

Vice Hampton

HYPHEN

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"GUESS WHO!"

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Cover and interior cartoons by Bob Shaw

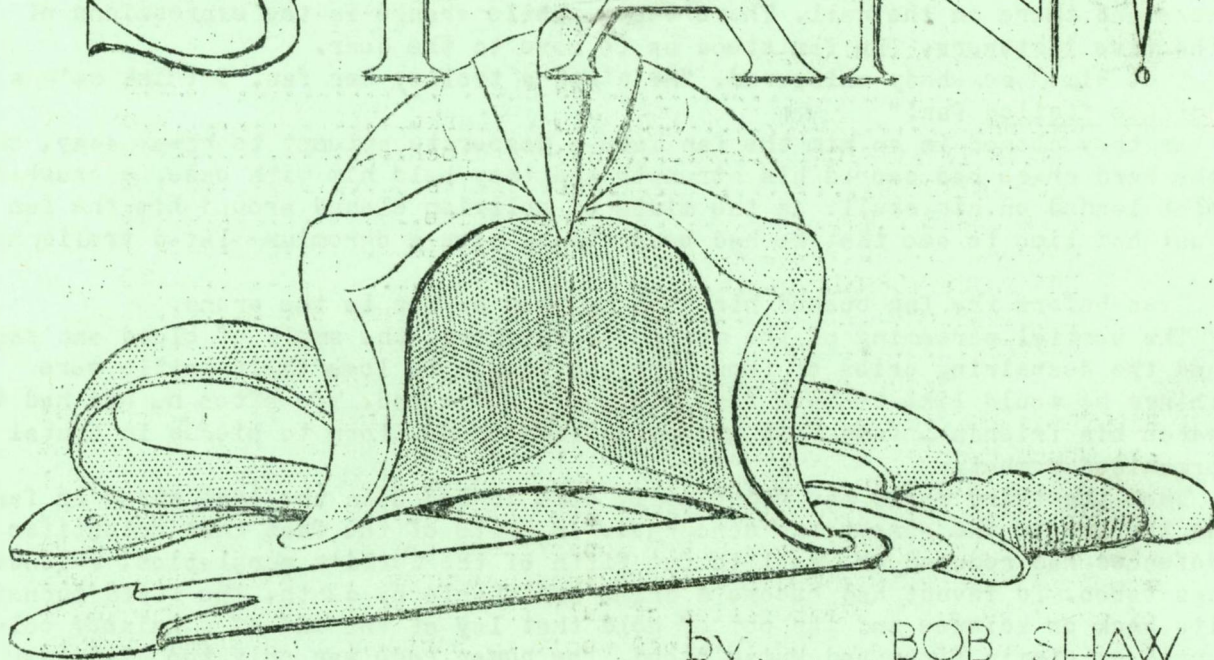
HYPHEN is edited by Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Rd, Belfast, NI and Chuck Harris, 'Carolyn', Lake Ave., Rainham, Essex, England. Letters may be sent to either address--the sky between them is thick with mail planes. Art Editor Bob Shaw. Associate James White. The sub rate is two issues for 1/6 or 25¢, but SLANT subscribers get two for one /. Those who don't appreciate their good fortune are urged to return this pearl of great price for restoration of full credit and so that we can cast it before someone else. Our feelings won't be hurt..or at least we'll be brave.

EDITORIAL

Walt Willis

This is traditionally the place where the faned apologises for the lateness of the issue, his failure to answer letters, and generally for having been born. But this time please take my face as red--I want to mention these interesting goings on in British sf. First we had Peter Hamilton not only surprising everyone with an excellent second issue of NEBULA, but revealing that the mag is going bimonthly this year with stories by Temple and Russell, and a sister mag to follow. (All of which may discourage the wistful rumour we heard straight from the White Horse's mouth that the mag was folding.) Then there was the vastly improved AUTHENTIC, in which Campbell broke the law that Britain must lag months behind the US in publication of a story sold in both markets. With the NOVA pubs this makes four high class British promags. And now comes the BRE GALAXY, the importance of which is not just that it's the best sf ever available in Britain, but that it's so available. It seems to have had a wider distribution than any sf mag in the history of British publishing. Everyone who read the BRE ASF will now read the BRE GALAXY as well--or instead. What must be worrying British proeds is whether he will then bother to look out for the poorly-circulated native mags, already handicapped by their low word rates. Carnell managed to turn out a mag rated even by Americans as just below their top three, by his London Circle contacts and by getting as much as he could from young authors before they found out about dollar lolly, but to keep four British mags going against the competition of a 1/6 GALAXY is going to take even better editing. One ray of hope is that all over the country the BREGAL must be making hundreds of new sf readers. Not so much with that unfortunate choice of a first issue--but wait for the later covers!

SEAN!



by BOB SHAW

The fan ran until his mouth was filled with thick salt saliva, ran until he felt that to run on was to die. But he knew only too well that to stop was surely to die.

Somewhere in the darkness behind him a rifle cracked, but the angry slug came nowhere near him. Nonetheless, a feeling of dread settled on the fan---they were really determined to get him if they were using one of the earth's few remaining firearms.

Panting heavily he sped through the narrow alleys that separated the square one-storey buildings of New London. He slowed down to pass a lighted doorway, straining his ears for the sound of enemies.....

Creak-click-swish-creak-click-swish.

Good Ghu, thought the fan astounded, a duplicator! Somebody inside the yellow limmed doorway was using a duper! He stood for a moment undecided. There was something wrong somewhere---nobody had followed fan pursuits so openly since the great massacre in '63. Again the rifle cracked, and this time the fan heard the vicious whine of a speeding slug. He staggered through the door.

Strong arms caught him as he fell and a few seconds later with gentle firmness a cup of hot tea was applied to his lips. He drank deeply, noting as his vision cleared that somebody had closed the door and drawn a curtain over it.

There were three men and two women in the smallish room, in the centre of which stood a table carrying a duplicator and untidy heaps of paper.

"Are...are you fans?" he gasped, feeling the strength return to his body.

"Yes, of course we are," answered one of the men. "What on earth has happened to you?"

"The World Stability Corps caught me spelling 'quandary' without the second 'a'. I did it without thinking," he added. The lean man who had first spoken looked puzzled.

"But why would they hunt you for that?"

"Have you never heard of QUANDRY?" asked the fan, fighting down a surge of pure panic. Too late he noticed the prints depicting tramcars that were hung here and there on the wall. There was a subtle change in the expressions of the five listeners. The fan stood up to move to the door.

"Get him," somebody whispered. "He's not a trolley-car fan. I think he's a science fiction fan!"

As they closed in on him the fan made a desperate attempt to break away, but the hard chase had sapped his strength and they held him with ease. A crushing blow landed on his skull. As the mists of oblivion closed around him the fan just had time to see that he had been struck with a chromium-plated trolleyhead.

Even before the fan opened his eyes he knew he was in the arena.

The bestial screaming of the death-hungry crowd, the smell of blood and sand, and the despairing cries of those unlucky enough to lose their battle were things he would like to have forgotten, but never had. Too often he had had to watch his friends—fans that had been discovered—torn to pieces in brutal organised combat.

When the third world war had finally come it had been the last straw as far as the man in the street was concerned. In spite of the fact that scientific defences had reduced the toll to one fifth of the world's population, science was taboo. To invent had become a crime punishable by death. The world turned its back on science and its pot of gold that lay at the end of a rainbow coloured by atomic fires and human blood. The human race was only too glad to sink down into semi-savagery.....all except the fans.

They too had no desire to be blown to tiny pieces but, being fans, they were unable to conceive of a world that was not working its way, however precariously, towards the stars. So they rallied and began to campaign against the burning of the books, not to say the scientists.

They fanned harder than ever, inspired by the fact that, for the first time, fandom really had a purpose. So intense did their efforts become that the aggrieved populace rallied in return. Their action was much more decisive than that of the fans.

In 1963 they killed every fan on whom they could lay their hands.

A few fans remained, however. These fans carried on their activities in secret, but every now and again one was caught—just as Edgar had been.

He lay very still for a moment knowing full well that his days of secret mimeo-cranking were over. Then he sat up. He was alone in a bare concrete cell except for a huge guard in heavy armour who stood near the door. Through the rough opening he could see a section of the arena floor. He didn't get time to look at it closely for, as soon as he had perceived that Edgar was awake, the guard caught his arm and propelled him out into the open.

A deafening roar went up from the crowded tiers of spectators. Dazed and still weak and sick Edgar was pushed out to the centre of the sunlit circle of yellow sand. His lips moved in silent prayer as he was made to kneel before the box containing the chiefs of the World Stability Corps.

"Ghu help me, and may the spirits of Ackerman and Tucker, Willis and Hoffman, Slater and Clarke lend strength to my slip-sheeting arm." With the time-honoured words on his lips the fan turned to face his opponent, whose entry had been announced by yet another roar from the crowd.

He knew from his first glance that his defeat was certain, for his opponent was easily six foot three as compared to Edgar's five six. Furthermore the giant

was armed and clad in the bright armour of the Free American Peace Army. The letters FAPA emblazoned on his chest seemed to strike a responsive chord in Edgar's mind, but this was no time for futile brain searching. With blind courage he tightened his grip on the short sword that had been thrust into his hand and advanced on the giant.

With contemptuous ease the other brushed aside his feeble sword thrust and in a second had Edgar disarmed and helpless on the ground. As the giant knelt on his chest with his sword raised, he tensed for the final agony that would be his exit from fandom.

"When I bring this sword down give a scream," a soft voice said. Edgar opened his eyes, numb with surprise. He saw with wonderment that atop the other's golden helmet a small propeller shivered and spun.

