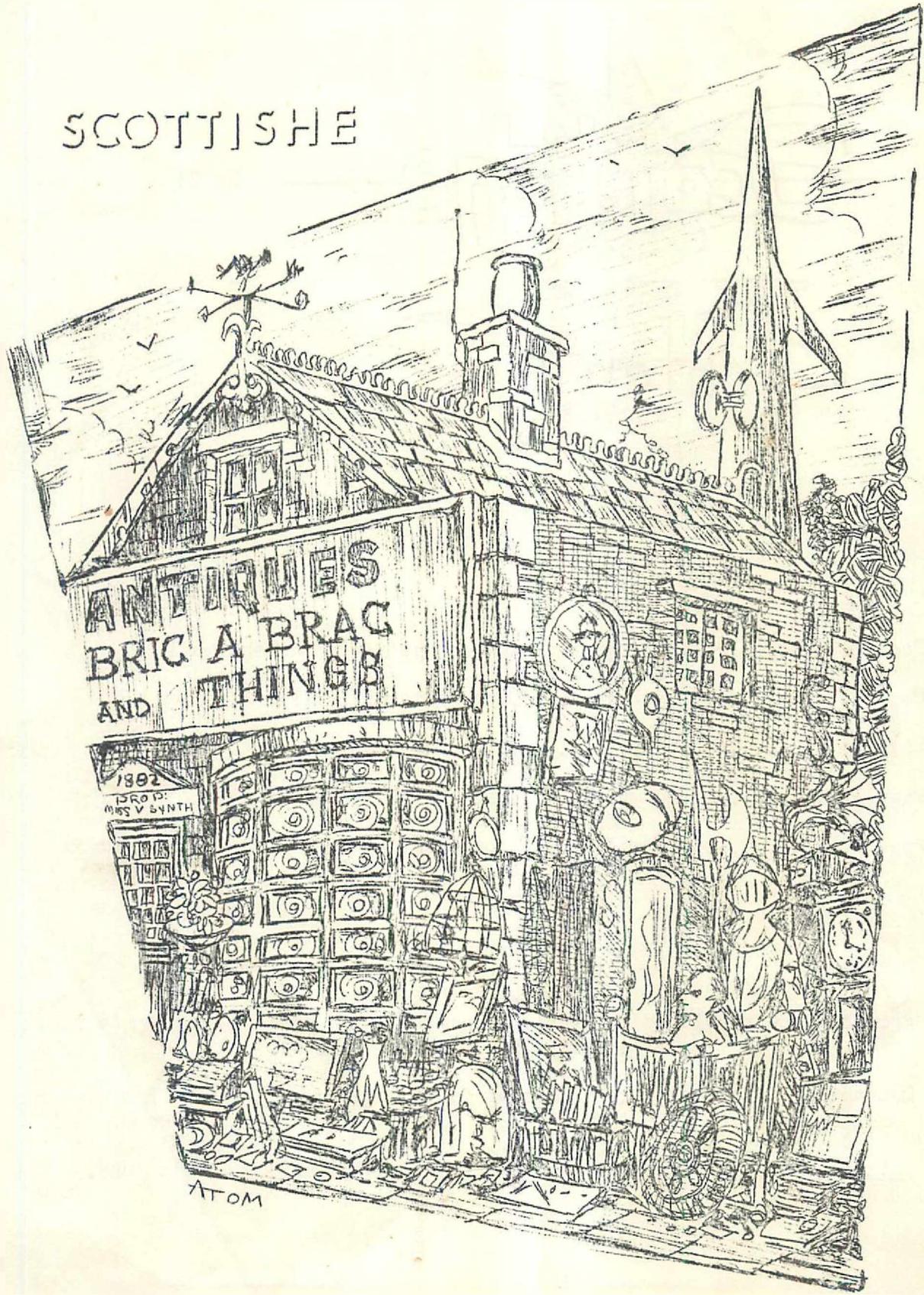


SCOTTISHE



Scottish

No 25

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welcome

Please note: All subscriptions will be donated to the Willis Fund.

bletherings



on the Twenty Eighth Ompa Mailing.....

Off Trails: Blast! we have lost the Trimbles: that we could ill afford. I only tied half the 27 knots that Daphne counted on my last Ompa offering; the other half was tied by someone who sniffed disdainfully at my parcelling.

Amble No 6: Mercer: We still argue about the merits of our respective daily papers.. Was the TIMES a liberal paper at the time of Suez? The GUARDIAN attacked the Government hotly about this. Archie, please you cannot get weary with mailing comments; without yours what should we do! I enjoyed the fannish tale and it did have a sort of time-binding effect. A typical Acheezine, lightly entertaining all through.

Bullfrog Bugle: Hickman: Such a beautiful cover, I particularly admired the way the heading was picked out against the black. I had a good laugh at the motor letter and I am very pleased you decided to stay in Ompa rather than Fapa, and apolard your decision to try to make BB more offtrail. Things like the motor letter will always be welcome.

Burr: No 20: Bennett: So you have taken up the torch and continued this serial. That is a fine mess you've left Jimmie Groves in at the end of it. Still, the last time I saw him he had figured a way out..and I bet he doesn't get himself born again to do so. Really, Ron, when you are dead you should stay dead. Glowing dust indeed!

The Complete Story of How Not to Move:Dietz: You tell this story of your travails in an entertaining way. What I like about this sort of thing is that it has a universal appeal, and is liable to set others off too. Like..your Mother's efforts in getting you the apartment reminded me of my own Mother. When my brother got married he and his wife would still be sitting in a dump had my Mother not spent hours with a flat-owner. The owner was a widow, very religious, and my Mother used to sing hymns with her to put her in a good mood. Long after my sister-in-law had given up, Mum kept doggedly at it, till she got the flat...You have a flair for dialogue too.

Conversation:No 12:Hickman: I hope you do not think that JDA was not appreciated in Ompa because you did not receive many British subscriptions. Speaking for myself it is only that I cannot afford to, all my spare cash goes on publishing. I think the quality of your illos much higher than the fiction you publish. This by George Willick is of fair standard only, and the idea very unoriginal. Your mailing comments were very good as you took the trouble to asses what zines you liked best.

Conversation:No14:Hickman: I like your idea of mixing your material up and trying to live up to the name of Offtrail. Cars, I think, are going to leave me cold, but then it depends upon your treatment of the subject. I prefer when you include some artwork, but that is because your standard is always so high. De Vet's idea that the world is hollow with a sun of its own..phooey! Basil Wells suggestions of War Duels being fought by volunteers seems rather unlikely of consumation. I would prefer to see the duels fought, if at all, by the leaders of the countries concerned. So, we would have K&K battling it out with wooden swords or something.

Conversation:No15:Hickman: Mm, yes, you must have thought that we did not appreciate JDA. Now if everyone in Ompa faithfully wrote some comment on the zines you would have known. Because they failed to do so you had to rely on letters or subs - the former not written because JDA came through Ompa, the latter not sent probably for the same reason as mine. So you never did know, what I am sure is the case - Ompa would have liked JDA to continued appearing. I am taking to heart your strictures on oversized mailings, and will weigh this well in the balance before voting for an increased membership. Again you give us worthwhile comments. Your own personality comes through much more here than in JDA and this I do like.

Defenestration:NoL:Carrs: I like the look of this zine, taking trouble with layout is something that Ompans have been neglecting, perhaps you will spur them on. The Molesworthy parody of DOWN WITH SKOOL is well done. Only one word puzzled me..wizz.. what does it mean? I had fun reading about your daily life, more of this please. Now you are in Ompa do tell me, why do you move house so much? You have made such a mess of your file card here in Courage House. Good to see Jim Caughran back with us again, and this piece was zanily good. Yes, zines like this should make some moribund Ompans stir uneasily.

Erg:No8:Joeves: The review of Amis' book was good: did you think to send him a copy of it? I am sure he would be interested in all those reviews that have been appearing in fanzines. Heard him on the wireless in Desert Island Disc. When asked what one luxury he would like to take to his desert island he replied..a case of Scotch. Your reviewing has improved greatly, and of course you always produce a handsome looking zine.

Kobold:No2:Jordan: So you have started an Sf association at your University; as has Chris Miller at his. Should be intriguing to see what transpires. I like to read of life at the universities, and look forward to more of this. Now don't you start to use that horrible expression "comment-hooks". I would like to ban it. Pity about all those struck over typos; on the back page you mention something about "thats the way the corflu thickens" Now if you use it more it won't get time to thicken hmm? Considering how busy you must be at exams and suchlike it is nice that you are managing to stay with us.

