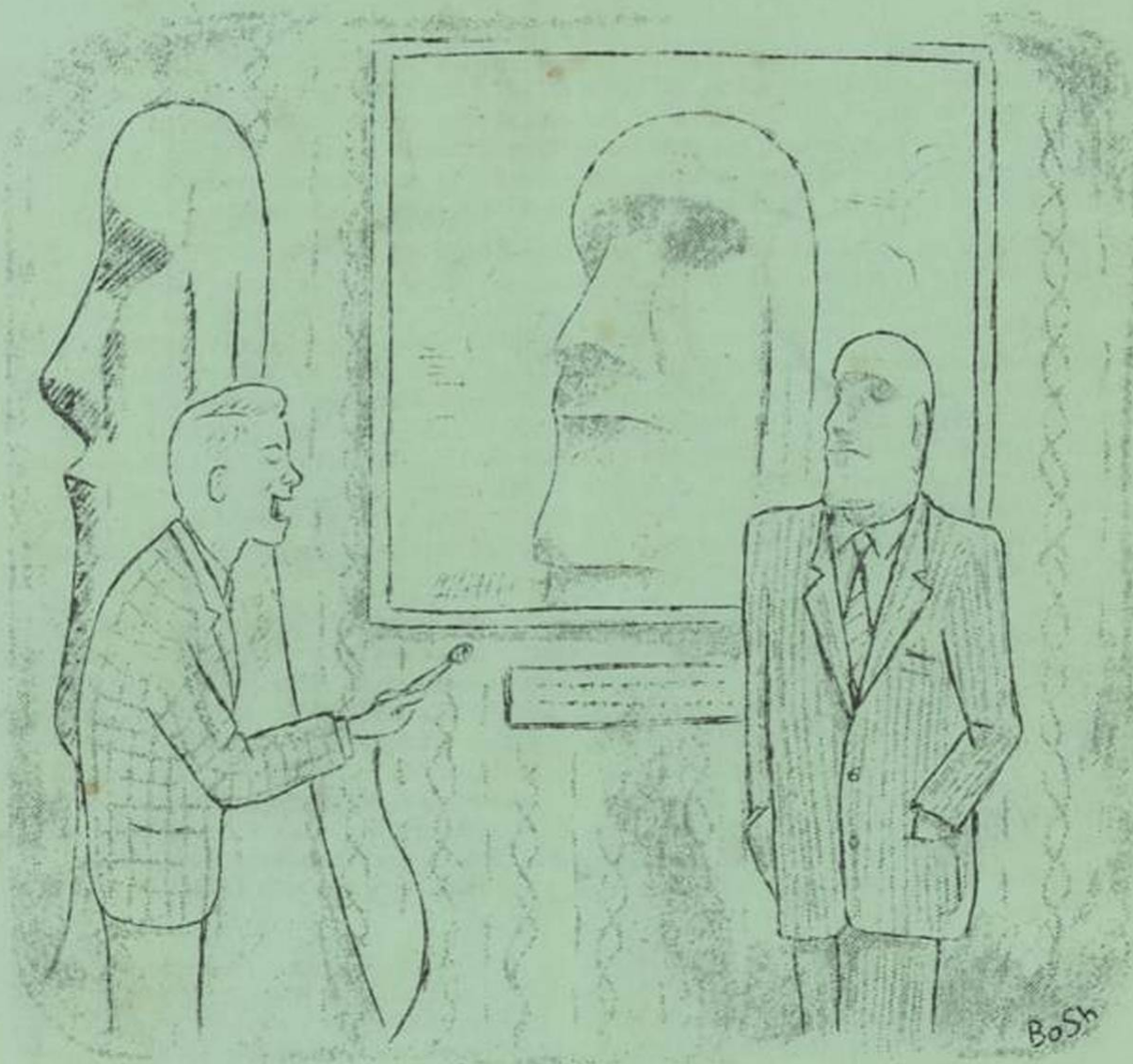


HYPHEN

NO. 26

JANUARY

1961



"Before we talk about your trip, Professor. can you tell our viewers what originally led to your lifelong interest in the Easter Island carvings?"

INSIDE COVERAGE

WALT
WILLIS

Yes, I'm afraid it's me again. I did try to get Ian to write the editorial this time, but the place is already knee deep in discarded McAulay editorials and I was afraid to press him further lest he get burned out before he even gets into print. He should follow my remedy against Creeping Perfectionism---write the editorial so late that it's whisked onto the duplicator before I get the chance to read it myself.

Anyway, as Ian points out, he already has material in this issue, a sort of companion piece to James White's account of his holiday in Bray. It's nice to have

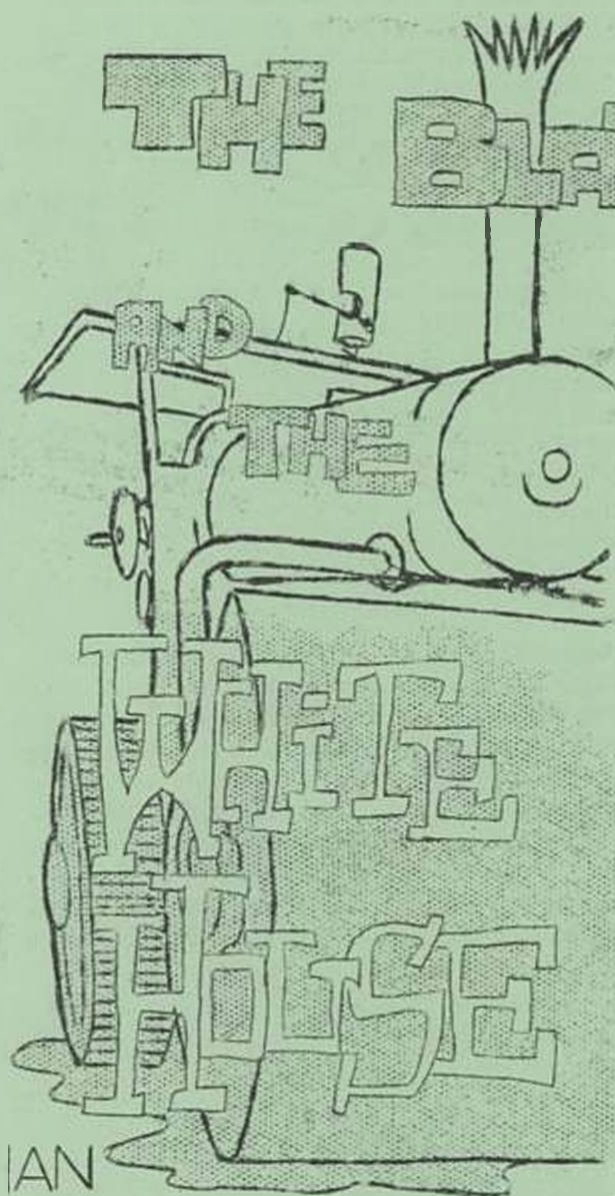
James in Hyphen again...incidentally he's just sold a serial to Fantastic, coming up in the May & June issues; we think it's terrific...but I've noticed some people muttering that they're tired of accounts of fans visiting one another, just as others say they don't like convention reports or articles about science fiction. I know what they mean, ghod knows, but I think it's wrong to categorise material like this. Any subject at all can be written about so as to be either interesting or dull.

The only reason, for instance, that articles about sf got such a bad name a while back was that they weren't well enough written. At that time everyone was surfeited with sf and many of the people who wrote about it were those who just couldn't think of anything interesting to say about anything else. They hadn't anything interesting to say about sf either, but at least they were able to tell themselves and everyone else that by describing stories or discriminating between fantasy and science fiction with all the painstaking care of a babeen peeling a banana, they were contributing something constructive to the field. The better fan writers tended to ignore sf, because it didn't need them. But now good sf is rarer than it's been for 25 years, and it needs the fans again. It seems to me we're due for a revival of good fan writing about science fiction. At any rate Hyphen is in the market for it.

One thing I would like to see discussed is the standard of professional editing. Only five survivors have emerged from last year's holocaust, so they obviously represent all that has been best in professional editing. Or do they. It's a point that didn't seem to be adequately covered in Kemp's Who Killed SF symposium, maybe just because the fans didn't know the facts and the writers were afraid of being victimised. I've been around long enough to gather something of the influence editorial 'policies' have had on the field and I'd appreciate views from others, either for publication under their own names or as background material for an article by me. My discretion can be relied on. I have done some terrible things in my time, like mentioning that Alan Dodd has been to Spain, but they haven't included branch of confidence.

On a lower level, I'd like to make an appeal for baccaver quotes. Lately I've been reduced to making them up myself but now I've revived The Harp in Warhoon (Richard Bergeron, 110 Bank St., New York City 14. 20¢ or letter of comment) I can't afford to go on scraping the tiny barrel of my mind. There was something in that remark of Loney's: "It's not good enough for an interlineation; let's make an article out of it."

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McAULAY

and condescended to give his advice. He would frequently bring stories unprinted for over a hundred years to Boucher's attention, and usually advise on the translation as well !

James White was a very different story (more suitable for *Weird Tales* than for the austere pages of *Hyphen* !). I wasn't too far out in my ideas of James' physical characteristics. (This, remember, was before he began to practically monopolise the inside front cover of *New Worlds*). He, I was sure, was the dandy of the group, always immaculately dressed with quiet good taste ! I thought of him as a rather headstrong protege of Walt, prone to sudden enthusiasms for wild schemes and only restrained by the calm moderation of the leader of the group. Even after meeting James, the fact that he actually wrote real science fiction stories over-

I SUPPOSE, in a way, the true nature of the various members of Irish Fandom was a bit of a disappointment to me.

Before I even thought of becoming involved in fanish activities, I had built up mental pictures of the personalities of Walt and of James White from the references scattered in the prozines through the years.

