

HYPHEN

NO 14

JUNE

1955



" Church, anybody? "

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CARTOONS BY ARTHUR THOMSON

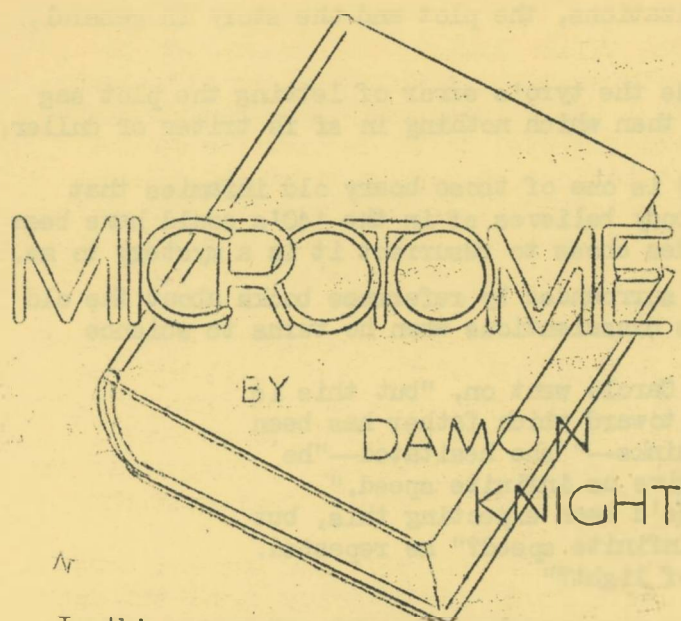
INSIDE
COVERAGE
CHUCK
HARRIS

No, Walter Himself hasn't run off to buy a horse or a stamp album, -- it's just that the tennis season is upon us again, and I wanted to do an issue on my new Gestetner. I have sold my old Ellams duplicator to Catford fandom. The price was fourpence, but I haven't gotten the money yet, -- we are still arranging the easy terms. When Vin/ Clarke and Joy Goodwin came over to collect it we found a dead mouse in the self-feed, -- this is what probably led to the lying Willis rumour that I was trying to convert it to treadmill operation. I only wish I'd thought of the idea before I sold the machine though.

Now, if you will all get your upper lips stiffened, I'll give you the bad news. With this issue Hyphen goes up to 1/- or 15¢ a copy. We're sorry about it, but there's a limit to the amount of money we can afford to spend, and since our first issue w-a-a-y back in 1952 we've kept the price at 9d even though we've more than doubled the number of pages. I suppose we could have cut down the size instead, but we thought that would spoil things, and we would rather put the price up.

This issue is another 42 page job, but we still didn't manage to get in everything that we hoped for, even though we dropped TOTO. I think it's fairly good though, and I hope you will all write in to say what a very fine editor I am, -- I'm sure we'll be able to manage a much longer letter column next time. NEWSY BITS. Hyphen's editorial assailant, James White, was married last month. James and Peggy came to London afterwards and we had a very fine honeymoon together even though I never discovered which hotel they were staying at, and failed utterly to convince James about droit de seigneur..... The Elsie Horde are humming Lohengrin in The Globe just lately too -- I only wish I knew how these people find the time to sublimate their fan instincts.... Bob Shaw's NEBULA story, "The Trespassers" was reprinted in the Sunday Supplement of the NEW YORK POST (circulation about 1,000,000). Ackerman fixed it, -- if he can do that, there's no reason at all why "Omega" (V.S.M. Vol 1 No 3) shouldn't be condensed for the READERS' DIGEST. I'll send him a copy..... Arthur Thomson's latest sale is to Bert Campbell for AUTHENTIC.... Dale Hart is the most recent Califan to turn up in London. He was selling Finlay originals in the pub last Thursday but he wouldn't accept right arms in place of currency.... Marie-Louise Share (Hodge Podge) was married on 7th of May.... Stuart Mackenzie (Lochrosque & Chelsea) is emigrating to Kenya.... Lee Hoffman is back in Savannah and has sold her horse, Kehli, -- and, dammit, bought another to replace it.... The BRE of Magazine of Fantasy & Science-Fiction seems to have folded.... I shall be playing for England in the International Ghoddminton Tournament at Belfast from the 22nd July to the 7th of August.

HYPHEN #14. June 1955. Chuck Harris, "Carolyn" Lake Ave, Rainham, Essex & Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, N. Ireland. Associates, Arthur Thomson and Bob Shaw. Also culpable, Madeleine Willis, John Berry, George ATW Charters, and James White. Subscriptions 1/- or 15¢ a copy in coin of your realm



The state of the science fiction novel in this year of the boom, 1955, can be summarised by saying that of five new examples to hand, the least bad is David Duncan's *BEYOND EDEN*, (Ballantine, \$2.00 and 35¢).

Duncan is a polished and subtle writer (see his delightful 'Wives & Husbands') who got into science fiction by a well-paid mistake—'Dark Dominion', published by Collier's and Ballantine—and apparently found that he liked it.

'Dark Dominion' will be remembered, by stunned Old-Guard fans, as the novel in which the law of conservation of mass and energy was broken by the simple expedient of ignoring it.

In this new work, Duncan's style is as fluid and controlled as ever, his characterizations as rounded and satisfying, his emotions as deep. It's a pleasure to watch him at work, especially when he has mugged up his mundane science as carefully as he's done here.

'Beyond Eden' takes place in 1961, against the background of the Neptune Authority—a gigantic but eminently believable sea-water purification project in Southern California. This is fascinating in itself, and Duncan does it full justice; but it isn't the subject of the novel.

The novel is "about" a mysterious substance which appears at intervals in the purified water of the Authority, and which causes accelerated growth in plants and micro-organisms. Duncan calls it "living water", and under all the confusion and intrigue, the hostile US Senator, the sabotage and other obfuscation, the problem of the novel is to discover what this stuff is and what it can do.

You never find out. Duncan dodges the issue, hides it in corners, delays it half to death, and finally smothers it under a truckload of Hollywood mysticism and moonlight.

STAR BRIDGE, by Jack Williamson and James E. Gunn, belongs to an older and more honorable class of bad science fiction novels, but its sin is the same. This is the blood-sweat-and-boobos adventure novel of which Williamson has already written some dozen without help: in the background, the enormous cold glitter of the Galaxy; in the foreground, the hero saying "Ouch."

Williamson, I suppose, has thought up more ingenious science-fictional ideas and thrown them away than any man alive. Here, he and Gunn introduce the fascinating concept of the Tubes—the great golden conduits that physically link one star system to another—and make use of it for nothing but a hairsbreadth escapade for the hero (he jumps into a Tube in a spacesuit) and prosaic transport for the Good and Bad Guys—just what, in my youth, Gene Autry or Tom Mix would have done with it.

The comparison is inevitable. This is one of those hyped-up Westerns (underground cities, robots and guitar music) that used to fill the silver screen every Saturday afternoon in one flickering chapter after another. The grasping villains get what's coming to them; the mysterious stranger turns out to be the evil mastermind, just as we knew he would; the hardbitten adventurer gets the girl, as we had suspected he might;

—Vasque
"Lionel Barrymore has only been dead for a month and you can talk that way about Christmas!"

and to cover up the poverty of the characterizations, the plot and the story in general, everybody talks interminably.

Old Hand Williamson and Tyro Gurn have made the tyro's error of letting the plot sag at the end into an amorphous Slaves' Revolt, than which nothing in sf is triter or duller.

CITY OF GLASS, by Noel Loomis (Columbia, 35¢) is one of those hoary old infamies that were so quickly buried and forgotten that nobody believes sf in the '40's could have been that bad. The evidence is here, but why Lowndes chose to resurrect it is a mystery to me.

Western writer Loomis, who works entirely surrounded by reference books about the old West, apparently feels more confident or less conscientious when he turns to science fiction....

"We've been up before," Carole went on, "but this is the final test, the one toward which father has been working for years. He thinks—" she hesitated—"he thinks this power will give us infinite speed."

Niles' eyes widened. He'd been expecting this, but still it was a shock. "Infinite speed?" he repeated. "Do you mean the speed of light?"

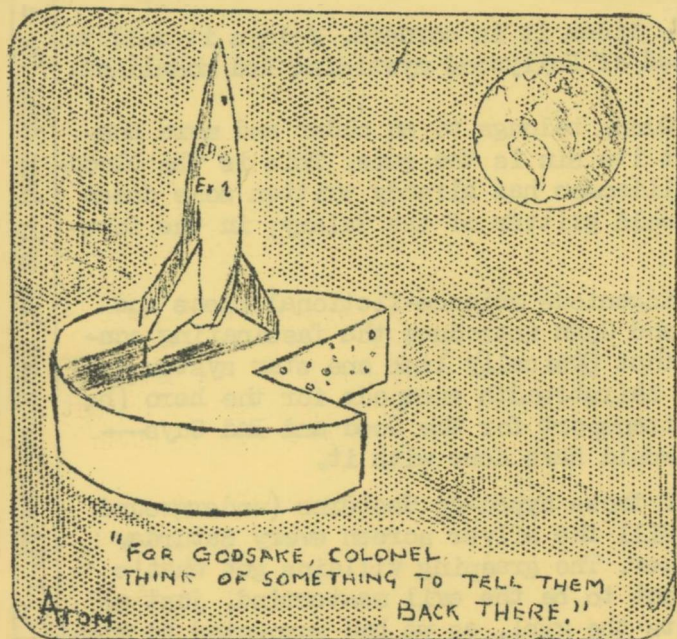
And so help me, she says yes...

Loomis's display of ignorance here is something special in the way of pyrotechnics—it lights up the whole landscape with a sickly white glare, like a rotten stump with infinite phosphorescence.

The plot, which after a while begins to read like a rejected outline for a post-Baum Oz book, is too familiar for description. The chief characters, all scientists, spend most of their time lecturing each other gravely about elementary physics, getting every other word wrong.

The excellent illustrations by Emsh are pieced out with stock cuts from Columbia's bottomless pile of bad drawings.

I've been trying to read some of the Ace paperbacks recently. THE CHAOS FIGHTERS, by Robert Moore Williams (25¢), reads appallingly like one of the old Doc Savage novels,



the ones where fifty different characters kept popping mysteriously in and out, and the whole thing was supposed to wind up making sense at the end, but by that time you were too bewildered to tell. I got halfway into this one, and had to quit. CONQUEST OF THE SPACE SEA, by the same author, shares a double volume (35¢)—one of those idiotic back-to-back monstrosities, where you always find yourself reading the wrong book upside down—with Leigh Brackett's THE STARMEN. I got 32 pages into it before my knees buckled.

Ace's all-reprint doubles are often better bargains; in particular van Vogt's THE WEAPON MAKERS, retitled and considerably revised, bound with Murray Leinster's THE INCREDIBLE INVASION. The latter may or may not be the hot thing I thought it was in 1936, but the van Vogt seems to me to hold

up as one of the most sustained and brilliant of the Old Master's pipe dreams.

Ace, incidentally, has a nasty habit of forgetting to warn you that a retitled novel has been printed anywhere before. The Leinster is one example---neither the original title nor the old copyright appears here.

There follows a guest review of a book I am too modest to deal with myself, although I think I am going to have a good deal to say about this and other reviews of it, in the next Hyphen.

I thought in simple justice somebody ought to rip into my maiden novel as hard as I've cut up others, and I solicited the job from the Rev. Moorhead, who turned out to be so soft-hearted that I had to ask him to spice it up in a rewrite. Moorhead is not a professional critic, and I hope that will be borne in mind; at any rate he makes a valid point that so far at least no one else has made.

HELL'S PAVEMENT, by Damon Knight. Lion, 35¢. Guest reviewed by the Rev. C.M. Moorhead.

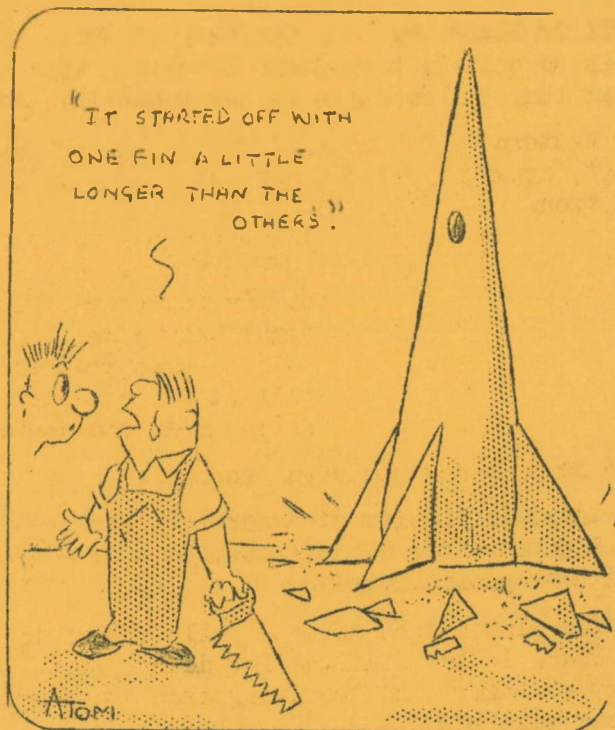
In the April 1953 issue of Thrilling Wonder Stories there appeared a short novel by Damon Knight, entitled 'Turncoat'. This story stirred up my rancor because it seemed to me a satire against religion in general and Christianity in particular, because of the use of certain words and phrases which are frequently found in Christian nomenclature. I wrote a letter to the editor of the magazine and stated my indignation and criticism of that story and he printed it in 'The Reader Speaks'. His comment at the close of the letter was that to him 'Turncoat' was a satire against modern high-pressure advertising and not religion, but his comments notwithstanding, I still feel it is a satire against Christianity, and not against modern advertising. The book 'Hell's Pavement' is just a continuation of the shorter story 'Turncoat', with the same idea prevailing.

I am wondering why the author set out to write a satire against the Christian religion? I have a hunch the book is an outgrowth of having had too much religion shoved down his unwilling throat in his youth, and that 'Hell's Pavement' is a misplaced attempt to strike back at the parental authority that was exercised in those early days.

Why did he use science fiction as a medium for his attack? Did he not realize that very few readers of science fiction are religious minded? Why write a satire against the Christian religion to a group in which very few are Christian and in which atheists and agnostics abound? Was it written as a "sop" to appease the rabidly irreligious minds of those who might read it? What did he hope to gain by writing such a satire for this group of readers? Did he hope to whet their ravening appetites to the extent that they too would take up the hue and cry to "Crucify all Christians" and to damn them all to a hopeless hell of their own devising?

Ninety-nine per cent of those who read the book will no doubt agree with the author. I am wondering if any of the remaining one per cent will have guts enough to protest this 'low blow' in book form?

I was particularly incensed by something on page 19 where the "do-gooder" Dr. Kusko was expounding on the merits of a "universal analogue treatment program". The implication here is that the breed that the author considers Christians to be, would sanction



"Don't expect me to agree with you just because you're right."

and promote such an enterprise. Some dupes to unscrupulous individuals, who use religion as a cloak for their nefarious schemes, might be taken in by such a program, but many of the intelligent leaders of Christianity (we have a few) would rebel stormily against such a proposal. The implication is an insult to the Christian mind. Why? Because it would strike at the very foundation of the Christian faith -- the inviolate right of choice! Take away a man's freewill and you do violence to his personality; he becomes merely a flesh and blood robot -- a meat machine, if you please! No Christian in his right mind would ever support such a program, and for the book to imply that he would is a downright insult. Evidently the author doesn't know too much about the Christian after all, or it has been injected into the book as a studied insult, which shows the bitterness of his own peculiar thinking.

Another passage that brought my blood to the boiling point is on p.120 where Parson Runningsore (indeed!) was chanting:

"For all our curses, All-Lowest, we thank Thee;
lift not Thy maleficent rump from us;
let Thy blackness enfold our steps."

This is pure blasphemy! It has the earmarks of devil worship. To take the terms of adoration which the Christian uses in his worship and twist them into a parody such as this, is to be guilty of blasphemy in the first degree. I wager the author chortled with satanic glee when he turned out this horror.

There are other sections of the book with which I take issue, but these two are the most notorious.

Mr. Knight may feel that he has done something pretty sharp in this lampoon against the authority of the Church but let him remember this: there is a Law of Retribution at work in the world as inexorable as the Law of Gravity. For every mean and misbegotten deed that we do, full payment will be extracted from us at some time in our lives. (This is not necessarily a religious axiom, for it seems to fall upon the godly and the ungodly alike.)

