

An S-F Fanzine issued for the June '58 OILPA mailing membership and other interested people by one A. Vinç Clarke of 7 Inchmery Rd., Catford, London, S.E. 6. Some of the opinions expressed herein are by no means the editor/publisher's.

MY GHOD! THEY DID SOMETHING!!!

In ZYMIC 6, published in the December mailing, I appear to have struck a spark and started a conflagration. The case for Doing Something about the apathetic state of British fandom has certainly been put before, and I'm surprised that the response to DON'T SIT THERE...has been so great; I feel like a man who has casually pushed a button and seen an ICBM take off with a whoosh.

The Liverpool group, and in particular Dave Newman and Norman Shorrocks, were so interested in the idea that they sent a tape along, filled with talk on the possibility of setting up a new Society. Their idea was for me to start off a tape discussion, which would then be circulated to those groups and interested fans who had recorders. This was before the Kottering Con., and I did suggest on this tape that it might be brought along to the Con. for the benefit of those without their own tapers. The three of us at No. 7 then found that, cash-wise, it was very imprudent of us to attend the Con. as we were confronted with the necessity of having to take an early holiday this year. Although disappointed, I felt that the tape would be a satisfactory substitute for my opinions in any discussion that arose on the business of forming a society.

Unfortunately, the tape went astray at the last moment; it was sent by Walt Willis to Norman Shorrocks during the week before the Con., and was accidentally sent to the wrong office at Norman's place. When the discussion was inaugurated at the Con. by Dave Newman (who is a Good Man), he managed to remember a number of my points and entered them into the discussion, which greatly pleased me when hearing the record of those sessions later. He then sent me back the original tape, plus those made at the Con., a total of about 6 hours listening time, and here am I under a moral (and fanish) obligation to report back to you what happened after I pushed that button.

In the condensed transcriptions which follow I've done my best to follow the exact sense of what was said, even though in all cases this should be regarded as quasi-quoting and my own interpretation of a purely aural record. Interpolations of my own are quoted between asterisked brackets thus (*.....*) to avoid anyone overlooking the fact that they are editorial insertions.

—DISCUSSION TAPE—

(* This tape will be sent on its rounds again when this has been typed *)

"This tape is meant as a free-for-all discussion rather than a policy making instrument...thanks to Liverpool for sending me this tape, which when I received it was filled with 45 minutes of suggestions about the state of fandom....

They were of the opinion that organisations don't work, except small ones, as the average fan has an anarchistic outlook; when an organisation is suggested there's some difficulty in getting people to 'keep their feet on the ground'. In the experience of the LASFS there must be something ^{for} new fans to come to, something solid, a club or something similar to give the newcomer a sense of belonging.

They think the major difficulty is in the setting up of an organisation which would have to be run by fans who have been in the swim for years and have great difficulty

in meeting the neo-fan on his own ground of s-f appreciation.

The L'pool fans then mentioned their new member who contacted the group via the Information Bureau at the Town Hall, although the LASFS had not taken official steps to register in any way with their local authorities. This is put forward as one way of getting into contact with the neofan, tho' my own reaction is that the normal, or rather, ordinary type of neofan would never dream of taking such steps. (* I bet you didn't, gentle reader!*)

L'pool continued; the ordinary person we want to contact doesn't know that fan-groups exist at all, also mentioned the possibility of contacting through placing leaflets in the local libraries. (* See the Con. discussion tape for more on this*)

(* Most of the other comments by the L'pool group were also repeated in essence in the last OMPA mailing, so on the discussion tape I turned to this, first of all putting in some of my own thoughts on definitions of terms which had aroused some comment from OMPA & letters from fans outside the organisation to whom I'd sent copies of ZYMIC*)

I, in a sense, straddle two types of fandom, the serious-and-constructive and the lightly-humorous, as do several OMPAites. There are, however, people whose fanning is always pretty serious, concerned mainly with s-f criticism and so on, and it's this type, rather than the new reader-cum-fan, who are the natural basis for an organisation. I'm terrified that there should grow up any split between fanzine fans and the serious types (using fanzine fan in its present form as one who puts out a 'zine of a primarily light type). My own viewpoint is that s-f is interesting and absorbing, and I can discuss most facets of it, but after a while it palls. This may seem impossible to those who've been reading for, say, 2, 3 or 5 years, but after 20... Ghod!

If one is not to become bored, one has to look for other things in s-f, and that's where fanzine fandom presents a small microcosm of the outside world; fandom is gradually increasing its likeness to this outside world (as Sandy pointed out in his BLUNT) tho' on an exceedingly small scale and that, for me, is where its fascination lies.

