norman ashfield presents vol.1, no.1. April 1948 (an occasional miscellany for L Enilat fantasy fans.) published irregularly 'at the sign of the black cat',27 woodland road, thornton heath, surrey. ne more British fanzine now sees the light of day Whether it will live longer than the proverbial may-fly is problematical, but suggestions for future wssues will be cheerfully received. 2. This fanzing owes its existance to the splendid example of Operation Fantast and if it can bask in a little of O.F's reflected glory, your editor will be happy (Thanks, Ken, for O.F.) 3.In O.F.2, Ken poses the question of the meaning of life(vide his article 'Why?') Nost folk are at one timeor another troubled by this question; we certainly don't exist for the sile purpose of getting a complete collection of SF(practically an impossibility anyway!) The only comment I can make is that those folk who are truly religious seem to avoid this feeling; they are so sure of the meaning of life and why they exist! But this is not a Society for the discussion of theological problems, so we'll leave it at that, apart from saying that the most popular SF usually deals with the truimph of good over evil (witness the ever popular Doctor-even knows-F F Smith) Even in evil(witness the ever popular Doctor -- you know -- F E Smith) Even in the weird type of fiction, this element often exists. 4. Interlude.... Did Shaver's Dero Activate Nero? Couldn't the Tera Score more than Zero? 5. Some little while ego, we had 'flying saucers' in the sky; now at the time of writing (Jan.) the Americans report 'flying cones' (beakers, to you!) I expect they'll soon be seeing the rest of our eating utensils-knives, forks and spaons! 6. An Alambic is the Alchemist's distillation apparatus; I intend 'Tho Alembic' to help clear my views (and yours also) -- in the same way as liquids are purified by distillation. (That's why this first issue is rather a mixup) In OF2, C Duncombe says that he seems to be suffering from a surfeit of SF and Fantasy. I can quite understand him. When I

6.An Alambic is the Alchemist's distillation appartus; I intend 'The Alembic' to help clear my views (and yours also) -- in the same way as liquids are purified by distillation. (That's why this first issue is rather a mixup) In OF2, C Duncombe says that he seems to be suffering from a surfeit of SF and Fantasy. I can quite understand him. When I first discovered the BFL, I wont whole-heartedly back to my pre-war madness over SF, but after a year I find myself reading mags not for the individual story, but in the hope that I can find one well worth reading--not only as a piece of fiction but for its'message'. Altho' ASF carries the more 'scientific'tales, its yarns do not stick in my mind for any specific reason(other than that of entertainment) I have found that Amazing has all types of fiction (as well as thought-provoking articles)--Reg Phillips' So shall be reap'being an autstanding example of its 'message' yarns. If you cant entertainment pure and simple, what beats the 'Green Man' series? (Little SF about them!) If I were restricted to one mag(Klana forbid!) my vote would go to Amazing (despite Shaver) I would be sorry to miss the others, ASF, FFM and the Fantasy Reader in particular, but I should be able to read everything fr m serious matter to light stuff in my chosen vehicle. As regards Shaver, well--I really don't know--does anyone? He's a good writer, and his stories hang together. In'explaining' many Forteen mysteries, he has created a larger mystery of his own. I'm at a loss about it, but Shaver or no ShaveryI'll still read Amazing (Unless RAP changes its policy!)

7. For Lovers Of The Weitd. (M. cbeth IV. 1)

Fillet of a fenny snake,
In the cauldron boil and bake;
Eye of newt, and toe of freg,
Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,
Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,

Lizard's leg, and howlet's wing,

For a charm of powerful trouble.

Like a hell-broth, bail and bubble.