Lxiconshot: Taking everything into account, such as this being left in the typer over the con weekend, it reads much more sensibly than one would expect. I have read much worse one-shots.

Pack Rat:No1:Groves: Welcome Jimmie, you have the right idea, begin at the beginning and introduce yourself and your history. So you are bringing the Scots V English 'war' from the SFCoL into Ompa are you? I'll be quoting right back at you my lad... Glad that you explained your job, now I won't have that blank stare when you mention it, and now I realise why you wanted a specimen of Carnoustie sand. Oddly enough I find this interesting, though I should never be inclined to such a hobby myself. Yet talk of the old cars hobby leaves me cold. I wonder why? About the trouble that the Navy was in having coloured sailors - you said there was no third way for the powers that be to handle it. There was you know, the Navy could have cancelled that 'courtesy' visit to S.Africa. Ament your remarks upon the men suffering after effects from being Jap POWs. You say that two wrongs do not make a right which is the whole answer to the point you raise. I know about these men, I nursed some who returned with tuberculosis. You should be an asset to Ompa. Incidentally Frances Varley remarked that this was the first time she had seen a first issue zine without one single typo or spelling mistake.

Phenotype:No CLXXXVIII:Eney: Say, why don't you chuck those Roman Numerals, it is just a bad habit. So that is how you vote in Va., you don't tell us much about yourself along these lines. Why not try to out-do the Durrell "Alexandrian Quartet" (I can recommend those books highly.) Since you asked this is how I vote. I tootle into the hall quickly, give my name and address, watch them look it up and then solemnly score a line through it, take a ballot sheet make my little cross and then beetle out quickly. I ~~th~~ relieve someone outside who is taking notes. As each person comes to vote we ask their number and write it down on a talley sheet. At intervals someone comes from the party headquarters to collect these. Thus at the end of the day they know who have not voted. They send out cars of knockers up to persuade or chase them out. I am collecting data for Labour, the Conservative lady sits beside me doing the same thing. All very friendly like; we give each other any numbers missed. Satisfied?

Phenotype:NoCXCI:Eney: How nice to see Jean Young's drawings back again. Since she is mad about rocks, she ought to get on well with Jimmie. I enjoyed your report of the trip back from the con best of the three you published, that is because you write well. I wouldn't call your style turgid, lucid rather. What I find about kids is that if one is a bawler then he'll set the whole lot off. Sitting as good as gold they may be, but when one starts to cry, that's it, they all do.

Random:No 3:Buckmaster: These nudes..just what is keeping their breasts up? They seem to completely deny the laws of gravity. The letters that came in on the WOMAN question made good reading; I enjoyed the Aldiss one best, though Harry Warner had some interestingly novel information to offer. Cannot say I have ever seen that attitude towards their female relations in patients over here. Do you suppose that all non-fan Americans hate women? Certainly do not waste remarks on zine production unless there is something special. When I wrote "subject matter only", I meant the comments were all concerned with what the writer thought on the subject, never any concerned with what the editor had written. Hope you can still get some writing from Ron. To be honest I like his better than your own. Your own however, like a loong letter, I must admit is what many people think an apazine ought to be.

The running, jumping and standing still magazine:No 1:Ashworth: You just about fill up the whole line don't you? Still, it is an appropriate title; I have often thought your humour Sellarish. I'M A STRANGER HERE MYSELF was just brilliant: I don't feel this or think it or do anything about it, I just know it! Fortunately you seem to have a wife who is your equal, I'd hate to think of a poor woman as your wife who was not! This was the best in the mailing because it contained the best writing: why in the name of little apples do you not publish more and be at the top of every Egoboo poll as you should be? I much prefer your remarks here on BANTHEBOMB with its trenchant plea for the crackpot to the snide remarks anent BANTHEBOMBERS by Berry in a past Warhoon. Only: what's wrong with graduated pensions? You make me very sad admitting you like the Telegraph. Man..you have no taste. Still, you write some of the most appreciative comments of the lot, so I will overlook it.

Sizar:No 3:Burn: Yessir..I am voting for.. Glad to see you at the commenting lark and hope you enjoy doing it as much as the faneds will appreciate the effort. It is true as you say that fiction does not get much of a welcome in fanzines. Still I do think if it were really good it would. The main fault with fan fiction is the use of unoriginal ideas with gimmick endings; and the quality of writing is rarely high enough to redeem this. Why not try though in Ompa? Much more suitable than Ipso.

UL:No3:Metcalfe: Are you in the regular Army? If so may I ask why? Could you not study PACK RAT and see how much nicer it is when the new Ompa introduces himself properly? I cannot help in saying for sure who is sending you the mystic letters; it could be Peter Campbell. The letter you quoted was real kooky. Your comments provided fair enjoyment, but I would have like to have seen something else added. As it stands I would not call this a magazine.

Vagary:No 13:Gray: This is a good offering, real meaty. I do like to see a zine not a few pages run off and stapled together. Bbut, I liked your idea of TALKING POINT and hope you will revive it. To me this is the ideal way to run the comments you want to make on the other person's material. Comments: I do not always agree with your opinions but read them avidly. Camp Crazy: I think I will wait upon your explanation before commenting upon this; meantime I remain politely incredulous whilst giving you full marks for a hair-raising effort.

Why is a Fan?:Hickman:Earl Kemp: First I must apologise: I keep misquoting this as What instead of Why. The Bergeron cover was one of the cleverest I've seen. Many thanks Lynn for letting us have this through Ompa. The main point about this I should think is that it stimulates each fan reader into thinking just why they are

fans. I wouldn't be surprised if another symposium could be compiled through this. One sees the constant mention of the good friends made in fandom and how they are the main reason so many stay. So, presumably, a mature fan is one who realises that not all fans are automatically wonderful. That this takes quite a bit of courage to say outright is evident by Anon and Bjo being the only two honest enough to come out and say so. That bit about inconsiderate visitors should hit home. I really cannot understand why some people feel that the normal standards of good manners need not be shown on a fan visit. It is also about time that some fans realised that the constant giving of extra meals is beyond most people's budgets no matter how great the goodwill. I am thinking here particularly of Ella Parker, since she joined fandom that girl's food bill must have leapt astronomically. A wonderfully well done and worth doing effort this. Thanks to it, I have been able to fathom out some of my own springs of action.

Zounds No 4: Lichtman: I wish you had followed up that non-staple idea, I am very curious as to what it must have been like. Rather a skimpy offering Prez, what? Try a net the next time Time flies out your window.

Through A Gordian Knot: Donaho: What with the title and the cover illo, you sly old one you, everyone will be in a mellow mood about voting. All concerned are to be congratulated. Oooh, but I am glad to see the back of all those horrid byelaws. Foosh upon them. Yes, I will vote for this gladly.

Viner: No 3: Donaho: I welcome another magazine to Ompa: and not only that, it is pretty: I do like that pink. Starting out like this with a - let's see now - how can I describe it. Not a letter, which so much Ompastuff sounds like. Not a formal editorial, not an article; believe I should invent a new word for it. An apaeffort. Quite distinctive and would be nowhere so much at home as in an apa. I started to answer that test dammit. Pleased to see Elinor again; Harlan is not the only one that is vivid about people, Elinor's description of him was marvellous, why - I saw him. That was a very penetrating thought of hers about Ralph Lanyon and Byron, and yes my goodness I agree. I could argue with you Bill - why should mailing comments be written so as to be of interest to the entire readership, who says so? Yes, I would argue, but your own are so good I hardly have the heart. Still if I am alone in Ompa in disagreeing with your idea of me I may chuck mine. Your way is easier you know. In reply to your query about why I like the Guardian - the writers are, without exception, good. The political writers in particular; nowhere else is the day to day reporting of what was said in Parliament more brilliantly done. I very meekly agree to your complaints of nonstop paragraphing. Have to admit you are right there.

Post-Mailings:

Checklist: Burgess: Valuable to collectors no doubt. I'd rather you told us about your visit to Hol.

Grist: No 3: Mills: Although you manage to pack quite a lot into those closely lined sheets, I felt I would have like a lecture more. You almost broke off in mid - sentence.

Unicorn: No 3: Spencer: You have just got in here by the skin of your teeth. Now tell

do tell me, what is the advantage of an electric typewriter? Don't you still have to bang the keys? Rather scrappy this, still you have made some good promises for the future.

