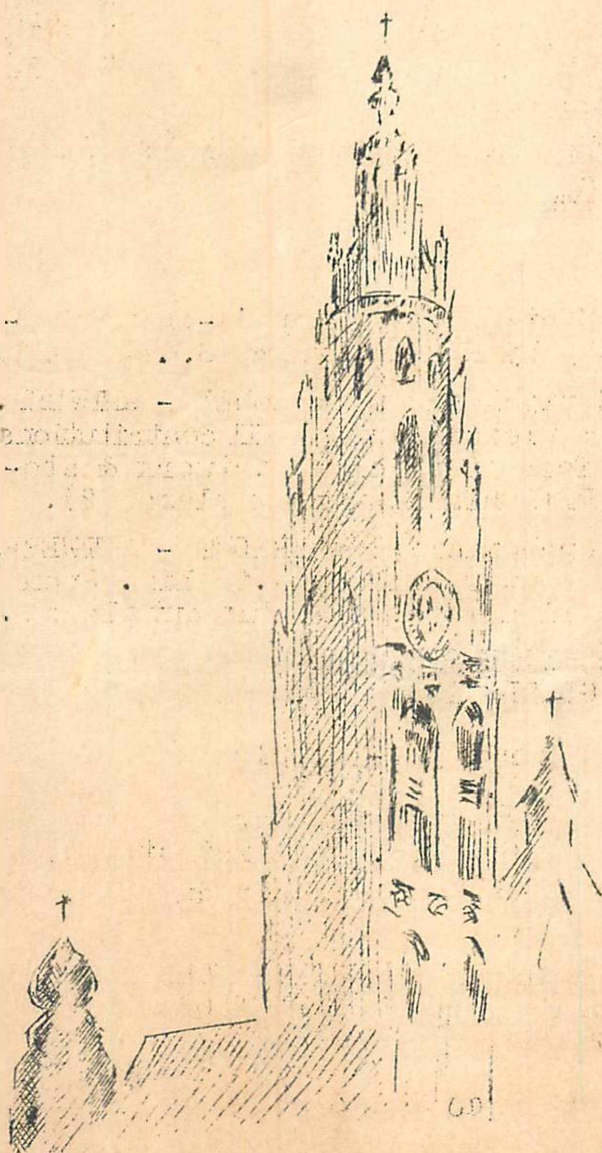


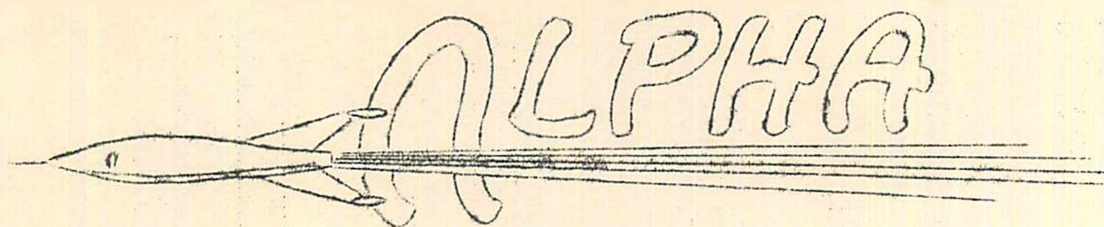
ALPHA

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



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C O N T E N T S
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APRIL 1954.
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COVER "ANTWERP CATHEDRAL"	W. D'Hooghe		
EDITORIAL	Dave Vendelmans	Page	1
ANTWERP SF CONVENTION 1954	Jan Jansen	"	2
" LAST PAGE "	Jan Jansen	"	4
MEET ME TO-NIGHT IN DREAMLAND	Dave Vendy	"	5
ON THE BOOKSHELF	Jan Jansen	"	8
OPEN LETTER	Orig.: G.B. Stone	"	10
"ALPHA" S.F. LIBRARY		"	12
"TRUES" IN THE NEWS	Dave Nutty	"	14
BOUQUETS AND BRICKBATS	The Readers	"	16

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WE CAN'T HELP THE FREQUENCY OF OUR NAMES ON THE CONTENTS PAGE:
YOU CAN

Editorial Statement:

ALPHA - Belgium's - and possibly Continental Europe's-only fan-
===== zine, is published bi-monthly by ALPHA, Antwerp S.F. fan club.

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more mail needed. Help him out please .

EXCHANGE SUBSCRIPTIONS WITH OTHER FAN-
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THE ABOVE ADDRESSES, IN ORDER TO SAVE POSTAGE.

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRES WITH ISSUE N° 3

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Dear Fans,

The present edition of our newsletter (I think we can safely call it a Fanzine now) is something of a milestone in our short history. It was in this same month, a year ago, that I met Jan, or Jan met me... and decided to form a S.F. Fan club between us, hoping eventually to find other members, preferably with a large stock of Science-fiction, a typewriter and lots of enthusiasm. We're still hoping... but it seems that our encounter was a lucky one because I'm beginning to think seriously there are no other active fans in this country.

The fateful meeting took place outside our local newsagent's shop. The day was Thursday; the date : April 2nd.; the time : 17.45. I had just entered the shop to buy my copy of "Future" which was the only science-fiction I could get hold of at the time, or so I thought, and had just seen a chap going out who gave me a queer look (If you know Jan as well as I do you'll appreciate that remark). Of course, I didn't take any particular notice, having gotten used to the natives by now, but on coming outside I bumped into the guy again. Apparently he had been waiting for me. I was just about to say "I never done it" (in my best English) when he spoke the magic words "I saw you buy "Future"... and then "I'm a S.F. fan too"... You can imagine my amazement. But it wasn't finished. There was more to come. This 9th. wonder also had a fairly decent collection of S.F. books and mags I had'nt yet read. He seemed pleased too when I told him I also had several mags and pocket-books. That started the ball rolling. We promised to send each other a list of our respective holdings and held our first "meeting" at my home on Wednesday, April 8th., where the foundations of our "club-to-be" were eagerly discussed and established, whilst my wife (who deserves a special mention here) kept us well supplied with tea and cakes.

Well, I think you know the rest We promptly got to work and started sending letters left and right, hoping to get into touch with some of the principal members of Fandom. We were more than successful, and, although at the present moment the only active members of our club are Jan and myself, we have several friends in the States and in England and even in Holland, who have been very good to us and have given us enormous help and encouragement.

I hav'nt been very long in the business, but I have learned one important fact : The spirit of good fellowship that exists in the S.F. world is certainly highly developed and I think that if everyone could get along with their fellow- homo sapiens as well as the members of Fandom do, then the world would certainly be a mighty fine place to live in.

And now : On with the show

Dave.

ANNOUNCING : THE BIGGEST SCIENCE-FICTION EVENT OF EUROPE 1954:

===== T H E F I R S T T W E R P - C O N =====
(First Antwerp S.F. Convention 1954.)

It is with great pleasure that we are able to announce, in this, our anniversary number, the event of the first TWERPCON, an event that will go down in Fandom's history as the turning point for Science-fiction on the European continent. This will be the convention that will leave its mark on Science fiction, and, through cooperation and the intermingling of ideas, add immeasurably to the appreciation and distribution of our favorite literature.

Most of the local and national newspapers and weeklies have carried news of the convention and even the wireless program made a note of our work. It is indeed a pity that the TV installations, damaged by fire late February, hav'nt yet been put back into service, as we might then have been able to carry our convincing slogans right into the homes of TV owners.

Yes, we finally did it... Bentcliffe's encouragement (see elsewhere in this issue) was the necessary nudge to push the snowball down the hill and start the avalanche going.

THE PLACE : THE CITY FESTIVAL HALL.