Walt's column in *Nebula* helped to perpetuate many of these impressions in my imagination and, even though Belfast was only a hundred miles or so away, I never plucked up the courage to contact the group until 1958.

I had visualised a group composed of erudite authorities of international reputation, whose slightest expression of displeasure would cause John W. Campbell, Anthony Boucher and Horace Gold to charter a plane to Belfast for consultations on policy. Walt was the doyen of fandom, with an immense knowledge of everything pertaining to science fiction (which I foolishly imagined to be the reason for the existence of fandom). I pictured him as a short tubby man in late middle-age, who wore thick horn-rimmed spectacles and a green velvet smoking-jacket. It was always, I felt, more in sorrow than in anger that he would point out the flaws in *Astounding* and *Galaxy* to Campbell and Gold, who would be pathetically grateful that he

owed me to such an extent that I didn't realise that his urbane and well-dressed appearance was merely a facade behind which lurked a diabolic fiend.

It's a bit passé for anyone in fandom to admit to actually reading that crazy Buck Rogers stuff, so when the author of "Assisted Passage" casually suggested I might care to call and see his complete file of Astounding, I was pretty nonchalant about the way I accepted (as a matter of fact, his shoe polish didn't taste too but I don't allow myself to be swayed by details like that). James was just leaving Oblique House at the time and, pausing only to kick a few autograph hunters out of his way, he made his departure with a casual "See you tomorrow, then". As an afterthought, he added "You'll easily recognize my house - I have a steamroller parked outside".

THE NEXT EVENING I was due to return to Dublin and I took my leave of Walt and Madeleine a bit earlier than usual, so that I could get to the White residence before nightfall. James had dismissed my anxious requests for further directions to his house with a negligent wave of his hand and the statement that anyone would tell me how to get there. Since I did know the address, I rashly took this at its face value - something I have never since done with any statement of James'.

I wended my way through Belfast city without too much trouble, and got myself pointed in what I imagined was the right direction. And that is where my troubles really began.....

A couple of years ago, I was at Hampton Court and went through the elaborate maze kept there for the confusion of tourists. I now know this to be one of the designer's first efforts; after completing it, he retired to an isolated mountain and studied topology for ten years before taking a job with the road planning department of Belfast Corporation. Following a few minor efforts, such as arranging Belfast City Centre so that all the streets leading into it are one-way (the wrong way !), he went on to his tour-de-force. This was the design of Andersonstown, which is where the White family live.

I found my way to the region of Andersonstown all right, with the help of frequent consultations with the natives (who speak a dialect with an occasional chance resemblance to English); but there I slowly sank in a welter of rights, lefts, straight ons, roundabouts, one-ways and cul-de-sacs. Many of the roads were so tamed purely by courtesy, presumably because the steamroller had got lost on the way to the area, and my Superb and Luxurious car was taking a beating comparable only with that given to competitors in the Monte Carlo Rally. A photographic record of this ordeal would have ensured a free supply of spares from the manufacturers for my S.&L. car for the rest of its life, as the publicity value would have at least doubled sales. After traversing one half-mile stretch that would have made a creditable tank training course, I began to feel that I could expect the car to shudder with horror if the word "Belfast" was mentioned at any time in the future in its vicinity.

Dusk was falling an hour later, when I suddenly had the uncanny feeling that I had passed this way before. This was confirmed shortly, when I struck a particularly vicious series of potholes that had left their mark on me previously. I pulled in to the side of the road and lit a cigarette, while I contemplated my predicament. After a while, I realised that the local inhabitants were all hanging over their garden gates and subjecting me to an intensive scrutiny. Obviously, I was the greatest entertainment seen in the locality since John Berry had arrested the local barmaid for bigamy (she wasn't really a bigamist, that was just his excuse for a little private interrogation back at the station !). Parents were leaving their television sets and bringing out babes-in-arms to see me performing lap after lap of the area. One enterprising character was even taking bets on

which direction I'd appear from next. Not wishing to spoil the unsophisticated pleasures of such simple folk, I restarted my S. & L. car and drove on into the gathering gloom.

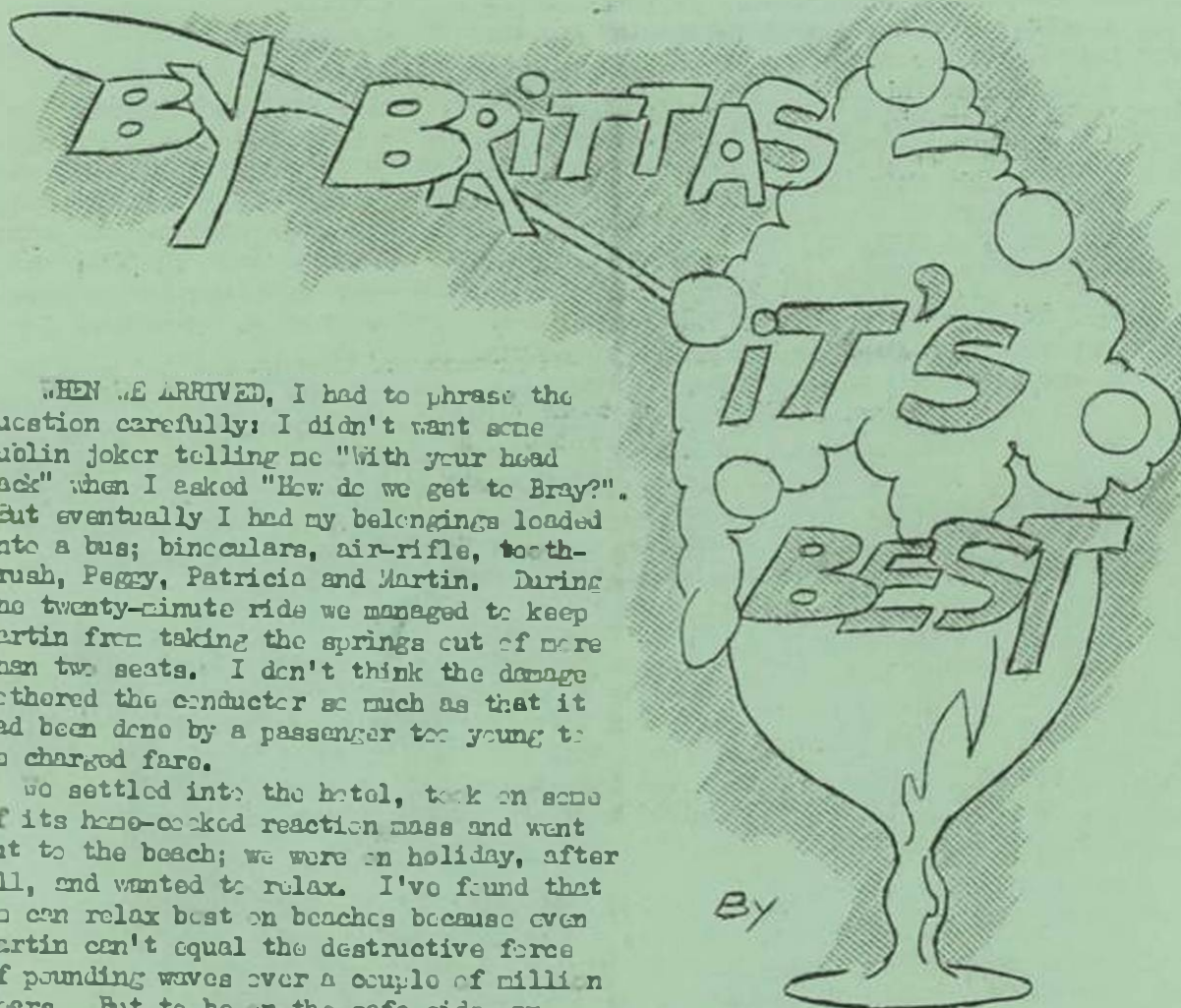
Some ten minutes or so later, while I was pausing at a road junction and mentally tossing a coin to decide which road I'd take, a diminutive youth at the roadside pointed in the direction I'd come from and said: "Mister, I think that man is looking for you". Actually, he didn't say that at all; what he said was; "Moss-ther, Anthon ottamonn slewkin furyoo", but I decided to translate as I don't suppose many readers are fluent in the Belfast patois (which owes many of its quaint terms to the fact that the inhabitants of Belfast grew up in a very hazy atmosphere - it's a sort of a patois de fog-race). Anyway, the remark made me look behind, where I perceived dimly all 75 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches of James White striding down the road and gesticulating frantically in my direction. The 2914-cunce workling loaded himself into my S. & L. car and guided me the hundred yards or so to his house.

It appeared that Peggy had casually remarked that she thought she had seen my S. & L. car go past. James had ignored this until some twenty minutes later, when Peggy said she'd seen me go past again. With a mumbled "Begorra", James had struggled out of his armchair and surveyed the road from his front window. Naturally, by this time my S. & L. car had disappeared from view. He was about to return to his armchair, when the scream of "There he goes again" from Peggy galvanised him into activity and he pursued me down the road and eventually led me to his front room, Peggy, tea and his ASF collection, in that order.

Really, I don't think I was very much to blame for the confusion. I'd passed the house three times and there was definitely no steam-roller parked in front of it or any other house in that road. When I taxed James with this, he explained that he felt it had looked ostentatious in front of the house, so he had had it moved to the space at the side. He had, too!

After all that, it was practically an anti-climax that the drive of 100-odd miles back to Dublin was uneventful. I did take the precaution of getting a native guide to escort me out of the district of Andersonstown, though!





WHEN WE ARRIVED, I had to phrase the question carefully: I didn't want some Dublin joker telling me "With your head back" when I asked "How do we get to Bray?".

But eventually I had my belongings loaded onto a bus; binoculars, air-rifle, tooth-brush, Peggy, Patricia and Martin. During the twenty-minute ride we managed to keep Martin from taking the springs out of more than two seats. I don't think the damage bothered the conductor so much as that it had been done by a passenger too young to be charged fare.