8. Finance. It is clear that the Library cannot expand as it might, with its present restricted revenue. 2/6d a year from 60-70 members will only bring in sufficient to buy a few of the good books now being published in America, when postage and duplicating eosts have been

THE ALEMBIC VOL. No.1. Page 2. been paid, and it is also very small in view of the benefit we receive from the Library. When I first joined the Library, I was surprised at its scope. More money would, however, mean a better Library. I would suggest that to help the finances, a small charge be made for each item between the details in the det item borrowed; from the details in the handbook, ld per mag and 2d per book would being in about 10/- a month--a useful fillip to the funds. What do other members think about this? As magazines cost up to 3/6d for wartime issues, and much more for scarcer issues of earlier date, ld apiece is little in comparison. A better bargain still would be 2d per book borrowed. UGH: that's enough on a distasteful subject! FICTION

The cloud chamber expanded

A sudden movement occurred in the Universe, where the stars had been pursuing their normal orderly courses. Something had happened --something unknown -- a runaway star had appeared to upset the ordered action of the universe's inhabitants. It was more than a runaway star --it was a veritable juggernaut, taking no care for others in its path--crashing onward, ever onward.....

A small star was in its path, and the rogue star, a giant in comparison, passed within a few milkion miles of it. As it passed by unheeding, its tremendous gravitational force drew out a filament of the gaseous matter of which the small star was composed, giving this filament a circulatory motion. The aggressor vanished in the distance but the life of the small star was changed for ever. From being just one of countless numbers of similar stars, and a very minor one at that, it became one of the nobility of its race, having something that the others hadn't got----of which more anon....

The filament of gascous matter that had been drawn out revolved round the sun, and in cons of tims, a change was to be seen. As the filament circulated it gradually cooled; as it cooled, the gaseous matter condensed; as the gaseous matter condensed, it was drawn together by its own force of gravitation; as the condensed matter drew together, planets were horn.....

The star had now entered the nobility of its race, for relatively few had the luck to possess a family of planets.

Very soon, it became apparent that in all ten planets had been

formed, and as they circulated around their parent sun, their motion was slowed by friction with the cloud of dust that was all that remained of the gaseous filament from which they had been born. In the process of slowing down, the fifth planet's speed was reduced too much to enable it to keep its place in the family, and it started falling into the sun. Before it had got very far, however, it was torn apart by the gravitational forces of its parent and brethren, and a mass of asteroids or minor planets was formed between the fourth and sixth planets. As the remaining planets cooled, their surfaces gradually solidified

On the third planet, life appeared, first in the form of algae, a primitive form of being, then evolving into fish, reptiles, birds,

mammals, and finally MAN.

At first he could hardly be distinguished from his siming ancestors, but as his protruding chin slowly receded, and his slanting forehead straightened, he grew to repemble man of today.

Herded in caves, he was only able to preserve his species from the attacks of the carnivorous beasts that peopled the world by the small amount of intelligence he possessed -- just sufficient, no

After the lapse of many more years, mandfrom being an intelking the beast, settled down and became an agriculturist; and science developed --mainly in form of astronomy and season-prediction, which latter is essential in an agricultural community. Man was still frightened by nature and human sacrifices were made to appease the gods of nature; eclipses of the sun were one of his worst trials, sacrifices to that body being prevalent and considered very important.

As science developed, man came to realise that there were many

THE ALEMBIC VOL 1 No.1 APRIL 1948 PAGE 3. other entities in the Universe beside the earth, which however he still believed in his superior way to be its centre--anyone not beieving this was a heretic and many suffered for their indiscretion until the fact that the earth was a mere atom was generally accepted. Henceforth science was disassociated from superstition, and man's progress, now that he was freed from his shackling chains, was rapid. He conquered the land, by notors, trains, mines, etc... He conquered the seas by huge iron monsters that seemed to break all the laws of nature... He conquered the air by balloons, airships, and then aeroplanes....BUT one thing he coulnd't conquer . . . HIMSELF .

The inventions of science were applied to weapons, not against nature, but against his followmen. He went on the seas in warships, under them in submarines; he used airplanes to bomb cities and blow their inhabitants to bits; he used scientific discoveries to make poison gas to main his enemies....and wars raged over the fair face of the earth.

Meanwhile, the physicists were puzzled because their calculations showed that the Universe was expanding, and each improvement in technique confirmed this. The Universe was not only expanding, it seemed to be exploding, but this point was never satisfactorily explaind for after many years of preparation, man wiped his race from the face of the earth with his scientific devastation by poison gas, bacterio logical warfare, and ... the last straw ... atomic bombs. Man could release the energy of the atom, but could not control it, and the whole earth became one fiery furnace.