Blush:Donaho: So comes the long awaited poll, and congratulations to Bob and yourself for actually doing what you said you would. It is a shame that all the work only received 15 votes, if we are going to have more polls; let's hope they will be better supported. Whether they are by and large a Good Thing, I am by no means sure. The results: I liked the way they were presented; and I did not agree with all the results. Appreciative at my own placing, but miffed at no mention of MachiaVarley among the humourists. I wonder how many of the voters took the trouble to haul out all the 1960 mailings and go through them!

Dear Non-Ompans: As my mailing comments are written for the editor's gratification first, and anyone else only incidently; I have toyed with the idea of omitting BLEETHERINGS from the non-Ompan copies. I also thought of putting some other material in its place to keep SCOT a decent size. Should you write, and I shall be extremely pleased if you do - I would be interested to learn your reactions to this idea. To those of you who have subbed to the Willis Fund to obtain this, many thanks, I hope you feel this is (nearly) worth it. SCOT will continue to be published quarterly.

Dear Ompans: Bobbie is not receiving CAMP DAZY unheralded: she knows you know.

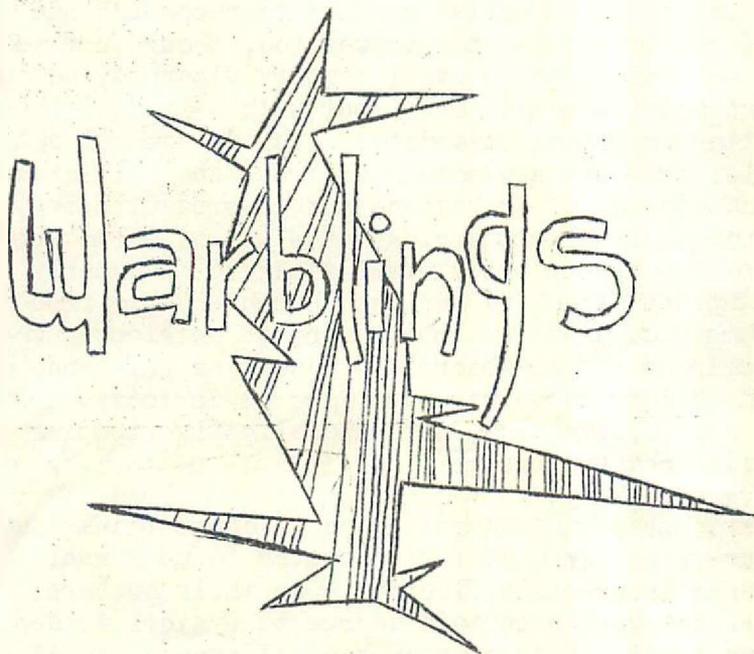
ADVERTS

Dikini for Taff...Dikini for Taff...have you voted yet..why not..go on..Dikin for Ta
Dikini I say...

Support the Willis Fund..more pennies needad here..or fivers..spare a dime..ha'penny
Willis I say...

Remember to send our Ella back..I am being overworked now she is away,,they are all
up at the Bowling Alley Ella..come on home..all is forgive...err, like.....

Serious Note: Now pay attention! I get NEW WORLDS and SCIENCE FANTASY I will send them regularly for a year to any American fan who will donate a suitable sum to the Willis Fund. Highest bid gets. Write to me, not the Shaws- they have enough paper work as it is.



Before I go any further into the Fifties, I've been repeatedly asked, both times by Ethel, to describe what Vince Clarke and Ken Bulmer were like in those far-off days. This seems like a pretty good idea, except for the fact that I haven't the slightest idea what they were like. All I know is how they seemed to me, which was by no means the same thing.

You see, I had this idea that fandom was like the French Foreign Legion. People joined it to Forget, or at least to start a new life. No matter what sort of a fugghead or a failure you were in the mundane world, you began anew in fandom. You had a second chance to be the sort of person you wanted to be. You could have a new character, even a new name if you liked, and build your relationships with other people on a new and better basis. It was a sort of contemporary re-incarnation.

So I reasoned it was not done to ask fans about their mundane background, though you could speculate. I speculated. Vince Clarke, for instance, had a Home Counties accent, the sort that in Ireland is recognised as belonging to the governing class. Moreover he spoke with what seemed to me an aristocratic, almost contemptuous, drawl and was obviously well read. Nevertheless he was unemployed and living in poor circumstances. It seemed pretty clear to me he was a Harrow or Winchester type gone wrong, maybe through having failed his exams at the University and having been disinherited. His manner, both in person and paper, initially gave me little cause to doubt this assessment. He was polite, friendly, but reserved and casual as if not wishing to be too intimate: he might have gone native, but he still mentally dressed for dinner. I liked and respected him, but for a long time regarded him with a certain degree of awe and caution. In appearance he was tall and thin, with a very large and round head with thinning yellow hair. I think I described him once as looking like a distinguished toffee apple.

I was still not familiar enough with English accents to recognise Ken Bulmer's as almost pure cockney, so I put him in the top drawer too, though not as high as Vince. I visualised him as coming from a small country vicarage, not quite big enough for a tennis court and immemorial elms, but with a lawn of the sort admired by the American visitor in the old anecdote. (How do you get a lawn like this? It's quite simple, you just sew some good grass and roll it every day for 600 years.) The vicarage was of grey stone and covered with ivy, and Ken's widowed mother lived there with her memories. She was of solid upper-middle class English stock too, but hers was a naval family. Presumably Ken had spurned or been spurned by both the Navy and the Church and had fled to the Epicentre to Forget. All this was based on a photograph of an elderly woman on Ken's mantelpiece, a model ship on the sideboard and a passing reference of his having been in a church. In appearance he was much like he is today, now that he has shaved off his beard again...smallish, dark and slightly stooping as if bowed down by some load carried cheerfully.

Both these backgrounds were pure phantasmagoria, but I don't think I would have visualised them so clearly if they hadn't represented to me a real difference in their characters, as revealed fleetingly in their letters. Vince wrote interestingly and well, but with a certain degree of cynical detachment. Even when he was complimentary it was with overtones of flippancy, as if condescending, and for a long time I viewed his remarks with suspicion and they were inclined to rub me the wrong way. Ken, on the other hand, was from the start full of friendliness and enthusiasm, which gushed out in his breathless all-one-paragraph letters. When Ken liked something, he let you know it, and we loved him for it, poor egoboo hungry waifs that we were. He had a rare talent for flattery...or, if you were the recipient of it, appreciation. If you had worked every night for four months at a printed fanzine, wouldn't you love a man who wrote by return of post a letter like this?

"Dear Walter,

Have some very serious news for you. Thought you would like to know right away. Vince and I today received through the post two magazines, professionally produced jobs, and with, I must admit, absolutely first class artwork and print set up, on semi-slick paper and turned out in the best way I've seen any magazine dolled up. However these magazines, obviously from a long established professional house, quality breathes through them, have the temerity to title themselves "Slant". Not only that, but impudently enough, they style themselves as being edited by a Walter A Willis at your address. Further, they claim to have artwork by a James White and a Bob Shaw. These false claims, as we are still hopefully waiting for Slant to come along, do not fool us in the least. There is a certain doubt that they may confuse other readers of Slant, who also are waiting for copies, but we well know the truth. I thought you might be interested, in fact you are obviously interested in such a matter close to your own interests. I do not see any professional editorial address, the publications claiming to be made from N.Ireland. What confounded impudence! The only thing that can be said is that they are of beautiful workmanship, a real credit to the publishing profession. However I do feel that any publication capable of such glorious work should not stoop to the inglorious ruse of assuming

the name of Slant in the search for further circulation. I now notice that my own name also is included, coupled with yours. Monstrous! Believe me, I shall not rest until I find the perpetrators of this effrontery and let them know, in forceful though restrained language, that the correct place for their publication is on the bookstalls and not sneaking through fans letterboxes under the guise of an old and loved friend. Watch 'em, Walter.

Yours, Ken."

The correspondance with Vince and Ken continued voluminously, but almost entirely about each other's publishing activities and the coming 1951 Festival Convention, that climatic event. There wasn't much more to talk about, since there were still less than half a dozen active English fans. As Vince put it:

"The trouble with British fandom at least is that the personalities are so nebulous in any writings. A number of personal allusions would be lost on the 'outside' reader at the moment. Regular and frequent publication of about 3 different fanzines would be needed before a sufficiently strong background could be built up in the non-active fans mind, and he would know instanter of the allusion back of, say, my crack concerning Shaver and Deacon in IR"

Parts of my reply have some historical interest...

