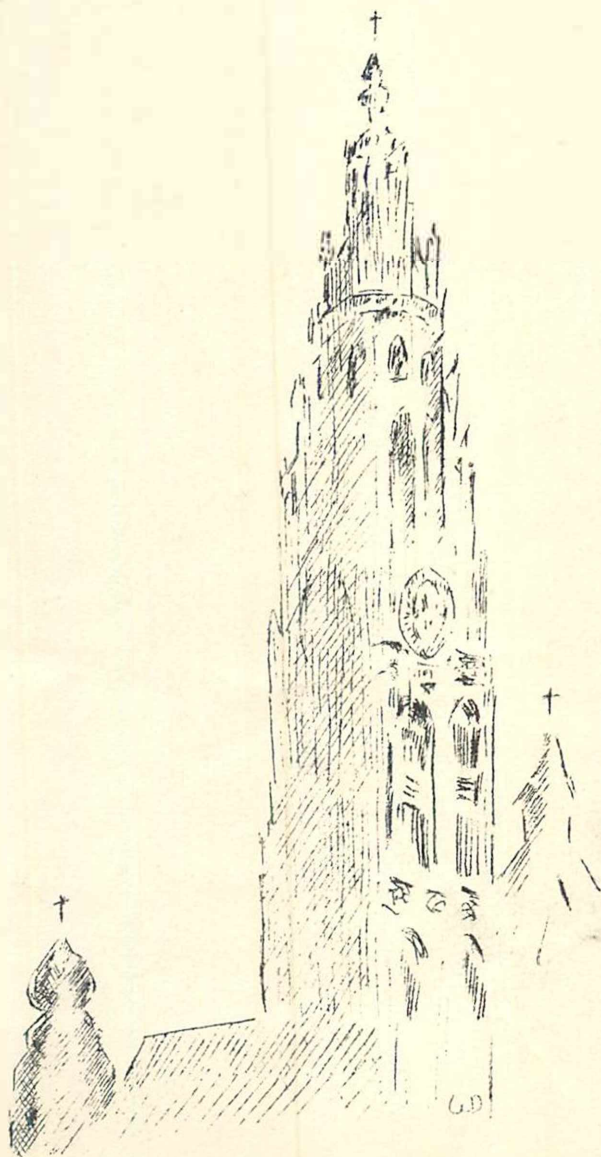


ITTH #1



n° 3



Ver. Uitgever Jansen J
229 Berchemlei Borgerhout
Bimonthly - 2 maandelijks

BEHIND THE FRONT COVER.

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This is being written the afternoon of Monday, August 23rd. The date we had originally planned as mailing date for this issue. So I had been sweating away Saturday night, in order to get my sheet finished, trying not to rush the job too much for fear of making errors, and as a result promptly being accused of changing the language. (I did manage to spell know "knwo", but still....)

As promised I turned up at Dave's office before lunch, where I parked the motorbike between two cars promptly earning some very nasty swear-words for not leaving enough room for the cars to back out. Ignoring this, (I'm used to far worse from Dave, and surtout Harry), I climbed the stairs and rapped my knuckles on the door. Just in case some bright fellow might say "go away", I followed up the sound of the knock, coming face to face with a lady, a gentleman, and... Always polite, that's me. Let's call him Dave. A glance at me, a grunted hiye, and once more he concentrated on the sheet of paper before him. I was pleased to note that he had a blue penoil in his hand, and that he was carefully editing his own script. Never before have I seen such a mess. Where once I had been able to read the closely typed lines, detailing his life story, with especial respects paid to the sf part of it, I found blue

What a mess he made of his life.

cancellations, red additions, and several lines of squeezy handwriting. Blinking at all this, I took out the masters for ITTA, and shoved them under his nose. "Haven't you finished your sheet?" I asked, not really believing the evidence before me. "No, I don't seem to get the hang of it. Don't like the thing

Writing his autobiography, he couldn't help disliking himself.

very much." I wasn't too surprised, knowing the sordid things that had been included. Nevertheless, not giving up all hope of yet meeting the mailing date I asked "When do you expect to get the article finished?" Another sullen glance at the previously neat sheet, a furtive look at me, and "When do you have to post it?" "I had intended to send them off today, but I suppose it will be alright to post them off tomorrow. Just as long it doesn't take you a week. They're being sent as periodicals, not as first class mail." "You'll have them tomorrow." This very reassuringly, even though lines of doubt still creased his brow.

