

HYPHEN

NO. 1

MAY

1952



"We are the builders of brave tomorrows,
We are the dreamers at last awake...."

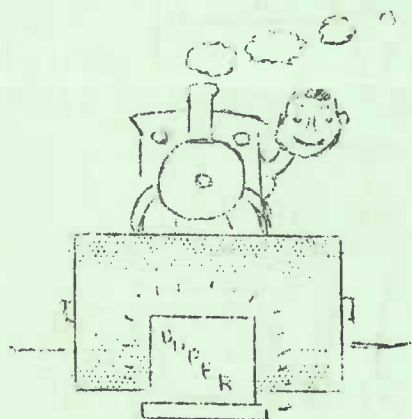
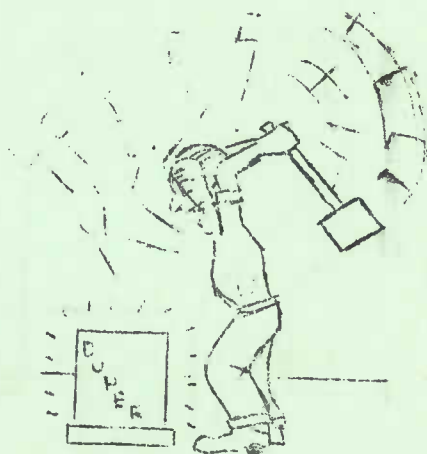
IN THIS
ISSUE

BILL TEMPLES '51 CON REPORT

AGWAST EDITORIAL

by A. Vince Clarke

Duplicate, duplicate, toil and trouble,
The drum won't turn and the ink won't bubble
The self-feed's shot and the gears are worn,
And that jagged line means the stencil's torn,
Sheets stick fast, slide through in bunches,
Machinery your finger munches,
The roller's turned an inky black,
That sheet was printed front and back!
The margin's crooked, the stencil creased,
That oily patch shows it's too well greased.
You should have blanked that extra letter,
But you tried it there and it shows through better,
The shade on that illo's come out blotted,
And why is that white space leopard-spotted?
The ink spreads out like an age-old glacier,
But on your hands it couldn't be racier.

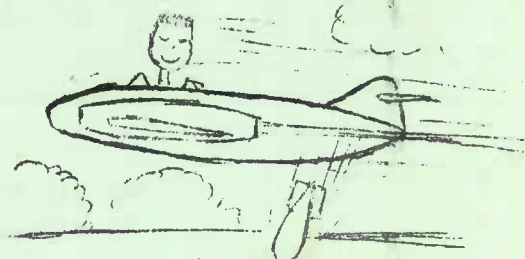


Open a new ream, big surprise!
It looks the same but it's different size!
Adjust your margins side and bottom,
Looking for troubles? It's me that's gotten!
This page is curious, stand and stare
At a four-inch gap that shouldn't be there,
Clean the rollers, wipe your fingers,
---rub 'em, scrub 'em, the ink still lingers.
Patch that hole with a bit of stickum,
It won't turn? Spanner?? No! Just kickum.
Grasp the handle, churn it round,
Sheets fly through with a ripping sound.
Five, ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty,
Thirtyone misses, and the roller's dirty.
Blots where the middles of the 'o's won't stop,
Spots where they offset to the sheet on top.

Faint ones, black ones, some in patches,
Half overinked and the rest just scratches.
If the counter's working you're nearly through,
Run off spares for the worst of the few,
Let them dry, if you touch you'll smear 'em,
Sit and relax before you clear 'em.
What's this feeling of stickiness below?
Where did you leave the ink? Ghu!! NO!!!

Envoi

Faneds together in a chorus sing
"Half the fun lies in publishing the thing."
"Lies" is the word, may that sentence's creator
Spend eternity in hell with his goddam duplicator.



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Cover and other cartoons by Shaw

HYPHEN is produced between issues of SLANT by Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd., Belfast, Ireland and Chuck Harris, 'Carolyn', Lake Avenue, Rainham, Essex, England. Art Editor Bob Shaw. Editorial Assailant, James White. This is issue No.1, May 1952. The sub rate is two issues for one US of promag or 1/6, payable to Willis, or deductible from subs to SLANT.

INCLINATIONS

Walt Willis

To beguile subscribers to SLANT during the fleeting intervals between issues I've entered into a symbiotic relationship with Chuck Harris, my best friend & severest critic (alternately) to publish this new international fanmag. Chuck's other qualifications were that he is one of the few English fans not already working fulltime for Ken Slater, and that he has acquired a very striking duplicator. However the duplicator insisted on staying on strike despite heroic efforts by Vince Clarke--see opposite--so I've run off the mag myself on a machine I picked up the other day at an auction in an effort to get Bill Temple's last Convention Report out before this year's. Blame all mistakes on me.

When we get over our labour pains we might bring out this thing quite often. We'd like to make it a sort of link between British and American fandom, which is one of two or three reasons for its name. I've always thought it would be a good thing if world fandom were better integrated, if only to raise the standard of fanmag material and increase its circulation, and we're in a good position to help to bring that about since the 300 odd subscribers to SLANT are scattered all over the civilised world--not to mention parts of Los Angeles.

This present issue, though, is mostly repercussions from the last issue of SLANT, and I hope you new subscribers won't feel too much as if you had come in in the middle of something. If you aren't interested in getting further issues of '-' just send this one back and I'll restore your SLANT sub credit.