We settled into the hotel, took on some of its home-cooked reaction mass and went out to the beach; we were on holiday, after all, and wanted to relax. I've found that we can relax best on beaches because even Martin can't equal the destructive force of pounding waves over a couple of million years. But to be on the safe side, we were staying only a week.

We had been there for a day when Ian McAlulay and Johnny Hantz came over.

Johnny lives only a stone-throw from Bray, a fact which Martin had just proved.

Johnny is a dark-haired, smiling denizen of the Protestant South of below average height - 6 ft. - who speaks with a brogue almost as thick as the ones he wears.

With a fine old Irish name like Hantz I thought the probability about fifty-fifty between his greeting us with "Cead Mile Failte !" and "Guten Morgen. Wie Heisst das auf Deutsch ?" But instead the sneek said, "Nice to see you again, old man," in pseudo-English.

Ian McAlulay is an entirely different, uh, character. Of average height - 6' 3 1/2" - with good shoulders and a rather low-slung chest, he has a large head - big enough to hold his physics degree and still allow room for it to rattle. He isn't going bald; sensitive, sympathetic types like myself refer to his condition as a high, intelligent forehead.

Ian drove us out to his country seat, a haunted castle his ancestors bought three hundred years ago and, I suspect, really could not afford. They are still

paying off the mortgage, which is probably why it is haunted by a medieval debt-collector — though Ian compulently maintains that the ghost is of a butler who fell down a well.

If only because it affects my sense of wonder like neutronium and timed sardines, I should describe Ian's 'Car' at this point. Ian is pathologically proud of the contraption for some reason, and has impressed his personality on it to such an extent that the manufacturers have long since disowned it. To make room for his long legs he moved the driving seat back into the boot, which meant that the person occupying the seat behind had to hold the spare wheel on his lap. This was me. I know, of course, that trousers of pure wool worsted and a certain polyester fibre are supposed to stay smart regardless, but there are limits. Come to think of it, it does resemble a telephone box on wheels, except that they are supposed to hold sixteen people in extreme discomfort.

During the run to Ian's castle Johnny became very hospitable towards Peggy, breathing down her neck and offering his lap for her to sit on and like that. Peggy refused, charmingly I thought, with the excuse that his knees were bony. Possibly I am had told him about his visit to my den, but just because I like to write wearing a bow-tie and fur-lined flying boots doesn't mean I'm bohemian. (I usually wear other clothes too, of course).

On account of the collapsing East wing Ian suggested we leave the children in the car, which we did. Patricia is three and Martin a year and a half, so they found the back seat of Ian's car actually roomy. We met Ian's folks, who were very nice and gave us tea — and had even laid in a store of water biscuits for me — and told us that they were pleased that Ian was beginning to make such nice, quiet respectable friends like us. Not like the men in trenchcoats who were always calling for him to go out on night work, and who wouldn't drink tea because of the scarves around their faces.

After the children had been put to bed that evening, Ian and Johnny called again to take us to the Eagle's Nest. This is a posh hotel and dance-hall combination which overlooks practically everything. Ian and Johnny entertained us royally; when we weren't dancing or drinking an imported substance called Coca-Cola, Ian related some of the naughty passages from a paper he had collaborated on about radio-carbon dating. Quite a lot of girls hung around our table, I noticed, and while I admit that we were all looking smart in dark, conservatively-cut suits which toned — or at least did not, in Ian's case, clash — with our navy-and-silver HIS toes, we didn't all look like Gregory Peck. Modesty forbids me mentioning the one among us who did looklike Gregory Peck. My puzzlement was put at rest by Johnny who, in a whispered aside, told me that they were all Ian's ex-flees, and that for some reason girls swarmed over Ian like flies. I was about to retort that this was probably because he looked so much like a half-empty jam-jar, but thought the remark unworthy of me and kept silent. Besides, I think that it is merely his apparent age which gets them. His face has a tired, worldly look about it which is a perfect setting for the dark yellow whited of his eyes.

After we had danced ourselves to near-exhaustion Ian suggested that we cool down with some ice-cream and asked if we'd like to go into Dublin to Caffola's. What Antoinette is to grumets Caffola's is to ice-cream guzzlers, and Peggy agreed at once. I felt that tightness about the chest which some of you may remember from air-raids when something straight above your head is whistling, and I checked my wallet. Ian saw me do it and shook his head, insisting that this was going to be his treat. I tried to explain that what I'd warned him about on his last visit to

Walter's was no exaggeration, that it wouldn't be the first time a NEW WORLDS cheque had gone down in ice, but he wouldn't believe me. When he said that as far as I personally was concerned he wouldn't buy me a single peppermint-flavoured jube-jube (He must have known I was going to write this and pre-read my mind) but that Peggy was different, and that a nice girl like her who was forced to live with me for three hundred and sixty-four days of the year deserved a little enjoyment, I decided to let him have his way.

This incident would best have been reported by a bare summary of the facts and figures. Names on the left, prices on the right, and total cost at the bottom.

And I would have done it this way if Ian had not immediately addressed the bill to his District Inspector of Taxes. As it is I'll have to depend on memory.

The affair opened with a Pink Lady, Ian and Johnny ordering Pink Ladies, too. Then Peggy asked if she might have another.

Ian said sure (with an H) and smiled like a benevolent uncle. At the third Pink Lady he was still smiling indulgently, no doubt thinking that that would be the last.

Behind my Bevril and water-biscuit I stirred. The next call was for a Manhattan Parfait, a more complex confection running heavily to diced pineapple, peaches and whole bananas split length-ways. When this, too, had been ordered three times Ian was beginning to look worried. Little that this was just a cooler-down, that Peggy was just getting into her stride. But Peggy likes Ian, and before she switched from Manhattan Parfaits to the larger Carnival Specials she asked him why not let me pay for the next batch, that I was more used to her vice-cream ergies. Ian had the look they have in Monte Carlo when they're wondering if there is enough of their fortune left to buy a revolver and one bullet, but he shook his head, a gentleman to the last.



An hour and a half later Peggy was on Knickerbocker Glorys, her seventh, and the proprietor himself had joined us. Peggy spooned the final dollop of ice-cream from the bottom of the four-foot glass and sighed happily. Ian looked cautiously hopeful, because he had thought she was finished so many times before only to have his hopes dashed with vanilla. Peggy said, "Oh, thank you, Ian, that was lovely." Ian said, in a cracked voice, "Glad you liked it, dear. Another?" I leaned closer, the proprietor leaned closer, and Johnny stayed where he was, stiff against the booth wall. I shook him vigorously to make him wake up: his close proximity to the low-temperature material which had been brought in over the past two hours must have given him frost-bite, and the books tell you that you have to stay awake when that happens or you're dead. When I got back to the conversation, Peggy was saying, "The children are in bed, no housework to worry about, and lots of nice friends. I feel wonderful! I want to celebrate. Do you have something a little different, and maybe bigger than a Knickerbocker Glory.....?"

Apparently the proprietor had. He sighed deeply and in hushed tones began describing . . . Project Iceflow! This was big, he said, this made all other parfaits look like three-penny cones, this was the Cobalt Bomb with icicles! Ian began playing with his fingers and giggling to himself. So they brought this thing in, a three-stage vehicle comprising three separate but complete shells of ice-cream set one on top of the other. Stage One was vanilla laced with pears, Stage Two raspberry and chopped peaches, and Stage Three, which also carried a payload of cherries, toasted coconut and flaked chocolate, was lime-flavoured, the joints between stages being lubricated for easy detachment by a mixture of orange jelly and strawberry jam. And it wasn't a fizzle, it went right down to where it was supposed to go, beautifully.

I left just ahead of Ian, who was settling the bill. I hate to see dumb animals suffer. Outside Peggy thanked Ian and Johnny for showing us such a wonderful time and said that we'd remember it in years to come. Privately, I thought that Ian would never forget it. As we were parting I offered to autograph any copies of NEW WORLDS he might have, and he said that he hadn't the habit of keeping any with my stories in them, which is the reason I'm writing this; then we said goodbye.

As they were leaving, Ian must have overheard Peggy asking me to take her someplace for sausages and chips before we returned to the hotel. I saw Johnny louding in away, gibbering like that butler of his who is supposed to have fallen down a well.

* * * * *

To those who have read this far on the assumption that the foregoing was a piece of my usual calm, lucid and factual reporting, I must now confess that it is nothing but an intelligent extrapolation of surprising accuracy of a sequence of events which at that time had not yet come to pass. In other words, I made it up. My only excuse for this fragrant deception — if you thought the first part smelled, that was just the first of the phew — is that, fearful of missing the rigid Hyphen deadline I prepared that account of our holiday in Bray a few weeks before going there. Now, however, a fortunate combination of circumstances — a high pressure system practically anchored over Ireland and a shortage of dupers on the Portrush golf links — gives me time to produce a factual report.

Here are the facts.

Surprisingly, the original report was very close to the truth, probably because I read it before we visited him and went to endless pains to make it come true. He does have an Old Country House, for instance, whose grounds include an abandoned lead mine, a still-functioning sand quarry and a large green scummy pond in which the butler who haunts his house drowned himself. The house itself is large and rambling, with stables, gables, orchards and stuff like that. The house is reached via a winding road lined with dense, overhanging foliage and abandoned motor cars. It is really a low tunnel pushed through an otherwise impenetrable jungle by Ian's car and his father's station wagon, and anyone trying to get to the house must arrive with their hair full of bird's nests and squirrels.