Rayt Kopt, an Astonyan physicist, straightened from the inspection of a plate shewing the track of a proton which was bent where it had struck an atom, and said, "These cloud chambers are truly astonishing; with them we can photograph, by means of the sudden expansion of water-saturdate gas, the path of a proton, and so determine its velocity and weight. They are certainly the most marvellous of recent scientific discoveries!" His companion agreed.

Earth had been born, had lived its little life and had died in less than one

second of Astonyan time. 10. I have for some time been compiling a card-index of titles and authors of stories in SF mags. It's a menumental task and I doubt if it ever could be completed. I am at the memorial task and I coupt upon British issues and AMAZING. So far, about 230 issues have been listed(inc.58 BREASF, 27BREUNK. and 63 AMAZING). If anyone could kindly let me know the contents of the following BRE's my index of them would be complete; -ASF 3/41 &7/41: UNK. '39 (all exc. Nov & Dec), '40 (Jan & Apr, '41 (all exc. Feb & July), '42 (exc Mar and Jun), '43 (exc. Feb and Oct). I believe I am missing about eight issues all told. (By the way these are my Primary wants—any offers?) I would be pleased to inswer any questions that can be settled from the cards (3*d per enquiry please—that includes postage) Can I Seploct 4 the cards (32d per enquiry please-that includes postage) Can I help you?

As a free gift, here are the Venus Equilateral stories that have appeared in BRE's:-ASF 1/43 QRM-Interplanetary, 6/43-Calling the Express, 4/44-Recoil, 6/44-Off the Bear, 2/45-Bear Pirate; 9/45-Pandora's Millions---and 'The Firing Line' appeared in appeared in UNK Winter '45! (If you don't believe no, look yourself!) 11. The following competition is largelely for your apusement. I trust you will back it up, as the whole of the entry fees will go to the Library funds (no expenses will be deducted.) The prize will be one good copy of Wells' "Meanwhile" and "A King who was a King in one volume. (If sufficient entries come along, I will give a small prize to the entry with half the total correct entries of the winner) Your entries (as many as you like -- 3d a go!) should be winner) Your entries(as many as you like--og a go:) should be written on a sheet of paper, headed by your name and address (nothing else should appear--not even any nasty cracks about 'The Alembic'). The questions need not be repeated, the answers only being given, e.g. "(1) H.G. WELLS.--you needn't even give the initials of the author if you lon't know then (I'm easy!) BUT PLEASE DON'T USE THE CHECKLIST OR ANY OTHER AIDS--I want to know how much you really know! Don't be afraid if you can't answer many, send your entry along.

It's all a bit of fun and for the good of the cause.

Section A; Who wrote (1) War of the Worlds(2) Unthinkable(3) The Foison Belt(4) The Country of the Blind(5) John Silence(6) The Scarlet Plague(7) Tracer of Lost Persons(8) Heart of the World(9) Seeker to the Dead(10) Nordenholt's Million(11) Dreams from the Past(12) The Wizard(13) Last and First Men(14) Club of Queer Trades(15) Marzio's Crucifix(16) In the Midst of Life(17) Ultinatum(18) Dawm(19) Dracula (20) Green Eyes of Bast(21) Purple Sapphire(22) Riddle of the Sands (23) Day of the Brown Horde(24) The Willows(25). The Hopkins Mss(26) A Traveller in Time(27) People of the Ruins(28) Rebirth(29) Maza of the Moon(30) Spacehounds of IPC(31) Liners of Time(32) Slayer of Souls(33) Weigher of Souls(34) Juggler and the Soul(35) Maracet Deep(36) Phra the Phoenician(37) The Brass Bottle(38) The Second Deluge(39) Terror from Timorkal(40) The Man Who Tilted the Earth Section B; Who wrote the following stories that have appeared in THE ALEMCIB. VOL 1.No.1 (APRIL 1948) PAGE 4. Section B; who wrote the following stories that have appeared in magazines? (41) The Gostak and the Doshes(42) Home of the Gods (43) After World's End(44) Truth about Pyecraft(45) The Worlds of If(46) The Mer9witch of Ether 18(47) The Green Man(48) City(49) If (46) The Mer9witch of Ether 18(47) The Green Man(48) City(49)
Beyond the End of Space(50) Microcosmic God(51) The Serpent
Goddess(52) The Equaliser(53) Interplanetary Bridges.
Section 6; Who wrote magazine stories about (54) Venus
Equilateral(55) The Lemurian Documents(56) Foundation (57) Don
Channing(58) John Hale(59) Mancelot Biggs(60) Carson of Venus
(61) Juggernaut Jones(62) Horsesense Hank(63) Adam Link(64)
Kinnison(65) John Carter(66) Professor Jameson(67) Craig Konnedy
Section D. What is or was the name of the SF mag which has had
the longest life(68); and (69) the fantasy mag similarly. (70) Was
an Amazing Quarterly issued in 1927, (71) 1932, (73) 1938? (74) Name
as many British SF and Fantasy mags, and American reprints in
England as you can—they needn't be still in existence. (1 mark
for each mag named) for each mag named) The answer to each question will count one mark, with the exception of question 74--see above.