We have managed, not without difficulties, and day-long sittings of the City Council, to obtain the largest suitable Hall in Antwerp for the coming convention. Situated, as it is, in the centre of the town, and only a few minutes walk from the Central station, it should prove the best possible location. There is room for nearly a thousand persons (medium-sized) and it has excellent facilities for the broadcasting of speeches, and holding of "clique-parties".

THE DATE : JUNE 31st. 1954.

Originally we had decided on the Whitsun holidays, but as I would like to be at the Supermancon myself, and not wishing to jeopardize the success of this convention by drawing a large portion of Fandom to Antwerp, we have decided on the above date as being best suited for our purposes. It will enable Mancon visitors to arrive in good time for our convention, and moreover it will give them a chance of getting acquainted with the Flemish language.

THE PROGRAM : We have not yet been able to put this together completely, but following items may already be considered as definite : Dave VENDY, the prominent SF author, will be present in the flesh to discourse upon the merits of Belgian Science-fiction in general. Of special interest will be the comparison of our national literature with the companion SF novels of Great Britain and the U.S.A. These are on a slightly lower level of intellect we know, but it will generally be agreed that progress can be made by the study of Mr. Vendy's work, of which an example is printed in this fanzine.

Nic Oosterbaan will hold a special discussion in the course of the morning's proceedings about the unbelievable success of professional science fiction magazines in the Low countries.

An internationally known fan, described as "electrical" in one of Britain's pro-mags, Yes Sir... WAW himself, will discuss the merits of friendly and informal fanzines; this by request of his numerous Belgian subscribers.

Other well-known figures will be present but it is not certain, so we will refrain from mentioning them as yet, but you may count on the appearance of Slater, Ackerman and so on. THE AFTERNOON will be devoted to an enormous auction of promags and novels. We have a letter ready for Mr. E.C.TUBB, auctioneer per excellence, and we would gladly ask him to conduct this part of the convention on a % basis, unfortunately we cannot offer him free transport to the convention or we would undoubtedly do so to secure his services.

THE EVENING : Early evening will be enjoyed at Antwerp's most magnificent picture theatre, where the world-première of the latest SF film " The man who could'nt work miracles" will be given. The proceeds of the collection which will be held after the showing will go to various charities, the main beneficiary being the FANTWERP ASTRONUTTICAL SOCIETY.

ATTENDANCE FIGURES: are estimated, from reports received up to date, at about 500 for Belgium, 200 for Holland, and another 200 from Great Britain and the U.S.A.

FANZINE EDITORS - are kindly requested to give full possible spread to this news item. No payment can be made, but as far as space allows, we will return their kindness by carrying similar sized adverts for any of their publications. No publication date can be guaranteed owing to the smaller size of "Alpha".

REFRESHMENTS will be available during the whole proceedings. The Metropolitan Water Board has consented to supply all drinks direct from mains. No such agreement could however be obtained with the Solid Foods Co, so please bring or order your own meals in advance.

REGISTER your name now with J.J. at the address given for future reports and special program-souvenirs of the TWERP-CON. Enclose all you can spare. We can use it... (No empty envelopes please. Prepaid letters too.)

BE SEEING YOU

ON JUNE 31st.1954

AT ANTWERP'S FESTIVAL HALL
FOR

==+== THE " T W E R P - C O N - 1954. " ==+==

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CUSTOMS + + + CUSTOMS + + + CUSTOMS + + + CUSTOMS + + + CUSTOMS

Would visitors from abroad please note that it is forbidden to import into this country :

LIQUORS, GIN, WINES, BEER and other alcoholic beverages in the quantities you will require during the course of the convention. BOOKS and MAGAZINES containing the PHOTOS you love to gloat over. CIGARETTES and TOBACCO, with the exception of one or two packets for personal use.

WEAPONS OF WAR, including WATER PISTOLS and ZAP GUNS.

But... WHY WORRY??? They are all available cheap and plenty at Antwerp.

J.J.

LAST PAGE

Please don't start making funny jokes just because this is not the "bacover"; but it is the last page to be made up for this issue of Alpha. I wasn't counting on doing this, and that these words are here is only due to the failure of the S(ergeant M(ajor) in England and the N(on)-C(ommissioned)O(fficer) in Holland to get their promised quota of hard-labour done before deadline. Actually we waited another fortnight then had to find a substitute to ~~take~~ its place. The "Open letter" found in the mail-box was one solution, whilst the present article is being typed amidst a litter of crates and boxes, -having only just moved- and not having had time yet to put everything in its proper place (Please don't ask me to translate the mutterings of my wife; they're untranslatable..)

First place honors go to AUTHENTIC S.F. Monthly n°43, which I received last week in exchange for matchbox-covers... A very good issue. It certainly shows much improvement to the other three I have, dated about a year ago. I sincerely hope Mr. Campbell keeps the upward path he has taken. "To-morrow is another day" by K.Houston Brunner, is the feature story. I enjoyed it immensely. I think a few sentences deserve eternalising : Page 54 : "Where are you ?" "In a dismal side-street in Manchester." - "Raining"?, with a chuckle (that was Savigny)... Page 57 "What a job.." - "Savigny, it doesn't always rain in Manchester you know". . . . The Convention must be a success if even pro-authors start talking about the weather there. Found all the other stories enjoyable, but would like to know how "Mary Hell"s " came to be entitled S.F. ? The various factual articles, fanzine reviews and latter column are highly welcomed here. Let me know when you get a letter from Belgium won't you Mr. Campbell?

"SPACEWAY" for April '54 found its way to Antwerp again. That man Campbell was there once more. This time with a novelette "The Alien". The story is fine but the method of telling "You do this, you said so" etc... became rather boring and, in places, even annoying. But it is good nevertheless. Just for the flavor, E.C. TUBB has another novelette in the same issue. England's authors are moving in again. The stories I did read were O.K. but I have not tackled the greater part of them as yet. Time... Well, that comes from trying to move at the time one is supposed to meet an issue's publication date.

Another fanzine dropped in lately, with a photo of a nice-looking young man, one you wouldn't accuse of being a fan anyway. If I remember correctly, I spelled your name wrong in the letter section. If so, my apologies Pete, but your handwriting wasn't made to read. "ABSTRACT" was the title of the issue. Vol.1, N°1 of a sixteen page photo offset mag, that will go over with the fans. That, at least, is my opinion. It is definitely a job by the younger set of fans, but compares well to some of the others that have passed here. And surely Pete, being 26 or 36 doesn't matter, as long as the spirit is present don't you think ? Pete confesses to having been an active fan for only a meager eight or nine months. Nice work Pete, keep going at this rate. I shall be looking forward to seeing more of your Fan - funzine. Which reminds me; I should apologise to a batch of correspondents for delaying my answers to their letters. I trust that you will understand that illness at home, moving to another place and trying to get our fanzine off on time doesn't leave much time for anything else. Sorry about the photos too. I hope they will be ready by late April. No promises though...

(continued on bacover)

MEET ME TO-NIGHT IN DREAMLAND.