The incident in the ice-cream parlour was even more fantastic than that already described, involving as it did the tragic figure of a young attendant overwhelmed by Events too mighty in their scope for his puny intellect — though he tried, I grant you that, he really did try to understand what a Bray Head crossed with a Snickerbocker Glory with strawberry jelly and pineapple replacing the pears now-

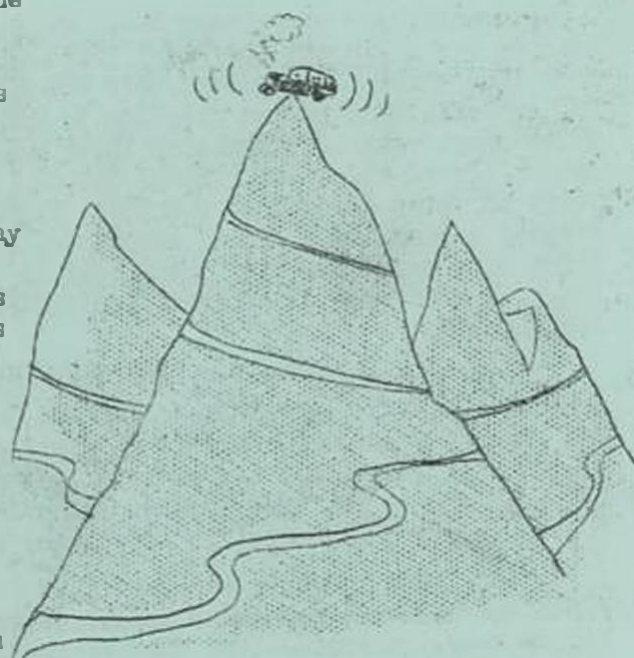
ally found on the third level was. But one item which never did happen was the visit to the Eagle's Nest. Ian or Johnny don't dance a lot. But Ian tried to make things exciting for us in other ways. Also excruciating and nerve-wracking. He tried real hard. And succeeded.

He called for us every night of our stay and on two afternoons as well, sometimes accompanied by Johnny and on two occasions by Madeleine. Walter was staying at Ian's house for the Canada Cup, which is apparently some sort of golf competition, and Madeleine was a comp follower. So far as I was concerned Ian was his usual gay, obnoxious self, though he did exert himself to give the impression that he might one day be a gentleman where Peggy was concerned, by making extravagant compliments and bowing and kissing her hand and like that. He stopped when I reminded him that biting other people's finger-nails was not the done thing where we came from.

Peggy was a little worried over the way Ian and I continually insulted each other for hours on end, and insisted that our two professions and personalities were mutually complimentary, like Ham and Egg-head. We both resented this simile, which was the only point on which we agreed all that week. Johnny was bright and entertaining, when he was with us. Trouble was, even when he was with us very often he wasn't, on account of he is being married soon. Madeleine I've come to know so well over the past twelve years that I've forgotten what she looks like.

He drove us over the Wicklow Mountains, the Dublin Mountains and the Sugarloaf; also to Glendalough, Enniskerry, Dun Loughaire, Brittas Bay, Kilcoole, and very frequently round the bend. His car (car?) proved adequate in that it got us from place to place, but from the time when Johnny and I discussed the Dean Drive in it it was overcome by a peculiar melody. Every ten or fifteen minutes it would go duh-duh-duh-duh . . . For whole minutes the wheel and steering column would vibrate and shudder horribly, Ian would hang on like grim death and shudder with it, his hair falling over his eyes. (You have to see Ian's hair to appreciate this sight properly). Several times the car went in and out of hyperspace, at least. This sort of thing happened so often in the later trips that we stopped mentioning it, although Walter began referring to the car as the judder-mutt.

Most nights Ian brought us to his house for supper, and on the first occasion he showed me his collection, which is very fine, and their three gongs. The one in the entrance hall is a lovely thing, a gong of the first Bong — hit it a solid bash and it goes Clank, but give it a smooth lateral swipe and the result is a deep, rich Bong-a-a. You can go in to supper and come out twenty minutes later and the Bong-a-a still hasn't died away. There was a freak thunderstorm that first night and the electric lights failed, but the lightning more than made up for this. However, the rain on the hot, tarmac road caused it to steam all the way back to our hotel and in the headlights it looked like a real dank, fetid B-footuro miasma. Naturally there were puns. Two of the best being "Miasma bothers me on a night like this" and "What's it like to have a famous author in your mist?"



On one of the nights when Walter and Madeleine were there Ian took us over his estate. We skimmed stones across the pond where the butler had drowned. There were no unearthly manifestations so presumably he didn't mind, or maybe the pams scared him away. Then we climbed over the towering mass of girders which was some kind of sand-sifter. On top it looked remarkably like the bridge of a ship and Walter started calling for marbles and going into a Captain Queeg routine. I tried to get something started about Ian being one of the landed gentry or about the old facade at home, but it never amounted to anything. When we were returning later from the abandoned lead mine chimney, Ian started talking about his record collection and asking what we'd like to hear. It went something like.

Walt: "Debussy's 'Clair de Lune'".
Ian: "I'm afraid I haven't. . ."
Peggy: "Rachmaninov's No 2 in A".
Ian: "I'm awfully sorry, Peggy. . ."
Me: "Rinsky-Korsakov's Scherzerazade?"
Ian: "I'm sorry. . ."
Madeleine: "Sibelius' Karelia Suite?"
Ian: "I'm very sorry. . ."
Walt: "Everybody has Tchaikovsky's 1st Piano".
Ian: "Uh, no."
Me: "Let's just sit around and talk".
Ian: "Don't have that, either".

Next day Ian took Madeleine, Peggy, our two little terrors Patricia and Martin and I to Brittas Bay. He had a terrific lunch which Mrs. McCauley had packed for us while sheltering from the wind behind the car (Mrs. McCauley always packs lunches in this way. Ian tells me. She does it to keep people from jumping on me for bad grammar.). With the food stowed away in the only place where it was really safe from drifting sand, we trooped across the dunes and onto the beach proper. Ian had been giving this bay a terrific build-up and it turned out to be everything he claimed; dazzling white sand, breakers, the lot. Apparently some sort of goshwowoboyobey comment was expected from me on beholding same, so I struck a Shakespearean pose (difficult in bathing trunks) and exclaimed, "Ah, yon Brittas is an honorable strand". After that the only proper thing to do was to get in the water and bathe.

The next day was Sunday, and the last full day we would be spending in Bray. Ian came shortly after lunch to take us to another beach at Kilcoole. A gentle breeze blew, the sun beat down at us, and the breakers were even bigger than at Brittas. By some geological oversight, however, there was no sand. A level expanse of small rocks stretched away on each side of us, not quite large or sharp enough to cut our feet but rough enough to make us shout "Yow!" every time we took a step. Patricia began insisting that we take our shoes off, meanwhile flinging small rocks in all directions, and Ian and Johnny began punning. "Watch out, sandal got in your hair." "Leather alone, it's all part of a fiendish plot." "Shoes pebbly got a good reason for it." And more like that. Again we were forced to submit ourselves in the Irish Sea. But not for long, this time — Ian was forced out after about ten minutes, his hands and feet had gone brittle. Shortly afterwards Johnny and I were picked up by a particularly large breaker which walloped us on our backs, turned us head over heels, rolled us for ten or fifteen yards along the stony sea-bottom and eventually left us high and soaking wet on the beach. As we were limping and yawning back to where we'd left our clothes Johnny stopped suddenly and reached into the seat of his togs. He drew out a large handful of pebbles, regarded them incredulously for a long moment, then said, "I've heard of piles, James, but this is ridiculous."

After tea and with the tribe safely asleep, Ian took us for a last look around Co. Wicklow, ending up again for supper. We stayed as late as we possibly could, and an hour beyond that, just gossiping and generally enjoying ourselves. Ian's folks offered to put us up if we came South again, which was very nice of them. Ian said that I would have to pay dearly for the visit if we did take them up on it, by autographing all the magazines he had in which my stories appeared, and forring Mickey Spillane's name on the rest of his collection. Long after midnight I took a last, loving whack at their gong, Peggy and I said good-bye to Mr. and Mrs. McCulley, and Ian drove us back to our hotel. There was no riasna, but the car gave us a farewell judder.

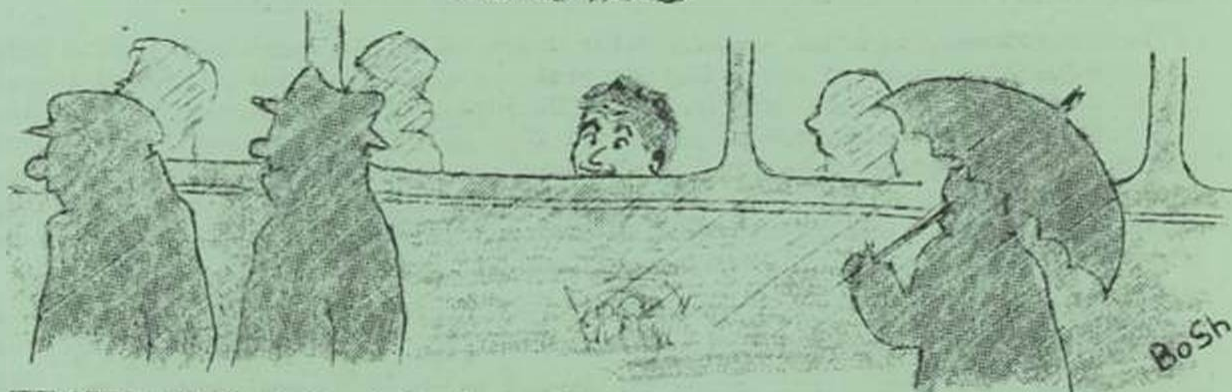
Parked outside the hotel we talked for a long time, trying to offer some return for the hospitality shown us during the past week. I said that Peggy and I would be glad to put Ian up next time he was in Belfast, or give him our leftovers if he was just passing through, and if he should feel any awkwardness about imposing on us thus he could always mow our three lawns. Ian shook his head vigorously and said that he was against mowing lawns, both on general principles and that it resembled hard work. I suggested that he fit scythes to each wing and just drive up and down. Peggy said, "Come anytime, Ian, we'll never be bored to see ya."