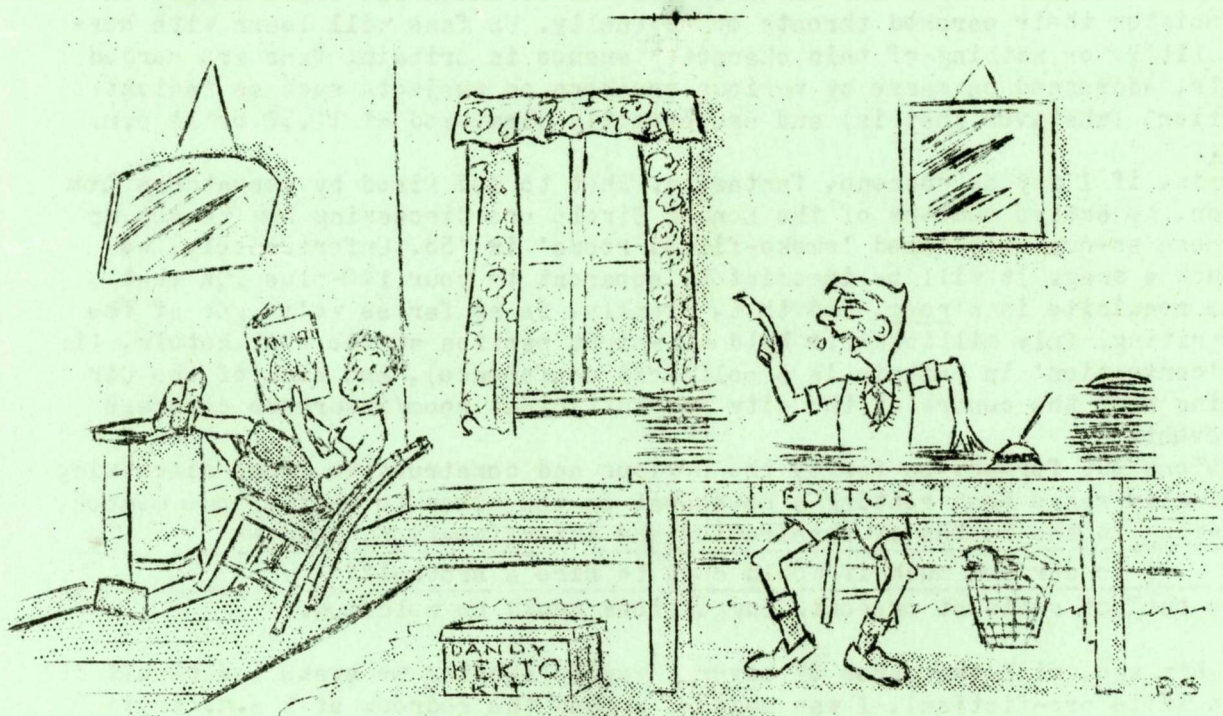
"My name is James White....yes, the James White. I have come to rescue you, the last fan in England, and transport you to New Fandom."

"But the fans are all dead," stammered Edgar.

"Nonsense. Willis and Hoffman and the others fan on yet---every fan you thought was killed in this arena is with them."

Edgar fainted, and the crowd gave a noisy, shuddering sigh of ecstasy as the golden sword glittered on its downsweep.

A few seconds later the last fan in England, bathed in red mimeo ink, was on his way to New Fandom, hidden deep in the Okefenokee Swamp.



"IT'S FROM HEINLEIN. HE SAYS 'NO'".

GRUNCH

GRUNCH GRUNCH GRUNCH GRUNCH

by Vince Clarke

One of the few printable comments re '-' to drift my way occurred in a new fmz. FAN PRESS, wherein the father of actifen Michael Slater characterised us as 'frothy'. Whether this is a subtle simile for 'scum' is not clear, but I for one resent this bubble reputation; no more serious and constructive fan than I can be found between these four walls, and to prove it let me tell you of the strenuous efforts we are making towards the success of the '53 London Convention.

It's well established from conreports in QUANDRY, OOPSLA, SOL, etc., that the major business of conventions is transacted at serious and constructive gatherings in various rooms, where delegates treat the subjects discussed with such enthusiasm that neither food nor sleep is allowed to interrupt proceedings, tho' they do moisten their parched throats occasionally. US fans will learn with horror that little or nothing of this character ensues in Britain; fans are herded into halls, addressed en masse by various speakers on subjects such as 'scientific fiction' (whatever that is) and are promptly dismissed at 10.30 or 11 p.m. Yes, p.m.

It sounds, if I may be obscene, fantastic. What to do? Fired by despatches from the Chicon, we active members of the London Circle are discussing how to set up one of these so-quaintly-named 'smoke-filled rooms' in '53. Unfortunately, we have struck a snag. It will be immediately apparent to your 140-plus IQs that the prime requisite is a room, and that, frankly, is as far as we've got at the time of writing. Only millionaires hold all-night parties at the best hotels, (in fact, a 'convention' in Britain is a political conference), and none of the Circle living near the centre of the city has sufficient room/insurance coverage for the event.

Suggestions put forward so far by the serious and constructive group discussing the difficulty range from renting a houseboat on the river to that of one member, who, speaking in the depths of inspiration and interlineation, said:--

"I wonder how much it would cost to hire a brothel?"

There the subject rests at present. Suggestions would be welcomed.

A few nights ago, with the cares of several worlds keeping me awake (a result of trying to write pro-fiction), I was padding around the bedroom at 2 a.m. trying to find (a) a knife with which to commit self-ending, or (b) a book to stun the cerebellum into unconsciousness. I also had a great yearning to Get Away From It All. This was unfortunate as, although the bedroom contained about 500 books and 600 mags



the non-sf is kept downstairs, but to cut a short story shorter, I eventually discovered an opus by Francis Brett Young called "Mr and Mrs Pennington" keeping a pile of zines off the floor. (Linoleum sticks to the covers after a few years.)

In spite of a foreword that quoted one of Jeans' weightier remarks on the Universe ("...stars..hundreds and thousands..millions and millions..space..universe..") the book seemed to be a domestic drama with no mention of gestalt or rain-on-Venus, and I Plunged Into It With Zest. With Zest wielding a machete we were cutting through the turgid prose at fair speed when on page 14:-

"In the distance, far down the Stour valley, he could see the trees that embosomed the stucco battlements of Mawne Hill, the mansion which Magnus, his North Bromwich stockbroker, had lately bought from old Walter Willis the ironmaster..."

Aaaaaaaarrgh!

They found me in the morning with glazed eyeballs and a fixed expression of utter terror on my countenance, and if it hadn't been for a passer-by rendering first-aid (a young fellow named Henry Frankenstein) I doubt whether I'd be writing this column now. Thus in the most prosaic places do we find depths of unnameable horror etc. etc. From now on I put myself to sleep by counting Kuttner pseudonyms, like other people.

According to the laws of average, there should be quite a few geniuses in the world to offset the mass of politicians, economists, etc. What happens to them? Do they die young, or is there some secret Shangri-La where they are assembled until Der Tag, only venturing out occasionally in flying saucers? And moreover, where are the intelligent kids, the Odd Johns, Hampdenshire Wonders, Camberwell Miracles, Wonder Children....are they really 'in hiding'?

The reflections are prompted by a news report concerning one Jeremy Spenser. He finishes a stage season shortly..legit. theatre. "I'm not worrying about the future" he is quoted as saying. "I have one or two jobs coming along in TV and films...I've written several short stories...one is to be published next month...I'm only sorry they haven't chosen one of my maturer works...I wrote 'The Bluffing Lover' when I was ten."

Spenser can well afford to look back upon these younger works with an indulgent smile. Spenser is now all of fourteen years old.

Supporters of SOTS, the Save Our Trixie Society, who can now be numbered on the fingers of one foot, will be glad to hear of the latest effort to erase Trixie's engrams. We found a paragraph in the NEWS OF THE WORLD in which Mr Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald, writing on 'Handling A Cat' said:-- "I have never yet found a cat that did not adore having its back legs lifted very gently just off the ground by means of the tail; very gently, mind. Many cats just go delirious with delight when you do this."

This is perfectly true. Finding Trixie sharpening its claws on the NIRVANA duplicator (the silly thing was getting in an awful tangle with the silk screen) we grasped its tail firmly but gently and lifted its hind legs. Trixie went



absolutely mad with joy. Running gaily across the ceiling it disappeared out of the top half of the window, obviously to tell all its pals about this super experience. It hasn't come back yet, but if we have to advertise for it I know its size from the hole in the window.

I received a sample STARLANES recently, a fairly well produced zine edited by Orma McCormick and Nan Gerding. STARLANES features nothing but fantasy poetry, a laudable object in its way, but carried a wee bit too far here, for all the letters are in rhyme as well. I ask you...how can I acknowledge the thing? I got as far as "Dear Orma, Thanks for the sample STARLANES....." and then retired for five or six hours to think of a rhyme for STARLANES...with no success. "Sample" is a hard word to rhyme too. "I'd rather have your sample than a torturing arm-pull" hardly expresses profound thanks. If Orma and Nan would consider changing their names to 'Marlene', "Dear Marlenes, Thanks for the sample STARLANES" would send one off to a smooth and tuneful start that Swinburne might envy. As it is, "-" has the privilege of publishing the following epic, based on a rhythm found by Chuck Harris in an old CHANTICLEER and dedicated to that staunch True Fan Bob Shaw who recently came into contact with the London Circle.

FANTHEM

Midst the chattering and the clattering of the London
Circle nattering,
Came an alcoholic anthem loud and clear,
And as silence overtook 'em, verbal violence really
shook 'em,

Blasphemy that blasted every blase ear:-

"The science fiction faction is a field of frantic action,
From fan-seller to fan-atic is its span,
Take a typer, tape or stencil, photolith or pen or pencil,
On a way of life that's fit for any man!

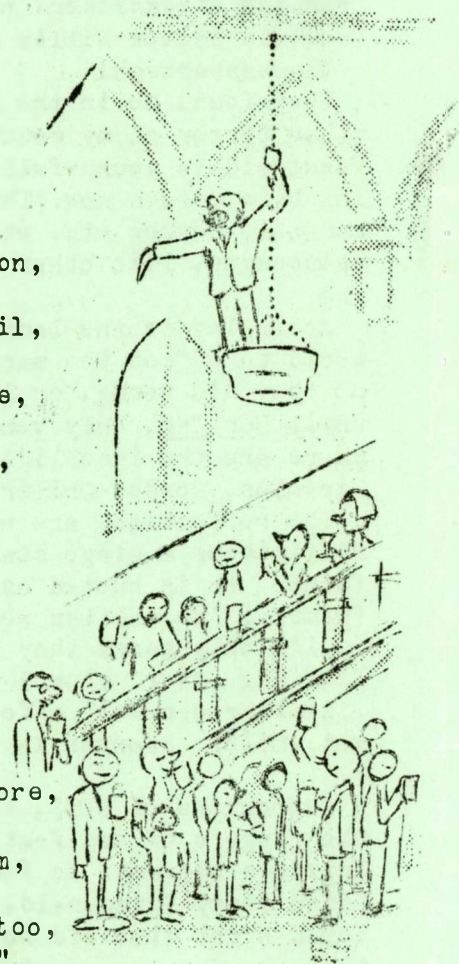
"Our selective fan collective is the object of invective,
From frigid folk gloof from fannish fun,
The result of outside insult is the ultimate adult cult,
The nucleus of nuts that Gets Things Done.

