

OPERATION FANTAST

No. 1
Sept 47

Hello, Fellow Fans,

To Commence, an apologetic explanation of why you should be further pestered with paper.

I received a request from Ron Holmes to write a sheet or two for inclusion in the 'BOOKLIST' when next published. He told me to consider it a separate publication, said that I should give it a title, and have a free hand with regard to the contents. His reasons were that he hoped thereby to encourage other mugs to do likewise, and so create greater interest, enthusiasm, and what have you, in Fantasy within the U.K.

As I am in the Army I was unable to work on his instructions as given, and had to translate them into my own lingo. I included in the final form a few aims of my own, and for the information of all concerned I have printed the whole lot below.

Good reading, and good luck,

Kenneth F. Slater
Capt.

OPERATIONAL ORDER No. 1.

INFORMATION.

Own Troops. Capt. Kenneth F. Slater. Reserve Force. Ron Holmes, Esq.

Weapons: A not-too-fertile imagination, and a typewriter.

Some mags. and books for sale and exchange.

Enemy.

Fans. Thousands of 'em.

Weapons: Pens and typewriters, apparently well developed for the construction of brickbats. Unknown quantity of mags and books they may or may not wish to sell or swap.

INTENT.

To encourage and promote greater interest and enthusiasm in S.F. and Fantasy in the U.K. To complete own files of magazines with missing issues.

METHOD.

The publication of 'OPERATION FANTAST' at uncertain intervals, and the inclusion therein of anything I may consider of interest (including my own 'want list').

ADMINISTRATION.

Issue through the great-heartedness (?) of Ron Holmes of BFL. Writing, duplicating, and what-not by KFS.

COMMUNICATION.

By letter c/o Ron Holmes, or to the address given at Appendix 'A'. Time, stink, or atom bombs should be sent 'Poste Restante, Marsport, Solar System, Orbit 4.'

ANY QUESTIONS.

Not yet, anyway.

ACK.

You don't have to acknowledge, but letters received will be

/ answered as soon as time and the exigencies of the service permit.

APPENDIX 'A' TO OPERATIONAL ORDER No. 1

Capt. K.F. Slater, o/o Riverside, South Brink, Wisbech, Cambs.

Note: Typing omissions, spelling errors, etc., are apologised for here and now. No comments required. I thank you.

?? S T I L L B O R N ??

or

The Trials and Tribulations of Editors - and Readers.

The following are extracts from letters between myself and Ted Carnell, of NEW WORLDS.

- 1946.
- Oct. 18 To: Pendulum Publications - Herewith my cheque for £1, being subscription for the next ten issues of NEW WORLDS, commencing issue No. 3. -
- " 22 To: Capt. Slater, Wisbech - Thank you for your cheque.....
- Dec. 5 To: The Editor, NEW WORLDS when can I expect your 3rd....
- " 10 To: Capt. Slater the third issue of NEW WORLDS is unfortunately running late, and we do not expect to see the magazine published before the end of January.....
- Feb. 7 To: Capt. Slater. Dear Captain..... A word about NEW WORLDS. The issue is in preparation now, but we have been held on the cover New artist Slack has..... the blocks take some weeks.... doubtful this month.... Ted Carnell.
- Feb. 12 To: Ted Carnell I guess the printer's strike has now held up publication.....
- " 18 To: Capt. Slaterand you are quite correct over NEW WORLDS being delayed further.....the printer and the blockmaker...an enforced two weeks vacation..... I can but presume.... not be published until late March..... Ted.
- Mar. 5 To: Capt. SlaterNW3 has now started and I hope to have the galley proofs this week..... Ted Carnell.
- " 17 Extract from Diary of Capt. Slaterhad lunch with Ted Carnell and Ken Chapman today, in town. Ted produced copy of cover for NW3, which is quite attractive.....
- Apr. 14 To: Ted Carnell....by the way, when are there going to be some British SEM's on the market ?....seriously, how are things going with N.W.3.....
- " 16 To: Capt. Slater....NW3 is still delayed - and I despair.....
- " 30 To: Ted Carnell....How's about NEW WORLDS - I read the review, and I want to read the magazine.(? Do you think Pendulum Pubs will pay me interest on my subscription?).....
- ay 7 To: Capt Slater ... still no news of NW....promised the proofs on Thursday- well, eight Thursdays have gone by.....another to-morrow. But I've given up hoping.....

