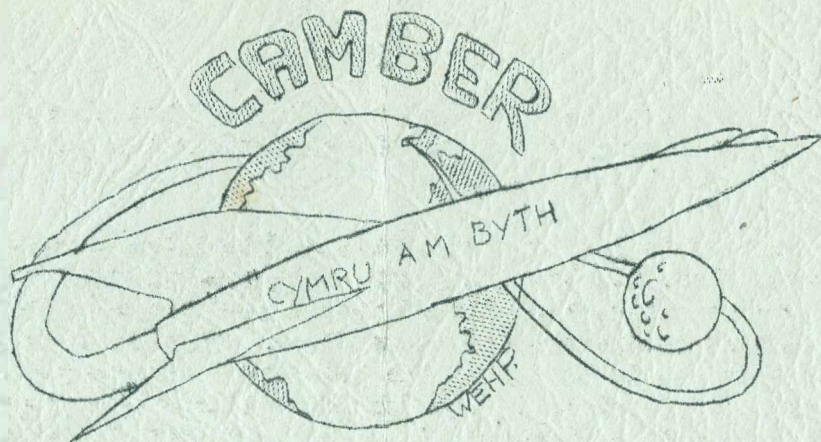


CAMBER

No.2.



—The 1953 London Convention in Focus—



Edited and Produced

By

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At 63, Newborough Avenue,

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CAMBER is produced with unbelievable irregularity and sells for 9d. (15c/) a copy (plus postage please) or 3/- for 4, (50¢). U.K. subs. to the Editor. U.S. subs to Charles Lee Riddle, 108, Dunham Street, Norwich, Connecticut, U.S.A.

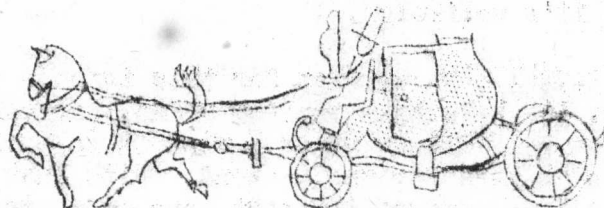
THE TOP LINE.

One day perhaps I shall be lucky enough to go right through the sequence of events which result in the production of a finished fanzine without a series of troubles dogging my every step. Maybe. But it's unlikely.

This is the second editorial I've written for this issue - the first is still waiting to be typed by someone else, it's been that way for weeks, however I'm tired of waiting and I must get the issue out by the weekend as I want it to be in the hands of British fans before they dash off to Chatham for the weekend. With luck I shall be there and am looking forward to what should be one of the best cons ever staged in this country. It's a long way to go for one day but if I know Tony Thorne, and the programme is any indication then a great time will be had by all. Incidentally it's a my pleasure to nominate Tony as the British representative to the San Francisco con in September 54. Several other names have been put forward but as far as I know Tony is the only person to accept nomination. Later there will be an opportunity for fans to vote, when you do remember - "Let Thorne Go To Frisco".

Getting back to Gamber, as you can see changes have been made, this size is a lot more economical on paper and stencils and still looks very neat., also it's a change from the more conventional formats so widely adopted today. While the contents of this issue have been devoted almost exclusively to the Coroncon with the next issue we shall be back to our usual varied style providing (we hope) something for everyone. Looking beyond the next issue however I'm not so optimistic, in hand is a fair amount of artwork a lot of serious poetry - and nothing else., so if you want to see future issues of this fanzine better do something about submitting your particular party piece - its up to you. Anything will be considered as long as it is reasonably well written.

AROUND THE HIGHSPOTS



1953 CONTOUR

We are proud and happy to dedicate this issue and in particular this report, to the charming and lovely guest whose presence, at all times, illuminated the proceedings to such an extent that we shall always remember the occasion as the Bea-Con.

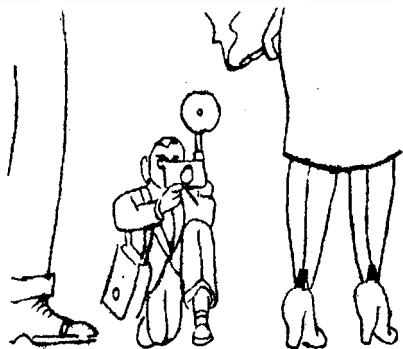
Well, in those few days Anglo-Fandom lost its innocence - no more will anyone ever question English reserve without memories springing to mind of this forty-eight "endurance test."

Trouble is, every time I attempt to start writing I relapse into the trance I was in on Monday morning and start reliving it all again.

However, let's go back to the beginning and see if I can possibly describe something of that lost weekend.

BYA GOTTA BELIEVE

The night before the weekend after.