But there are people who can keep on reading s-f and do know of fanzine fandom but who for various reasons don't want to get mixed up in the fanzine field. We have, for instance, the Cheltenham group, who are busily evolving a type of fandom which is peculiarly their own, largely slanted towards ceremony because of an interest by some of its members in ceremony. I say good luck to them, but my own main interest in fandom is communication between fans and if you're looking for definitions I call an active fan someone who not only attends a club and reads s-f but by some means does something to amuse or interest his fellow fans...that is, he's in contact with more fans than there are in his local group. (*On putting this down on stencil it's occurred to me that fanzine fans will soon be in the position of the Press as it is in the mundane world, another analogy with the Outside; until recently one could be sure that one was writing for an audience composed mainly of other fanzine publishers*)

It's this factor of Communication which has bred many of the brighter fanzines, and the spirit of fanzine fandom, and has also given rise to the term of BNF. A Big-Name-Fan to my way of thinking is not a great and lordly character and not snobbish, but he or she is a fan who is known to numbers of other fan. It doesn't matter what his character is, really, as long as he's known. The definition is given here not only to define my own feelings, but because the label can be a source of gratification, and it should be an inducement to a newcomer to fandom to enter into communication with other fans. (* This is given as there seems to be some criticism of the use of the term at all*)

If someone is at all interested in fandom, then information on fandom in all its aspects should be available. The newcomer can be shown fanzines etc., but first of all the initial approach must be through s-f; what the newcomer becomes then is up to him.

L'pool say they are worried about the amount of support available from London. Well, the population of the GLOBE often dwindles until OMPAites make up 50% of the visitors, and as far as I can see from the OMPA mailing everyone agrees that British fandom has come to a parlous state, everyone agrees that something should be done about it, and as far as I can see everyone agrees that a new Society would be one of the best possible answers.

Most of the foregoing is in relation to the L'pool tapo; now some other comments:

TERRY JEEVES in a letter; interested in a revival of a society providing it fulfills some useful purpose. A Club should start regular projects on the s-f side, and it must offer more than a name and an official organ.

SID BIRCHBY in a letter: There should be some sort of continuity from one Con. to another. He takes a dim view of a Society, which "usually boils down to a lot of rules no one keeps and one or two suckers doing all the leg-work", but then says that we can't afford to 'level off' with old fans gaffiating all over, also suggests that some research could be undertaken into the causes of GAFIA.

ROLES in OMPA suggests I'm influenced too much by London apathy, tho' as a fanzine fan I can point to the number of fanzines which are appearing with any sort of frequency as compared with 2-3 years ago and say "Look!" He also says "The name is a flag, a fact not emphasised in DON'T SIT THERE". John also suggests that Ken Slater should be contacted, and also says that London should have as many fans as New York. Remember, John, s-f has never been so popular over here as in the US, and we've always been behind in the proportionate number of fans. John also states that the new fan must be taken in hand and trained, and refers to a theme that constantly recurs...that there is too little about s-f in fandom to interest newcomers.

BOBBIE WILD also suggests contacting KFS, and suggests that part of the cost of an advert in a prozine could be borne by a new society in collaboration with KFS, he advertising his wares and the society its existence. This strikes me as very interesting, as my own first intimation that there existed a British organised fandom was through seeing a fanzine advertised in the catalogue of the L'pool "Science Fiction Service", which I had in turn contacted through an advert. in TALES OF WONDER. Bobbie also mentions the possibility of undesirable characters entering fandom if it were advertised widely, but I think that this is inevitable, advertisement or not. There's no reason why one should be polite to people one doesn't like in fandom....

CHUCK HARRIS in OMPA says that Anglo-Fandom has become a clique; the Willis column in NEBULA is not enough advertisement for new blood. I might mention that I approached Ted Carnoll when it became evident that a new Society might be born, and he offered to run any announcements on these lines I'd like to give him. Chuck also states that the foetal fan is lucky if he understands 10% of the allusions in fanzines and one of the basic necessities is a Neofan Guide, like Bob Tucker's.

RON BENNETT says he has tried to contact new people by watching at the local library for those who take out s-f.

EPHEL LINDSAY points the analogy of fandom with the London Circle, which definitely needs new blood, and offers to help.

(ZYMIC 4)

ARTHUR THOMSON says very simply, "What do you want me to do about it" which is very nice of him.

