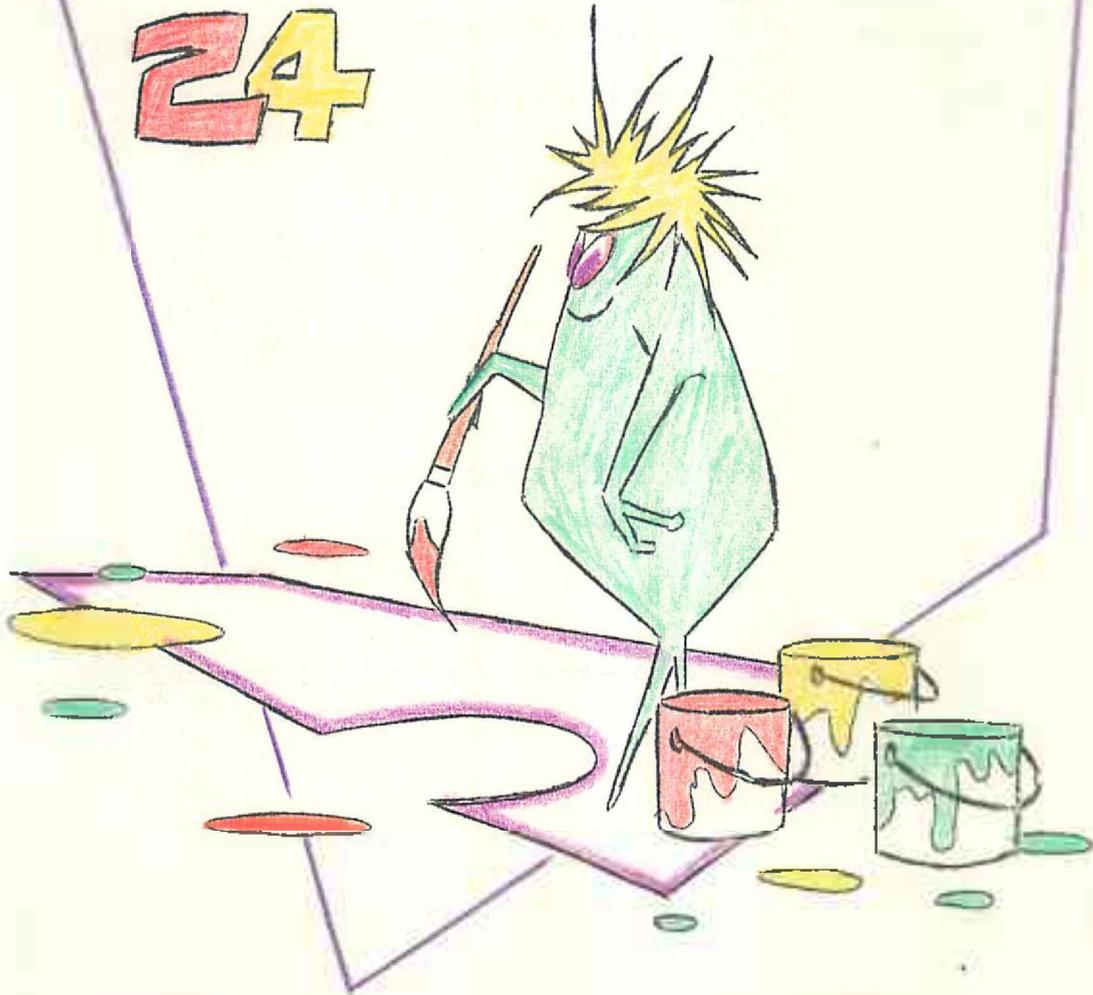


SCOTTISHE

24



SCOTTISHE

(24)

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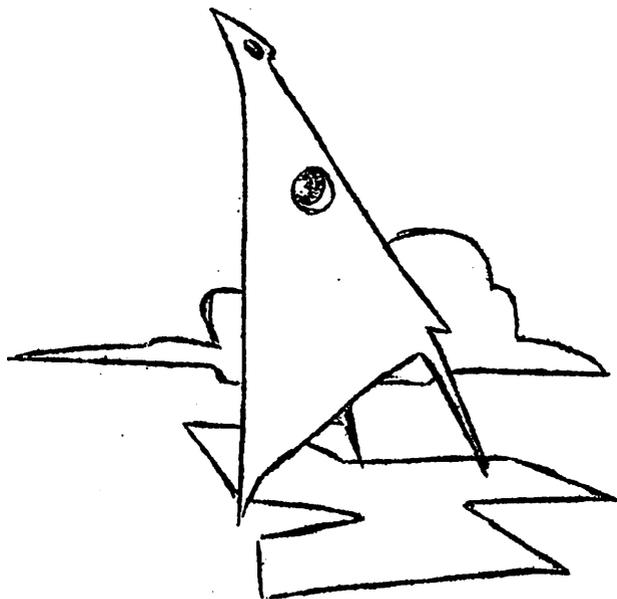
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CREDITS

ALL ART WORK BY THE INCOMPARABLE ATOM

Scottishe is available to non-Ompans for trade, letters of comment or 1/- cash.

pletherings



Being comments on the 27th Ompa mailing.

Offtrails: Welcome to our new officials I hope they succeed in their plan to inject some new life into Ompa.

Amble: Mercer: I have been reading your comments on the last mailing as through a microscope, puzzling out what it is you do that makes your comments so worthwhile. Even when they are on the subject matter only. I guess it is mainly that you get the impression over, to me at anyrate, that you have read each zine carefully. I laughed at your mathematical jokes, and probably got the whole idea wrong. Would you be using the word 'like' to the point where no one else will dare to do so? On purpose? Like - I would go for that! A nice diverting Ramble.

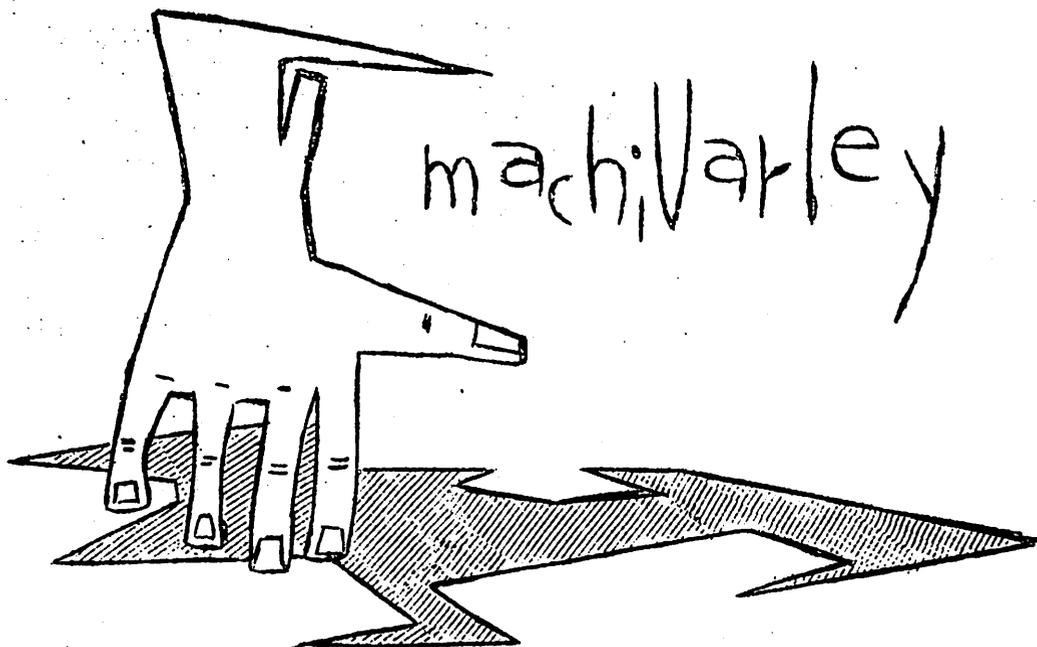
Burp:Bennett: Maybe Bill Donaho can get your meaning when you are writing about American fans. It fogged me completely - maybe you ought to make a few rough notes first. I hope you can get back to bigger Burps now that your Colonial Excursion is finished.

Erg:Jeeves: This is rather like getting a letter from you. Pleasant, but rather 'bitty' for a fanzine.

Parafanalia:Burns: A very nice cover. I think this is jolly good. The writing breezes along and you carry the reader with you. This tale of your travelling adventures is the type of thing which fits splendidly into an Apa.

Random:Buckmaster: Thank you for taking the subject of women and giving it so much attention. Bill Donaho will be gratified I am sure. When you say men will less and less tend to expect women to be 'stupid' - I hope you are right. I do not see much sign of it as yet.

Vert:Mayne: Your reviews have the merit of being off fandom's beaten track, and well written into the bargain. The rest is too loose-jointed and not at all helped by all that double-spacing.



FOUR WEEKS WITH FILTHY FANNY:

When I first realised that I was going to get married (this realisation came on the day I took possession of the house, prior to that the whole affair had a mythical quality, an "it's-not-really-me" air about it), I began to prepare myself for the event. I instilled into my reluctant mind the idea that nights out on the beer were about to end abruptly. I must become a practical, do-it-yourself handyman - even though I might be the most unpractical, unhandy specimen of the type. I must learn the finer arts of budgeting, for a month's salary must not only last a month, but also give a reserve for gas, electricity and water bills, and the rates. I could no longer selfishly dine off steak, egg and chips every night, there and then I determined to make the ultimate sacrifice and have steak, beans and chips occasionally. Oh yes, I was thorough in my mental grooming. I meant to meet the situation completely prepared, the complete, prepackaged, ready-to-serve husband. However there was one factor I hadn't considered, an unknown element which was to shatter and destroy the idyll which my mind had created. Not that I was to blame, for how can you prepare for something you don't know is there?