?? STILLBORN ?? cont.

PERMATION FANTAST, PAGE 3.

- Jun. 6 To: Ted Carnell ... NW3 ? I'd still like to know if P.P. are going to give me interest on the sub. they have lying idle.....
- Jun. 15 To: Capt.Slater ...NEW WORLDS 3 (and your directorship ?) is still on the way....half the proofs in....the rest....promised next week. But I ignore promises. I work on concrete facts....
- Jun. 20 To: Ted Carnell ...pleased to hear of slight possible progress of NW..
- Jun. 21 To: Capt.Slater....Flash! - today received remainder of NW proofs: now for another fuel crisis.....
- Jun. 24 To: Ted Carnellmost welcome news...NW3...glad to hear that further developments are taking place.....
- Jul. 5 To: Capt.Slater ...Ta for yours of varying dates...I hold over a repl; ..the fact is that I have been slaving on NEW WORLDS for your benefit - and others, ... now put the issue 'to bed'. We roll next week, so pray, if you are capable, that there are no strikes lock-outs, closed shops, acts of God, or what have you to get in the way this time.
- Jul. 15 The Daily Telegraph ...'STATEMENT ON NEWSPRINT' ...Cut to operate from next Monday.

????????????

(To be continued in our next issue, if any.)

SUBJECT: P O W E R.

It would appear that due to assorted reasons, we shall be short of power again this winter. Personally, I shall as usual be short of money, and most of us will be short of many things, but for our modern civilisation (?) power is the THING of prime importance.

Power to push water through pipes, power to carry you home for Xmas, power for light, power for heat, power for innumerable purposes.

Coal, although still one of the main sources, is on the way out - or so I am told. Nuclear fission power is on the way in. Maybe - but not in time to cook the turkey, chicken, or, possibly, sausages for our Xmas dinners. Perhaps not in time to do it for 1950 either.

Have any of you fans ideas on new and easy sources of power ? Or of goods ways to conserve our present resources ? Do you want to discuss them ? If so, please send me your names and addresses, with some brief note of your ideas, and I will try and put you in touch with people who are thinking on the same lines.

Some of you may produce workable projects, and then maybe we can get some publicity for them - let me know. Something is needed, and I think I can claim for the S.Fan the ability of looking well ahead. There are also a lot of us, unorganised, but if we got together we should be able to make enough noise to make some-one take notice of us, - and making a noise is the way you get ideas worked out, tried out, and put into operation.

Don't get me wrong - not politics, shuns - just an effort to shed a little more heat and light around.

Anyone with any ideas ?

FLYING SAUCERS.

Around the beginning of July this year we heard and read a lot about what were called 'Flying Saucers'. After the dust and the shouting have died away what have we left? NIK.

The first clear report was, I think, in the Daily Telegraph of July 4th, it was reported that U.S. Army Intelligence officers were investigating reports from the Western States. One 'flying business man' made the first report, on 24th June, and stated he had seen circular objects flying at speeds up to 1,200 mph. Further reports were received from areas wide apart.

The Daily Mirror of 7th July informed us that the U.S. Army had jet planes standing by to chase the objects, if seen.

The Telegraph of the same day tells us that a Seattle coastguard has taken a photo of one, which shows as a light-coloured, almost round spot.

Daily Mail of the 8th includes reports from Stockholm, San Francisco, & Sydney, of assorted flying whatsits: and also quotes three authorities (?) who state that the objects seen are a) optical illusions caused by the bright sky, b) optical illusions caused by the red corpuscles in the blood, and c) radio-controlled guided missiles. You pays yer money, and yer takes yer pick.'

Another report of the eighth gives full details by a bloke named Vernon Baird, who was flying a plane taking geographical photos. He informs us that he knocked a flying saucer down - in fact 'it got caught in my slipstream and came apart like a clam shell.' He gives his speed at the time as 360 mph. If the gadget came to bits that easy, I can't see it doing any 1,200 mph., or any of the other high speeds claimed for it.