Future issues of '-' will have material by Harris, Clarke, Shaw, White and me. Also readers' letters and lots of other informal stuff we were never able to print in a stuck-up mag like SLANT, so let's hear from you readers and writers. I guarantee, no typos. When we get the standard of reproduction we want we'll be running a series of special features too long for SLANT, starting with the serialised memoirs of Forrest J Ackerman, THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A HAPPY FAN.

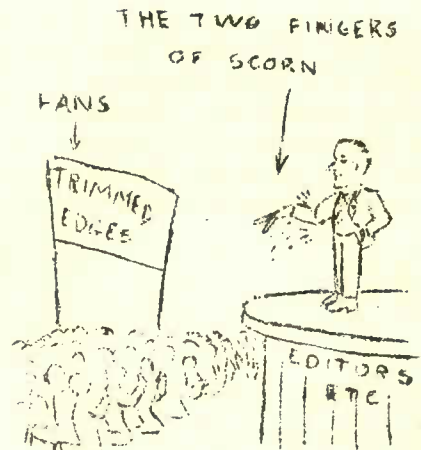
A sudden spurt in the activities of Belfast's legal profession has taken half the solicitors off the streets. Some time ago Bob Shaw heard from Cartier's legal representatives and had to engage a criminal lawyer, all the honest ones being busy defending me against the libel suits following my Convention Report in QUANDRY. And now this arrives:

My Dear Sir,

It has been requested by my retainers, the Association of Science Fiction Magazine Publishers, that I write you with the intent of bringing to a prompt halt the publication of your professional hootchzine, the infamous SLANT.

Your temerity has seldom been equalled in the annals of the publishing trades. For decades, the cry of the embattled fan, the very rallying point of the perennial battle twixt publisher and reader, has been;

"TRIMMED EDGES!!!"



Valiantly, the publishers have resisted every form of treachery, spurned the blandishments and enticements of the fan press. Never have they yielded one iota from their slogan: "RAGGED EDGES AND LIKE IT!" And now you, a veritable unknown, worse, an unregistered lobbyist for the filthy fan hordes, you have the gall to bring forth a magazine with not merely one of the finest covers ever offered for the approbation of fandom, an original story by that dean of British sf writers A. Bertram Chandler, and articles by Hoffman, Ackerman, etc...not content with this you use three staples, and then---oh the horror of it---TRIMMED EDGES!!

Needless to say, the ASFMP cannot tolerate such unethical practices. I shall expect to hear from you by return mail that you consider yourself properly chastised and will revert your magazine to its former fannish format. If you fail herein, rest assured that your reviews in all ASFMP magazines will ensure the prompt and early demise of that notorious name SLANT!

Vehemently,

I. W. A. Wiffenpoof (Distraught Attorney)

Well, all we have to say to Mr. Wiffenpoof is "Bah. Bah. Bah!" He can take it on the lamb and shear off. We have reason to suspect that this so-called "Wiffenpoof" is none other than the notorious Heinrich de Burwell, the fiend behind the underhand plot to stab us in the back with cut-throat competition in the form of his disgustingly excellent SF DIGEST. The reason for our suspicions is that we believe that even in Atlanta, Georgia, representations of the creature known, we understand, as 'Pogo Possum' do not figure prominently on letters from genuine natural born lawyer-type writers.

But I loved that description of Jack Chandler as a dean.

Occasionally competitors write to us to vent their jealous rage, attempting to persuade our talented contributors to prostitute their genius for filthy lucre. Sometimes Carnell intercourse takes place:

Dear Sir,

I have been reading fanzines for the past 17 years, and have never missed an issue of one of them. Yet I have never written to an editor before this! But at long last I am blasted out of my lethargy by this magnificent, super colossal zip-dinger of an issue of yours dated Winter 1951/2.

It was the cover, sir, the cover, which simply made me put axe to granite and chip out this little ol' affidavit ((sic)). This guy White certainly has something---I don't know what, but whatever it is, he's got it. The subtlety of the illustration will be lost to all your editors and reader, but to me it is obviously a picture of the needle editor John Carnell got when he read your Quandry Conwrite-up. The haystack in the background is one of the finest I have ever laid eyes ((sic)) on, too.

May I suggest that this needle be worked up (far up), into a national fan emblem and be worn in the left ear lobe so that we can always recognise another slant when we see one, thereby being able to hurriedly cross the road and take evasive action?

While on the subject of artwork, for Pete's sake throw out all your interior illustrators. They are useless. Most of them are cribs from Cartier (God rest his soul), but even so your artists don't know the difference between a torso and a lasso. Take Shaw's on page 17. He's drawn the fellow with a size 11 left foot and a size 8½ right, and underneath the buttoned jacket he's got the guy's waistcoat buttoned over from right to left. WHY DON'T YOUR ARTISTS READ THE STORIES BEFORE THEY DRAW THE PICTURES? And the girl! Duck's disease ((sick)) and thick ankles. Tsk! Tsk!

Shaw's illo on page 43 has the Bannister ((sic)) the wrong side of the stairwell, up against the wall. This isn't good enough for our mag. I know you are trying. Very. But an editor must notice these little things before the mighty presses start turning.