"On the same day your letter arrived I had a letter from Banister saying that on the same day my last letter to him had arrived he had a letter from you saying that on the same day his last letter to you arrived accepting your story my letter to you arrived accepting your other story. What did you want to start all that for? By the way, don't let that mention of carbon fool you, I'm not at all business-like, it's just that I have to be careful because I tell so many lies. I remember once a letter from a fan who quoted a reference number at me at which I felt properly insulted...I think you do pretty well for Ray, and I hope he gave you his Invisible Little Man, which must obviously have been intended for you. What you really need is a plot-twister. We can supply a model almost as good as the one we use for Van Vogt. Just feed in a simple plot at one end, turn the handle, and it emerges at the other end in any desired degree of complexity. I am afraid we cannot supply the identical VV Mark II model because this has to be handled by skilled operators. We had a lot of trouble with it some time ago, Some of the plots got very badly buckled and when we tried to straighten them out there was a lot of loose ends which proved impossible to unravel so we had to invent Charles Harness. So called of course because he was all traces and bits of VV....Would like a copy of WASTEBASKET, and it doesn't matter how sorry looking it is. It won't look as sorry as I will if I don't get one. Actually I don't much care how a fanzine looks as long as it reads well. People who are stuck with printing have to do the best they can with it, but my own favourite fanzines are chaotic, informal and frequent. Like WARP and in a lesser degree QUANDRY. Not lesser in content, that is now very high, but Hoffman seems to spend too much time on the appearance of his magazine. Not that he doesn't make a very

nice job, but I wonder would it not be better if he cut out some frills like these linocuts."

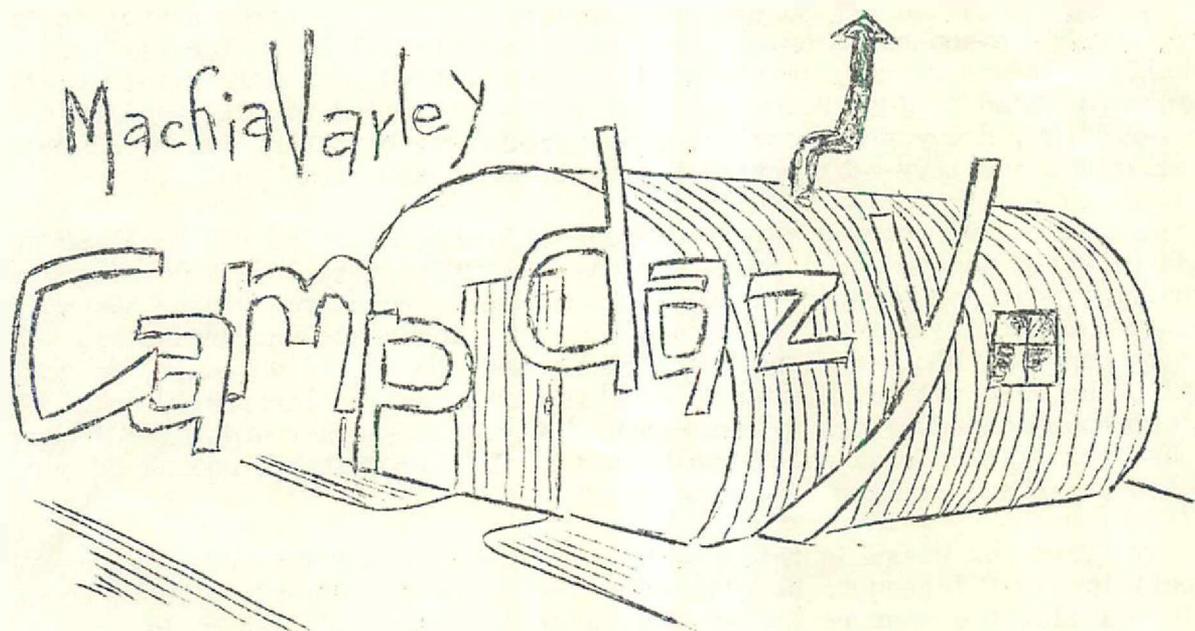
Quandry edited by a man, and printing linocuts! But such were the weird inchoate beginnings of the era known as Sixth Fandom. Leo had produced the first issue of "The Quandry" in the autumn of 1950 and when we got Slant 4 finished I sent an exchange copy...hence, probably, the brief manifestation of linocuts in Quandry, a mistake which Lee soon realised, returning to the mimeo artwork for which she had such talent. And hence this momentous letter she mailed in November:

"SLANT arrived today. Gørsk, thanx. As is my custom I read the editorial first. Terrific! Liked to laughed m'self silly. If you should ever feel so inclined don't hesitate to send material to QUANDRY...Hah, I am laughing at your comments on multi-colored paint. I know how you done it. I havn't spent years as a stage hand for nothing. It's done with lights. Simple...Neither DESTINATION MOON nor ROCKETSHIP X-M has come to Savannah yet. Personally I doubt if the world is ready yet for STF..or if it ever will be. I believe in the cyclic philosophy..that all things wax and wain (or is that wane?) I saw a stf movie made about 1930 not long ago. It was a Flash Gordon serial spliced together. Two of them were released recently to cash in on the stf trend..ROCKETSHIP and MARS ATTACKS THE WORLD. I saw the latter. It was the funniest movie I've seen in years. Especially the part where Flash and his friends were locked in a cave on Mars when suddenly a hole appears in the wall and out tumbles the Prince of Mongo (a planet) who just happened to bore in and just happens to be an old friend of Flash. So tell me this is strictly for the kids, I know.... Savannah is a fairly large town. Around 190 thousand. Well, way over on the other side of town a fan grew. Over here I grew. He did it by himself I delved into the black mysteries and purple ghlories with a lil shove from a guy who was a fan five or six years ago. I entangled two friends slightly That gives Savannah a fan population of 2 slans, 1 retired slan, and two non-slans. Yet when I go dashing down to the mag. shop looking for something that came out a week or so ago when I was really broke..what do I find? Yes, nothing. I, too, fear that we dwell in ignorance on the edge of a ghreat fandom in which Ghu, himself, walks. Perhaps it is the oft mentioned fan-heaven..could be fan-hell too. It's my theory that they're the same"

I had just been waiting for someone to ask me to do a column, because I always had bits left over from Slant, so I jumped at the chance. Not too obviously of course..

"I'd be very pleased to write for Q but I'm not the sort of bloke who can sit down and dash something in cold blood. Let me know what sort of thing you would like and give me a weeks notice and the number of words required and I'll airmail some sort of crud back. I suppose a one page column would be the best thing, could put anything in it. Would try to keep a monthly schedule but it might break down during the period SLANT was going out."

Walter Willis



There is a peculiar attitude of mind present in most of my male acquaintances which causes them to view their military experiences as more and more enjoyable the longer and longer it is since they did it. I get the distinct impression that by the time they all attain the age of fifty they'll be clamouring outside a recruiting office, begging to be taken back into the fold. Now whilst I was doing my enforced stint of slavery I can only recall two or three who actually claimed to enjoy it, all of them regulars who had to put a good face on it, and one of these was so dumb that he regularly put his trousers on back to front. Mind you he wasn't an officer, only a sergeant.

Against all these precedents I dislike the memories more and more. Was it the fact that I rebelled against travelling to an 8.30-5 office job all dressed up in boots, gaiters, ammunition pouches (stuffed with newspaper to keep their shape), a pack on my back (similarly stuffed) and all topped off by a barbarous haircut? Was it in fact a rebellion against moronic discipline, against the cretinoidal curtailment of my liberty of speech and action - or was it the aura of ghastly, wordless terror which hung over the place where we worked, the smell of fear which silently penetrated through the nasal cavities and hung menacingly in the shrouded recesses of the skull. Which was it? You may ask, and which indeed! Is my reply. Personally I prefer the latter cause which makes for a better story anyway.

Let me take you back then to that smell of fear which I left hanging around the rear of my hooter. Let me go back further than that because of the aforementioned stink putting me off my food. Having completed my basic training (which mainly consists of grasping the fact that the lesser intelligence, the higher the rank), I was given my first (and last) posting, which took me from the calm English serenity of the Olde Worlde Charme of Devizes to the bitter and inhospitable land of Manchester.