"Wake from stupor! Get a duper! We'll turn out a 'zine
that's super!
Full of pregnant prose the prozines wouldn't print,
Pictures patchy, poor or pretty, lewd and rude or wise
and witty,

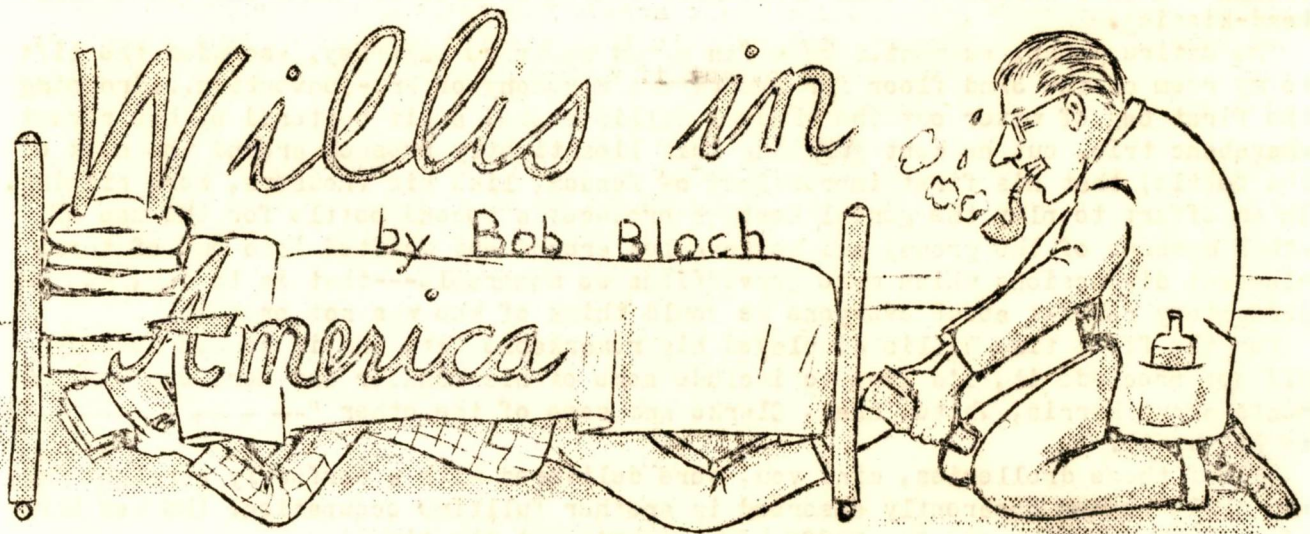
And letters egobcosting without stint.

"Articles on authors' antics, dianetics and semantics,
Selections from collections in the clique,
Fannish lore from days of yore, apt allusions by the score,
And a not-so-solemn column by the FLEAC.

"Why read fantasy at random? Take a lead from actifandom,
Its caustic critics carry clear conviction,
You can take their view as true, cos if you are active too,
You won't have time to read the flipping fiction....."



•Fandom's Leading Expert and Critic ---vide NEW WORLDS



Hitler invaded Poland on September 1, 1939...

The atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima on August 5, 1945...

Walter Willis arrived in Chicago on August 28, 1952...

I was not present at the first two catastrophes. But I saw the third. And in the interests of fair play, for the benefit of future generations (if any) I'm forwarding this account by a bloodshot eye-witness.

Others can no doubt furnish a full (or censored, if needs be) account of Willis's actual brush with the immigration authorities in New York, and his post-Chicago adventures in Los Angeles (See Francis Laney's monograph: LET'S SEPARATE THE MEN FROM THE BOYS) and his return to oblivion, or Belfast.

But Willis in Chicago...let's wander down Memory Lane, you and I, and mind you, be careful, the streetcleaners haven't been around here for a long time....

I arrived at the Morrison in the early afternoon. The Morrison, for the benefit of our English cousins, is a large pub surrounded by 42 storeys of rooms.

After checking in at the pub, I fell in with Messrs Kyle and Greenberg, two gnomes from the press of the same name, and Evelyn Gold, the gal portion of GALAXY. They were on a similar errand...checking the pub to see if Willis had arrived.

The bartender hadn't seen him. So we spent several hours visiting all the neighboring pubs...with the same result. Obviously, Willis had not yet come to town.

Dinner was poured, and after munching down a bloater, somebody suggested checking on the whereabouts of Max Kessler. It was the cool scientific logic of the assembled pros which brought this inevitable daisy-chain of thought. The game was afoot. The plan of action, as we sketched out on the back of an old chambermaid we had lying around, resulted in the following conclusions:

- (a). Where Kessler is, can Shelby Vick be far behind?
- (b). Shelby Vick must be close to Bob Tucker.
- (c). Bob Tucker certainly is near to Lee Hoffman.
- (d). Look under the bed, and there is Willis.

Well, to make a long story cleaner, that's precisely the way it worked out. Inside of ten minutes we were hauling the recumbent form of Walter Willis out from under the bed, where he had been reading a copy of I GO DEGLER.

My first impression of him consisted of a bobbing glimpse of curly, sunbleached hair (we had just been introduced, and he was kissing my hand). His face, wreathed in ecstatic fervour, bore a striking resemblance to that of Fritz Leiber---al-

though I didn't strike it very hard; just enough to make him stop that incessant hand-kissing.

The entire group, augmented by a fan named Beatrice Mahaffey, ascended the lift to my room on the 32nd floor for the ritual ceremony of Pre-Convention...dropping the first bag of water out the window. Willis seemed a bit battered by his recent charabanc trip, but he kept gurgling (his lips tightly pressed around the neck of the bottle) that his first impressions of fandom, like his trousers, were ripping. In an effort to play the genial host, I produced a second bottle for the use of other members of the group, and we sprawled around and drifted into one of those pleasant discussions which make Conventions so memorable---that is to say, we made derogatory remarks about everyone we could think of who was not present.

For the first time Willis displayed his remarkable wit, and if common decency did not preclude it, I'd love to include some of his funnier and more obscene comments about Harris, White, Shaw, Clarke and some of the other "-----", as he put it.

All of these drolleries, mind you, were delivered with a perfectly straight face, and while he was apparently absorbed in another fulltime occupation. (He was knitting a sweater--the one Lee Hoffman was wearing at the time.)

At half-past nine or thereabouts...somewhere between the scotch and the bourbon, as I recall...the room opposite mine was occupied by George O. Smith, a little-known pro. Smith is a rather shabby specimen of huckster; loud, opinionated, given to exhibitionism (in an effort to impress onlookers, he will even go so far as to drink out of a glass) and I was a bit of a mind to conceal our presence from him. But Smith, whatever his other defects, is a keen physicist and student of electronics; and his sharp ears detected the tinkle of ice.

In three seconds flat (that's his characteristic position) he was pounding on the door and within three minutes he had moved the gathering across the hotel to his suite.

I must say that my fears were unjustified. Willis took the introduction very well and behaved just as he was expected to behave---fawned, stammered, asked Smith for his autograph, told him how much he liked the GREY LENS MAN series and his Avroigne stories in Weird Tales. The rest of the evening was pleasant but uneventful: Smith had an early morning appointment and left for it just in time.

As I recall, Willis eventually went down to sleep in the lobby, as was his nightly custom. (The bar closed at 2.30am.)

I don't know what happened to Walt on Friday. I don't even know what happened to Friday. He might have been in the hands of Tucker and Company---fans were arriving, and he probably was collecting autographs. Certainly he got a great many of the latter---by Monday night his body was completely covered with signatures. Many people commented favorably on his distinguished appearance; he looked like Bradbury's ILLUSTRATED MAN, unless you bothered to read between the lines. How this particular gag occurred to him I'll never know, but it's typical of the man. Who else would be able to boast of sitting on "John W. Campbell, Jr." for three days? (It was a difficult autograph to get--S&S don't allow Campbell to write much these days--but I got it in the end. --WAW.)

Oh yes...Friday evening we all had fish-and-ships at the local hostile-ry, and then just plain chips in Smith's room. Chips and cards, that is.

Saturday the Convention started, and from that point on things are vague in my mind. I know Willis was introduced, Willis was on a panel, Willis was witty and profound by turns. All these reports were faithfully delivered to me in the bar.

Somewhere in through those days I dashed across the street with Mack Reynolds and Evelyn Gold to get a malted milk. There sat Willis, Hoffman and Kessler (who

by this time were so insufferably inseparable that they were generally known as the Unholy Trinity) and it is to my credit that I persuaded Walt to drink a malted milk by convincing him that it was a glass of stout with an unusually foamy head on it.

But during the Convention Sessions proper (or improper, as the case may be) Willis was completely surrounded by massed fandom; brandishing his fountain-pen like a shillelagh and tossing off impromptu mots as fast as he could surreptitiously read them off his cuff.

My next contact with WAW was Sunday night at the banquet. Both of us occupied the speakers' table and it was my duty, in my incapacity as toastmaster, to introduce him. He delivered a positive gem of a speech on EXPLORATIONS OF SPACE, accompanied by slides showing Bonestell illustrations. The whole thing was masterly and came as a complete surprise to all of us. It was one of the highlights of a Convention which was already well-lit.

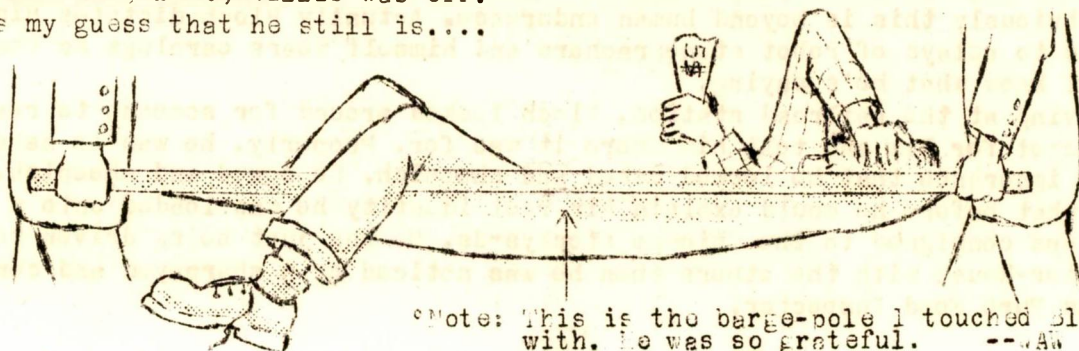
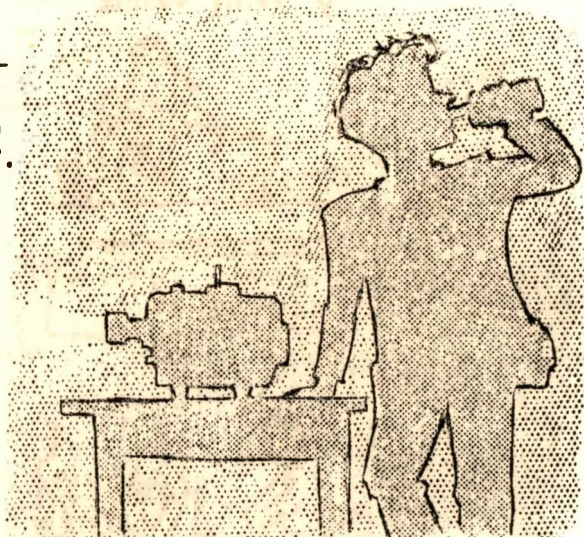
He capped the climax later in the evening by attending the Masquerade Ball with his skin tinted a sensational shade of green---the inadvertent result, I learned later, of swallowing an entire ounce of the liquor being served in the Georgia fans' room.