Shakespeare in 'Julius Caesar' put these words in the mouth of one of his characters: "The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interred with their bones". To some people this is the only kind of eternal life there is. If this were all the hope that I had, I'd hate to leave a bad influence behind me; I'd rather leave a good one. Let Mr. Knight remember that to some weaker minds 'Hell's Pavement' will exert an influence to sneer at even the good in religion, and thus an evil influence will linger in that mind, maybe long after Mr. Knight has been gathered unto his fathers. I'd hate to leave a book like that behind me for posterity!

GRUE

(The American NIRVANA!)

25¢ to:

Dean A Grennell
402 Maple Ave
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin

oopsla

(The Fake Fan's Almanac)

15¢ to:

Gregg Calkins
2817 - Eleventh Street
Santa Monica, California

THE BLOGGY BLOGGY DO

WALT WILLIS

After an interesting journey through, round, along and under some mountains which concealed themselves so haughtily in clouds that I assume they must have been the Pique District, the special early train from Manchester carrying Frances and Cyril Evans, Ethel Lindsay, Frank Simpson, Madeleine and a few hundred less interesting people, including me, arrived at the base camp from which the ascent into Kettering may be attempted. Scorning the assistance of native porters the expedition eventually mounted to the George Hotel...a mere 20 minutes after Dave Cohen, who had foolishly waited for the ordinary late train. We watched as he masterfully unsettled the booking arrangements for his party and at length I was provided with a key like that for a baronial castle, attached to a length of drawbridge. I dragged it and our two suitcases up to our room. Pausing only to make sure it had an unoccupied bed we went downstairs again to be greeted by Chuck Harris, Joy Goodwin & Vin/ Clarke. It was now clear what had happened to the Clarke follicles, who had not been heard from for some time. Desperate after years of wandering through vast echoing caverns, the few survivors had made a misguided sortie out onto his upper lip, where he now bore a sort of crew-cut moustache. I entered Chuck's book title contest with "The Weird Shadow Over Vincemouth" and we all went and sat in the corner.



Among the large but select company were Mal Ashworth and a young lady with the fine old North Country name of Sheila O'Donnell and a nice line in humour. (As a married man I do not of course notice such things but I am assured by the President of the Union of Fully Certified Sex Maniacs, a Mr Harris, that her other lines are commendable too.) There were also Ron Bennett, who seemed much nicer than last year & who was to become the first fan to play Rugby at a Convention out of doors, Brian Varley (who is not married), Denny Cowen, Convention Secretary, and lots of other very agreeable people. Dave Cohen engaged Denny Cowen in conversation and Chuck called to the latter across the room "Dave giving you some tips on how to run a Convention?", adding in a reflective aside audible only on the ground floor, "Fans have short memories, haven't they? Look at people talking to Cohen!" He then went on to speculate on the fact that Ted Tubb was engaged in earnest conversation with Frances Evans. I told him Frances was married.* "That's all right," said Chuck. "Ted isn't superstitious."



The scene here in the bar lounge was picturesque in the extreme. Everyone seemed to be wearing helicopter beanies, all home made and each more picturesque than the next. Sheila wore hers, a double-

(*Unlike Brian Varley.)

"Did you see me giving photocards to the Salvation Army?"



prop job, through the streets of Kettering without attracting more than cursory attention..which is a commentary on women's hats. Eric Jones's was by far the most imposing, incorporating as it did a radar antenna, several Van Der Graaf generators and a spaceship complete with launching bowl. He didn't so much wear it as shelter beneath it. During the official program Terry Jeeves lit a small fire under the spaceship. It presented a most imposing sight but Eric Jones remained oblivious, even when Burgess came up from the back of the hall and extinguished the conflagration with his zapgun.

The presence of all these helicopter beanies...far more than can be seen at a dozen American Conventions...was fascinating to the fan historian. The helicopter beanie was first introduced to fandom by Ray Nelson and (I think) George Young many years ago, but they've never been conventional headgear in America as they now are in British fandom, and they owe their currency, it seems to me, solely because of their convenience as a recognisable symbol for fan artists--mainly Lee Hoffman. As with Conventions themselves, British fandom is acting out what US fandom only dreams.

After a while the strain of carrying on seventeen different conversations at once began to get too much for me and I thought I'd take a quiet stroll over to the Convention Hall. I've never yet been able to have a good look at Convention exhibits. I was making my way past groups of people at a speed of about two knots an hour when Pete Taylor ran up to me with an "Is-There-A-Doctor-In-The-House?" expression and told me that three local people in the bar were perplexed about the beanies and wanted enlightenment. He dragged me in front of three well-dressed matrons and promptly scamp-ered off the sinking ship. I gave the three good ladies a brief synopsis of the history of Defiant Goshwowboyohboyism, of which I take the beanie to be a facet, from 1939 to date. They seemed reassured, which was more than could be said for me. My nerves finally shattered by this experience, I gathered a little party consisting of Madeleine, Chuck, Sheila & Mal and fled upstairs in search of peace and quiet. We found it in the dark and deserted Residents' Lounge. We lit one of the table lamps and talked contentedly in the little tent of light until gradually other people began to arrive.



The size of the party increased according to the well known exponential law governing Convention functions, until the hideously inevitable Burgess manifested itself. Chuck, resourcefully, immediately sent him away for some tea. He came back with some story about it not being available until half ten. Reckless-ly, Chuck told him to go and find Wansborough and Reaney and bring them up too. He was more successful in this quest and presently ushered in Wansborough, just after Ken Slater had rung for tea again. Aghast, Ken exclaimed "That wasn't what I rang for!"

Shortly afterwards I thought we might as well go to bed. As I was escorting Madeleine out we passed by Norman Wansborough. He leaned forward confidentially and said, "Walt, I wish I was in your shoes." I told him I wouldn't be wearing any, and went on out. Though now I come to think of it, this was a mean and selfish attitude. Why shouldn't we share these



things with those of our friends who are less fortunately situated? I shall send Norman a pair of my old shoes by the very next post.

When we got to bed I found that my body didn't agree with my mind that this had been a sensible thing to do. After lying awake for an

• BRIAN VARLEY NOT MARRIED — OFFICIAL •

OH! MR BRUNNER

WOULD YOU REALLY
SHOW ME YOUR
LETTERS FROM
JW CAMPBELL
JNR



hour I got up again, put on my jacket, trousers and shoes over my pyjamas, and went out in search of fannish good cheer. I was nearly knocked down by a fan swaying from side to side and looking for the lavatory. I directed him to the door marked "Bath", figuring he couldn't miss it, and continued on to the Residents' Lounge. There was a small party there, consisting of Ken Slater, Dave Cohen, Brian Varley (who is not married), Archie Mercer, Mike Wallace and John Brunner. Ken Slater was anxious to talk about TAFF but the atmosphere wasn't suitable for sober discussion. I had locked our bedroom door after me lest Madeleine should be awakened by drunks looking for their room or Wansborough wanting to try on my shoes, and after a while I went back

to make sure all was well. To my remorse I found a note lying in the corridor. It read: "SOS. Walter has locked me in and I'm dying of thirst. Would someone please tell him to bring me a drink." I went in and was told that the hotel taps provided only hot & cold running chlorine, and went out again for a glass of cider.

Having stayed her with flagons and comforted her with apples, like it says in The Bible, I went back to the Lounge, where I had the privilege to be present at the most historic intervention of a Night Porter in Convention annals. He shambled onto the scene at 2.45am. We had been making a fair amount of noise and were prepared for the usual retribution to overtake us. Everyone had practically thrown themselves out before he opened his mouth. When he did we could scarcely bring ourselves to believe what he was saying, but eventually it seeped into our numbed brains that the unthinkable was happening. There was no reproving reference to "complaints" from that mysterious horde of antifans who furtively follow us from Convention hotel to C onvention hotel spoiling our innocent fun by selfishly trying to sleep. There was no Message From The Manager. No tactless reference to the lateness of the hour. No sinister suggestions about non-residents. Instead the man was talking about science fiction! He was a fan...at least of the BBC program Journey Into Space. Actually he looked more like a Weird Tales fan--in fact he looked like a weird tale--but Boris, as he came to be called, was a very fine fellow. There was a proposal that he be appointed Official Night Porter to British Conventions and be provided with his own travelling coffin.

Eventually I went to bed again, about 3.30am. Next day someone asked me how I'd enjoyed the previous night and I said, "Fine: I went to bed twice."

"Yes," said Madeleine, "and with the same woman!"



The Official Program began next day at 2.18pm with a 50 cycle hum on the PA system and speeches by Ted Camell and Bert Campbell. I hear that Denny Cowen had attempted to start it at the advertised time of 11am, but no one was there to appreciate this whimsical gesture. It came to an end some 90 minutes later, but no blame can be attached to Ted or Bert. Ted maundered on for a while, first about short stories not selling, and then about increasing people's reading speeds...as if he was resolved to convert all stories into short stories and put an end to the whole sorry business...but he soon became again the engaging soul of indiscretion we enjoy every year. Bert was at first un-

"YOUR BLOOD
SIR"



"Did you know that at Conventions it is possible to sustain human life on aspirins and egbo?"



characteristically subdued under heavy fire directed at his fanz reviews...a sitting target..and was also most unbertlike in his defence of the Authentic Book Of Space. He allowed his old enemies to retire in triumph from the field after the following brisk bombardment...

Eric Jones: "At what age was the Authentic Book Of Space aimed?"

Bert: "We are always very hopeful, optimistic--"

Eric Jones: "So was I when I sent for it."

Eric Bentcliffe: "I sent a copy of it to White Sands, and now I hear that all tests have been cancelled."

But after this just retribution by two of the famous Misfits, Bert brightened up a bit and became more like his usual outrageous but likeable self.

After this came the Liverpool Group's famous tapera, which was so good that the sensitive fannish audience subconsciously realised that anything else, even Ken Slater lecturing with laryngitis, would be an anticlimax. They voted for an interval with their feet, leaving a publisher who had begged a five minute spot in the Program for a plug with the task of selling his spring list to 120 chairs. (My brain received a message from the rear that they could do with them.)

We arrived back from tea in time for the tea interval, as usual, and to welcome the Convention Chairman, Bill Panter, to the empty hall. Then I contacted the custodian of the Liverpool tape recorder, a nice bloke whose name I have stupidly forgotten, to see if I could play on his machine two tapes made at San Francisco and sent to me by my Literary Executor, Peter Graham. I had been fighting a losing battle with these tapes for months. The first machine I borrowed played both tracks simultaneously, one forwards and one backwards, so that the fans' voices were drowned out by what sounded like a heated conference of Russian agents. The second played them separately, both backwards. This one played them separately, and in the right direction, but at half speed. I give up. Will any US fans who send me tapes in future please enclose the tape recorder they were made on...or at least a Russian dictionary.

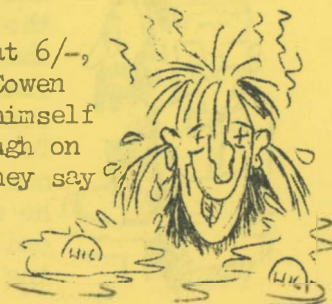
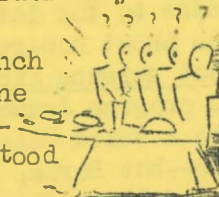


At lunchtime that day the hotel manager had laid on lunch for fifty at 8/6 per head (or at least per person.) At one o'clock the vast organisation had completed its preparations and stood ready to swing into action. Six waiters stood poised for zero hour, sworn to deal with the mad rush of starving fans or go down beneath their feet. By two o'clock six fans had

appeared, the rest of them by this time finishing their fish and chips in cheap cafes. Denny Cowen didn't seem at all worried. He said the Manager had asked him for advice on how many he should provide for at lunch. 75? 100? "Well," said Denny thoughtfully, "I think you could safely allow for about six. Maybe seven. Or, if you want to take a chance, perhaps even eight." The Manager was incredulous. There were over a hundred people there; surely most of them would want lunch. "Not," said Denny firmly, "at 8/6 a throw." And so it turned out. I didn't have lunch there myself, but I hear the service was pretty good.

Next day the hotel put on what was evidently a "Fans' Special" at 6/-, but it was too late; the pattern had been set. The imperturbable Cowen took the view that the Manager had had fair warning and had only himself to blame, which was quite true. In any case the hotel cleared enough on the bar to win on the swigs what they lost on the roustabouts. They say Norman Wansborough took a bath in cherry brandy every night.

(*Later: This problem has now been solved. Tapes welcome.)



My nerves were still shot to pieces; I was, as the old gag has it, shaking like an aspirin. Ever since the Chicon I seem to have been living Conventions backwards...I start off with the hangover and finish on top of the world. The turning point this time came when Arthur Thomson, Roscoe reward him, recommended Alka Seltzer and went out with me to buy some. We came back, ordered two glasses of water from the astounded bartender and drank the mystic potion. Having carefully read the booklet of instructions I began to feel better at once and, hearing that Mal Ashworth was ill with flu I went up to his room with Chuck Harris, the bottle of Alka Seltzer and an unsolicited testimonial. Poor Sheila was speculating mournfully as to how much it would cost to ship a body back to Bradford, but after we'd been talking to him for a while Mal brightened up in sheer self defence and began to fight back. Sheila, still morbidly minded, had pointed out that there were tiny skulls in the wallpaper pattern. "It must have been meant for a scullery, not a bedroom," said Mal. Satisfied that he was going to live...though whether or not he deserved to was another question...we went back downstairs.

NOTICE

In an unscrupulous attempt to spread alarm and despondency among the single women of Britain, certain subversive elements caused to be printed in the last Hyphen a report that Brian Varley was married. We are happy to be able to reassure the female population that this statement was false in virtually every particular. Brian Varley is not married: the glittering prize is still dangling before each of you.

We have been asked to make this statement to ease the Government's position with regard to the recent Bill introduced by the women MPs to legalise polygamy.

Some time during the afternoon word had been spread by runners through the various lounges that War Of The Worlds was going to be shown that evening. My Ghod, we thought, the Official Program walks again. I dropped in about half an hour after it had started to make sure that the Martians hadn't found out about Alka Seltzer, and discovered



the makings of an even worse catastrophe. Someone had decided to help defend Terra against the alien hordes with his little zapgun. Apparently these high class silvered screens are allergic to water and the maddened operator had called in the Manager, complaining that his screen had been ruined and his projector was in imminent danger. He said he would cancel the show if he wasn't afraid the audience would riot. I assured him he needn't worry about that and if he'd explained the position to them there'd be no more trouble. Then after discussing it with Vinç I told him we'd lift a collection to pay for the damage to the screen. I got Bill Panter to make the announcement and the film show went on without further incident. During the interval Vinç and I went round with beanies and collected £2:12:3. The operator settled happily for £1:10 and of the remainder 10/- went to TAFF and the balance in gratuities to the hotel staff.



Some people said afterwards that the people who did the damage should have paid for it, but I don't see how it could have been done in practice. I took the collection from the main culprit, a professional man with a University degree, and he only gave me 2/6 and was far more concerned about his confiscated zapgun than anything else. Besides until recently zapguns have been quite comme il faut at British Conventions and in a convivial atmosphere anyone can be forgiven for failing to take into account the possibility that a film screen may be something other than an ordinary white sheet.

All the same this incident could have ruined the Convention, and it seems to be the general opinion among the leaders of fannish thought that the zapgun should be outlawed. It had its uses in the dry-as-dust British Convention of a few years back, but we all know how to enjoy ourselves now without mechanical aids to informality. Many of the act-ifans left them behind in 1954 and hardly any ENFs toted them at Kettering. The trend will probably continue.



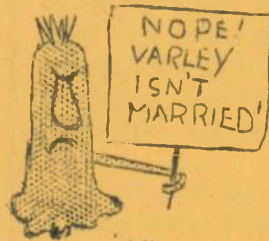
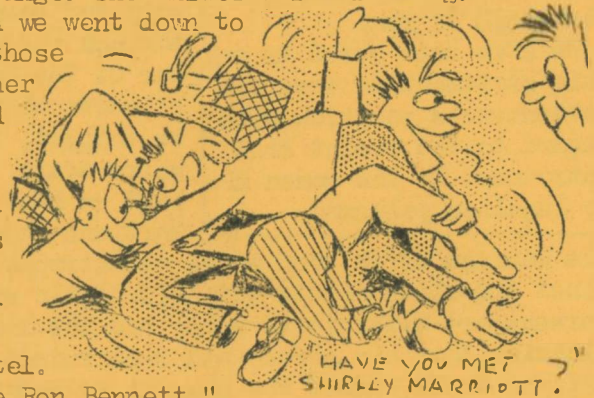
"Surely they're not going to nationalize 'Shirley!'"



