not only completely uninformed, but also bore the earnest SF reader to tears. What happens? Along come two SF fans like Charles Platt and Pete Weston who start catering for the readers of SF who are not pseudo-intellectuals. They want to write SF and here other fans' opinions of it. Amazed by the following these youngsters have, the "fannish" fans make vicious attacks on them with undertones of sour jealousy.

Already the enthusiasm of these fans has rightly earned them the Control of the BSFA. Their proposed plans for it will attract more than ever the serious reader to the ranks of fandom...a fandom that might mature because of their efforts.

Although I have a high regard for Jim Linwood, I think he typifies the hard core of prejudice against the new wave. He is

opposed to the swelling of fandom's ranks by people such as Charles Platt. One is almost tempted to think that Linwood and his friends are prejudiced against anyone who doesn't think and act like them. Their behaviour on paper and at conventions does little to make them revered in the eyes of new fans.

Previously, fans have entered into fandom by themselves and have been taken aside by a "mature" fan and told the golden basic rules of fandom, like, "Always sneer when SF is mentioned" and "Be snide to neos." But because of the recent influx this has been impossible. The new fans will evolve on their own. Their common ground will be Science Fiction and their magazines will be directly influenced by professional magazines not the latest 'in' fanzine. Their vocabulary and behaviour will be that of serious students of the genre, not that of maladjusted neurotics seeking sanctuary in fandom.

The new wave are putting SF back into SF fandom.

Pete Singleton, Ward 2, Whittingham Hosp., Preston, Lancs.,

I enjoyed all the magazine apart from "Review of an Explosion". I'm sick of all this 'white versus negro' jazz. In my opinion the whole mess of colour discrimination is too diseased with childish irrationalities to bear serious consideration for more than a short length of time. Not that I fail to realise the seriousness of the problem: it's just the fact that to me colour prejudice is so completely alien as to present an impossible task in any attempt to fully visualise the forces involved.

I first saw an edition of "Tropic of Cancer" when I was 15 years old, when I'd just left school and started work. My workmate who showed me the book as proof of what the 'birds and the bees' were all about was eagerly awaiting my reaction. I was off work for a week, so very stunned and shocked was my innocent young self at the time. It was a big paper-covered edition, printed in France, I think that gave me such a traumatic experience - I'll never forget it.

John Rackham: I asked Nurse what a "Male vagina" was and Nurse informed me that I should know because the country is being governed by a whole bunch of them.

Dick Ellingsworth, 5 Kingdon Rd., London NW 6,

I agree with Linwood in his fanzine reviews. "Zenith" and "Beyond" are definitely the two least admired fanzines in my book. I met Charles Platt - sorry Twisher at Ella's last Friday and I must say he really looks the part. His contention that because you do not put in LS that material is copyright, it is not copyright, is right up the wall, of course. But who cares? You could, of course, sue the bounder for both infringement of copyright and defamation of character if he tries to reprint from LS.

Oh, for the good old days of "Satellite", "Brenschluss" and "Rot".

I just haven't attempted to read "By Spaceship to the Psyche" yet. I can't understand William Burroughs, I can't stand Jim Ballard and I'm beginning to think I misunderstand Mike Moorcock. If William Burroughs ever gets round to writing in the English language, Perhaps I'll get around to reading some of his work, and maybe I'll even vaguely understand it. But after digging around his seemingly meaningless phrases for a few hours I still can't see what he's trying to say -- if indeed, he's trying to say anything.

I don't get all this Douthwaite adulation, Pete. As a rule I'm appreciative of good artwork -- I'm even appreciative of a load of bad artwork -- but I just don't like Douthwaite....why? Maybe it's because Douthwaite is not an artist as I understand the word. I've heard people who know what they're talking about say that Douthwaite is a good draughtsman and I'm willing to accept their opinion. If an artist, or somebody who knows something about the subject, tells me Douthwaite is a good artist, I'll accept that, but I still don't have to like his work. After all, Eue Bevan was a marvellous politician, but that didn't make me agree with his politics.

Brian Aldiss "The cover is a real beaut, dynamically designed, surely executed. And the contents are good, apart from that silly little editorial which says, "the best thing this country could do is to get conquered and be made to think"; that's the sort of remark that gives fandom a bad name and the name is - puerile. Apart from that, some good stuff from contributors and some stuffy goods from correspondents. I mean, there's dear old Moorcock...we all know he's as avant garde as all get out, and the sweetest guy, and England's answer to Moskowitz to boot, but is he not exaggerating just a tiny little bit when he declares that William Burroughs is "the only SF writer (with the exception of Ballard) worth reading."? Let's not let this sort of rubbish get by; Burroughs is piss. But the letter from friend Baxter restored my humour; even when he's wrong, he talks sense, which is rare. "

Terry Jeeves " 'Non-Opinionate' by Alan Burns was obviously one of those 'let's suppose' articles, but even Alan didn't take himself seriously when putting forward his arguments. (Obviously his theory has one basic fallacy. To strive to attain a state of no-opinion the striver must have the strong opinion that such a state is desirable, and thus defeat the object. Really another form of Rousseau's paradox to make a habit of not forming any habits. // The best thing is the issue was, without doubt, Roy Jay's piece."

Jim Cawthorn "I wish I could comment at greater length on this issue, but frankly it was a bit depressing taken overall. I don't mind being asked to think, but after going through the debates on contraception, abortion, politics and nits, I feel rather more as if I'd been brainwashed. How did John Berry get in these? He doesn't even have a platform....

THANKS also to Arthur Thomson, Colin Preemer, Keith Freeman ((how's this for editing?)), John-Henri Holmberg and Marion ~~Thompson~~ Inwood..sorry.



LES SPINCE