Filthy Fanny soon made herself known to us. In a cloud of flame and fire she came among us, satanic, sulphuric gases issued from her gaping maw burning and blackening ourselves and our meagre belongings. In short we made the acquaintance of our solid-fuel

boiler. Filthy Fanny is short and ugly, squatting like an obscene toad in the corner of the kitchen. Her simple duty is to heat water in exchange for a steady supply of boiler-nuts. She has the temperament of a prima-donna, the obstinacy of a mule and the waywardness of a spoilt child. Also she stinks.

My first clash with Fanny came early on when Frances decided that she would like the pleasure of a bath. Still oozing with olde-worlde gallantry I offered to light the boiler for her. Hours later I was still grovelling in front of Fanny trying to make the damned thing work. It was easy to start with. Various sections of Fanny came away with simplicity so that in no time at all she was cleaned out and had paper and wood laid neatly as a basis for her meal. Then came the trouble for the bars and the grill wouldn't go back. One would go in but the other wouldn't. I tried 'em logically and illogically, right way up, upside down, sideways and backwards. I tried brute force and the coal hammer, subtlety and an oiling can. I tried the casual handyman approach, I even tried banging my head on the floor.

Eventually I discovered the error. Should one grain of dust, one thickness of newspaper, one unseen bit of ash lie in the path of the lower bar, then nothing would force the top bar into place. After this discovery I thought I'd tamed Fanny, but she evidently took our battle as an aperitif for the jousting yet to come.

Getting Fanny going is easy. Allow maximum undershaft, open the damper wide and off she blasts without even the formality of a countdown. At full blast she consumes a shovel-full of coal every ten minutes. Leave her eleven minutes and you have to apply artificial respiration (chunks of wood soaked in paraffin, or in emergencies half a bottle of turpentine).

Trouble starts when you want a nice even burn to keep the water hot. Shut her down a fraction too much and five minutes later she's dead. Open the damper a fraction too much and she's burnt out in fifteen minutes. I reckon to spend at least 25 per cent of my time at home tending to Fanny. Only a few weeks ago I was strong and healthy, now I'm but a thin weakly shadow with blackened hands who's normal posture has become a craven crouch.

I have been hearing a lot recently about the billions of dollars that America is proposing to spend in order to combat Russia's lead in rocketry. I can tell 'em a foolproof, cheap method. If they buy up the thousands of Filthy Fannies which infest this England and export them to Russia as a free gift they would reduce each boisterous, vodka-swilling Stakhanovite into a hag-ridden, beaten fire-tender. There is only one snag to this from America's point of view. England, freed of her overwhelming burden, would immediately re-assume her position in world leadership. Still, no doubt we would be very sympathetic to an application to join the Commonwealth.

MachiaVarley.

Have you heard of IPSO? The newest idea in Apas..first subject is "Fantasy Apas". Nineteen contributors. 7/- From Ted Forsyth.



I REMEMBER ME.....

In August 1950, you may remember, I was contemplating a trip to England. One of the three friends I hoped to meet was Chuck Harris...but I didn't, for a reason that surprised and saddened me. On 24th August he wrote:

...I don't think you'll be seeing me when you come over. During the war I caught meningitis, whilst in the Navy, and it destroyed both auditory nerves. Hence I am completely deaf. Lip-reading is a very exacting science (harder than dianotics!) and I'm not very proficient. Most of the 'conversation' has to be written down for me, and it makes things rather difficult.

At the time I didn't know Chuck well enough to dare try override his protestations, so I just accepted his wishes. Even now I doubt if I should have tried to see him, because Chuck was then very sensitive about his disability. For years it was one of the best kept secrets in fandom, known only to me and then to a widening group of other personal friends.

Anyway, one evening that autumn I took the night boat to Liverpool. I described some of that trip in Void 23 so there's much I can leave out now, but I spent the afternoon in Eric Frank Russell's house, a fairly small suburban-type semi-detached villa in a village a few miles from Liverpool. He works on a big roll-top desk in the front room, the walls of which are decorated with ASF cover originals. There he sat for hours talking about his writing and experiences and the sf world in general. It was just as well he needed only an occasional question, because his larger-than-life personality had a wilting effect on me: in fact it was years before I could hold my own with EFR except on paper. He was a very hospitable host...actually it was EFR I was mainly thinking of for the character of Profan in The Enchanted Duplicator..... and his wife's cooking was wonderful but, determined not to presume, I left after tea and spent the night in Chester Youth Hostel.

Next morning I set out along the road to Nantwich to try my hand at hitch-hiking. I found I hated it. I felt like a beggar standing there pleading for lifts, and when I finally got one was relieved to find the driver was going all the way to Birmingham. To make myself feel better I took his name and address and promised to send him a pound of Irish butter....hard to believe now, isn't it, that rationing was in force five years after the war? (And yes, as a matter of fact, I did send it.) That finished me with hitch-hiking, so I got a bus from Birmingham to Leicester, where I stayed with Mike Tealby (see Void 23). Then, on the Thursday morning, I took another bus to London. I met Vince Clarke, accompanied by Ted Carnell, at a Lyons cafe and we went on to the White Horse. I don't remember much about that, but afterwards Ken and Vince invited me to stay at The Epicentre, and I do remember that. It may have changed my whole life, and it certainly changed my writing style. Hitherto everything I'd written had been either serious and solemn or terse and turgid, but within a few weeks of getting back, in an article for Pickle's Phantasmagoria called VENI VIDI VINCI (I came to see Vince) I was writing like this:

....They seem to stop drinking very early in England, so soon after ten evryone went home, their fanning finished for another week. I went with Vince Clarke and Ken Bulmer to the flat known for reasons lost in the mists of antiquity as 'The Epicentre'. It is near Holloway Gaol. In fact I believe it was Holloway Gaol, until the League for Fenal Reform got going. In the wilder parts of North London, where the hand of civilised man has never set foot, is this long grimy street, sinisterly deserted. On one side is a railway shunting yard. This is known as the goods siding. Opposite are Bulmer and Clarke. This is known as the bad siding. In front of their house a watchful Borough Council has installed a single warning lamp of a shade of green I had not seen since the boat docked in Liverpool. Fausing only to sign a certificate indemnifying the caretaker against any claims by your relatives you start the long climb to the flat. If your oxygen holds out, and you are not caught in the tangled mass of SFN deadlines which cover the stairs, you eventually arrive at the door. This must be opened carefully. Heaps of whitened bones tell of the fate of earlier travellers who were crushed by one of the periodic avalanches from the mountains of unanswered correspondance which give that peculiar curved appearance to the walls.

And so on. Keen students of literary style will notice that this is more or less the way I write now. Yes, I had spent a night in The Epicentre and I had become a fan.

Next morning Ken and Vince went to work and I was left alone in The Epicentre. In an earnest but rather foolish attempt to do something for my keen I tried to tidy up a bit, but after bringing to light a fantastic quantity of decaying foodstuff and corroded coins in the vicinity of the sink I had an agonising re-appraisal of the rest of the flat and gave up the unequal struggle. Every level surface was covered to the point of instability by fanzines,

prozines, letters, stencils, busts of Napoleon and model ships, their outlines blurred by a deep film of coal-dust which sifted continuously through the window I reflected I was no Hercules and went out to visit various cultural centres of the capital like the Folies Bergere, The London Casino and Charing Cross Road. (The Windmill was too dear) Actually it wasn't Hercules who finally cleaned up The Epicentre, but a slip of a girl called Pamela, whom I have ever since regarded with awe and admiration.

I can't remember anything about the rest of Friday and Saturday except that Ken Bulmer invented the steam engine, but I know what happened on Sunday because there is documentary evidence. Vince Clarke produced a oneshot called Inductive Reactance, in which he mentions that Ken and I had gone to Regents Park Zoo...where incidentally we arranged to collaborate on a story called The Gatecrashers. This oneshot was in reply to one Mike Tealby and I had put out in Leicester called Slander (Slaw + Wonder—Mike's title and brilliant I thought) which carried a semi-serious feud against the London Circle whose current inactivity was, as you'll have gathered from the extract above, a source of dissatisfaction among us provincials.

As I think I mentioned before, Ken Slater had set up a British fan organisation called the Science Fantasy Society, with an elaborate structure of regional gauleiters, and had then been posted to Germany. Most of the London fans who had been in on its conception, including Ted Tubb, had then left Ken and Vince to carry the baby. My own feeling was that they should either do something about the organisation or drop it, but instead the SFS dragged on a nominal existence from year to year, so that nobody ever knew where they were. Ken Slater made a last desperate effort to save it by arranging for one Egerton Sykes to take over the Secretaryship and sent him along to the White Horse. Unfortunately Mr Syke's only qualification for the job appeared to be that he was perpetually on the point of setting out to Mount Ararat to discover the remains of the Ark, and the London Circle did not particularly want to be organised. They explained to Mr Sykes, not too diplomatically by all accounts, that there was no money or publicity to be made out of organising fandom and he vanished from the scene never to be heard of again...except perhaps in Armenia. Disgruntled, Ken Slater washed his hands of the SFS and started a drive to popularise the N3F in England without very much more success.

