

# ETHERLINE

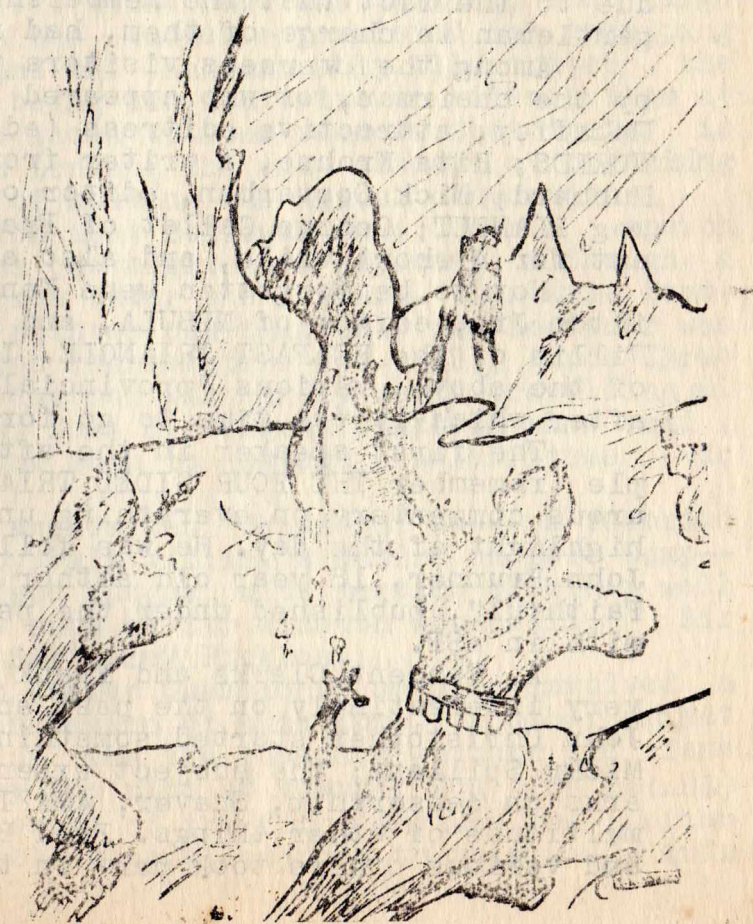
THE SCIENCE FICTION NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 8

29/6/53.

FILMS.....  
FANDOM.....  
BOOKS.....  
MAGAZINES..  
PUBLISHING..  
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# LONDON CORONATION CONVENTION REPORT

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By W. Peter Campbell.

Following the example of the previous two years the LONDON CIRCLE again held their annual Convention during Whit, May 23-24. This year's event was neither as large as the preceding one nor as successful - there were, however, plenty of notable personalities present, who helped to augment the poorly-managed programme.

The opening address of welcome from the chairman Fred Brown, was half an hour to begin with - probably due to the fact that the membership records, and the gentleman in charge of them, had not yet arrived.

Among the overseas visitors who were introduced by the chairman, or who appeared later were Miss Bea Mahaffey, attractive editress (editrix ?) of OTHER WORLDS; Rita Krohne, a writer from Milwaukee; L. Ron Hubbard; Nick Oosterban, editor of Holland's only SF mag PLANEET; George Gallet of France was later present for a short while, and also a fan from Malta.

Not to be forgotten were Ken Slater, Peter Hamilton Jr., editor of NEBULA, and Walt and Madeline Willis of the BELFAST TRIANGLE. In addition to most of the above, various "provincial" fans were present after which it was time to go for lunch.

The first speaker in the afternoon was Bill Temple (remember THE FOUR SIDED TRIANGLE ?), whose humorous commentary on everything under the sun was the highlight of the day. He was followed by E.C. Tubb, & John Brunner, 18 year old author of "Thou Good and Faithful", published under the pseudonym of John Loxmith in ASF.

A. Vincent Clarke and Frank Edward Arnold spoke very interestingly on the past and future of sf. John Christopher started something when he discussed Micky Spillane; the subject extended to include remarks on censorship, Shaver, AMAZING STORIES, and a multitude of other things. Fred Brown, John Brunner, and various others took part in these topics.

contd.