A S.F. Burlesque by

Dave Vendy

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It was 3.15 a.m. on a wet morning in April when Johnny rounded the corner and bumped into the BEM... Under normal conditions, Johnny would have retraced his steps in no uncertain manner; but conditions were anything but normal. In the first place, he was blind drunk...; in the second place, he was on hands and knees and the wet pavement prevented him from getting into an upright position; and in the third place, his girl had just jilted him and he was past caring what happened to him anymore. Therefore, he just let Fate take over and stared foolishly at the BEM. When this impossible creature rolled one of its three eyes at him and said in English: "Hi Pal", he wasn't at all surprised and even managed to grin sheepishly, thinking "What the hell, I'll be O.K. in a few hours, I hope...". The BEM, encouraged by this apparent sign of friendship, opened its hideous camel-like snout and said "I suppose you hav'nt got a room for me, or some place I can stay for a while have you Pal ?". Johnny, deciding he could afford to humor this hallucination for a bit, answered "Sure, you can stay in the garage if you like; I sold my car some time ago". "Say, that's real swell of you" said the BEM, "You see, I've just arrived from Centaurus III on a "Good-will" tour of the Solar system, but so far the persons I have met are all scared of me and run away". "You must be kidding" thought Johnny, shuddering. "Still, you seem like a good guy" continued the BEM, "Say, would you like to see my space-ship ?". "Sure", said Johnny, wishing he were somebody else, "O.K. then, climb on my back and I'll take you there." With that, the monster lay on its under-parts and Johnny clambered, not without difficulty or repugnance, on its scaly back and off they went... That twilight journey was certainly something to remember and if Johnny had'nt been so weak, he would certainly have risked jumping off. Once the small- and fortunately sleeping- town was left behind, the BEM picked up speed and trotted along at about 35 m.p.h... Five minutes later, entering a small wood and pushing a few trees aside, the creature exclaimed proudly : "There, ain't she a wow ?". In a clearing of broken- off and charred trees stood an ugly-looking space-ship (at least that's what it seemed to be), its metallic hull gleaming dully in the twilight. "Come on in and have a drink" said the BEM. "Er... no thanks" protested Johnny; "I think I've had enough for to-day I guess I'll be running along now"; "but, by the way", he said, a thought penetrating his befuddled mind, "Why did you ask me for a room when you can stay here in your space-ship, and another thing : how come you speak English so well ?". "As to the first question" answered the Bem, "I could stay here of course, but that would'nt solve the problem of getting acquainted with you folks; besides, if I could get someone, like you for instance, to help me, it would simplify matters a lot. People would believe you and would'nt regard me as such an unusual specimen. Now, for your second question : I should have thought that a man with average intelligence would have thought of that one, especially if they had read Science-fiction... Our robot observation-craft - flying saucers to you - make recordings of all interesting phenomena occuring here on earth and these are examined in detail by our experts at home. We learned your simple languages many years ago. By the way, I was listening in to the A.F.N. on the way here. They've got some fine music on that program. I'm a Be-bop fan myself"... "Gosh" moaned Johnny, "why don't I wake up ?"

"Come on, step inside and I'll show you around" said the BEM.
 "What have I got to lose" sighed Johnny, stepping gingerly into the
 air-lock. The BEM followed suit and manipulated some controls that
 opened the inner air-lock. "Voilà" said the BEM, "Après vous" ...
 "Say, ain't that French?" "Yeah" answered Johnny. "Well, what do
 you know" croaked the BEM with a horrible leer...
 Johnny looked inside the space-ship and saw an incomprehensible ar-
 ray of pipes, wires and switchboards, complete with buttons to push
 and switches to pull... "Say, how do you manage to operate all those
 gadgets?" asked Johnny, "they're spread all over the place. "Haha"
 chortled the Ambassador from Centaurus III, "you forget I have eight
 arms". "However" he continued, "the ship is automatically controlled
 you know. All I have to do to take off from here is press this grey
 lever here... (actually it was a green lever, but BEMS, as everyone
 knows, are color-blind)... and away we go. The automatic pilot then
 takes over and sees me safely back home. It even lands the ship au-
 tomatically. These other gadgets you see here are only to be used ma-
 nually if anything goes wrong". "You don't say" said Johnny. "But I
 did" retorted the BEM; "Oh I see, that's only a figure of speech eh"
 "Say, have you got any tobacco on you pal?" "Gosh" thought Johnny,
 "now the nightmare wants to smoke"... Aloud, he replied "No chum".
 "Never mind" said Bug-eye, "I'll go and collect some dried leaves.
 I made myself a pipe on the way here but had no tobacco, so when I
 landed I tried some dried leaves. It makes quite a good smoke. That's
 another vice I learned from you folks. Stay here a minute will you?
 I won't be long."

Left to his own devices, Johnny started looking around. He still was'
 nt quite sure what to believe. Was he actually standing inside a space-
 ship that came all the way from Centaurus? Had he really been talking
 to a horrible BEM? or had he gone nuts? He really couldn't make up
 his mind... "Of course" he reasoned, "there is one certain way of
 finding out." His eye fastened on the green lever... "No" he thought
 "I mustn't do that; it might work"... And then a new thought struck
 him: "Supposing the ship did take off... What harm could it do?
 According to Bug-eye it was set to land automatically on Centaurus III.
 What a grand opportunity to achieve fame and fortune... He'd be the
 first man to accomplish interstellar flight... But what about the
 BEM? "Oh, he'll be all right". Besides, when I return I can explain
 everything. I'll be famous... His eye fell again on the green lever.
 He hesitated an instant..... and then.... he pulled it.

+ + + + +

When Johnny came to, he was floating a few feet above the padded
 floor of the space-ship. (Luckily for him it was padded and served the
 BEMS as an acceleration couch or he may not have lived to tell the
 tale). His head felt like a miniature atomic-pile in full production,
 but he was no longer drunk. At least, he could think quite clearly,
 and suddenly the events of a few minutes ago, (or was it hours ago?)
 came back to him with a rush and he tried to regain a normal vertical
 position. Not being used to free space, all he managed to accomplish
 were a couple of queer somersaults and ended up by cracking his skull
 against the far wall...

When he came to for the second time, his head was aching more than
 ever. He manoeuvred himself very carefully to the ship's side and ga-
 zed out of the rear viewport. The sight amazed him. There were thou-
 sands of stars of all colours and one star in particular held his at-
 tention. A great big flaming orb... (He didn't know it at the time,
 but he was looking at the sun...): The Earth, his own home, was nowhere
 in sight... The ship was on "interstellar drive" and was travelling
 very very fast.....

When Johnny had finally gotten used to the idea that he was actually in space, many millions of miles from home, he started inspecting the BEM's ship. In some queer lockers, he found food and drink, that looked rather unusual at first, but nevertheless tasted quite good and actually proved to be very nutritive.

After awhile, he fell asleep and dreamed of his ex-fiancée. Only there was something strange about her. He could'nt place it at first, then it suddenly dawned on him..."My God... she had eight arms..."

He awoke after what seemed ages and had another look out of the viewport. Nothing apparently had changed except that the sun was shrinking rapidly. In fact it was hardly bigger than an orange seen about 50 yards away. He looked out of the front viewport and saw innumerable stars burning brightly in a black velvet background. He felt very lonely and miserable and began to regret his rash act...

+++++

The landing on Centaurus III was accomplished with hardly a jar. Johnny did'nt remember how long the journey had taken, what with being knocked out a few times... but he reckoned it must have been about 20 days; which you'll agree was pretty good going. (It works out at approx. eighty times the speed of light - child's play- D.V.) Before landing on the 3rd. planet, he had seen a lot of queer-looking objects that looked like chimneys, but not a sign of houses or anything that resembled a habitation. (He found out later that the inhabitants of Centaurus III lived underground because of violent atmospheric conditions and that the queer-looking chimneys were actually ventilation shafts).

As soon as Johnny managed to find his way out of the ship (He had'nt even thought of testing the atmosphere, besides he would'nt have known how) and stepped onto the wet spongy surface of the alien planet, he was immediately blown flat on his back by a powerful gale which must have been travelling at near 200 miles an hour. He was very careful after that and when he finally reached one of the tall chimneys, he was just about all in. Around the other side of the chimney, there was a large, round, sheet of metal, flush with the wall, and which looked as though it might open... It did, leaving a great yawning cavity, from which issued a most unpleasant smell. On closer inspection, Johnny noticed some steps leading down. He hesitated a moment and entered the hole, holding a handkerchief to his nose. As soon as he stepped onto the top step, it started moving... Rather startled by this sudden manifestation, Johnny almost lost his balance; but eventually he calmed down when he realized it was a moving stairway and resigned himself to meet the inhabitants of this strange world...

