

the

# SKYRACK

NEWSLETTER



"And this is the spot where John Ramsey auctioned Famous Monsters of Filmland for 30/-."

This, at last, is SKYRACK number 93, published 26th November 1966 by Ron Bennett, 52 Fairways Drive, Forest Lane, Harrogate, Yorkshire, England. Six issues for 3/6d or 50¢ (\$1 airmail). Stateside subscriptions may be sent Buck Coulson, (who sits neglected, waiting to hear from me somewhere along) Route 3, Hartford City, Indiana 47348. News of interest to sf fandom welcomed -- it might even be published some day. Cartoon by Arthur "Atom" Thomson. Contributions by Ethel Lindsay, George Locke, Tom Schlück, Ella Parker, Keith Freeman, John Ramsey Campbell and that ol' faithful to whom thanks are especially extended, Harry Nadler.

TUCKER'S NEO-FAN GUIDED REPRINTED. See page 3

THE HORROR FILM CLUB OF GREAT BRITAIN'S FIRST ANNUAL CONVENTION took place over the weekend of 23rd/25th September. The programme was scheduled to commence on the Friday evening (23rd) but as projectionist Harry Nadler, complete with films and projector) arrived somewhat belatedly, attendees adjourned to the bar. The representative party of northern fandom, Harry & Marie Nadler, John Ramsey Campbell, Dave Trengove, Linda Barnes, Dave Briton, Brian Marshall, Bob Holland and Bill Burns were misdirected on their arrival in Bath, the western convention town and spent several hours searching for the main hotel, the White House, discovering only the following morning that The White House was....a white house, only two doors away from a place where they had made enquiries the evening before.

During the weekend a total of eighteen films and film extracts were shown, amongst them The Black Lagoon series, King Kong, The Mummy, One Million B.C., The Lost World, Return of the Ape Man, It Came From Outer Space, Nosferatu and Destination Moon.

Auctions of books and film items were highspots of the weekend, with John Ramsey Campbell in fine form as auctioneer, selling "prize items" like Forry Ackerman's Famous Monsters of Filmland for 30/- and a photograph of Boris Karloff for £1. SF books on auction brought long silences from bidders, most of whom were interested only in film material.

The fancy dress party, billed as The Mad Monster Ball, had much the same poor response as have the SF cons of late. TV and press reporters arrived on the scene and apparently based their entire coverage on this one event. David Fletcher of Bradford was awarded first prize as the best Ghoul of the year and along with all entrants left for the bar at Ted Tubb's request.

(continued overleaf)

## Horror Film Club Convention(continued)

A handsome silver trophy was awarded to John Ramsey Campbell who just outwitted David Fletcher in the film quiz. This item began with twelve contestants and after some thirty minutes only these two remained. The final questions were really tough, getting down to lines of dialogue from sf and horror films and requiring the film titles as answers. Despite John Ramsey's insistence to give all his answers in French at first, he beat his opponent by 6 correct answers to five.

Delta Film Productions gave their usual extraordinary performance and a critics' panel, which kept creeping towards members of the audience who complained of its inaudibility, was held, stimulating within the ranks of the listeners more discussion than attention.

The Convention suffered somewhat from the fluidity of its programme and from the understandable inexperience of its organiser, the excellent Gary Parfitt, who attempted to shoulder the convention single handed and ultimately was left with the responsibility for dinners which were ordered but neither eaten nor paid for, and for the actions of certain people who simply did not pay for their attendance.

Attendees included Ted Tubb, Ken Bulmer, the Delta Doomsters and associates, three local children who huddled together in terror during the Delta film show, Dave Paldock, fanzine editors Ray Fawcett and Bram Stokes. Though fandom was thus represented no room parties were held, attendees being booked into two hotels, one under Salvation Army management.

( HN and JRC)

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APOLOGIES TO BOTH OUR READERS dept.