Regarding the literary side of the mag, what I could read of it, as my copy seems to have been printed on some Izal off-cut--this now fan Eric Frank Russell seems to be able to write. I suggest you keep right after him and don't let him get away. He shows great promise, and I predict a great career in front of him if. Chandler is another fine writer. I just don't know how these fans keep up the ideas!

I was sorry to see that our magazine has started a discrimination campaign ---I was horried ((sic)) to notice that that great British magazine New Worlds was only mentioned twice in 60 pages and, at that, once in small letters. It is a dangerous practice to get into political arguments, I know, but way out here at the back of beyond I rely entirely upon the few small crumbs of information I gather from your groaning table....

This guy Fiske's column was the best in the issue, I thought. What was it all about? Reminds me that I used to have a skipper in the Army ((sic)) by the same name. Someone shot him in the back. No relation, I suppose?

I have noticed your request for new fiction, and I am delighted to tell you that I am nearing the end of an original story that will knock you right out of your editorial chair. I won't give the plot away now, but you certainly are in for a surprise when you get it. It will probably arrive by rail, as I have been working on the synopsis for the past 22 years at the rate of 4512½ words a day. My deadline to complete the epic is December 21st this year, and I'm a couple of words behind.

Which is one reason why I must close this off now. By the way, I'm in touch with a couple of fans on Mars and one on Venus and one in Abertillery. We swap



used bus tickets. If any of your readers are interested, Xxtlsj up on Venus is short of No.C8559 3D. red on the Glasgow Corporation Buses, for a complete set dating back to 1889. I know he'd love to hear from a couple of redheads your way.

Signing off, as my friend Colonel Slater puts it,

Sciencefictionalphantasmagorically,

Elmer (Mr. E. Carnell)

PS. This is to certify that I am free, white, sane and over 21. Signed before me, a notary public and justice of the peace this 7th day of November 1951. My licence expires on 6th November 1951.

Of course, we have no time to reply personally to every obscure prozine editor, and since the usual printed form hardly seemed suitable we passed the letter on to our office staff to deal with as they thought fit, at their convenience. One of the junior employees found it hanging there and actually replied to it.

Dear Mr.Cornell,

I have shown your letter to Mr.Willis, and he thinks we might use it in place of the advertisement for Athlete's Foot which is not running in the next issue. For some reason he thinks you might take the place of the heel. This is of course not the sole reason for printing your letter, which in my opinion is tantamount to sabotage. Certainly I wooden shoes it myself, but then Mr.Willis is always willing to help struggling prozine editors. I have heard of your little magazine, "New Words", and by all accounts it is, apart of course from the format and contents, one of the finest published in Stoke Newington Rd. I am glad to notice that you have been able to pick up some of our cast-off authors.

Of course I haven't actually read the magazine, but if you will send me review copies on each publication date, or even when the magazine is published, we shall try to find something nice to say about it. Or at least we shall quote your name and address, which may attract a few subscriptions from people who haven't already seen the magazine.

Mr.Shaw, who is a structural draughtsman in his spare time (the partition of Ireland has gravely reduced the number of structural draughts) asks me to inform you that his illustration is of a cross section of the staircase. After your comments it is if possible even crosser. Your remarks about the Banister have been forwarded to Kansas City by newel post.

I must express my thanks for the story you are sending us by rail. If it is on the right lines I'm sure it will be the goods.

I am sorry you don't like our paper. We find it suits our ends admirably. Watch out for our next two covers---diagrams of atomic piles and a symbolical painting of Uranus.

Yours sciencereally,

For and on behalf of Mr.Willis

J.W.Campbell

Assistant Private Secretary to

Mr. Willis's Confidential Typist

/ We shall use capital letters, if we get any more of them.

Another wellknown editor we heard from was MAX KEASLER, whose remarks we reproduce in all their original beauty:

Dear ~~Sox~~ Snobb,

Best fnamag in the world indeed. Must you rub it in. Anybody could

print the best fanzine in the world if they knew how. That's all it takes. ((We didn't say we were the best fanmag in the world--we implied we weren't. We're the most modest fanmag in the world.))

Liked Hoffman's article bestest and The Prying Fan follows a seconded with all the rest wagging their tales behind them. Only I disagree about Ralph. ((Huh?)) He would never do a thing like that, specially with his grandmother like she is and all. It was unfair of you and I'd report you, but can't think of anyone to report you to. ((Rick Sneary?)) The cover was a beautiful mess, you couldn't of done better if you tried. Also the rainbow on p.31 is nice for a rainbow. Giving Mother Nature a good run for her money. Also liked your mimeograph-pamphelt. Well, at least I gave that word a good fight, even if I did lose. Wait a minute and I'll look it up. It's pamphelt. ((It is?))

Bob Shaw's artwork is quite good if you like Cartier and I like Cartier. (Perhapes misspelled) ((True)) But I shant stoop so low and tell you how great your fanzine is. I leave that to the masses. Besides you already seem to know this.

Just before I left college ((name withheld for fear of action for damages)) I printed and mailed my new mag. It is called WOMBAT (spelled right). When I get back up to school I send you a copy also too. (I think I've been through this.) ((Not school, surely?)) I know there are rally wombats cause I saw one at the zoo. Of course he didn't say he was a wombat, but he didn't deny it either. Also there was a little sign under him that said "This is a Wombat". It didn't take me long to know that HE really was a Wombat cause I catch onto things.

Ever-loving yers,

W. Max Keasler

PS. you might as well stop reading cause this is all.