ARCHIE MERCER, who generally dissents from the majority opinion, says that the trouble with a Society is that it erects a barrier between members and others, and an all-embracing Society would make him shy away. Well, when Archie joined fandom OPERATION FANTAST was virtually all-embracing, but has never, as far as I know, embarrassed fans. Archie says Trufandom is a state of mind; people with a wide range of interests who characterise the fanzine-fan type are naturally subject to the influence of the mundane world through this, and it being easier to conform to the mundane than otherwise, the trufan character is a very rare bird indeed. Archie ends with the remark that we don't need a Society, we need a Bureau. Personally, I consider that this is one of the most significant remarks in the discussion so far. (*Archie also put forward his Trufan definition at the Con., but to save repetition it has been eliminated in that report*)

There were a couple of returns from the States; PAVLAT in OMPA said that the main difficulty is finding people to do the work and avoiding the Club atmosphere...this appears to be a purely personal reaction...and that one difficulty in organising is the 'dead wood' encountered. He characterises the whole thing as an executive problem.

DICK ENEY is pessimistic; "fandom inherently lacks the ability to become an institution" and I'm calling for a process of institutional maturation to be applied to fandom and the development of managerial types, which can hardly be expected in a hobby. (* I'd hate to generalise on over-all patterns for hobbies, but we surely have different elements (such as the popularity of s-f) influencing us than will be the case with model-train enthusiasts, golfers, and people who put ships into bottles?*) "Our amorphous mass is very unlikely to run into any condition it can't adapt to.." which may be true of US fandom, but I'm dubious over here. I do really think that British fandom is stagnating and alarmed because of it.

SANDY's 'zine...4 pages on the subject, every word with which I agree with and can't really quote. Again, the point is made that an interest in s-f is essential.

DOROTHY RATIGAN's contribution is rather wild and woolly, but merits consideration because she is less of a fanzine fan than most of the contributors. She thinks the causes of the disintegration of fandom are banality, obsession with 'egoboo', states that labels such as BNF are irritants, and suggests that if a Society is formed it should have s-f as a basis and a Central Library.

TED TUBB, in Dorothy's 'zine, does some of his usual stirring...jazz is not s-f, sex is not s-f, etc. "Men who have been in fandom 20 years don't just get up and wave it goodbye for no reason." Of course, other things can happen over a 20 year period, Ted, which have nothing to do with s-f. Ted wants more serious and constructive fanning, and says a Society must offer something. (* A constant theme of Ted's at the Convention, as if I had not written in DON'T SIT THERE... "the major promise would be that such a society would not be an end in itself but would exist for specific purposes."*)

PAUL ENEVER emphasises the two different types of fan, the s-f and the social-minded, and after generally denigrating the Society offers all the help he can give! (* I don't think you meant the social-minded fan was solely confined to fanzine types, Paul...some folk like to get together but haven't the ability (or inclination) to put out fanzines*)

There was an extremely interesting letter from ERIC BENTCLIFFE, but before going on

(ZYMIC 5)

to it I'll insert some preliminary remarks.

In the ZYMIC I advocated a Society because it not only implies a group which can undertake activity through being organised (bearing in mind that most active fans are busy individuals already) but offers a name and a sense of belonging. However, on second thoughts I've been wondering if the name is as all-important as John Roles, for instance, and to a lesser degree myself in DST have believed. Archie's reaction may be entirely personal, but I remember that the old BSFA was going when I first encountered fandom, and I didn't join. It's also as well to remember that the greatest organised event in British fandom, the World Con., was widely advertised in prozines so that no s-f reader could have missed it, yet they stayed away in droves. I'm wondering if those of us who have sufficiently conquered any basic shyness to communicate via this and that have given sufficient thought to the shyness (and in many cases inferiority complexes) of the s-f reader before he contacts fandom. The fact that even in this day and age the s-f enthusiast is regarded as slightly nuts may influence the lone wolf's attitude to other readers and fans. He, he thinks, has slightly eccentric tastes, but the other fellow is clean crazy.

There is one extremely good alternative to a Society which would, however, act as Societies do in getting group activities starting and spreading the news of fandom's existence around. A bureau, as put forward by Archie without elaboration and by Eric and Sid Birchby in letters to me. Eric and Sid had been discussing the whole problem preparatory to a TRIODE article.

Eric suggested a British Fancyclopaedia - what I had in mind was a sampler - and wondered whether the rest of British fandom would support it. When published it would be issued by the Bureau to current and staying fanzine editors who could then send out copies to enquirers, and it would also go to Club Secretaries, of course.