After several minutes of rapid descent, he finally arrived at the bottom, where two dark and forbidding corridors branched off to right and left. He chose the left one and groped his way along for several minutes before his progress was suddenly arrested by a large double door... at least, that's what it seemed to be. He was just wondering what to do next, when the matter was taken out of his hands and the doors swung silently open, revealing.... two hideous monsters with eight arms, three eyes, a slobbering camel-like mouth and a scaly back... If anything, they were more fierce-looking than the BEM he'd left behind on earth.

Suppressing, with a superhuman effort, a powerful desire to turn tail in the opposite direction, Johnny took his courage in both hands and croaked: "Hi fellows, I've.. just arrived from Sol...".

The BEMS looked at Johnny, their three eyes ogling him from head to toe. Finally they closed them, shuddered convulsively, and said, practically in the same voice.. "WHAT A HORRIBLE CREATURE"...and fled.

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ON THE BOOKSHELF.

Well, we must say that if this situation continues, we might just as well fold this department. In two months of ardent search, I've only found one American pocketbook, and one Dutch translation. But then again, we did receive some items from abroad worthy of inclusion.

One of these items takes first place here:

THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR by Walt Willis and Bob Shaw.

Available for 1/- or 15 ¢ from WAW at 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast Northern Ireland, IF you hurry! It is a very limited edition!

Belgian or Dutch members wishing to obtain this masterpiece can send 8 frs or 60 cents (Dutch) to JJ, who will order for them in block. (?)

Eighteen months in preparation! Unless George Charters doesn't have to work for a living, I quite believe it. The stencilling is excellently done, and the resulting booklet is a neat production in / style.

But the story is the thing that matters, and I must propose to accept it as the Bible of Fandom. It relates the story of Jophan, on his way from the Mundane World to Trufandom. His journey through the Forest of Stupidity, the Hekto Swamp, the Jungle of Inexperience, the Desert of Indifference, to pick only a few, is set forth in the - spirit. With Umor! As one reviewer wrote (about another book, on another subject!):

THIS IS THE LAST WORD, THE COMPLETE BOOK, THE AUTHORITATIVE JOB ON FANDOM - GOOD ENOUGH, WITHOUT QUESTION, TO SERVE AS A PRIMARY TEXT-BOOK, REFERENCE VOLUME AND HANDBOOK FOR EVERYONE WITH A SERIOUS INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT, AND ALSO TO INTRODUCE THOSE WHO KNOW NOTHING ABOUT IT, TO THE GREAT MOVEMENT OF TODAY: "FANDOM" §

My personal copy will NOT be available from the library. Love it too much. Even though the binding is stronger than any fanzine.

o o o

THE SCIENCE FICTION BOOK CLUB (Great Britain) has now completed its first year. I have received, read, and, most important, enjoyed, every one of the six titles up to now published. EARTH ABIDES, by G.R. Stewart, the first selection, is a novel of the nearly total extinction of the human race by a new virus, and the struggle of the few survivors to keep in as far as possible, civilised. THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES by Ray Bradbury, was the second choice. I am not exactly a Bradbury fan, but I did enjoy the stories in this book. It seems that The Wilderness, included in the BCed, was not featured in the original book. Third came that classic LAST AND FIRST MEN by Olaf Stapledon, describing Mankind's history from today till some billion years in the future. It is rather heavy reading in places, but nevertheless a "must" for every SF fan, and we are much indebted to SFBC for making this book again obtainable. Fourth on the list TOMORROW SOMETIMES COMES by F.G. Rayer brings the story of atomic destruction, and the subsequent civilisation under the rule of a mechanical brain. MINIMUM MAN by Andrew Marvell followed, being the story of minimum men. How's that for brevity? Minimum men are a new race of men, as the name implies, the size of rats, but able to learn things faster than we poor humans. Latest arrival was a British anthology, NO PLACE LIKE EARTH, edited by John Carnell. Luckily, I had read none of the stories, all British, previously; although all are worthy of rereading. (I've already read Survival for the second time!) Belgian and Dutch members may subscribe for six books (one year) at their local P.O. at the rate of 39/- (approx. 275 Bfrs or f 21.-) addressed to SFBC 33 William IV street, Charing Cross, London WC2. The next three selections are: I, ROBOT by Asimov; VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE by Van Vogt and PLAYER PIANO by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. (By the way, Mr Jones, I find I have n° 1, 4 and 6 of S.F. News which accompagnies the books have gone astray. Replacement?)

To our meagre findings on the market here: Signet Books at 20 Bfrs, made Isaac Asimov's CURRENTS OF SPACE available here. This novel is about a brain-washed spatio-anylist who has found out that inter-planetary dust is threatening the existence of Florina, and wishes to evacuate the planet. His gradual recoverage of memory, and the plotting to refrain the news getting around, form the basis for an excellent Asimov thriller. But why, oh why, did Signet have to pick on a book I already possess as the original serial (aSF) and in the Doubleday edition. Isn't the stuff scarce enough as it is, over here?

PAX Publications, which gave us the translations of Arthur C. Clarke's "Exploration of Space" and "Sands of Mars" some time ago, has added another title to their output of interest to the S.F. fan: HERSENE ZONDER ZIEL is a Dutch translation from the original German "Die Roboter sind unter Uns" by Rudolf Strehl. In Belgium: 140 Bfrs.

This book is a report on "robots", here alluding to all sorts of gadgets, especially the "mechanical brains". Starting off with a review of the situation to date, it gives a short explanation of the working abilities of such giants as ENIAC, UNIVAC, BINAC, ACE and several others? Some space is also devoted to the various "robots" already in use on the continent. The query whether a machine will be able to "think" for itself is raised, without conclusion, and ending with the proverbial chess-playing robot. A short history on them follows, and via the first industrial revolution, as brought about by steampower, suggests the early arrival of a second revolution. This has already started, as witness the ever increasing demand and uses the "mechanical brains" are produced for. Several factories all over the world have already fully automatic departments, and today there are already concerns where human labour is practically cut out. Higher productiveness, lower costs, and a nearly total absence of workers. Via the present "projects" not yet completed, or not yet in full-scale production, the author considers the possibilities which still lie ahead, and will certainly be followed up in the pursuance of "more and faster" automatics. The book closes with a short glance at what the future may bring, either in war or in peace. All through the book runs a thread of fear, fear that mankind will be delegated to a backseat. That man will not be able to keep up the increasing strain and complexity of the automatic controls they themselves are creating. And all the time, stories and novels come to mind: we of fandom have read it all in fiction. We were warned, still are being told by scientists and authors, in the guise of fiction. Now comes the factual book. And an excellent one at that! "Exploration of Space" was followed by the fictional account "Sands of Mars". I only hope that PAX have already lined up a novel to follow this factual book up. Sufficient are available, both those that see the subject blackly, and those who are sure that the "robots" will make mankind's future a life in Paradise.

o o o o o o o o o o o o

ODDS AND ENDS DEPARTMENT: Thanks to Charles Lee Riddle for his mention of our first newsletter in PEON Jan '54 ish. It brought us a new Dutch member! And, Lee, I hope the mimeographing has improved since then? Re our quote from your pages: I'm soliciting!