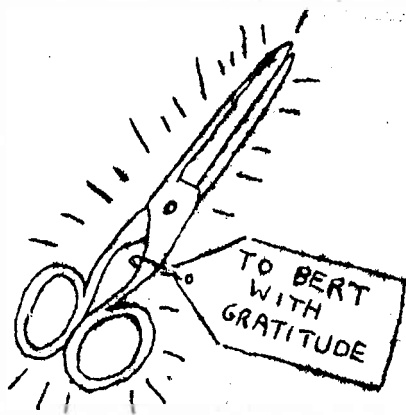
I literally staggered out of Paddington Station around eight-fifteen on Friday evening, weighed down to the ground by having put all my eggs in one basket - to be more precise one very large and very full suitcase.

However, less than an hour later I was hurrying through Norwich St. and pushing open the door of the White Horse expecting to find fans hanging to the ceiling by their eyebrows, but instead it was comfortably half full which was indeed a blessing for it afforded me ample elbow-room to wield my camera.

It gets a might awkward in a crowded room lugging a fifteen pound Battery pack which is the power unit of the electronic flash I used to photograph.

During the evening pretty well all the British actifans came in and out, (mostly out) complaining of being tired - Ghu! what a way to START a Con. feeling tired. Amongst the many regional accents to be heard that evening in the bar there were several that were strongly Transatlantic. Firstly of course there was that of the first lady of the Con. editress Bea Mahaffey who came in during the evening with Walt Willis, his very charming wife Madelaine, whom I had the pleasure of meeting for the first time, and that expert on aqueous weapons, James White. Then from Milwaukee Wis., came Rita Krohn, an inspiring writer with a very inspiring personality - I'm sure she'll go over great in Philly (Shapiro please note).

Also there representing Southern fandom was Jesse Floyd - from whom fandom is going to hear quite a lot I fancy - watch Quandry for this. Also helping Bert Campbell make the W.H. like the old Bull & Bush was my old friend Bill Harding who has emerged from several months silence in Bristol with a beard which fooled me for a moment. Bill comes from Buffalo --- just don't grow horns Bill!



It's difficult to say which of our American visitors drew the most attention or worked the hardest to help the Con become the success it was but there was no doubt at all about which British personality stole the honours. It was Bert Campbell's Con all the way through. His tremendous personality, ability and sheer hard work made the weekend a howling success.

One great piece of news emerges from that evening - it was revealed by Jesse that The Fort Mudge Steam Caliope Co. after great research has discovered a new use for steam - it cleans things. No doubt Russ Watkins will be shortly advocating that all fanzines

be subject to treatment. However, more will be revealed to you about this at a later date as Jesse is shortly to visit Cardiff and this meeting will surely result in something - even if it's only a hangover.

When Lou finally got rid of us at closing time we adjourned around the corner to another pub which closes later. Bert offered to take Bea around on his motorbike - that's the first time I ever saw anyone ride a motorbike sidesaddle. As Bill Harding put it "she's got more guts than any woman I've ever known," - having ridden on Bert's bike I tend to agree. What a picture - Bert in a duffle coat, his beard flowing in the breeze and Bea hanging on behind.

From here we tottered around to the Bonnington where the Con was to be held, only to find the bar closed, so we grabbed all available transport and adjourned to a place somewhere in the Leicester Square area. Having had no tea, the evening's liquid refreshments were beginning to take effect, so I proceeded to demolish a pile of chicken



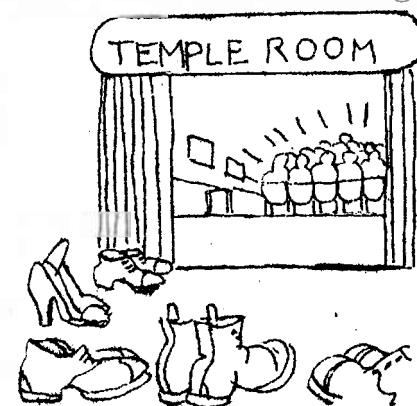
sandwiches, hope I left some for the other people, anyway as I felt a bit groggy I faded out and went back to get some sleep. Evidently I missed quite a night.

:::::::::::::::::::::
PSEUDOPORNOGRAPHIC.
:::::::::::::::::::::

A Fresh Start.

The following morning the Welsh contingent was at full strength - they slept the night before - all that is except Dave Barker, who will probably never get over this Con. Bill and Fred Price had got in the morning before I got in during the evening and Dave arrived at the Ghod awful hour of 4.30 a.m. Arthur Hillman also turned up at the Con. making five of us. We all arrived bright and early at the Bonnington and were a little surprised to find that the Con was being held in the Temple Room - such huckstering!

Firstly we found that everyone was wearing a badge with their name on it, this is an excellent idea imported from the U.S., with Cons getting so well attended these days it saves a lot of time and makes for easy friendships. A good 90% of the fans present were also wearing a second badge sporting slogans to the effect that "I like Bea Mahaffey" and "I like Rita Krohn". WAW's referred to Pogo; I'm told that there were quite a few odd remarks on some of these badges altho I didn't see any.