Ian made a small whimpering sound and repeated sickly, "Never be Bonadica. Oh, no." Then he said, "Out! Out! I'll have to wash the car now. Go away, goodbye..."

A little sadly we walked across the street to our hotel and on the steps turned to wave to Ian for the last time. Ian was waving back. We waved again, and Peggy blew kisses. Ian waved again, agitatedly. It turned out that he had kept his parking lights on too long and his battery had been low. We had to push him along the scafront for a quarter of a mile before the car would start.



I Have Been Faithful to Thee, Cinema



THE OTHER NIGHT, having left the car in for a much needed grease job, I found myself back with the Belfast Corporation Transport after an extended absence. I was suddenly and forcibly reminded of how, when I was a small boy, my mother hated having to take me onto a bus on a dark, rainy evening. There was a strange hypnotic quality in the sombre dimness of the lights, the drumming of rain on the roof and the smell of soggy tickets which never failed to send me into a trance. I would get a seat to myself, slump down in the corner, peer out at the vari-coloured blurs of light and drift off on yet another adventure. People the bus passed would sometimes notice a pair of eyes glaring at them, from a point approximately one and a half inches above the bottom of a window, and never realise that they had just been transfixed by an arrow, perforated by a bullet or shrivelled up by a betatron ray pistol - depending on which serial was running at the local cinema.

When in one of these moods I was exceedingly difficult to arouse and often had to be led off the bus like an imbecile. On one occasion, having just seen Nelson Eddy in a film, I became so completely absorbed in my role of Bob Shaw, world-famous tenor and consort of beautiful women, that I had to be forcibly restrained from giving several bored passengers a fifth rendition of the only song I knew the whole way through. I think it was "Away In A Manger."

(It would be nice to be able to relate that I quickly passed through this stage, but such is not the case. I was out of my teens before the cold sneer of Bob Shaw, master mind, ceased to be a familiar sight on the Castlereagh Road buses on wet winter evenings. In fact, it was on such a night, in a fit of neurotic grandeur, I decided Ireland was not big enough to hold me and I was going to Canada. I remember sitting alone on the top deck trying the idea on for size while the introspective, melancholy strains of Rachmaninov's Second rose up around me in imaginary applause, mingled with the faint pervasive odour of wet tickets on the floor...)

The films they show nowadays do not seem to be capable of exerting such a powerful effect on young minds.

Possibly it is because the new breed of children, case hardened by television, are different to the generations for whom the weekly visit to the local cinema was

a thrilling, glittering event. But I suspect the real reason is that the movie makers have discarded nearly all the best ingredients that went into the "oldies", and have kept the dross.

Look, for instance, at what has happened to the serial combat epic. The romance, heroics and tragedy have been done away with since the coming of those supersonic broomsticks which completely enclose the pilot and give him time for just one burst before he is over the horizon and out of sight. The human element vanishes as the fliers strive to attain the efficiency and temperament of machines.

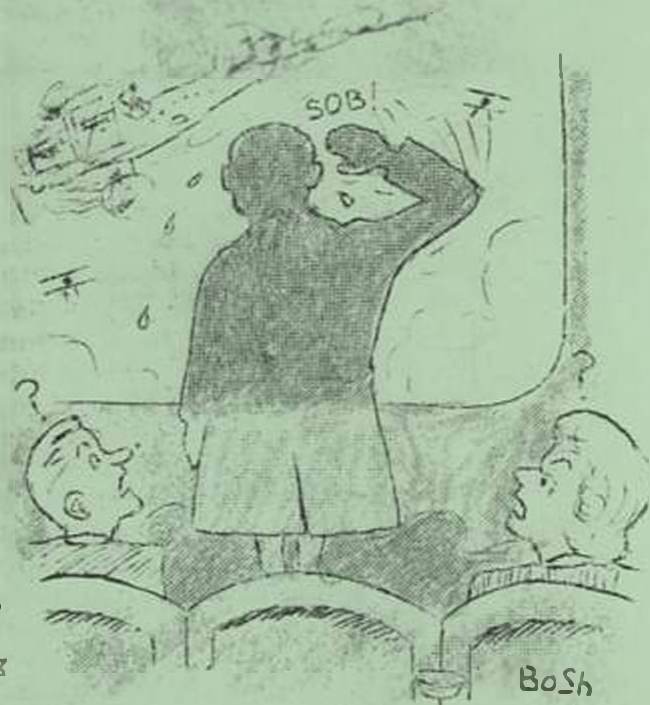
How much better were the pre-war films about the first world war where a dozen bi-planes could swarm all over the one piece of sky for hours. Watching those films I was no longer in a cinema seat - I was there. As far as memory is concerned, I personally flew against dozens of German air aces with names like Heinrich von Sticklegraffier who always led, not merely a squadron or a fleet, but a Circus. There were bombs that you lifted from under the seat and threw over the side by hand, and if you ran out of ammunition it was always possible to nail your opponent with pistol fire.

Those aeroplanes were made of wire and cloth but when they received a direct hit they did not vanish in a puff of smoke the way modern jobs do. They went down in a spectacular flat spin which always allowed ample time for victor and vanquished to stand up and exchange salutes, the tribute that one brave man extends to another. The lumps I got in my throat when such things were going on used to reduce my breathing to strangled gasps which, more than once, became so noisy as to cause alarm among people sitting nearby.

Perhaps impressed by the rigid ethics of aerial combat the film directors developed a code of their own, and nobody ever got killed without several easily recognizable warning signs appearing in advance. You always knew that anybody who, before take off, announced his intention of making just one more run, or who fell victim to a sudden impulse to write his girlfriend a letter, was a goner. Another bad thing was to give away one's good-luck token.

Once in battle a pilot could survive innumerable wavy lines of bullet holes all over his craft, or even, although this was more dangerous, a close-up of a wire brace snapping, but let him get hit in the face with a squirt of black oil and you knew he had had it. No amount of pushing up of goggles, knuckling of eyes or wrestling with controls could save him once that had happened.

Even the weapons were more romantic in those days. Twin machine guns synchronised to fire between the propellers were practically de rigueur, but I never trusted them. Firing between the propeller blades always seemed to me a risky business at the best of times, perhaps because I could never figure out just how it worked. Bob Shaw, D.F.O., used to limp home from many an imaginary engagement in his unique-



ly blazoned aircraft that had been crippled by its machine gun synchroniser going wrong and letting the guns whittle the propellor blades down to stumps. It was only by using all of his skill and giving the engine full throttle that he managed to stay up at all.

So acute was the film maker's understanding of the public taste in aircraft amusement that they completely disregarded what was on the actual planes. The old British S.E.5 and 5a never had twin Vickers firing through the props - but they were always shown with them. Would they do that today? Would they have twin Vickers firing through the props on one of these Lightnings or Super Sabres?

No! And quibbling about the fact that these are jet aircraft reveals the kind of mind that is ruining the film industry. Now that I think of it, this is probably what has gone wrong with science fiction - can you name just one story where the spaceships have twin Vickers firing through the props?

I had intended to explain what has gone wrong with detective and Western films too, but I've used up too much space already. Perhaps at another time. Right now I've got to start work on a modification to the Shaw family car - I think I can get them firing through the fan if I move the radiator out of the way

Post Scripts

People have been kind enough to point out that some of the addresses in the last issue were out of date. Sorry, but the fact is some of those letters were pretty old. If I'd thought I'd have realised that places like Wagner St. Savannah, Battle Creek Michigan and Drayton Park Highbury are now deserted hulks...bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang, as Wansborough put it when contemplating The

White Horse...but to delay stencilling while I looked up the Great Card Index at work, where I keep it, would have been the onset of Creeping Perfectionism which has killed more ~~fun~~ than you could shake a stylus at. I do apologise, especially to those good people who didn't get their letters printed at all, just their incorrect addresses..talk about adding insult to injury..but I had this idea that it was wrong to segregate people who didn't happen to have their letters quoted into a sort of ghetto at the end. Because a letter that just comments simply and sincerely on the individual items in a fanzine is just as welcome to the editor as one of general interest, and more so to the contributors. Anyway I'm nearly up to date now, all the old letters but two being among this lot, plus some only a fortnight old..

Rich Snoddy, 2962 Santa Ana St., South Gate, Calif. - It looks like you maybe seeing me thru another dry spell. Back in 52-55 Hyphen was about the only fanz I kept getting and reading...and now I just putter around with my stamps and old fan friends: a sticky lot at the best. But old fanz, as old friends, are always welcome in the cluttered cave of the gaffite... I think I can see the reason why Hyphen has lasted all these years. Walter A. Willis is not so much a fan as an institution. People join you like a club, and thus like old clubs such as LASFS you keep living on. Hyphen is sort of a club zine, which has had a rather long line of co-editors. Yet it has always remained Hyphen in name and text. Llewellyn has come in the hour of need, and again the familiar odd size green fanzine floats through the mail. More power to him. All fandom's blessings on him and his stout arm and back.

Marvin Wingfield Jr., General Delivery, Williamsburg, Va.
Cinch Harris, "Carolyn", Lake Ave., Rainham, Essex--Keep
 that McAuley, but on no account let him get near your golf
 clubs. It was less than a month ago when you told me that
 you were reviving H, and it's a bit of a shaker to actually
 receive the thing during the same year as the gestation
 note. (Many a true word spoken in gestation.)...I still think
 Headham was a bigger loss to fandom than Liney was. I never
 tire of that weird, but pleasant distortion of the mundane
 world that Eric inhabits, and although he was bitter about things the bitterness
 never crept into anything he did for Turner. (Or was edited out?)



