

THE EDITOR:

MAY 1965.

Price: Threepence.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

-Chris Guy.
-Ron Clarke
-Ken Hobson.

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT:

Ron Clarke
78 Hedgrave Rd.,
Normanhurst,
SYDNEY.

TYPIST:

-Rhonda Rees.

CONTENTS:

EDITORIAL	Ron Clarke
ARTICLE	Bertram Chandler.
STORY	Ron Clarke
Correspondence.		

EDITORIAL:

Seventh Australian Science Fiction Convention.

Here we are with another issue and, at last, something worthwhile to report. It seems the s-f fans down in Melbourne have decided to throw off some of their apathy (which is something we ought to do, too.) and have announced that the "7th Australian Science Fiction Convention" will be held in Melbourne in the Easter holidays next year- which is 1966, in case someone is wondering- that is, April 8,9,10 and 11. The "First Report",

dated April 15th, 1965 states that "the greater part of the program will be held on the Saturday and Sunday, April 9th and 10th. Membership is 15/- (\$1.50) for those attending and 10/- (\$1.00) for those unable to attend. Members will receive all advance notices, the convention booklet and a Convention report.

"Address all correspondence, and make cheques or Money Orders payable to J.M. Foyster, P.O. Box 57, Drouin, Victoria, Australia".

Sounds O.K. to me, I'm going. How about you ?.

Many people will receive two issues of THE MENTOR at the same time. This is because of postage rates. The details of how to keep up your 'subscription' to THE MENTOR were given in the editorial in the previous issue. Please note the price change. The whole thing is voluntary. If you think that a particular issue is worth the higher price it's up to you. However, the minimum price is three pence (or the other methods, as you wish). If anyone who receives this fanzine can draw fairly well, or knows of someone who can wield a mean pen, the editors of THE MENTOR would like to get in touch with them, as we are short one illustrator; and since we didn't have an illustrator before, you can imagine how we are situated with regard to illustrations for THE MENTOR.

Concerning current s-f paperbacks - there doesn't appear to be a great influx of them into Sydney as yet. I haven't seen an Ace book at Wynyard for over a month and there have been too few new paperbacks at Farmers: and I mean new, not reprints. I see that Pan are bringing some of Well's novels out in paperbacks. THE TIME MAGAZINE I've seen (which is priced too high, I think) as well as a few others. THE TREASURY OF GREAT SCIENCE FICTION STORIES came out about three weeks ago, and is selling at 4/6. It has a photo cover and consists of reprints from old magazines from about 1939 to the early fifties. From what I've heard and read of it, it seems a pretty good issue. I've got a copy but I haven't read it as yet. I hear too that it is the first of a series; it appears they will be coming out annually.

This issue is dedicated to John Baxter, without whose help you would not have seen the previous issue of THE MENTOR (Fond hopes !)

... R.C.

"Oh, isn't it wonderful !" breathed the girl, awed. "Of course, I suppose that it's old stuff to you, but I am a ground-gripper you know, and I could look at it forever, I think. That's why I want to come out here after every dance you know, I ..."

from TRIPLANETARY by E.E. Smith, circ.
1930.

TO RUN THE RIM

- Bertram Chandler

No, I'm not writing the bloody thing yet a third time. Twice was ample. (The first, shorter version appeared in Astounding Science Fiction, the second, novel length version, retitled The Rim of Space, has been published by Avalon.) But, having been asked to write an article on the Rim Worlds, this title is as good as any.

Once upon a time I could really have spread myself. Once upon a time I was the official chronicler of the Rim Worlds and, I suppose, something of a cartographer as well. (And what's the astronomical equivalent of hydrographer?) But that was before I lost my Rim World citizenship, when my state of mind was such that I just naturally gravitated to the bleak, cold edge of the Galaxy and masochistically, derived a perverse pleasure from living there.

The first Rim World story was Edge of Night, written in January, 1958. It sold to Venture - and Venture promptly folded. (The story, retitled The Man Who Couldn't Stop, finally put in an appearance in E&SF.) When I wrote it I didn't realise what I had started - but the idea of the Rim, the last frontier, stuck in my mind, as did the names of the planets, Lorn, Faraway, Ultimo and Thule. Wet Paint followed - it was published in one of the Ziff-Davis Magazines- but it wasn't a proper Rim World story, being more concerned with the wet paint gimmick than with the Rim mythology. It was with To Run The Rim that I really emigrated to the Rim Worlds. I suppose it was because it was, like so much of my stuff, really a disguised sea story. And Rim Runners, too, bear a certain resemblance to my present employers. Just as their ships are officered by refugees from the Interstellar Transport Commission, Trans-Galactic Clippers, the Waverly Royal Mail and so on, so are the vessels of the Union Steam Ship Company officered by refugees from Ghaw Savill, Port Line, Royal Mail and even Cunard White Star. Come to that- some of the Union's Company's services are as near Rim Running as Dammit. The Strahan trade, for example- with Strahan on one end and Yarraville at the other...