When we went to set up our stall we found that there was no table reserved for us so we promptly appropriated Jim Rattigan's, who, when he came in, took over one reserved for a publishing firm who didn't turn up. Bill put out the artwork and I the photos and mags. I'd made a special point of bringing with me some drawing pins, as had most fans, only to discover a plaster wall that required Scotch tape to stick anything to it -- and the

supply that was available was inadequate to say the least. However, we spread the display over the table. I'm glad to say that Bill's artwork caused quite a lot of comment and the stall was continually patronised.

I set up both cameras ready and made a few trial shots to get the feel of things. A lovely hotel from the photographer's point of view, the Bonnington, plenty of light is reflected from the walls and ceiling - important in flash work, especially in a large hall.

After a mill around to meet people and some char we came back to the hall in the early afternoon as Fred Brown and Ten Carnell were getting everybody together for the opening of the official proceedings. Carnell opened by saying that bearing in mind that Korshak could'nt see beyond the front row at the Chicon, and not wanting to miss anybody, he would point out a few London fans and the provincial actifen who could then in turn introduce people from their own areas. Unfortunately Ted has not studied a map of Britain for a long time as this sort of petered out after L'pool and Manchester were introduced.

A discussion was then opened on the trends of modern S-F and was started by Bill Temple who was really on top of his form - crack followed crack without pause making his speech so good that everything else that followed that day seemed pretty dull. I jotted a few notes as he went on. Referring to Carnell he revealed that he was known in the publishing world as "Honest John" Carnell; another big man in every way was G.Ken Chapman. Somehow Algernon Blackwood came up and a story allegedly titled The Dog Whom The Trees Loved - or was it the Trees Whom The Dog Loved - got mentioned. Another fan acquaintance of Bill's had grown to be a big man in the field - in fact he had beaten him to the paunch. However it could not be long before Bill made reference to the one and only Arthur Clarke. Mentioning Arthur's recent succession of book sales Bill mentioned that a fortune had been made from "The Exploitation of Space." Arthur we understand is now being referred to as Ego Head and Heinlein had called him 'The Man Who Sold The Moon.' Arthur was at present photographing sharks underwater, rumors were that he was being investigated by Senator McCarthy

for 'submersive activities'. Bill sat down to a very well earned round of applause. Other speeches in this item were by Ted Tubb, John Brunner, John Christopher and Vince Clarke - appearing in the guise of a huckster for the first time.

Frank Arnold sounded very pessimistic; he said that from what little Stf he had read over the past few years, he gathered the impression that the stories were the same, the plots in fact had all been done before - I for one disagree.

With the next item Ted Carnell really started something. Mentioning the recent article in Authentic where John Christopher made very harsh criticism of sex and Stf, and the Symposium on Sex and Sadism in recent Stf that the L'pool group were selling at the Con. he gave the mike to John Christopher to voice second thoughts; he was followed by a succession of speakers. Fred Browne, far from condemning Howard Browne for publishing the Spillane story said he liked it --this was the first time I ever saw hardened fans look shocked. A well known scientist who is also a reader of Stf spoke from the audience and made several good points and coined the word 'pseudopornographic' for fiction that was naughty 'in inverted commers' (perveted commers, maybe?). This discussion got quite lively but was eventually wound up by Ted Carnell who found he had to apologise as someone had brought along a daughter of tender years. I don't know how old she was but after some of the remarks made I don't doubt that she had tender ears.

An announcement was then made that the idea had been broached by many American fans to bring over a British fan for the Philcon in September. A raffle of original cover paintings had been organised to raise the cash. These tickets were available over here and were to be sold during the Con at 6d a time (I beleive they went quite rapidly). The idea was suggested



SHOCKED, HARDENED FAN.

from the platform that British fans should get together to see if we could choose someone to go. We did this on Sunday but the big stumbling block is the fact that the fan in question is going to have to raise his own fare initially which means well over £100, altho it is quite possible that he will be reimbursed later; also the trip would occupy 3-4 weeks. The two items have ruled out everyone eligible so far. Trouble is most British fans are working class people or students and both time and money are too short to consider it. Being one of those approached I could only say the same as the rest - "I'd love to but...." However it's a bit too much of a rush to organise anything this year so we decided to start a Transatlantic Fund to take British fans to the States and bring U.S. fans over here to a future Con in this country. Now as a faned I'm going to ask you a favour. I want every one of my readers in the U.K. to write down on a postcard the names of four British fans whom he would nominate to attend a convention in the U.S. as a British representative. Put these in order of preference and send the postcard to Walter Willis at 170 Upper Newtownards Rd. Belfast, N. Ireland. The idea being that from the result of this we can find the most popular choices and they can be approached to see if they can manage it. By September 1954 we should be in a position to help quite considerably from a financial angle. But don't delay - do it now, all we ask is that the fans you choose should be fairly well known. NO, don't read any further, write that postcard now!!

Getting back to Saturday, at 3 p.m. the Junior Fanatics were to produce a play altho we had been told earlier that it had been cancelled -- it should have been obliterated. I don't know who hatched the plot or who egged them on to produce it but it's a wonder they didn't get the bird.