The most unfortunate aspect of the SFS affair was that for years Vince Clarke's publishing activity was perforce confined to Science Fiction News, the official organ of the zombie organisation. Perforce, because he and others felt that if he had the time and money to publish anything, it had to be SFN. He did publish some fine SFNs, but I always thought that editing a mere newszine was a waste of his talents, and a job for which he was temperamentally unsuited. An incurable perfectionist as far as publishing was concerned (it was he I was thinking of for Perfexion in The Enchanted Duplicator), he kept holding up issues for hot news, and by the time he got the news the rest of it was cold, and by the time the stencils were re-cut (of course they had to be re-cut) the hot news was cold again, and so on. Looking back on it all, one can't help feeling that the SFS was an unmixed disaster for British fandom. It did no good, and it wasted Vince while we had him.

This is of course an objective appraisal. Subjectively, the SFS had its merits as far as I was concerned, in that it had provided a ready-made mailing list for the first issues of Slant, and Ken and Vince had contributed from its funds towards our costs...I think about £2 in all. Nor did I mean to cast any reflection upon Ken Slater. The SFS may have been a flop but it was no fault of his as could be seen from the success of his own Operation Fantast, which virtually created post-war British fandom.

It was mainly OF which had brought us into fandom and, while I was staying with Mike Tealby, then acting as its British agent, he got an enquiry from another unknown in Belfast. I made a note of his name and was able to his surprise to greet him by it when he called at my house some while after I got back home, having been given my name and address by the OF contact bureau. I excitedly reported the event to Ken and Vince:

The Belfast Triangle is no more. It is now a quadrilateral. We have discovered a fan who is..listen to this..A. Had keen to be active, publish fanzines and all that. B.Writes stories. 3(sic) Draws some of the best sf illos I have ever seen. Can you imagine! And lives not a quarter of a mile from my front door. He didn't know a thing about fandom, and you are the first English fans to hear about him. But by ghod you won't be the last.

Of course you recognise the description. Yes, it was Bob Shaw, and that historic meeting had taken place on the evening of 10th October 1950.

I was so impressed by Bob's elegant little drawings that I borrowed from star Slant author Cedric Walker the carbon of an MS he had sold to New Worlds and got Bob to do some illos for it, and sent them to Carnell as an example of his capabilities. I didn't really expect him to use those particular illos, after all he might already have allocated the story to someone else, but I hoped at least for some encouragement. Carnell replied a month later:

...I am not greatly enamoured with the enclosed. I presume that they are finished articles, and not roughs. If I tell you that my artists submit roughs which look like these, you will understand that the finished jobs really look good.

This from a man who published Alan Hunter. It was then that I had my first suspicion that Carnell might not be a very good editor.

One of the congenial people I'd met at the White Horse was Peter Phillips and, between exchanging shaggy dog stories, he'd asked me to look up a journalist friend of his in Ireland. I'd also got a story from him, to which Ken Bulmer had waived an option in my favour, about a post-atomic world in which a Geiger Counter had become a magic talisman. In November I was writing:

"I'm sorry I have'nt been able to find any trace of your friend over

Peter didn't reply till he was out of hospital. I think towards the end of February.

I've been out of hospital for four weeks. Should have had the sense to stay there until the dry-rot was eradicated in our new dwelling and the coal shortage was over. I've got me a room of my own to work in at last. When the builders replace the floor-boards and I have some means of heating other than a halfpint oil heater, which I place under my chair, maybe I'll get some work done. My backside keeps nicely warm but my fingers are freezing and my brain congealed. And I don't work with my backside, although a contrary opinion is probably held by the Piccadilly business lady who approached me one night when, in my capacity as a crime reporter, I was waiting in a dark nook to see a spiv about a story; and in reply to her charming solicitation (Looking for somewhere warm, ducks?) I said: "Sorry love, but I'm working myself" The look she gave me would have curdled the milk of the Ten Contrary Virgins; but I didn't realise her misapprehension until she was gone beyond recall and explanation.

And that seems to be the end of the Phillips/Willis correspondance. I was looking for another letter in which he interestingly deolored the "private jokes and curious excesses" of fandom, but it must have been one which has not survived. It's an unhappy thought that when they cured Peter'sneurosis they appear to have eliminated his creative talent as well, for he never as far as I know wrote anything up to the standars of SUCH STUFF AS DREAMS or even his little gem in Slant, published as COUNTER CHARM, which I think was later anthologised. However he is still to be met at British sf functions, as convivial as ever and strikingly like a BRE of George O.Smith.

Walter A. Willis.

(To be continued)

+++++++Q+++++++Q+++++++Q+++++++Q+++++++Q+++++++Q+++++++Q+++++++Q+++++++Q

Editor's Note: On the previous page I made a mistake, nor did I notice it till the end of the stencil. I have not quoted Walt's letter in the narrowed margins which I have used in quoting all the other letters. For this, I do apologise to both Walt and the readers.

THE WILLIS FUND

Support this worthwhile cause

American donations to Larry Shaw, 16 Grant Place Staten Island New York NY
British Agent: Arthur Thomson, 17 Brockhamd House Brockham' Drive. London SW2
Special notice Arthur has promised that all donations sent to him from 5 shillings to one pound will receive a black and white Atomillo.
All donations that he receives over one pound will get a coloured Atomillo.

letters

Boyd Raeburn,
89, Maxome Ave.,
Willowdale.
Ontario, Canada.

"I enjoyed Scottishe and liked all the items in more or less degree - except for Ompa comments, which of course didn't mean much to me. But then, Dick Ellington does send me his Ompa zine, and I do get more out of his comments, for example, than I did from yours. I am being so Brutally Frank because I have a point to make. You speak of your disenchantment with Ompa, and can it be that your comments reflect this disenchantment? You are "commenting" but that is all. No grabbing hold of subjects and tearing off on tangents and like that. In effect Scottishe is now a genzine, and maybe you will find more satisfaction with it that way... Toronto fandom is mildly agog that a Mysterious Woman claiming to be Ella Parker drifted through here last Sunday without managing to contact anybody (she left a card at the Coexistence Candy Store where Les was not at the time) and we don't know if she is still here or what. Idiot fans! Why do you think The Times is a "silly paper"? I thought the Times was looked upon as goshwow as The Guardian."

xxx You are right in thinking that my comments are not as good as Dick's very good efforts. However the last two Ompa items from Dick have consisted of only comments. It is like getting a long lovely letter and I enjoy them very much, but personally - I don't call them Ompazines. Your 'Ella' must be an imposter, for we still have 'our' Ella. I am absolutely positive that there are not two of them. The Times advertise thus - "Top People Take The Times". Now do you believe me when I say it is a silly paper? xxx

Joe Patrizio
11, Ferndale Rd.,
London. S^w4

"I enjoyed your tirade against Ompa, but you are probably batting your head against a brick wall. The whole question of mailing comments seems to be an unanswerable one. You want people to say something about Scot, so fair enough, I don't blame you, but just how much do you want? Is it sufficient for somebody to write a page on the Willis article, or do you want them to say how wonderfully produced the mag was. The second one is bound to be boring to the other members even tho' you will lap it up, whereas the first will be of interest to all the members. My own view is that you shouldn't include mailing comments just because it has always been the thing to do. They should only be included if you have something to say, and an ideal length would be about twice the length that you had for your comments in this issue. I haven't fully gathered together all my thoughts on this subject, but I will do so in the near future and you will see the results in the first IPSO mailing."

xxx To write good mailing comments which are interesting to the reader and rewarding to the editor at the same time is a very difficult thing to do. It takes time and effort, and that is the reason we see so few of them. Ipsos is a new Apa, its first mailing takes as its subject "Fantasy Apas". Copies will be on sale. Watch for announcements.

Betty Kujawa, "Hoo did I run into the Scots all over the place on our
2819, Caroline St., southern vacation! In Puerto Rico and Palm Beach and all
South Bend 14 over the joint. My they sure do get around. Think I'll
Indiana. USA. abstain from this thing on women who don't like other
women--if I can! Cause, dammit, I don't like women...and in the way and for the
same reasons Juanita gives..too many round me in mundane life are shallow bores
and these are college and university graduates that have let themselves go to
seed. On the other hand these same femmes husbands are almost to a man still
hip and alive and 'with it' as far as being aware there is a big world out
there..and like that. If the gals refuse even to try to keep awake and aware
why should I waste time in their company or give excuses for their laziness
(and it is laziness..they all have the money and where-with-all and servants so
the excuse here in suburbia-So.Bend is not one of finances or of time-consuming
-child-care--they have PLENTY of time for golf and bridge parties). Sure, if
that is their desire to fritter their life away in that pusuit--then let them
--but don't expect ME to say I like them or that I ever want to spend any time
in their shallow company--they can go their way and I'll go mine. But 'like
women'? I don't..not the ones I am exposed to day in and day out!"
xxxBetty, have you any idea why these women act in this lazy way? And these
hip husbands, what do they think of it all? I don't blame you avoiding bores,
you ought to see the long-suffering expression on my face as I sit at the
Sister's table, every day at lunch time. I quoted that bit about the Scots,
because the current joke in London fandom is -- that the Scots are TAKING OVER