To Péter Zilahy Ingerman, c/o Orv Mosher: I learned about your scheme for an entirely "new, artificial language", which would be semantically correct and would be spelled with a phonetic script! Well, Pete, you've had your PFC membership, but may I suggest you go out and buy, borrow or scrounge an elementary course in Esperanto? You'll find you won't have to work at it yourself, and in a couple of months you should be able to get around with it. Would save lots of time and paper!

JJ

OPEN LETTER TO BENELUX FANS

=====
(an abridgment - with slight modifica-
tions- of another Open Letter, By Gra-
ham B.Stone/and/or Vol Molesworth-Sidney)
=====

Dear Fellow Fan,

This is an invitation. Perhaps it could be expressed simply as: "Come on in, the water's fine." Or perhaps we could echo that fine Churchillian phrase and promise you nothing but "Blood, toil sweat and tears". But we are not inviting you to come to a party or join a working-bee. We are asking you to do both at once.

When you first took to reading science-fiction, it was an activity you had all to yourself. You hunted up magazines and books, you were pleased by the good stories and peeved by the poor ones, and then you set off again on the hunt. You knew there were other science fiction fans about and you thought it would be stimulating to be able to discuss the stories with other fans. But most people-friends and family - thought you were a little "odd" reading that "ratbag stuff".

Now you have met some other people who read science fiction. The feeling of isolation has diminished. The hunt for reading matter has become a little easier, because you can exchange magazines with fellow fans. Possibly some of you have got together and started up a small library. There is a certain comfort in the company of others afflicted with the same "disease". It's great to be able to talk about space travel and telepathy and mutants and time warps and not get the automatic frozen stare of incredulity.

Like any other group of people with a common interest, you decide to get together ever so often. At first, when there are only a few of you, meetings are held at each other's homes; then the numbers get larger and you shift into a coffee shop or a lecture room or some place else where a dozen or more fans collect. Time passes and you find that the growth of members and the rapidly-increasing library call for larger premises.

By now, the old informality has to some degree vanished. It is necessary for one of you to collect the money and pay for the room, or tip the waitress, or bribe the proprietor or whatever the system is. It is necessary for someone to send out notices to newcomers, giving the date and place of meetings. It is necessary for someone to catalogue the library, collect borrowing fees, employ the profit to buy new books and so on... In other words, organization has arrived.

Now, in most Anglo-Saxon areas outside Benelux, this point has been reached. There are sizeable groups of fans, with some loose form of organization, in the U.S.A., Great Britain, Australia and Canada. There are perhaps smaller groups in various other countries. Many new fans are coming forward and very soon the Australian science fiction fan population will be considerable.

....

We suggest that the time has come for a more regular form of organisation over here. We are asking you, in fact, to form or join an official club. And we have certain very good reasons why you should do this, reasons which we would like to put before you .

The establishment of a formal club has this advantage : It provides an official contact point for new fans, as well as for fans and organisations overseas; and it has the psychological effect of suggesting that there is a steady, efficient organisation waiting to serve the new fan, and not just a few individuals.

Already I can hear an objection : "But there aren't enough of us here to form a proper club". Friend, it only needs two or three fans to start a club. All you have to do is to elect a Director and a Secretary-Treasurer, hold a meeting once a month, and keep a minute-book of your activities and decisions. When the club increases its membership, you can elect separate officers as Treasurer and Librarian.

How much better it will look in the next international round-up of fan activity, to say : " The "ALPHA" S.F. Fan club of Antwerp, Belgium, has done this and that..", rather than : Jansen J., and Vendelmans, D., of Antwerp, have done... etc." Your meetings need not be lengthy, but your decisions will be "on record".

Remember the old adage about great oaks from little acorns? Start building for the future now. Two or three fans, setting up their local S.F. fan club to-day, may seem to be putting up nothing more than a "front", but in a year or so, that club may have grown to the stage where it is organising a Convention and playing host to the rest of Fandom.

If we can help you at all, you only have to ask.

DV & JJ

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A NOS AMIS D'OURANOS. - (This is a letter - in French - and I don't want any funny remarks either - destined to our friends in France. If you can understand it however, good luck to you. "OURANOS" is the name of a pamphlet published in France that specializes in "Flying Saucer" news (see "Alpha" Newsletter n°2, page3 "Received with thanks")- DV.)

Chers amis,

J'étais très heureux de pouvoir prendre contact avec votre organisation et vous remercie vivement d'avoir fait de la publicité pour notre club dans votre supplément "Ouranos-Actualité". Je ne manquerai pas, de mon côté, de vous envoyer toutes les nouvelles que je puisse réunir sur les soucoupes volantes, quoique je ne connais personne, jusqu'à présent, qui pourrait devenir votre correspondant en Belgique. J'aimerais beaucoup accepter votre offre Marc, mais mes nombreuses activités ne me le permettent pas pour le moment.

Je ne sais pas dans quelle mesure notre organe intéressera vos collègues, mais si vous le désirez, je tâcherai d'inclure un article en français dans nos prochains numéros, dont je vous enverrai, à titre gracieux, régulièrement un exemplaire. S'il y a parmi vous des S.F.Fans, j'aimerais correspondre avec eux.

D. Vendelmans.

" ALPHA " S.F. Library (Catalogue for March '54 (Mags).

(All magazines listed below may be obtained on request from Jan JANSEN, 229, Berchemlei, Borgerhout/Antwerp. Mail orders, until further notice, to : Postbus 10, Antwerpen 1.)

AMAZING STORIES (Am.Ed.)

1935 : APR. AUG.

1947 : APR.

1954 : MAR.

AMAZING STORIES (Br.Ed.)

Undated- nos.18-19-20-21-22-23-24

ASTOUNDING S.F. (Am.Ed.)

1947 : JUN.SEP.OCT.NOV.DEC.

1948 : JAN.FEB.MAR.APR.MAY.JUN.

JUL.AUG.SEP.OCT.NOV.DEC.

1949 : JAN.FEB.MAR.APR.MAY.JUN.

JUL.AUG.SEP.OCT.NOV.DEC.

1950 : JAN. MAR.APR.MAY.JUN.

JUL.AUG.SEP.OCT.NOV.DEC.

1951 : JAN.FEB.MAR.APR.MAY.JUN.

JUL.AUG.SEP.OCT.NOV.DEC.

1952 : JAN.FEB.MAR.APR.MAY.JUN.

JUL.AUG.SEP.OCT.NOV.DEC.

1953 : JAN.FEB.MAR.APR.MAY.JUN.

JUL.AUG.SEP.OCT.NOV.DEC.

1954 : JAN.

ASTOUNDING S.F. (Br.Ed.)

1944 : AUG.OCT.DEC.

1945 : FEB.MAY.JUL.SEP.NOV.

1946 : JAN.MAR.

1951 : OCT.

1953 : MAR.

AUTHENTIC S.F. (Br.)

nos. 23-28-32

AVON S.F.& F.READER (Am.)

1953 : JAN.APR.

BEYOND (Br.Ed.)

no.1

COSMOS S.F.& F. (Am.)

1954 : MAR.

COSMIC S.F. (Br.)

no.11

DYNAMIC S.F. (Br.Ed.)

no.1

FANTASTIC ADVENTURES (Br.Ed.)

nos.17-18-19-20-21-22-23-24

FANTASTIC STORY QUART.

1950 : Spring

FANTASTIC UNIVERSE

1954 : MAR.

FANTASY BOOK

1948 (?) Vol.I n°4

FANTASY S.F. (Br.)-Annual

1938 & 1939

FUTURE S.F. (Am.)- (Bi-monthly)

1951 : MAR.MAY.JUL.SEP.NOV.

1952 : JAN.MAR.MAY.JUL.SEP.NOV.