With the next item came some bad feeling and I'm sure that tempers got a little too strained - or am I too sensitive. Anyway Dave Cohen was given the opportunity to voice his arguments for a Con in Manchester next year, and give his criticisms of the London Circle. Dave commented on an editorial in Authentic and stressed the point that he didn't like having to ask London-IF the North could hold a Con--all he wanted was some

support from London when he did. He accused the L.C. of apathy and lack of interest. Fred Browne replied for London and described the L.C. as a circle of friends, a loosely knit organisation who only appointed officers to run Cons. He argued that he'd seen no advertising for last year's Mancon and neither probably had others. The arguments then flew back and forth but heated tho they became the participants were no nearer to a solution at the end than at the start. Personally I think that the only solution will be to keep the annual "Big" Con at London as I'm convinced that not 10% of Southern fandom would ever go north to this type of Con while a very much larger proportion of Northern fans would come South. The emphasis of this Con should be, as it has been in the past, upon the pro' side of the business, the editors and authors bearing the brunt of the organising and entertaining. Then hold an annual FANCON in Manchester or Liverpool, where the whole programme should be mapped out for, by, and about fandom. This system seems to work out O.K. in the States with a world Con that is primarily Pro' and a fan organised Midwest Con at Indian Lake -- how about it Northerners? I realise that they are arguments against this but fans are primarily fans, and if the programme is sufficiently attractive THEY WILL TURN UP!

The tension built up by the last item was then swiftly dispersed and forgotten in the laughter that was raised by Whiskers, written by WA, this was Walt at his best. It was presented as a broadcast over the P.A. system and told the story of catastrophe. The awful story of Bert Campbell - his research into drugs - how he spent years searching for a drug to cure leprosy, then at last - success, his drug was found to be a perfect cure - for tuberculosis. Then, after even deeper research into T.B. he found a cure for leprosy. His fame spread far and wide and through the years discovery followed discovery until at last a

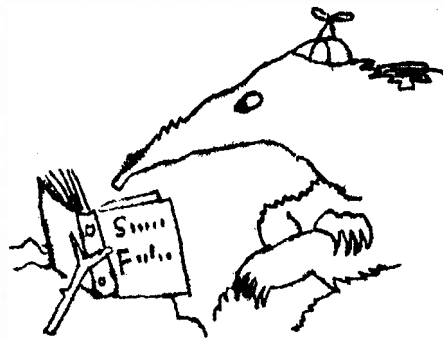


stockpile of drugs was built up, waiting for someone to discover what they would cure. Changing his field of research he developed a furniture polish that proved to be an ideal sandwich spread. Then at last his greatest discovery - the instantaneous hair remover. He decided to sacrifice his beard to be the first to try it out. No doubt you've guessed by now that it instantaneously caused the beard to grow in length as the square of it's root. But I'm sure the complete script is sure to be published somewhere so I won't tell you more. Congratulations are due to all who took part in the sketch and made it such a success although the Hair-o was Bert Campbell.

Followed games which raised little response from the audience, unfortunately apart from those who took part no one had much idea what was going on, except that money was being given away for answering questions.

Somewhere around here people faded out for the tea break and groups of fans turned up in cafes all around the area. I'm sure the local inhabitants must have thought us a gang of egoists walking around with our names written all over us, and I noticed that fans were prominently displaying copies of Sex and Sadism in Stf - ah well, that's fandom.

Coming back to the Bonnington, the editors and authors were answering questions submitted by the audience. I got there in the middle of a discussion on mutation in which fruit flies figured prominently, although I seem to remember reference to something with five heads -- but he was'nt present so it could'nt have been a fan. Then came an interesting question on whether a fan was liable to be re-incarnated as an ant-eater, - raspberries to whoever sent this question to John Christopher to answer.



The auction followed and most people agreed that even with Ted Tubb batting it never really achieved the heights of the previous year. Too much crud was being - not sold, thrown away. It's a reflection on Anglo-Fandom that they've chosen to gather together as much pure junk as possible to give to the committee to sell; heck, if everybody present had given one book or mag that was worth reading the auction would have been really worth attending. As it was it became rather ludicrous, bouquets to Ted for trying so hard. One novel event during the auction came about when Ted offered any item on the stall to the first person to come up and sing something. The only person with enough nerve was the little girl I mentioned earlier, - if I offer any more bouquets to Ted people will believe he's dead.

Now Is The Time For All Good Fen To Come To The Aid Of The Party

As the evening drew on plans were being made in every corner for smoke-filled rooms. The biggest seemed to be organised by the Liverpool group and most of the actifen had been invited. Finally the Con proper broke up -in fact it just disintegrated fan by fan. Not being able to remember which room the party was being held I made my way upstairs with ears attuned ready to catch fannish remarks to lead me to the room. Eventually I located the noise, and having practically forced the door, I found myself jammed into a small hotel room about 15 x 10 occupied by over 20 fen not counting the furniture. The fact



that I'd gotten into the wrong party didn't worry me much as I soon found a whisky bottle, and, failing to locate a glass, I discovered a weird looking piece of pottery that I assume was a flower vase; (at least I hope it was a flower vase), anyway, the whisky tasted good.