I saw Willis a number of times Monday---as a matter of fact, it was impossible to miss him, since every time one passed through the lobby he was lying there. Monday night the San Francisco group threw a party and it spattered all over everybody. Willis had been propped up near one of the penthouse windows and I was finally able, at long last, to get in a few cherished moments of private conversation.

This is one of my most cherished memories...this midnight interlude with the true Willis. Soft-spoken, gentle, almost dreamy...he seemed a bit abstracted, true, but so sincere. I'll always remember the way he held my hand and called me "Madeleine." (Of course, some churlish fans claim he was merely so inebriated he didn't know what he was doing. This I refuse to believe. I happen to know that he was in full possession of his faculties, and sensibly held my hand in order to keep from falling out of the window.)

Tuesday I bade farewell to him, in the lobby. The stretcher paused long enough for me to gaze down at him and say goodbye. It was a touching farewell---he touched me for five bucks---and then (I'll always remember the date) on September 2nd, 1952, Willis was off.

It's my guess that he still is....



*Note: This is the barge-pole I touched Bloch with. He was so grateful. --WAW

BLOCH EXPOSED

by Walt Willis



There are a few minor inaccuracies in the foregoing account which I would like to correct. In the first place I had no trouble at all with the Immigration Authorities. In fact as soon as I told them I was going to meet Robert Bloch they were more than sympathetic. I was presented on the spot with the Congressional Medal of Honour and escorted to the bus station by massed bands playing slow music. Thousands of people stood weeping as the bus moved off. The driver was deeply moved, and the bus itself broke down several times.

On arrival at Chicago I found the Convention Committee broken-hearted. Even the Convention Hall was in tiers. It seemed that even after all their trouble Bloch had found out where the Convention was being held. I should perhaps explain to English fans that the reason why the American Convention is held in a different town every year is that they are trying to evade Bloch. But despite all their efforts to shake him off he seems to be always able to nose out where the Convention

is being held. Every year he turns up and behaves so outrageously that they are seldom able to hold a convention there again. But this time they had for once managed to double back on their tracks and after a mere ten years or so were holding another convention in Chicago. They had great hopes of foiling Bloch this time, for who could have expected that they would have been able to hold another convention there so soon? Apparently the intervening acquaintanceship with such comparatively pleasant citizens as Al Capone had lulled the people of Chicago into a false sense of security. Everything seemed set for a beautifully Blochless convention.

But the Committee could not leave well enough alone. To make absolutely sure that Bloch wouldn't be there they had printed for him alone a special set of convention literature giving the venue of the Convention as Tuktoyuktuk, North West Territory, and sent him a free railroad ticket to the nearest trading post with a promise of free igloo accommodation and an undertaking that there would be free ice in his room. A brilliant scheme, admittedly, but they had overlooked one essential point—Bloch cannot read!

This may come as a surprise to some of my readers, but a moments thought will show them that if Bloch could read he would have to have read all his own stories. Obviously this is beyond human endurance. Actually Bloch dictates his stories to relays of robot stenographers and himself wears earplugs so that he doesn't know what he's saying.

Arriving at the railroad station, Bloch looked around for someone to read his ticket for him and tell him where it was for. Properly, he was so ashamed of his ignorance that he looked cowed and sheepish. So cowed and sheepish, in fact, that before he could explain his real identity he was loaded onto a cattle truck and consigned to the Chicago stockyards. He was just being driven to the slaughter-house with the others when he was noticed by a sharpeyed and conscientious Pure Food Inspector.

While the authorities were making up their minds what to do with him, Bloch was assisted by some of his pen-friends to escape and found himself in the streets of Chicago. He had learned nothing from his narrow escape from being canned and, attracted by the smell of liquor, sneaked into the Morrison Hotel. The Convention Committee recovered manfully from the shock. They realised it was too late to move the convention to another hotel and determined to make the best of a bad job. They started by introducing him to me in the hope that my refined and cultured personality would have some ennobling effect on the man.

I admit to kissing his hand at first, but that was only because of my fervent admiration for the great Edgar Allan Poe. Bloch had been exhibited to me as "one of the collaborators on THE LIGHTHOUSE in the current FANTASTIC" and, knowing that Poe had been dead for over a century, I was misled by Bloch's appearance into thinking this was he. When it was explained to me that Poe was still spinning around quietly in his grave and that the figure before me was merely the result of the sort of life Bloch leads, I immediately pushed his hand away from my mouth. Not, however, before I had lost three of the gold fillings in my back teeth.

The party that evening kept moving from room to room, but no matter how silently we would tiptoe out Bloch would hear and follow us, crawling out from under the bed where he had been immersed in the works of Poe and looking up the hard words in Chamber's Dictionary. In despair we called in the well-known electronics expert George O. Smith to construct a Bloch Proximity Fuse, and the next time Bloch appeared the whole party went off. Unfortunately Bloch followed us to the restaurant we had gone off to, and started drawing on his fund of wisecracks. By the end of the meal, however, he had filled up all the blank space in his copy of Joe Miller's Gagbook and began looking for something else to scribble on. He stole a postcard from the restaurant and half-filled it with a witty inscription...or rather filled the whole postcard with an inscription...addressed to Marty Greenberg. On the way back to the hotel he mailed it—in a garbage can. A natural enough error in his condition, and one for which the people who were carrying him were partly to blame. They should have moved away from the garbage can immediately they had made sure it was impossible to force Bloch through the slot.

At the reception desk in the hotel where we all stopped to wring Bloch out into a cuspidor, he noticed a stack of postcards which the clerk had not had time to hide. Learning that they were free, he seized a handful of them and began inscribing them with scurrilous messages to Madeleine, exhorting everyone else to do likewise. Having completed a dozen himself he looked around for somewhere to mail them. There being no garbage can available he gave them to Max Keasler.

The party then returned to George O. Smith's room, where drinking continued. I was rather disgusted at all this intemperance and did my best to set an example to the others by confining myself to a sort of American lemonade I had discovered called 'Bourbon.' But it was of no avail. The imbibing of intoxicants continued, and soon the entire party began to get blurred and fuzzy round the edges. I decided to leave them on this account, especially as everyone else was going to bed.

During the first part of the Convention Bloch seemed to be doing his best to redeem himself by tidying up the Convention Hall---removing cigarette butts, half-empty glasses etc---and generally did an excellent job of cleaning the carpet. In fact at times it looked as if he was doing his best to replace it, but people gradually learned to avoid walking on him after he had bitten them

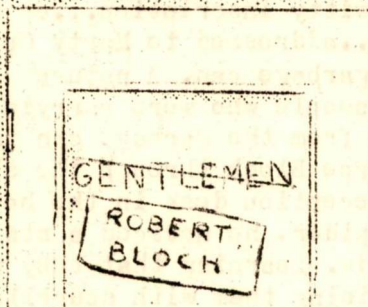
a few times, the girls learned even sooner.

The Convention Committee were very pleased at this improvement in Bloch's behaviour, which they ascribed to my manly and clean-living example. We were thus all the more hurt and disappointed when on the evening of the banquet Bloch poisoned Will F. Jenkins and usurped his place as toastmaster. The banquet was, of course, completely ruined. Bloch seized the opportunity to spoil the entire solemn ceremony with facetious remarks and to make it an occasion for unseemly hilarity. Not only did he make a laughing-stock of himself, but he contrived to make us proper guests of honour sound dull and inept. And in my own case he added insult to injury by publicly alleging that I was not Walter Willis at all, but an imposter with a Brooklyn accent. This was not the only time he spread this foul slander. While I was staying with Forry Ackerman in Los Angeles he wrote a grave letter to Phil Rasch warning him that there was an imposter in town passing himself off as me, a Bowery layabout whom I had hired to take my place. He solemnly advised Rasch to expose him. Rasch telephoned Forry Ackerman at once with this serious news, and Forry had the greatest difficulty convincing him of my bona fides.

Not content with his undignified display at the banquet, Bloch turned up at the fancy dress ball and almost succeeded in walking away with the first prize for the most horrifying disguise, before it was discovered he was not wearing any make-up at all. Frustrated in this unscrupulous ruse, he forced his way onto the stage the following afternoon and made a final dreadful exhibition of himself---tossing a box of tacks onto the stage, throwing crockery at our distinguished guest Willy Ley, and hurling insults at everyone. The fact that the tacks were largely responsible for the spirited performance of the dancers in the ballet which followed is no credit to Bloch. Nor is it any excuse that the seat he presented to Chairman Judy May was the only one in his room.

Some people have tried to excuse this unseemly exhibition on the grounds that it was amusing and clever. That may be so, though I am bound to say it is not the sort of thing that we serious constructive fans expect of the professional authors whom we are accustomed to look up to with such respect and veneration. In any case I think it well to reveal at this point an item of information in my possession which will quench any spark of sympathy that may remain for Bloch. I will reveal that this speech of Bloch's; which has been so widely reported, was not written by him at all, but was stolen from another speaker. Bloch waylaid his victim in the bar, drugged him with a rare poison imported from the South, and stole not only his manuscript but all his props ---including the whiskey bottle, the brass tacks, the scissors, the saucer, and the toilet seat. The result of this was that Bloch was able to deliver a speech which has since attained the high honour of being reprinted in Harlan Ellison's SFBULLETIN, while his unfortunate victim, a Mr John W. Campbell, had to fall back on some hastily scribbled remarks about THE PLACE OF SCIENCE FICTION IN THE CULTURAL PATTERN.

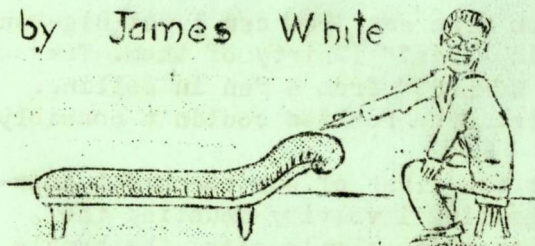
One final word. However low an opinion one may have of a person or writer one must remember that they could, after all, be worse. That is why I would like to deny the rumour that Bloch is Micky Spillane. Serious charges like this should not be made on superficial evidence and I hope those who started this rumour will be properly ashamed of themselves to hear that, so shocked was he at the widespread credence given to this rumour, Mr Spillane has ceased writing and has withdrawn from public life.



TELL UNCLE

JIM

by James White



Most of you have troubles. Some are big, serious, others are small and merely inconvenient. But no matter which category they fall into, you've got to get them off your chest.

Tell me. I'm here to help you.

And you don't have to spare my blushes. I've been around, I don't shock easy, and, this is important, I won't laugh. So don't let false pride or an exaggerated sense of your own ignorance keep you silent while some silly little worry gnaws needlessly at your guts, souring your every waking moment and sapping the precious vitality

that should be flooding the mails with fanstuff. Tell me. Whether you are an old hand who has inadvertently posted a rather controversial letter in an envelope addressed to the person you were being controversial about instead of the envelope it was meant to go in, and are, in consequence, in urgent need of advice on ways to increase your life-expectancy, or whether you are one of those incipient serious constructive types who has written a letter of fulsome praise to your favourite author, only to have the resultant glow of self-satisfaction quenched by the belated realisation that you spelt his name wrong, it doesn't matter in the slightest. My vast fund of knowledge is at your disposal.