I managed to get a supposedly satisfied grin on my face, and changing over to mailing costs, remarked upon the postal regulations covering the sending of periodicals. "They must have a front cover, denoting periodioy, title, resp. publisher and no text, though illustrations are allowed. Have we anything in the way of illustrations? Or ideas?" Blank looks, utter silence. "Haven't we?" Same. "Well how about that drawing Ken did at my place, still got it?" Dave threw me a horrified look, and after a search to locate his tongue, shouted "NO, not THAT." "Well, why not?" "Eh, you can't.. I mean... eh, you just can't." "They won't expect anything better from a twerpzine. And surely it is very ORIGINAL." "Look, Jan, you can't.... Well.... as long as you take the blame." "Hand it over." And I am proud to present you:

KFS. Self-portrait. (special effects by Marcel Maurin-three star brandy.)

Have just seen the first copies of the other pages. Lousy. No more hecto here. Even though the drawings are easier to copy, o r reputation(?) comes first.

/ Ann

VOL. I

Nº 1

Sep
1954

1st OMPA

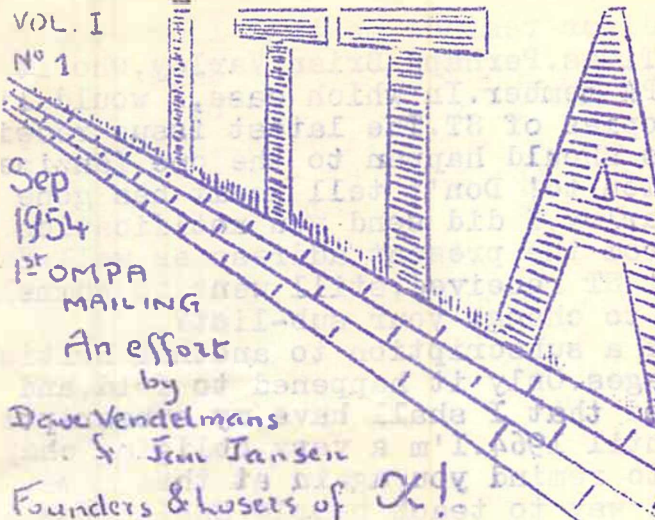
MAILING

An effort

by

Dave Vendelmans

& Jan Tansen

Founders & losers of 

TRUJAN BRAYS.

Our Ghulord, who art in Belfast,
Hollow'd be thy fame.

Thy fandoms come,
(And go all the same!)

Thy will be done, in OMPA
As it is in Ireland.

Give us today our daily letter,
(And fortnightly Slant!)

Forgive us our insolence
As we condone your hibernation.

Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from Proxyboo,

Inc.

AGEN !

IN FOR A PENNY,.....
\$

WHAT'S IN A NAME? If I remember correctly, one or the other newspaper or weekly, used to run regular articles on this subject, explaining the various origins of surnames. No, don't worry, I am not going to start a similar line here. Just wondered if you would be able to make out the origin of this magazine's title. Have a try. No prices offered! About time we got rid of that Alpha, Beta, Gamma sequence of publications. As Dave has told me that he has a sort of article prepared for this "try-out", I shall occupy myself by rambling along merrily, a sort of column, to keep using the same phraseology. This, that, and nothing else in particular will fill it, although I must try and keep it to fandom. We should have something to say about.....

I SOMETIMES HAVE TROUBLE with the English language. Like hibernation for instance. The description of the action fits the word, but not the relation to time. Perhaps we could use aesternation?

CONTINUING on the nations in the language, I suppose that nearly everyone of you has read Con-CCrastination. Only that should have been usion instead of nation. Con-Fusion to be exact. Why?