Since Skyrack first saw publication in 1959 a monthly schedule has been roughly adhered to. Occasionally an issue has been skipped and also occasionally issues have tumbled forth one after the other (There was one run of some four or five fortnightly issues and one hectic week during which three issues were run). Skyrack 92 appeared at the beginning of September, almost three months ago. It will be evident from the enclosed flier that my activities inside the sf field now extend in other directions and accordingly Skyrack-time is limited, for my professional activities and responsibilities in mundane circles also show no signs of diminishing. Because of already-laid plans which include a possible change of job during 1967, it may well be that Skyrack will have to cease publication completely. In the interim period, however, publication will be continued if at all possible. No promises are being made, but the century mark is a target, at least.

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OUR MAN AT THE PHILLYCON..... Former BSFA stalwart, Jim Groves, emigrated to the USA on Saturday, 8th October, after an eight month visa-wait. The Philadelphia convention was held over the weekend of 12/13th November and Jim was there, writing this report: "Charlie and Marsha Brown took me in hand and introduced me around. I met fandom's photographer, Jay Kay Klein, and Tom Purdom and remet Frank Dietz and Al Hoch who is now back in the States and has a wife, Barbara. I also met a lot of my favourite authors -- Hal Clement, Sprague de Camp, Isaac Asimov -- and with my signable books crated up 3,000 miles away!. Asimov, a brilliant speaker, was Guest of Honour for the convention whose overall theme was SF & The Two Cultures. Tom Purdom opened the Saturday session with some extracts from an article he had written (continued on back page. Stay with it)

TWO MONTHS' FANZINES, in brief:

Wembley,

PHILE 2 (Graham Charnock, 1 Eden Close, Alpertton, /Middlesex; Aug 66; 1/-) A good mixture of general articles, sf slanted material and fanzine reviews. The overall tone is light and informal and qualitative and one cannot help but feel that with a shade more fannishness this zine could go far. British fandom seems at the moment to be in a transitional stage; the old guard have largely faded from the zinescene and there is definite room for someone to come along and produce a "focal point" fanzine which could take a decided hold on fandom's imagination. With the right backing and enthusiasm, this could be it.

GRIMWAB 3 (Harry Bell, 28 South Hill Rd., Bensham, Gateshead 8, Co Durham) A fair enough issue, with letters taking pride of place. The duplicating and lay-out, however, need far more attention.

XERON 4 (Sept 66; John Quattromini & Mike Ashley, 9 and 8 (respectively), Shurland Ave., Sittingbourne, Kent; 1/6d) 60 bulky pages of fair to average articles and stories and once again a most useful and thorough checklist to current sf.

LES SPINGE 16 (Oct 66; Darroll Pardoe, 11 Cheniston Gardens, London W 8) The last remaining bastion (which reminds me, Eric.....) of Stourbridge fandom has moved to London. LS is thin, and fair, but not yet up to the standard of former glories.

SCOTTISHE 41 (Ethel Lindsay, Courage House, 6 Langley Ave., Surbiton, Surrey; Sept 66; 4 for 7/6d or \$1) Editorial and informal matter on books by Ethel, Ken Potter reminisces (is there such a word?) on caravan life, Ethel talks on hospitals and those writers no fanzine should be without (have you ever seen any article from them which has not been thorough and entertaining?), Frances and Brian Varley take a long look at Arthur Mee.

AUSTRALIAN SF REVIEW (nos 3 & 4, Sept/Oct 66, John Bangsund, 19 Gladstone Ave., Northcote N 16, Melbourne, Australia; 6 issues 14/-). With these issues ASFR consolidates itself as the leading international sf magazine. Terrific stuff, with John Foyster taking a lengthy and an analytical look at recent editorials in Analog.

THE NEO-FAN'S GUIDE TO SCIENCE FICTION FANDOM is a title which deserves scoring. This is the second edition of the Guide, first published in 1955. The editor is one Bob Tucker. The Guide is available from Buck Coulson (see colophon for address) at 25¢ or 2/- a throw). Get it -- the money will be well spent -- and wasted if you spend it on something, anything, else!