There was some speculation next morning as to what would take its place. Ken Slater was demonstrating a potato gun, but one hates to think of what farmish ingenuity might develop from this. Bombs loaded with cold mashed potatoes, bazookas firing half a stone at a time, french fried shrapnel, long range rocket missiles...maybe even guided potatoes, with electronic eyes. A horrible thought. Mal Ashworth and Ken Bulmer came up with the best idea---a double-barreled shotgun with one barrel loaded with tar and the other with feathers. It could be used for running people out of fandom...such as thoughtless zappers.

After the film show a number of us had a very pleasant party in the Residents' Lounge...or at least I enjoyed it. Not too many people, only one talking at once, and everyone participating. Arthur was drawing cartoons, as usual---his graphic commentaries were one of the best features of the Convention, and became a sort of illustrated quotecard---and Pamela stole a particularly brilliant one for UGH, hiding it down the neck of her dress. ("She's wearing a strapless evening cartoon.") But after a while the word began to go around that we should mingle. For some reason everyone went to Bert Campbell's room, which was already crowded. It was about the size of two telephone kiosks and at one time contained 35 people, not counting the ones under the carpet. When there was a knock at the door I reflected that if it was the house detective asking if Bert had a woman in there he could have called out "Only about 17." I asked myself what sort of creature would go to this place when there was a perfectly good lounge. The answer was a lemming.

Eventually everyone else had the same idea and we went down to the 'Basket Lounge' where the Liverpool Group, those masters of conventioning, were throwing another classic party. It had quietened down by now, and you could almost see the other end of the room. This was more than could be said for the floor, where a wellknown femfan was holding court. Under the impression that one of her satellites was a certain Northern faned Chuck said "I'll bet Ted Mason doesn't report this" but when the police arrived at 4.20am it fortunately turned out to be someone else who was registered at the hotel. Chuck said "I'd rather go to jail myself than be Ron Bennett."



The rest of Sunday passed in a happy blur and then there was the usual mad rush round saying goodbye to people. Not as many as usual this time, because it seemed that all our friends were coming to see us off. There were the Bulmers, Vin and Joy, Mal and Sheila, and Eric Bentcliffe. Even Eric Needham, who had just arrived on his motorbike. (The one with the wide handlebars, of which he had been heard to say "It's a good bike, but rather susceptible to forked lightning.") I heard him asking Chuck for a light for his cigarette. Chuck obliged, saying; "A light from Chuck Harris! Light an eternal flame from it or something."

Eventually Madeleine, Chuck, Arthur and me, accompanied by our entourage, arrived at the platform and the train came in. We said our last goodbyes and started to clamber on. Suddenly the air was filled with confetti. Every one of them had been clutching a handful of it all the way from the hotel.

Madeleine and I leaned out of the carriage window dripping confetti---technicolour dandruff, as Bob Shaw, calls it---laughing and waving goodbye. As the train moved off Ken Bulmer shouted, "Give our love to your children when you get home!"



TAFF 1956

(American & British fanzines please copy)

Nominations are hereby invited for a US (or Canadian) fan to be helped attend the next British Convention at Easter, 1956. They should be sent to Don Ford, 129 Maple Ave., Sharonville, Ohio to reach him before 30th September, 1955, and should be accompanied by a 100 word 'platform' describing the candidate's qualifications. The voting papers will be published early in October. Every fan who contributes 2/6 or 50¢ to the Fund subsequent to the publication of this Hyphen (June 1955) will be entitled to vote, but only one vote per person. Contributions in dollars should be sent to Don Ford at the above address, and in sterling to me, Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast, N.Ireland.

The 1955 Fund is now closed and all monies received after the publication of this Hyphen, together with the 10% held over from this year, will be put into the 1956 Fund.

Grateful thanks to Ray Palmer and Bea Mahaffey of OTHER WORLDS for their \$25 donation to the Transfanfund

CONVENTION AFTERTHOUGHTS What a happy, friendly affair it was..at least for us who already knew people there. It may have been worse than the Supermancon for strangers, but then there was less publicity to mislead them into expecting a lecture session. It was whole-heartedly a fannish Convention, and as such the best of all time. New personalities of the year, Sheila O'Donnell & Denny Cowen; the latter a trufannish type whose mordant wit was wasted on Kettering astronautics. If the fannish ingenuity and energy used to promote the Liverpool Group's BLOG could be prostituted for commercial purposes we could incorporate fandom as an advertising agency and retire from our jobs.

Two stray memories: Wansborough proudly showing a pin-up photo of Irene Baron in a green bathing suit. Seems she's promised him a date if he can get to Los Angeles. Proazines, anyone?...Turning a corner in Kettering and coming on a shop front emblazoned in huge letters with the name MILDRED K. BLEWETT. Chuck standing stockstill to exclaim:

"Not THE Mildred K. Blewett!!"

KEN BULMER WINS 1955 TAFF ELECTION

The final results were:--

Ken Bulmer.....	138	(38)
Terry Jeeves.....	61	(5)
Eric Bentcliffe.....	60	(5)

The totals were got by giving three points for a first place vote, two for a second and one for a third. Figures in brackets denote first place votes. The obvious discrepancy between these totals and the number of voters is accounted for by the fact that some voters 'plumped' for one candidate and others who had voted for candidates who retired did not amend their votes. The following voted (44 British & 14 American): Mike Wallace, Mike Rosenblum, Ken Slater, Peter Hamilton, Ethel Lindsay, Sam Youd, Dennis Tucker, Ted Carnell, John B. Hall, Brian Varley, Ted Tubb, Irene Boothroyd, Pete Campbell, Archie Mercer, Julian Parr, Joy Goodwin, Vin Clarke, Eric Jones, John Brunner, Dorothy Ratigan, John Berry, Walt Willis, Madeleine Willis, George Charters, Bob Shaw, James White, Joan Carr, Constance Mackenzie, Stuart Mackenzie, Tony Thorne, Pete Taylor, Eric Bentcliffe, Bill Morse, Pamela Bulmer, H.P. Sanderson, Arthur Thomson, Nigel Lindsay, Ken Potter, Mal Ashworth, Ron Buckmaster, Daphne Buckmaster, Dennis Cowen, Frank Arnold, Chuck Harris, Bob Tucker, Bob Pavlat, Gregg Calkins, Richard Eney, Steve Schultheis, Edith Carr, Bea Mahaffey, Ted White, Dean Gremell, Mark Schulzinger, Eva Firestone, Dale Smith, Rory Faulkner and Vernon McCain.

The total in the Fund at 15th June is £146:6, news of another \$25 raised at the Midwestcon having been received after the list overleaf was stencilled. In accordance with rules already agreed by fandom, 90% of this amount will be made available to Ken towards the cost of his transportation to the States. A deposit has already been paid to a shipping company for a berth on a boat arriving in New York late in August. Would any US fan who would like to help with transportation in the States or in any other way please write to Don Ford or me, or to Ken Bulmer at 204 Wellmeadow Rd., Catford, London SE6. I understand that if they can raise enough money to augment the TAFF sum, Ken hopes to bring Pamela with him. Bon voyage, Ken & Pamela.

WORLDCON LONDON NEXT YEAR

Brian Varley is a bachelor.

Ynèvi is a louse.

COMPLETE LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS TO THE TRANSFUND AT 15th JUNE 1955

(These are in order of receipt, except that later contributions by the same person have been

Collected by me, total £83:6:0			added to the initial amount.)		
Walt & Madeleine Willis	2: 1: 0	James White.....	1: 0: 0	Richard Geis) per Doug-	2: 6
1953. Convention Auctns.	1:11: 6	Bob Shaw.....	2: 6	Gregg Calkins)las Miller	2: 6
Ballot Tickets.....	3: 5: 0	Tom White.....	2: 6	Kettering Snooker Chal-	1: 0
A.Clark.....	10: 0	Liverpool Group.....	1: 7: 6	John Brunner.....	5: 0
Eric Bentcliffe.....	5: 0	Pete Baillie.....	2: 6	Wet Screen Fund.....	10: 0
Ethel Lindsay.....	7: 6	George Richards.....	2: 6	Eric Jones.....	3: 0
Peter Hamilton.....	1:10: 0	Dale Smith.....	1: 1: 3	Groff Conklin.....	5: 0
Archie Mercer.....	1: 0: 0	Ted Tubb.....	1:17: 6	Surrey Circle.....	15: 3
Norman Wansborough....	2: 6	Mal Ashworth.....	7: 6	Cliff Gould.....	6: 0
Max Leviten.....	10: 0	Forry Ackerman.....	5: 0: 0	Gregg Calkins(per A.Mercer)	5: 0
Mrs Carol Smith.....	7: 2	Terry Jeeves.....	5: 0	Frank Arnold.....	2: 6
Ken Slater.....	1:14: 5	Anon.....	10: 0	Sam Youd.....	2: 6
Ken Slater enterprises	2:13: 4	Atlanta SFO.....	13: 6	Arthur Thomson.....	2: 6
Evelyn Smith.....	17: 2	Brian Lewis.....	10: 0	Ron & Daphne Buckmaster	5: 0
Fred Smith.....	3: 0	R.Jones.....	3: 6	Collected by Don Ford, total \$155	
Eric Frank Russell....	1: 0: 0	E.R.James.....	5: 0	Don Ford etc.....	28.50
Peter Campbell.....	17: 0	S.R.Thomas.....	2: 6	Ballot tickets.....	32.25
Hyphen Adverts.....	1: 7: 6	Mavis Pickles.....	2: 6	Leone Schatzkin.....	2.00
Bill Morse.....	15: 0	Paul Enever.....	1: 5: 0	Jim Holtel.....	1.00
Ken Potter.....	8: 0	D.Beasley.....	2: 6	Nan Gerding.....	2:00
Stuart Whitehead.....	2: 6	Colin Parsons.....	5: 6	Midwestcon Sales.....	23:00
Ted Carnell.....	1: 5: 0	Vernon McCain.....	2: 9: 7	Addie Huddleston.....	1.00
Don J.Nardizzi.....	7: 2	Sid Gale.....	5: 0	Bill Grant.....	3.00
Brian Avis.....	6: 0	D.McCormick.....	5: 0	Dick Ryan.....	1.00
Dennis Tucker.....	10: 0	N.Shorrocks.....	3: 0	Janie Lamb.....	1.00
George Raybin.....	7: 2	" Auction donations	1:17: 6	Eva Firestone.....	1.25
John B.Hall.....	5: 0	Stu & Connie Mackenzie	10: 0	E.D.Eischied.....	1.00
John Roles.....	2: 6	Liverpool femfans....	5: 0	Basil Wells.....	1.00
Colin Webb.....	2: 6	Supermancon ballot...	10: 0	Andy Harris.....	1.00
Mike Rosenblum.....	1: 6: 0	S'mancon collection..	3: 5: 2	Dewey Clark.....	1.00
Mike Wallace.....	5: 0	" brantub...	1: 4: 9	John H.Preble.....	1.00
H.P.Sanderson.....	10: 0	Fred Robinson.....	10: 0	John Wasso.....	1.00
Mr & Mrs Derek Pickles	15: 0	Ballot tickets.....	7: 9: 6	Dale Smith*.....	1.00
R.E.Dunlop.....	2: 6	Julian Parr.....	11: 0	Doc Montgomery.....	1.00
Joan W. Carr.....	10: 0	Ed Wood.....	1:15: 6	Eleanor Tootell.....	1.00
M.Arden Weekley.....	14: 3	Sam Sackett.....	6: 0	Earl Downey.....	1.00
Ken & Pamela Bulmer..	1: 0: 0	ISFCC (Terry Jeeves)	4: 0	Lee Hoffman.....	2.00
Jim & Dorothy Ratigan.	7: 6	Gregg Calkins(per Eth-	5: 0	Norman Stanley.....	1.00
Charlie Duncombe.....	2: 6	Dennis Cowen.....	2: 6	Grady Zimmerman.....	1.00
F.O.Barton.....	2: 6	Richard Geis	5: 0	Dee Dee Lowender.....	1.00
Geoff Wingrove.....	2: 6	Gregg Calkins	5: 0	W.S.Houston.....	1.00
Vin/ Clarke.....	5: 6	Dean Grennell*(per A.	3: 6	Charles Wells.....	1.00
Chuck Harris.....	1: 2: 6	ISFCC (per Tony Glynn)	5: 0	George Earley.....	1.00
A.W.Ridgeway.....	2: 6	Rory Faulkner.....	7: 0	Paul Spencer.....	1.00
Pete Taylor.....	10: 0	Edith Carr.....	3: 6	Jack Safarik.....	1.00
Mr & Mrs Tony Thorne.	1: 7: 6	Bob Pavlat.....	7: 0	Ellis T.Mills.....	2.00
Bob Tucker.....	2:11: 0	Harry Calnek)per A.	1: 0	Orville Mosher.....	1.00
D.Cretchley.....	2:6	Pete Vorzimer)Mercer	2: 0	Dan McPhail.....	2.00
Nigel Lindsay.....	5:0	Gregg Calkins)per Mike	2: 6	Dean Grennell*.....	1.00
Eva Firestone.....	7:2	Richard Geis)Wallace	2: 6	Bea Mahaffey.....	.50
Norman Ashfield.....	5:0	Irene Boothroyd.....	5: 6	Mark Schulzinger.....	.50
J.Ben Stark.....	7:2	P.Chappell.....	5: 0	Richard Eney.....	1.00
George Charters.....	1: 0: 0	G.Calkins (per D.Tucker)	5: 0	Steve Schultheis.....	5.00
Harry Turner.....	2: 6	Joy Goodwin.....	7: 6	Frank Andrasovsky.....	1.00
R.Tripp.....	2: 6	John Berry.....	2: 6	OTHER WORLDS.....	25:00

*An asterisk denotes that the contributor appears on both lists.

RANDOM AT KETTERING

CHUCK
HARRIS

Kettering, like Kew in lilac time, is not so far from London. It's a sleepy sort of place, and prior to this Easter its only real claim to fame was that the Baptist Missionary Society was founded there in 1792. It's just the sort of place that you would expect the Baptist Missionary Society to be formed in too, -- a rural market town full of sober-minded people all happily minding their own business and living their quiet, uneventful lives. Nothing like the Convention has ever happened to it before -- and the local Watch Committee are probably making plans to ensure that nothing like it ever happens again....

By the time I'd gotten around to writing for room reservations the George Hotel had been completely booked out, but Denny Cowen had found me a room in The Royal -- a rather genteel place a few yards further along the road -- the most remarkable hotel I've ever been in. (I have been in six hotels in my life and am speaking from vast experience.) There was a sort of vaguely Victorian air about it, and I was fascinated to find bells in the foyer for summoning the Boots and the Ostler.....and I would have offered even money that a Sam Weller character would have answered the latter if it had been rung. However, I got a very fine double room with a good view of the Corn Exchange and the Market Place, as well as a free tin of liver salts and a copy of "The Testaments and Psalms" (courtesy of the Commercial Travellers' Christian Association.)

I didn't stick around the Royal to read The Book though, -- I prefer sf to fantasy, and anyway I had a date. Mal Ashworth was bringing his girl-friend to the Convention. Mal's Gal, Sheila O'Donnell, (guess where she comes from, hool-ey?) had arranged to meet me in The George as soon as she checked in. I had never seen her before, but I was to recognise her by an Irish sixpence that she would wear on a chain around her neck. Well, naturally, I wasn't going to waste time in The Royal when I could be out looking for sixpences, -- I have my fannish reputation to think of. I dropped my case onto the bed, polished my new glasses, and sprinted down to The George.

Sheila arrived just after the thirty-second crucifix and about ten seconds ahead of the tar and feather brigade. She is a dish -- just twenty years old and as pretty as paint. She has a twenty inch waist and the dammedest grey/blue/green eyes you ever did see. This was real genuine HYPHEN material, -- the sort of talent us active faneds are always on the lookout for, but, for some reason or other, Ashworth doesn't seem to trust me. Before I could get really close to those purty green-speckle eyeballs he'd caught each of us by one elbow and was piloting us out of the hotel in search of food. "You look starving," he said as he wiped the drool from my mouth.

We got back from our meal just in time to catch Walt and Madeleine checking in along with the Manchester and Scottish contingents. Everybody seemed to have arrived although the convention wasn't due to start until the next day, and the bar was just one big reunion scene with everybody holding six conversations simultaneously. We all went in for a drink, but the place was packed tight and it was impossible to sit down and talk. It was almost closing time too so we went up

"Then he talked of naming his house 'Vargostatten' I quit in disgust."

to the Lounge and had our first encounter with Boris. He was the Night Porter. We never found out his real name. He had a spinal deformity and a heart as big as his hump. He delivered tea, coffee, and drinks at all hours of the night, and although he must have more in tips during the weekend than he usually make in a couple of months, he was worth every penny of it. He had a flair for conventions and there was none of the nonsense that we had with the day staff who delivered our tea and coffee in small and fancy electroplated pots. Boris brought it up a gallon at a time and usually had a dirty joke to go with it. He's a far bigger asset to the George Hotel than the hot and cold water in all bedrooms, and should be certain of a job with Tucker if Bob ever gets around to building his joint.