SHORTLY AFTER THE MANCON, Dave phoned me to say he had received a whopper of a con-report for publication in Alpha. It was even better than I had expected, and I asked Dave whether he couldn't do the stencilling on this before he went on leave, to avoid having to rush the job afterwards. Imagine our consterusion, eh, consternation, when a week later we received an apologetic note from Eric Bentcliffe, asking us to send back the report. A friend who had promised to do him one for Triode, had gotten meddled with a dame... A sinking feeling overtook us but being very nice people, even if fans, we did send back the manuscript, glad that we hadn't started cutting the stencils after all.

SOME TIME PASSED, then, along came Sidereal. Imagine my surprise at finding Con-Crastination listed on the cover. A furtive glance inside, and of course, there it was. Told Dave and showed him the fanzine. Why bother me with copies, he said, I've got the original back. I was confused by now, and it took another apologetic letter, which had accompanied the ms to clear up the mess. In it EB suggested we use it, as Sidereal didn't have a large circulation, etc... I believe I'm being polite not quoting Dave's reply. I can't be sure, as I lost my copy, but I seem to recall some very unfannish expressions. Another letter followed from EJ, explaining that the muddle was due to his mistake, not reading the letter EB had sent along with Con-C. Even so, I'm sure you will agree that Con-Fusion is a far better title!

BUT ALL THAT talk about the ex-editor reminds me that I am sorely in need of information on Space Times. Perhaps Brian Varley, who it seems, now runs the show, is an OMPA member. In which case, I would like to ask him what happened to my copies of ST. The latest issue received here was the April 1954. That this should happen to the one fanzine I actually sent a cash subscription to! Don't tell me it has gone and left us. And while I'm at it, Mr Varley, I did send you notification of change of address, and a letter from the present address as well. Yet the Combozine, as well as the last ST received, still went to Wommelgem! Will you take this as a reminder to change your sub-list?

SUBSCRIBE INDEED! I also sent off a subscription to another British fanzine, way back in my neo-fan stages. Only it happened to fold, and only recently have I been informed that I shall have my subscription honored, even if I have to wait until 1964. I'm a very obliging chap, I am. But please, don't let me have to remind you again at that time.

LESSON IN FLEMISH, or a roundabout way to teach people English as it should be writ! EI is a Flemish word, the English translation of which is egg. Now let us put egg into the word where ei should be: I receggved a receggpt on receggving TRIODE. And if Eric Jones would only stop wondering about eggs, he might write received and receiving correctly. If he does this as a starting point for the modernisation of archaic English, as may be the case, my apologies.

YES, I RECEGGVED TRIODE, along with a letter from Scotland, commenting on a quote from one of my letters, appearing in T. Arthur sure was in a hurry. As some of you might wonder about it as well, the letter quoted was written on receggpt of Con-Science. Since then we have, as readers of Alpha will undoubtedly know, discovered that Ben Abas was not yet dead, only hibernating (that word again, how about annonating this time?) and have started him drawing again. As far as Alpha is concerned, anyway. As Arthur writes: I don't understand your worries about artists. Ben's cartoon for the Twerpcon was excellent! -And we have now uncovered more talent: Jean Steer. No folks, we aren't grumbling no more. Trmode should have been published three months earlier!

FROM ARTISTS TO TRUFANS is not too great a step. But what exactly is the Trufan supposed to be? Most people seem to differ on this, some it seems, even changing their minds occasionally. Like Stu MacKenzie, for instance. Sometime during June, and even as late as begin July, he still considered us true fans, having promised to forward us i, which, according to page 28 "all true fans will get." After trying various subversive methods I finally got hold of a copy, though not via Stu. Appeal to the elite: would those considering us to be true fans tell Stu about it, and if we're not, would they write and tell us just how we are to become such creatures? (Call it ESP if you like, but I sense a conspiracy to deliver me 29 letters making improper suggestions!)