We were detailed off to present ourselves at the Fay Corns Branch in that city, which was housed in an old, reclaimed cotton-mill known locally as Fownalls. It was a grey, gaunt building which loomed ominously before us as we approached it on a bleak November evening. It stood out weirdly against a blood-red sky, heavy and brooding. (The picturesque bit about the blood-red sky is all true, courtesy of the neon-lights in the nearby town centre.)

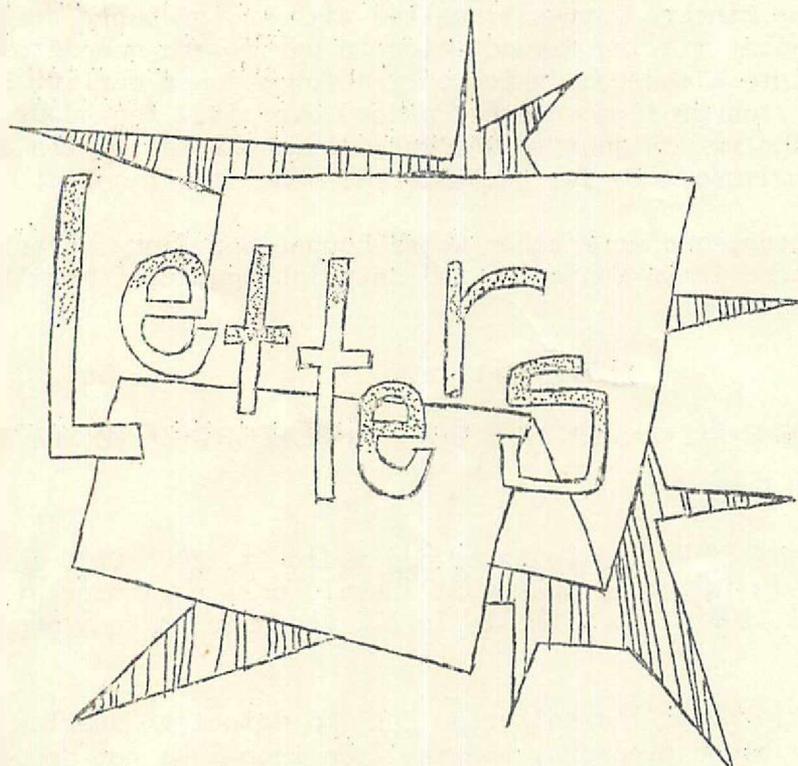
As soon as we entered the front door we became aware of the smell of fear which silently penetrated through the nasal cavities, etc. We huddled together a small, frightened group of defenceless soldiers (makes you wonder how we won the war doesn't it) for we all sensed that evil incarnate was around us. That some obscene and bloated fiend was silently and gloatingly welcoming us to its domain. We were all vividly aware of this Lurker on the Threshold, and I felt Winterbottom's hand clutch my arm convulsively. The Lurker undulated towards us, an irrisitable force which was halted by the high-pitched squeak of our Lieutenant. "Good evening Sergeant-Major"

My first few weeks in this gaunt, grey building (my apologies for any repetition, but I seem to be running out of suitable adjectives) were spent with learning the macabre (there's a new one) history of that building. I learnt that the mill owner - Pownell - had met death suddenly in unusual circumstances, in his sister's bed in fact. It was some time later that I also learned that his sister predeceased him by 5 years and he was 90 when he got it.

There was also the authenticated case of a Captain Cruikshank who fell down the stairs and broke an arm and an ankle and who said that he felt as though an enormous hand had pushed him violently in the back. I feel sure that this was some horrible, unearthly monstrosity, in all probability oozing brimstone from its ears and fumes of sulphur from its nasal cavities (I DO like that phrase, nasal cavities, I mean, so expressive isn't it?). The fact that a Private Gott who had on several occasions received the wrath of the aforementioned Captain on his head came in the following morning with a sprained wrist does not alter my personal opinion.

Mind you there were some occurrences which could not easily be set against the simple fact that the incarnate evil around us was ready to do us harm. For example the Lurker on the Threshold (RSM Shiner) was itself dealt a severe blow by the malignant forces when some fourth dimensional force shattered the spokes on the front wheel of its pedal-cycle. (I feel that there is something rather sweet about evil incarnate riding around on a bicycle.) In the case of the busted bicycle it was generally felt that the malignant force in question had taken over the drink-besotted bodies of several demobees and utilised them as the tools of its destruction.

The Army, of course, is really very educational and often devised outings of an instructive nature. We were, for example, taken out into the country and shown how to stick bits of coloured paper over holes in large squares of cardboard. We were also shown how to go 500 yards away and shoot more holes for other people to stick up. I often got the feeling that if ever we had a war half of us would be shooting the enemy and the other half rushing around



Ken Cheslin
18 New Farm Rd.
Stourbridge
Worcs.

"..I hate to think of the time and patience required to colour goodness knows how many covers like Scot 24. WAW: I like to find out what was going on before fandom and I knew each other. Very interesting to get these sidelights into earlier Anglofan history like the SFS and Ken Slater..I have still not quite got it thru' my head that he was an active fan way before he set up Fantast Medway. To Redd Boggs I would say I used to like to listen to that Radio Lux program(spelling as a compliment to our American cousins) the one called smash hits..it does not deserve capitalising..but not so much now..seeing that I have a suspicious nature. I can't convince myself any longer that they really smash the records, they cost too much. However should the programme be, some time in the future, televised, wal, maybe I'll have a look at it. Come to think of it, I can think of an improvement on the original programme, not only would the records get smashed, but they'd be smashed over the heads of the offending artists..Ah, the sublime satisfaction of smashing a record over Tommy Cooper's bonce..heaven has less delight."

xxxYou sadist you! The cover colouring was a chore but also a tribute to the one and only Atom. Besides, out of the 130, he coloured twenty himself..xxx

Gregg Galkins,
1484 East 17th South
Salt Lake City 5
Utah

"I feel guilty about all the fine issues of SCOTTISHE you've been sending for so long without a trade or even a letter of comment. Well, loc's have always been my weakest point -- guess I'll have to make it a trade with the next issue of

OOPS. I hope to get busy publishing this afternoon and just about finish off the (last?) issue..certainly tomorrow. But this most recent SCOTTISHE with full-color Atom cover is more than I can successfully avoid, even with my own deadline so close. You did a beautiful job on that cover and I'm sure it represents a lot of effort on your part--I just wanted you to know that it is being appreciated. Willis was outstanding, Varley a fine example of British esotericism (boiler-nuts?)" xxxand that card was dated July 20th what happened to OOPS? Boiler nuts are, I think a kind of coke, does that help? Not an ice-cream coke. About the covers..och it wass nathin'..and there was that twenty that Arthur did. xxx

Mervyn Barrett. "The Willis bit got me thinking about all the dopey and clumsy
74 Jolinont St. letters that I've written in the past. Horrors. What dreadful
Melbourne. thoughts. I think I'd better change the subject. The Varley bit
Victoria ties in with a short film shown here called I AM A LITTER BASKET.
Australia Was made by British Transport Films to point out the problem of
clearing away the vast amounts of rubbish left in Railway Stations every day in
Britain. It shows all the wire litter baskets unused while all around them on the
ground people dump trash. In desperation they break away from their brackets and go
foraging for rubbish on their own. It was quite an amusing little thing. Of most
interest to me was the Donaho letter about women. Most of the women I know who come
on with this "I cant stand women" stuff make an exception of one or two close
friends. I don't think I know any women who have lots of friends of their own sex
in the way that a man has lots. I also get the impression that women don't enjoy
all female gatherings in the same way a man can enjoy an all male gathering.
Certainly not over a long period anyhow. Maybe the feeling that other women will be
more critical of her behaviour than men, will prevent her from relaxing and being
herself. I admit that my impressions have been drawn from idle and probably
incomplete observations and are therefore quite possibly wrong. On the back of
Haver 3 you mention some of your likes and dislikes. I see that one of the likes is
Whisky, so here's a friendly warning. If anyone ever offers you a glass of
Australian Whisky don't take it. It's vile stuff"
xxx Weeclll..you couldn't observe an all female gathering that's true, for if you
could it wouldn't be all female would it? As to the Whisky advice I have pubbed it
here so that others too may be warned xxx

Archie Mercer "Let's turn to HAVERINGS. I see you mention my name several times
434/4 Newark Rd in fact you seem to drag it in by the scruff of its neck whenever
North Hykeham you think of it. You appeal to me re the origin of "fly in the
Lincoln air" for instance. Why me? Am I some sort of bird or something?
The first thing that catches my observation re the phrase - now that you insist on
involving me with it, I don't think I've heard it before - is that it's strictly
tautological - where else, I ask you, can any person or thing fly except in the air?
However, thinking deeply - nay PONDERING even - it occurs to me that probably the
phrase was originally a more meaningful comparison, eg:"He can no more play football
than fly in the air" -"She can no more cook than fly in the air"- "I can no more speak
the Gaelic than fly in the air". From this logical use it becomes corrupted by
popular usage into the illogical-type instance that you give -"this is no more like
the real thing than fly in the air" Sorry I can't do better, but I'm not an expert
on obscure lowland-Scots dialect idiom than fly in the air. Fan Cabinet - now I'm
cited as an allegedly "enterprising lad". I strongly deny this. However (and it must
be borne in mind that I'm not sure how generally the original was handled) I'll see
what I can rake up....