Along with the tea that we ordered came the rest of the refugees from the bar. It was better and quieter up here, and fans forgot their zapguns and sat around to talk before trickling off to bed. Soon after midnight Madeleine and Walt went to bed for the first time and I went back to The Royal.

I was up bright and early on the Saturday and back to The George as soon as I'd had breakfast. Walt and Madeleine, my Sheila and Mal, were just coming down for their meal, so I trotted into the dining-room with them. The waiter seemed quite eager to provide me with another breakfast, but I just didn't have the heart to let him serve me, -- I told him that I'd already eaten and didn't bother to mention that it was in another hotel just along the road. I was very pleased with the service in The George; after one glance at my transparently honest face and my name button, they accepted me as Archie Mercer (who was booked in there), and didn't hound me as a non-resident.

Arthur Thomson arrived soon after breakfast -- he'd got up at 4 a.m. and caught the first train out of London. The Official Programme was due to start at 11 o'clock, but after reassuring Sheila that it was just wishful thinking by the Committee, we all went down to the Royal to book Arthur in (we shared a room), talk, and send pactsarcs.... "Having wonderful time, wish you were."

The Convention officially began just after two o'clock when Ted Carnell and Bert Campbell started the balls rolling. Anglofandom owes a great deal to these two and to Ted Tubb. I don't think there would be any sort of programme without them, and if they can't make it one year there will be the biggest godawful fiasco we've yet seen. I'm not kidding, these three carry the convention programmes on their backs; without them, the rest of us seem to do nothing except trek back and forwards to the bar.

Walt suggested last year that Tubb should be hired by the Concommittee along with the hall, -- and I don't think he was kidding either. Whilst Carnell and Campbell handle the 'official business' (and this has to be handled if there's going to be a convention the next year), Tubb keeps things moving and provides many of the bright intervals.

Later in the programme Cowen made a presentation to Ted -- a lighter and cigarette gimmick for "The Year's Most Popular Author" -- and the gesture got the biggest applause of the day. For the first, and



probably the only time in his life, Ted was almost at a loss for words. He managed one crack about how he had refused to enter for the International Fantasy Award and then had gotten off the stage long before the applause had died down.

There were several of these presentations and I think it would be a Good Thing if they were made annual affairs. Ken Slater, (he's out of the Army and was wearing a very fine bowler hat fitted with a little propellor), was obviously touched when he received the Fan Of The Year Award that Forry sent over for him, and so was Vin when he collected the NEW WORLDS cover painting that was the Fanzine of the Year award for himself and the other editors of EYE. I think most of the audience finished this session with blisters on both palms.

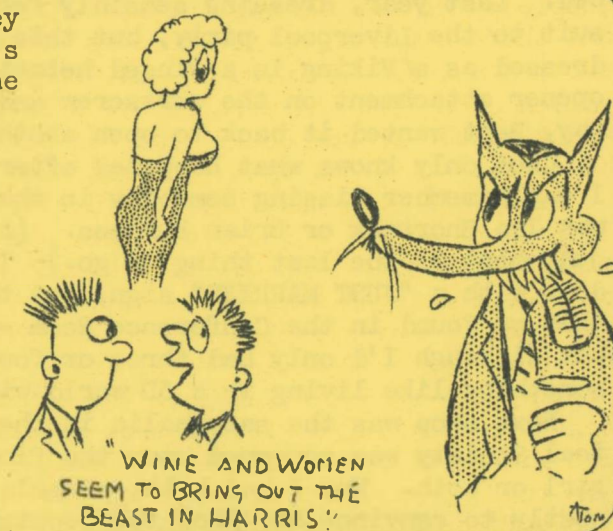
Soon afterwards Sheila made a private presentation to me. I was elected "Fan Of The Year (1866)" by "The Bradford Society For The Care And Feeding Of Elderly Sex-Fiends" and was given a mint copy of "Dimension of Illion" -- the very latest ninepennyworth in the Tit-Bits Science-Fiction Library. I was hoping that Mal would be carried away by the occasion and present me with Sheila herself, but he seemed unenthusiastic about the idea even though I offered him three part-worn paramours and a free sub to "-" in exchange.

The next bit of the official programme was the tape-recorded play of the Liverpool Group, -- THE MARCH OF SLIME!.....a commercial broadcast sponsored by the makers of BLOG. Dave Newman and Norm and Ina Shorrocks lent me the only copy of the script afterwards. It's wonderful, superbly fannish stuff and I would have loved to have been able to publish it myself, -- but Eric Bentcliffe got there before I did and it will be coming up in TRIODE shortly. For me, the highspot of the play was the "entry of Willis into the Convention Hall"....a fanfare heralds the Maestro....he waves a hand in greeting as the people bow and curtsy...and Bert Campbell steps on his own beard and topples over." I told Walt afterwards that it wasn't a genueflection, -- it was just a false salaam,....but somehow he didn't really appreciate me.

Just before the bar closed in the evening Arthur joined the ranks of the Vile Pro's by selling some artwork to Peter Hamilton for NEBULA. We all gave him our congratulations and our empty glasses. I don't know how much change he'll have left from his first cheque, but I doubt if it will be enough to pay for a pair of corduroy trousers to go with his new status.

The parties began just as soon as the bar was shut. It was a very fine night indeed with the emphasis more on fun than on drink. I can't think of anybody who was really high at all. I remember stepping over Paul Hammett early in the evening, but whilst prostrate he was by no means paralytic -- he was still able to clutch a glass. I think that the con-atmosphere is far more intoxicating than any booze and is responsible for the largest part of the high spirits.

Our first stop was in Room 101 -- a single bedroom with more than thirty people packed into it....fifteen of them sitting on the tiny bed and the rest squeezed in around the walls. Bert Campbell, crammed alongside the washbasin at the far end, was pouring out drinks for anyone who came within range, and everybody was doing their best to keep him fully occupied.



"Has the Kettering Astronomical Society disbanded yet?"

Even now, it's still mercifully hazy, but I can remember finding Eric Jones with a tumbler full of hock in one hand and an "Introduction to Elementary Psychology" in the other, and then squeezing past him to find Ina Shorrocks sitting on the bed. Last year, dressing sensibly for the Mancunian weather, Ina wore a bathing suit to the Liverpool party, but this year she was much more cautious, and was dressed as a Viking in a winged helmet and a shiny metal corselet. I found a tin opener attachment on the corkscrew and moved in. It was blunt though....and anyway, Bert wanted it back to open another bottle.

Ghod only knows what happened after that, -- and His notebook isn't available. I can remember kissing somebody in the corridor, but I'm not really certain if it was Ina Shorrocks or Brian Burgess. (Altho it was probably Ina -- my critical judgement is the last thing to go.) I know that we stopped to decorate Varley's door with a "JUST MARRIED" sign, and then gilded the lily with two more notices that we found in the Conference Room --- "QUIET PLEASE" and "PRIVATE MEETING" -- but although I'd only had three or four drinks it's all very kaleidoscopic, ... something like living in a 3D world without the red and green spectacles.

Next stop was the saturnalia in the Basket Lounge where the Kettering Anatomical Society was convened upon the floor and everybody was clutching a glass or a girl or both. Me, I had both. Pamela Bulmer was on my lap and I was trying earnestly to convince her that the reputation I have collected through "-" is strictly fictitious and that actually I am just a shy, clean-living, decent, unassuming, honourable, chaste and modest boy. Ken Bulmer was sitting right next to us, gazing thoughtfully into the brown depths of his Guinness bottle and nodding emphatically at every adjective. The others were either busy on their own account or, like Madeleine and Joy Goodwin, doing their best not to look sceptical.

Unfortunately, I had to drop everything, including Pamela, when Pete Taylor came up to warn us that we had to be back in The Royal by 4 a.m. if we intended to go back at all. It was ten minutes to the hour and most of the other Royalists had already left. I grabbed hold of Arthur and we ran off down the road like a couple of Cinderellas -- and found that The Royal was already locked and barred. We couldn't possibly get back into The George, and, believe me, there's nothing funny about being out on the streets of a strange town at 4 o'clock in the morning. We saw a light burning way up on the third floor and guessed it was Pete Taylor's. We tried a couple of muted shouts (one of us shouting and the other making shushing noises alternately), but he never heard us. We walked around to try to find a tradesmen's entrance or something, but we couldn't even find an open window to crawl through. Eventually we found a bell-pull and hung onto that until somebody came down to open the door, -- it was probably the Ostler. I bumbled something about a party and slipped him half a crown. For another sixpence he would have carried us upstairs. We didn't need his help though -- we were able to manage on our own hands and knees.

I slept like a newborn babe for every minute of four hours. Arthur didn't sleep at all -- there were chimes on the church clock across the road and every 15 minutes they played a couple of chords to him. We got up, thought out this issue's cover and a couple more cartoons whilst we washed and shaved (never a minute wasted on this fanzine), and then went to breakfast and onto the George for the Sunday session.

There was an impromptu jazz session scheduled for the morning, but I was in no shape for anything above the pianissimo ranges. I left the others to it and went back to The Royal for another helping of aspirin. Pete Taylor was there and had just had the bar opened so that he could drink his breakfast. He asked me what I wanted, but the bar-tender never seemed to have heard of Alka-Seltzer or Sheila O'Donnell and I wasn't very interested in anything else.

The only part of the programme that I attended on the Sunday was the Auction. Most of the people in the hall didn't have any money left to bid for anything, but were there for the same reason as myself -- to see Ted Tubb in action. It's all strictly ad lib stuff -- he doesn't have the slightest idea what he's going to say before he climbs onto the stage, -- but once he gets going he keeps the audience roaring with laughter until he has to pause for breath or beer. He has an infallible sense of timing, but it's impossible to quote him fully because he talks almost as fast as Danny Kaye, but our Joy Goodwin did manage to get most of it down in shorthand for us.....altho the audience drowned a lot of it. Ted is selling artwork.... "A LOVELY ILLUSTRATION FOR YOUR BACKROOM PARLOUR - OR outhouse....COME ON, PEOPLE - HURT YOURSELVES, HURT YOURSELVES....WOULD SOME LADY COME UP ON THE STAGE AND TAKE HER SKIRT OFF - NOBODY'S PAYING ME ANY ATTENTION... YOU TIE IT TO YOUR STOMACH LIKE A CHASTITY BELT...WHEN A WIFE BELITTLES HER HUSBAND SHE BELITTLES HERSELF. WHEN YOU BELITTLE SCIENCE FICTION IT BECOMES LESS THAN THE DUST BENEATH YOUR FEET...DOUBLE ENTENDRE - THAT'S A SUBTLE WORD....I MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT. IF EVER SHIRLEY NEEDS BOARD AND LODGING SHE CAN COME TO MY HOUSE. WE'VE GOT A SHED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE GARDEN....A LOVELY QUINN ORIGINAL DONE IN ICE-CREAM....I ONLY WISH YOU CRAWL HOME ON YOUR HANDS AND KNEES.

Ken Slater took over for a while so that Ted could get a drink and then he was back again and helping Norman George Wansborough onto the stage. Ted had primed him with a couple of drinks beforehand and when he asked "Shall we castrate him and sell him?" we all thought our Poet Laureate was the next item for the auction block. I told Sheila that I'd buy him for her, but she wasn't very enthusiastic -- she had nowhere to keep him and she doesn't greatly care for poetry.

However, Norman George wasn't for sale -- his price is beyond rubies. (I'll tell you about Ruby some other time.) Ted had promoted him to assistant auctioneer and was busy teaching him the tricks of the trade. It was fun to see the stolid, earnest Wansborough with his broad Wiltshire accent trying to imitate Ted's quicksilver patter, but he did vindicate himself towards the end. He held up six battered AMAZING BRE's, laboriously fanned them out like he'd been shown, and then picked up the one that he dropped. "Ah'll tell 'ee what Ah'll do," he said, "Anybody offer me thirty bob for this lot and Ah'll throw in Shirley Marriott." The Bournemouth Belle nearly fell out of her seat at this, but she was laughing along with the rest of us. Too bad I'd read those six BRE's though.....

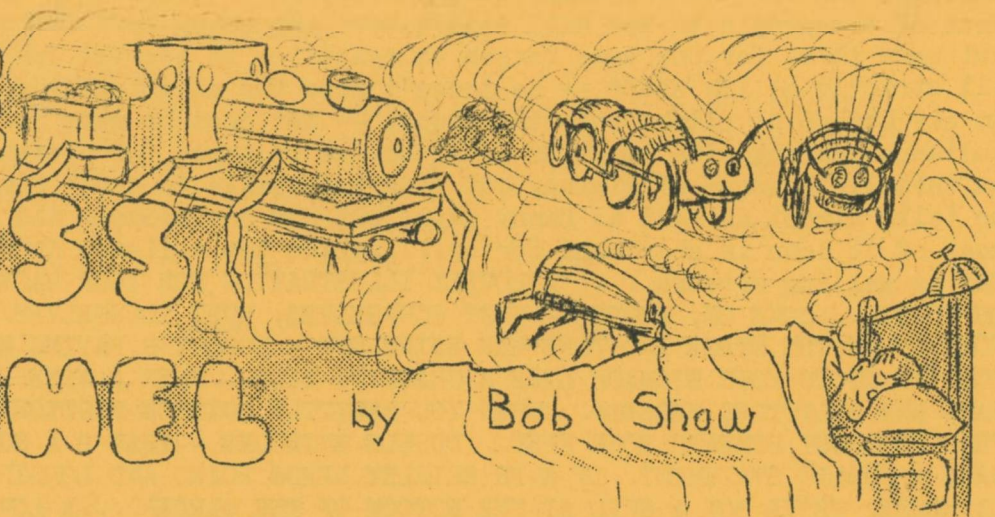
After the auction we just had time for some tea before Walt and Madeleine, and Arthur and I, had to leave. The others still had one more night to go and a whole crowd of them came down to see us off. During the long walk to the station I tried to persuade Sheila that any real Trufan girl would just jump at the chance of coming back to Rainham with me and founding a dynasty or something. I thought I'd managed to convince her too. We climbed into the train, the others threw their confetti, (I still don't know what the other passengers must have thought about Madeleine being with three men all covered in confetti), and I leaned out of the door to say goodbye. I didn't want any more trouble with Ashworth so I waited until the train was just going to move out before opening the door again and beckoning to Sheila to climb aboard. But Mal was there before she could move. "Come back little Sheila," he said.....and back she went.



"That's he mean when he says I'm one of those?"

THE GLASS BUSHNEL

by Bob Shaw



THE OTHER DAY I was sitting as is my wont (I always sit this way. I can't help it. Sometimes as I lie taking stock of my life in the long introspective hours of the silent night I say to myself, "BoSh, old chap, you'll just have to stop this sitting as is your wont—give it up while there is still time. Before it gets to be a habit." But it is no use. My wont shakes its head, gives me a smog glance and I have to follow soot. Anything my wont won't want I won't want.) honing the edge of my ghoominton bat and thinking to myself that if John Berry could attempt to train a budgie to talk I should be able to train one to hone my bat. Come to think of it, I was just muttering, have I not heard of pigeons that do that? Suddenly Walter spoke to me.

"Do you realise," he said, absentmindedly straightening the barbed wire on the ghoominton net, "that The Glass Bushel is Hyphen's oldest department? The only one in since the beginning!"

I was amazed. Here in Belfast among my circle of inmates I have a reputation for the transient nature of my projects, which usually fade out after a few short days of uncertain existence. Could I have done this glorious thing? After the initial shock had worn off I began to think about my column and all the things that had happened to me since I first began it.

One of the things that immediately springs to mind is the way in which after every GB in which I devoted all my space to a semi-pro type story, we received an anguished protest from Gregg Calkins who apparently hates that sort of thing. Write about fans! He has said this so often that I am going to do just that to please him. Now. The only fans that I know enough about to enable me to produce an article on them are those here in Ireland and since the arrival of John Berry, sometimes known here as The Chronicleer, this is not possible. He writes up everything. I did have the idea of shouting "Copy-right" in a loud firm voice immediately anything of interest took place. This worked all right—once. That was the fireworks article a few months back. But John, sensing that his supply of material was being imperilled only shook his head doggedly, causing a shower..almost Fortean in nature..of old toothbrushes and long lost combs to fly out of his moustache, and retired into the corner to devise his countermove. When he produced his answer to my ploy it was devastatingly simple, as only his sort of brain could produce, and unbeatable.