DEVIL GIRL FROM MARS, according to Mal Ashworth, was funnier than Abbott & Costello, though unintentionally so. May I suggest you ask to see the Burgess Hat from Tyrol? This beats even Devil girl! It is even rumored that the sudden decrease in British export trade is due to uncountable workers being seized by fits upon Brian's sudden appearance. THIS INNOCENT COLUMN seems to have been turned into a veritable battlefield. Evil forces must be at work. If you only receive half of our effort due to the censors, afraid of the possibility that their most prominent member might get banned, refuse to send more than just this last paragraph, I'll have to look for a new home for this column. Any takers?

IF THIS MAILING seems rather a thin effort on our behalf, would you just this once accept our apologies? We did get to know about it rather late, and had a lot of work stacked up due to the recent ish of Alpha. We'll make up for it next time. Until then, guess again.

[Signature]

As if we didn't have enough trouble... It isn't bad enough having to worry about getting a fanzine out on time (sometimes); buying tons of paper; borrowing loads of stencils (indefinitely); taxing our diminutive brains to the utmost trying to produce mediocre articles, ineffective editorials and unsatisfactory stories, wasting the office's time - and money - typing and stencilling said articles and/or editorials and/or stories; mailing the darned things when they're finally ready; paying for the postage; then, when everybody's received them, paying some more to make up for the insufficient postage they stick on their letters telling us how mediocre, ineffective and unsatisfactory said articles, editorials and stories were.... and NOW, to cap it all... some blokes come and ask us to join some impossible sounding organisation and expect us to spend some more money producing some more mediocre... (see above), so that we should receive more letters telling us.. etc.. (see above). I ask you : "IS IT WORTH IT ?"; "Do we have to stand for this ?". This business of Fandom is getting me down. If I'd known what I was letting myself in for, I'd never have started this s.f.f.club/fanzine blooming racket... Do you know that my hair is turning grey already, and I'm only 75... Besides, what about my poor wife ? How am I going to justify all this surplus expense ? And what about those nice quiet evenings at home or at the pictures ? Quote : "Darling (with a trembling lip), I hardly ever see you anymore... You're always away... And when you do come home, you're busy writing some silly article (you see?) or reading some impossible story (she must have seen me with one of Bert's "Panther" Books) "You don't even have time to speak to me..." etc.etc.. Need I go on ? You see what I mean ?

O.K., so I'm a moaner... So I'm ruining myself and my family... So I'm getting old before my time... So I'm jeopardizing my social life and position... SO... by the Great GNU, you shall have a blooming article.. SO I'll put in some extra time and spend some extra money (I havn't decided whose yet) and borrow some extra stencils etc.etc... SO WHAT ? I wouldn't dream of missing it. Just try and stop me... Besides, think of the poor fen that might thus be deprived of some literary "tours de force" (that's French for "meaningless drivel"). The question however, is: "What in Ghod's name shall I write about ?". What do people expect of us ? Don't answer that ! What can a couple of Twerps like us possibly dream up that hasn't already occurred to thousands of hardened s.f.veterans ??? Let me see.. Ahhh.. I know: "Science-fiction". That certainly seems to be a subject that is seldom discussed when fans get together. At least I can name several occasions when the subject has been very carefully avoided; presumably the fen in question were otherwise engaged at those times...

Well, now that I've at last managed to make up my mind, I shall proceed with my own personal and invaluable experience in the field of science-fiction...

I'm not quite sure which was the first s.f. story that I ever read, but I imagine it was a tale by H.G.Wells and I believe it was published in "Amazing stories" and I think the title was: "When the moon ran wild". Is anybody as definite as I am on the last three items ? I believe there was another story by Wells, either in the same issue or another one, called "The thing that walked in the rain", but my senile mind is no longer as sharp as it used to be (I could split hairs with anybody at a distance of six feet once) and I have but a very faint recollection of this dim and distant past.

I couldn't even tell you the date on that mag, not even the year. I know it must have been prior to 1930, because I remember reading it in the living room of our home in Bouchout, a one-horse village approximately 8 miles outside Antwerp, and we lived there until 1930. (Cute, aren't I ?) Possibly it was one of the first "Amazings" to be published (?). Can anybody check on that ? Thank you.