Minister of Health: Ethel Lindsay

Prime Minister: Ella Parker (Everybody else takes her orders and like it)

Foreign Secretary: Julian Parr

Commonwealth Relations: Bruce Burn

Colonial Secretary: George Locke

Home Secretary: John Berry

Minister of Education: Terry Jeeves (Ron's expert at getting around without transport so Terry'll have to take Education)

Minister of Transport: Ron Bennett

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster: Ken Potter

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's Wife: Irene Potter

Lord Privy Seal: I'd better reserve that job for myself, on the grounds that my privy's only fit for seals (ask Ella)

Minister of Agriculture: Ken Bulmer

Chancellor of the Exchequer: Ted Forsyth

To hell with it...COGITO ERGO DICINI FORTAFIUM "

xxx Easy seeing why I put you name to those idle queries of mine! I knew you would answer them, and entertainingly too. xxx

Ruth Berman

5620 Edgewater Boulevard
Minneapolis 17
Minnesota

"Thanks for sending me Haverings 4 & 5..." People can become accustomed all too easily to being on their own. I know. Not wanting to turn into a hermit, I have often made myself go out and join in" I wonder if that

statement of yours will set people off commenting the way your hypothetical non-hypocritical femme-fan did. Anyhow, it sets me off commenting, because I, too, have the problem of turning into a hermit too easily - and because that statement of yours is nonsense on the surface. On the surface, my immediate response is "Well, what's wrong with turning into a hermit." Then, knowing what too much hermiting feels like, I decide that what you probably meant is something like this: being alone is fun and easy; being with people is more fun (in reasonable amounts) but much harder; therefore I sometimes force myself to join in because otherwise I'd take the easy way out almost all the time. Yes? No?"

xxx But yes, of course, and thanks for clarifying my muddy-type remarks. I suppose you will have noticed that fanning induces hermit-like habits. No real fanatic gets done in a crowd..to stencil-cut is a proud and lonely thing....xxx

Sid Birchby

1 Gloucester Ave.
Levenshulme
Manchester 19

"..re Jill Adam's letter, I do not live in a house with "rude cottage walls". Walls of all kinds we have in Manchester, including one that says "Save the Rosenbergs", one that says "Monna, ban science child murders" and one "Doris loves Ernie" (with variations) But no rude walls. We're very keen about things like that, both in public and in private" xxx Yessir! xxx

Betty Kujawa

2819 Caroline
S.Bend 4
Indiana

"You ask why these lazy local gals act that way? Cause they are lazy I'd say or the lives they lead is so unstimulating that all enthusiasm is long gone. The husbands sense something amiss..and complaints are voiced-as time goes by and they get older the complaints of lack of comradship and common interests will become far greater. When the kids of the family go off to college or married lives of their own and wifey has left the social doings of club and femme golf..maybe some will come to life see something is wrong and got 'with it' again-not many by then I fear. I disagree

Harry Warner..there are few femmes I'd confide in---far far more men I'd turn to first..."I find these statements rather shocking" you say because Roy(Tackett) balks at supporting people who wont work and are just plain lazy. Seriously Ethel I dont think for one minute you'd willingly see your own wages taken from you to feed and support wilfully lazy insoloent louts who REFUSE to work for themselves! Thats what Roy is meaning there--to HELL with this welfare-stateism and socialization lark of penalizing the willings worker to support the lazy ones!..Evidence of laziness is only too evident in the quality of the work put out by far far too many these days here--by regular professional parasites on our relief rolls--in the hospitals when I'm there doing "grey lady" work I see so many times gals in having their 7th (or even 12th!!!) illegitimate child--all being paid for and supported by MY city and county taxes--insolent babes having baby after baby and getting money for the act--eventually each child has to be taken from them for the childs protection. Sure there is unemployment here--and I say give a boost and a hand to any guy or gal who shows SOME evidence that they are willing to do their bit--but far too many wont.For these, like Roy,I'd let them starve--"

xxx Well, Betty dear, you already know I do not agree with railings against the Welfare State. I saw this country before we had it, and I did not like it then. xxx

<p>Roy Tackett USMC H&HS-1(Comm)MWHG-1 1st MAW FMFPac c/3Fleet P.O. San Francisco</p>	<p>"Do you really think it possible to re-educate those who can but won't work? xxxxYes, because there has been a scheme here for this and I read that it was highly successfulxxx I'm sorry I left you sitting there frazzling to know why I didn't like Natterings. It's a matter of personal taste, Ethel, and that's</p>
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ad Consider ne a grouch or something but I just don't care for this sort of personal reminiscing. I dunno, I guess I'm rather a minority of one about this type of thing. It must be popular because so many fans do go on and on about their personal lives. But, truthfully, do you think you would find it interesting if I should fill the pages of Dynatron with my memoirs? Would you really be interested in reading about things that have happened to me personally in the 19 or so years I've been knocking about the world as a U.S.Marine? I doubt it. Such things are interesting to me and would perhaps be interesting to others who have had similar experiences but I doubt that they would be interesting to fandom. Maybe I'm wrong. Boggs tells me, in answer to my complaint about mundane fan writings, that nothing is really mundane. He's right perhaps, but in a fanzine I expect to read about stf or fandom. And we're back where we started, aren't we? For I've sort of answered my own complaint in that personal reminiscences are writings about fans.

Owell. I pass"

xxx Och, I don't think you are a grouch at all. That is a very mild sort of grumble and you also see the other person's point of view. Grouches rarely do that. My answer to your query - would I be interested in your life as a Marine, is ycs very much indeed. First of all I would like to know what makes a man join the regular armies of the world. I also like to read about the way other people live in the walks of life I have not entered. Which is why I started my 'memoirs'. Had fandom been full of nurses I would not have bothered. Besides it was Atom's idea that I do this. It might be easy for you, but it isn't for me - I am not a 'born' writer alas, and the necessary re-writing is tedious. xxx

Fred Hunter "OMPA MEMBER No 1 "I say, have you read SCOTTISHE 23 yet?"
 13 Freefield Rd. OMPA MEMBER No 2 "No, haven't had time. Why?"
 Lerwick O.M. No 1 "You'll see. Er..how many lines of comment did you
 Shetland Isles give Ethel's last issue?"
 O.M. No 2 "Ummr...three, I think Look, what is all this?"
 O.M. No 1 "Let me explain....."
 O.M. No 2 "Ghod!"
 O.M. No 1 "If I were you mate,I'd do a Yuri Gagarin and STAY
 up there"
 O.M. No2 "The situations as bad as that, you think?"
 O.M. NO 1 "Let's put it like this man..exactly what are you
 going to say when next you meet Miss L. and she says "So..you thought my zine rated
 only three lines of comment eh?" Will you be able to look without a qualm into those
 steely eyes and answer without faltering "yes".

O.M. No 2 "Great heavens no..(hopefully)"Look I'll give Scot a
 full page in my zine next time round...dammit..TWO pages."

O.M. No 1 (smugly)"Well, you can try that but I don't think you
 stand a chance against my 'ETHEL LINDSAY APPRECIATION ISSUE' already on stencil"

O.M. No 2 (bitterly) "Swine...."