Well, not quite. First some extracts from the works of A. Vince Clarke, the well known robot.

Dear Walt and Etc.,

We have decided to form a club for science fiction fans... it is about time we were organised. As we have heard that you have some interest in the medium, we thought you might like to enter into the spirit of the thing by donating a small sum. Even the smallest ghost to show....

Sorry, wrong opening, as Ken said to the ceiling. Our new SFNEWS letter heading rather carried me away, and I'm in a slightly confused state....also, I have this beautiful new ribbon (no, not in my hair, silly boy). You will be proud to know that 'Dear' was the first word I wrote with it. It was also the first I said about it. But don't let us have any of this old buck, for staggering down the road comes a postman. This'll cost us a packet of doe. Last time we had a letter from Ireland we had to pay for the PO van's springs.

It's SLANT! Oh Chu. What have they done this time. Look at it! (Quick, Watson, the sunglasses.) How did they get these reproductions staple through all that get that red smear on the cover manage to typeset all this do it at all? I rejoyce.....Having just got down to linocutting (what happens when your cutter sticks in the floorboards?) I can appreciate James' work even more. Incidentally if he wants to be associated with a clean minded zine we'll always be glad to hear from him.



Funniest thing in the ish was Bob Shaw's '1961', with of course 'The Prying Fan' running a close second.

'Out Of The Silent Planet' wasn't bad, tho a bit overwritten, but I didn't quite follow the train of thought in the middle.

Funniest thing in the ish was 'Prying Fan' with '1961' a close second.

Jackson's column...faintly amusing. One of the most active SFS members, Jackson. He wrote in twice. ((How many times were you supposed to write before you got an answer?))

Most humorous thing in the ish was 1961, though 'Prying Fan' ran it close.

We were to have a Big Weekend. (This is different from Ken's 'Red Maria', which has a weak big-end.) Answer all letters Saturday, visitors on Sunday. Come up stairs Saturday dinnertime. Met by wild-eyed figure towing bathful of plaster and broken glass. Peering beneath the hair and dusty spectacles, I recognise this Grey Lensman to be none other than Ken. Seems the ceiling has fallen on him...a warning from Almighty Ghu to keep his mail up to date in future, lest he be cut off in his prime beefore having further enriched fan literature. ((Some of those letters you answered must have been holding the ceiling up.))

Changing to SLANT again: Chuck's plaint about red-blooded American heroes in every prozine could easily apply to a bloody red Irishman in every fanzine, turning up like a bad penny. Frantly, it's centsless to spend your dime on tael for so money fanzines when you could make your mark by writing for Gold, but life would be dollar (if not obulus) without SLANT, so don't lei it off but use your talents to bring it out each quarter. Piastre you for ccinsideration.

Yours,
Vince

PISTOLS FOR ONE COFFEE FOR TWO DEPT.

THE WATCHERS

"Strictly filler. Who wrote it anyway? No guy with any respect would write under a name like that. If I did I'd expect it to fall on me and do some damage."

"Neat and effective." --Peter Campbell.

--Fred Robinson

UNDER ATOMIC COVER

"Mr. James improves with each story. He need too." --D.NcCormick.

"Good and enjoyable." ---Terry Jeeves.

MEN AGAINST THE COSMOS

"Were you tied to a stick and beaten with thorns?" ---Manly Banister.

"Wonderful satire. It must have been written by an American." ---Wrai Ballard.

TEST CASE

"Ineffectively written." ---D.R Smith.

"Could easily have sold to a promag." ---Henry Kuttner.

THE COVER

"No art criticism, my ship slightly out of register however." --Terry Jeeves.


((Sorry, Mr.Teeves, all future Slantships will be registered at Lloyds.))

"Beatiful. Surrealistic, no doubt?" ---Dick Ryan. ((Get that, Taurasi, SLANT is going Dali!))

"The Biro pen was superb." --Bob Foster. ((Our subscription Dept. reports that the cover had remarkable drawing power.))

"Delicious--a cross-section through a trifle?" --Tony Thorne. ((We believe in giving our readers their just desserts.))

There were to be all sorts of plugs and ads in there, but there just wasn't time. I haven't even got the space to mention that Henry Burwell's address is 459 Sterling St. NE, ATLANTA, Georgia and that he's running a US branch of the CF Library, or that for the best in news and views you should read Vince Clarke's SFSWS, 16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent. Three issues for one promag or 1/6.


PETER RIDLEY

"Hello, Mr Willis," said the Leprechaun in his high scratchy voice. "I'm pleased to see you looking so....well, well."

"Paling," muttered the tall man. "Uh, um....AH! Fencing. Er, oh! Barbed wires." The leprechaun considered this for a moment. Willis went on.

"Barbed wires, barbed wires...Uh, ah. Mailed fist."

"Mr Willis," shouted the elf. "I'm speaking to you."

"Stamp of guilt," declaimed Willis triumphantly.

The leprechaun backed him on the shin. "Now will you listen to me," he yelled. "Eh? Oh? Hello." Walter was not particularly surprised to see the leprechaun because although a few gulps of medicinal poteen are a considerable aid in the composition of puns, there are other effects. "What can I do for you?"

"I'm the Satanically Accredited Agent for the Purchase and Sale of Souls in Northern Ireland."

"Are you now," said Willis. "The only one in Northern Ireland?"

"Yes," said the little person proudly.