Then came The Outsiders, a follow up to To Run The Rim and also published in ASF. The Key followed and was purchased by Ziff- Davis. And there was Chance Encounter, published both by New Worlds and Satellite. And there was Ringhost- still unpublished utilised later. And To Hell For A Pastime, which appeared in Fantastic Universe. Then, for a while, I got away from the Rim and worked on a series of long novelettes, the IF stories, in which I played around with the ideas of an interstellar drive, utilising the propulsive force of light, and alternative time tracks. Somehow these stories never caught on. Several editors have nibbled at them and then, eventually, turned them down. And there was a run of "Lost Colony" stories, said lost colonies having been founded by the crews and passengers of gaussjammers, the Ehrenhaft Drive ships, that got themselves mislaid in space. (The Mannschenn Drive ships, of course, got themselves mislaid in time...) There were a few stories about the Beacon Keepers, the men and women who tended the Carlotti Beacons, the time-twisting radio-direction-finding and communications device that has simplified the navigation of the timejammers and put the unreliable, temperamental telepaths, with

But I couldn't keep away from the rim. In December, 1959, I wrote When The Dreams Die. The first version was a 17,500 word novelette. I sent it off to my agent in New York and heard nothing further about it for a while. I wrote a novel, Voyage, which my wife said was "too highbrow for the smut market, too pornographic for the highbrow market and too lacking in action for the thriller market." (I fear that she was right.) And then, for lack of anything better to do, I turned onto a novel length expansion of To Run The Rim. New incidents were invented and other material was borrowed from rim world stories, such as Ringhost, and from a few of the Lost Colony Yarns. And, of course, the mildly pornography expunged by John Campbell was re-inserted, and a bit extra thrown in. The magnum opus finished, it was posted to New York.

Suddenly things seemed to be moving quite fast on the literary front. Avalon wanted To Run The Rim still further expanded and this was done, by way of borrowing rather than inventing. And the last of all the Rim World stories - Bring Back Yesterday - was written. And When The Dream Dies suffered its final expansion.

Even so, it was the last of the Rim Runner stories, although the Ace version of When The Dream Dies has yet to appear. The Galactic Rim was real enough to me when I lived there; it was a state of mind that lasted rather too long for the comfort of myself and those around me. Yet I was lucky to be able to make capital of it and, even now, feel a certain nostalgia for "orn, Faraway, Ultimo and Thule and the queer outlandish planets of the Eastern Circuit.

The above article was reprinted from the wild colonial boy number two - one of Foyster's Fanzines.

[illegible]

"I was thinking...." she began hesitantly, "and now, when we are faced with great danger I bow my head before the might and majesty of man who has penetrated to the stars, far, far into the depths of space! Much of this is customary for you, but I'm in the Cosmos for the first time. Just think of it, I'm taking part in a magnificent journey through the stars to new worlds."

From ANDROMEDA by Ivan Yefremov (Russian)
circa. late 50's.

===== 00 =====

Breakthrough.

The door dilated and Peterson burst into Gregory's office. He was babbling so fast that he was half way across to Gregory's desk before that worthy had caught himself. At ninety his heart couldn't stand too many shocks like that. Peterson subsided enough for Gregory to pick out a few words.

"It works! It works! We've done it!" Peterson exclaimed, his hair dishevelled and his eyes gleaming.

"Do you mean you've gotten the computer working?"

"Yes!" Peterson replied, "One of my associates, the new one, Thompson I think his name is, found the right catalyst that enabled the molecular bonds to hold together, instead of breaking apart when the signal goes through. They are bringing the computer up here now."

Both men's eyes turned towards the door as it opened to admit a young man pushing a small trolley. "Well," exclaimed Peterson, "There it is." The 'it' referred to was a sphere, perhaps six inches in diameter, of some silver coloured alloy; wires of blue, iridescent metal ran from its base, under the cradle it rested on, and into a small control panel, about three inches high and nine long, of the same blue metal as the wires. There were numerous dials, switches and levers covering the face of the panel; the back was covered with a sheet of transparent material which gave a view of a tangle of various coloured wires and small pieces of metal connected to them.

Gregory poked a blue veined finger at the six inch sphere. "You mean to tell me," he asked incredulously, "that that thing is more intelligent than a human brain?"