Roy Tackett, "Your complaints re comments on SCOTTISHE are, I think
Iwakuni. universal among faneds. I received a letter from George
Japan. Willick a few days ago in which he said he was beginning
to treasure letters of comment more than articles since they were becoming
rare. I have the same trouble with DYNATRON. I draw a goodly amount of Locs
but most is comment on the subject material. Little, if any in the way of
suggestions on improvement or comments on the makeup of the zine itself. Was
quite pleased with Varley's article. His comments on paperbacks proved to be
of real interest. I wonder how our American paperbacks compare in the matter
of cost breakdown. 10^d doesn't seem too large a profit for the dealer,
particularly when both wholesaler and retailer are included..And Varley is
right, of course, in that the paperback has been the salvation of some of the
booksellers. I know of a couple of bookshops in San Francisco that were just
struggling along until they switched to paperbacks and are now thriving. DAW
comments that fanzines aren't sent to the pros anymore and that we apparently
no longer cling to the pros for support. I suppose the reason for that is that
we don't get any support from the prozines anymore. The fan columns have been
chopped from the remaining magazines, actually the big three never did cater to
them. There is no reason existing at the present time for us to send fmz to
the prozines. Should any of the editors announce a fan column said editor would
find himself buried under the current output of the fan press. Of your
BLETHERINGS and NATTERINGS I will comment only that I preferred the Blotherings"
xxxThe last sentence that I quote from your letter, is the type of comment
that I have been grumbling about. I have far more than my fair share of
curiosity, so here I sit frazzling to know - why you didn't like Natterings! I
do not care how harsh the criticism, I would rather know than wonder.xxx

Jill Adams, "I don't know very much about the subject of nursing but I
54, Cobden Ave., remember in our last few months at school, some of the girls
Bitterne Park. who had decided on nursing gave up the idea. Someone had
Southampton. told them about the rules hospitals make concerning what
the nurses could and couldn't do in their time off and it put them right off.
One girl said something to the effect that, though they trusted you with the
health and lives of others on duty, they couldn't trust you off duty with your
own. If this state of affairs still lasts, then, with the poor pay I'm not
surprised they cannot get nurses...I like the idea of Sid keening over his
chilblains. I can just picture him, huddled in an old rocking chair, shawl
round his shoulders, rocking back and forth wailing softly to himself and the
firelight flickering on the rude cottage walls..John has one or two things to
say so I'll hand over to him...I'm so mad I could spit! John said he would
write but now he won't. He says he'll send a separate letter, but you'll be
dead lucky if you ever get it. Damn men!"
xxxWave this under John's nose and see what happens..Nurses..ah yes there were
all sorts of rules we had to abide by, in by 10pm was the most strictly
enforcedxxx

Donald A. Wollheim ".You know in this country nobody ever uses the term
66-17 Clyde St., Sister except for Catholic nuns. A nurse is a nurse...no
Forest Hills.74 other title. I also found your accounts interesting
New York. USA because I have some familiarity with the medical life, being
the son of a doctor. And for another reason too: there's a form of popular
literature called "nurse novels". You know: a soppy sort of girls' novel about
a nurse who falls in love with some young doctor who is too dedicated to his
work to notice poor little she until somehow or other he learns of her sacrifice
and devotion by the end of the book. This kind of treacle has been around for
years, but it has finally found its way into the American paperback book market.
..So to add to my daily editorial schizophrenia, comes this kind of thing. Ugh.
And again Ugh.xxxI echo that ugh. Sometimes whilst sitting in the hairdresser
salon I have picked up a woman's mag and found one of these things..there ought
to be a law! Owing to the popularity of the tv series on "Emergency Ward" I
notice a great many 'nurse novels' crawling about the bookshops tooxxx

Robert Coulson "I assume that others will by now have told you that a folk
Route 3 song is a verse concerning fan activities set to the tune
Wabash of a folk song. I don't know who coined the term; quite
Indiana possibly Bruce Pelz. If you want long mailing comments you
USA should get into FAPA. Pages and pages of the things. (For
example, you're asking for more and better comments, yet in this issue you only
have 3 pages of your own. Whereas I'm not particularly concerned about them
one way or another and I regularly write 8 to 12 pages of them for Vandy).
xxxI do not particularly faunch for long mailing comments, just good ones. My
three pages, will be three more than the majority of Omnia members will produce.
In this and the last issue I quite lost heart and enthusiasm over them and I
know it shows. Next time I mean to try something different.xxx

Rick Sneary
2962 Santa Ana St.,
South Gate
California

USA
All the glamour of helping the sick and doing good.. It was sort of like being a Saint without the restrictions. Nowadays with the price of everything so high; the demand being greater than the supply; and the need and trend towards specialization; there seems to be few of the old time nurses or G.P.'s. Doctors here, looking personal respect as they gain in wealth. Some will not make house calls, and you can hardly find one that will come out at night. The higher prices plus less personal contact is going to drive this country into some form of Socialized medicine, no matter what the AMA does..I enjoy Walt's rummaging through his files. Walt is one of the few fans I know, beside myself that has not only kept files of his letters, but carbon copies of his replies. I am rather relieved to see that Walt-- who I have never seen do anything wrong --finds things to regret in his ten year old mail. This has happen to me, when I've looked back--and is an exact reason why other fans should not keep copies of their letters. The proof in your own type-face that you were a self-centred snob, is very hard for a self-centred snob to take. Another fan has suggested that it is too bad that we can't all spend our first five years in fandom under another name. After five years "A" could drop out and "B" could be born as a new fan... But as why female fans do not care for other women in general, I would like to make a point. The interest in science fiction and fandom seems to be mainly a masculine one.(At LASFAS, the ratio is better than 5 to 1)..Thus, I suggest that those women who do find sf and fandom interesting tend to have a mind, in part, more like man than the average woman. That they thus have less than average in common with other women, and more in common with men. I do not suggest that women in fandom are more masculine--far from it. Willis and I have long agreed that there are more pretty girls and women in fandom than you would find in any average sampling of the population. I don't know what it is that causes men to be interested in sf, but I can say that this interest is about the only difference I have noted between sf females and those not interest in the subject.(I hope I have made my point clear without calling any wrath down on my head I mean well)xxx How could we be offended when you have just called us all pretty? Can't you just hear us purring?

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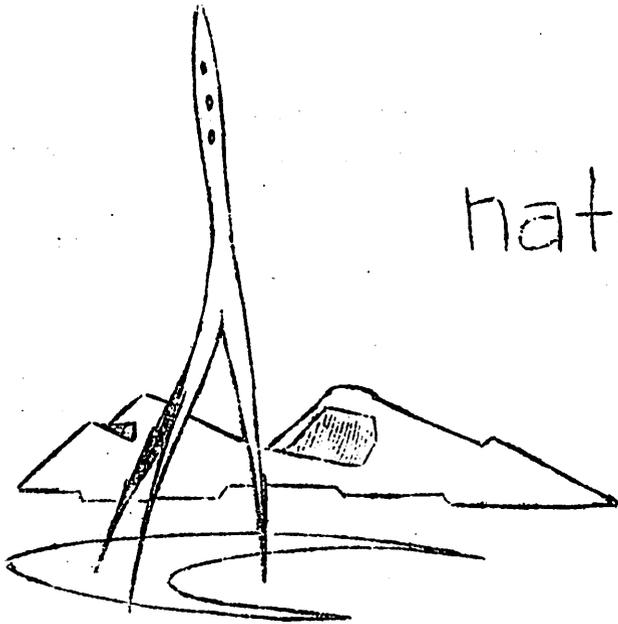
USA
"Femazine is next on the pile. I remember that I was particularly impressed by the ease with which so many female fans expressed themselves in this letter section despite their near or total failure to appear in fanzines with articles. Betty Kujawa turns up in scores of fanzines but never ventures to expand her remarks the slight degree necessary to put title to them and call them a contribution to the fanzine. Sheila Ashworth can write very nearly as well as Mal. And so on... I hope that Warblings goes on and on, preferably at greater length as long as your fingertips hold out. I don't remember any fan who has documented his activities in the field with such wonderful thoroughness..I'm probably wrong, but my impression of women is that most of them are never really comfortable or fully confiding except when they are around women. I've seen many women who were much livelier and showed more

personality around comparatively strange females than around their husbands or brothers. xxx Perhaps this remark will inspire Betty to write some articles. In which case, I hope she sends them to Scot! That is true about women being more confiding to other women, I think. Often, of course, it is merely a way of letting off steam about their husband. .xxx

I also received a long letter from Dick Schultz, but it is so disjointed I really cannot quote from it here. I appreciate your thought Dick, but you would tax a better editor than I. I also received a letter of criticism from Bill Danner which has been highly valuable to me. It mainly concerned grammar, and punctuation. Donald Franson also pointed out my error in the use of it's and its. Bill said I was "a comma-splitter from way back". I was hugely pleased to receive these letters. At this abode, constructive criticism is always welcome. Goodness knows how many years I have been using my it's wrongly, but until Bill's letter arrived I was simply not aware of it. Another long letter came from Don Geldart who says "The only complaint that I have against Natterings as far as the writing goes, is that it doesn't flow along as I think it should. By this I mean that, although it is all about the same subject, it seems to be chopped up into a lot of little pieces. The impression that I got when reading was that it was jerky". Thanks Don, I will watch that. Another long, delightful and much appreciated letter has just arrived in, fortunately still in time to be included in this issue...