John now writes up everything before it happens. This accounts for the large fantastic element that creeps into his articles and it also means that I have to retract my scope even further. There is only one field of material left.

From now on every GB will contain some fresh outpourings, more wordy flows from yet another and another faucet of my character. Now read on.....

There is a dark shadow over my life far more ominous than the one cast by Than in the film of that name, because after all it only took a few army divisions equipped with flamethrowers and bazookas to rout that menace. Nothing to it. But when ordinary, everyday, common or garden insects pick on you, you've had it. There is nothing you can do, you see. When fifteen foot ants wander about knocking down houses and frightening policemen the general public is solidly behind you when you start shooting themite about; but, just try anything like that on an ordinary insect and you'll soon find yourself a social outcast.

Why is it necessary to use such drastic measures on poor little creepers, you might say. Well, it all began with the time I brutally murdered two spiders. The first one fell victim to my airgun under very extenuating circumstances which were described in Vin/ Clarke's late and lamented SFN, so I will not go into that here. The second one I hit with a pickaxe.

I remember the day well. I came out of the drawing office in a hurry to get home to my tea and ran down to the workshop where I had left my bicycle. I was just about to jump on when I noticed a spider, a large stupid-looking spider, dangling around the chain wheel. If I rode away it would get smeared all over everything and I didn't like the idea of that, so I tried to shake it off. It refused to come.

I spent long impatient minutes trying to dislodge the brute and when I finally succeeded I was gibbering with rage. The spider scampered away up the brick wall and it seemed to me that I could detect derision in the way it wobbled its legs. I looked around for something to hit the thing with and my gaze alighted on a huge pick axe that a workman had left lying about. I hefted it and swung it at the wall grinning ferociously and when I looked to see the result I found an inch deep hole in the wall with spider's legs sticking out all round the perimeter. They were waving gently like palm trees on the edge of a small lake.

I was immediately sorry for what I had done so I apologised to the tiny crater, looked all about to make sure that I hadn't been seen and rode off home. Another spider must have seen its mate encountering the insect equivalent of the atom bomb though, for, ever since that day, all varieties of tiny winged and many-legged things have been attacking me.

Have you ever been savaged by a moth? I can tell you it is a fearsome sight to see a berserk moth flying at you without a hope of doing you real damage or getting away, like a Jap suicide pilot bent on his own destruction. The night that happened to me I was lying in bed reading when I realised that this moth had entered through the open window.

I decided to treat it with contemptuous disregard and continued to read. Suddenly I felt a stinging blow on the ear and then another on the face as I looked up to see what was happening. At last I realised the horrible truth. I was being attacked by a defenceless moth! Wasps I can handle with ease because I don't mind hitting them and they don't move as fast as a shuttlecock, but this was too much. Mewing with fright I drew back into the corner and made blind swipes at the moth which was keeping up its insane onslaught. I felt the way Goliath must surely have felt as he noted the fearlessness of David's advance.

Suddenly I landed an uppercut on the moth and then as it was flopping about in the air I sent in a right hook that knocked it into a big box in which I kept books and junk. I went over to have a closer look at the dead hero. I leaned over the box. Boink! It came shooting out again at tremendous speed and hit me on the face.

It was a psychological stuff. By this time I was in a dead funk and it was all I could do to start throwing punches again, but after a series of panicky swipes I hit the ferocious moth and as luck would have it, it landed back in the box. This time I

"He gave me the impression that seven-eighths of her was still under water"

took no chances. I dashed over, almost hysterical now, and lifted the box and shook it up and down churning all the stuff inside about like stones in a concrete mixer. After minutes of this I set the box down and went back to bed without looking inside.

About half an hour later when I put out the light to go to sleep I was lying in the darkness when I heard something. It was the moth fluttering about inside the box among all the books, old poster colour pots, telescope parts and throwing knives. I closed my eyes tight and lay there without moving and, after a long long time, the noise went away.

The above account is quite true and it shows the horrible way in which the insects work—they can't win but they attack anyway. Like the story about the aliens whose way to fight was to dash up to their enemies and cut their own throats. Another night I came up to go to bed, threw back the sheets and was just about to hop in when I realised I had seen something black disappearing in below the blanket. Cautiously I pulled the bed clothes back a little further and discovered a beetle clinging to the sheet.

Now this was a tricky problem. I wasn't going to actually touch the thing and yet I had to get it off onto the floor so that it could be disposed of. I dragged the sheet in question to one side of the bed so that the part to which the beetle was clinging was hanging over the side and flapped it about with all my strength. When I had finished the beetle was still hanging there unperturbed. Feeling the old dread coming back I looked around wildly for something to use and I noticed one of those things like mops that are used for polishing limoleum. It was out on the landing. I brought it in, closed the door and played several golfing shots at the beetle. It was no use. In the end I had to put the sheet right down on the floor and sweep the thing off, making a mess of the sheet as I did so.

Once on the floor the beetle just sat there

probably picking the torn shreds of linen out of his powerful claws or whatever it is they walk about on. Feverishly I looked about for my shoes; then I remembered I had come upstairs in my socks, so it was the mop again. I put it over the beetle with the handle sticking vertically upwards and leaned on it with all my might, turning it round and round for good measure. When I looked under the mop there was no sign of any intruder so I concluded I had crushed it right into the floor and I set the mop against the wall, changed into my slumber suit and got into bed.

A minute later I saw the beetle come walking out from under the mop. At two in the morning when your confidence in yourself has been badly shaken this is not funny. I leaped out of bed grabbed the mop and pounded it vertically downwards onto the beetle. In the other bedrooms people began to stir and mutter in their sleep but I was past caring. I looked down and the thing was still there. I began a regular pounding heedless of the startled grunts from the room next door, and after about twelve blows there was no sign of the beetle on the floor.

This time I was not to be fooled. I turned the mop upside down and there it was clinging onto the strands. Giggling faintly I dashed out onto the landing and ran downstairs to the kitchen determined to burn the beetle to death. The fire had not been lit that day. I set the mop down and the beetle, sensing that I was really out for blood, scuttled out moving at roughly the speed of sound. It went round the room several times looking for a dark place to hide and as our kitchen is small and compact and fairly modern it didn't find one.



When I had overcome the instinctive fear that this unexpected ability to travel like a speeding racer had inspired in me I lifted one of the heavy chairs so that the front legs were about half an inch clear of the floor. It was very dark and safe-looking in below them. The beetle swerved sharply and skidded to a halt under one of the legs.

Feeling ashamed of myself for the underhand trick I had played, I let the chair fall and went up to my bed.

The above are only two examples taken from my casebook---there are many others. Readers of Paul Enever's ORION might remember the description of how a daddy-loglegs drowned itself in my tea, which is another method of attack. However, now that I have got this down on paper I feel better about it all because, if I am ever found dead in an empty room with my eyes glazed over with fear and a water pistol half full of insecticide in my hand, perhaps somebody will remember this and call out a few army divisions equipped with flamethrowers and bazookas and thermite bombs and tanks and rockets to hunt down and destroy the dirty rotten flea or beetle that did it.

How many fans know that there exists another worldwide organisation which has advantages and interests to offer even greater than those we derive from fandom? The name of this mysterious organisation? It is none other than the Boy Scouts!

Yes, I too have always regarded the familiar Scouts with their proverbial knobbly knees and arrays of badges as being people wasting good energy that could have been used for the production of fanzines. I used to sneer at them and shout "Come on the BB," from the window of the bus when I passed one of their troops, but that is all over now.

The reason for this change of heart? Well, the other night I happened to glance through a copy of "Scouting For Boys" by Lord Baden-Powell, which is the basic literature of the organisation. It is a series of informal lectures, called "Camp Fire Yarns", on the various topics of interest to Scouts. It is the Scout equivalent of The Enchanted Duplicator.

In CFY No.7 which is entitled "Signals & Commands", I came across this interesting little problem. See how you get on with it: it beat me, so I'll give it exactly as in the book to keep everything fair.

In the American Civil War, Captain Clowry, a scout officer, wanted to give warning to a large force of his own army that the enemy were going to attack it unexpectedly during the night; but he could not get to his friends because there was a flooded river between them which he could not cross, and a storm of rain was going on.

What would you have done if you had been he?

Well, I sat and thought about this for some time and the best I could think of was to get into the river, swim down to the sea, take a boat to India and settle down to planting tea or cotton or something, and find out what happened in the papers. Somehow I was pretty sure this wasn't the right answer so I read on to see what an experienced scout would have done. Here it is exactly as printed on p.56:--

A good idea struck him. He got hold of an old railway engine that was standing near him. He lit the fire and got up steam in her, and then started to blow the whistle with long and short blasts--what is called the Morse Code alphabet. Soon his friends heard.....

You can just imagine all the Scouts who had been working on this problem slapping their knobbly knees in self disgust and saying, "Of course! Why did I not think of that? It's the obvious thing to do...." But to me, a member of the uninitiated, this casual employment of old railway engines that just happen to be standing about smacked of magic, another and alien way of thinking.

Puzzled and curious I read on through the book in the hope of finding something that

"I'm easily led astray - in fact I just can't wait to be led astray."

would throw light on the problem, then at last I discovered one pregnant sentence that solved the whole thing. When you knew the real facts there was actually nothing queer about the idea of a railway engine and the wherewithal to get up steam in her standing on the bank of a flooded river during a civil war.

Here is the sentence:--

.....but it takes a good deal of practice before a tenderfoot can get into the habit of really noting everything and letting nothing escape his eyes.

There was a lot more in the same vein saying that a trained person can see things that are there all the time but which the layman cannot perceive through not knowing how. After thinking this over it dawned on me that there was no mystery or coincidence at all involved in the episode mentioned. You see, although we are blind to them and don't know they are there, the whole world is covered with old railway engines and heaps of coal! They are everywhere.

When next you go out to work look again at the trolley bus that passes you in the street. Strip away all preconceived notions and attitudes of mind. Now do you not see that it is really a large locomotive? Look at your neighbour's rock garden; is it not really a heap of nutty slack? Those prefabs across the way: is that not something suspiciously like wheels peeping out from below the window box?

Probably most of you, steeped in your habits of thought, will never be able to see through to the real nature of the world around you, and perhaps it is just as well. Just think of the tremendous impact on human affairs if this knowledge became generally accepted! Just considering one aspect of this, the field of literature would be thrown into a state of chaos.

For instance, all those stories of the good girl whose boy friend drops her on a lonely country road in the middle of the night because she refuses to co-operate with him in his nature studies would look pretty silly if you read something like this:--

"What was I to do? I had no idea that Jack would turn out to be the sort of person he was, and as he sat there holding the door of the car open invitingly I was tempted to get back in beside him, for it had begun to rain and I was scared.

My resolution began to waver.

Suddenly I had a good idea. I climbed into an old railway engine that was standing nearby, got up steam in her and drove back to the town....."

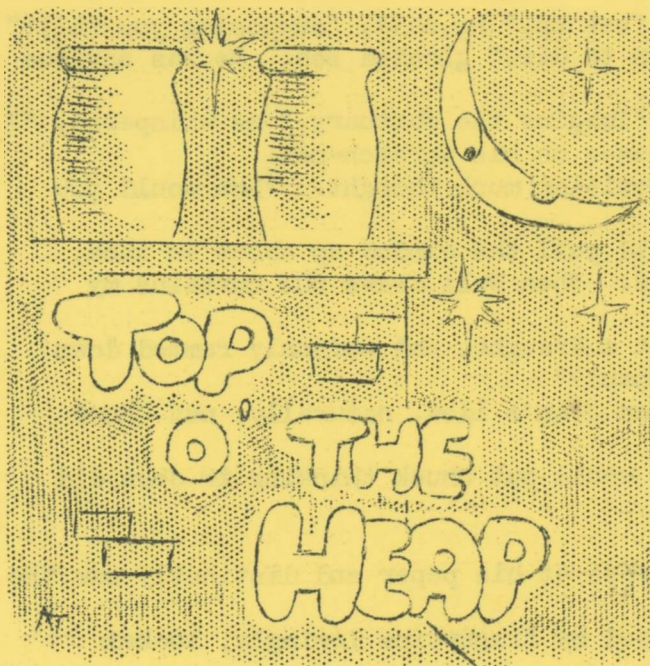
And furthermore there is no longer any justification for early pioneers in the West making a circle of their waggons and shooting out a losing battle with Indians. The Apaches or Sioux would probably be completely demoralised to see a fleet of old railway engines charging at them from behind a screen of covered waggons. It requires only a little imagination to realise that nearly every great book in the world would be spoiled. Even the titles wouldn't look the same. Who could enjoy a book or a film with such names as:

UNCLE TOM'S DRIVING CABIN
PANDORA & THE FLYING SCOTSMAN

THE ASCENT OF COALHEAP EVEREST
DESIRE UNDER THE L.M.S.

With this disquieting thought planted firmly in your minds I will now conclude this appearance of the Glass Bushel, Hyphen's longest lasting department. If any of you think of any further effects or consequences I would be glad to hear of them so that I can incorporate them into the next GB, thus giving you lots of egoboo and saving me lots of work. In the meantime, I am going to pop over to the loco for a pint.

LONDON IN 1956



Sunday 19th December, 1954.

IT WAS a few days before Christmas. We were all seated around the table in our room on the top floor of Oblique House. It was tea-time, and there was silence, save only for the rapid action of six pairs of jaws, and the occasional hurried scrape as Bob pulled a plate of cakes towards him and we pulled it back again.

"Have another cake, Bob," said Madeleine sarcastically, "and make your total an even dozen."

"That," rasped an indignant Bob, "and have everyone think I was a glutton?"

Finally, only the crumbs were left, and leaving Bob sniffing round the empty tray, we leaned back, satisfied.

Walt spoke.

"I am pleased to be able to announce," he said, "that Chuck Harris will be with us for a few days this Christmas."

There was a general murmur of approval round the table. Well, to be quite truthful, there was one cry of dissention. That was from Bob when he discovered the tea pot was empty.

James in particular, seemed quite happy at the prospect of meeting Chuck again and idly started to sharpen a knife on a whetstone that was convenient to him. From the way he constantly tested the edge with his thumb, I presumed that there was some ritual between them, whereby Jas sharpened Chuck's pencils - or something like that.

Then Madeleine leaned forward. "How can we introduce John to Chuck?"

Bob nodded. "Right enough," he said, "it wouldn't be fannish just to introduce them normally....we must think of something really original."

They all looked at me, then nodded sagely to each other.

Frankly, I had been thinking of the same thing, and had worked out a complicated plan that I thought would amaze everybody. I decided to put my plan to the vote. I put my hand up, and waited until Walt raised a finger, giving me permission to speak.

"This is my idea," I said, "but it needs split-second timing. I will come up next Sunday night at a carefully prearranged time. Just before I arrive, Madeleine will think up some pretext to take Chuck away to the back of the house. Walt will let me in and I will come up here into the attic. I will open the window, still with my coat on, crawl through the window, and stand on the projection outside. Walt will close the window, rush downstairs, and suggest a game of Ghoddminton. After you have all been playing for a few minutes, I will push the window up, move the curtains aside, and clamber through. Then you all look at me, and say 'Hello' quite casually, as though I always come in that way. Imagine the expression on Chuck's face."

My suggestion had a mixed reception. Walt

BY
JOHN
BERRY

"To be a whole-hearted fan you've got to be mentally retarded"

wincing expressively. "It's about ninety feet up," he said, "supposing you fell?"

"It would be a marvellous way for a fan to die," gloated Bob. He was serious too. I began to feel unnerved.

James had a dreamy look in his eyes. "Imagine the obituary," he whispered, "I can see it now. He began to jot down phrases on his scratch-pad.

Madeleine had obviously given the proposition much thought. "How would you retain a grip?" she asked.

"I've thought of that," I said. I would pull the window up about an inch, gripping the ledge tightly with my fingers. When Walt draws the curtains my finger-tips will be hidden."

"Ghod," said Walt. "Suppose Chuck felt a draught, and suddenly rammed down the window without saying anything beforehand?"

"Not a bad idea," said Bob, ".....I mean John's idea, naturally, not Chuck slamming down the window."

"Mmmmmn," mused Walter, "I suppose it would put Chuck thinking if John did make his entrance in that manner."

"It would be fun," Sadie said.

"I like it," added James. I looked across at his paper and distinctly saw the letters F.I.P. and a verse below them.

I began to feel cold all over. I clasped my fingertips lovingly, looked across at the window and shuddered.