Ethel Lindsay, Courage House, 6 Langley Ave., Surbiton, Surrey
 -- Blessings be upon Ian McAuley's head (well, they're better
 than nothing) what an estimable young man he must be to be
 sure...Isn't it a pity Eric gave us all a fond farewell? I'd
 have loved to see what happened over Frances Evans' reaction
 to that paragraph of his about her. Of course it's a pity any-
 way, for no one else except Nigel Lindsay ever managed to com-
 prehend the sheer wickedness of Eric in full spate. Do you remem-
 ber that time in Harry Turner's when Eric was describing a forth-
 coming opus involving dead flies in lampshades? I remember the
 expression on your face, and then your saying to him "You know, your thought pro-
 cesses are difficult to follow." Wacky all right, but kindly in his way and gener-
 ous, fandom could do with a lot more like him. Right now fan writing on an imagin-
 ative and different kind is at a very low premium. (Yes, I remember, he proposed a
 translucent plastic spider for keeping flies out of lampshades. It was when he got
 onto translucent plastic flies that he lost me.)



Archib Mercer, 434/4 Newark Rd., N. Hykeham, Lincoln
Harry Turner, 10 Carlton Ave., Romiley, Cheshire
Rex Barnett, 7 Southway, Arthurs Ave, Harrogate
Arthur's cover was superb. The only criticism I
 have is that there are 47 eyes staring from the
 wall. Who in American fandom is a Cyclops, pray?
 (That's our Ron.) I was really fired with enthus-
 iasm about the Glass Bushel, and for me the place-
 ure was one which has been few and far between....
 The letter column was of course excellent. It's a
 slight help I suppose when fans write you letters
 like Jim Hansen's, but I've a suspicion that the editing helps too. One thing about
 the editing that worries me is that I just can't, from experience, take anything
 unusual in Hyphen at its face value. What for instance has Boyd Roeburn done to
 deserve a minus instead of an equal sign at the introduction to his letter? (Shih.
 Hadn't you heard?) Or for that matter what about the inverted commas denoting
 the end of the Paul Dwyer warning in the John Berry garden piece? Every time I
 open a bracket I think of the time you noted that I'd left one such bracket un-
 closed in PLCY as I consider myself justified in making this criticism: indeed,
 I've waited about three years to get even. (The fact is that after finishing my
 piece about slugs I, Paul Dwyer, was so relieved to get it off my chest that I
 did a few articles illos etc under assumed names like Shaw, Thomson, Hamon, Temple,
 Rindergate, White etc and asked Walt and Ian to publish them. I'm going back to
 my gardening now. You don't think you wrote this letter, do you?)"

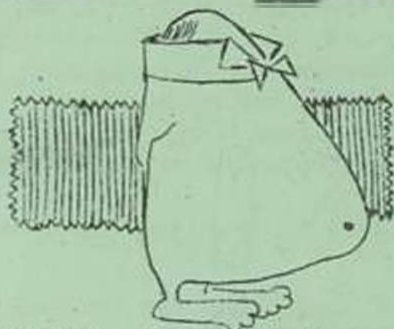
(--and after all that I checked H25 and found that the quotes
 had been closed. Grrrrr.)

Don Emery, 93 Hemlock St., St. Thomas, Ontario -- well, it's close to two years since I screwed up enough ambition to write a fan letter. If this fact inclines you to think of me as lazy, you're wrong. It appears that certain types, like me, are born with just a certain amount of wit which when used up, like youth, is gone forever. Now, if you think of me as sitting cogitating for two years, trying to invent a pun, you're more right than wrong. Old age creeps upon us, desiccating and necrotizing our brains, with the aid of TV, slick magazines and frozen foods.

Someone tore the backcover off Hyphen 24. I guess sex makes men do strange things.

Starting with the letter column and working backwards, I found this H24 incomprehensible. Starting at the front and reading backwards clarified matters somewhat, and residual confusion is a permanent resident here anyway. ERK's Search kind of irritates me; I always felt I couldn't rike a writer too deeply, but wasn't sufficiently floridish to figure a way to rike the reader, as ERK does.

The idea of helping neofans to an understanding is comforting, but could be carried too far. Consider what would happen if fans started explaining in their letters ... "Today I received the 24th ish (that's short for issue) of '-' (that's short for Hyphen) (that's among other things a pun on 'Hi, fan' (fan is a plural of fan (that's what we call a person interested in sf (that's short for science fiction (of course we never discuss that)))))).



Ray Nelson, 212 Columbia Ave., Berkeley 8, California -- There is something boring about a fanzine that goes on doing nothing but being funny year in and year out. One finds oneself yearning for a little solid sermonism, even a bit of tastefully presented fuggheadedness. Every comedy act needs a straight man, you know. Your line really needs some sort of pompous blowhard or Col. Blimp type full of dignity and platitudes. Somebody for the rest of your writers to ridicule mercilessly. Have you ever seriously considered getting McCarr to do a column

for you, or maybe Marion Astra Zimmer Bradley could write a little something on clearing up fandom. You know what I mean.

It's luck, we might even dig up Claude Ogler to do a little something on the Comic Circle. Did you know I used to belong to the Comic Circle? I still do, spiritually. After all, somebody has to rule the world. Why not fandom?

Hurdiest of all in the issue was (unintentionally) Russell. I can see it now.. the office of a major magazine:

Editor: I'm sorry, Skidmore, I'll have to reject your story.

Skidmore: But...but...I need the money badly.

Ed: Maybe so, but this thing hasn't even got a plot.

Skidmore: I know, but I typed the whole thing with my toes. It isn't easy on a writer to lose both arms in an air raid...

Bob Farnham, 506 2nd Ave., Dalton, Ga.

Jim Groves, 29 Latham Rd., London E6

Les Gerber, 201 Linden Blvd., Brooklyn 26

Lo Meskys, 723 45 St., Brooklyn 20. NY





Seamus O'Bosh, I.R. E., Crumlin Road, Belfast — as you may or may not know, the glorious Army of the Republic regards with disapproval the activities of other organisations in this country — no matter how much their actions or principles resemble its own. If we are to achieve unity we must act with unity.

I must inform you that you are being watched and that we generally manage to obtain copies of your Green Broadsheet — so be warned!

You will no doubt be shocked and ashamed to learn that the recent lull in our battle against the occupying forces was caused solely by your fumbling mistaken efforts to bring over American mercenaries by means of T.A.F. (Troops & Arms For Freedom?). On his last fund raising trip to the States our leader only collected 42 cents in cash, plus 83 January '60 IRs and 500 odd badly duplicated shoots with Elik and Enay scribbled on them. Thinking they were a new kind of credit note he took them to our bank but the manager said they were worthless and that, furthermore, he thought Kyle should get the vote. We are having a thorough check made on this manager.

Another mistake you have been making is allowing your Broadsheet to fall into the hands of the wrong people. One of the men on your subscription list is a member of the RUC and, furthermore, he has succeeded in breaking the code you use on the back cover. Just last week he deciphered something from it, shouted "Sophisticated man's Bet! Willis has gone too far!" and hopped onto his bicycle and rode off towards the Upper Newtownards Road carrying his revolver. Had our observer not had the foresight to remove the bicycle wheels in advance you might have fallen before an English bullet. As it is Berry managed to cover about a mile travelling on the gear and sprocket wheels alone and was last seen, trapped in an old trainline, heading in the direction of Mountpottinger Depot.

The IRs saved you that time but we will not always be able to spare men who should be on important work.

Another thing we do not like is your latest policy of recruiting men from below the Border and placing them in key scientific jobs in the Establishment. It looks as though you are planning some weapon of mass destruction. When we told our leader that McMulay was in Belfast checking upon the carbon particles in the atmosphere he said, "This is tampering with the workings of God's realm — there are places where man is not meant to vet soot."

As you can see, our leader is very advanced in philosophy — he has a saying for everything. Only last year a number of horses we had rounded up to form a cavalry division broke out of the stable and got away. Anybody else would have said it was no use closing the stable door after the horse was gone, but our leader said, "There's no point in dogging a fled horse." Give up, Willis, you just can't compete against a brain of that calibre.

We have always assumed that you were on our side even though you were getting in our way, but now you have to prove yourself. Instead of ineffectually stuffing your local pillar box with wads of scrap paper every now and again, blow it up or something. Failing this we will expect you to take an unpaid job on the staff of our official organ, the Sinn Fein Newsletter. Your first job would be to think up a new title — we are fed up getting contributions intended for Vinco Clarke's SEN.

George W. Charters, 3 Lancaster Ave., Bangor, Co. Down==

Dear Madeline, This is being written in the very early morning, five o'clock to be precise. Knocking the devil out of a typer at this ungodly hour might be described as early morning exercise. (There seems to be a queer small around here: perhaps I've saved that pun too long).

I had intended writing a letter of comment on H25, and indeed had actually written, "BoSh shines, as usual, in The Gloss Bushel..." when I noticed that I am stigmatised on the cover, for all freedom to see, as a layabout. A layabout they call me! So why should I tire myself out for them, the cheeky young whippersnappers? Just because Ayphen is the best fanzine is no reason for them to insult me. Consequently I am not going to make with the fulsome flattery, the effusive encomiums and the panegyric poems. In any event they get enough kuḏos from others.



I have just finished reading Lady Chatterley's Lover. I found it extremely diverting because all the time at the back of my mind I was picturing the holy horror of the people who read it when it was first written. And I'll lay 6 to 4 a lot of those Victorians obtained copies. (I suppose it was this queer sense of 'humour' that made me laugh at High Noon, in the big scene when Gary Cooper went up the street to meet the outlaws, all alone except for 500 people behind the camera!) I am looking forward, however, to the illustrated edition.

To finish off, I would like to tell you how James White met an extra-terrestrial. One day he stood at his counter singing happily to himself. Don't ask me what he was singing. I know you sing because you believe Ransom is a lay of wife, Walter sings "Lay down upon the Swannee River" when he should be working in the Minstrelsy of Home Affairs, but I don't know about James.