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"Scottishe 23: A thoroughly delightful issue, despite your rather stern criticism of OMPA..but I was shocked to learn that you swear at reviews of Scottishe!.. Warblings is one of the best columns going, of course, but I'm just a little sorry to see Walt going into all this reminiscing: it indicates our Walt is growing old, I fear; and besides, it shows that in some way he is marking time, summing up the past, instead of planning projects for the future. The new Willis fund may reverse the trend, but in the meanwhile "I Remember Me" is--I hope he will forgive the word-- charming. I look forward to more instalments--and hope he'll write enough of them to make a complete autobiography of his life in fandom...The program--pardon me, programme--you mention where you can choose the record you'd most like to smash sounds soul-satisfying. Can you write in and suggest that they smash all their records and then set fire to the studios? I sometimes wish that would happen to some of the stations hearabouts. One of my favorite FM radio stations is currently broadcasting propaganda by the AMA(American Medical Association) against the King Bill before congress, which the AMA says would "socialize" (a dirty word) medicine. These plugs are so deceitful and misleading that you can't listen to them -- they set my blood a-boil and (as you know) that's bad for the health and who'd want to consult a physician who believed in such propoganda as the AMA sponsors?...Does your address (Courage House) have any personal significance?" xxxCourage House is a large house which was gifted to the Royal Eye Hospital by a Mr Courage for use as a Nurses Home. It can accommodate 14, and has a very pleasant garden. Mr Courage owns a large brewery which produces Courage Beer.... Our medical association over here also issued alarming warnings of what would happen if medicine was nationalised. At the risk of sounding cynical I feel that the bill went through because most of the hospitals were bankrupt. xxx



natterings

Many things start a girl off in a nursing career: not all of them admirable. Some girls start with a true sense of vocation, some with a vain notion (these last but a short time), and others get there they know not how or why. Ask them and you will get the vaguest of replies. So you will understand that I can write honestly only of myself. My Mother had wanted very much to be a nurse, but was frustrated in her design by my Grandmother. That I should have a profession - and not merely a 'job' - was my Mother's aim. I fell in gladly with her plan that I should become a nurse. Chiefly, I must confess, because I thought it would be grand to be away from home and her eagle eye. Had anyone asked me what I wanted to be - I should have said a writer. At 17 my head was filled with the wonderful books I would write. Meantime I was content to get along as best as may be in the mundane world. It never occurred to me to question that I would have to work for my living. I knew from my earliest days that money had to be doled out carefully: I was born and brought up in Dundee during the Depression.

So when I set off for Forfar I was fairly carefree; not heartbroken at leaving home, nor unduly apprehensive of my new situation. Of course the first thing I learnt to appreciate was the home I had left. Among other girls I could compare our backgrounds and count up how lucky I was in many ways. Seems to me now, that all adolescents ought to be pushed out into the world to learn this lesson. Enough of myself - let me tell you some more about the characters in my first hospital.

Apart from the Matron, the other person who affected us most was the "Chief" - Dr Sinclair. He was a dear man; tall and fat and always buzzing around in his small car, looking harassed. He was the County Officer for Health in Forfarshire, and therefore in charge of all the hospitals under County authority. He was good to his nurses and thanks to his generosity we had many treats. Often when he had to go to neighbouring

like Brechin or Montrose, he would call and ask Matron if there were any nurses off duty who would like a run in his car. Matron would dash into the Home, and finding no one off duty would then plunge into a ward. "Quick" she would say, "You, you, and you, go with Doctor!" How lovely on days when we saw her bustling in, and were already cringing at the expected cry of "To the Smallpox!", to be suddenly wafted on our way to the busy shopping centre of Montrose. Doctor would set us down there; give us money for tea, and tell us to meet him in two hours. Two shillings and sixpence he would give us; and that was enough for tea for three of us, and some shining piece of worthlessness bought as we wandered round Woolworths. This was always a wonderful highlight in our days, a bonus, pie in the sky brought down to the platter.

Sister Knox was one of those queer figures of whom, I trust, the profession sees less nowadays. She was tall and bony and rustled with starch. She never looked you in the eye but always gazed about two inches above your head. Herbent was religious and she presented the two other junior nurses and myself with notebooks; into which each Monday we solemnly copied the Bible text which she gave out. She was a fully trained nurse - the first I had met, and I sincerely hoped they would not all be like that! She gave us lectures in elementary matters such as personal hygiene, general care of the patient, the correct method for giving medicines.

We three juniors were of an age, but one, Macgillvary, had received the best education. The other girl, Marshall, and I had been given sundry admonitions on how to try to keep up with her. This I found challenging. When we had an examination I was delighted to beat the other two hollow. As neither the Matron or Sister Knox had expected this they surveyed me with mistrustful surmise. This was the first time Authority looked at me in this way, but it was not to be the last.

The other Sister, whose name I cannot recall, left to become married shortly after my arrival. She had trained for her Fever Certificate only, as had Matron. Sister Knox was in possession of the General Nursing Certificate which gave her the title of State Registered Nurse. The General Certificate required four years in a Teaching Hospital approved by the Nursing Council. The Fever Certificate on its own could allow a post of authority only in a Fever Hospital. This Sister was a kindly woman; it had made an easy start to my career to work in her ward. She could be stern, she insisted on work well done but, blessed woman, she never used the weapon of sarcasm. How often in the years to come when I writhed under this weapon was I to long for her homely ward!

To start in a children's ward is ideal, for there is nothing that comes more natural to a girl than looking after them. Also, after you have 'potted' a whole ward of children for weeks on end, it comes as no great shock to graduate to bedpans for adults. To me at that age, the human body was a thing to wash and rub with spirit and make comfortable in its sickness. I never went through the agonising shyness that afflicts some nurses. Bodies were bodies; something to be nursed, not sniggered at. Even then I had little patience with prudes, though I could understand and also sympathise with genuine shyness. There is modesty and false modesty, and the second is something I loathe!

At the hospital gates stood a lodge in which lived John Baxter and his wife. John was known officially as the Lodge Keeper. He was, in fact a combined porter, ambulance driver, stoker, handyman and gardener! A slow-moving, slow-talking man, stockily built and brandishing a neat little moustache; he ran the hospital services with effortless efficiency whilst keeping a fatherly eye upon the young nurses.

My most vivid recollection of John was the first time I was sent out with the ambulance to collect a Scarlet Fever patient. We junior nurses had all looked forward to this day with some trepidation. The older nurses boasted how they could 'smell' Scarlet Fever as soon as they entered the house. We listened with awe.

We were well lectured on what to do; the equipment that we must take with us (blankets wrapped round a filled hot water bottle, sickness bowl, spatula, thermometer, watch), the list of articles that the patients must bring with them (towel, toothbrush, slippers, comb) and we had to learn the routine by heart. First to fill in the form, name age etc., take the temperature, pulse and respiration, examine the throat, write out an account of any rash, wrap the patient warmly for the journey. It all sounded a most alarming procedure to be enacted before a group of no doubt critical relations -- or so I thought.

When the great day came and I was told to go and collect a small girl, I rushed to get ready with a rapidly beating heart. I sat perched tensely on the front seat of the ambulance beside John, as we rolled out the hospital gates, hoping that I looked ten years older than I felt. After we had passed through the streets of Forfar, with me trying not to look as if I noticed the curious gaze of the passers by, we entered the countryside of Forfarshire. I was able then to relax, admire the scenery and listen to John's slow drawl. As we neared the patient's home, he said, "Noo, lass, have ye got a' ye need?" and then, to my horror, I realised I had forgotten the thermometer. I exclaimed despairingly - how could I ever face Sister Knox to tell her this? I added to John that I wished I was dead! From his pocket he calmly pulled out a thermometer - "There lass" he said, "you young 'uns aye forget something the first time, and its by and ordinary that." I could have hugged him.

The house was one in a row surrounded by the fields of a large farm where the tenants were employed. They had all come out to watch my descent from the ambulance. "Here's the nurse", one cried, and oh how I wished I were a trained one! Inside the house I found the family: the Father dumb, the Mother tearful, the other children scared and excited. The patient, a small girl of seven, was covered in an unmistakable rash. I very carefully carried out all my instructions, answered the Mother's anxious questions about visiting hours and told her how she would be able to see her daughter through the window only. After the child was wrapped up I called for John to carry her out, and marched out in great relief behind him.

The lesson I learnt that day was that patients and their relatives see the uniform, they never really see you. When people are ill, or have a loved one ill, they welcome you. They do not care how trained you are, providing you are calm and kind.

Now I know that in actual fact what I had to do that day was of little importance. The disease had already been diagnosed. Had I fainted dead away, John would have been able to do it all, revive me, and drive us both back home. Still, for that once I arrived back at the hospital with my patient, pleased as Punch, and as proud as any fisherman bringing home his first salmon.

to be continued.

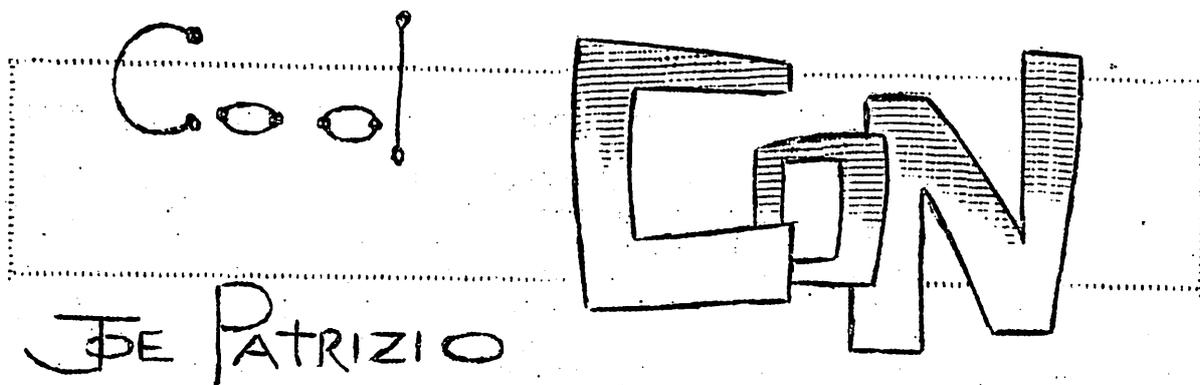
Book Reviews.