1953 : JAN.MAR.MAY.JUL.SEP.NOV.

1954 : JAN.MAR.

GALAXY S.F. (Am.Ed.)

1950 : DEC.

1951 : JAN.FEB.MAR.APR.MAY.JUN.

JUL.AUG.SEP.OCT.NOV.DEC.

1952 : JAN.FEB.MAR.APR.MAY.JUN.

JUL.AUG.SEP.OCT.NOV.DEC.

1953 : JAN - DEC.

1954 : JAN.

GALAXY S.F. (Br.Ed.)

Vol.I - Nos. 2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10

IF (Br.Ed.)

Vol.I, n°1

IMAGINATION (Am.)

1952 : MAY.JUL.SEP.

1953 : MAY.JUN.JUL.DEC.

MAGAZINE OF F.& S.F.(Am.)

1951 : OCT.

1952 : SEP.NOV.DEC.

1953 : JAN.FEB.MAR.APR.MAY.JUN.

JUL.AUG.SEP.OCT.NOV.DEC.

1954 : JAN.FEB.

MARVEL S.F. (Am.)

1938 : AUG.

1939 : AUG.

1951 : NOV.

NEBULA (Br.) - Quart.

1952 : AUT.(1)

1953 : SUM.(3),AUT.(4).

NEW WORLDS (Br.)

1952 : MAR.

1953 : MAR.JUL.

ORBIT (Am.)

Vol.I, n°2

OTHER WORLDS (ctd.as SCIENCE STORIES)

1952 : JAN.MAR.APR.JUN.

JUL.AUG.OCT.NOV.DEC.



|                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| OTHER WORLDS (Continued)        | THRILLING WONDER STORIES (Am.)  |
| 1953 : JAN.FEB.MAR.APR.MAY.JUN. | 1936 : DEC.                     |
| JUL. OCT.                       | 1951 : JUN.                     |
| 1954 : FEB. APR.                |                                 |
| SCIENCE FANTASY (Br.)- Quart.   | TWO COMPLETE SCIENCE ADV.BOOKS  |
| 1951 : Winter                   | 1951 : Summer                   |
| 1953 : Spring                   |                                 |
| SCIENCE FICTION (Br.)           | VARGO STATEN MAG (Br.)          |
| 1939 : JUN. AUG.                | 1954 : JAN.                     |
| SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY (Br.) | VORTEX (Am.)                    |
| Nos. 1. 2. 3.                   | Vol.1, N°1                      |
| SPACE S.F. (Br.Ed.)             | WEIRD TALES (Am.)               |
| Vol.1 - nos.1.2.3.4.5.          | 1946 : SEP.                     |
| SPACEWAY                        | 1949 : MAY. NOV.                |
| 1954 : MAR                      | 1950 : MAY. SEP.                |
| STARTLING STORIES (Am.)         |                                 |
| 1952 : APR.                     | WONDER STORIES (Am.)            |
| TALES OF WONDER                 | 1930 : FALL                     |
| 1938 : Summer & Winter          | 1932 : FALL                     |
| 1939 : Spring & Summer          | 1933 : AUG. OCT.                |
|                                 | 1935 : JAN.FEB.APR.MAY.JUN.JUL. |

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ADDITIONS TO BOOKLIST

(see "ALPHA" Newsletter N° 2 - Feb.1954)

ASIMOV, I.	Second Foundation (H.C.)
x BALMER, E.& WYLIE Ph.	When Worlds Collide
x " "	After Worlds Collide
F " "	Après le choc des mondes
BROWN, F.	What mad Universe (H.C.)
D BURROUGHS, E.R.	De Prinses van de Rode Planeet
x FUTURE, S.	Doomed nation of the skies
x JONES, Raymond F.	The Alien
x KORNBLUTH, C.	Take-off
LEINSTER, Murray	Space Platform (H.C.)
x MERRITT, A.	The metal monster
x " "	Creep, shadow, creep
x POHL, Fr. (Ed.)	Shadow of to-morrow
Fx RENAULT, M.	Le péril bleu
x SODMAK, Curt	Donovan's brain
SOHL, Jerry	Costigan's needle (H.C.)
D STREHL, R.	Hersenen zonder ziel
x TAINE, J.	Seeds of Life
x Titbits S.F. comics	Terror of Titan & Planetoid plague
x " "	Planet XI & Giants of the second world
x WELLS, H.G.	First men in the moon

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Key to symbols :

|    |   |              |
|----|---|--------------|
| x  | = | pocket books |
| HC | = | Hard cover   |
| F  | = | French ed.   |
| D  | = | Dutch ed.    |

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[illegible][illegible]

As everyone knows, one pound of coal gives an equal amount of energy as 3 million pounds of uranium.

The locomotive would consist of two parts : the first part and the second part. The first part would contain a water condenser. There is also a distinct possibility that the other part (the second) would be able to hold one or two passengers...

No definite plans are formed yet regarding the route this new monster will be used on but the constructors have made a tentative suggestion to use it on the new " New York/San Francisco route. Progress..... always Progress .....

○ ○ ○

Our informant described them as "Saucer-shaped discs", "shimmering - with an ethereal beauty - in the golden rays of the setting sun"; (Must have been something of a poet, this guy). On the underside of the discs, he also noticed some queer markings, which looked suspiciously like "M-A-N-C-O-N", although he professed not to be very strong on inter-galactic languages.

From later reports, it seems now that there is some doubt as to whether the occupants of these disc-shaped craft were actually visitors from space or whether it was only the members of the "TWERP-CLUB" making sure of their reservations at the " SUPER MANCON "....



THESE MODERN TIMES : When we hear the old folks talking about the "Good old days", when they still used gas for lighting the house and milkmen used dogcarts as a means of transportation, we shake our heads incredulously and consider ourselves very lucky to be born in our present age. We step into our car (paid for or not yet paid for), drive home, switch on the TV set and give ourself a lightning shave with our electric shaver. In the meantime, our wife, who has just cleaned the place a few minutes earlier with the vacuum cleaner, miraculously produces a meal from the refrigerator.

When we stop to contemplate all these modern wonders, we might ask ourselves what new thrills are in store for us, or whether the inventors have reached the limit of their powers and have nothing further to offer us in the way of labor-saving devices.

That is why we paid a visit to the Third exhibition of modern inventions, held at Brussels (Belgium) from 5th. to 14th. March 1954. There we found no less than 300 new inventions of all kinds liable to amuse the most disinterested persons.

First of all we'd like to mention a mechanical razor that is worked by hand and which contains, amongst other things; a dynamo, razor blades, shaving soap, after-shaving lotion, etc... The whole gadget only weighs 4 lbs. and of course does'nt waste electricity either.

A new kind of hammer was on view too. One which can also be used for opening tin boxes, removing nails (not human of course), chopping wood and cleaning one's teeth.

Then there were the latest type of nylon stockings, fitted with an alarm system that rings a bell when certain parts of the stockings are manipulated by unauthorized persons...

In other words, there is something for everybody and I'm sure that the world will greatly benefit from these additions to its continuously improving condition.

o o o

BIG FRY : I suppose you're all familiar with the tragic case of the Jap fishermen who got "all burned up" near the Eniwetok Atoll? Also about the fishes that were affected for miles around ? OK, but what you probably hav'nt yet heard is the fact that some of the fish (or their offspring) inhabiting the waters around those parts (Eniwetok, Bikini, Rongelap and Zeemalap atolls) have been curiously affected by a previous atomic explosion, probably in 1951 or 1952.

Some strange reports have reached us according to which some of these fish have mutated into all sorts of unusual shapes. One report mentions "an enormous-sized, one-eyed monster, resembling something between a shark and a whale".