The announcement was made by Ted Carnell that once again the U.S. fans (headed, I believe, by Don Ford & the Cincinnati group) hope to bring a British fan over for a World Convention. They planned this to take place in time for the Philcon II if possible -- or if it was now too late for that, then the scheme could be carried out for the 1954 convention. At a meeting of fans during this London con., it was agreed that the project would have to be held over till 1954, as it is necessary not only to raise part of the travelling expenses, but also to select who is going.

The next major item was a talk by Dave Cohen, of Manchester (no relation to the Aussie fan of the same name), Secretary of the NSFC., on the subject of "Apathy in the London Circle". While Dave was talking, a large number of people in the audience persisted in gossiping among themselves, and the Chairman ably illustrated the speaker's point by being too apathetic to silence them at all. It may not be known to some readers that there is not one fan club in London; the only attempt at organising is for the purpose of holding the annual conventions.

The discussion that followed Dave Cohen's speech was not as heated as one might have expected, although a current of feeling ran under the surface. When Eric Bentcliffe (Stockport) pointed out that only one Londoner was present at the Mancon (Manchester, Oct. '52), Vince Clarke replied that a one-day con was hardly worth travelling all that way (180 miles) for. H.J. (Bert) Campbell also said, in effect, "It is too much to expect celebrities to travel".

Next on the agenda was "Whiskers" ----- a recorded playlet, inspired by Walt Willis. A satire on Bert Campbell's straggling face fungus, with mention of other well known personalities such as Sir Winston Churchill, Sir Kenneth Slater and Sir Derek Pickles.

The "Authors Answer Questions" session involved a long and serious discussion of mutations. Another subject which somehow came up was the question whether old fans became embittered by the rise of younger fans! (Oh no! Ed)

The closing event of the first day was the auction conducted by Ted Tubb. A novel adjunct to this was a quiz



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with prizes of 1/- credit for the correct answer-this credit could then be cashed at the auction.

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Sunday's programme was a double one, as an additional hall had been hired; as things turned out, this extra space was probably not necessary, since only 120 people attended, compared with 200 last year.

Before announcing the Fantasy Award winners, Leslie Flood of Nova Publications and Fantasy Book Centre, gave a 15-minute speech on the difficulties of organizing the award, coping with all the correspondence it entailed, and particularly whether there was enough public interest in it to justify its continuation. He also explained that the model spaceships which constitute the actual awards had not been completed in time for the presentation this year. The Non-Fiction Award is definitely to be dropped next year. The winners were announced, however: CITY by Clifford Simak won the Fiction Award; runners up were TAKEOFF by C.M. Kornbluth, and PLAYER PIANO by Kurt Vonnegut. The Non-Fiction Award went to LANDS BEYOND by L. Sprague de Camp and Willy Ley.

Various competitions, crosswords, etc., took place at various times. One of these required competitors to write down as many prozine titles as possible in 10 minutes; the winner had about 50 titles.

Perhaps the best feature was the "Guest Editors Address". Nick Oosterban, the small but very friendly and lively delegate from the Netherlands, was the first speaker. He talked about the slowness of stf in developing in his own country, and said he expected that a lot of Dutch publishers would jump on the bandwagon in time to come. In addition to being an editor, he is also a literary agent, and looked forward to a boom in business.

Maurice Goldsmith, a former science editor of UNESCO, discussed the value of stf in popularising science; stf, he said, has had more success in that direction than UNESCO! He also described the unsuccessful attempts of himself and a British publisher (Hulton's) to add another stf magazine to the field.

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Bea Mahaffey described the progress of OTHER WORLDS and said that Ray Palmer (who co-edits the mag with her) hopes to raise payment to 3c. per word shortly. (Until recently he paid only 1c., and now pays 2c. a word for short stories).

L. Ron Hubbard spoke humorously about his own intention to continue writing science fiction, but carefully avoided the subject of dianetics. He is a breezy, open type of Californian, and soon warmed up to the chilly atmosphere which greeted his opening remarks.

Peter Hamilton answered questions regarding NEBULA, and announced his intention of publishing a companion mag. The new title, however, will be planned to appeal to the masses rather than to fandom. It will be 80 pages for a 1/- or 1/3. The circulation of NEB increases by about 1500 per issue, and Heinlein and Asimov have been approached for a story. The proposed new magazine may include straight fantasy, but plans are, he said, NEBulous.