Agent of Vega: by James Schmitz. Gnome Press. 3 dollars.

This book is made up of four stories written about the Agents of the Vegan Confederacy; and the author tells them with a wealth of vision and imagination, the like of which we never see nowadays. To be sure he uses faster-than-light spaceships, and telepathy as casually as I use my watch, and Mr Amis has told us that these things are impossible. Schmitz assumes a technology far beyond our wildest dreams, and I thoroughly approve, that is what I want in my science fiction! Anyway, these scientific advances are used in the most matter of fact way, there are no long-winded explanations of how they came about, but the wonder of them shines through.

The adventures of the Agents are told against this very wonderfully thought out background. Each absorbs the attention, the Agents are all such unique individuals. Illif - "a small, wiry man with rather cold yellow eyes., unrestricted utility; try not to irritate". Thus his description in the mental file of the Third Co-ordinator. The Co-ordinator who hands out the orders to the Agents is never described much, but from his speech you can see him. Coaxing, soothing, cajoling his individualistic flock. Pagadan, a member of the Lannai race and the second Agent we meet remains one of the most unforgettable characters I have ever met in SF. "the huge silvery eyes with their squared black irises, which widened or narrowed flickeringly with every change of mood or shift of light". Then there is Hallerock, the Trainee Agent, too unsure of his own ability, till nudged into responsibility by Pagadan.

My favourite is called "The Truth About Cushgar". In this you glimpse the whole range of the Agents as they drop everything to rush to help Agent Zamm. Only it leaves me rather frustrated - all these Agents I want to know more about! Why did Schmitz never continue this series? Zamm became a Peripheral Agent after the abduction of her son and husband. Known and loved by all the other Zone Agents, when the day comes that she finds her family and heads for the trouble spot where they are, the Agents all rush after to help her. They slam through and find they have taken over the planet. One of the Agents I faunch to know more about is described only in this short passage..."Something put-putted suddenly by overhead. Enough of its seared and molten exterior remained to indicate that at some earlier stage of its career it might have been a fat, amiable-looking freighter. But there was nothing amiable about its appearance now! It looked like a wreck that had rolled for a century in the fires of hell, and put in another decade or two sunk deep in an acid sea. It looked, in fact, exactly as a ship might expect to look whose pilot had a weakness for withholding his fire till he was well within point-blank range. It passed over Zamm's head, bobbed up and down



At 6.30 on Friday morning, Ted Forsyth, Bruce Burn and myself set out for the Lexicon. Bruce had managed to hire a nine seater van for the trip, and as it turned out it was just as well that we managed to get one as big as that. Apart from personal stuff the three of us took along a load of synthetic armour for use at the fancy dress party. This took up quite a bit of room, and as we still had to pick up the rest of the London crew, a fervent prayer went up from the Ferndale trinity. All to no avail. We did collect Pat Keraney, with only a minor difficulty, Bruce had to drag him out of the bath, ignoring the screams of protest that we were not due for another hour yet. The Parker Pen was the next stop and, of course Ella had only just got up, and was busy ramming breakfast down her guest's throats. While loading operations commenced, any casual observer would have thought that we were going to relieve Gloucester not just attend a convention there. The final blow was struck when Ella, after seeing us load three large hold-alls, said, "Well, now that you've got the food on, you can help me put my own stuff away". Luckily Roy Sheppard, a BSFA member, turned up and offered to help. Thanking him very profusely, we hastily threw some cases into his car, pushed Ella in after them, and roared away into the west before Ella could regain here sense. to complain about the set-up.

In the van, in addition to those already mentioned were, Ethel Lindsay (SFCoL Chairman), Jim Groves (SFCoL Hon. Sec.) and Don Geldart, the club's tame army sergeant, who put in a power of work on the SFCoL display table. It would be a waste of time to say much about the journey as it was uneventful, although surprisingly speedy and pleasant in spite of the cramped conditions. One ironical note though...after travelling the 105 miles with little in the way of traffic problems, and remember this was Good Friday notorious for hold-ups, we got stuck just two hundred yards from the hotel door, and were held up for half an hour.

We finally booked into the New County Hotel. Being the first to arrive we proceeded to give the staff a taste of what was to come by hauling in a great quantity of odds and ends, and dragging them into one room, out again, along the corridor, into another room, with a quick dash down to the bar every now and then. Everything stowed, Ted and I went to find Bruce, Room 18 was where we had tucked him away, so that is where we headed for. Arriving I banged loudly on the door. What looked suspiciously like a half dressed female stuck head and shoulders round the door. In a heartfelt screech she said, "Am I not to have any peace today?" I stood there with my mouth open, about the only time at the con I was to be speechless. This wasn't the hirsute New Zealander we all knew so well. No! by God it wasn't. I recovered enough to

mumble an apology, and hastily dispersed from the scene, dragging Ted, still in a state of shock, behind me.

Meandering aimlessly we ran into Jim Groves, who it seemed had been given one room only to have it snatched away from him. Another room had been assigned, and he had just got all his luggage in when Brian Alldis arrived. It seemed that the hotel had fouled up the bookings and there was no room for Brian. Jim's services were immediately offered (by Ethel Lindsay) and Jim found himself homeless again. Ted and I helped Jim remove his cases. Brian was very apologetic about all this, and kept saying how sorry he was, as he joyfully threw Jim's luggage out into the corridor. They did find Jim a room in the end..it was Audrey Eversfields'. However Jim was bitterly disappointed when he found out that they wouldn't let him stay after Audrey arrived the following day.

Down at the bar we found almost all London fandom trying to explain fandom to Geoff Doherty, a new BSFA member. He seemed pretty impressed and surprised that such a group existed, and was asking a lot of pertinent questions, the answers to which he was to put to a good use later. We all adjourned to a Chinese restaurant for food, very good it was too. Much refreshed we made our way back to start our hardworking part of the convention. This was the setting up of the SFCoL table. Don Geldart had done most of the hard work already by making posters, models and planning a suitable layout. Ted and I helped with actually putting it together, while Bruce was busy at the Ompa table, and Jim at the BSFA table. The main item on our table were models of a rocket, with launching rig, personnel and transport. The smaller ship, and space station were suspended in a frame against a black background, which was very effective. Whilst Don was busy setting these up I was stringing together letters, which Don had cut out, to form the name of our club. These spanned across about ten feet and when they were up we were all satisfied that anybody who came into the hall would at least know who we were.

It was now time to start our advertising campaign. This year the club made an all out drive to sell the Combozine, which had been especially produced for the occasion. We had adverts which were parodies of current mundane ads such as 'Top people read the Combozine'.. "Unzip a Combozine" and "You're never alone with the SFCoL Combozine". Don had printed over a hundred cards with the inscription 'Get the SFCoL Combozine Now' and these were liberally sprinkled round the hall, into people's pockets, and many other likely and unlikely places. Anyone looking at someone else's display was likely to be confronted with one of the cards. Our greatest success was with Norman Shorrock who after removing cards from the Liverpool stand about a dozen times without ever seeing anybody put one there, came and begged to be allowed to buy a copy. Whereupon we presented him with a free copy as he was an honorary member. Ted proved just how unbiased we were by writing on Norman's little card 'We also recommend Bastion', a little gesture that left Norman obviously unmoved.

We set off with Ron Bennett to find something to eat, and just as we were about to order, in walked Dave Kyle. Those who have met Dave will know what sort of a sense of humour he has..I think 'sharp' is the word. Bennet is no slouch in the art of wise-cracking either. By unvoiced mutual consent Dave and Ron started a bait-the-waitress campaign, as a substitute, I suppose, for the lack of a floor show. Unfortunately they had

picked on the wrong person, and soon they were hard put to it to keep up with her, much less get the better of her in high-powered cross-talk. I was all for hurrying back to catch the official opening, but Ron kept on saying that never in the history of the world had a con started on time. Nevertheless I made my way to the con hall, where in spite of Ron's assurances that no con had ever started on time, this one had.

When I got into the con hotel Eric Jones was introducing interesting con attendees. He then said as there was nobody else to introduce he would get on with the programme. Dead on cue the door opened and Eric added "Except for our Guest of Honour, Kingsley Amis". A really wonderful entrance, which couldn't have been improved upon even with rehearsal. Originally the programme was to start with three films, which the committee thought would help non-fans get into the mood of things quicker. Unfortunately the projectionist went somewhat berserk and kept on showing an almost unending stream of pretty poor films, except for a good one, which no one understood. Hours later, or so it seemed, the lights went up, and everyone heaved a sigh of relief, and made preparations to enjoy themselves.

Things started quietly for me, in the lounge talking with Ron and Norman Shorrocks, we were joined by Ian McAulay, carrying the inevitable glass of lager. Norman and Ron had a duel with stamp tweezers, but other than this everybody seemed content to gather their energies in readiness for the long night ahead. We went to a party in Peter Mabey's room, about ten others were already there. All pretty quiet, as they were listening to Paddy Roberts on tape. Dave Hale was on the bed, with about 6 others, trying to seduce Alan Rispin's girl, Dianne, who was dropping hints (like kicking him in the ribs) that she wasn't too keen on the idea. Alan was lying there with a silly grin on his face, and a hat of the type worn by men who want to get ahead, on the back of his head.