The Group here has long held the opinion that there was a certain vital something—apart from legibility—missing from the pages of the current fanzines, and that vital something was, of course, the Advice Bureau. It is missing no longer. Also, it was generally agreed that I was the one best fitted to conduct this department, needing as it does that peculiar blend of warm humanity, discretion, and a gentle, loving severity, which are so rarely found in the proper proportion among normal fan. And, understand this, I am not looking for scandal or gossip to fill monthly columns in a chain of magazines, so your dirty little secrets are safe with me. I will not use the information which comes to me from any fan for purposes of blackmail nor as ammunition in a feud—apart from one obvious exception which need not worry any normal fan.

There are however just a few rules which must be observed when writing in. First, no blasphemy. Second, no free plugs. And third, no extraneous or non-fannish queries: it should be unnecessary to remind you that s--,.....,er..... gender has no place in the life of a dedicated fan. Now that we understand each other let's get on with it.

The letters dealt with here were not all addressed to me, but they do fall within the scope of this department, so I'm answering them. The first query is from MW of London, who tells (at great length) how a serious constructive suggestion of his to his favourite author was laughed out of the pub, and wants to know whuffo? Well, MW, I agree with you about GRAVEL OF GANYMEDE, but your suggestion to "ACC" that it could have been even better if he'd had the creator of Carter of Barsoom collaborate with him to speed up the action a bit is, unfortunately, impracticable. They live too far away from one another. The next is

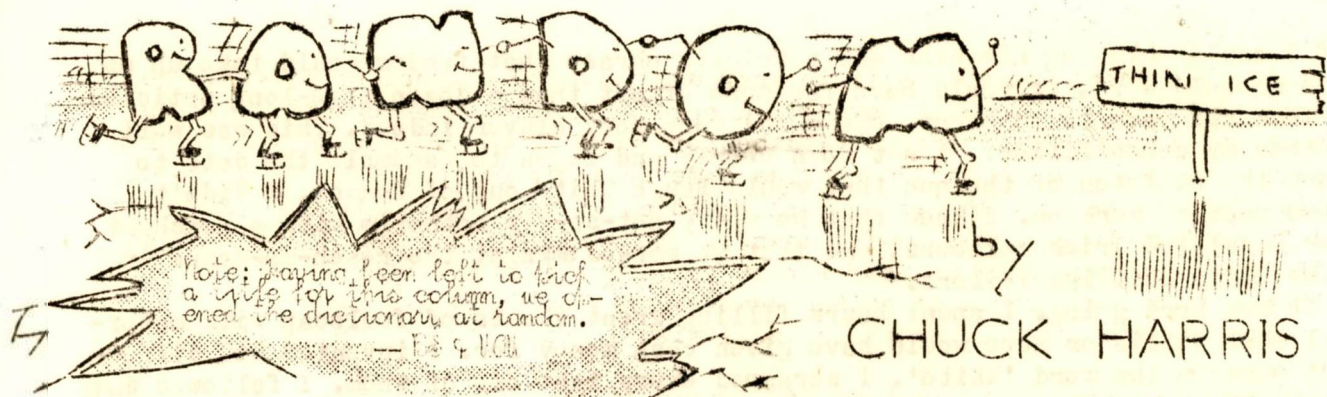
from another young fan who wants to know why, when he approached a favourite author in the White Horse to have a mag autographed, the man standing beside the favourite author suddenly...(I'd better quote this)... "growled deep in his throat and went red and little bubbles came from his mouth and he lifted a heavy table high in the air and let it fall again and I was talking to the author and didn't notice where it was coming down..." Now, KP, it is quite possible that while you were buttering up your author you might just have mentioned another author's name for purpose of odious comparison? You don't know who's beside you sometimes in that place. But cheer up. I wish I had a nice nurse to dictate my letters to.

Now comes a batch of routine stuff. Seventeen fans ask "How can I get Big-Ponded?" Some others ask "What's it really like in Paris?" (Thirty of them. Tsk tsk). And there's one "How can I get into NEW WORLDS?" from a fan in Welling. These have been sent the usual printed leaflets—the replies couldn't possibly interest you.

However, that last fan, one AVC, also raises the first of our technical queries. He has developed a substitute for slip-sheeting involving mounting the duplicator on a broom so that the printed sheets slide slowly along the handle to drop on the floor a few feet away. He keeps moving the broom around so that each sheet drops on a different place on the carpet. However he finds that he quickly runs out of carpet and wants to know should he move to a bigger house. No, AVC, you are on the wrong track. It would do you no good to change your residence because your argument would still be based on the wrong premises. This is the type of problem that can only be solved by the alien thought processes of a warped mind. I should explain that the warped mind in question was recently on an expedition to America and, as members of the fan underground will recollect, there was a conspiracy during his absence between me and country fan George Charters not only to overthrow him but to move the centre of British fandom to Bangor, County Down. This double coup (known, strangely enough, as Operation CoupCoup) was foiled by the Tyrant's return, but I think he suspects. At any rate he has been trying ever since to make me superfluous by evolving a method of automatic slipshooting. The other night I arrived at Oblique House to find him experimenting with an apparatus consisting of several strips of metal, a cocoa tin with a hole in the bottom, and half a pound of rice. The cocoa tin is filled with rice and mounted over the receiving tray, which now consists of a cardboard box, in such a way that every revolution of the duplicator shakes several grains of rice onto the freshly-mimeed sheet. He has found that six grains of rice dropped onto a quarto sheet from a height of 18" distribute themselves evenly enough to prevent offset onto the next page. When the run is finished he merely takes the pile of sheets by the corners and shakes the rice into the box to be used again. ((Note. Rice has been found too light to be shaken out satisfactorily--I am now considering airgun slugs. -WAW))

The next technical problem is from a neofan who is having trouble with his duplicator. His letter seems to be written in red ink...no, it's blood—I've just noticed it's signed by a clot. 'CRH' of Rainham says: "This ----- ((ah-ah, remember Rule 1)) duper of mine just won't work...I don't know what to do... I think I'll shoot myself." It always gives me a certain amount of pleasure when people answer their own questions. Saves me the trouble.

A hastily-scribbled note has just been handed to me. It says, "You do run on, don't you. Shut up. (Signed) WAW." Oh well, I suppose he can't afford my word rates.....



THE OUTSIDER Once upon a time, when Vince Clarke still had hair, and Pogo was just a stick, I was a Happy Fan. I felt at home. I corresponded with myriads of nonentities, and, being a firm believer in the inherent destiny of Chuck Harris, I was quite convinced that I was an embryo Bradbury. I was a specialist too. He wrote Mars stories; I wrote werewolf stories. I could quote three chapters of 'The Golden Bough', and I knew just about everything on silver bullets, oaken stakes through the heart, and what would happen to lycanthropes on Bbllzznaj—where there just happens to be a full moon every twenty minutes.

Hell, I was an expert. I was ready for the Big Time. It's true that I made deprecating noises when my best friend and co-editor said, "You're a much better writer than I am, Chuck", but that was due to my innate sense of modesty. Hadn't the Bboy Himself told me I was his best discovery since Clive Jackson? Hadn't he enthused about my "breathless exuberant style?"

This was the sort of serious constructive criticism that I needed. At this time, James White's attempts at literacy had been confined to the deathless phrase, "This is not the opinion of the type-setter, JW." Bob was a BRE expert, Vince was a mimeo cranker, and even the legendary Bulmer had no other interests than NIRVANA. It was wonderful. We all burred along happily just waiting for the pro-eds to discover me.

And then, it happened. By a tremendous fluke, Ken and Vince sold an....er, juvenile. Before I could even make with the congratulations, James was caught in flagrante delicious with a NEW WORLDS cheque, Walt began writing things for Peter Hamilton and money (mainly for money), and Bob Shaw started sending Bill Hamling little 2000 word novelettelets.

It's different now. Instead of talking about s-x and similar fannish subjects, we talk about word rates or "good old Ted." I feel strangely alone—rather like the ape that decided to stay in the tree whilst the rest of the tribe ran around below rubbing sticks together and inventing the wheel. { An apt analogy. —JW } It seems that any minute now Fandom will consist of me and Ken Potter—and I hear that he's thinking of doing reviews for AUTHENTIC.

Please,.....couldn't anybody use a werewolf story?

I WAS A VICTIM OF PROXYBOO LTD. Before it happened, I never believed in the 'Proxyboo' myth. I thought it was just another fannish gag and that James White was just an ordinary opponent.

After reading "The Last Time I Saw Harris" I swore a mighty oath of revenge—as well as the usual minor ones like 'Fugghead' and flickering blank and asterisked dash. I thought about it carefully and decided that the most desirable 'one-upmanship' ploy would be the tried and tested insulting pun gambit.

If I could only tag him with one vitriolic phrase that fandom would take up as a household word, it would have far more effect than a dozen page-long articles.

It would have to be short, sharp and very very clever indeed. This was well within my capabilities. I sat down calmly and began to assemble the data to form the skeleton of the pun that would laugh White out of fandom. I didn't have much to work on. I knew that he was a not-so-gay Lothario with a penchant for unsullied Irish colleens, and that he worked amongst the reach-me-downs in "The Fifty Shilling Tailors."

It was hard going. I spent hours filling great sheets of foolscap with material that Willis or Hope would have given cash money for. I invented 947 different puns on the word 'White'. I scrapped every last one of them. I followed them with 632 about keen, bespectacled BIS types and sincere ACColytes. I burned them. I wrote 38 different limericks about the sex life of cut-price tailors. I sent them to Ermengarde. I began to despair—as well as run out of acid and foolscap.

I bought a new reem and a new carboy and started afresh. It became an obsession with me. I gave up eating, drinking and wenching (well, almost) and even began to dream about puns instead of Bea Mahaffey. I was pretty desperate. I was almost at the point of Giving Up when, glancing idly at the Gigantic Reductions in the window of the Rainham branch of the 50 Bobsters it came in a flash.

It was a pun to end all puns. A flawless scintillating gem sparkling with the very essence of wit. Far, far better than the countless vulgar Harrisques I'd previously discarded, it was slangy and yet pointed, it was catchy as well as easy to remember. With a mere five words I jeered at his insensate philandering as well as his lowly occupation.

I stood there in the High Street and muttered it to myself. Every single word seemed to be a tone-poem in itself. I felt like Einstein or L.Ron Hubbard. This was my brain-child. Alone I'd created it.