Of course, once I had read s.f. and experienced the delights of that type of literature, I could hardly read anything else. Now of course I can hardly read anything at all (All right, no need to get personal). By the way, I wonder how that A.S. ever got into our house ?

It was not long after that I came across the "War of the Worlds" (It would appear that H.G. had the monopoly in those days) and read it, not once, but many times... (As you probably know - you old veterans - there was a scarcity of s.f. in those days, especially in Belgium). I don't recall seeing any other s.f. mags until the year 1935 when I finally came across the famous "Wonder stories" edited by H. Gernsback. There were some very good stories in there, to wit: "In caverns below" by Stanton A. Coblentz; "The green man of Graypek" by Festus Pragnell (incidentally, if anyone has got Vol. 7, nos. 3 and 4 of 1935 - W.S., I should very much like to buy them; maybe I can finish that story then). Then came the "Tales of Wonder" 1938 & 1939, not to mention "Scoops", a weekly (I think) paper containing (now and then) some fairly acceptable yarns. I had about twelve or fourteen issues of the latter. Then I discovered a copy of "Science-fiction" and "Marvel" in the bookshop and was just acquiring the beginnings of a stock of s.f. when the blooming war broke out, and now most of my stock has vanished, (together with a batch of "hot records etc...), with the exception of a couple of old "Wonders" (without covers) and an odd copy of "Marvel" or "Science-fiction". Of course, I've acquired a new stock in the meantime... However, to continue... During the war, I came across an occasional copy of "Thrilling Wonder stories" in a second-hand bookshop, or "Astounding" (B.R.E.), which I read avidly and stored very carefully away in a safe place (place that should be) to read again later.

Well, the war came... and went and I put away my drum-sticks and eventually found myself back in Twerpland, only to discover that my old newsagent, who still ran his old business, didn't have a single s.f. mag to his name, curse him.

Year followed barren year without a change in the situation, except that I did manage to find an occasional second-hand copy of "Amazing" or "Astounding", until at last I came across, in a different bookshop, a new "Astounding" (September '47). Of course, I bought it. Of course, I wasn't sorry. Of course, I bought the next ish too and the next and the next... And then, I came across "Future". Of course, I bought that too (It was the Jan. '52 ish). I even bought the next ones too... and then... I came across a bloke named Jansen and then I came a cropper... then my troubles started. Naturally, I met him in the bookshop, as you know (if you don't, consult "Alpha" n°3 - April 1954 - page 1 (Advt.)) and naturally, not being hardened fen yet, we discussed s.f. and weighed the possibilities of starting a club... After that was fixed, we weighed the possibilities of starting a fansine... Now that's fixed too, and NOW I HAVN'T THE TIME TO READ ALL THE MAGS AND NOVELS AND FANZINES THAT COME POURING IN FROM ALL CORNERS OF THE GLOBE... For CHU's sake will somebody please ask somebody to invent a time-machine, so I can go back for a few months - or years - and catch up on all this literature that's staring me in the face every day... I'm sure it's mocking me... It seems to be saying "Well, you tried hard enough to acquire a s.f. library.. Well, now you've got one... and now... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT ? Please help me fellows... IT'S DRIVING ME SANE !!!"

Ray

BEFRONT THE HIND COVER.

Being further nonsense and general chatter. And why? Well, we are supposed to run off 8 pages every quarter and although we hadn't meant to do so this time, Dave being very lazy, I'm having a go... There shouldn't have been time to do it in; only, being lazier than usual, Dave hasn't even finished his article. He must be sure about the immaculate quality of his piece before showering his co-members with the heavenly fruits of his labour. And in the meantime, I just run merrily along, bringing this to regulation (minimum) size.

I received the circular about the "purposes of OMPA" some time ago and have tried to establish the mutual relations between ITTA and these listed items. Taking them in order:

1/- Personalisation: A publication based on this system is indeed the next step beyond the personal letter. In it, I am able to soil some guys, which I c- wouldn't have done in Alpha. The latter partly because of the serious-mindedness of several of our readers, who would indeed be capable of starting a war over such silly things. (So would I).