A bit far-fetched you think? Seriously your comments on Ompa were most illuminating
 I've asked for my name to be put on the waiting list and if and when I manage to
 qualify for membership I'd like criticism of my work as a whole. No matter if the
 comments in total rate my production the cruddiest crudzine in circulation..at least
 I would know that I had provoked a positive reaction. I'd feel kinda low but
 satisfied. That way I'd soon learn"

xxx I would not say the dialogue is far-fetched...a l ttle totched maybe. xxx

Brian W.Aldiss "Amid all the elegantly phrased sentences in SCOTTISHE 24, one struck
 24 Marston St. me with terror. This was the announcement by Walt Willis that when
 Iffley Rd. Peter Phillips was cured of his neurosis, he could no longer write.
 Oxford. Ye gods, if they cured my neurosis so that I could no longer write,
 I'm sure I'd turn into a neurotic in no time. It seems generally accepted that some
 sort of occultation or psychotic influence drives most writers to write - and it's no
 good looking at me like that when you publish 'Haverings' and 'Scottishe'. Of
 several books on the subject, I possess only one, Dallas Kennare's 'Nature of Genius'
 which is inconclusive. But I've never seen anything dealing with what makes one
 writer turn to documentary and another to fantasy. Of course, all fiction is fantasy
 from the point of view of actuality; i.e. the author's making something up. But why
 does one man try to imitate the real world and another try to build a world of his
 own? This question has dogged me lately, partly because I've just been reviewing
 Winifred Gerin's biography of "Branwell Bronte". Branwell, as near as dash it, was
 a fantasy writer. As a small boy, he read eagerly, incorporating filtered versions
 of what he read into his play and into his writings, which were mainly the
 microscopic magazines he produced with his sisters, Anne,Charlotte, and Emily Bronte.
 Born in 1817, he grew up in the shade of the great events in Europe, his heroes in
 consequence being Napoleon, Wellesley, and the French Marshall Soult; the artists he
 loved were Piranesi,'mad' John Martin, and Henri Fuseli. These artists influenced his
 own painting - and Miss Gerin's book has a dazzling painting by Charlotte Bronte of
 their imaginary Glass Town. Their fantasy world grew in magnitude. It had its
 battles, its history, its magazines (which published the works of and reviewed the
 poems and pictures of its artists). But where the sisters grew out of the game,

Branwell, to compensate for his inferiorities, grew into it, confusing his identity with the identities of some of its inhabitants. His dreams got too big, his gods got too heavy; they crushed all the spirit out of him - and to all the Brontes spirit was life. Just by the way, a case curiously parellel to Branwell's was published in a book called 'The Jet-Propelled Couch'. This was a modern case, and the Branwell-figure was a man called Kirk, who identified himself with the hero of a series of science fantasy novels that I have always presumed to be Burroughs' John Carter series. Do your readers know this book? I am hoping to reprint the whole fascinating story in a projected collection of fantasies that Faber will, with luck publish next year"

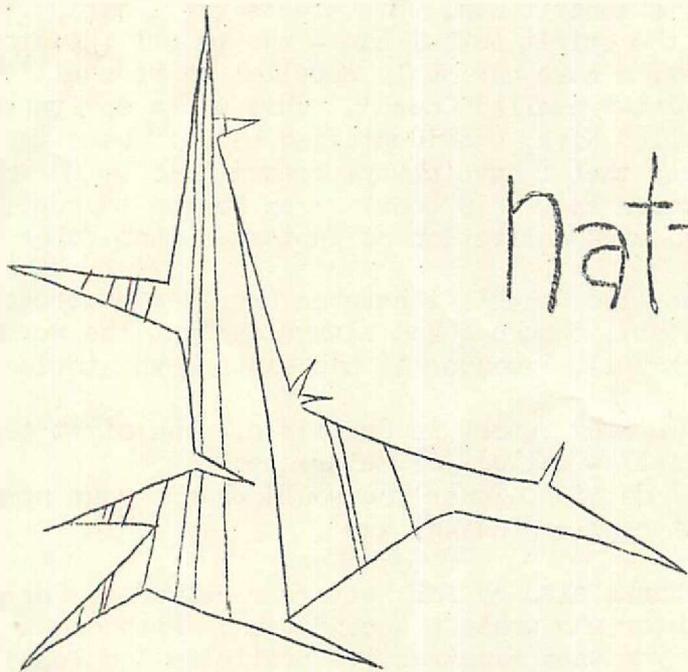
xxx Yes we know of the 'Jet-Propelled Couch'; I have an American paperback edition of this(obtained through Ken Slater), though I had always thought the series referred to the Lensman stories. Poor Branwell, I wonder if his Glass Town stories would sell now? xxx

Brian continues...."Re your "COCL CON" report in Scottishe. You might teach its author to spell Aldiss. He's a fellow called Joe Puttrizeo"

xxx Gluck! Probably my error..I do wish either you would change your name or Eric Benteliffe his address..I find it most confusing! xxx

I really must finish this off: thanks also go for letters received to Forry Akerman, Ron Ellik, Ralph Holland Fred Hunter who wrote a second time. Fred did make a point worth answering though: "I know you want constructive criticism so lemme say that I would like - for perfection's sake, if nothing else- to see your right-hand margins a wee bit more even. I don't suggest you go so far as Redd Boggs does with DISCORD and exactly balance every line(looks nice though) but have you noticed that in Scot 24 you used a hyphen only 4 times at the end of a line- to break up a word that is?".....Well that is deliberate; not having Redd's patience to do the thing properly, I still do not like to halve words in two. I find it makes very awkward reading myself. Does anyone else agree with that? xxx And here is a belated letter from Jill Adams, whose comments will be mainly interesting to the contributors and so will be included in their Egoboo Sheets..

Some of the letters published here apply to remarks from Haverings, but there are very few of you who do not receive both zines, so I hope that will not matter. Should I ever be able to get Haverings down to a decent size I could give it a letter column of its own. It's this post-war boom, y'know.



natterings

The nurses at my first hospital were all untrained girls like myself: although I had attended First Aid classes after school and had learnt some things like the names of bones, bandaging, and simple first aid. Nowadays we would be classed as Nursing Auxiliaries. The next step up the ladder is the State Enrolled Nurse - she has taken and passed the preliminary examinations. The State Registered Nurse has spent three years (it was four in my day) in a Training School Hospital and passed all her examinations. Most of the nurses were farm worker's daughters and their homes were in the surrounding countryside. They usually stayed on until they got married, very rarely did one go on to take her proper training. They were an unambitious lot, rather hearty and usually 'going steady'. At night they would congregate in each other's rooms and gossip about the day's work and their boy friends; whilst I would retire to bed and read avidly.

Then the War came and the blackout. At first only one room was blacked-out, and we all had to sit in that at night, then grope to bed in the dark. Thankful I was when that came to an end. The Matron became exceedingly efficient over the threat of War. At once she had all our white aprons replaced by coarse grey ones: and so, she reasoned, saved the country some money in laundering! Her other pet idea was to instruct us to have a bundle made up on our bedside chairs; in case we had to get out quickly before the onrush of the Enemy. That the Enemy was unlikely to bother his head over the sleepy town of Forfar was not an idea she entertained; to hear her talk, he was just around the corner. Likley enough during the previous war she was one of those who saw the Russians with snow on their boots! Our bundles were to contain: an extra pair of stockings, two warm pairs of knickers, two wool vests, and six handkerchiefs. Thusly equipped we were to be ready for anything...

The time came for me to go on night duty: and for the first time I entered that world-on-its-own where the Night People lived. I discovered that they were always at war with the Day Folks; and this held true for every hospital I went to thereafter

Probably because I have done so much night duty, my sympathies lie all with the Night People. The Day Folks blame them for everything - all lost articles, undone routines, misplaced or broken dishes, and are fervent believers that Night People have no work to do and snooze all night. The Night People, on the other hand, are kinder and inclined to philosophise - "Well, what can you expect from those Day Folks; we do all their work practically, and they still can't cope." Most people dislike night duty, they cannot sleep properly during the day; but I could sleep soundly in daylight and be full of beans all night.

A new Sister arrived named Brummage, she was newly finished her training at the Dundee Royal Infirmary. We were told she was coming to work among us as a sort of rest: after her hard years of training - she was exhausted. We watched her approach with awe and when she actually looked white and tired, were suitably impressed.

As the time passed and I had been at Forfar over 12 months, I began to be bored. The work was easy and the hours long and I hated doing nothing. I became friendly with the other night nurse who was the daughter of a local farmer. She suggested that we go out one morning after duty to join the raspberry gatherers and so make some money. This sounded a wonderful idea to me so off we went.