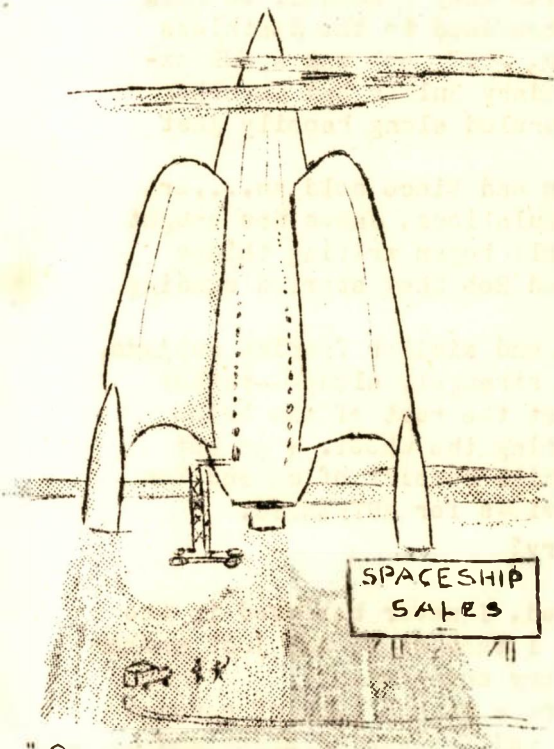
"A wolf in cheap clothing."

And every nuance of it would sound the death knell of White in Fandom.

I was all set. All I had left to do was to lay the groundwork. The whole effect would be spoilt if the hoi polloi and R.J.Banks were ignorant of James' satyriasis or of the Fifty Shilling Tailors. I mentioned the facts in my NIRVANA column and followed up with letters to QUANDRY and SFN.

I laid my plans carefully and decided that I would use my verbal H-bomb in the Whitsun "-".

And then, somehow or other, Proxyboo got to hear of it. (Vince Clarke was the only person I'd confided in, but I make no hasty accusations. It's just possible that the Orangefen really are telepathic.) The whole massive organisation swung ponderously into activity. Willis was recalled from America, Bob Shaw left London to return to Belfast, SLANT was postponed, and their entire forces directed against this attack on the base of the Belfast Triangle. The usual procedure was useless—this couldn't be stolen for premature detonation in 'The Harp', like countless other Harris gambits. The next



"OF COURSE YOU GET A
BOOK OF INSTRUCTIONS
WITH IT!"

two Harps consisted of already stencilled conreports. There was one wild fleeing hope that they would be able to use it in the January SFN, but I'd blocked that by getting Clarke to appoint me as sub-editor.

In despair they called in their consulting semanticist, George Charters. After 36 solid hours of analysis he came up with two alternative solutions. The foundations of the pun had to be broken. Either James had to be castrated or the cheapness implied by the Fifty Shilling Tailors' name had to be nullified.

The rest is history. White was adamant. An unknown shareholder called an emergency general meeting of the Tailors' Guild and within three days the whole of the Fifty Shilling Tailors' organisation throughout the country was renamed as "The Fine Service and Thrift Co." The Harris ploy was destroyed and Proxyboo sank back into hibernation until the tennis courts opened.

LUCK O' THE IRISH I've always thought of myself as a Rational being. I've never invested in lucky charms or zodiacal emblems. I didn't even believe that a rabbit's foot was lucky....unless of course it came from a black doe or a white buck that had been trapped in a graveyard at midnight.

But just lately, I haven't been so certain. I've been thinking of the peculiar contrast between what happens to me and what happens to Willis. On his rubbish dump he picks up printing presses; on my rubbish dump all I find are extremely dead dogs and bicycles even older than Bob Shaw's. One of his American friends sends him a print shop; this week, one of mine came through with last April's AMAZING STORIES (and minus Rog Phillips' column at that). He spends two shillings on advertising for a typer, and as a result gets a Vari-typer (I doubt if there are more than a dozen in the whole of the UK) worth about £80 for a lousy ten quid. I spend that much on a secondhand duper and still can't make the goddam thing work. (Willis of course picks up a perfect duper at an auction for £3:10.) He discovers neophytes like Bob Shaw; Rainham's other fasan is Harry Lincoln who collects first editions of Vargo Stat-ten. He gets a trip to the States....I even have to pay my own fare to the White Horse (no gratitude in these London Circle types).

As an anti-forteen I'd dismissed all this as coincidence, but, as I just said, lately I haven't been so sure about it. The last crushing blow is too much. Listen.

This year London has been transformed into a fannish Mecca. Not only have I promised to attend the Convention in person, but we have all other sorts of tourist bait like Coronations laid on. We were confidently expecting Everybody to attend.

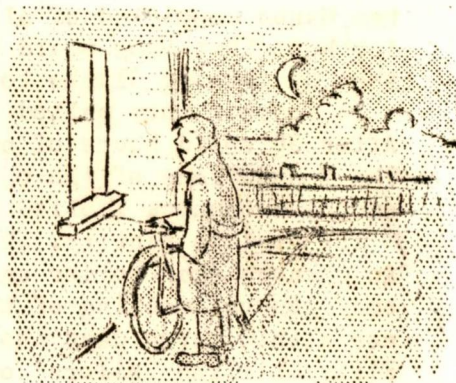
And then, this week, we had a quietly jubilant letter from Belfast (that's something of an event too lately). In it he tells us that Bea Mahaffey—yeah, the Bea Mahaffey is coming to Europe this summer. I don't have to tell you where she's staying.

If anyone has a secondhand Joan the Mad for sale, I'd like to hear from them. Then, maybe, James White will small-pond me.



THE GLASS BUSHEL

BOB SHAW ALIAS (BoSh)



THE ADVENT OF THE SEWIFAVSAG On the evening of the founding of the above body (The South-East Woolwich Imaginative Fiction and Vargo Statton Appreciation Group) I cycled back from work at top speed. This isn't as fast as it sounds because the climate of Greenwich didn't seem to agree with my bicycle. It seemed different somehow—I think it was the way Vince Clarke poked around it for a whole day that started the change.

Vince put oil over the carefully nurtured coat of rust that took me years to grow. As anybody with any mechanical experience (beyond fiddling with ancient duplicators) knows, oil only spreads rust. Mind you, I like rust on a bicycle, but it must be in its proper place—along the frame and handlebars.

Spreading easily over the oiled parts the rust had penetrated into the ball-bearings. Even at the best of times I have never been able to freewheel on my machine. My bike is safe. When you stop pedalling—you stop moving. But after Vince's efforts it was difficult even to pedal, because I could no longer push with both feet simultaneously.

(Before going on I would like to say that I bear no ill will over the matter. It was obvious on the first day Vince saw my bike that he would have to do something or go madder. As it was he went red. He kept staring at the rear lamp which, due to sloppy workmanship on my part, pointed vertically upwards. He was aghast when I told him I had thrown the front mudguard away when the securing strings broke. The only thing that really annoys me still is that he mended the puncture, just when it was going away by itself.

I have a theory that if one simply ignores a puncture it disappears. I once drove one away by pumping up the tyre every time it went soft. After a few weeks of that treatment the puncture just sort of dried up.

This technique was spoiled by Vince knuckling in to that one. I did tackle the problem of mending them without using a patch, but I couldn't find the right solution.)

The reason I was hurrying was that Ron and Daphne Buckmaster had declared open house for fans. I got back to my digs, read my mail, and set out for Woolwich only stopping at a fruit shop to have my saddle bag filled with apples and to make sure I had remembered the fanzine on which Ron had sketched the route to his place.

Just as I finished the last apple I reached the sombre structures that the Army terms Woolwich Married Quarters. I passed West Block with my brakes jammed on (jam holds brakes very well) but to my dismay I discovered that the numbers of the various apartments were the most cleverly positioned I had ever come across. I just couldn't find them. A lot of thought must have gone into putting up those numbers.

My hypothetical observer would have been intrigued to see a lonely figure wandering up and down in the gathering dusk, peering hopefully into brightly

lit rooms, only to sag with disappointment and stumble off into the gloom.

Finally, just as I was about to give up hope, I saw that one of the windows bore the legend, inscribed with one finger in condensed moisture:-

I HAD ONE GRUNCH BUT THE EGGPLANT OVER THERE.

I tripped lightly up the steps, tripped heavily over the doormat, and entered. I will gloss over the alcoholic details of the evening beyond a brief mention of some of the personalities present.

We had famous author Ken Bulmer, among whose published works are SPACE TREASON and CYBERNETIC CONTROLLER. And Vince Clarke, among whose published works are CYBERNETIC CONTROLLER and SPACE TREASON.

One thing that really stands out in my memory is that we brought to light the theory concerning:

WILD AND TAME HOLES

Tame holes are familiar things. These inoffensive and harmless creatures are in constant use throughout fandom, indeed this very magazine could never have been assembled without the holes wrapped round the staple prongs. Of course these pygmy holes, the larger ones being used for such things as getting letters into envelopes and holding the glass in James White's spectacles.

I must confess that it wasn't until Ron Buckmaster pointed it out that I realised that all holes are not so obliging. There are some that dedicate themselves to obstructing fannish activity in any shape or form. These are the Wild Holes.

They sneak into stencils and lodge themselves in the centre of every letter 'e'. Sometimes one of them goes berserk and spreads over several inches of stencil as it is being put on. The ones that fans use in their front doors often contract when magazines are being pushed through, thus ensuring that they arrive minus the cover.

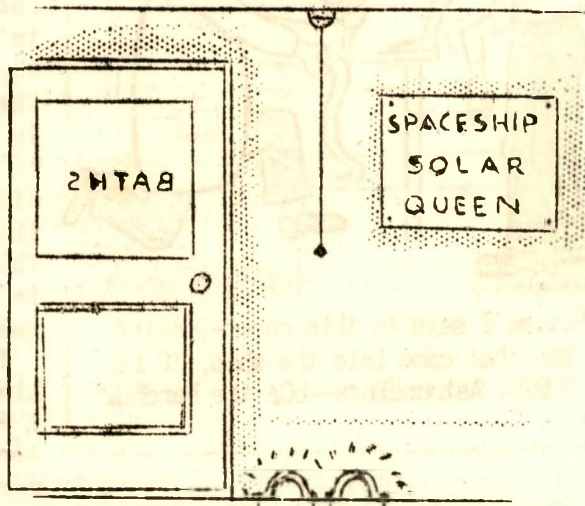
It is even possible that the puncture I cured was a Wild Hole that got into my inner tube and, because I steadfastly refused to remove the tyre, died in captivity.

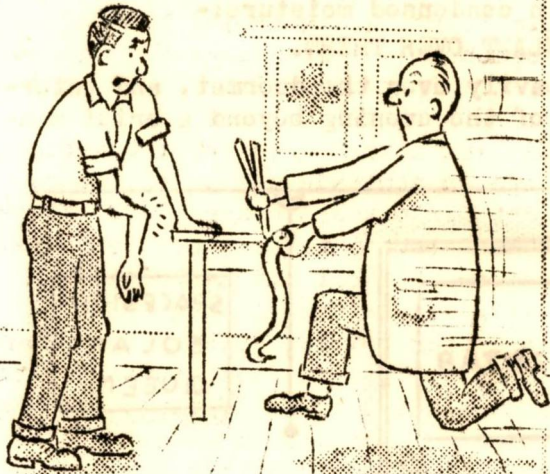
How did these obnoxious things get into fandom? I asked myself that question too. So far I have not been able to find out how it was done. Not definitely, that is. However I suspect, suspect mind you, that Shelby Vick smuggled them in in his socks.