Dissemination of information of this kind is definitely wanted, of course, and I'll throw in my own suggestions. We should consider setting up a Science Fiction Information Bureau or some equally 'official'-sounding title which would prepare various lists, but not necessarily in one volume...not only because of the work involved but because of the cash angle. Any sort of organisation like this has to be solvent...it can't keep on supporting itself out of the pockets of the fens who are brave enough to take an interest in it. So I'd like to see a Bureau, with a few centralised points in touch with each other, each having the Bureau's leaflets, which would consist of items like Ron Bennett's DIRECTORY, DUPLICATING WITHOUT TEARS if you like, a new booklet compiled by all the club secretaries in the country, past and present, explaining how to set up local clubs and (where necessary), why their club failed, the Introduction to Fandom (which would have to be very carefully prepared), an S-F Bibliography, showing the kind of thing that one can pick up at the marketplace bookstall and the bookshop and in the public libraries (but good quality material), and perhaps a journal or similar organ.

Ideally, I suppose something on the lines of my SFN would suit for this, but it's an exhausting job to compile that sort of magazine, and I'm not anxious to volunteer for any more editing, so please don't start looking my way. This journal could contain current news in the manner of CONTACT and SFN, it could handle a Reader's Query section on the s-f side ("When did this story/series appear" and so on), naturally advertise the other leaflets available from the Bureau, and generally keep the neo-fan in his pre-fan stage in touch with what was going on. It would also contain plenty of plugs for current fanzines.

I've also thought that such a journal could be part of a somewhat larger sericon fanzine which could contain contributions from fledgeling fens anxious to try their

wings, and from the old-timer BNF willing to do it for amusement only, but, and this is an important point, ready to fall back on reprinting sericon articles from past fanzines if need be. You could always, therefore, have a material backlog, and might possibly attract more enthusiasm from the usual fanzine fan - whom I think can appreciate a well-written piece on s-f as much as anybody - into the bargain.

In passing, a recent post brought a curious offering from a couple of Dutch enthusiasts - I won't call them fans because I don't know very much about them - who have the idea of producing a 'Fannual' along the lines of Ken Slater's OPERATION FANTAST HANDBOOK of blessed memory. It sounds like a wonderful Project, but in the course of their leaflet they say that they have 'thousands of names' of fans which they propose to publish, and this makes me somewhat dubious. Thousands of names? If anything does come of this project it sounds just the sort of thing that would be helpful to British fans (* in spite of the fact that in this leaflet the prices are all given in dollars and cents and the whole thing appears to be aimed at the US*) and it's worth keeping an eye on.

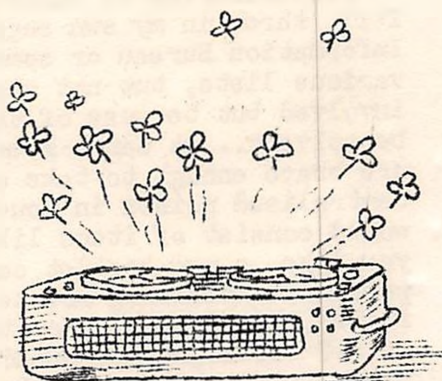
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(* That, apart from the usual farewell's was that. The tape was then sent back to L'pool, who passed it on to Willis, who commented thus:- *)

¶Hello...the L'pool people have sent this tape on to me, as they evidently felt that what this symposium needed was another simp. It's rather interesting that it should be Vince Clarke who raised this idea of a new fan organisation, because it was he more than any one person (even the N3F in all its august majesty) which convinced me that fan organisations were no good. I came into fandom at a time when the SFS had passed into his hands and shortly afterwards passed on. Well, not shortly afterwards...its death was lingering."

(* It's rather interesting that it should have been Walt Willis, whose independent SLANT was obviously giving him a lot more fun than trying to run an official organ was giving me, which eventually caused Ken Bulmer and myself to cut the throat of the SFS*)

Walt continued that fan organisations usually hinged on the question of incentives. It was characteristic of these organisations that people welcomed them and offered any assistance in their power short of actual help. When it comes down to it the organisation is left to a small group, and there's very little fun. Eventually it attracts politically-minded fans, and the thing ends in the depths of N3Fdom. It should be a fan axiom that nothing is done by an organisation, everything by the individual. Ken Slater did more than any one person to revive fandom in Britain after the war...he was incidental in bringing myself in and later James White and Bob Shaw; there'll probably be many fans at Kettering who wouldn't be there if it weren't for Ken, but his wasn't an organisation in the sense that Vince mentions. As for the idea of a Bureau, the sentence of Archie Mercer's was the most perceptive and sensible made in the discussion.