We arrived at the fields and found many people already at work. We were given our baskets and started down the rows. Being inexperienced we picked slowly, but we enjoyed being out in the fresh air, with now and then a berry popped into our mouths. At midday we elatedly carried our baskets back to be weighed. I was a bit disappointed at the result as I surveyed the shilling in my hand (when I had been dreaming of pounds!) but still it was a valuable sum as my weekly pocket money was 2/6d.

Next morning Matron sent for us - we had been found out - how I know not. Such a lecture.....irresponsible, lowering the dignity of our own hospital, our own Matron, the whole nursing profession; and probably the King too if I could recollect it all in detail. Oh we were abandoned creatures, she said, and lucky not to be dismissed upon the spot. Much chastened Nurse and I crept off to bed. It occurred to neither of us to argue that it was done in our own free time.

Fortunately about that time my Mother decided it was time for me to make a change; I was now 18½, the age when you could start your general training. So I carefully wrote out a letter of application to the Dundee Royal Infirmary. A reply came making an appointment for me to attend for interview - so I trotted off happily to Matron to ask if I might have my monthly day off on that date. Alas! I was again in hot water! It was not etiquette for me to apply for another post without informing her first: she was outraged at my temerity in doing so. She gravely doubted that I would ever be accepted, or last the course if I were. Losh! how that woman could induce a feeling of inferiority into one.

In fear and trembling then when the great day came, I boarded the bus for Dundee and headed for the Infirmary. It stood on a steep hill, a tall red building that dominated all around it. The front hall was a sea of faces at which I gaped, till a kindly porter showed me the way to the offices. Once there I found two other shivering mites waiting, and dumbly we sat side by side. I had heard some stories of this Matron. She was "a real dragon of the old school"..she was "a fearful snob"

I was told..don't mention your Father is in the Jute trade..remember to say 'Yes Matron' every second word... Ushered into the office I was confronted with the largest desk I had ever seen, with a tall stout woman wearing an enormous starched cap, seated formidably behind it. Of the many questions she asked I remember best her asking severely did I take a bath every day; in a tone calculated to infer she doubted if I ever took one. Next the Medical Superintendent arrived and sounded my chest and heart, which was all the medical examinations they bothered with in those days. I was made to feel a very stupid person for wearing a dress instead of skirt and blouse. After that the other two mites and myself were taken up to the sickbay and left to wait again.

"What" tremblingly asked one "could this be for?" I guessed that it would be to obtain a urine specimen for testing, and when I proved to be right, felt quite immeasurably superior. Well, maybe they had stayed at school longer than I, but at least I knew what urine was. Feeling a little heartened over this incident, I went back to Forfar and waited patiently for my letter.

Now I know that, with the war just started, the beginning was upon the hospitals of the shortage of staff which has plagued them ever since. Matron was in no position to be turning down an applicant who had any experience at all, even if she had left school at 14. Then however, I did not realise that, and all through my training I was to be haunted with the fear that I would be thrown out.

The letter arrived: I was to be a probationer at the DRI. Matron shook her head sadly; she did not feel I was the 'right stuff'. I was too lightminded; I often daydreamed, she was not happy about the whole thing and neither, by the time she was finished, was I! As I sat in the train on my way home to Carneustie for a blissful months holiday I reflected: a great deal of Matron's distrust of me stemmed from the fact that I had never been able to hide my feeling of contempt for her. It was that 'Smallpox' routine of hers! How could I have respected anyone who acted so daft! Still, I resolved to mend my ways; and one thing was true! I would have to cut out that daydreaming...

to be continued.

It was when I went to Dundee to work that I first found the joys of reading SF. I used to haunt Woolworths till I found an Astounding for 6d. I still read SF even if there isn't much about it in my zine; honest, Roy Tackett, I do! Only, in those days every story I read was new and marvellous; and nowadays I rarely find anything to enthuse over. Just to look at what waits to be read is to induce a feeling of staleness.

The latest Analog to come to me is the July issue. Here are two novelettes: A SPACESHIP NAMED McGUIRE by Randall Garrett, and TINKER'S DAM by Joseph Tinker. Maybe the last-named is real, but probably he is a house-name. Both stories have psi as their main plot device and are as predicable in their outcome as tea-time each day at four. Gone are the days when the psi plot device alone could thrill me; in a way psi has almost become a form of cheating; as if magic were being used under another name. Yet I can re-read SENTINELS OF SPACE by Eric Frank Russell and still enjoy it. These recent offerings however seem cold and lifeless; filled with cardboard characters, churned out as if from some machine.

Why the world of TINKER'S DAM should seem unreal to me, and the world of SENTINELS FROM SPACE remain romantically thrilling I cannot explain. Yet if I could; or had the words to express my feelings, then I would know where that elusive sense of wonder had gone. I mourn it sorely: Oh for the days when the sight of a new ASTOUNDING was a delight! It cannot be because I am older, else why should I still thoroughly enjoy the Eric Frank Russell story?

So I lift up NEW WORLDS nos 107, 108, and 109 to read the three part serial by John Brunner called PUT DOWN THIS EARTH. Will this be the new and thrilling story that I yearn for? Well...this is Earth, the population has risen catastrophically, there is not enough of anything to go round. The United Nations is in charge trying desperately to keep things under control. Hated and hissed at by the general public (who blame the U.N. for all their ills, illogically of course) is U.N. Agent Greville, the central character. He is in despair because his wife is drifting away from him. Her name is Leda (which turns me against him for a start) one of those child-wife characters who have been done to death. That's the sub-plot, she will eventually drift out of his life and it will be filled by a 'good' type of woman. The plot hinges upon "Happy Dreams"; a new drug that baffles everyone. They don't know what it is; they don't know where it comes from, and they cannot find the end results, as the addicts after a year's addiction - "vanish into thin air." Great puzzlement all round; much hammering at the key phrase 'vanish' so you'll get the point; but of course you're too stupid to follow that clue like 99 per cent of the characters. Only our Hero Greville follows it to its natural conclusion (helped by actually seeing an addict vanish.) So where do they go to? That's right - a new virgin planet. So who had been distributing it? That's right - the U.N. And this virgin planet, what is it like? Allow me to quote.. "There were cabins of wooden planks. There was a watermill turning in the river. There were sounds of hammering on wood and metal.. Kathy (the Good one) was standing in the door.. She wore a plain straight dress woven of sunbleached natural thread; her feet thrust into sandals of plaited reeds.. "Come and see what I've been doing! I've been making clothes, weaving and sewing; I've been testing plants and helping to discover natural drugs.. "The newcomer in the new world, Greville followed her."

Well, not me, ecchh. This passion for back to the simple life that besets so many of our SF writers just annoys me. I like new things, new ideas, progress! If they want to go back, I for one won't follow them.

Whats next? The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction August 1961. This won't let me down surely. The trouble is, by this time, I am becoming easily irritated. The first story THE KAPPA NU NEXUS has a very turgidly written beginning; and this puts me further out of humour, so I only give its joke of prostitutes from the past in a Fraternity house a wry smile. SURVIVAL PLANET by Harry Harrison I will forget ten minutes after reading. COGI DROVE HIS CAR THROUGH HELL reminds me somehow of ~~the same thing~~ I thought cry. Cor! I am in a mood am I not? JULIETTE next; this one is translated from the French by Damon Knight, and really rouses me to a frenzy. The man in the story describes what is supposed to be a love affair with a car. Cars now have personalities, can drive themselves and JULIETTE is one of those feminine personalities that only a man could dream up. I don't see how any red-blooded woman could read this story without wanting to clonk the writer one hard over the nut. It is written in the fulsome style which I avoid in W- mags, and is the type of thing men usually call a "woman's story". It brings all my feminist tendencies roaring out, and I almost bite chunks out of my pillow. Breathing hard, I read on: PIGGY - a whimsy. THE CASE OF THE HOMICIDAL ROBOTS - I don't believe in

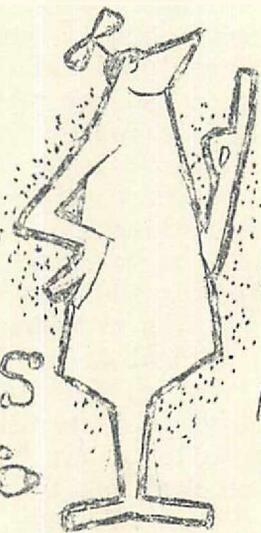


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