Just about every leading fan apart from the Liverpool and Manchester groups was in the room somewhere and about a dozen different conversations were being carried on simultaneously. This was not to last unfortunately, as an official knock sounded on the door and a voice announced "Night Porter -- will you please go to your rooms." I wonder what he would have said had he seen how many were inside; He'd probably have thought it was an orgy.

We decided to adjourn for Chow; someone suggested a Chinese restaurant so we silently sallied forth and dived for the transport which consisted of Bert Campbell's bike and Ted Tubb's car. We were treated to the interesting spectacle of Bill Harding with grey Homburg, beard, and tightly rolled umbrella, riding pillion on the bike - with Bert and his beard up front it was a sight worth seeing. Bill tell's me incidentally, that if nothing else, he's learned to roll an umbrella in Britain and I'll grant him that, he roll's a mean umbrella, - over here he needs it. The rest of us piled very literally into the car. I don't know how he managed it but Jesse Floyd had Rita Krohn on his lap - I got Chuck Harris on my stomach - I can assure you of one thing, Chuck will never be a spaceman - he's too damned heavy.

Much to my relief we eventually arrived so I managed to breath again. The Chinese place was closed so we found an Indian Cafe where I had my first taste of curried meat and rice.

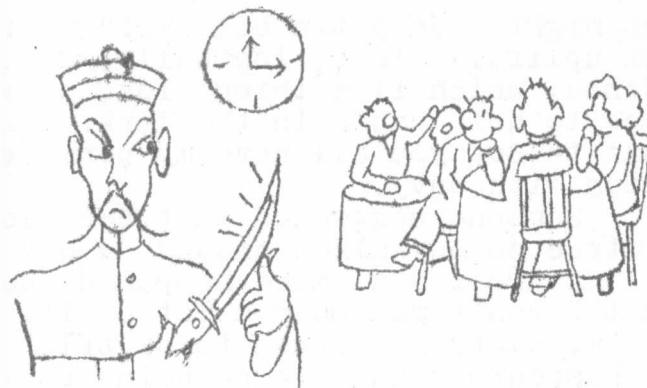
I enjoyed it a lot, moreso because of the company though.

Around 12:15 we began to get black looks from the staff who were waiting to go home. The decision was then made to go down to Ron Buckmaster's place in Woolwich and we piled in again; this time I made sure I'd breathe by riding on Bert Campbell's bike. Along the way we picked up Ron's car driven by his wife Daphne and we then proceeded across London in convoy. Believe me we drew plenty of startled

gazes from the population - and the police. Man, that was a long trip, if we'd gone much further I'm sure we'd have fallen off the edge of the world; however, we eventually arrived at Woolwich Barracks Married Quarters amidst sundry cracks about never getting out again. Once there, out came the bottles and on went the conversation; after a while the cat got up and left wearing a look of amazement - I should'nt have been surprised had it shaken it's head sadly.



Bert Campbell really came into his own from this time onwards as he planted himself in the fireplace and acted as keeper of the bottles. Quite early in the night someone spoke that now sacred phrase, "Let's all Hum," Hmmm? The conversation veered about a while until Bert suggested a test of mental powers. We decided to levitate a cardboard box - the one that the booze had been carried in -- this cheating as it was already pretty high. After great concentration and inspired by that great slogan which became a by-word of



the night, "Ya gotta believe!" we finally gave the box uplift. This, logically, was followed by a seance, which if nothing else, provided a good excuse to hold hands in the dark. As I was sitting next to Bea you all have my permission to turn green with envy.

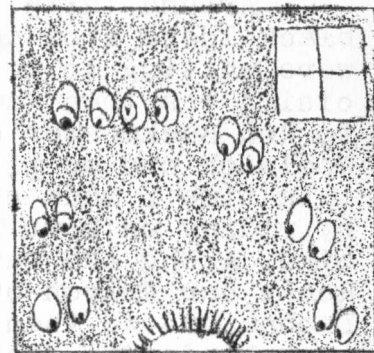
Someone suggested that Bert looked like Toulouse Lautrec so he walked around on his knees for a while.

A great deal more happened but I have to admit that I can't remember a lot of it. Somewhere around 5 a.m. everyone seemed to be spluttering poetry and Shakespeare sonnets were being recited at Bea from



from various directions in fact more than one of us had a Bea in his Sonnet. Inevitably the topic of conversation mutated into sex; it became what we might describe as quite frank. Somewhere around six or seven the party broke up, and Bea, Rita, Jesse, Ted Tubb and myself travelled back to the Bonnington looking pretty bleary and we males all needing a shave.