It appears that someone caught one of these large specimen (It was almost dead when he caught it, otherwise he never could have) and next day he was telling the local boys all about how he caught a fish measuring about 20 ft. long and 5 ft. wide single-handed. He was thrown out of the local drinking-place on his ear, naturally... You know how it goes. Well, out of revenge, he brought the fish to the local the very next day, with his tractor, and... BOY!... did he create a sensation..? The lads of the village carried him on their shoulders and he became famous overnight, and, what is more important, he had earned for himself the most unexceptional title of " THE TRUTHFUL FISHERMAN ".

Dave Nutty.

P.S.: This column will henceforth be taken over by Dave Vendelmans as the above person has now been returned to his guardian. (Editor)

BOUQUETS & BRICKBATS.

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FORRY ACKERMAN:

.....I would enjoy seeing a photo of you and any of the other fans of the Antwerp area. This is one case where I will have to curb my tendency to coin words, as fantwerps would have the unfortunate American connotation of fan twerps, a "twerp" being a slang expression, (in case you are not familiar with it) meaning "goon", "little dumb-bell", "pest", "insignificant individual"...and I am sure you are anything but that!

§Thanks again for the parcel, Forry, and as you see from the article on page 2, we were 'twerping afore ye!

ERIC BENTCLIFFE:

.....for the copy of Alpha 2. I found this latter item most interesting, reflecting as it does the continental approach to science fiction. It is a pity that so little S.F. is available in the Low Countries, the state of things seems to be somewhat analogous to the situation in England prior to 1951, only two original mags were published here prior to this date, and only one regular U.S.A. reprint...Sorry to hear about your accident. Were you attempting to coax your machine into doing more than the Escape Velocity?...In a not too serious mood, may I suggest that you hold a science fiction convention in Belgium fairly soon- and give a special customs clearance to all fans attending. This would have to be done, as I believe that Zap guns are not yet on sale in your country.

§If you consider NO original, and NO reprint, and NO translated mag analogous to the pre-1951 English situation, you come over here, and explain the meaning of ANALOGY...As a matter of fact, I got up to E.V. I was off the ground for a considerable amount of microseconds.

JANE BIANCHI:

.....Hi ! Received your newsletter n° 2 and must say that I was baffled. It seemed, after reading it over three times (§Was it that good§) that all you and Dave do is talk back and forth. Anyways, I will admit it is interesting and wish both you and Dave continued luck with it... But I am puzzled over just what it is: The Alpha S.F.F. Club, Newsletter n° 2, or both or what?...Now before you get disgusted and rip this up, I'll say again that I found it quite interesting. Your future new feature "Science on the March" sounds exceedingly interesting, so I'm hoping to get a chance of reading it... Hoping you answer, and if in Flemish, I give up... Cordially...

§I think Dave's cleared the matter to your satisfaction, eh, Jane?

We do call ourselves the "Alpha S.F. Club, AND we publish a newsletter. However, now we have gone to such lengths to find extra material, the question arises "Newsletter or Fanzine" ??? To be or not to be? Of course, WE think it's worthy of the tag "fanzine". What do you say, Boys?

PETE CAMPBELL:

.....Thanks for the stamps and the copy of Alpha, All back issues are sold out, but you're on the list for future issues; the spring number will probably be out in April. When you publish a fanmag of your own there's no need to pay for ANDRO - I'll gladly send you future issues in exchange for Alpha!...Your mag arrived yesterday, and I've not yet got down to reading it, except for a brief glance through. Its an extremely neat production.-a nice job of printing. Its quite surprising



to find an English language fanzine published in Belgium...Enclosed is a copy of the CIRCULAR 5 of our Lakeland S.F.O. If you or any other fans in Belgium want to make use of the Library, I'll be pleased to have you as members...

Getting 4 times 50 pages in exchange for 6 times 10 to 20 pages seems an excellent bargain to me! Thanks, Pete! Any other offers? The reason for publishing Alpha in English is simply that all the fans we have contacted up to now, read English fluently, and those who don't have only themselves to blame, for not bothering us.

ARTHUR COOK:

.....You say in your letter that you are not in the know of any of the subjects in WHY. For that matter, nobody connected with the zine is. I'm sure I'm not, though I am very interested in anything connected with the para-normal. You will see from n° 2 which I've just sent, that we are trying to form a group of volunteers for some experimenting. Maybe we won't learn anything new - again we may make a useful contribution to ESP knowledge. It's a field of research wide open for investigation and argument...If you'll send me a copy of your newsletter I'll only be too pleased to accept it in exchange for mine. I found yours interesting and hope you will be successful in obtaining many new members...

I received WHY, n° 2. It is a definite improvement, and some of the articles are very well done. This is especially the case in Mason's "Telepathy, a social renovator". Very well put. For those interested in ESP, etc. certainly worth the trouble to write and send a stamp for sample copy. Address: 45, Derby Street, Blackburn, Lancs. (Unpaid ad. quote ref. A 5 when replying.)

MICHAEL CORPER:

.....Nu, wat Antwerpen betreft: ik was van plan je de eerste dag al proberen te bereiken, i.e. 21 Dec. Maar ik had mensen beloofd pakken af te geven. Ik had me namelijk ingebeeld dat ge bij Coveliers werkte, en wou U daar opbellen. Toen de volgende dag. Maar ik zat vast op het kantoor waar ik vroeger werkte, (Navex), en dat ging ook niet. Toen, 's avonds, besloot mijn oom, waar ik logeerde, ons uit te nemen, en kon ik niet weigeren. Maar die avond had ik eerst een bezoek moeten brengen aan een paar oude vrienden, omdat de vrouw met nierontsteking in bed lag. Door dat uitgaan moest ik dat bezoek uitstellen tot 's anderdaags, maar goed ook, want het mens had koorts gehad), en door dat bezoek moest ik weer andere dingen uitstellen. Enfin, het werkte als een sneeuwbal, en de ene dag schoof de andere op. Op den duur, door die ene stomme avond en de daarop volgende feestdag en met nachtjes door, en 's anderdaags uitmaffen, verloor ik dag op dag. Uiteindelijk was het tijd om weer te vertrekken, en kwam ik tot de ontdekking dat ik niet alleen Janneman niet gezien had, maar ook geen tijd had gevonden om naar Brussel te gaan, noch naar Lier, noch vrienden en familiebezoeken in de Duin-, Delin-, Gas- en Dambruggestraten, die vlak bijeen liggen. Ja, geloof het of niet, maar een paar dagen geleden hebben we nog een brief geschreven naar vrienden die op 50 meter van ons logeeraadres af wonen - omdat we geen tijd hadden gevonden. Ik zeg U dit alles, omdat ik hoop dat ge me zult vergeven, heel grootmoedig, en een schietgebeddeke zeggen voor mijn zieleheil...

That, in case you didn't get it, is the story of another WHY! Why he neglected his column duties! Well, drinking all night, and sleeping daytimes, seems to be the foremost reason, so we will understand and forgive. But, Michael, I have moved, you know, to Borgerhout, Gitschotel, just around the corner of your uncle's place, and I warn you, if you ever get lucky that line finished there! Never, never, make rash statements!

IVANBLICK:

.....You may not have any S.F.mags in Belgium, but you do have a fan magazine, don't you? I read in the fanzine review column of some magazine that Belgium had a fan magazine printed in both English and Dutch. (§ Was that Peon, Bob?§) ...I actually don't know anything about it, but you might look it up, and see if there actually is...I've got a few magazines, mostly '53 issues, that I could send to you for your fan club if you want them. The only payment I'll ask for is enough to pay for the postage...