I sat next to Brian Jordan, who offered an almost empty bottle of Brandy. I, of course, refused and delivered my speech on the evils of alcohol. I don't like Brandy. I was then shown a glass with a $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of liquid, and told "That's all the Drambuie there is". Not liking this either, I poured it on Dave Hales' head. I got the impression he was not too keen on the stuff either. Things seemed to go with a swing after this, everybody indulging in high quality fan-talk. I then took an intense dislike to Alan's hat. I grabbed it, dropped it on the floor and stood on it. Soon there was a queue of people waiting to stand on Alan's hat, much to his complete disinterest. The idea grew that it would be a good thing to auction it for TAFF. Ron immediately took this up and called for bids. These were a bit slow in coming, and 1/- was the highest anybody was prepared to go for the grotesque. Ron was trying everything in the book to get the bidding up, he turned to me and said, "I will even accept postal bids". Reaching for the nearest typewriter I hurriedly typed a note - to say I had no intention of bidding. Ron was a bit peeved at the wasted time. Then came his most brilliant idea, group bids. The hat was passed round and everybody contributed to the total, even Alan, we found that TAFF was richer by 12/-! Now came the tricky part, who was to get the hat? Dianne made some silly suggestion about giving it back to Alan, but was shouted down, when I made the obvious suggestion that we each have a piece. Scissors appeared from nowhere, and Ron divided it up. I managed to snatch the hat band

which hangs proudly on the wall before me as I write. Even Alan got a bit..

It was rather noisy by now, and made noisier by a banging on the door. It was the harbinger of our first complaint. One of the permanent guests had seemingly had enough of the racket, and started laying down the law about the right to get some sleep etc. Mumbling curses quietly under our breath, we departed for more sociable parts. Ella decided to get some sleep, as did Ted and some others, even though it was only 1.30 am, but the rest of us did not go for that. As we wandered down the corridor, we bumped into Norman Shorrocks, who waved a bottle of something at us and said there was a party in his room.

There were quite a few people there, most of the Liverpool Group, Ruth and Dave Kyle, and lots more too blurred to be seen properly. Dave was preparing to show the film he had taken of the London con of the year before. Dave and Norman did a great job of showing them under conditions far from ideal, the room was small and there was no screen. Everyone enjoyed them and were disappointed when they finished. Then Ina decided that she wasn't as comfortable as she might be, and that she would feel better in slacks. The assembled male faction could see no reason for her not changing into them, and made their findings clear to Ina. Accepting the roars as a challenge, Ina said "Oh, so you think I can't", and jumping up on the bed which was holding about ten of us, proceeded to do so, by the simple expedient of pulling them up under her skirt. Eddie Jones and Phil Rogers led the howls of protest.

The room was pretty crowded by now, Ina must have thought the air needed purifying or something, because she started to spray people with scent. I did a stupid thing by indicating that this sort of thing did not appeal to me. Of course I ended up being held down while Ina sprayed scent down my neck, up my nose and in my mouth when I opened it to protest. It's just as well that I knew everybody there, or it could have been very embarrassing for me. I cannot remember much after that, except that Norman kept handing round glasses of coffee, which turned out to be coffee flavoured wine, with drastic after effects. About 4.30 I decided I had enough, and bidding farewell to all and sundry, wandered happily down the corridor to my room, bed and four hours sleep.

After breakfast next morning Ted and I went up to see if Ella was still alive, and found that she had discovered she could have breakfast in bed, and was taking full advantage of this. The start of the programme was TYPO, a tape play by the Cheltenham Group. It wasn't bad but not as good as I had expected. This was followed by a talk from Geoff Doherty on the desirability or otherwise of plugging SF in schools. Last year Geoff had edited an SF anthology for use in schools called "An Alien in the Academy". What with the stories he told of the trouble he has had to get other teachers to read SF (we all felt for him here) and the questions from the audience, and the very interesting and competent way he handled his subject, Geoff gave us one of the best items in what was to be a really fine con programme.

Next came lunch which gave everybody the opportunity to talk about what they had just listened to, and from what I could hear they all did. No hanging about over lunch, as next came the Don Ford slide show. The previous year's show had got rave notices, and we were all looking forward to it very much. The slides were shown with a commentary on tape given by Don. This made things a bit difficult for Norman who was projecting, as there

was no margin for error..if he goofed once, it was probable the whole show would go up the creek. It says a great deal for his nerves, that only one slide went in upside down, and he still managed to keep things running smoothly. There was slight disappointment in that there were no shots of last year's con. I had been particularly looking forward to this as I was unable to attend. Nevertheless a good show.

As you all know, the Guest of Honour was Kingsley Amis, author of "New Maps of Hell". He was next on the programme to give a talk, and be available to answer questions. It was this last bit that everyone was waiting for, and you could see that at the earliest opportunity there was going to be a mad scramble to get questions in..it seemed everyone had read "New Maps of Hell". Amis came in with Brian Aldis. Brian gave an amusing introduction to Amis, who rose to really tumultuous applause, which subsided to dead silence..we weren't going to miss a word of this talk. His address gloried in the title.."SF:Anti-science; Anti-fiction". Right at the start Amis set about stirring up the natives, and he proved that he was a most accomplished hand at the job. He started laying about SF, letting us know just what he thought was wrong with it, but at the same time telling us just how it could be improved. The unfortunate bit was, most of what he said was quite right. I am afraid he overdid it in places, such as when he gave us a list of concepts that formed the basis of a good many S stories, and said that they were ~~impossible~~! These were..time travel; telepathy; the universal translating machine, there may have been others, these were the main ones. He went on in much the same vein, dealing in the literary side of SF; and here Arthur C Clarke ..got his! Amis read from one of the stories in Clarke's new anthology, and made Clarke's handling of a love scene sound even worse than it actually was, although this was just barely possible. As he continued, people started shifting in their seats, like cats getting ready to pounce, but other than a few gurgles and splutters, noone said a word till he had finished.

Once he'd stopped the questions came rolling at him, and it was wonderful to watch him take them all and come out on top. Even Ted Tubb couldn't get the better of him, although Ted had some good points, which might have caught Amis had Ted followed them up instead of arguing round in circles. By now everybody was having a great time, and if they weren't arguing with Amis they were arguing among themselves, the hall wasn't quite in an uproar, but it was getting well on the way. But it had to stop sometime, and Eric Jones called a halt half an hour over the allotted time. Afterwards most people agreed that in general Amis was right, and individuals could only disagree with him in particular points, like the impossibility of telepathy, for instance.

A long queue formed before Amis, most with shining new copies of "New Maps of Hell" to be autographed. He had quite a job writing, while still answering questions. I got my programme signed, and managed to get an indignant "Why don't you like Sturgeon?" in, I got an answer that boiled down to.." 'Cos he makes me sick". I went away shattered at this confession

Eric Jones was in charge of the next item, an auction in aid of the BSFA. I need say no more than he managed to keep dividing people from their money at regular intervals. Ted bought 5 F&SF covers. Everyone now disappeared to get ready for the Transgalactic Tourist's Party. Some of the London mob were going in armour made by Ted Tubb and Ken Bulmer.

This was a little away from the central theme, but we thought it would be OK if we said we were from something like The High Crusade.

All were donning costumes in Bruce's room. When I entered I was greeted by a great deal of frenzied activity, interspersed with grunts, groans, and the occasional full blooded scream as a pin didn't go where it should. Ken and Ted were in charge of proceedings. Bruce and Jimmie were dressed, while Don was putting the finishing touches to his. It had been originally mine, but he was doing a better job of wearing it than I ever could. Pat Kearney was being bound up in authentic type mediaeval leggings. Ted was trying to put Brian Burgess in a suit of armour. Ken was going around with a hefty wooden sword cutting and slashing at people and asking them if they could feel anything. This was funny, as he was hitting so hard, had they not been properly protected, the blow could have killed far less hurt! This was no place for a person of my sensitivity, so I rapidly faded from the scene.

In order to combat the ever present lack of females at fan gatherings, the committee had the bright idea to invite some nurses. They were gratified when all tickets were taken and more asked for. The sad news that confronted me in the hall, was that they had used the tickets to bring their boy friends also! Thus there was a distinct impression given of two separate dances being held..a mundane one where people were dancing..and a fannish one where people were talking and drinking. It's very difficult to get across the atmosphere that pervaded. All through everybody was giving the impression, without actually saying anything, that there was nowhere else they would rather be, and this was the only way to enjoy yourself.

The highlight of the party was the fight staged by the London group. From the onset this had been Ken Bulmer's idea. He had been talking for weeks before in a way that suggested the whole purpose of the con was so that London could stage a carnival of blood..the more blood the better. Ken would organise it all, but no thanks he was too old for that sort of thing. Those wearing the armour were none too keen on the idea, but Ken, with masterly verbiage, convinced them all that this was the only gentlemanly thing to do..they got up and fought. Ted Tubb, try as he might to hold back, got stuck in too. It was quite funny beforehand to listen to Ted trying to talk himself out of taking part, while everyone knew, including Ted, that where it was thickest was where we would find Mr Tubb.

Bobbie Grey announced the bout. She told us that one faction from some star cluster had suffered a slight at the hands of another and had challenged them to back down or prove themselves with cold wood. The supposed slighers had no hesitation, they agreed unanimously to back down, but unfortunately for them the audience realised that there was a good chance that somebody might get hurt, and so wouldn't let them out of it. The two groups consisted of..Ted Tubb, Brian Burgess, Bob Richardson, and Bob Hawkins on one side. The other side was made up of Bruce Burn, Don Geldart, Jim Groves and Pat Kearney. How they fixed the sides I just don't know, because Bruce, Don, Jim and Pat were outweighed considerably, and it must have taken real nerve to stay in the same hall as the others.