After the girls had freshened up a bit we found ourselves some breakfast and then broke up. I made my way back to my digs only to find another breakfast awaiting me - this just about cooked me, but nevertheless I could'n't sleep so I contacted the other boys and we returned to the Bonnington which looked awfully bare of fans, and those present reminded me of snambulists. Eric Bentcliffe told me I'd missed quite a party. It seems that there the Northerners had bribed the night porter with some whisky, to let them onto the roof where they held the party; this went on all night and only broke up when several fen started dropping empties down the chimneys.





THE SOMNAMBULISTICON

The first item on the agenda Sunday morning was billed as a "tour of the stands" "guided by that rascally streak Ted Tubb." However, as Ted was feeling like the rest of us the item never materialised. In fact, practically nothing happened during the morning except fans trading experiences of the night before, and this was when the actifen went into a huddle trying to choose a delegate to the Philicon with the result I listed earlier. I met Mike Tealby who was hiding behind a dark moustache and a blinding tie. Then along came Ken Slater who had finally made it to his first Con. Having met Ken I can quite understand how he gets through

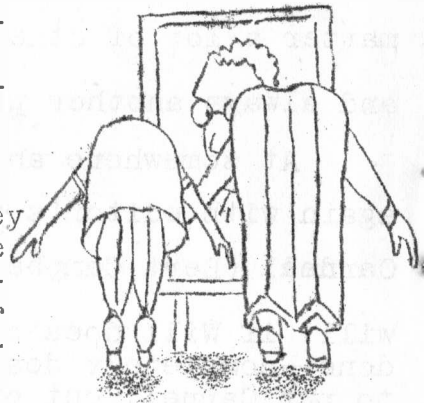
K.F.S.... (FROM MEMORY)
so much work. Sorry I didn't get more time to talk to Ken, and for that matter a lot of other folk, but remember there never was enough time - and always another picture to take.

At somewhere about 2p.m. (Con-jective)time) the Con got under way again with editor's addresses, this time was of course a front for Ted Carnell (Bert Campbell has a natural front behind which he can lurk at will) if Will doesn't mind being lurked at) This item was beautifully done--completely deadpan with Bert bringing into use a whistle and a bell to put Carnell out of his stride--but as I said afterwards he's stride hard.

The International Fantasy Award followed - or rather, a pale ghost of the expected award followed. Item A. - the awards themselves had'nt been completed in time and Item B - both authors were in America. Les Flood who commented on the item seemed very, very depressed about the whole thing. I shall be surprised if there is an award next year - unless things alter a bit. Pity, as I for one think this award is a very good thing. This year the judges chose "CITY" by Clifford D. Simak to win the fiction award and "Lands Beyond." by de Camp to win the non-fiction.

The results of the competitions run in the printed programme were announced next. Dave Barker won one of those - he never did tell me how much he won, - I'm worried he might start a rival fanzine with it.

After the results came what I would term the most unappreciated item of the whole Con. "Editorial Ravings" postponed from Saturday. This was a series of inter-editor letters read by Ted Tubb. There was hardly a giggle from the audience although there was a gag in every line, - I think the audience was gagged as well. A surprise item followed this. A playlet presented by two of our transatlantic visitors whose name I never did succeed in getting. A young lady from the States and a guy from Canada. The setting being an artificial satellite occupied by a woman scientist - more the former than the latter - and a robot with a human brain. He had been her companion until burned by radiation and having to adopt an artificial body. Into this situation enter two men with ideas - unfortunately for the woman who also has an idea - they prove to be androids. The most was obtained from the situation and the whole thing was very well presented. A very novel idea was a large portrait of Arthur Clarke headed by the words - "Per Ardua ad Arthur" - this portrait was bowed to every time anyone passed it. The audience really lapped this one up.



Tea break proved interesting - in fact very much so. The weather in London was terrifically hot - for London, and right opposite the Bonnington was some kind of hostel for girls. So half the Con types were ranged along the opposite pavement admiring the fillies sunning themselves in sun-suits on the balconies - one of them even --- but that's another story!

During the afternoon there was to have been a film show of Destination Moon in the Temple Room while the main Con went on in the large hall upstairs. However, there was no film show. Seems that there is a regulation forbidding the use of 35 mm. projectors without a fire-proof operating box. This of course was'n't discovered until the last minute - too late to get anything on 16 mm. One thing - no one can complain that the films were poor, even if it seems queer that a different hotel was chosen this year mainly so that the glass roof would'n't interfere with the films.

However, having two halls gave fen a nattering place if they didn't feel like staying with the official proceedings. After tea the Medway Club, aided and abbetted Tony Thorne to present a crazy display of fauna and flora of that area. The items were many and very varied, from an electric torch bulb in amber, a stone-age exhibit dating from the days when they were used as ornaments - before the discovery of electricity, to a meccano robot via a pair of diapers - the exact purpose of which seems to elude me.

To round off this item the Junior Fanatics presented to WAW on behalf of Lee Hoffman, a binder lettered in gold - QUANDRY, as an award for that fanzine winning a poll for the most popular fanzine.