Organisations attract politically-minded fans, those who are out for power, and they peter out because in England no one is interested in power and in the States because too many people are interested in it and the organisations end up in feuds. The other incentive, that of becoming a BNF, is almost as bad; it gives people the idea of the purpose of engaging in fanactivity is personal aggrandisement. People work themselves up into a frenzy of schedules and publishing, and work themselves

(ZYMIC 7)

out of fandom in less than the 3 years it's supposed to take from neofan to BNF. (** In re. Sid Birchby's remark about the need of curing gafia, there's a subject to be kicked around here in the investigation of the fan-orbit of 3 years; some of us last, but what of the Fred Robinsons, Tony Thornes, Jan Jansens, Geoff Wingroves, Dave Vendelmans, to name only European fans that spring to mind?*)

Walt goes on: the true base of fandom is the come in and have fun. There is a tendency for fandom to lose cohesion, however, a process that started in America about 2 years ago. There are small groups with no interest in each other; each fanzine has its own little coterie, and neofans have no chance to find out about fandom as a whole. Another tendency is for subgines to restrict their sub. list; it's a bad thing when the newcomer can't obtain some of the best fanzines.

It seemed to me (* continues Walt*) that what was needed was a Bureau, and Ken Bulmer and I came up with a suggestion that is something like a cross between an information bureau and a book-of-the-month club. The idea was to take money from onquirers, and send them all the first-class fanzines published (in our judgement) until the sub. ran out.; this would ensure that the neos gained a good impression of the field and at the same time would guarantee a certain sales-figure for the best fanzines. I mentioned this in the NEBULA column once, calling the organisation the NIRVANA GUILD, and had a dozen replies. At least one of the fans who replied has since come into fandom. (* For a better picture than this condensation from the tape, see NEBULA 18*)

We didn't pursue the matter apart from this one advert., but it seems to me that this is the sort of thing for a fan organisation to do. The less publicity we have for fan activities the better, if past Con reports are any evidence. What we want is better s-f to attract the public's interest, and we can do that by criticising the pros.

As for useful publications, Ron Bennett is doing far better on his own than any fan organisation ever did. (* Granting that, Walt - and it's a big grant- why should such tasks be left to the devotion of one fan?*) The best way of getting recruits is to show them the best fandom has to offer. The Project for re-publishing from OMPA would be far better for fandom than some grandiose organisation for which you'd ask people to pay five shillings or even ten shillings a year and offer nothing but the glory of belonging to the British S.F. Society or whatever name they call it, and receive no material benefits at all; no one is going to go around flaunting a Society badge like an Ovaltiney."

—CONVENTION DISCUSSION TAPE—

(* The discussion at Kettering appears to have extended over Sunday afternoon and evening, with a break for tea (and probably another when the Bar opened.) About 40-50 fans appear to have been present; a number of those active in fandom on the fanzine side were missing, and the London representation was way down. The following, as previously, is a description of the proceedings, naturally condensed, as heard on the tapes.*)

Dave Newman, as Chairman, brought the meeting to order, and gave a brief resume of the ZYMIC article, its results, and some of the views contained in the tape which had not arrived (and which forms the first part of this 'zine.) He then threw the meeting open to the debaters.

ERIC BENICLIFFE said that to attract new blood we should have Conventions in big cities; he felt that the neofan would not be attracted to the primarily social Con. at first, although he hoped that these (such as the Kettering affair) , would con-

tinue. DAVE NEWMAN replied that he was all in favour of the Kettering-type Cons being held as well, and was ready to organise them indefinitely.

DAVE then continued that one point brought out in correspondence was the theme that fandom must "get back to s-f" and the present type of fanzine fan wasn't much help in bringing in new-comers into fandom. He said that he wondered what an innocent NEW WORLDS reader would say on having a copy of PLOY shown to him and being told that this was s-f fandom.

BENNETT: "The mind boggles!"

DAVE continued that the same thing could be said of TRIODE and practically every other fanzine. The point was, how could we attract the reader of s-f who will gravitate from reading to the more interesting and entertaining type of sociable fan?

The ice having been broken, a discussion on ways and means followed. FRANK SIMPSON complained that none of the British s-f 'zines printed full names and addresses, which was one good point of contact. DAVE COHEN said that the NSFCC was founded on contacts through letter columns. BENNETT remarked that fanzine review columns in prozines were most helpful; perhaps something could be done to persuade more prozines to mention fanzines.

TED TUBB, as an ex-prozine editor, gave it as his opinion that fans were made, not born; he agreed that letter columns were a help, but altho' editors were happy to print letters they didn't get them from 'esoteric' fandom fans. Before we went into the question of making contacts we should consider what we are offering. What are you going to tell the readers we are? Newcomers want to feel that they belong to a body which wants to help them.