The closing date for entries is the 31st May 1948--Come on, 'Have a Go, Joe' (or whatever your name is!)

12. Well, that's the end of this issue of 'The Alembic' I trust it has intested you. No promises have been made about any future issues, but I'll probably have a go at another! I do trust, though, that this rather poor effort will encourage other British fans to air their views through their own fanzine. There's surely plenty of brains in the BFL, apart from those of the Big Three! Good hunting!

APPENDIX. I haven't left a lot of space for listing the books I have for sale, but here is a sample. If you'd like a full list of my surplus, send me a stamped addressed envelope, and you'll get the works!

(E.R. Burroughs: -Return of Tarzan (Methuen) G. 1/3d: Beasts of Tarzan (same) G. 1/3d: Warlord Of Mars (same) G. 1/3d; Tarzan of the Apes (Tauchnitz PB)

(F. Marion Crawford: -Zoronster (Nelson) G. 1/3d. F Marion Crawford: -Zoroaster(Nelson)G.1/3d; Marzio's Crucifix(MacKillan)

Man Overboard(same) G.1/3d each.

Unthinkable(Methuen)G 2/6d.

Modern Tales of Horror(edited by D.Hammett)(Gollancz)VG (448pps) 8/
Switch On The Light(Collected by C C Thomson)(Selwyn & Bleunt)G 4/
Dream(S Fowler Wright)(Harrap)G.1/6d.Power(S Fowler Wright)(BayTree)1/3d

Queer Stories from Truth' -FG-1/3d.

Before Adam (Lack London)(Golling)G.1/6d White Fang(Nelson)F.1/-Before Adam (Jack London) (Collins) G 1/6d. White Fang (Nelson) F.1/Camberwell Miracle(J D Beresford) (Heinneman) FG.2/6d.
Hocus Root by C B Foster (published in Australia -- PB) G 1/6d.
The Lost Jorld (Conan Doyle) (Hodder and Stoughton) F 1/6d
The Poison Belt (samp) E1/6d.
Riddle Of The Sands (E Childers) (Nelson) FG 1/6d.
Uncanny Tales (F Marion Crawford) (Unwin Fisher) F 1/6d.

...... NOTE; -Postage extra on orders under 10/NON-Fiction-NON-Fiction-NON-FictionWorlds Without End(H Spencer Jones)(English Universities Press)VG 2/6d.
Microbe Hunters(Paul de Kruif)(POCKETbecks, N.Y.)G 1/3d(PB)
Miracles Of Military Medicine(A Q Maisel)(USA ARNED FORCES Ed.)G 1/3d.
Magic and Religon(J G Fraser)(Thinker(s Library) 1/3d G-DJ
Easy Outline of Astronomy(M Davidson)(Thinker's) 1/3d G-DJ
The Occult Review:-Jan'47 and Summer '47 @ 9d each. (PBNew Hope For Britain(Olaf Stapledon)(Lethuen) 2/-.G-DJ. Paper
Electronic Engineering(OCT NOV & DEC '46)G at 1/3d each. Bound)
Key:-F-Fair.FG-Fairly Good. G-Good. VG-Very Good. DJ-with dust jacket.
This ends number one of volume one of 'The Alembic'. 'be seein' you!