Anyway there was a sudden commotion. A loud buzzing noise was heard, then a clearing of voices. The buzzing swept closer and suddenly the origin of it was there in front of his face: a spaceship, beautifully made, but only a quarter of an inch long. A telepathic 'voice' came from it, pouring words and ideas into James's head much faster than mere speech could do it. But he was ready for it and his brain soaked up the messages like blotting paper.

It appeared the spaceship came from a very heavy planet about 4,567, 890 light-years away, taking π as 3.141592653589. Normally the ship was silent, but something was wrong with the engines, and the anti-gravity was failing. On the home planet this would not be serious, but here on Earth it was, because without the anti-grav the ship weighed about 15,000 tons. And 15,000 tons cannot be treated with levity. Even as the alien 'spoke' the engines failed and the tiny ship dropped like a bullet through the counter, the wooden floor and the concrete foundations.

The building had scarcely stopped quivering when the manager, followed by a small multitude of assistants and customers, dashed up and skidded to a halt on the other side of J's counter. "Where is the b— thing?" he yelled, barely remembering in time the management's inflexible rule about swear words.

"Boo, sir?" said James, playing for time. "I thought it sounded more like a wasp." As he spoke, one hand was gradually bringing a sheet of paper to cover that hole. He knew who would have to pay for it.

"Boo or wasp—WHERE IS IT?" yelled the Manager, and then he saw the hole. "AND WHAT'S THAT?"

"Ah, I think," said James hopelessly, "it's counter-sunk."

I still seem to detect a queer odour around here!

Perhaps I should mention the Christmas Card, even though it was obviously done without our assistance. Mind you, it was not as good as I expected, but then I didn't think it would be.

I will call soon for a cup of tea.

Myrick, Rte 2, Box 575, Albuquerque, New Mexico
 Ron Allik, Room 109, 2315 Dwight Way, Berkeley 4, Cal.
 George Spencer, 8302 Lombybrook Lane, Chevy Chase 15, Md.
 Bob Lichtman, 6137 S. Croft Ave., Los Angeles 56

W. Ourobours, 402 Maple Ave., Fond du Lac, Wis. -- It was good to see Kyphen turn up in the mailbox again and it shows how long out of custom I am at commenting on it for in practice I might once have said "good to see H turnip greenleafed, with radish staples (swelp me, they are) (I can afford them on my new calery) in the mail again; lettuce hope it happens again soon" or some similar painful and obviously contrived juggementical wittory. As you can see, I have matured in the interim (and other places) and nowadays am able to restrain my wild impulses towards such flights of whimsy. It beats me how I could have ever been parsley inclined toward them.

...It's doubtful if Coleman's physicist friend will be able to get any more information on birth control out of the next President than he did from Ike.

Would you say a prophylactic was a sort of phallic thimble?

I drove myself half daft trying to figure which of the bequotes was the one you referred to in the comment on Pelz's letter. Finally decided it was the one, credited by Bloch to Madeleine, "HEDUAN ELLISON RAN INTO ME WITH A CIGARET IN HIS MOUTH AND BURNED A HOLE IN THE KNEE OF MY PANTS." If this isn't the one, then what was???

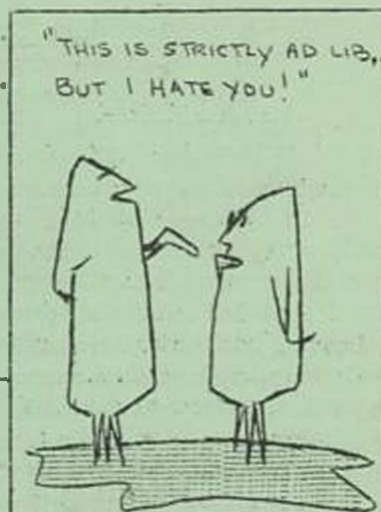
(Welcome back, Dean Grennell! You don't catch me printing that bequote again, but it was in H6 and it started WHEN YOU'VE BEEN A FARED AS LONG AS I HAVE... It was Chuck, of course. I wonder if Dean in his choice of scubriquet was thinking of Sheila Ashworth's difficulty in pronouncing The Worm Ourobours, so that it is her custom to refer to it as The Worm Smith. As her husband says, one supposes it is all right, but it does seem to lack something }

Ken Cheslin, 18 New Farm Rd., Stourbridge, Wores.

Sam Byrne, 2615 N. Fountain, Wichita 20, Kansas -- As a footnote to Grennell's item on the lawn mania, there is a charming local practice. The Bermuda grass grown here turns a dismal brown in the winter so enterprising local citizens go out in the fall with spray guns and paint the lawn. At the present the popular color is a virulent chrome green, reminiscent of the vegetation of Aldebaran II, but as the practice becomes more popular I expect patterns and pastel effects. This would be followed by the use of tinted concrete or, for families with children, styrofoam plastic—a new market which will bolster the US economy and increase the gross national product.



I submit that there are essentially two, not incompatible, ways to write sf. One is to do an ungodly amount of research, like Hal Clement. The other is to weave a compelling spell which will ensnare both author and reader: of this the exemplar seems to me to be Doc Smith. Since 90% of authors are congenitally lazy and the modern crop are too conscientiously sophisticated to be enchanted with anything short of a running noose, it follows that the product suffers. Incidentally I think this is why analog prospers: Campbell may be nutty but he is always excited about something, be it diemetics or pai, and the mag seems alive. (Pity he wouldn't get excited about science fiction, or even editing. Incidentally does anyone notice a weird allegorical connection between those two paragraphs of Sam's. Isn't modern sf just a sort of plastic corn?)





John Champion, Box 5221, University Station, Eugene, Oregon =
 += My colleague Mr. L.S. Bourne and I have become rather dis-
 tressed over certain statements made by one Chuck Harris in H
 24. We're quite aware of Harris's prowess in the field of which
 he speaks and his true devotion to the cause, but when he says
 the Anglia cannot be improved on as a vehicle for smuggling, we
 feel he has not gone into the matter thoroughly enough. We defi-
 nitely think American cars have it over European ones in at
 least one respect—the back seat.

Now, we don't want to go into extensive detail as to how we
 reached this conclusion, but we have had some experience in
 both European & American models (cars, that is). In the European field, the reclin-
 ing front seat of the Simca Aronde has some unquestionable psychological advant-
 ages, but when it comes to back seats... As examples, I offer the back seat of the
 1954 Plymouth station wagon, which also lacks arm rests and ash trays; and Mr.
 Bourne says the virtues (probably not the not just) of his 1949 Hudson sedan are
 not to be impugned. (The arm rests and ash trays are recessed.) These are only the
 more notable examples of course: actually just about any full-size American car
 will do. The newer ones, especially Chrysler, have made an excellent name for them-
 selves. In fact one might almost say a family name.

However, we're willing to put the
 question to a fair test. Let Harris
 send us two young and appealing fem-
 ales, both of them aware of the potent-
 ialities of his Anglia. We will then
 attempt to demonstrate the superiority
 of the domestic type over a period of
 several months. After the four of us
 have put the matter thoroughly to the
 test, we will let the females decide.

Rory Fullmer, 7241 E. 20 St., Westmin-
 ster, California += That was a great
 article in H24 by EFR. It makes the
 sizzling criticisms of Damon Knight
 seem cheap and a sort of intellectual
 snobbery that seems to be the trademark of critics in the theatrical world. More
 tolerance and kindness, and less display of mordant humor, which one suspects is
 more for the ego-blasting of show-offs, would make fandom a better place.



Len Moffatt, 10202 Balcher, Downey, California += Your editor-
 ial to the contrary, H24 was far from being a lousy ish. Of
 course I did notice a definite avoidance of the good healthy
 humor which previously prevailed. Is H going 'seroon' on us?
 For instance, the Atom cover, a dull depressing pic of a jaded
 fan's room cluttered with unanswered mail and a reference to
 dull depressing smogbound Lorder... Hal's heartrending account of
 the tribulations of the would-be writer.... SOUTHERN Irish fans
 creeping into the mag which has always stood for the best in

Northern IF... BoSh's confession of the trauma and pain of days best forgotten... and
 the letter column sad, sad also, typified by Bloch jumping on the bandwagon of those
 starry-eyed still disillusioned seroons who want to make expensive movies with noth-
 ing to go on but dreams and aspirations—just refusal to face reality. Really now,
 does Bloch really think that Keenan Wynn would be willing to portray Perry Ackerman
 on the screen! Now, if he'd said Ed Wynn...

Al Birchby, 1 Gloucester Ave., Levanshulme, Manchester 19
 += The Homes & Gardens contributions from Harry Turner
 were worth printing, though slightly dated. Harry has often
 said during pauses in the conversation, reflectively and with
 a dying fall: "I really must do something about the Homes &
 Gardens issue of NOW & THEN; I've got it all on stencil you
 know." Then I usually fancied I heard a strain of Saint-Saens
 outside the window, played by a blind beggar man as he shiv-
 ered in the snow. (It was me, looking for material.) I felt
 embarrassed, because I knew there was no N&T to publish then in.



If the heart-cry from Dean Gremell had seen the pages of H earlier, someone
 would surely have set him right over his failure to make rhubarb wine. There's al-
 ways some know-all. Rhubarb is the most difficult of all wines to make, because its
 acidity will chew the surface off any vessel used for fermenting. The older the
 rhubarb, the greater the acidity. In fact, the gritty flavour of the old stems is
 mostly due to crispy chewy calcium oxalate crystals.

So I should say that what Dag did first was to brew himself a nice mix of alcohol
 dissolved in spent oxalic acid and then distil from it a set of sub-alcohols to the
 ethyl he was looking for. Propyl, butyl and amyl alcohol, probably, the good old
 "fuzzle oil". No wonder it tasted a bit off. There's always some know-all...