.....

From my bedroom window you can see the Northern Ireland House of Parliament perched up on a hill dominating a wide tract of the County Down. I was just sitting gazing blankly at it wondering with one half of my mind which window marked the Willis office. With the other half I was frantically searching for a suitable tail-piece for my column.

After many minutes of mental turmoil I finally found what I was looking for — it was the small window with the funny brush hanging outside. That left the other half of my mind seething with anger and resentment because it was still wrestling with its problem. Just as I was on the verge of becoming a





"...so I says to this queer-looking
guy that came into the shop, 'Old
1934 Astoundings—50¢ the handful."

split personality there came a knock at the door, followed by a familiar plop on the hall floor.

I sped down the stairs like a step rocket to see what had come. It was the latest sheaf of stuff from Operation Fantest—but what is this? The neat envelope has been carelessly ripped open. Still in the present tense I bend and pick up the desecrated package—but what is this? The whole thing is dripping with water. It is as wet as if the postman had carried it to the door in a bucket of water. My eyes widen until they are almost open. Could the postmen have.....no, it can't be. There must be another reason. The shock is too much for me—I drop back into the past tense.

I carried the soggy bundle into the living room and dried it at the fire. When I read it later it seemed, apart from a certain warping of the paper, to be a perfectly normal OF mailing.

I suppose it must be all right. I have a half-formed fear that when the paper comes tomorrow there will be a headline announcing that the mailboat sank on its way across the Irish Sea, and a sub heading giving survivors' accounts of how a small white object was seen cutting a huge bow wave towards Belfast.

Getting Away From It All

All of a sudden it's happened again,
A head stuffed with cotton and nerves
made of refia,
A look round the bookshelves gives me
a pain,
I wonder if sf does drive you insane?
This is another attack of the GAFIA.
The postmen knocks twice and the
letters float in*,
Fenwit that sparkles like diamonds or
sophie,
Even a deaths-head can wear a big grin,
Ghu! Give me a tonic without any gin!
This is another attack of the GAFIA.
A fenzone that's full of the latest in
feuds,
The one that I'd start would be worse
than the Mafia,

The point of that interlineation eludes,
And what can they see in those distort-
ed nudes?

This is another attack of the GAFIA.

L'envoi

Prince, in the promags the corn's get-
ting chaffier,
Plots are more puerile, ideas growing
deffier,
You collect zines for years, at the
finish whataffis?
.....GAFIA.

—A.Vincent Clarke

*(You too?)

WALT WILLIS

INCLINATION



Readers Letters

I don't seem to be able to get the hang of this letter column business. People just don't seem to write the proper kind of letter, somehow, and it brings out the editorial beast in me. For instance I used to go through all the letters I'd got since the last issue, copy out the interesting bits on separate sheets of paper, combine them into shorter snappier letters, shuffle them about into some sort of continuity, copy them all out again with an attempt at a commentary linking them together, and then revise again on the stencil. It took me days to do this, and by the time I'd finished I had a letter column not half as good as Max Keesler manages with his typewriter tied behind his back. (His favourite typing position.) So this time to hell with perfectionism. Forward, mens, unrelentless, and let the chits fall where they may.

The first one's from Paul Enever, England's Rip Van Winkle. He was active in British fandom round about 1934 and then went hors du combat until last year, when he emerged as fresh as a daisy. The old war horse doesn't seem to have changed a bit in the last 20 years: even his appearance adds new evidence in support of the theory that True Fans are immortal. Here he comments on Bob's account of the White Horse and his ignorance of the famous Bickerstaff.

Sir,

While glancing in vain through your pusillanimous publication for some mention of the more erudite country fen I came across an atrocious article by one signing himself 'Bob Shaw'. I am not surprised at this obvious use of a pseudonym---no one with even a glimmering of sanity would put his right name to such an appalling assemblage of errant ambiguities---but I feel it would be a disservice to fandom in general and those fen in particular who have been so unwary or ill-advised as to subscribe to your purulent periodical, if I failed to comment on your corny contributor's inexcusable ignorance of the identity of Bickerstaff.

Not to know who Bickerstaff is is tantamount to being unaware of the number of beans required to make five, though in the case of this 'Shaw' person the two are, no doubt, synonymous. Everyone at the White Horse knows Bickerstaff. The doings of Bickerstaff, his goings and his comings, are THE subject of conversation. Do we not repeatedly hear his name mentioned as the author of 'that story called wotsit, all about a thingummy, in wotchermacal-lit magazine'? Is he not the gentleman due to buy a round whenever no one else is willing? It is Bickerstaff who botches the interior illos, who puts the psoriasis adverts alongside the feature story title, who axes all the most interesting shorts from the BRTs.

For years Bickerstaff has been responsible for the regular non-appearance of our favourite zines. Bickerstaff beats us to that priceless mint copy of a No.1 Amazing offered in all the obscurist second-hand bookshops--and beats us only by the shortest of heads. Being himself a fen he is, naturally, short-headed. Bickerstaff waylays the postmen and extracts the urgent letter our

correspondent assures us he posted. Bickerstaff is the patron saint of strikeovers and obliteration, Bickerstaff is omniscient and omnipresent.

For your wretched writer to be unaware of these facts of Bickerstaff's life, coupled with his repeated assertions that members of the London Circle were continually buying him beer, leads to only one possible conclusion.

He has been frequenting the wrong hostelry.

Now we come to the matter of the Gover Illustration. This obviously Means Something. By dint of considerable research and comparison with certain Lonconpics, I have succeeded in identifying most of the protagonists in the murky scene. The gentleman holding the hosepipe is of course James White. Strange how, even in a crude cartoon such as this, the fine quality and sterling character of this eminent Belfast artist shine out! Beside him the rest of the characters, though recognisable, appear dwarfed and malignant. It may be that the would-be cartoonist has here felt some stronger power than his own directing the pen, so that truth breaks through even his clumsy efforts.

Behind the great White, way behind, stands A.V. Clarke, ready as ever to apply pressure and pour oil on the burning waters. In the immediate foreground stands Fred Robinson, his flag held Straight Up. I beg your pardon, a blurred patch of mimeo misled me. Robinson kneels--kneels on a canber, too, by the looks of it.

To the right of the dais Tubb exercises his unusual talent for selling the most useless of junk. (Come come, Paul, I think Ted's stories are pretty good.) I see that tightening purses have caused him to reduce his prices with remarkable rapidity, though anyone who buys THAT rocket for fivepence is being cheated. It SLANTS.

The self-portrait of Shaw playing with his Meccano is a revelation.

As for the affair of the water pistol: I am shocked sir, unutterably shocked, at the outcome of this business. Do I understand that some interfering busybodies actually DARED to lay violent hands on Mr White? Do you mean to sit there and admit that some subhuman cretins still exist who would restrain that noble artist in the just expression of his sentiments? If I could be certain of the identity of these foul ruffians, gad, sir, I'd have them out. Have 'em out, I tell you. Brrrrrrrrrr-rrr-r.

Your disgusted Reader,

A Country Fan

It was Vince Clarke and myself, sir, who restrained Mr White, and I am not a subhuman cretin. I have statements by some of the foremost figures in the subhuman cretin world to prove it. Do you suggest that I should have stood idly by in that scene of awful carnage, with the water flowing like blood, and watched my co-editor drowned with a water pistol? Would Boucher have allowed that to happen to McComas? I think not sir. I venture to say that in similar circumstances he would have sprung to his aid and wrenched the water pistol out of Heinlein's hand.

Dear Sir or Madman,

Hyphen returned in case another would like it. The effort titivated my testacles and gave much amusement, the largest chortles being caused by the 1927 Underwood with the capital 'I' badly worn and the Shaw design for a latrine in the World of Null Gravity. The use of a magnetic field to fasten down urine impregnated with colloidal iron

is a truly magnificent stf idea that someday will have to be exploited by dirty capitalists.

Why Travel to Venus All Wet?
Pin The Pidöle with a Shaw Closet.
(Regd. at U.S. Pot Office).

Was disconcerted by the callow wight who implies that what is spoken over there is Erse. 'Tain't. Had the same notion myself until I went there and found that when the Irish don't speak English (usually better than the English) they speak Irish. They told me, with much passion, that Erse is the name given by Scots to the Gaelic jargon spoken in Glasgow by its largely Irish pop, which gabble is not identical with either Scottish Gaelic or Irish.

And positively no Irishman ever says begob or begorra. They don't know what the words mean, and say they were invented by English music-hall comedians trying to act Irish. Ales, 'tis true, only too true. A few dyed-in-the-nylon Irishisms I did pick up were (a) their fondness for doubling an end phrase, such as, "It doesn't matter at all at all," and (b) habit of tacking on a so--- phrase such as, "It's a beautiful morning, so it is," or "They're a gang of Protestant bastards in Belfast, so they are," and (c) their liking for the word 'now' with results such as "Wait now", "Good Evening now," etc. And finally some choice expletives such as "Be the howly Christ!" etc. I was also given to understand that the chief difference between the real Irish and those in Belfast is that the former were conceived in holy wedlock. Is this true??????? (No. You should hear what they say about you English.)

How did you like the US hoooley? --and the treasured moment when Bobloch voted Bea Mahaffey and Evelyn Gold the editors to whom he would most like to submit. I was the astral body three rows behind you, in dark glasses, with the name of Obadiah Pip, and a breast-pocket full of dime seegars. Am looking forward with interest to your grossly distorted report on the shenanigans.

Eric Frank Russell

A typically serious-minded and dispassionate 25pp. report on the Chicon appeared in QUANDRY 27 & 28. Incidentally, I don't know if this is worth mentioning here or not, but I'm going to publish a sort of memorial volume containing an expanded reprint of the conreport and a lot of other stuff about the US trip as a sort of souvenir for the people who helped to bring me over. If anyone else wants a copy I could run off a few extra for say 2/6 or 35¢ each. It'll be anything up to 100 pages. Another big publishing venture scheduled here is a full-length allegorical novel by Bob Shaw and me called THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR.

Next a few extracts from letters. Editorial comments {thus}.

ROBERT BLOCH Dear Mr Harris: Thank you so much for Hyphen. It does a great deal to restore my faith in British fandom. I was beginning to think that there was nothing in the Isles but Willis...every offering from across the pond for years seems to be completely Waltered down; filled with atrocious puns and accounts of the White Horse as seen from his end. Your effort is doubly welcome, in view of the fact that I've recently been subjected to Willis himself (in "person", if you care to stretch a point.) And as you know, a few moments with Willis is enough to instil cubts in even the strongest mind. As I listened to the man cheerfully babbling away about events on the other side I occasionally intervened with a few questions. You can imagine the answers I got---or rather, the answer. "What about Harris?" ("Never heard of him.") "What kind of a guy is Vince Clarke?" (Don't know the chap.") "Have you seen

Shaw lately?" ("Bernard?") As a matter of fact, I had to twist his wrist to get him to admit there was an actual Madeleine. And even then he wouldn't have broken down except for the fact that there was a glass in his hand.