"Then you must be the sole agent," cackled Willis. "The SOLE agent, see?" He bent over and poked the little elf in the ribs, knocking him down.

The little man picked himself up, muttering.

"Not much of a job for a leprechaun, is it?" enquired Willis.

"When you've been on the dole for 500 years you're glad of anything in the way of work," snarled the leprechaun. "And I'll thank you to keep your finger to yourself in future."

"Digit it hurt you," screeched Willis.

"I think," said the leprechaun viciously, "you'd look fine as a toad."

"Now, now," Walter wagged his finger at the sprite. "You wouldn't do that to a prospective customer, would you?"

"You mean you want to sell your soul?"

"Perhaps."

"I can assure you the very best terms," coaxed the elf. "Women, Wealth, Health?"

"Egoboo," said Willis decidedly.

"Eh?"

"Egoboo," repeated Willis petulantly. "Surely you know what that is?"

"No," said the leprechaun.

"Well, to understand it you got to...it's...well it's...it's egoboo."

"Oh," said the little man. "I see." There was a long silence.

"Good evening," said Walter. "I must be going."

"No, wait," shouted the leprechaun. "Will you sell your soul for this egoboo?"

"Of course," said Willis. "What else would I?"

"I'll get it for you then if you just tell me now. The boss has been a bit touchy about the lack of business lately."

"Done," said the elf, some time later. "Just sign here on the contract."

"I won't shrink from it," muttered Willis with an attempt at normality, and signed.

And so now you know the REAL truth. ELANT is written and printed by the combined efforts of two thousand four hundred and twenty-three leprechauns, who may be seen any night marching to Oblique House at 12 o'clock and leaving at 4. (Hours laid down by the Amalgamated Sprites and General Demons Union.)

THE ELVES' GNOMES' AND LITTLE MEN'S SCIENCE FICTION, CHOWDER AND MARCHING SOCIETY.
European Agent: Walt Willis, Belfast, N.Ireland

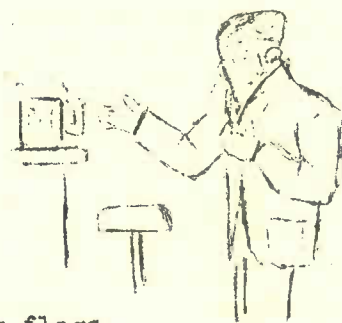
HOW IT ALL BEGAN...

by William F. Temple

I see by the programme that the Convention began semi-officially on May 10th and officially on May 12th. But to me it seemed to have been beginning for a long time before. The first ominous sign was when Treasurer Charles Duncombe started demanding money with menaces every week at the White Horse. The peace was broken. Pleasant and amusing discussions about the imminent end of civilisation were darkened by interruptions from this fellow to the effect that we'd better pay up while money was still worth something and while we were still here to pay it.

He made our life miserable. He made us feel guilty about spending even a penny on beer. We became secret drinkers, hiding round corners and furtively gulping the stuff before he discovered us.

He'd attack us from all angles. He'd bully, importune, wheedle and cajole. He'd hector us on the evils of drink, remind us of our duty to science fiction, then drop his voice to a bellow and plead with us to walk home and give him the fare instead. His resourcefulness was unbounded. You'd find him opening the door for you, calling you 'sir' and covertly displaying an expectant palm; or standing outside the toilet suggesting that the admission was a penny and he was an attendant; or calling you 'sir' again and helping you on with someone else's overcoat; and when you got outside, there he was on the pavement again, selling flags.



He also got into the big time, cornering all the packets of crisps in the pub, and selling them to the hungry at twice the price. And he tried to sell Lew, the landlord, the idea that if the beer were diluted they could split fifty-fifty. This didn't come to anything only because water can't be diluted.

Then the Convention Committee kept going into huddles around one's favourite table to work out the agenda. They made heavier going of it than their rival committee in UNO. They not only disagreed about where to put asterisks but also how to spell asterisks. It was bedlam and chaos. The only thing they were methodical about was spilling beer on every magazine the owners had left on the table---they never missed.

People like Vince Clarke and Fred Brown went around wearing lost looks and lapel buttons labelled *Amicus*, or *33110W00*, and long before Convention Week the White Horse was full of overseas visitors and the sound of strange accents (including mine---Forrest Ackerman accused me of speaking English with an English accent). So the Convention not so much began as grew up around us.

As part of it, Ted Carnoll and myself took Forry and Lee Jacobs (the original 'American in Paris') to see 'Things To Come.' Forry had already seen this film 26 times. Every time he goes to see it now, the characters wave 'Hello' at him from the screen. As we entered this time, Ralph Richardson, as 'The Boss' was saying: "Now, this man hasn't taken me by surprise. I knew he was coming---yes, I knew he was coming." I'll bet he did.

There was a hitch in the organisation on the way to the cinema. The route there was a rather complicated one on the Underground, and this was to be Forry's and Lee's initiation into the mysteries of London's subway network. Ted and I, born Londoners, told them not to be afraid: there was nothing to it when you knew your way around, as we did. Therefore, our aplomb was slightly dented when we found ourselves getting out at Mansion House instead of Victoria---we'd come a few miles in the diametrically opposite direction. All Ted's fault of course. He can't tell the difference between Westbound, Eastbound and Eggbound.