§Egoboo never hurts, so I'll keep Dave's remarks: "Do we have a fanzine in Belgium?" You bet we have and don't I know it! I used to have a few spare hours each week; now I don't even have time to eat. Some guy called Jansen (I expect you've heard of him, ahem!) keeps popping up with more stuff or suggestions for our next 'zine...We're mighty grateful for the mags. They should make a very welcome addition to our library. Thanks a million, Bob!...Just received your letter dated 6/3 in which you state you've started a fanzine too. Congrats! Wish you plenty of luck and hope you've got lots of aspirins! Be glad to trade with you.

ORV NOSHER:

.....In a couple of weeks you can count on me sending some mags down your way (I'll slip in 10 aspirin, some Pfc stickers, and some FAN WAMPUM ...I've a couple of suggestions for finding members. Even if only you two meet, write up each meeting and send it in to the local newspaper and mention when the next meeting is scheduled. Keep this up - the papers may not take note at first, but they will probably start putting these in the social column - perhaps you can get a reporter down for one of the meetings and fill him in on fandom and your attempts to get a club started. See if you can get the address of some rocket society - I have learned that many science fiction fan attend these meetings as a general rule. If you have a local library you should check to see if it has s-f books, and who checked them out. If you do contact any science fiction readers, try to find out if they know of others...By the way, I actually ended up with three copies of your first notesheet - one you sent, one sent by Walt Willis, and I can't remember where the other one came from...

§Thanks for the birthday cake, Orv, and the aspirins. Just as well I can get some here, as delivery takes rather long by surface mail. We are following your advice on the local newspapers, but a check at the main local libraries has already been made without result. About that third copy: Dave sent it, he wasn't sure I had. And while we are at it, Dave got a Pfc world list, I received one at Wommelgem, and one at Antwerp. No wonder you run out of stamps at times!

NIC OOSTERBAAN:

.....In de volgende Alpha zouden we misschien eens wat aandacht kunnen besteden aan de serie BALLANTINE pocketbooks. Die zal in België toch ook wel geïmporteerd worden...

§I would just love to buy those books, Nic, but they're just not available over here, although I have asked for them all over Antwerp. I've heard of them, of course, but that doesn't help much does it?.... If at all possible, I'll drop in over Easter.

DEREK PICKLES:

.....I was very pleased and surprised to receive your introductory leaflet on the formation of your fanclub...I would appreciate future



copies, if you have one to spare. Or if you publish a fanzine, I'd be pleased to exchange the Bradford Club magazine for it... I was also rather astonished at the quality of the English, much better than the English I either write or speak, although the fact that one always writes and speaks another language much better than one's own...

§I hope this issue will be acknowledged as a fanzine. I'll know when I get the Bradford 'zine. Thanks for the compliments, I didn't know there were people left nowadays who write and speak their language as badly as you profess you do.

CLIFFORD ORRIS:

.....Thank you very much for your letter and the wonderful selection of matchbox covers with it. Believe me when I say that over 90% of them were new to me, and I am extremely grateful for them... To be quite frank I do not read them (SF mags, you chums), and consequently I have none here at home. However, I am more than prepared to buy some magazines regularly for you and send them on...

§Now talk about nice guys! SF Fans, please start collecting matchbox covers for me. I'll exchange them for Belgian covers, and while helping Cliff out, I'll be getting something out of it too! Thanks for Nebula 5 latest arrival, Cliff!

KEN SLATER:

.....For your interset (my mistake, not Ken's) I've found those three juveniles you mention at the end of ON THE BOOKSHELF quite good reading. Could lend them to you, if you'd like - the USA editions. Lemme know! Your stencilling is very good, puts mine to shame!... Once again, I find in your letter, that misunderstanding of the term "fan", which I, like Sam Moskowitz, consider wrong. Look, a fight-fan doesn't necessarily put on the gloves, and enter the ring, does he? He just attends all the fights he can. Similarly, a s-f fan I define as someone who reads all the s-f he can - even if he's never written a letter to an editor, or to another fan! Once he writes a letter, he becomes an acti-fan. If he keeps on writing letters, and engaging in various kinds of activity like amateur-publishing, he becomes part of "fandom" - which is not the same as being a fan...

§As I explained, I got the wrong impression from one or the other fanzine or column. We have changed our minds now, and will follow your appellation which is logical. We're part of fandom now, boys, and I was a "fan" all my life, without knowing it! Thanks for mags and book, Ken!

PETER VOORZIMER:

.....Dear fancobs, Please send me a list of fanzines, the ages and addresses of all editors, writers, etc. now active in Holland, Belgium and Germany....

§Fanzines: easy: ALPHA is still on its own. I'm 26, Dave's 36. As for your request for ALL issues of ALL fanzines, we've given you a sub to Alpha, then you'll have 'em ALL.

WALT WILLIS:

.....I enjoyed Alpha very much. Nicely produced and interestingly written. And my personal thanks for the Fan Wampum. Hyphen is still going strong, and n° 6 is on its way to you. Do you want me to keep on sending it? I delayed with the last one with the idea of asking you that - it struck me some of it (doesn't) mightn't be of much interest to you. Though now I have seen the fannish tone of the latest Alpha I doubt if I need worry about that too much? (This is meant to be a compliment!)

reviews were interesting and well written, and the whole thing well out. But what I liked most was its friendly and informal character. One of the differences between fandom and other fields of amateur journalism is that fans seem to avoid the besetting sin of ordinary amateur journalism - pretentiousness. With some people it seems that once they start writing for publication they get delusions of grandeur and become pompous and insufferable, and very poor writers. Whereas fans, many of them anyway, get their real personality across. So that even a bad fanzine is interesting as a psychological document, and the best is like meeting a likeable person face to face, or at least by personal letter. It's that friendly touch I was so pleased to find in the latest Alpha. You seem to be the very first fans to appear outside the Anglo-Saxon world. So WELCOME.

§That amounts to just about an article. Thanks for the friendly comments, and, in general, thanks for everything. I like the right-hand margins of Hyphen. I think I'll start page-bottom lines as below!

VINØ:

§Thanks, too!

WE QUOTED CHARLES LEE RIDDLE ON OUR TITLE PAGE, SO WHY NOT CLOSE WITH A SIMILAR QUOTE?

.....And remember, all we fanzine-editors like to hear reader's reactions. Let us hear from you all sometime!.....

oooooooooooooooooooooooo

LAST PAGE (continued from page 4)

Assorted plugs :

Plug N° 1 : Dennis COWEN, 42, Silverwood Road, Kettering, Northants, England, is collecting data for O.F. Handbook : Club/Society section. Send him details of your club or organisation for inclusion.

Plug N° 2 : Brian VARLEY, Balmoral Hotel, 33 Princess Square, London W2, still longs for more and more half-crowns. Seems mine was not sufficient. So do him a favor and hurry your Supermancon registration won't you ? It doesn't always rain in Manchester you know....

Plug N° 3 : Reynold's News is publishing a SF serial : "Colonists of Space" by Charles Carr. But why should I plug them ?

Plug N° 4 : Get your "Enchanted Duplicator" to-day.

Plug N° 5 : Buy "Science Fiction Adventures" - After all, they did the same for me.

Plug N° 6 : Subscribe to "Alpha". I'm losing money fast. (So am I -Dave)

Plug N° 7 : Contribute to "Alpha". I'm running dry fast. (Me too - (Dave)

Plug N° 8 : (see nos. 6 & 7)

Assorted questions:

Question N° 1 : Why will there be no Ackerman stories in Belgium's index list ?

Question N° 2 : Surely Eric is not going to stay out of fanzine publication ?

Question N° 3 : What's gonna be in next issue ???

! FOR WILLIS IS MY GHOD , AND I AM HIS PROFIT !