2/- Unsuitability: Like saying the three of us were pretty well "soaked" on Convention night in Antwerp.. But indeed, where else would I have the courage to present such modernistic art as KFS has shown himself capable of but in OMPA?

3/- Experimentation: Where the above could equally rest in pieces, but which I prefer to set apart, to make an example of the magnificent literature (it will be won't it Dave?) which my dear partner is even now sweating over; or was it swearing?

4/- Provision: which doesn't apply to either of us, as we're liable to end up with about half-a-dozen fanzines before we're finished. Afterall, there's Beta (the Flemish sister) Gamma (The Mercer brainchild) Delta (to be the Francophile part) (WAW has already prepared a condensation of Slant) and Ghu knows how many more to turn up. One of the chaps, now lying in hospital, did mention Esperanto.

5/- Appreciation: you did say "friendly"? I presume that all the members have a far better knowledge of English than I have, but just in case one or the other gets stuck somewhere: when reviewing ITTA (or Alpha for that matter) here are some words you might like to use. Gives you a feeling of maturity to use long ones: Nice, good, interesting, excellent, fine, beautiful, very good, exceedingly so, better still, pleasing, lovely, jolly, splendid, superb, and such like... For others, one just uses the word that comes easiest to mind, dismissing the item almost immediately: unpalatable, vexatious, irksome, platitudinous, uncongenial, indecorous, serio- or tragi-comic, bumptious, contumelious, ad infinitum..

6/- Transaction: I have given odd items of news (old) to some, but not to most of you (I presume). About the neglect, the inclemency and the orthography we have to undergo, just because we cannot defend ourselves except by means of this puerile missive.

7/- Acquaintance: but surely this doesn't mean that none of you are going to write us no more surely?

8/- Establishment: would we liken OMPA to the London Circle? Where a new-timer will be afraid to enter, for fear they'll make him broke?

9/- Endeavour: It doesn't show at first sight. But here lies buried the whole reason for Vin's intense activity to make a success of OMPA. Trying to keep the lead which he has lately held, by his publication of the fan directory, he has noted the attempt by our good friend Michael to work out a scheme for a new, and more detailed fan-list. Not willing to play second fiddle, out he comes with the bright idea of collecting all the fan publishers in one group and putting in the ninth clause, just to enable him to direct us to do the work he hasn't the time for: the new complete unabridged, unexpurgated fan directory... Even so:

10/- : IT WILL BE FUN.

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One eye opens, a glance around the room reveals

Kettle boiling; Nescafé is quickest. No bread..Oh damn. Can't spare the time to get some. Some biscuits will do. Ouch... this coffee is hot. Shoes over socks; Shirt and jacket; Where's that tie gone to ? Never mind, take another. Look in the bedroom. Wife still asleep after a hard night's work (?) "Bye dear". Down the steps, three at a time, through the front door, politely left open by someone else. Round the corner to the garage. My ignition key ??? Bang, upstairs again. Half the drawers unloaded... There it is. Slam goes the door.. three at a time, down. Oh, the postman cometh... Ten minutes later, still chuckling over the letter from that subscriber, and the cover of the just-received fanzine, and the extract of the letter of his they published, the motorbike rolls out of the garage. A glance at the windows before going off. Still no sign of the wife. And so.. to the office.

Pick up the papers for customs and off to the docks. Boat is unloading; railcars are charged; the fan reads the fanzine.... Two hours later, another office.. Not ready ? To-morrow for sure.... Back to the office. Not much doing. "May I borrow your typewriter for a moment ?".. One hour later, signs his letters, posts them and goes home for lunch...

Finished them. Can I go home ?" What.. an hour early? whatever for ??? Oh, some painting needs doing you know." A smile, and D'Hooche says : "I know". Back home, wife gone; a pile of dishes left. Let's do that mag first. Page 7 finished. A bite of bread and a cup of coffee in between. Now what ? Bright idea. Good cartoon. One hour of hard work. No go. Simply can't draw a line. Oh well... Write another article. Another one ?? How about... NO; and the... No. A colu.. Don't mention the wor I know... A day in the life of a fan. Gosh... it's midnight.