Other zines, even more briefly: YANDROL 161-163, Buck Coulson (UK: Alan Dodd, 77 Stanstead Rd., Hoddesdon, Herts; 4/6s, 12/15s) This is a fanzine. Recommended. HABAKKUK (Chapter II, verse 2; Bill Donaho, PO Box 1284, Berkeley, Calif 94701) Available for letters of comment -- excellent material, including a lengthy look at sf in the UK by George Locke.

QUIP 3 (Len Bailes & Arnie Katz, 98 Patton Blvd, New Hyde Park, NY 11043; 50¢) High priced but worth every penny. Invaluable to the fan who either yearns for the old days or wonders why others do.

FOCAL POINT, Mike McInerney's slightly irregular (I should talk) newszine. 12 for 7/- from Peter Singleton, Ward 6A, Whittingham Hospital, Preston, Lancs.

RATATOSK, Bruce Pelz's slightly regular newszine. 3/25¢ or 1s 9d from Archie Mercer. Both these newszines are of course recommended and not only because of a spirit of newszine togetherness!

An X here shows your subscription expires this issue ; next issue

PHILLYCON REPORT(continued): for a woman's magazine, a type of "What to do if your child catches SF" in the course of which he quoted a letter from a librarian who thought that some sf was "pure erotica," thereby occasioning the remark from Asimov, "As long as it's pure...." A good time was had by all, especially me. I gather that the Convention circuit here begins again in April and runs around until September, so here's to 1967!" ((Yes, just like Harrogate. Thanks, Jim))

SPECULATION 14(Oct 66;Peter Weston, 9 Porlock Crescent, Birmingham 31;2/-)A slight change of name for Zenith. A lengthy look at Heinlein's "middle period" by Alexei Panshin and various departments. Well up to the standard of previous issues in every respect...a magazine with the Skyrack mark of approval.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS dept: Jim Groves, Room 416, Hotel Lafayette, 4th & Northampton, Easton, Penna 18042, USA.

Ed Wood, 151 Calderon Ave(Apt 341), Mountain View, Calif 94040.

Darroll Pardoe, 11 Cheniston Gardens, London W 8.

Jim Grant, 80 Bargates, Christchurch, Hants.

Archie & Beryl Mercer, 9 Cotswold Rd., Bedminster, Bristol 3.

TOM SCHLÜCK, who recently returned to Hannover after his successful TAFF tour of the United States wishes to be allowed some little space to express in print his thanks to all of American fandom for "the overwhelming reception" accorded him. "In addition," continues Tom, "my 'thank you' to the fans the world over who, with their contribution to TAFF, made this wonderful trip possible for me. I hope to have a report finished in due time."

QUICK-FIRE SNIPPETS: Fred Pohl interviewed last week on 24 Hours:::Harlan Ellison in the public eye with Soldier on TV's Outer Limits, a Man from UNCLE programme and an appearance in a Woman's Mirror article on Frank Sinatra!:::Don Wollheim and Walt & Madeleine Willis recently in London for a week's stay. Ron Bennett also recently in London...for five hours!::: John & Elizabeth Foyster will be leaving Australia early next year, bound for these shores:::Bristol Easter Con membership now way over the 100 mark:::Interesting 2 page leaflet recently circulated round British fandom. Posted in London this was stated to have originated with Ted Tubb, Archie Mercer, Chris Priest, Brian Alldis, Mike Moorcock, Ken Slater and Pete Weston. The circular discussed the possibility of the BSFA forming regional committees and asked interested parties to send 2/6 to Chris. If you haven't already heard, this was a fake, parties' names being used without their knowledge. Hey ho, some people need lessons in how to hoax. The main factor is to have those who are hoaxed share in the enjoyment after they've called you the nasty names.

SKYRACK 93  
from Ron Bennett  
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Yorkshire

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