The Chronicle of July 9th gives us reports from Johannesburg, Sydney, Copenhagen, and DEAL, Kent. The saucers have now become shields, rings, and all sorts of shapes.

The Mail of the 9th tells us the U.S. Army have taken possession of a flying saucer. This report is confirmed by the Telegraph of the same date.

Later comes news that the 'F.S.' wasn't an 'object' but only a net.kite

All very interesting, all very nice. Visitors from the Void? Has our friend Roosher developed a lovely new machine with which she will set out to conquer the world? Or have termites developed flying machines, subsequent to mutation from radiation, caused by atom bombs in New Mexico?

Publicity petered out, and we were left to believe what we liked. From a friend in Canada, I can offer the following additional observations:-

"....one gets the impression that reporters realise they have overplayed the theme..... keep in mind our periodicals and newspapers, both U.S. & Canadian, and their sensationalism....reports of said discs were reputed to have been received from all parts of the U.S. and Canada....the report of the pilot who knocked one was down was admittedly a hoax cooked up in a hanger bull-session. Another 'find' was a net. balloon....pranksters contributed their share by tossing paper plates from high windows and buildings' roofs. One such was reported to have dumped out a bag of milk tops from a private plane, over a U.S. city. U.S. Army aircraft reported no encounters, after covering wide areas..... retaining an open mind, one admits the possibility of extra-terrestrial visitors, or of the uncanny, but it would seem that the most definite reports were those which subsequently turned out to be fallacious. One photo was presented - a large white dot on a dark background - very similar to some of Shaver's photographic roofs, and one entertains the impression that some of his followers contributed /continued. Page 5.

FLYING SAUCERS, cont.

their share.....you must remember that our people are sensationally minded; if a phenomena is reported in which they believe - or would like to believe - they are not above bolstering it with false or misleading testimony....."

In other words, my friends, although some items may be of use to a new Charles Fort, I fear we shall not be meeting our little tentacled friends from Mars this week.

INFORMATION BUREAU.

Some time ago I tried to compile a check list of mags published in the U. S. during the war, but could not get much support, although a number of fans expressed their interest. There are a number of people with lists already in the country, but they are too busy to answer all and every query that comes to them, so I am trying to build up a little information service of my own.

I shall publish here everything I know about mags, and anything I may learn in the future, and also queries. These facilities I extend to all fans, on the terms below; I should like to point out that such charges as there are, are only to cover out of pocket expenses.

A little information, now:

ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION.

Published monthly all through the war in the U.S.A., Jan, 1940 being Vol.24, No.5, and Jan.1947 being Vol. 38 No.5. Each vol. has six issues, and commences with the March issue.

Information required : when did the three alterations in size take place?

UNKNOWN.

Published monthly commencing Vol.1.No.1. March 1939, up to Dec.1940, Vol.4. No.4. and then bi-monthly (Vol.4 No. 5. Feb.41) up to last issue Oct. 1943, Vol.7 No.3. Vol. has six issues. Not yet re-issued, but hopes are high.

Subscription for ASF one year, is 16/3d. Address will be supplied if you want it. Next month - AMAZING AND FANTASTIC - I hope.

More about the info bureau. I don't know all the answers, but I'll do my best to find out - the extraction of the information from some of the folk who do know is a little difficult sometimes. Rules and regulations as follows:

You submit your query to me with your name and address.

If you want a personal answer, please enclose 3d in stamps.

If a published answer is soon enough and sufficient, 1d in stamps will suffice. When I cannot give a direct answer, your query will be published, & if you have asked for a personal answer, a reply will be sent giving any and all information available at the time, plus other sources of information.

On the same terms, I will publish 'want' or 'available' items, not more than twelve items to any one list, however. (Think of how my typewriter suffers anyway.)

Any irrelevant questions not dealing with S.F. or fantasy (i. . 'how's your old man ?') will be ignored.