Back upstairs to the main hall for the Guest Editor's Session. While people were assembling for this who should turn up but L.Ron Hubbard.





FILBERT : "There goes YOUR manuscript"



MEMORIES OF THE BALLET

Carnell opened the session by introducing Nick Osterbaan editor of the new promag PLANEET. Nick proved to be a short guy but long on humor, and a perfect speaker in English. He was the only editor I've ever heard say he was in for the money, which is why he's an authors' agent and translator as well. PLANEET should go a long way with Nick at the helm. He was followed by Maurice Goldsmith, a former UNESCO Science Editor who read a paper on Stf that went over very well. Then Ted introduced Bea Mahaffey and proceeded to fire questions at her about OTHER WORLDS and it's future. Seems OW is going places with higher author rates - must keep my eye on that 'Zine. Bea was followed by Hubbard; he has quite a sense of humor and made quite a neat though unrehearsed speech, strictly about Stf. One important item to be revealed - he's taking up writing again and is at present working on a long novel. Hubbard was accompanied by a young woman with a very large and imposing press camera so that all through his speech he was "fired at" from left and right by the two of us. Then followed something of a surprise. Ted introduced Peter Hamilton of NEBULA. Now to look at Peter one would never imagine him to be an editor, or even a good speaker, yet he made one of the best "public appearances" of the Con. His handling of the questions - and there were plenty of them - was masterly. NEBULA is to go bi-monthly shortly and is to be joined by a companion mag printing rather more juvenile Stf; this, hopes Peter, will sell in large enough quantities to help subsidise NEBULA and allow him to purchase top-line stories for it. Already on hand is a hitherto unpublished Eric Frank Russel story and another by Bradbury. Also, negotiations are being made with Heinlein. NEBULA has gone a long way in three issues, and I think it's going a lot further in such capable hands.

.....
"NETBALL ANYBODY?"
.....

Imposingly titled "Lecture From The B.I.S.", the next item was nowhere as near as dull as might be imagined. In fact the platform was suddenly occupied by a wierd looking character in corduror pants, a coat on back to front, a battered trilby and dark glasses, not to mention the beard which left no doubt as to who was hiding behind it. This mad scientist was joined by a contemporary no less typed, carrying a mysterious cardboard box labelled MARGERINE. Followed a "lecture", heavily accented, dealing with a revolutionary rocket motor. Notes were read from a book titled "Fisiks" and some complicated maths on the blackboard for some reason worked out to OXO and BISTO (free ads). Then came the demonstrations. Unfortunately I was in a bad position to see much of it, however something "flew" a few yards, but it looked like a torch to me. Suddenly a cry was heard - "The Russians" - and everything was quickly rammed back into the Margerine box and the lecturers practically fell off the platform in their rush to get away.



It wasn't long before Bert was back on the platform to be presented by Tony Thorne with the "Nut Award". This seemed to consist of a sort of Robot yo-yo at any rate Bert soon prostrated the audience by dancing around waving it in the face of Hubbard and mouthing strange noises - Dianetics was never like this!

Congratulations to Bert Campbell and Brian Berry for this novel item. Barely had aching sides relaxed from this when the long awaited Ballet came on. Now much had been whispered about this item all through the Con, it was, we were assured, the Piece-de-resistance of the whole Convention - and sure enough that's just what it turned out to be.

I was so interested in the "dancers" that I can't remember what music they were using. However I have an idea it was "Danse Macabre" which could'nt have been more inappropriate - or funnier.

Enter Fred Brown, dressed in flowered dress, nylons and bashful expression - enter Dorothy Jacobs (Mrs Jim Rattigan) in black tights, masked and red cloaked, who danced like she was used to it. I'm no expert on ballet, but I thought her interpretation of the part and mood of the music excellent. Then enter the rest of the "girls". Tedd Tubb, who unfortunately was having trouble with his figure - half of which kept slipping down while the other half changed sides. However, the sight of Charlie Duncombe nearly choked me, the wide eyed expression, the attitude, every time I think of it or look at the photos I can't help bursting out laughing. Enter Daphne Buckmaster dressed as an American soldier - the theme was a bit weak but who cares - after the first few minutes everybody was too helpless with laughter to worry about themes.

Of course I ran out of film half way through the ballet and got my film jammed as well so I could'nt have changed the film even if I'd had any more, lucky though that the jam had'nt occurred before.

I drifted out for a drink after this and packed up my miniature. Then I remembered I had a few exposures left on the roll film camera and although I had no bulbs left I had some "Flashbuttons" which are capsules of flash powder fired like bulbs - only they go off with a very sharp spit and shoot out a flame - had some fun with this when I went back to the hall where the auction was in full swing. Well at least I drove all the people from the back of the hall to the table where the auction was being held.