BENTCLIFFE said one of the first jobs of any organisation should be a duplicated fandom 'sampler'. The NSF had published a guide to fandom, but they had gone wrong in listing page after page of slang only. What was wanted was welcome articles by well-known fan and a few slang terms and phrases. You mustn't blind people with science. The sampler could also contain a list of fanzines and publishers, and perhaps a fan directory, but its main purpose must be to welcome newcomers to fandom.

DAVE then mentioned definitions of BNFs, also said the people we were looking for were not 'true fans' but new blood which we can if necessary turn into fanzine fans, and we should be prepared to cater for people not interested in fandom at all as a beginning.

ARCHIE MERCER said he disagreed with TED TUBB; Truefandom was a state of mind. When he first entered fandom, he wasn't particularly interested, but after moving from London he started writing to fans, joined OMPA, and became very active.

The discussion then digressed into getting youngsters to read s-f, sparked by a mention of Archie's concerning MIKE MOORCOCK's work in TARZAN ADVENTURES, which was brought to a close by TUBB's and BENNETT's mutual objection that we knew that there were plenty of readers of s-f; we were interested in getting to them.

DAVE said that we needed to create a new fandom that would supercede the present one, and which would have room for the serious and constructive fans and the social fans. The L'pool Society had a number of members who were not strictly s-f fans, but were valued members of the Society, and this type should be fitted in as well.

BOB RICHARDSON then asked what attracted fans into fandom today? BRYAN WELHAM said that he came into fandom through getting fanzines mentioned in Walt Willis's NEBULA column. DAVE mentioned the L'pool member who enquired at the Town Hall for the address of a s-f society. ERIC JONES wondered how many people entered fandom through OPERATION FANTAST and its advertisements. DAVE then told of how he first encountered fans, in a narrative that deserves to be reproduced in full:

(ZYMIC 9)

"My own personal case, the way I entered fandom, is rather interesting. You can blame it all on the Buckmasters. There's a lot of things been blamed on the Buckmasters, but blame this one on them as well. I was sitting on a train one night travelling from Charing Cross to Woolwich, coming back to Barracks late at night, about 11 o'clock.

" I'd just bought off a bookstall in Villiers St. all the current science fiction that was on the stall - there were three magazines at that time. There was an ASTOUNDING, an S-F QUARTERLY, and a NEW WORLDS. I was loafing through one of these and I saw this couple sitting opposite me, looking at me rather oddly, and I was sort of wondering whether I was properly dressed or not (Laughter) 'cos they were thoroughly staring me out of countenance. When I got off the train at Woolwich, this fellow sort of marched up to me and said in a thoroughly aggressive tone of voice: " D'you read much of that stuff?"

" So I, equally aggressive in turn said "Yes, I do, what of it," you see? And he said, "Well, so do we, we read a hell of a lot - er, you doing anything in particular just now?" yes, bearing in mind this was now a quarter past eleven at night, and I was thinking of my bed more than anything else.

"And I said, " No, not really, I want to go to bed, " so they said "Well, come up and have a cup of tea." I went up to Ron's Married Quarters, and we introduced ourselves on the way up,...and I staggered out of Ron's flat carrying a suitcase full of hard-cover science fiction which I never knew existed - things like VENUS EQUILATERAL, SLAN, LAST AND FIRST -er- MEN (Laughter) - quite a few books like that plus the whole of the first two years of GALAXY, and this lot kept me going for approximately ten days.....and then Ron and Daphne suggested that I should take a trip up to the WHITE HORSE one night to meet the gang, and I did, and from then on when duty permitted I never missed a meeting for some two-and-a-half years....."

(* The above, uttered without a pause and hardly edited, is a striking example of extempore speech deserving of a far wider audience than that at the Con*)

ERIC BENTCLIFFE said that the Public Libraries should be approached; they could display posters of local club activities and have hand-outs available. ERIC JONES remarked that the Cheltenham group had run into trouble on this because their Public Library had refused to handle the leaflets as it might be regarded as advertising a 'pub'...the group were meeting in one at that time. It was agreed by several people that this refusal can be avoided if a Club Secretarie's private address is given on the leaflet instead.

ERIC JEEVES said that if an organisation had to give the newcomer something, why not a central s-f library?

BOB RICHARDSON announced that the Cheltenham Club library is being made into an open affair, and will be advertised locally as for the use of all s-f readers in the vicinity; they will also be invited along on Club Nights. Apropos of this, DAVE remarked that the L'pool and Cheltenham groups offer something for the neofan anyway. He thought clubroom for local groups essential.