"Of course," I said, without even putting my hand up -- you can tell what a state I was in -- "perhaps it would be too complicated, perhaps it would be snowing, or even freezing, or even raining. I..."

Walter held up his hand authoratively. "I have though of an alternative plan," he announced. "I have a copy of the Vargo Statten Magazine No.3., which, incidentally, has my photograph in it. However, it also has a story by Chuck. My suggestion is this: I will loan this magazine to John, and when he comes around on Sunday, I want him to rush in, with his eyes staring out of his head in awe. I want him to rush up to Chuck, trip over the doormat in excitement, and lay prostrate at Chuck's feet, with the book opened at page 56, muttering 'autograph, autograph.'"

There was a spontaneous burst of applause at this suggestion, with cries of "Bravo!" and "Brilliant!" and "Ghod!"

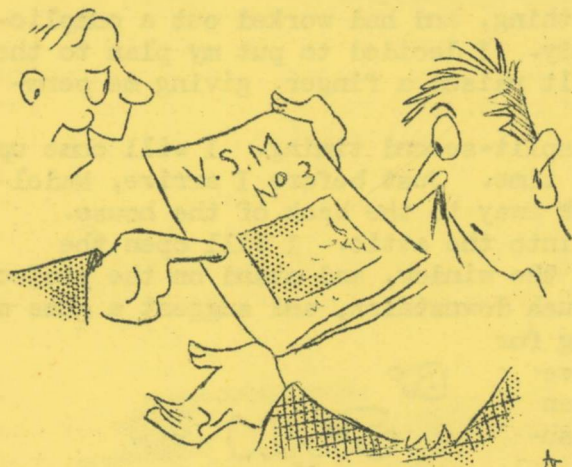
"Well," said Walt, "I will put the two suggestion to the vote. In the case of a tie, as there are six of us here, I will let George have the casting vote. He will be coming here next Tuesday. Now, hands up for John's suggestion."

James' arm shot up like a rocket, closely followed by the arms of Sadie and Bob. Three.

"My suggestion," said Walt. He raised his hand, and Madeleine raised hers. They were very slow about it, my arm was beginning to ache. Three.

"It's up to George then," said Walt, "and please understand that I shall not allow him to be approached by anyone to try and sway him one way or the other."

Well, that is how the matter stands at the moment. I am writing this before



Chuck comes, so that if George is in a frivolous mood on Tuesday, and votes the wrong way, my loss may be mourned, but my story will live on.

Why don't I keep my big mouth shut?

.....

Tuesday, 21st December 1954.

I raced around to Oblique House at top speed in an endeavour to have a word with George before the bourgeois arrived. I was too late. I opened the door to the Ghoodminton Chamber, and seven pairs of eyes looked at me. Two pairs, Madeleine's and Walt's (pro-Berry), looked apologetic, sorrowful. Three more pairs (anti-Berry), Sadie, Bob and James, looked sadistic and happy. It wasn't so much the way they looked at me that had me worried, it was the things they were doing. James had hewn out the rough shape of a cross from a chunk of timber, and was busily sandpapering it. Bob was working on a thesis that I saw was entitled "Head in the Clouds" which began with a mathematical equation in which "...32' per second, per second.." figured prominently. Sadie had a large piece of lace in her lap which looked like a shroud.

There was no need for me to ask which way George had voted. "George," I cried, "George, how could you do this thing?"

He laughed from the corner where he was sitting, -- a hollow, mocking laugh. "Bags I the story of his demise for my Fourth Column," he shrieked.

I ran across to Walt and knelt down respectfully in front of him. "Walter, Mr. Willis, ...sir," I gasped, "can't you intercede on my behalf?"

He gulped, obviously under great emotional stress. "Irish Fandom is run on strictly democratic lines," he announced grimly. "It was put to the vote, and we must abide by the majority decision. It was your original idea, anyway. And by the way, don't think I am being too suggestive, but I consider it would be a rather fitting gesture if you bequeathed your Science Fiction collection to O'Bleak House. I'll have a special bookcase built in mahogany, overlooking the Ghoodminton Court." His eyes began to light up with a strange enthusiasm. "What a precedent! sacrificing a neofan to Chuck Harris. Ghod, that'll go down well in America."

I turned desperately to Madeleine. "Madeleine," I begged, "please, can't you use your influence?"

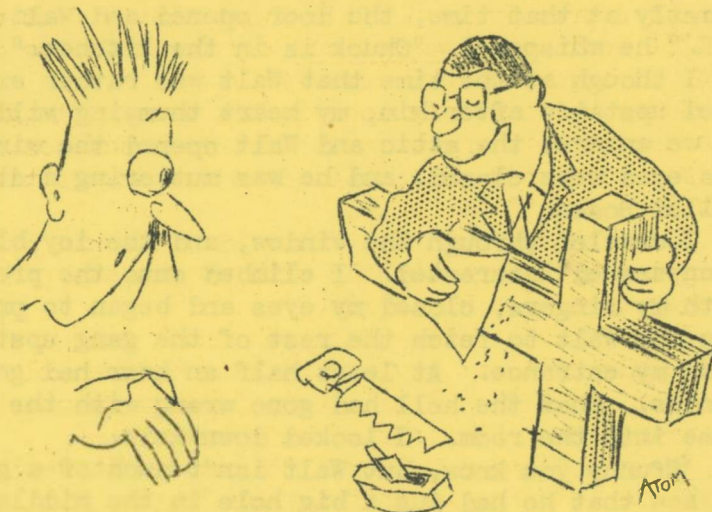
But she had a far-away look in her eyes too. "John," she cooed softly, "I've always had my eye on that Ghoodminton bat of yours with the leather wrist-strap. Promise me you won't leave it to anyone else."

.....

Sunday, 26th December 1954.

I survived. I survived, and what's more, I met Chuck Harris. It was a near thing, but fate was kind. But I am getting ahead of myself. I must tell you how right triumphed over the machinations of the trio.

Working to the split-second schedule, I arrived at Oblique House at 4.36. pm.



Exactly at that time, the door opened and Walt furtively ushered me inside. "It's O.K." he whispered, "Chuck is in the kitchen."

I thought at the time that Walt was rather excited about something, but I tiptoed upstairs after him, my heart thumping wildly. Only my pride kept me going as we entered the attic and Walt opened the window. I gulped and turned to Walt. His eyes were closed, and he was muttering a strange incantation to someone called Bosco.

I crawled through the window, and the icy blast almost tore me away. Even the moon seemed interested. I climbed onto the projection, gripped the window ledge with my fingers, closed my eyes and began to pray. The plan, you will remember, was for Walt to fetch the rest of the gang upstairs, play ghoddminton, and me make my entrance. At least half an hour had gone by and I was still outside the window. What the hell had gone wrong with the plan? Dammit, they hadn't even come into the room. I looked downwards.

'Sfunny you know, but Walt isn't much of a gardener, and I was quite surprised to see that he had dug a big hole in the middle of his lawn. It seemed a strange place to dig a hole, especially of this size -- I guessed it to be about 6' long, 3' wide, and 6' deep. All sorts of strange notions passed through my head. Perhaps Walt had taken up archaeology for a hobby, perhaps his refuse man was on strike. I suddenly decided I had done my bit for the cause. I had waited long enough, a small crowd had gathered outside 170 and I could hear murmurs of ".... dial 999..."

Somehow I raised the window and wriggled inside. I collapsed on the floor, exhausted. After a few moments I found enough strength to switch the light on. I gazed at the Marilyn Monroe calendar for about 20 minutes. Considerably rejuvenated, I made my way down the stairs. All was silent. I padded to the front room and peered through the doorway. Everyone was lined up at the bay-window, looking out. "He's a long time coming down," said a strange voice.

I was indignant. I rushed forward in annoyance. Unintentionally, I tripped on the doormat, flew through the air, and landed on my stomach in front of a large pair of carpet slippers. I looked upwards from the slippers and saw a distinguished, bespectacled face looking down at me. Someone, (BoSh I think), grabbed me by the scruff of the neck, and dragged me to my feet in front of this important personage. "Berry," everyone chorused.

With a gesture of annoyance, Chuck clicked his fingers impatiently. Then he unscrewed his fountain pen. "Well, where's your Vargo Statten?" he asked.

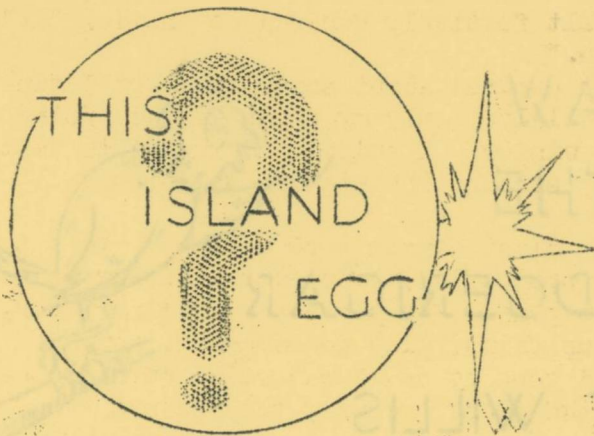
Later I asked Walt what had gone wrong with the scheme. "Oh, I knew you would come down one way or the other," he grinned. "But supposing I lost my grip and fell?" I asked. "That was a risk I had to take," he said modestly. Can you beat that. It was a risk he had to take. "How about the grave in the front garden?" I countered.

"Grave?" he asked with raised eyebrows. "Grave? Oh, that. If you go outside and look, you'll see that it's a small patch of lawn I cut the other day when I felt madly possessed with the gardening bug. The comparison with the surrounding long grass makes it stand out. You know, there's something kinda poetic in that illusion of yours. I suppose from the third floor, in the moonlight, it would look like a grave."

"Cemetery'ial to me," roared Chuck.

Confidentially, I began to think that the whole plot was arranged just as a build-up for that lousy pun.

As I say, I began to think so, ---until I saw the wistful expression on Madeline's face as she gazed with envy at my ghoddminton bat with the leather wrist strap.



BY

JOHN BRUNNER

PROFESSOR Anonymous Bosh, the celebrated astronomer, turned dramatically aside from the eye piece of the giant four inch telescope. Without a word he walked across the room, opened a drawer, took out a revolver and shot himself through the head.

With a cry of dismay, his beautiful daughter Fatima came running into the observatory. On seeing her father lying on the floor in a pool of blood, she let out a lady-like yell and fainted.

Gervase Muddlehead, the professor's brilliant and handsome All-American left end assistant, came swiftly to her assistance. That was what he was for, after all. After dashing a fire-bucket

over her face to revive her, he realised too late that it contained sand and not water, but it startled her and she sat up, scraping it out of her eyes and nose.

"Bphrmsch!" she said through a mouthful of it.

Gervase thoughtfully lent her his penknife, saying, "There, there, my dear. I know it's a terrible thing to happen -"

Fatima burst into tears. "Oh, this is too much!" she sobbed. "And after I'd spent all day on my hands and knees scrubbing the floor, too. Why couldn't he have done it in the garden?"

Gervase nodded. "The lobelias could have done with it," he agreed. "But stay--why did he do it? Is it merely that he has anticipated a yet more fearful fate?"

He staggered lithely across to the telescope and nearly poked his eye out with the end of it. Then he let out a fearful yell.

"What is it, Gervase?" demanded Fatima. "Is it that you see some monstrous cosmic doom approaching us?"

"No," said Gervase. "I can't see a blind thing -- I hit my head."

He applied his other eye to the optical giant and said grimly, "It is as I feared. The end of the world is imminent. Mars has hatched out!"

Fatima thrust him aside and stared down the long tube. At the end of it she could see the Red Planet, its north polar cap split and drifting away into space. Out of the hole so left, a monstrous beak appeared, followed steadily by a pair of eyes and a neck. Then Gervase shoved her aside again and gave a running commentary.

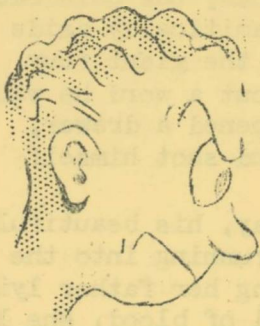
"Fantastic!" he said. "Natural evolution - a bird with rocket tubes instead of wings. And the tube even occupies the position where one might expect it to appear."

Fatima blushed.

Quickly Gervase swung the telescope and surveyed the other planets. "Saturn and Jupiter have hatched already," he reported. "There goes Pluto - and Venus - yes, they're all at it. Who would have thought it. After all the prolix theories of eschatological cosmogony to find that our solar system is nothing but a clutch of eggs in a giant incubator!"

"Gervase, darling!" sobbed Fatima. "I admire your cool scientific detachment, which is probably why you are doing it, but how can you be so calm when at any moment the earth may split open beneath our feet? Darling, we are doomed!"

(Contd. on page 32)



BOB SHAW
AND THE
BUDGERIGAR
BY
WALT WILLIS



Bob Shaw is not a deeply religious person, confessing when pressed to being little more than what he calls an "enlightened Shavian", but there is one belief which he holds with a religious fervour. It is that budgerigars cannot talk. It is not that he doesn't believe budgerigars can talk---no, he holds it to be self-evident that they cannot. It is rather like the difference between an atheist and an agnostic. The latter is merely not convinced of the existence of God, whereas the atheist is firmly convinced of his non-existence. In just such a way Bob Shaw is firmly convinced that budgerigars cannot talk; not only does he hold this belief with an almost fanatical devotion, but he is prepared to crusade and undergo martyrdom on its behalf.

We all have our little foibles and it seemed unlikely that one as harmless as this could disrupt the happy unity of Irish Fandom. In fact we didn't even know about this belief of Bob's; somehow the subject had never arisen at our bi-weekly gatherings. But one night the Old Guard of Irish Fandom went to visit John Berry's house....

We had been sitting chatting amicably for about twenty minutes when the Voice of Doom emitted a strangled squeak from the corner. We all looked round. There was a birdcage with a little bird in it. We mentally marked it "Noted" and were about to proceed with our conversation when we noticed John Berry had his hand raised.

"Wait!" he said. "It's going to say something."

The respectful silence was broken by Bob Shaw.

"Huh," he said.

"What do you mean, huh?" said John Berry.

"Budgerigars cannot talk," said Bob Shaw.

"Of course they can talk," said John Berry. He went on, not realising the depth of the cleavage between his school of thought and Bob Shaw's, "They can talk just as well as parrots."

"Parrots cannot talk," said Bob Shaw, "and neither can budgerigars."

I knew then that there was going to be trouble. People who own budgerigars are quite as convinced that they can talk as Bob Shaw is that they can't. Furthermore, the matter of personal pride is involved and more than counterweighs any altruistic devotion to truth.

"Our budgerigar can talk," said John Berry.

"No budgerigars can talk," said Bob. "Budgerigars cannot talk."

"I have heard it," said Diane Berry.

"People who own budgerigars always say that," said Bob, "but their budgerigars never say anything."

"I tell you our budgerigar can talk," said Diane. "It can say lots of things as plain as plain."

"People who have budgerigars," explained Bob patiently, "like to think they can talk, but they are just deluding themselves."

I tried desperately to change the subject, but it was too late. The fact that Bob Shaw was willing to insult his hostess before he had got his tea was in itself evidence of the depth of the emotions involved.

"Are you calling me a liar?" said Diane.

"No," said Bob Shaw, "I realise you think your budgerigar can talk. You are suffering from a common delusion which afflicts people who own budgerigars."

Diane disdained to answer him. Instead she went up to the cage and began to address the budgerigar. "Pretty budgy. Pretty budgy. Pretty budgy. Pretty budgy," she said. We all crowded round the cage.

After a few minutes the bird emitted a few un-birdlike sounds.

"There!" said the Berrys triumphantly.

"There what?" said Bob. "It just made a noise. It didn't say anything."

"It said 'Pretty budgy' as plain as anything!"

"That was what you said," said Bob. "The bird didn't say anything. The power of speech is a prerogative of the human race, not to be usurped by any mere bird. The idea that budgerigars can talk is a superstitious myth."

Diane flounced out to make the tea and after a short silence the rest of us tried desperately to talk of something else. John Berry seemed lost in meditation and Bob Shaw preserved a proud demeanour, even when he was served last with his tea.

We heard nothing more of the subject for several weeks, and I began to hope it had been forgotten. The only difference was that John Berry arrived later at our meetings and left earlier, and began to look pale and thin, as if he hadn't been getting enough sleep. He also began to play what he called "restrained ghoominton"i.e. he inflicted only flesh wounds on himself.

Then one night he invited us to his house again. Diane opened the door and showed us into the living room. We were shocked at the change in her appearance too -- she was pale and tired-looking.