THE LAST LONG LAP

People were talking about parties again and Bill, Fred and I were invited to a party at Jim Rattigans. Bill and I took our stuff back to our digs and got so busy talking we got on the wrong tube so that we went half around London before we got back to the Bonnington. After a great

deal of argument who was going to travel with who, Bill, Fred, and I went down in Ron Buckmaster's car with the booze. Interesting car Ron's -- 500 cc. two stroke, front wheel drive -- has a lot of weird features I can't remember now.

In spite of the number of people present and the potentialities, this party, I regret to say never came to life. It wasn't long before a poker game had started in the middle of the floor -- interesting to those who had the money and could play poker -- but the rest of us were pretty bored. Walt, Madeline, James White, Chuck Harris, Vince Clarke and I had a natter in another room while scoffing all the available food. When we drifted back to the rest of the gang we found a dance session in progress, or rather, Bert Campbell was playing records while Bea and Brian Berry danced -- this went on for hours and hours. Everyone had a sort of fixed expression with glazed eyes as if they had been hypnotised. Looked like they were suffering from Concussion, certainly it deserved the title of the Trance -- Atlanticon.

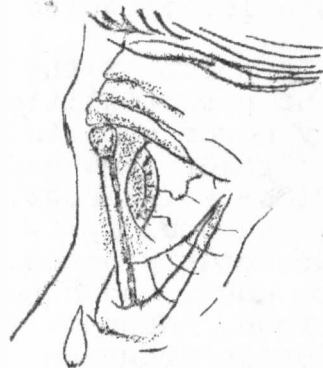


THE WEAK END.

Somewhere about six in the morning dawn was breaking and people were lying about all over, Bert Campbell drifted briskly in asking "Netball Anybody?" -- "right, get your ankle socks on!"

However, no one was strong enough to laugh. Eventually everyone drifted off with farewells till next year. Vince, Walt, Madeline, James,

Chuck, Bill, Fred and myself went off together, tottering along to the station. I can't think why, but every time I looked at James he shuddered and hid behind Chuck. Eventually he told me not to look at him as my eyes frightened him. However, eventually we arrived back in the city, said our goodbyes, and headed for home. Home - ah, it seemed like a dream after this mad weekend and when I got to bed Monday night I'd been up for 60 hours - and I used to grumble at 24 hour guard duties in the army - Ghod!



However, in retrospect this was a real Con. the Con we have been dreaming about for years. We all grumbled a bit at the time but I doubt if anyone could have put on a better show. Whoever runs the next Con is going to have a job to better it - or even equal it - but you can be sure of one thing - We'll be there!

FAN OF THE CON ----- Bert Campbell.

ITEM... ... ----- The Ballet.

You will find elsewhere in this issue a statement by Sandy Sanderson referring to some of his comments contained in his Mancon report in the last issue. It seems that several of the remarks about Peter Hamilton of Nebula S-F were not strictly true. This was rather unfortunate and has led to some correspondence about the matter. I think Sandy's statement clarifies the position but I would like to formally apologise to Peter for any embarrassment caused him by these remarks. One good thing arose from the affair however I have made a friend in Peter Hamilton who is one of the most sincere editors I've yet encountered. At least he has made good his promises and I for one am confident that with him at the helm the future course of Nebula will be aimed high.

Newcomers to the field may be interested to know that I am acting as British agent for Charles Lee Middle who's fanzine Peon is one of the neatest and longest lived fanzines in the field, being now in its fifth year of production. If any of you would like to sub to Peon through me I will arrange it at the rate of 7/- for 15 issues.

This is a good time for me to apologise to faneds for not acknowledging receipt of their zines. I've received them and enjoyed them, in fact I've been so busy enjoying them that I haven't had much chance to write and let you know. However in the next issue I hope to devote quite a bit of space to comments on them.

I must apologise to WAW for using "Beacon" in my conreport, its a case of great minds thinking alike I hope.

Sorry if several of the things mentioned in this issue are a bit out of date but most of the copy was written around July of this year. You know how it is - if your fans you will anyway. Fancercely,

*Fred.

In my recent article on the MANCON, which appeared in the first issue of this magazine, a number of mistakes were made concerning Peter Hamilton and Nebula. Peter is not 19, not a teenager. He put as much money into the business as did his father, and a number of other people. It is true that the first three issues of NEBULA were printed by the firm in which his father had the controlling interest, but I believe that future editions will not be. "Robots Never Weep" was not cut by 30,000 words, but to 42,000 from 45,000. John Brunner's advice about the number of copies to print had no effect whatsoever, and lastly, Peter has never spoken to, or heard from anybody in connection with Kemsley House.

All these mistakes in the space of one short paragraph, I'll never get over it. However, I must point out that, with the exception of the wordage of "Robots Never Weep" in which I may have misinterpreted John Brunner's words, the rest of the paragraph is almost word for word identical with John's little speech. I accepted it as being correct. It is quite obvious that John was not being deliberately misleading; he had nothing to gain by it. His speech was entirely improvised, and he must have got hold of some wrong data.

I sincerely wish to apologise for my part in this, to Peter Hamilton for any damage this may have done, and I hope this will clear up the matter completely.

Yours,

SANDY.