When Forry and I were casually passing the 20th-Century-Fox film studio at Wembley, I mentioned casually that they'd just completed six short films there of Algernon Blackwood's weird short stories. Forry suggested we call in to see if they'd let us have some stills to show at the Convention. We called in. I said: "This is Mr. Forrest J Ackerman from Hollywood----"

At the magic word 'Hollywood' the red carpet was instantly unrolled at our feet, and we followed it to the producer's office. He parked us in the best chairs, scratched our backs, gave us cigarettes, and had slaves carry us to the projection theatre, where one of the Blackwood films was run through especially for us. We acted up, casually mentioned our friend Zanuck, talked in millions, and promised to see what could be done when Mr Ackerman returned to Hollywood. Everyone shook hands all round and took everyone else's telephone numbers, and we were ushered out with little black boys holding umbrellas over our heads. And Mr Ackerman returned with dignity to his temporary home to resume his not so dignified struggle with Olde Englishe plumbing.

The following week I read in the papers that all 20th-Century-Fox film studios in Britain were to be closed down and their personnel fired. Gosh, we didn't think the repercussions would be as drastic as that!

Such episodes as the Ackermans at the Folies Bergere trying to catch the nudes moving even one muscle (which, by British law, would instantly stamp them as rude nudes), or the Ackermans trudging over Plumstead Common in ten layers of clothes, blue-nosed and shivering in our balmy English summer, looking for the Carnell igloo, are really outside the province of this article.

Another hiatus in the preparations was when Arthur Clarke and I were detailed to find and fit appropriate gramophone record music to the silent film 'Metropolis', which had been procured and was to be shown. We had to go by our memories of the film, which were in fair shape, as we'd once had to provide a similar soundtrack to it before the war. The trouble was that we could remember the film but not our original music programme. However, we fixed up a programme of modernistic and/or mechanistic music, took our heap of records along on the day, and found that at the last moment the film had been switched to 'The Lost World', about prehistoric monsters. Our music was a bit out of period, but we were stuck with it. And so the allosaurus sparred with the triceratops, Professor Challenger fulminated, and the young lovers made eyes at each other---all to the impartial and deafening clangour of Mossolov's 'Steel Foundry.'

Incidentally, Conan Doyle had kept it from us in the novel that Maple White (that cagey old defunct explorer) had a young and lovely daughter; also that Professor Summerlee's first love had not been science but the Church. When the young and lovely daughter is trapped, apparently for life, with reporter Malone (her sweetheart) on the plateau, they look at each other in horror. She gasps: "But we'll be here---always!" The resourceful Malone replies: "It's all right. Professor Summerlee will marry us---he used to be a minister."

As Arthur seemed to think 'Steel Foundry' needn't ever be changed for another record during the film, there was little for me to do at the turntable. He suggested I went and sat in a corner and manage the volume control. I went. It was a dark corner. Ego hadn't mentioned that the platform ended suddenly there and the chair was perched on the edge of it. I sat down, and promptly went over backwards, and hit the floor in a shower of ashtrays, wires, abuse, and broken bones---all mine. It put 'Steel Foundry' in the shade. On the screen a couple of monsters were having a fight at the time, and I was congratulated afterwards for my very sound sound effects.

That was after the Convention had really begun, of course---when all the plans and agenda had been abandoned, forgotten or ignored, and everyone was running the Convention in their own way. Some of them had odd ideas. Lew, the White Horse landlord, spent a busman's holiday in the bar. Committee-man Jim Rattigan spent most of the first day in the washroom, having drunk a bottle of port in mistake for coca-cola. He was a strange and pitiful sight. Every time I paid a visit he seemed to groan louder and become more convulsed, with delicate colour effects. Sometimes he'd have his head in the sink, sometimes under the sink, sometimes under his arm, sometimes down a drain; and sometimes he was so contorted that he didn't seem to have a head at all. Chacun a son gout.

Wally Gillings opened the proceedings---and damn nigh finished them---with a funeral oration over the dead body of science-fiction, bemoaning that it, or he, or anyone had ever been born. It was a tragic and powerful performance. He didn't have to play Hamlet with a false beard, like Alec Guinness, or with dyed hair, like Olivier. Wally IS Hamlet. The times are always out of joint for him. There's always something rotten in the state of---almost anything. How all occasions do inform against him! I feel the same way, but gosh---if I could only act like that! Well, he killed some of us off and the rest committed suicide, and he tripped away happily and the Convention continued.

Messrs. Tubb and Duncombe, Auctioneers, got carried away by their own fervour and finished up by selling everything in sight, including the furniture and Audrey Lovett, who was sold as a slave-girl to Ego Clarke.

Before that, Ego had been playing continually through the loudspeakers records of Yma Sumac, the Incan screech-owl. When the record was forcibly taken from him, so that other people might hear each other, he grabbed the mike to register a public protest. Hearing his own voice emanating from the loudspeakers, Ego forgot Yma and became self-enchanted. The mike had to be torn away from him. It was given to John Keir Cross, who said he was sick of the sight of microphones, and spoke without it. On the other hand, Ted Carnell loved the mike and clung to it so intimately that several scenes had to be re-shot.

Serious notes were struck by Forry's hot-news bulletin; by his wife Wendayne's lecture on dianetics; by Frank Arnold's erudite survey of the whole development of international science-fiction, rounding off the reports by the overseas visitors; and by Bill Temple's having to drink water in the middle of his speech when his tonsils gave out.