I'm glad to see that H'phen's being tidied up now that McAlay has joined the
 staff. Even that tatty old lighthouse on the back cover - what has made you repaint?
 Is the Kingdom of Hyphen at hand?

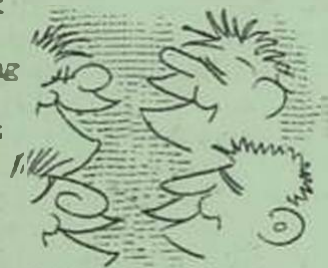


Colin Freeman, Ward 3, Scotton Banks Hospital, Ripley Rd.,
 Knersborough, Yorkshire += I am not a fan, but because
 of an unfortunate accident (Ron Bennett entered my life) I
 suddenly find myself peeping through a keyhole into the
 fascinating world of fandom. When I started publishing my
 own zine SCRIBBLE I asked Ron to send it out as a flier
 with Skyrack as it seemed a good way of increasing our
 circulation. I was hardly prepared for the flood of letters
 and zines that followed. My first impressions were that
 fans were a crazy, useless crowd. Sort of intellectual
 beatniks. However as the letters arrived I soon altered
 this smothering attitude to one of gratitude and deep-

ening interest. The zines I received in trade were a different matter. Most of them
 were either almost illegible or completely incomprehensible. I had resigned myself
 to the fact that fandom and its mystic ways would be forever beyond my reach. A
 strange thing happened then. H'phen arrived. I'm a glutton for punishment, so I
 read it. I understood it. I enjoyed it. I was extremely puzzled. I arrived at the
 only possible conclusion. H'phen must be a lousy fanzine. This Willis must be a be-
 ginner. I only had to compare H with my other of zines to see that. Why, he wasn't
 even advanced enough to use bad grammar. The words didn't run into each other and
 it was even punctuated correctly. Then, what surely must be the worst crime of all,
 it was even comprehensible and enjoyable to a non-fan like me. (What is happening
 to Hyphen?)

Mike Deckinger, 85 Locust Ave., Millburn, NJ += Millburn probably mistook the sewer
 round Bloch's house for a moat. I suppose you know the latest fad in American homes
 these days is to build a house with a running sewer completely surrounding it. This
 has become even more of a fad than the combination cesspools and swimming pools one
 finds so often... Speaking of birth control information, as Coleman does, I have in-
 fallible advice for women who are eager to learn how to prevent childbirth. Every
 night take two aspirins with water, and that's all. This will positively prevent
 painless childbirth: if it doesn't, you've been cheating. (Or your husband has been
 coming home for lunch.)

Letter to Bob, 10 Wellington Square, Cheltenham. +++ Your remark in reply to Bruce Pelz that you can only evaluate humour by counting the number of people laughing seems to me to be taking democracy to an absurd extreme. Agreed that the only way to tell if anything is funny is to see if it's laughed at (Didn't Raddington consider a possible science of geology? The geologist presented with a joke would analyse it logically and, after careful consideration of its structure and components, calculate a coefficient. If this reached a sufficiently high value the joke was established to be a funny one. He would then laugh.) but can one then say more than "he (the person observed) thinks that's funny" and leave it at that. To tell someone who's in stitches that the joke isn't funny because a vote has shown that a majority haven't laughed at it is not going to be very popular. (No, but it's what an editor has to tell himself. Since humour is entirely subjective, the only evaluation he can make is statistical. In other words if a majority of his readers think a joke isn't funny, then it isn't funny for his purposes and shouldn't be printed; because apart from the waste of space, people are inclined to be annoyed by jokes they don't understand. The only alternative is to present the joke in such a way that people who wouldn't understand it don't even know that it's there. This is the art of publishing an esoteric fanzine.)

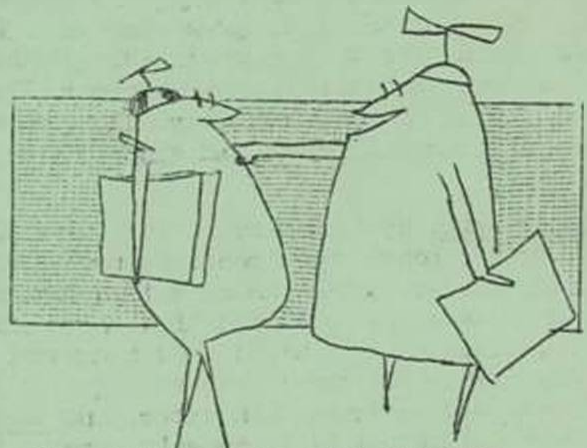


In a magazine put out by the Southampton Teachers' Association I saw the following: "I must apologise for a faulty duplicator, which made the word 'Wednesday' appear as 'Thursday' in some copies." And you think you have trouble with yours!

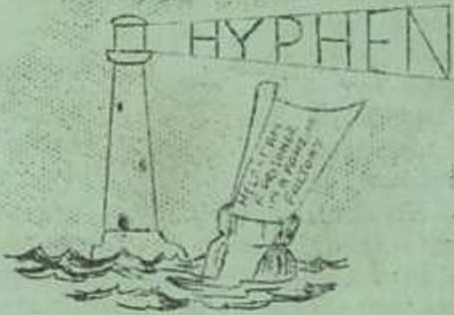


Walter Breen, 1205 Paralta Ave., Berkeley 6, Calif. +++ Much as I respect EFR, I have to harden my heart against his bleeding heart oratory...The parallel with the limbless veteran is barely accurate: Machin could be reasonably sure that people in charge of the art exhibition would know the circumstances under which he produced the painting....As long as patronage of creative people is obsolete, the creators who make a living on those who produce what sells. Worse luck.

Which leads into a second look at patronage. Most people think of it in terms of its spectacular failures—Mozart, Schubert—and assume that it died because it became obsolete in a modern industrialised world. This could not be further from the truth. Patronage has been highly successful in quite a number of instances—the poet Horace, Haydn, Scarlatti, in more recent times Tchaikovsky, and in the last few decades Sibelius. Patronage did not die out because it wasn't successful. It has become rarer in the last few centuries because the French Revolution and similar political crises destroyed the patrons' wealth and sometimes their lives, and more recently the income tax structure has performed a similar Good Deed....The creative artist is, by and large, likely to go hungry unless he produces what will sell, so we are treated to the spectacle of the finest writers leaving the field of sf to go to Hollywood, and to a daily ration of crud from the radio and tv: the creators' major patron, the public, has a taste for superficial crud above anything else, whereas the earlier philanthropic patrons were at least highly educated and able to appreciate genuine future-oriented talents



* CONGRATULATIONS, YOU HAVE JUST PUBLISHED THE FIRST FANZINE FOR 1961 *



HYPHEN 26
January 1961

From A. Willis & I. McCullay
170 Upper Wards Rd.,
Belfast 4, N. Ireland

PRINTED MATTER
(renewed rate)

eavesdroppings

WHERE'S THE PANIC BUTTON? OH, I WAS SITTING ON IT.....I REFUSE TO THINK OF BEN ELIA AS A MURDERER.....SHE NEVER BELIEVES ANYTHING I TELL HER UNTIL IT'S CONFIRMED BY A MURDER.....WELL, IF FLODDY ISN'T A WAY OF LIFE, WHAT IS?.....CAN YOU FIX ME UP WITH A SENSE OF FALSE SECURITY?.....HE DEC LAUGHS LAST NIGHT GET JOKE.....IF HE REMOVED HIS HEAD HE'D BE CHARGED WITH INDICENT EXPOSURE.....PEOPLE TRY TO HATE ME, BUT THEY JUST



CAN'T DO IT.....I HAVEN'T HAD A LIE ON SINCE I WAS MARRIED... ..CAN YOU TELL ME ANYTHING TO THE DETRIMENT OF HEATCLIFFE? ..REALITY IS BASICALLY AN UNPROMISING THING.....GOT ANY

BUT CARES? SORRY, NO BELIEF FOR THEM.....I LOOKED AT YOU AND YOU REMIND ME MY ARMS. MY WHAT A GOOEY MESS YOU ARE.....HE'S A COLOSSUS ONLY WHEN HE'S STORED.....AND DO YOU SOLEMNLY SWEAR TO LOVE, HONOUR AND BUNG UP THE DRYING-UP CLOTH?.....HEY, WHEN I WENT INTO THE WHITE HORSE, CARILL WAS THE FIRST TO SHOUT "BUY HIM A DRINK".....THEY PAKE IT IN THE CHEMISTS ROUND THE CORNER—IT'S A LOCAL ANAESTHETIC.....IF I KNOW IS WHAT I READ IN THE ENCYCLOPEDIA.....I FEEL JUST AS I ALWAYS DO WHEN SOMETHING NICE HAPPENS TO ONE OF MY FRIENDS—SICK ..HE BITES THE HEADS OFF NEOFEN—A SORT OF LITERARY GEEK.....THAT SINCERE STUFF IS DEAD EASY TO WRITE.....HEAVEN KNOWS HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE FOR FERDINAND PECHOT TO KILL OFF SE COMPLETELY.....THEY'RE PUBLISHING HIS APPRECIATION ISSUE FOR CHRISTMAS—A SORT OF EULOGY.....HE KEEPS TALKING ABOUT PUBLIC HALL BUT I CAN'T SEE WHAT ALL THE FUZZ IS ABOUT.....I HAVEN'T ROGGED ANY PATTIES FOR YEARS.....I COULD TELL A HANSARD EVER A WHILE OFF—EVEN IF HE WASN'T MOVING A HEMSE.....OF COURSE I KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A ROCKET AND A GINE—I'M A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE HIS.....WILL CORR, TED PAULS, BOB 5, MIKE DECKINGER, EFR 3, BOB COULSON, TERRY CORR, WAG 6, WALTER BREEM, KAN HED-berg, BILL BRINEY, CHUCK HARRIS, JAMES WHITE