For your information, some copies of this effort, apart from 'Booklist' are going to the U.S.A., which may be productive of info. and want items.

That, my friends, about closes this edition, apart from my own Want and Available List, which you will find overleaf. I might add that constructive criticism will be welcomed, and if anyone cares to type a stencil, duplicate about 120 copies, and send it to Ron Holmes, or myself, that will be welcome, too.

WANT LIST, and AVAILABILITY List. Shortened versions of magazine titles are used: Astounding Science Fiction = ASF; Planet Stories = PS; Weird Tales = WT; Fantastic Adventures = FA. Less well known mags will have titles given in full.

WANTS - U.S.A. Editions only.

ASF 1941 Aug. Dec. 1942 Jan. 1943 Jan. Mar. Apr. Jul. Aug. Sep. Oct.
 UNKNOWN: 1939 Aug. Sept. Nov. Dec. 1940 all except Dec. 1941 all except Dec. 1942/3 all issues.
 A.S. 1939 Dec. 1940 Feb. to May inc. Jul. Aug. Oct. Dec. 1941 all except Jul. & Aug. 1942 all except Oct. 1943 all except Aug. 1944 & 1945 all issues. 1946 Jan to Mar.
 TWS 1941 Apr. May. Jul. Sep. to Dec. 1942 all except Apr. 1943 all except Feb. Apr. Aug. & Fall. 1944 Fall, Summer. 1945 Winter Spring.
 SS 1940 all except Mar. 1941 & 1942 all issues. 1943 all except Jan Mar. And Fall.
 PS 1940 All ex. Winter & Fall. 1941 all except Winter & Spring. 1942 all ex Spring. 1944 all ex Summer. 1945 all ex Winter. 1946 all ex Spring.

The above are MY primary wants. I am willing to purchase others in good clean condition for resale to other people, and if you have them, let me know. I should perhaps here inform you that Nigel Lindsay and I are attempting to organise a non-profit exchange system for the benefit of members of the B.F.L. Any mags purchased not on the above list will go into stock for this purpose, and will be resold at cost price plus postage.

Having got this far, I find I shall have to use an extra sheet for the list of items available, and as that sheet will have two sides, I fear I shall have to do some 'filling - in' - mustn't waste (?) paper, must I ?

Therefore INFORMATION BUREAU : the following dope has now come to hand: ASF was enlarged commencing issue Jan. 42, reverted to old size May 43, and shrank to present size Nov. 43.

Nigel Lindsay (311, Babbacombe Road, Torquay, Devon) wants copies of Astounding for Dec 1930, and October, 1944. Can any help him ? I gather that when he gets those, he will have ASF complete to date!!!!

Miss Coralie Buob 915 Collings Ave, West Collingswood, New Jersey, U.S.A. wants to correspond with some rabid British S.F. fans. Secondary interest is detective stories - she tells me she is willing to discuss any subjects from archeology to cosmic physics. She also hopes shortly to produce a FANZINE of her own, and will doubtless be pleased to hear from any British fans who would like copies.

FILLING MATTER:

UNCANN(Y)ED

FLYING (hic) SAUCERS.

I admire
 the Vampire.
 In a fashion
 of the nation,
 he takes
 real steaks.

People who see
 what might be
 Space-cars
 from Mars
 really oughta
 drink water.

ITEMS AVAILABLE.

* Avon FANTASY Reader, No.1	2/6.	Startling St.	1947 July.	1/8
* Wonder Stories Quarterly,	1933 Wnter.	4/6.		
* T.W.S. 1946, Summer	2/3	F.F.M.	1940, Mar.	2/9
" Fall	2/1		1947, Jul.	1/8
1947 Aug.	1/8			
A.S.F. U.S.A. editions.		A.S.F. BRE editions.		
1936 Dec.	2/9	1939 Nov.	1/-	
* 1939 Sep. Oct.	2/9 ea.	1940 Jan.Feb	1/- ea.	
* 1940 Feb.	3/3	" Jun, Jul.	1/2 ea.	
* 1946 Feb.Mar.	2/3 ea.	" Sept. to Dec.	1/4 ea.	
" Jun. to Dec.	2/3 ea.	1941 Jan.Feb.Apr.	1/3 ea.	
1947 Feb. to July.	1/9 ea.	1942 May.	1/0.	
A.S. 1932 Dec.	3/-	1943 Jun. Dec.	1/- ea.	
* 1947 Jun. Jul.Aug.	1/8.	1944 Feb, Apr, Jun.		
W.T. 1946 May.	2/3	Aug. Dec.	1/- ea.	
1947 Mar, May, Jul.	1/9 ea.	1945 Feb, May, Jul, Sep.		
		Nov.	1/- ea.	
		1946 Jan, Mar, May.		
		Jul. Sep. Dec.	1/- ea.	