Another serious note was struck this morning when I had a letter from Lee Jacobs asking when next year's Convention would be. Is this Thing going to begin all over again? If Charlie Duncombe calls me 'sir' at the White Horse next week, I'll...I'll emigrate. Perhaps I'll come back as an overseas visitor. It mightn't seem so bad if you can skip the beginning.

THE NAMING OF JAMES

JAMES WHITE

Dislike isn't precisely the word to use. Uncontrollable revulsion and intense hatred also make up my feelings towards the Dagenham Ghoul Pauper (he says his income is only £500 a year. Hah!). But anyway, he hated me first. Ever since he sent Walter that werewolf story with what he claimed to be an absolutely brand new bang on nova type sure fire plot twist in the last line. It was passed on to me in the usual way to read and comment on. Somewhere in the middle of the fourth line I paused and remarked jocularly that I hoped this wasn't another of those stories where the girl turns out to be a weretiger. Walter said that was just what it was and if I could spot the gimmick that quick the ordinary unintelligent reader might do the same so perhaps he'd better send it back. I said yes, but to let the author down lightly because parts of those 3½ lines were quite well written and with a little encouragement and careful cultivation he might ripen and yield a mighty harvest of.... etc. etc.



Did Harris, when our feelings about his story and future prospects were communicated to him, take this kindly and help-criticism philosophically and with a firm and eager resolve to keep on striving until he was eventually accepted? Did he write thanking us profusely for our benign guidance and vowing eternal friendship?

No.

He was flaming mad. He wanted to commit murder, he wanted to rip and break and trample on with hobnailed boots, and he wanted a reliable sorcerer to go over the remains to see that the non-material residue got to the proper destination. And strangely enough all his wrath seemed to be directed at me! Most of his letter, where it wasn't charred, was incoherent, but he was specific in his intentions in one passage. He said he was going to fly to Belfast and wear suitable lengths of a certain Art Editor's intestinal tracts home with him to support his hosiery. (I'd like to point out that Harris's sartorial tastes also leave something to be desired. No true fan would be caught dead in garters: the proper wear is the loose drape, showing concentric folds of sock falling gently over the shoe.) Nothing came of it however and he restrained himself to casting doubts on my moral integrity, complaining of the effect of pussyfooting bluenoses on True Art, and insinuating that I am a pseudonym of Eva Firestone. Until now, that is. Those insults I could have ignored, but this new dirty mean low treacherous underhanded backstabbing foul kick in the abdomen is too much.



I don't know how he got to hear of that discussion in the first place. I must have enemies. Bob and Walt were discussing my name and pointing out that I should have something between the Jas and the White. One feels sort of naked in fandom without even a single middle name, and I was treating the matter very seriously indeed. The best of the suggestions put forward, in my opinion, were Jas P. White, meaning Just Plain, and James S. White, the S standing for Snowy, chief assistant to Dick Barton and himself a handsome, broad-shouldered, clean-living intrepid type.

What business had the Tweedy One poking his nose into this thing anyway? It's no concern of his. If I could only insult him or something, but I can't. You see, he's

((Continued on page 16))

THE GLASS BOSS

by Bob Shaw

The hypothetical observer is bored. He stifles a yawn. He gazes at the sky and wishes he was back in his hypothetical bed. For years now he has been posted outside Oblique House and nothing has ever happened. He is beginning to think nothing ever will. No Zap guns, no outbursts of fannish hooliganism---nothing but quiet respectability and adult good sense.

Suddenly he senses something out of the ordinary. He opens the gate, crosses the 'lawn' and sneaks up to the corner of the house. Cautiously he peers round the side. He gasps. His eyes dilate with horror. Frantically he tries to draw back, but he is too late-----a thin jet of water plays over his hypothetical face. Willis and White dash out cackling with laughter and brandishing water pistols. "I got him! I got him!"

Like any sensible person the hypothetical observer turns and runs.

Yes, it's quite true! Willis and White, the sobersides, the starched collars of fandom, have acquired water pistols! It would be bad enough if they were ordinary water pistols, but these are powerful brutes of things capable of a hundred deadly shots on one reloading. My concentration on my fannish activities is constantly interrupted by furtive figures prowling about muttering such sayings as, "Bah! Wind deflection again" and "It is fitting that a Gunner should serve."

All afternoon they sit at the back room window and drench inoffensive cats and other small animals. Soon, however, they will get tired of such easy game and start looking for something that will give more excitement, show more signs of horror, scream louder. Something like me for instance.

Luckily by that time I will have completed my weapon. A really powerful water pistol constructed from a bicycle pump and a pair of chest expanders. We'll see who drowns who. Heh. Heh. Heh.

That will leave me short of a pump for my bike, but I'm sure we will manage--- my bike and I. It isn't much to look at but it gets me around. I like my bike. The mudguards are tied on with string and the saddle is so loose that when I go round a sharp bend I remain facing in the original direction. But in spite of all its faults we have come through a lot together and a bond has sprung up between us, and in view of this it is with great sorrow that I announce that They are plotting against us.

Everybody has at one time or another complained of how the wind always seems to blow in their faces when they take a bicycle out. In my case it doesn't just seem to. It does! It blows on my face on my way to work in the morning. It changes before lunch and blows in my face all the way back. Not content with this it repeats the same performance in the afternoon. Going round corners has no effect.