Arthur Thomson called them to order and got them started, a most fearsome sight that struck awe into the bystanders. Tubb, not having a shield, made do with two swords. Had I not known he was quite friendly with his opponents, I would have sworn that he had his heart set on

killing the lot of them. He would beat about one of them, whilst making frantic back handed swipes at any other opponent who passed within reach. Amis, who had managed to get a seat at the front, was cowering against the back of it. Bob Richardson, dressed in a sort of Mongol outfit, and Don made frenzied efforts to decapitate each other, right in front of Amis, and they didn't seem particularly worried about the possible loss of one of our leading writers.

Brian Burgess just stood there. With the armour on he looked impossibly tall and most impressive. Bruce kept on coming at him, but made no impression whatsoever, and every now and again Brian would take a tremendous swing before which Bruce respectfully retreated. Pat, the SFCOL's youngest member, only 17 and looking more like 15, was achieving one of his ambitions, the undivided attention of a professional author. Yet he was not very happy about this, nor could you blame him. Mr Tubb was acting as if Pat had said he was only Britain's second best author, and poor Pat looked set for the hospital at any minute. He was pretty lucky to get away with skinned knuckles, and quite badly bruised ribs. He got consolation later from Ted in a long talk and permission to re-print one of Ted's stories in Goudy, Pat's zinc. The battle went on for some time, but gradually subsided as people admitted they had had enough, or they ran out of swords, broken ones now littered the floor. Arthur called a halt, and declared a draw, they were all too tired to hear him.

The climax came with the Fancy Dress judging. Judges were Ruth and Dave Kyle with Ted Carnell. Eddie Jones got first prize with his intricate Spaceman costume. Ina Shorrocks second with a Firebird costume, which had also been designed by Eddie. From now on the party started to break up into small groups who went off to get room parties started. Ella and Ethel were sharing a small 'suite', consisting of two rooms and a bathroom tucked away on the top floor. Ted and I headed there and found them with Don Geldart and Arthur Thomson. We were told they had invited Amis to give him a taste of room parties. Arthur began his usual fine job as barman, he says he likes being barman as he can stay close to the drink all night, and nobody complains. Ron Bennett wanted to play cards, and made tracks for his room with Dave Barber and Peter West, I went with them, to watch. Soon I had enough of watching and got in on the game. As it turned out I was glad I did as I won a few shillings, and was in on some fannish history. Ron Bennett lost! We packed up at 3.30 and went looking for a party. We had heard there was to be something in Eddie Jones' room, so wandered along. We had heard right. There most definitely was something going on in Eddie's room. We heard a low rumble coming from within. Ron knocked, a voice yelled "You can't come in". They were right we couldn't get in, it was a physical impossibility. Ian McAulay, who was propped up behind the door, managed to get it open about nine inches; I stuck my head round, going on the assumption that if I got my head in, the rest would follow. I was wrong! There were so many people in that room the only way to get in was to go outside, climb in the window, and jump on top of those already in. That room contained thirty eight people, and I'm glad I was not one of them. Our coming seemed to be the cue for things to break up, as Audrey Eversfield fainted which convinced people that perhaps it was a bit crowded. So ended the second day.

Sunday saw me up not so early, and

definitely not so bright as Saturday. I was nearly put off my breakfast by the entry of Ina Shorrock, who bounced in looking disgustingly fresh and cheerful. I did get some consolation from seeing Norman, who looked as if he had crawled painfully from his coffin for the day. Bang on time Ina, as Chairman, got the BSFA General meeting started. Anyone who wants to know the Official Business that took place can join the BSFA (by getting in touch with me) and read the Official Minutes. One item of general interest was the choosing of the 1962 Consite.

After having suffered the disappointment two years in succession of being given the con for Harrogate, only to have it snatched away again, it was the general consensus of opinion that the 1962 con should be given to Ron Bennett. Everyone seemed agreed on this, the only one who would not give an opinion was Ron himself. Someone nominated Harrogate. People started to get up and say why they thought this was a good idea. Then some bright person came up with the bright idea of asking Ron if he was willing to take the con. Ron made the most of this, his moment. He slowly rose to his feet and waited for everyone to be quiet. Then he went into a long dramatisation of how for years he had nurtured the idea of holding a con in his home town; but nobody would listen. How at last it was reluctantly agreed that he could have it, but finding his dream snatched away, and this happening not once, but two years in succession. By now, nearly everyone was in tears at poor Ron's plight, and it was now that he brought his speech to a brilliant climax by accepting the 1962 con, and then naming the committee which he had already formed. Ron had played again.

This being Easter Sunday, after lunch the SFCoL started to distribute Easter eggs. Ethel stood at the door with a basket and, as far as we know, nobody escaped. They all got an egg whether they liked it or not, on the whole they were rather taken with the idea. The first item on the afternoon programme was the SFCoL sketch. This had been written by Bruce Burn, around his pet fixation of Scotland taking over Anglofandom. The theme, briefly, was that Bruce and Jimmie Groves were prisoners in a fanzine factory (I seem to have heard this before somewhere) and were under the charge of Ethel who brought them fanz to collate, and occasionally something to eat. This plot was the vehicle for a few songparodies which seemed to go down pretty well. At the end Ella came on, and gave me orders to shoot the pair, which I did with great pleasure, they being only Englishmen. Unfortunately, as this was put on soon after lunch, there was only a small audience, which was a pity considering the amount of work put into it by Ethel, Bruce and Jimmie, who had even rehearsed on the journey to Gloucester.

As is becoming traditional, Eric Bentcliffe put on another THIS IS YOUR FAN LIFE. After Eric's usual red herrings it turned out the victim was Eric Jones, and a more surprised man you never saw. There was a delightfully free and easy atmosphere throughout, and even the few mistakes didn't break the continuity, but on the contrary, gave Eric the chance to get in a few sly jokes. Eric, later did admit to feeling bad about one part. This was when a magnificent machine was brought on, wheels turning, lights flashing, it was very impressive. Eric Jones had made it himself under the impression that Terry Jeeves was to be in the very seat that he (Eric) was sitting in. Dave Kyle made quite an impression when in the middle of Eric's description of Eric Jones (confusing isn't it?) by getting up from his seat, and pretending

that he was hypnotised. He started walking round the hall saying, in a very cultured English accent things like, "I am an Englishman" and "I renounce Science Fiction". I don't know if this was in the script, Eric Bentcliffe looked pretty surprised anyway. THIS IS YOUR FAN LIFE was definitely the best fannish item on the programme; Ron Bennett then conducted a most successful TAFF auction, it was surprising the amount of money people still had. I had saved all mine for this auction, thinking everyone else would have spent their's. I did manage to get a Science Fantasy cover, and also in partnership with Ted, an unpublished Brian Aldiss manuscript. Eric Bentcliffe gave a talk on his TAFF trip. He had a terrible cold, and could hardly speak, but stuck to it, to give a most worthwhile talk. I had to leave the hall as he started to auction off the professional authors. When I got back I was congratulated by Don Geldart and Ron Bennett for having a hand in buying Kingsley Amis, and asked to pay the 10/- that was due. I did. I must have been drunk.

The con was rapidly drawing to a close. A film show was the last item. FORBIDDEN PLANET was the main film to be shown, but of much more interest to most fans was THE MISQUITE KID, which Dave Kyle had brought over from the States. This however turned out a bit of a disappointment. The soundtrack was very bad, and we could not understand most of the dialogue. We did have the consolation of seeing some of the Amerifen, and when Ejo came on the screen, there was more than a few dark mutterings, all asking what fool voted for Don Ford. The films ended. The con was officially closed, and people started to pull the con hall to bits (or clear up it was called). There was nothing else for it, but to go find another room party.

The room parties on this last night seemed to go very quickly, with everyone trying to talk about everything they had forgotten at previous parties. I remember listening to Ron Bennett bearing Jhim Linwood's ideology to bits, in a very calm and reasoned manner, considering Ron has the same ideas on the subject as Jhim, while Alan Rispin mumbled drunkenly in the background. This was at a very sedate affair in Bob Richardson's room, which we soon left, to go up to the Ethel/Ella suite. Here we found the usual boisterous mob, which this time included Amis, Aldiss, Geoff Doherty arguing in a corner about SF with Chris Miller and some other fans. Ian McAulay was becoming very intimate with Ina Shorrocks at the top of the bed, while Norman was beaming benevolently at the bottom of the bed. There were dozens of others strewn about about all over the room. Ethel was somewhat merry by this time, and on giving Amis a drink, proceeded to do so by pouring it all down his jacket, later she insisted that she saw a glass there.

This merrymaking went on for some time with various people coming in to make their fond farewells, and others drifting out to get some sleep. I found myself a seat on the bed, but no sooner did I get comfortable than I was pushed off by Ian. As I sat on the floor I thought that when it came to the bit that I couldn't hold my own on a bed with Ian, it was time for me to go home, which I proceeded to do by crawling along the corridor to my room. Before going to sleep I just had time to realise that my first convention was over, boy, had I enjoyed myself!

Next morning was a flurry of activity, getting ready to leave, saying goodbye, and just walking about soaking up the last drops on the convention. We met Tony Walsh who had bought THE GUARDIAN