A ballet (humorous) was featured next. The program gives the title as "First Man on Mars" but it was, as far as I could see, nothing to do with Mars. It was excellently acted, to the accompaniment of the "Danse Macabre", and the theme seemed to be the triumph of good over evil. The cast included Daphne Buckmaster, Dorothy Rattigan, Fred Brown, Ron Buckmaster, Charles Duncombe and Ted Tubb.

The last event was, as usual, the auction. Auctioneers tonight included Ken Slater and Fred Brown. Ted Tubb was scheduled to conduct this, but I'm not sure whether or not he actually appeared -- it was rumored that he was browned off by the poor response the previous night. A vast quantity of magazines, mostly BRE's, was disposed of at an average of a few coppers each.

W. PETER CAMPBELL  
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MELBOURNE SCIENCE FICTION GROUP MEETINGS  
18/6/53.

In spite of the sudden onslaught of winter, fifteen fans stayed the whole session. Of the others, Race Mathews



brought in a potential femme fan, yclept Geraldine McEwan, introduced her all around, and then the two vanished into the night.

Brian McSperrin and Lester Gibbs came in, changed their library books, and then went off in search of a snooker table.

Keith McLelland and Wallace Maynard looked in on their way to another meeting. That's how the meetings are run folks, you look in when you please, and go when you like.

Dan Bicknell showed two films from the State Film Library - 45 minutes of easily seen and clearly heard 16 mm stuff, without a single breakdown. (Sydney please note. Ed.) Thanks a lot for your help, Dan.

Leo Harding is back from his Murray trip, and is full of the Murray - vocally, not physically, unfortunately. He's been taking photos of the clubroom and it's habitues again, too! He must be making a collection of BEN's to show at the next convention.

25/6/53.

Winter seems to be affecting the attendance --- only ten stayed the course. Race Mathews had to attend the Teacher's College Ball. Neil Merrilees had to lend a hand at Frankston.

Dick Jenssen is buckling down to study, and will be visible - like a comet - at rare intervals.

Mervyn Binns is still not enjoying military life and I will how he will react to civilization again -- in spite of Sydney's comments, MELBOURNE IS CIVILIZED

Bruce Harrison is back with us after having his tonsils out. He and Don Latimer discussed bookbinding at some length.

It has been decided to hold the film shows every fourth week.

ARMAK.

WATCH FOR IT \*\*!!\*\* AUSTRALIA'S NEW FANZINE.

AN A F P A PUBLICATION, OF COURSE.

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A B O U T   N O T H I N G   I N   P A R T I C U L A R  
\*\*\*\*\*  
By Lyell Crane.

A certain fan casually mentioned recently that the trouble with the general run of fanzines (amateur science fiction fan publications) is that they look like fanzines. Now I'll admit that in letting this remark go by I missed an opportunity to give forth with some sparkingly witty comment as to what exactly he expected them to look like.

The trouble with my brilliantly witty conversation is that unfortunately some of my most devastating quips don't occur to me until several days later.

Of course on the surface of it, his remark wasn't too logical, because naturally fanzines look like fanzines by definition; however what he was, in actual fact, deploing was their generally low standard.

Well, let's face it! These publications are produced, often at considerable expense relative to the income of the editor, and with considerable labour. They are put out for various reasons, but mostly because that individual wants to produce a fanzine, regardless of the possibilities of either selling it or giving it away.

It may be looked on by some as a labour of love, as is also the material written there-in, produced also by a non-professional writer, whose only reason for staying non-professional is that he is not good enough to make the paying market.

For this reason both the editors and the contributors are pleased to hear from anyone naive enough to like their work, and very often would rather not hear from the people who perennially don't.

Then again, the inexperienced fan is unlikely to produce a magnificent effort first off; so we are faced up with the probability that the good fanzines of tomorrow can come only from development of those existing today. In other words, to completely damn an amateurish publication is more or less to condemn the whole idea of amateur fan publications.