BOOKS: Two copies of Williamson's Legion of Space are available at 18/- ea., including postage. Both brand new.

Please do NOT send money with your orders - if items are still available when your request is received, they will be sent with details of cost. Cash, P.O.s, or cheques will be accepted.

You will note that prices for items, even of the same year, vary. This is accordance with the policy of Nigel Lindsay and myself, to market what we can to members of the B.F.L. at cost plus a percentage for postage and other expenses

In case any dealers who make their living or pocket money out of selling stuff to fans should object, we should like to point out that this scheme will only refer to member subscribers of the B.F.L., and as such, they are entitled to what ever services we can render them. In any case, our small scale trading should not interfere with any big dealer.

Definite information on all points attached to the trading scheme will be published in either the next issue of OPERATION FANTAST, or the next BOOKLIST, if O.F. doesn't make the grade.

Another (gentleman, this time) American Fan who wants to correspond with British Fans is Thomas De Vore, of 9712-S-San Pedro St, Los Angeles, 3., California. He tells me he hopes to visit England some time, and wants to get the inside dope on life over here. Some of you fans who are 'men of the world' can rally round and tell him all about spivs and whatever else one needs to know to get along these days.

Norman Ashfield, of 27, Woodland Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey, is making a collection of British S.F. and Fantasy mags. - including some off-trail stuff, and Unknown & ASF BRE's. Can anyone help him ?

COMPLIMENTATION It is with regret that I hear FANTASY will not be published after the current issue, No.3. This is, I think, Walter Gillings's second effort at a Science Fiction mag. on the British market. The war, methinks called a halt to the first one, and I suppose it is the paper shortage that has killed the second. I have not heard whether the stoppage is only until there is more paper, but I am hoping so. I am also hoping that Walter keeps up the noble work with FANTASY REVIEW. The REVIEW is by far the best thing that has occurred in my young life. No longer must I walk round every bookshop I see - just in case there has been a fantasy book published I don't know about - FR keeps me posted. Please don't let that go down as well, Mr. Gillings.

The efforts of people like Walter Gillings are frustrated at the moment by the fact that few publishing houses will start a new periodical, even of a type more usual in England, unless they can be sure of a market. They cannot spare the paper for anything the least bit 'chancy' - and I imagine anything as weird and wonderful as science-fiction appears extremely 'chancy' to a publisher. Even if a house decides to publish, the convincing of the big retailers and distributing organizations, that their public want to read such a magazine, must be a fearful job. Friends Carnell and Gillings, I suffer for and with you. However, fans, lets wish Walter better luck next time, and get right behind Ted to make sure that NEW WORLDS No. 3 is a complete sell-out as soon as it appears on the stands.

I don't wish to suggest that you all buy two copies - but if you did, it would make a convincing statistical return, wouldn't it ?

As to what you do with the second copy - well - don't ask me - but you might find an American, Australian, or South African Fan who would like it.

I note Jonathan Cape have just re-published Samuel Butler's DREWTON - for those fans who have never read it, its a good buy at 5/-.

SHAVER.

The story Shaver
of unpleasant behavior,
by hordes of Grenlin
Sets me tremblin.

Note: My poetic license expires when I do. No comments, please.

After stopping and starting several times, I am reluctantly forced to finish - if I don't I'll have to buy more paper. If those gentlemen who are pleased to see me finish will kindly file out through the side door I'll do my best to avoid them in future.

So long, chums.