TED TUBB said the meetings at pub's were failing and the club meetings were growing. DAVE agreed, saying pub meetings cost too much money. Also, it was not desirable that younger fans meet in a pub. A discussion then started on the availability of premises, and the respective merits of pubs, club-rooms, private houses and hired rooms. The question of the cost of renting premises was raised, and this led TED TUBB to say the fan must be prepared to pay for his pleasure, and again the debate went back to the subject of what to offer the newcomer. ERIC JONES said the C'ham group were contemplating putting out a semi-serious fanzine for members. TED TUBB asked if it was proposed to make it the organ of a central organisation,

were they going to speak as a corporate body? ERIC: "Yes, we've got to have a central body..that is a thing that's got to be done." TED: And I think that has to be decided and here and now is as good a time as any to rough chart who is going to run it."

DAVE stated that this had already been covered by the idea of a Fan Bureau. TED stated that the Bureau could be part of an organisation. DAVE disagreed, saying that it was difficult to obtain efficient officers for a Society, and a Bureau could cover the activities.

This argument went on for some minutes, finally side-tracking itself into a discussion of how the BIS started and previous societies. After several irrelevant matters had been dealt with - a question of what had happened to previous libraries for instance, TED TUBB wound up this part of the debate by saying that it was generally agreed that " I think basically we agree on the fact that there should be a strong organisation with a subscription and the Bureau incorporated in it and an elected advisory body, tho' I'm not too happy about the advisory body because you just waste a lot of time arguing with people about the way that a job should be done "

(*This was the crux of the discussion inasmuch as it involved the action to be taken; by a coincidence it was also the end of one side of a tape, so it is a little difficult to tell if any further argument was advanced for a Bureau as distinct from a Society-with-Bureau. When the recording resumed the discussion revolved about the possible practices of a Society, and the steps to be taken to get it running. As this will be covered in forthcoming Society publications, I'll try not to anticipate plans too much, but will place on record the more basic points raised*)

TED & DAVE (who were now practically running the debate between them) said that it was useless to set up a Society in the fashion of OMPA, as much expense would be involved from the beginning and before the Society had received publicity.

The question of expense and general support then gave rise to a suggestion from PETER WEST that a show of hands be taken, the question being how many of those present would be willing to join a Society and pay a membership subscription of a pound (£1) per year. Out of 30 there were 4 dissentients (" one of whom is asleep anyway"). Ted TUBB wanted to know why people were dissenting; an objection was raised that the sum was too much for the probable return in the form of benefits. It was agreed that it was too early to pursue this.

It was agreed that a Library should be started with two Cheltenham fans, Dave Jones and Peter Mabey running it, and fans would be asked for material contributions. The discussion then wavered around the choosing of further officers. Some dislike was expressed that more of the active fans weren't present, especially from the London area. although TED TUBB decried London as a possible source of activity. It seemed to be felt that unless the discussion was to dwindle away to vague resolutions to settle matters by post something positive would have to be proposed, and PETE CHAPPELL framed a motion, verbally edited by DAVE as follows:

"This meeting proposes that a national science fiction society should be formed, whose aims and objects will be the encouragement of readership of science fiction and liaison and general social and literary contact between^s readers, and that the persons present in this room shall, when called upon to do so, fork out a sum of money (to be later agreed) to set up a capital fund for the formation of this Society."

This proposal, from the Chair and seconded by PETER WEST, was passed unanimously.

The meeting was then thrown open for further discussion. It was suggested that

Ken Slater should be contacted for advice, and there was general agreement on this.

The thorny question of selecting officers then arose; it was decided that what was wanted was first of all an Executive Committee. Discussion on this occupied a large amount of time, and finally it was decided that the job of Secretary should involve two people within easy reach of each other, to lessen the individual work required. Over some reluctance Torry Jeeves and Eric Bontcliffe were persuaded to take on the job (proposed by PETER WEST) for Secretary and Assistant Secretary of a Working Committee (or Caretaking Committee), said Committee to run things until the Society was working smoothly. Ted Tubb was elected "by acclaim" as Editor of an Official Organ, Archie Mercer was persuaded to take on the job of Treasurer ("it's not a particularly complicated job"), and Dave Newman was the natural and obvious choice as Chairman.

The discussion then moved on to the subscription to be charged. (*So many varying and slightly complicated proposals were made on this that it's rather difficult to untangle them from the record, and the following is subject to revision in the light of more knowledge and later events*). It was decided that "Associate Membership" (up to 18 years of age & students) should be 10/- per annum, and "Full Membership" (over 18 yrs.) £1 per annum, with the under-18's being able to buy their way into Full (and voting-right) membership if desired.