Maybe this is really what that fan intended in his remark, although I think not; because by doing so he would be condemning one of the main avenues of self expression



of the science fiction fan population. Such an attitude whether expressed or otherwise, would bring the possessors -or into continual conflict with the fan groups, and if the tender shoots of fan effort are over exposed to such a tempest, they may either die off, or become stunted & distorted from the tall timbers they might hope to be into gnarled and twisted knotty growths, so handy for batting people over the head with.

Lyell Crane.

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# FILM REVIEWS. \*\*\*\*\*

## INVASION U S A.

Columbia Release

This reputed little piece of propaganda is following in the footsteps of so many American movies lately. Hollywood's aim seems to be forcing Russia into a war by churning out this type of slanderous junk.

Five people meet in a bar and hear that USA is being atom-bombed by Russia. In the ensuing carnage, they are all killed, but a trick ending reveals that it was nothing more than mass hypnosis induced by a 'mysterious' stranger as a plea for the preparedness against the 'inevitable' war.

## MAGNETIC MONSTER

United Artists Release

This supposed stf film is about a radio active element which grows so fast and has such a powerful magnetic field that it threatens to destroy Earth. In the nick of time, it is destroyed by our hero, who feeds it with an overdose of electricity. The best sequence is when the element is destroyed in the climax by a flickering high voltage charge hurled from a gigantic subterranean deltatron.

Average.

IJC.

STATESIDE

STATIC

From Charles Anderson.

The first slick AMAZING appears, and has, quite frankly degenerated into a sex and sadism filthy-wiper. One of the stories, "The Last Day" by Richard Matheson, is the most obscene story I have ever read in a stf magazine. Sadism is also liberally sprinkled through this so-called science fiction story.

GERNSBACK'S SCIENCE FICTION PLUS is still going strong, but the question at the moment seems to be can he keep it up. The magazine is a gem to behold, but whether it will be the biggest success or the most dismal failure remains to be seen.

Top quality paper and first rate production and artwork does not necessarily make up for poor stories, as seems to be the case at the present time. Many of the yarns are top notch stuff, but many, far too many, reek of 1920. Be that as it may, SCIENCE FICTION PLUS can hold the distinction of being the only SCIENCE fiction magazine sold at the present time.

C.A.

# FANTASTIC FANZINES. \*\*\*\*\*

Something new in fanzines has appeared in USA, titled COSMIC CAPERS and published by Will Jenkins, Sol Levin and Dave Hammond. Photo-offset at 20c a copy, this er-magazine specializes in satires on science fiction. Well, that's something new at least.

The first issue is liable to send the old AST---OUNDING fanatics screaming in agony. The title is CONFOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, and the contents page looks like this: THE EDITORS PAGE - by Will Jenkins, in which John T Camel comes up with some new statistics and something even more fantastic than Dianetics to start a new crusade.



THAN THE EYE - A Foundation Story ( sequel to THE HAND IS QUICKER)) By Dave Hammond, in which the Second Foundation faces it's greatest adversary - the Fool.

WORLD OF \*"?!% - a comic feature about Burpsel the Blue Ben (who writes under the pen name of A.E. van Blike), in which Burpsel meets the notorious Gilbert Goosepimple.

WANTED- A Spacesuit built for Two - By D. Hammond Illustrated by Sol Levin. A feature article covering a few - ahem - interesting aspects on spacesuits.

CONVENTIONS I HAVE KNOWN (Or a better title if it can be thought of). This is by Robert Bloch, and really is a scream.

Plus the usual aSF features, advertisements etc.

To quote from the editor, "The second issue will feature ELAXY SCIENCE FICTION, and if we told you what was going to happen there, it would ruin it for you.

Okay, Will, you've got another buyer. From what I can see, it looks like a damn lot of fun. Copies can be got from Will Jenkins, 5147 Lancaster Ave., Philadelphia USA., at 20cents a time.

LJH.

REMEMBER, THE BEST  
NIGHT OUT IS TO BE HAD AT  
THE MELBOURNE SCIENCE  
FICTION GROUP MEETINGS.  
Held at the Oddfellows Hall, Latrobe St., every  
Thursday night at 8 PM. Films, Auctions,  
Library. Roll Up.

# W MCGILL'S

183 Elizabeth St., Melbourne.

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