It cleverly blows against various walls and deflects itself down the new street. It always outsmarts me but I haven't got the breeze up: I'm going to expose it! I'm going to do what Eric Frank Russell did with the Vitons. I will write a story about myself and call it to Astounding. So that nobody will pierce my disguise too readily I will spell my name backwards. The hero of this yarn, this fellow called boB, will have the same trouble as me. No matter what he does the wind will be too smart for him. He tries pretending to go up the road and swiftly turning round and going back down it at full speed. He tries sitting backwards in the saddle and



and tricking the wind into thinking he is going the other way, but all to no avail. He becomes neurotic, he wears away to a shadow. Then one day as bob is setting off to work he is infuriated beyond all reason by the sight of a few normal carefree riders going in the opposite direction with the wind in their backs. It is too much for him.

"To hell with work," he shouts and turns his bike round and flies up the road, pedalling like mad. The next day there is a report of his passing through a small village about ten miles beyond the Castlereagh Hills screaming with hysterical laughter and uttering loud cries of "Fooled them! I fooled them!"....and that is the last that is ever heard of him.



It is a far cry from the days of yore when fan humorists used to represent the outbursts of laughter which they hoped to inspire in, or direct at somebody else by the use of such devices as:-- (Hearty laughter) or (loud guffaw).

The modern writer has a whole battery of individual chuckles ample enough to electrify his readers be they at ohm or in a cell. The head man at chuckles here is James White, which must be why his friends call him chucklehead. For an example just look at this extract from a letter of James' to Vince Clarke, who was quite likely to publish it. The letter was full of nasty cracks at Chuck Harris and he ended it up by saying, "Of course I don't want Harris to see this. Heh. Heh. Heh."

This is a brilliant example of the use of the vindictive chuckle. As well as that there is the oafish chuckle which is best ascribed to somebody else, preferably after a rather stupid remark of theirs, e.g. "The man in the shop tried to charge me the full cover price for an old 1932 Astounding, but I was too smart---I made him sell me a brand new magazine! Hyuck! Hyuck! Hyuck!"

The other two main forms are used for rounding off a joke with which one is rather pleased. Naturally I can't throw away one of my carefully stored, memorised and rehearsed spontaneous witticisms on a lecture, so I'll just content myself by noting that they are "Nyuck, nyuck, nyuck." and "Erf! Erf! Erf!" The latter to be uttered slowly and with gusto, or some other willing helper.

Is anybody keen on the policy some of the newer sf mags have adopted of not having any interior illos? Personally I hate to plough through page after uniform page of the dry as dust stuff that these look-at-me-as-I-read-Poe type of mags dish up, with never a touch of brush and pencil to brighten things up. I think that a good illo makes a story.

Who can illustrate Sprague de Camp like Cartier? Or Van Vogt like Rogers? The reason for these affinities is not that Ls de C writes about queer creatures and Cartier is good at drawing them, and ditto for vV and Rogers. It is that the essential mood of the members of each pair is the same. That is what a good illo does---it sets the mood of the yarn. I quote almost any book on art: "The aim of the artist is not to depict, but to capture the mood." The significance of this is put in its proper perspective by the following quote. Bob Tucker in QUANDRY: "As compared to other forms of literature the sf yarn is lacking in mood. (!)"

TELEKINESIS AND MUTTERED OATHS To move from a serious topic to a really grim one. I am the victim of a horrible mental disorder! Every time I read a really convincing yarn about telekinesis I find myself glaring at various small and innocuous objects and gritting through clenched teeth, "Move, you b....., MOVE!" If anybody else has this complaint, let him write to me and we may be able to start up a movement between us. That, in case you missed it, was a pun.

---Bob Shaw

((ctd. from p.13)) a friend of the boss and there might be an argument. (Last time there was a disagreement here we got a new inland lough and the Irish Sea got a large menace to navigation which straightaway started producing mutant cats, so I have to be very careful.) Next Con time I'm going to call on Mr.Harris. It won't be any trouble because there are two people living in that locality who called my lovely Roger's blue cover spaceship a ballpoint pen. HIS suggestion was....but no, it is too starkly unthinkable, too shameful, too utterly degrading to be borne. I'll not have it. I won't, I tell you!

I do not want to be called Lily White!

I DROVE JAMES WHITE! (An extract from a forthcoming issue of Ken Bulmer's NIRVANA) (Exclusive)his attention was (forcibly) drawn to an account of a ride which he kindly gave one James White during the Convention. He has regretted it ever since, owing to the cost of fumigating and the shamrocks which persist in growing under the seat, but for the sake of keeping the record straight (which the circular from SLANT is not) has asked for an independent investigation. It seems that when the struggle started at the Folies Bergere, James was thrown through a window. This caused him some pain but leaving Willis and Shaw engaged in a glass struggle he escaped the heat of bottle via Underground. By the time he reached the Epicentre he was his normal self, but the news that he would be allowed to ride in the van brought on a reaction. He had to be forcibly restrained from poking apple cores into the radiator under the impression that the horse power wanted feeding. As it was the van laid an apple-carlotte in the morning. Of course the excitement of the Irish lads on seeing the streets of London for the first time is understandable. They tried to drive a car through Belfast last year, but the bloke who was walking in front waving a red flag got picked up as a suspected Communist. Since then the horse has had things pretty much its own way, and the situation is very stable. After it was explained to our visitors that the red lights on the roads had no significance other

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