A hectic discussion then took place concerning the name of the Society, TED TUBB wanting to keep 'science-fiction' out of the title and DAVE NEWMAN opposing this, leading to some extremely interesting exchanges:

TED : Consider what the BBC did at the World Science Fiction Convention. They did not go there with the idea of worshipping at the feet of idols but of making mugs out of people who'd come a long way to do something they thought highly of. We don't want that to happen every time we meet the Press, and every time we meet the Press that is what happens."

DAVE: Well, merely calling ourselves THE IMAGINATIVE FICTION SOCIETY or THE FANTASY SOCIETY is not going to make any difference; the Press immediately say "This so-and-so Society, they call themselves -----; well what are they? Oh, they're science fiction readers." The damage is done."

* * * * *

DAVE: The name we've got is the name we're stuck with, it's the name we're known by, and we might as well learn to live with it, and try and make other people accept it as a respectable name.

SID BIRCHBY: The point is, the term "science fiction" has become debased and it's our job to try and make it a bit more passable."

TED TUBB : No book reviewer will admit that '1984' was science fiction, or Wells of Huxley.

DAVE: My personal feeling about this is that avoiding the use of the name 'Science Fiction' in the title is cowardice in the face of the enemy, and I strongly disapprove of it."

On a show of hands it was agreed that the words 'Science Fiction' should be incorporated in the title, and after more discussion it was agreed by a show of hands that the name of the society should be the BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION ASSOCIATION.

It was further agreed that the Association would be responsible for annual Conventions, and that the 1959 event should be held "at the seaside", place unspecified, at Whitsun.

(*The above resume is the result of about 20 hours listening to the tapes, and I'll confess to a couple of spots of confusion; the titling of the ASSOCIATION and the

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setting up of the Library should follow the proposal to set up the Society. Both subjects, as all the others, recurred again and again, and my notes became a trifle confused.

PERSONAL OPINION

Firstly, and most importantly, I'd like to place on record my personal appreciation of the magnificent way in which Dave Newman sponsored the discussion, kept it fairly firmly on the rails, acted as interlocutor and interpreter, and handled the whole thing with magnificent elan (which is not the name of a small deer in four letters.) A wonderful effort.

As to the whole affair, I can understand why there was some slight apprehension in the personal messages to me which decorated the end of the tape and why Peter West and Ken McIntyre, among others, acted so mysteriously when we saw them at the GLOBE before I'd received the tapes. I do wish that the personal tape forming the first part of this 'zine had arrived at Kettering, as it might have saved some discussion of the subjects which were comparatively old-hat, but that's water under the bridge.

My own feelings are slightly mixed. To be perfectly honest, I would have preferred to see a Bureau as suggested formed, instead of an Association, but it's wonderful to see something done. As I said in the last ZYMIC, it cannot be argued that a Society will not benefit the neofan, and I think that the BSFA deserves support from everyone.

The choices of Dave, Eric and Terry as officers are strongly approved. I was somewhat worried about the casual way the Treasurership was forced on Archie as a matter of comparative un-importance. If the Association is to be of any significance at all then its membership must reach the 500-1000 figure within a comparatively short time, and at £1 a time, with numerous channels of expenditure, this amount of lucre is going to be very important, especially as the accounting needs to be impeccably accurate. This is not in the same class as putting out a fanzine and not worrying (much) what the expenses are. Anyway, we'll see.

As for Ted, he's the obvious choice for editor of the journal for anyone unacquainted with the publishing statistics of fanzines, which applies to the majority of those present, at Kettering. Considering the facts that he failed to publish anything during his year in OMPA (at a time when he was a full-time professional author), that he has never edited or published a fanzine on his own, and his total fan writing can hardly have exceeded the wordage of this 'zine alone, I can only hope that he'll buckle down to this particular job with more constructive effort than he's previously shown. At least he'll have a highly competent publisher.

I must say that I breathed a sigh of relief when Ted sprung to attack the possibility of myself doing an active chore in the Association. I prefer to free-lance; I'm experimenting with various literary devices, am hoping to do some pro-writing, and am rather looking forward to the time when I'll have finished this particular report, finished the Presidency of OMPA, and will merely be committed to a HYPHEN column. I would like to place on record, however, as Ted and one or two ^{see} others seem to have misinterpreted my ZYMIC remarks, that I can't for the life of me ^{see} why one should be serious about s-f fandom other than its worth as a hobby. I'm ready to spend hours of time and most of my spare cash on s-f fandom, but to be serious in the sense of setting up an organisation to "improve the standard of s-f" strikes me as sheer egotism; s-f criticism, yes, but it's up to the pros to improve the output of the stuff itself. I'm for fandom first, and s-f second; so would you be if you'd been reading it since '36. I sincerely hope the BSFA won't forget it originated at a 'social' Con. A.V.C