"You must not let its smallness give you the wrong impression," replied Peterson, "Its circuits are printed on the smallest molecules we could find that would allow the special types of vibrations we send to be transmitted. It's really a vacuum tube with all the circuits inside, so that it self contained. Except for the output and input devices, of course." And he pointed to the control panel as he said it. "Watch, I'll show you what is inside." Peterson moved until he was in front of the control panel, and Gregory watched with growing interest as Peterson flicked a switch. Immediately the sphere ceased to be a silvery globe, and instead Gregory found himself gazing into a ball of darkness, in which minute specks of light floated.

BREAKTHROUGH (cont)

"I thought you said it was filled with molecules?" Gregory queried, gesticulating at the ball of blackness.

"It is," replied Peterson, "but only a few of those molecules are visible - the ones that are glowing. The rest are far too small to be seen, even with the best optical microscope. The sphere itself is held in place by fields of force originating from here, here and here." he said, pointing in turn to three small, golden masses of honeycombed metal. Gregory found his knees were beginning to tremble and he sat down in his big, comfortable plastic chair, motioning to the others to do likewise. The young man sat down in one of the visitor's chairs, but Peterson remained standing by the computer.

"We think," he continued, "that this is the first electronic computer that can take over the menial jobs have to do - truck driving, garbage collecting, factory supervision, assembly line work and many others - and will be able to do them more efficiently than the majority of humans who do them today."

"Very interesting," replied Gregory, "Ah, to get back to the computer itself; I don't see any connections to it except those blue wires. Are some of them input and output channels?"

"No," answered Peterson, "We haven't built an input or output terminal to this particular computer yet, and so until we do, we won't know for certain whether this computer will work according to plan. However, the prototype, using the same circuits and molecules worked, so we have no reasons to suspect that this one, which is a further development of the type, will not operate as planned."

"You inferred that you don't know what is going on in the sphere," said Gregory. "In a previous report you stated that you were unable to see what was happening in the sphere, due to some interference. Have you been able to bypass this phenomenon, or find any reason for its causation?"

"We haven't been able to penetrate the outer layers of the force curves," replied the young man seated, "And we think the interference is due to the fields warping the space inside the computer. This does not, however, affect the operation of the computer itself."

"Thank you, young man," said Gregory, "And is," he asked, "the power used in transmitting the 'signals' very high?"

"No," answered Peterson, "The only power we're using is the minimum needed to prevent the molecules from collapsing in on each other, and amounts to less than which the human body generates."

"And if something went wrong?" asked Gregory.

"You mean such as short circuit?" replied Peterson, "Well it wouldn't start a chain reaction, as all the molecules are relatively too far apart for it to spread, and anyway, one short circuit wouldn't affect the whole."

"Good!" exclaimed Gregory, "It's relieving to know that, at least. Now to get on to the really important aspects. Of course we'll have to patent it; and the government will be after it. I think we will make a nice profit on this...."

The talking faded into the background of noise and the sphere rested quietly in its cradle, the tiny notes of dust caught in the last rays of the setting sun. There was for an instant of time far too small to be

B.EARTHROUGH (cont)

measurable, a single flash of light from one of the specs of luminescence and in the darkness something happened which was a very rare event in the curved emptiness of the sphere. A short circuit developed in one of the tiny glowing bodies in the sphere of darkness - and the sun went super nova.

===== 00 =====

- Ron L. Clarke.

(This is possibly the most boring story I've read for a long time. In addition to reading like a technical report, the central idea that the writer is trying to convey is lost in the mess of high sounding phrases he uses. He's told me the idea he was trying to convey and the only hint I can give you is a single sentence : "And the missiles sped across the disintegrating sky." Let's hope that 'Ron L. Clarke' can pull his socks up and give us something at least readable next time! - Ed.)

===== 00 =====

Grahame Stone's "Australian Science Fiction Index" is reviewed in the April edition of Analogy.

===== 00 =====

Advertisement.

Has anyone a copy of "Star S-F Short Novels" by Pohl, that they would be willing to swap or sell? Please contact Ron Clarke.

===== 00 =====

- Patrick Terry.

Have read with great interest your last issue of "Mentor", and found it very good.

I also read with great interest the review by Keith Lay of "The Stars My Destination". Not wishing to start a feud with Mr Lay, I would say his "Comments" are quite unreasonable in parts. I say "comments", but they are, in my opinion flat statements for which there is no other authority than himself. The Book is quite readable and enjoyable. To take his statements in order (1) Who told him, and has he any first hand experience of rocket motors and capabilities as envisaged by the author? (2) Again who told him & etc. Gravity Launching beams would lift a vessel perhaps, but what of motive power for flight. (3) Why should not the inventor "ways & means" have the process named after him. So I detect a tinge of jealousy, and his own name would hardly lend itself to such a procedure.