There was a small table in the middle of the room with a large object on it covered by a cloth. After a few moments John staggered in and locked the door behind him. He put the key in his pocket and went to the table. Then he pulled the cloth away. It was the budgerigar cage. As soon as the light struck it the bird straightened on its perch. It looked at John. He nodded.

"Once upon a time in the village of Prosaic in the Country of Mundane there lived a youth called Jophan," said the budgerigar.

Startled, I looked at John. He motioned me to silence. The bird went on, "Now this youth was unhappy, because in all the length and breadth of Mundane there was no other person with whom he could talk as he would like....."

After it had come to the end of Chapter Two I opened my mouth to speak again, but once more John motioned me to silence. There was a fanatical gleam in his eye.

I thought after Chapter Seven that the bird was looking tired, but again John put his finger to his mouth. The bird went bravely on, John crouching over the cage making gestures of encouragement.

Towards the end of Chapter Nine the bird began to falter, but John redoubled his own efforts, mouthing the words silently at the cage.

After two hours we were nearing the end. Both John and the budgerigar were on the verge of collapse. It was a wonderful feat of endurance.

Finally the budgerigar gasped, "....And Jophan found that it was so." It then

flopped limply off its perch and tottered to the side of the cage. John opened a little package marked "Balkan Sobranie Birdseed" and poured the entire contents into and over the little trough.

Then we all turned and looked at Bob. He had gone white and his eyes were glazed. His gaze was fixed on some point in the middle distance.

"Well?" said John, feebly.

Bob did not seem to hear him.

"WELL?" said John, with his last reserves of energy.

Bob seemed to come to. "Well what?" he asked.

"The budgerigar," said John, gritting his teeth and indicating the little bird, which now suspended its pecking. "It talked."

"No," said Bob mechanically. "Budgerigars cannot talk. Budgerigars cannot talk. Budgerigars...."

The budgerigar keeled slowly over on to its back and lay there, legs motionless in the air. After a few moments Diane reverently replaced the cover. John got up and unlocked the door.

We have never been invited there again, but I understand the Berrys have now bought a goldfish.

THIS ISLAND EGG (Cont from page 29)

Gervase grinned quietly to himself, but he straightened his face before he turned round. He nodded. "I'm afraid we are," he agreed.

"Gervase, hold me tight!" said Fatima.

It was about three hours later when Fatima demurely tidied her skirt and looked at the clock. Gervase followed her example.

"Good heavens!" he said.

"What is it, sweet?" said Fatima, "Are you late for something?"

"No. We're still here." Gervase rushed to the eyepiece of the telescope and strove to focus his tired eyes on the remains of Mars. Sure enough, the planets were one and all no more than floating bunches of egg-shell drifting in the illimitable void.

He turned with a smile of triumph.

"There is only one possible explanation," he said. "Earth is addled!"

"You mean this isn't the end of the world after all?" demanded Fatima.

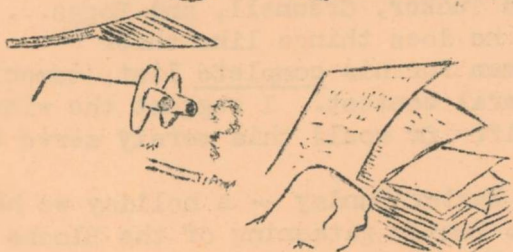
Gervase nodded, smiling.

"Thy, you big creep!" said Fatima, and delivered him a resounding slap which knocked him Schmidt over Coude into the developing tanks.

* * * * *



POST SCRIPTS



ARCHIE MERCER With one possible exception, this TOTO is the second-best of the series.

And that possible exception was too fragmentary - it's the one with the scherdlites and things in it that I mean. The New Light thrown on the word "Fugghead" is, to me, enlightening. I'd always thought it was an ordinary term of gentle insult, -- like "dunderhead"-- that had got itself specifically adopted into Fandom.

I was glad to be one of the only two recipients of GATW's column. I suppose the other was Geo himself?

One regular feature of "-" that I find rather annoying is the habit of jumping pages. I know your excuse -- stencils are cut partly by you, Chuck, and sundry other odd people at odd times, so that if you're doing Page 8 and have allocated Chuck P.9, and P.8 happens to finish in midstream, you are therefore obliged to jump to Page 27. This has nuisance-value only, of course, but it IS a nuisance. ((And especially so when it happens on the final stencil to be cut and we get stuck with six lines of deathless prose to jam in somewhere; those six lines are always egoboo.))

The titles for Ackerman had me laughing out loud. Two more....

ORIGINS OF THE MONROE DOCTRINE

Cal Endar

THE LIGHTS IN THE STY ARE CIGARS

George Orwell



FRED SMITH The whole appearance of Hyphen has improved greatly. (Glasgow) Atom is a worthwhile acquisition, his drawings have a nice clean look about them, (the style I mean, not the subject matter.) However, we must have Shaw back to carry on the "-" tradition. I couldn't make anything out of the sideline on page 5. I've been muttering it over and over for about five minutes now, but the only result is that the words are beginning to rock wildly and I'm getting permanent lines in my forehead. Explanation, puh-leeze. ((You mean "Infangenetheof, hamsoecn, and blodwite"? Tsk, tsk. We thought that every reader of "Hansard" or "The Justice of the Peace and Local Government Review" would have gotten it immediately. It comes from a parliamentary speech by Tom Driberg protesting that the electoral commission had placed Malden after the name of some other district in the title of a revised electoral division. (You still with me?). He was pointing out that Malden was far more hoary with antiquity than the other upstart place which first came to notice as recently as the thirteenth century, --- before then nobody had ever heard of it. In the course of his campaign he put down a question asking when Malden was vested with the rights of Infangenetheof, hamsoecn and blodwite. Apparently these are types of archaic jurisdiction as well as being lovely words for a sideline. Malden, incidentally, was awarded these rights in 1035, -- and we trust you are impressed by our Culture.))

I thought TOTO was as good as usual. I prefer it to be drawn from the US fanzines since there is such a wealth of material there that most British fans haven't seen before.

And a title for Chuck.....

TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT -- Joe di Maggio.

"I think all fans have a justifiable fear of zocs."

ROBERT BLOCH First off I want to congratulate you on that brilliant article
(Wisconsin) you did under the pseudonym of "Madeleine Willis".... I have never read anything to surpass it, and I bet Madeleine is proud of you.

It is even better than the stuff you do under the name of "Bob Shaw."

Secondly, I want to inform Chuck and you that Ackerman is indeed papering his walls with book-titles. I can vouch for the fact that he asked for (and received) a list from me....and I think he also solicited Tucker, Grennell, and Boggs... Although, of course, we mustn't let Laney know he does things like that.

At any rate, you might do well to ask Ackerman for his complete list, comprising everyone's titles and then launch your general contest. I suggest the winner might be awarded a Grand Prize, Ackerman himself. Or would this merely serve to destroy all incentive?

Thirdly, I must tell you that yesterday was Easter Sunday -- a holiday we have here in the States --and was the occasion for a family gathering of the Blochs and Grennells. Somewhere during the course of the evening I had occasion to call Grennell's attention to an extract from the Old Testament, and as I looked up the exact quote ((In your autographed copy?)) I was suddenly constrained to review the events of the day...the Grennells arriving...the quiet dinner...the sober conversation...the total absence of alcohol....the Grennells' imminent 8 PM departure.

And at the same moment a Cinemascope vision came to me in horrid contrast.

Even as we sat there in the parlor, Kettering was under mass bombardment! I glimpsed a kaleidoscope of discharging squirtguns, a melee of entangled beards, a squirming soiree of imbedded Bedlamites, a frantic fresco of fandom, the star-gazers and the star guzzlers, the Tubb-thumping of the auction --the glassy-eyed spectacle of British Fandom in full flower, and well-sprinkled, to say nothing of fertilized.



I spoke of this to Dean, commented on the fact that nobody would believe how we had spent the day over here, and then tottered off to bed full of complacent self-righteousness....and envy.

I note your adoption of the slogan, "HAVE BLOCH PICKLED FOR POSTERITY". This idea repels me. The way I feel, I'd like to be pickled right now. Then at least I could be with you in spirit.

Seriously now, for some years a group of friends in Milwaukee were interested in a project I proposed: namely, that we donate our bodies to the local museum so that we could be stuffed after death and displayed in the Anthropological Exhibit as typical specimens of 20th Century Man.

At the time I thought a scene around a poker table would be most appropriate, insofar as our group was concerned. This had the virtue of being fairly representative: while all the other obvious suggestions were just too obscene.

My only stipulation was that, insofar as I had dreamed up the idea of the poker table, I be allowed to hold the winning hand.

This notion met with general acceptance on the part of everyone -- except the museum authorities. They refused to cooperate unless we consented to be shown in the Zoological Exhibit.

But there's the key here to a really worthy project. Why not start a campaign on an international level, urging prominent fans to donate their bodies for permanent preservation and exhibition in a suitable location....such as Ackerman's garage, the Willis attic, or the place where Bert Campbell stores his excess venom?

I am sure a number of fans would be happy to donate their bodies after death.

In fact, if we work this thing right, we might even get some of them to donate their bodies before death. There are certain females I have in mind whose compliance with this request could lead to rewarding results.

The dead could undoubtedly be handled by a competent taxidermist. As to handling the living females, that is a matter for we of the Committee to decide. Maybe by cutting for high card or something....

The possibilities are endless. A Transatlantic Fund would take care of shipping the corpses...we could get up an exhibit proving that First Fandom Is Too Dead.. we could provide a Memorial Exhibit of Famous Fans which would be visited by neo-fans from all over and inspire them with a definite Esprit de Corpse. Surely this is a noble ghoul! I urge you to lend yourself (literally) to this worthy ~~cadaver~~ endeavor.....Embalm yourself as a Fannish Emblem.



JOHN BRUNNER Chuck's column reminds me of a game I haven't played in years, -- (Bucks) not since I was seven or eight, --when the Mickey Mouse Weekly ran a similar contest. Anyway, I've dug into (flushed out?) my fannish mind, and herewith a small section of the results.

MISSION OF GRAFFITI, Ackerman (which started the whole thing.)

FOUNDATION, Gossard.

MURDER IN THE DIHEDRAL, Clawed Shannon.

PI IN THE STYE, Lancelot Hogpen.

A CENTURY OF SHE STORIES, Viereck & Eldridge.

THE BEAUTIFUL SUIT, James White.

THE HOT SEAT, or FANNY BY GASLIGHT Michael Ardent

THE EMPIRE OF THE AUNTS, Margaret Meade.

THE LAST TRUMP, D. Clara Heldon

CHILDHOOD'S END, Youngman

THE SHAVER MYSTERY, Nigel Baldchin

THE ROAD TO THE AISLES, Tommy Manville.

THE HERRING INDUSTRY, Ruddyard Kipperring

ARMAGEDDON OUT OF HERE, de Camp.

DIED IN THE WOOL, Paul Calico

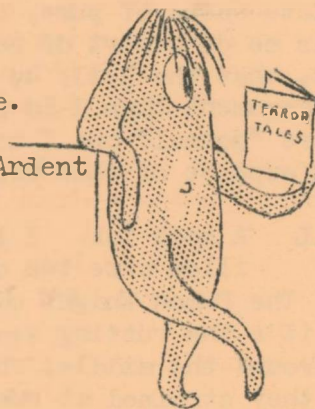
THIS IRELAND EARTH (Proceedings of the Irish Horticultural Society)

STARLING STORIES, (Journal of the Ornithological Society)

MARBLE SCIENCE, (Journal of the Monumental Masons)

NEW WORDS, (Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary)

NUDES OF THE WORLD (Journal of the Naturist Association)



DENNIS TUCKER Just a small technicality: STARTLING hasn't folded. According (Bucks) to the official notification its been combined with TWS. ((Pooh, that's just a minor point -- you wait till you see what Newshawk Willis did for Brian Varley!)).... I think Ethel Lindsay rather understates her point. Surely, and I say this in all seriousness, s-f has nothing to do with the binding together of fandom. On the face of it, the remark may seem silly, and I certainly acknowledge that s-f caused fandom to come into being, but, putting it bluntly, if all science-fiction publishing stopped tomorrow, would HYPHEN auto-

"Please do not address me as Ghoul! I am an ethicist and do not believe in myself"

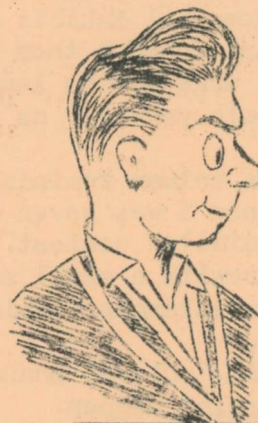
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matically fold? I think not. ((Well, I wouldn't say "automatically" but "-" is a fanzine for science-fiction and fantasy fans. Our tastes in reading are the only thing that we all have in common: without it there would be nothing to hold the group together, fandom would disintegrate, and there would be no point in publishing either "-" or any other fanzine. I know that we concentrate more on the fun-loving side of fandom and seldom have a good word to say for the prozines, -- we have never claimed that sf is the highest form of literature, only that we enjoy reading it, -- but don't write us off as cultured intellectuals and POGO addicts. If science-fiction publishing suddenly stops, you can send your "-" file to the binders, -- there won't be any more issues to follow.))

MIKE WALLACE Oh why, oh why, don't you use the good-quality paper for the covers?
(Hull) I folded my "-" in half and put it in my overcoat pocket. When I took it out again part of the

print of that wonderful "Fantyper" effort had rubbed off. Think of future generations! Think of 118th Fandom! With these blotting paper covers "-" can't even be preserved for posterior. However, at least the colour is better, ---or that may be due to the fact that I've got some new glasses.

I see there's that Turner crittur busting up my sweet li'l illusions again. He's HARD, that's what he is. He cares nothing for the gentle dreams of youth and thinks only of the desolate waste of pure, cold logic. He reminds me of a sort of poor man's Izzard, but, what the hell! he puts forward a better argument than I do so I'll be happy to give him best. I still don't think fen are "normal" but I can't think of any very effective arguments to put forward in support of that belief. Harry, the field's yours.



"THIS IS
MIKE WALLACE,
AND WE ALL
KNOW WHAT
TO SAY TO
MIKE WALLACE."

Atom

ERIC FRANK RUSSELL A good ish. I liked the front cover for a start. Interior
(Cheshire) illos were ten cuts above those in the average farmag in that they were funny. The Demon Knight came off best for material yet again. He writes as though it's the rutting season, and I like it. ((Which?)) (Both. EFR) One or two bits around the middle, which I shall not name, lost a little by lack of spontaneity; they strained at camels and swallowed gnats. Camels usually do taste like swallowing gnats. Don't gno why anyone smokes the things. Can it be that over there they actually read the ads and believe them? ((You mean you don't worry about your T-zone?))

I think the bits that tickled me most were the type-sketches in the letter section (Starbegotten, Brunner, Eney, Emery, et al), and, by Ghod, the fan-typer. The gold-plated dofflethumper goes to you for special feature #12, to wit: Jack for raising one end of carriage for producing italics.

Your account of the BBC stf has what is valuable in humour, verisimilitude. What a pity you couldn't have brought it to a sweetly malicious conclusion by truthfully reporting that it ended with the caption: "Technical supervision by Arthur C. Clarke." Too bad!

SID BIRCHBY (Manchester) About "-13", the text, although impeccable, was outshone by Atom's cartoons. Now that there's no Goon Show to listen to on the radio and no comic strips in the newspapers (nor even any newspapers, owing to the strike), I'd be in a bad way but for Hyphen. Might even have to learn to read.

TED TUBB (London) Hyphen arrived, was read, enjoyed, and reluctantly put aside. If ever a magazine should be a 'mammoth' issue, "-" is it.....it's too easy to read the thing through and then have to wait a whole month for more. The pages seem to almost breathe the sort of life we'd all like but somehow never seem to get, casual, careless, good-humoured, devoid of all bitterness and nastiness. Reading it is like meeting old friends and slipping into the old familiar groove of the days when money, mortgages, jobs, all the things that take up too much time and leave too little energy for following the Fannish Way, didn't exist.