BLOCH AGAIN Dear Sir: We Americans stand on punctilio. (look it up, Buster!)

We adhere to certain strict conventions of salutation. Added to which, the natural gravity of my demeanour precludes the vulgarism of addressing anyone by his first name without an exchange of cards. (I generally exchange cards under the table, first diverting the attention of the other players by loudly yelling, "Who forgot to ante?")

...Believe me, it would please me no end if I could get over to the land of Joan the Wed. But unless Shelby Vick starts a GET RID OF BLOCH FUND it doesn't seem to be on the cards. (Of course, I can exchange them again.) But oh to be in England now Mahaffey's there! You will like Bea. She's a proper smasher, very bloody posh. She'll square the London Circle in short order.

...Perhaps the truth would be a good thing to disseminate. I'm sure that between Clarke and Willis you may have a somewhat distorted picture of American Conventions. So here is the sober truth of the matter, seen through the dark, glassily. Hoping you are the same,

Robert Bloch.

This is a clean word.

{ There should of course have been an asterisk after 'disseminate' and before 'this'. As it stands the statement is ridiculous. // Bea Mahaffey, the most beautiful editor in the business---even counting Ted Carnell in his bow tie and rolled-up umbrella---is landing at Shannon Airport on the 14th May and will be at the Lencen. }

SID GALE Clive Jackson's epistle doesn't make much sense, in fact it reminds me of the typographical layout of the Tail in ALICE IN WONDERLAND. Most of Vince's article was entirely incomprehensible---I'd be obliged for an English (or Yorkshire) translation of it. Ken Beale's story was quite good. I see White still harasses Harris to the reader's amusement. On this occasion I prefer Harris's side of the feud--KFS later spells this 'fued' by the way--White's version being rather repetitious. {KFS spells this 'repetitious' by the way.} ...Of the four cartoons, the first was the best---I didn't twig it until long after. No.4 at the end of the zine was again incomprehensible, what's that in aid of? {Who's being incomprehensible now---there were only three cartoons. If you mean the stamp, it was in aid of the postage revenue.// Let's know how you make out with the second in the Solar Queen Sanitary Series.// Clive Jackson's letter was a parody of the typographical tricks used to portray telepathic thought processes in Bester's THE DEMOLISHED MAN, notable serial in GALAXY. Pity the BRE didn't start in time for you to read this--it was good. }

HAL SHAPIRO Beale's MEMORIAL was good. Too bad it had to come from Beale. Now

I can't say nasty things about him in Hyphen...The wording on the address stickers was marvellous. By Roscoe's front teeth! I never noticed it before. That cancellation mark; man, it's a work of art. Such beauty. Such symbolism. Such stark reality. There, in the filthy square is a reproduction of the famous symbol of the Belfast Triumvirate. And over the stamp, which itself bears some exquisite artwork, are the most attractive wavy lines I have ever seen. Willis you have certainly outdone yourself, and this co-operation with the English postal authorities will certainly win you Roscoe's Ribbon. All in all this issue was very good. Keep up the good work and, one of these days, you may become a very well known fan. (Aw shucks. Or as Vince Clarke says, 'blarney'.)

HANEARD, House of Commons Debates, 26th January 1953.

MR. PERKINS asked the Minister of Supply whether he will move to appoint a select committee to advise as to the steps necessary to ensure that this country does not lag behind in the development of interplanetary travel.

MR. SANDYS: No Sir. With all due respect to this honourable house, I do not believe that a Select Committee could throw much light on the subject of interplanetary travel.

MR. PERKINS: Is my right hon. friend aware that the Astronomer Royal recently stated that from the scientific and engineering points of view interplanetary travel must be considered a practical possibility? In view of the eminence of this gentleman and of the great development work taking place in America, will he consider appointing a small committee of scientists to advise the Government to ensure that we do not lag behind?

MR. SANDYS: I think that these informing studies must at present be left to private initiative. Even in this age of the welfare state interplanetary travel is a service for which the Government do not yet accept responsibility.

MR. EMrys HUGHES: Are we to assume that there is nobody stupid enough on the other planets to wish to come here?

LIEUT COLONEL LIPTON: Pending a decision on the practicability of interplanetary travel, will the r.hon.gentleman co-operate with the Minister of Transport to facilitate travel between different points in the West End of London?

MR. I.O. THOMAS: Would the Minister agree that it would be advisable from all points of view for the Powers on this planet to settle their differences before entering into relationships with other planets?

MR. PERKINS asked the Minister of Supply to what extent development work is being undertaken towards developing interplanetary travel.

MR. SANDYS: None Sir. The problems of this world are at present more than sufficient to occupy the Government's scientific resources.

MR. GIBSON: No imagination!

Acknowledgements to Hal Shapiro for the cartoon idea on p.19. // Quotes overleaf are from Roles, White, Harris, Willis, Shaw, Enever, Hoffman, Clarke (AV), Morse, Hunter, Charters, Clarke (AC), Campbell (HJ), Jeeves, Shorrocks, Thorne, Chandler, Temple, Brunner, and others. // SLANT columnist 'Ermengarde Fiske' has been appointed Assistant Editor of GALAXY. // The Junior Fanatics plan to make an award to the best fmz of the year (presumably the calendar year 1952) at the Coronvention. Votes should be in before 30th April to Dave Wood, 4 Coverdale Rd, Lancaster. All fmz eligible wherever published, but personally I think we need look no further than the Liverpool Group's magnificent Christmas issue of SPACE DIVERSIONS. // Oldtime BNF and mimeo genius Harry Turner looking for 'satire, sarcasm and slanging' for new fmz BLAST. // With mimeo ink at about 21 a tube, other impoverished faneds might like to know that this issue was produced with a few oz of printing ink (Ault and Wiborg's Jobbing Black) at 2/9 a lb.

Norman Wansborough had a paid ad in the last OF mailing offering to transport 100 British fans to the Philcon for weekly payments amounting to some £25. Since the cheapest fare to the States and back by boat is £100 (plane £140) I figured this was either a hoax or a swindle and asked for details. Wansborough says; "My idea was this. Charter a 20 passenger plane and make 5 trips. For food and accommodation I thought I'd get a special train and use that for the meals and sleeping. Perhaps I was a trifle optimistic but I will try to make the offer work. The plane in question would cost £2900. I hoped perhaps I could get a little support from fans in the US...and have written to Ray Palmer." The Wiltshire fan may have an unsuspected genius for organisation, but I would like to know where he figures he can charter a plane for a fortnight (at least) for only £2900 even assuming he can raise the extra £400 plus a few other petty expenses like the cost of a special train for ten days. And has he realised that the plane would have to make ten trips, not five---ie twenty transatlantic flights?

FANDOM IS THE VORTEX I SAID IT IS....I WANT TO GO TO THE STARS IN MY SPARE TIME....AND THEY CUT DOWN TREES TO PRINT THIS!....I CAME HERE TO BE INSULTED, DIDN'T YOU?...FANNISH GOOD CHEER....BUT ONE MORE PROOF OF MY GENIUS....YOU COULDN'T HEAR YOUR BLOOD BOIL AT THEIR PARTY....HE IS A BIG FAN ISN'T HE?...PAUSING ONLY TO GROW A MOUSTACHE....CAN YOU UNDERSTAND THIS GROTESQUE INVOLVEMENT?...DID YOU LEAVE BEFORE THE HELICOPTERS?...I'M THE PHONIEST WRITER IN FANDOM....HE TRIED THE MALTESE NEWSSTANDS FOR SLANT....AS A FULLY CERTIFIED SEX FIEND...I PUT MY FOOT IN IT BY THINKING THAT TED TUBB WAS ONLY NOTED AS AN AUCTIONEER....ISN'T HE A NATURAL?...US SIXTEEN YEAR OLD TWIN FROTHERS....THESE ARE THE WORST DUPLICATED SHEETS....CARNELL IS THE FATHER OF ENGLISH SCIENCE FICTION AND THERE'S A HELL OF A LOT OF BASTARDS RUNNING AROUND THIS PUB....HE'S JUST A BRE HOWARD BR-OWNE....WHERE'S SLANT?...PLEASE KEEP YOUR CLAY FEET OUT OF MY EYE....FANS ARE RATHER DISCERNING ABOUT SUCH THINGS....HE KEPT IT FOR POSTERITY....IS THIS THE BISCUIT FACTORY?...I HAVE A CERTAIN STANDING TO KEEP UP...THAT HAS ALL THE EARMARKS OF A GOOD JOKE BUT NONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS....I'VE GOT MY NAME IN HARD COV-ERS....HAS ANYONE GOT A 16MM PROJECTOR?...JUSTIFIABLE INSECTICIDE....A PURELY MECHANICAL FORM OF HUMOUR....HAMILTONS SAID THE STORIES WERE GETTING TOO HIGHBROW....MY JOKES ARE BRILLIANT....I EXPECT VOID WOULD PRINT IT...PEOPLE LAUGH AT THE FUNNIEST THINGS....WHAT HAVE YOU GOT IN THAT BOTTLE KLEIN?...AM I THE ONLY ONE LEFT ALIVE?...I'D LIKE TO KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT MOSKOWITZ....PUH-LEEZE, DON'T HAVE TOO MUCH FACETIOUS COMMENT....ANOTHER MR CLARKE WHO WRITES LITTLE BITS ABOUT FLYING TO THE MOON....SATISFICTION....FAR BE IT FROM ME TO GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR GRAMMATICAL COMBINE HARVESTER....LET GOLD COME TO ME....I AM ALONE AND COMPARATIVELY UNLO-VED AND DON'T PARTICULARLY CARE FOR THE FEBRUARY ASF....IS SLATER REALLY HAL CLEMENT?...HE IMMEDIATELY SUGG-ESTED AN AMALGAMATION....TWO OF THE MOST BRILLIANT MINDS IN FANDOM AND THREE OF MY FAVORITE CHARACTERS....THE CHESEBOARD IS THE WRONG WAY ROUND....I WANT TO SUBSCRIBE TO NIRVANA....AS SF IT MADE BRADBURY READ LIKE CLARKE AND AS FICTION IT MADE CLARKE READ LIKE BRADBURY....WHOOSHT, HIYA FAN....YES, MISS PAYTON, I RECOGNISED YOU FROM YOUR PHOTOGRAPH....I HAVE SOLD A THOUSAND DOLLARS WORTH IN AMERICAN MARKETS....WHAT'S POGO? WHAT'S BNF?

HYPHEN, Feb. '53

Walt Willis

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