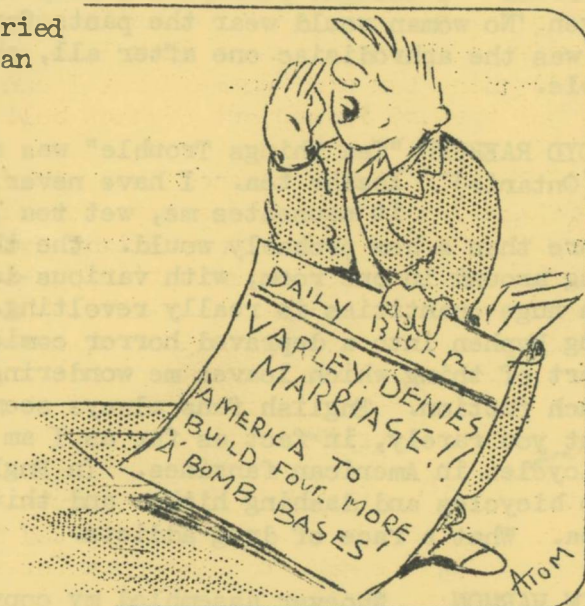
GATW Charters (Co. Down) A word I like is committed on page 36; Taul. There are so many uses for it. You could say, "A Taul, dark and handsome," if you wanted to describe a Martian hoolig. Or, "at Taul events" describing a Con. Or you could tell a "taul story" about james. And of course, an "ataul" is an atoll that hasn't been atom-bombed at all. Grimm's fairy tauls. St. Teeter and St. Taul. And it even suggests bowdlerised spelling for other words which annoy Daphne, -- surely Mr Funk and Mr Wagnall would not object in such a wordy cause.

The letter that I liked best was also the shortest, -- I still grin every time I remember that the bacover is a little incoherent. Cultivate Mr Royle.

JOY GOODWIN (London) The news that Varley is married I just can't believe. ((Brian found it a little difficult too, but who is he to quibble. "Whom Ghod hath joined together....!") You mean some woman found a way to persuade him she had a better use for his money than filling landlords' pockets? Or was it just that the drink brought him to his knees? ((No, it was all A Dreadful Mistake. Walt was "sure somebody told him Brian was married" but it was just an unofficial rumour. Brian has not entered into any legal state of bliss, and we apologise for any inconvenience we may have caused him.))

BRIAN VARLEY (London) Please, a correction in the next Hyphen, -- some women object to carrying on with

married men. Announce my divorce or something. As to damages, I'll settle for a pint at the Kettering bar, and, of course, a full-page announcement of your inaccuracy in the Daily Express just as soon as that organ again resumes publication. ((Well, we said that we're sorry....but it was fun watching Brian trying to make convincing explanations when he was at Kettering....and anyway, he ought to married.))



MAL ASHWORTH
(Yorks)



Good Lord! (Only a mild epithet because I'm feeling in a mild mood; in fact I am a mild person -- with all that Mild, and not a drop of Bitter, coursing through my bloodstream, I don't know how else I could feel. Except lousy -- but I can feel that way in addition. And I do, -- although the strongest thing I touched at the Con was cyder.....unless of course you count the Night Porter). As I was saying, Good Lord! On leafing through the last issue to find what I meant to comment on, I find nothing except masterpieces. I think it's rather an unethical trick not announcing the fact on the cover; I suppose you think that this way some poor unfortunate neofan will show himself up by not noticing the fact? ((Yes, -- but it's embarrassing when we find not one, but 249 of them)) I too love to play Bloch's game of fitting the bacover quotes to the people listed underneath. I find this especially fascinating if my own name happens to be there. I don't see how anyone who has never played the game can know the endless fun, the tingling thrill there is in trying to fit one of the quotes to one's own name. Fitting them to other people I never find very difficult at all; I think we can regard that as merely the early stages of the sport -- simple practice for the endlessly complicated and fascinating play which comes later. In actual fact, it is a sort of preparation too, because if you can succeed in properly allocating all the quotes but one to the other names that are listed, then you know for a certain fact that yours is the one that is left. You can be as sure of this as...well... as for instance, that Brian Varley has got married. (Hmmm?) And the pervading content of the discovery. You can lay back peacefully in the easy chair and think blissfully; "So I said 'An aphrodisiac is someone who will insist on speaking African isn't it?' did I? Well, well - who would have thought it? For a moment I was worried - I thought perhaps I'd said 'He's the white sheep of our family.' Or even 'No woman would wear the pants for long in his house - even her own.' But I was the aphrodisiac one after all, eh?" The peace of mind is just indescribable.

BOYD RAE BURN "Tea Things Trouble" was amusing, but also rather revolting to me. I (Ontario) loathe tea. I have never tasted it, the mere SMELL of it nauseates me, wet tea leaves give me the horrors more than a bem probably would. The thought of all that tea floating around in one room, with various depraved persons sucking it up in huge quantities is really revolting. What is the big idea, turning Hyphen into a depraved horror comic? "Rust in Peace" is the sort of thing which leaves me wondering how much is truth and how much fiction. English fans always seem to be babbling about bicycles but you rarely, in fact as far as I am concerned, never, read about bicycles in American fanzines. In English fanzines, types are always leaping on to bicycles and dashing hither and thither to various places, usually to drink tea. What a race of drug addicts.



JIM HARMON
(Illinois) Whoever assembled my copy didn't know which way was up. I found myself having to read the centre section upside down, from back to front. I felt like I was listening to a dianetician's lecture on Clear Thinking. As a True American, I don't appreciate these oriental foreign influences. As it is, you Irish are confoundedly Unamerican. That's probably why you didn't know which way was up. If you didn't have those Cambridge accents, you could ask somebody



to tell you. And those Australians are even worse. Down Under. Subversives, you know.

You will soon have an unparalleled opportunity to read some of my science-fiction non-fiction. I sold an article to Campbell. Bert, not John. I'm glad, I tell you. Who wants 4¢ a word? This way I can tell all my British friends what I think of them. The article is all about what a stupid jerk Arthur C Clarke is. And Ley, Pratt and all them guys. Boy, I really show them all their mistakes in those space-travel books. Just because a guy has a college education and can spell his wurd's rite, he thinks he knows everything. There is still the Common Sense of the Common Man. I prove once and for all that a rocket can't work in space because there is nothing to push against. Balloons! That's the thing -- balloons!

DAVE WOOD
(Lancs)



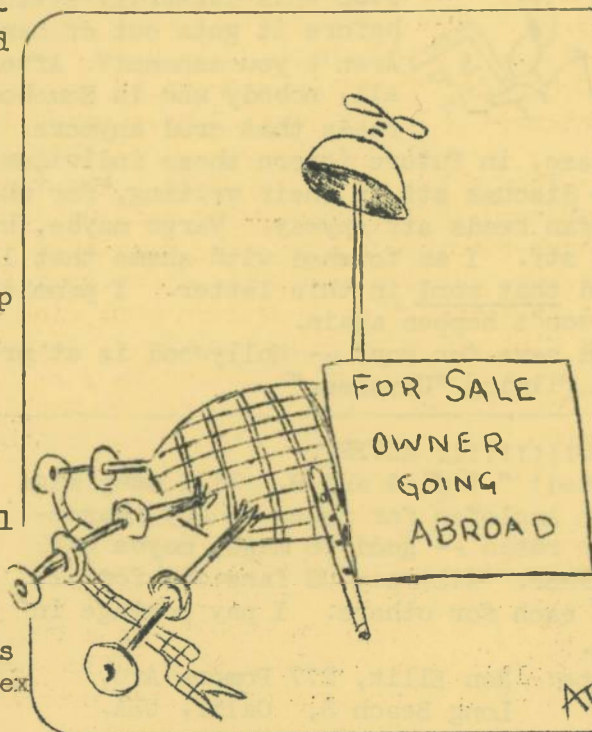
As Mal said, Ken Potter and I were in the Scouts. But we weren't half as bad as he makes out. We did go to one Sunday School Youth Club Dance and BRENNSCHLUSS maybe did originate there. But as to us going around peering in the back seats of parked cars "Making sure that everything was all right," No Sir! We did it once only. It happened on a particularly useful stretch of quiet road behind Lancaster. Here, amid the rural silence are the courting couples. This particular night found six members of the local scout group engaged in a strenuous and tiring sport known as "the midnight

hike. This consists of donning heavy warm clothing and hiking boots and setting out at about 10 pm, for a hike which carries you high into the hills behind Lancaster to watch the morning sun rising from over the far Penines, infusing golden light across the purple hills. Unless of course it rains. Well, as we strode along this particularly quiet stretch of country road from out of the gloom there swelled the black outline of a small Morris. Somebody, -- no names -- allowed his curiosity to overcome him and he peered in at the side window.

"Flickering asterisks!" he exclaimed. (An archaic way of saying "Man dig!") We all moved to the window. It was indeed as he said. We gazed awestruck. "Let's knock on the window," said the Patrol Leader. He rapped smartly at the pane. "What goes on 'ere?" he growled in a deep officious voice. We paused only long enough to see the man sharply rap his head on the low roof, trip over his braces, and leave his girl alone on the back seat. We fled.

Sometimes I still get the feeling of being pursued by an irate car-owner still clutching his trousers round his portly waist.

We never "Made Sure That Everything Was All Right" again. We left the Scouts soon afterwards. ((Hm. In the 6th Essex Scout Troop, all we did was throw bean-bags.))



"I say again, semantic poliorcetics!"

RAY SCHAFFER
(Ohio)

Good news for you, -- Hollywood is at present filming "Ulysses."

Wanted: "-" #1-4 and 8. Will swop mags with Anglofen for these in any reasonable ratio -- good US mags, maybe asf or F&SF. Will pay US fans 25¢ for #1, 15¢ each for others. I pay postage in USA.

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BILL TEMPLEa few remarks about Bob Bloch's criticism of critics in the Xmas number. He stressed the fact that they were so much driftwood on the tide of fashion, like a lot of aged women with too much money and too much time. I couldn't agree more. It's womanish to be fickle. Ergo, critics are mostly womanish types. However, there was once an honest critic, Leslie Stephen, of the CORNHILL MAGAZINE. He wrote to Thomas Hardy after the latter was spinning because of six-and-twenty conflicting opinions from the Olympians (who agreed about only one thing: that they could have written Hardy's novels better than Hardy):-



"I think, as a critic, that the less authors read of criticism the better. You have a perfectly fresh and original vein and I think the less you bother yourself about critical canons the less chance there is of your becoming self-conscious and cramped....We are generally a poor lot, horribly afraid of not being in the fashion, and disposed to give ourselves airs on very small grounds."

A worse case than the fluctuating fortunes of Scott Fitzgerald is mentioned in Van Wyck Brooks' recent SCENES AND PORTRAITS. I forget the relevant names, but an influential art critic saw an oil painting in a Chelsea junk shop. He declared it to be a work of genius. The artist was found to be living on stale bread in a slum. He had been painting all his life without any material success and was now in his seventies. But now he was officially "discovered." Success story after all. For two years he was revered and everybody fought to buy his paintings. Rembrandt was a back number. Then the same critic opined that the old fool was overrated. The new genius's stock slumped so suddenly he found himself in debt. So back into the slum crawled the old man and was never heard of again.

Again, there was the poet-dramatist Stephen Phillips, who in his time was seriously compared to Shakespeare. Then the same critics who had praised him all ganged up at once to ridicule him. End of Phillips.

And Henry James, Thackeray, Trollope, Conrad go in and out of critical fashion as regularly as the seasons.

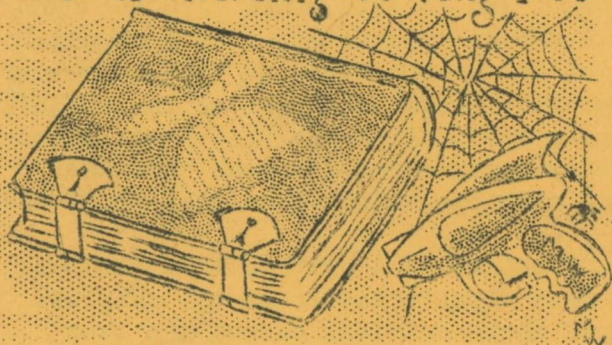
Mr. Bloch says TENDER IS THE NIGHT is Fitzgerald's best book. But in fact it is, of course, THE GREAT GATSBY -- compact and powerful, where TENDER IS THE NIGHT is weak and sprawling. What an uncritical ass Mr. Bloch is!

I'm sorry to have to cut sweet William off in mid-stream just as he was getting ready to change horses, and before he'd even gotten around to mentioning Arthur C Clarke, but I need the rest of the page to acknowledge the rest of the mail. I had to cut all the letters to ribbons, but there is still a great stack of stuff here that I can't possibly squeeze in. Believe me, it's only the mail that we get that makes "-" worthwhile and we do appreciate the time and trouble you spend in writing to us about each issue. As well as the people in the letter column our thanks go to the others who commented on #13:- Steve Schultheis, Ken and Pamela Bulmer, Sandy Sanderson, Richard Fney, Gregg Calkins, Dean Grennell, Ted White, Andy Young, Edith Carr, Ron Ellik, Curtis Janke, Dennis Tucker, Harry Turner, Ted Carnell D.R. Smith, Carol Sanchez, Groff Conklin, Julian Parr, Pete Royle, Rory Faulkner, Eva Firestone, Jan Jansen, Bob Pavlat, Sheila O'Donnell, Meredith Chatterton, Eric Bentcliffe, Peter Mabey, Fred Smith, Sid Birchby, Cato Lindberg, Paul Enever, P. Chappell, Dick Ellington, Ken Steward, Ermengarde Fiske Joan Carr, Peter Singleton, and a host of others whose names I shall remember as soon as I've run this stencil off.

ADDRESS CHANGES: Richard Geis has moved to: 1525 N.E. Ainsworth, Portland, Ore. D.R. Smith is now at 228 Higham Lane, Nuneaton, Warwickshire.

/U.S.A.

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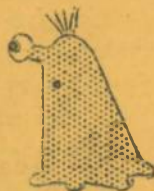
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DON'T MEN LET WOMEN GET INTO, SOME UNCOMFORTABLE POSITIONS...MONEY MAY NOT BUY EVERYTHING BUT IT'S NICE TO RUN BAREFOOT THROUGH...IS DOROTHY REALLY THE QUEEN OR IS

SHE JUST PRETENDING?...SHE WAS ASKING FOR BURGESS BEFORE BREAKFAST...IT'S A PROUD AND LONELY THING TO BE DAPHNE'S HUSBAND... THEY BURNED GALAXY HERE AS A HORROR COMIC...PORNOGRAPHIC POETRY IS JUST VICE VERSES...PROCREATION IS A MATTER OF MUTUALLY ECSTATIC RHYTHM...I WOULD ASSOCIATE WITH ANYONE WHO HAS MONEY...IT'S THE VERY SAME THING, IT'S JUST THAT I DROPPED YOURS...THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THIS HOTEL, THE STAFF HAVEN'T SHOWN ANY DEFINITE SIGNS OF HOSTILITY YET...I THINK IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH COMING INTO THE WORLD BOTTOM FIRST...THIS IS PETER REANEY, THE NORTH'S ANSWER TO NORMAN WANSBOROUGH...I AM PROHIBITED FROM REVEALING THE FULL TRUTH ABOUT SAUCERS...THE POSTULATE THAT FANS MIGHT DO IT BECAUSE THEY KNOW HOW TO ENJOY THEMSELVES IS A SORT OF BIG-HEDONISM...HE ONLY PATS YOU ON THE BACK TO FIND A GOOD SPOT FOR HIS DAGGER...



I TALKED TO PETER HAMILTON ABOUT DIGITAL COMPUTING...TO BE TECHNICALLY CORRECT I'D HAVE TO BE VULGAR...I AM THE ONLY SEXUAL ATHLETE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THE PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE...HE'S

DONE EVERYTHING IN HUMAN POWER TO SPELL THE WORD EXCEPT LOOK IT UP IN THE DICTIONARY...AS ONE OF THE LEADING NON-RESIDENTS OF KETTERING I VOTE WE HOLD THE NEXT CON HERE...S.F. FIVE-YEARLY ISN'T DEAD--IT'S ONLY HALF DECADE...I THINK DOWNSTAIRS IS BENEATH US...HE WROTE THE UNREADABLE BIT.. YOU'D BETTER WAKE HARRY AND TELL HIM IT'S TIME TO GO TO BED...I COULDN'T EVEN SAY THAT THIS TIME OF THE MORNING...THAT'S RIGHT, YOU GO AHEAD AND ALTER THE LANGUAGE...ONE OF MY BONES FELL OUT LAST NIGHT... I'M GLAD WHEN SHE STROKES THE BACK OF MY HEAD TO FIND THAT I STILL HAVE A BACK TO MY HEAD...KYRIE ELLISON.

Quotes and sidelines: Correspondents of EFR 9, Joy Goodwin's notebook 10, sheila o'donnell 3, Al Toth 1, Mal Ashworth 3, Ron Buckmaster 3, Pam Bulmer 1, Helen Knight 1, Don Susan 1, WAW 5, Chuck 4, Atom 2, Vinç 3, Edith Carr 1, Varley 1, Grennell 1, Eney 1, and others.