

# THE NEW FUTURIAN

June

....The glass  
Giant of  
Palomar

SUMMER 1954  
VOL. I. NO. 2.

ALASTAIR  
MCLEAN

An Amateur Magazine devoted to  
Fantasy Fiction



THE NEW  
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FUTURIAN  
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SUMMER ....1954  
Issue number 2.  
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One of the selection of amateur magazines, commonly known as Fanzines, produced by enthusiasts for science fiction who are usually known as s-f fans, and the associated loosely organised groups and individuals are called collectively "Fandom". Edited by J. Michael Rosenblum, 7 Grosvenor Park, Chapel Allerton, Leeds 7, England. Quarterly publication is aimed at. Price is 9d. per issue, four for three shillings, in America 15 cents and fifty cents respectively. Exchanges with other

fanzines welcome. Contributions to our columns solicited, a glance within showing the types of material hoped for. Comments eagerly awaited and subject to publication without further notice if thought to be of interest to subscribers generally. The New Futurian has mutated via Futurian War Digest of the war years from the original Futurian of circa 1933-40 which again grew out of the Bulletin of the then Leeds Science Fiction League. A fanzine with a history as well as a future!

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#### ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

ALASTAIR McLEAN has never been active in fandom and this issue contains his first contributions to a fanzine, in the shape of his article and the cover illustration he has produced illustrating it. He is a Glasgow man, married but no family, and will soon attain that intriguing age when life is supposed to begin, says Alastair. By profession is cashier with a large firm of chartered Accountants and is right wing in politics (with apologies to R. G. Medhurst). Shortage of leisure time has reduced reading opportunities but during the period 1930 - 1935 he compiled a collection of "Amazing Stories" and "Wonder Stories". Still remembers the work of such as Dr Smith (who wrote the two Skylark series) A. Hyatt Verrill, A Stanton Coblenz and the inspired illustrations of that wonderful artists, Paul. As to hobbies, likes ship modelling, house carpentry and alterations. Has a life-long interest in Astronomy and owns a 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ " refractor and a home-made 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " 'scope. Before the war he played most of the popular sports. Enjoys an amateurish session at the piano and was a staunch admirer of the late Carroll Gibbons.

JOHN K. H. BRUNNER gives us the following profile ...

Like all good science fiction fans, I was made, not born. This singularly ghastly event occurred on the 24th September, 1934. I cut my teeth on a copy of H. G. Wells's War of the Worlds which someone accidentally left in the nursery, and when I was old enough I read it. I have been suffering from the desire for more of the same ever since. I was a horribly precocious child - I learnt to read at the age of four, but since then have gone through quite a lot of the literature of the language, and also of French and German, which I speak after a fashion. I acquired a good literary education, and a number of prizes, including the Ley & Bonestell "Conquest of Space", but aside from a few natural history lessons I never had a science lesson in my life. I wrote my first sf tale proudly at the age of nine, and sold a novel to Curtis Warren in my last term at school. I immediately sank the proceeds in a typewriter in order to start on the next one. Have sold to Astounding, TCS&B, Nebula and Authentic since then. At the moment I am a pilot officer in the RAF., but from necessity not from choice. Next January I hope to get down to some serious writing and not so serious fanning. Among my other vices (anyone who was at the Mancon knows what the first two are) I count a collection of 250 records of traditional jazz, a guitar and a soprano saxophone. I'm intensely interested in sf as literature as well as fun, and hope to see it gain general approval without losing the unique features which make us like it. I am 5 ft, 9 ins tall, weigh 9 stone 7 pounds, and have never yet cracked a mirror by looking into it, but I sometimes wonder why not. I have only one head, and consider that a distinct disadvantage.



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# THE CLAMOROUS DREAMERS

The Story of British Science-Fiction Fandom.

by WALTER GILLINGS

THIS is the second of a series of articles, written specially for THE NEW FUTURIAN, in which the well-known editor and critic is recounting the history of British magazine science-fiction and of fandom's efforts to establish it. The first article told of his own encounter with American s-f in 1927. In this instalment he tells of his early aspirations towards editor-ship and of the first attempts to propagate s-f in this country.

## 2: AIMS AND OBJECTS

Just to keep the record straight, let us admit that the first organisation of science fiction readers in Great Britain would seem to have been the Science Fiction Association which had it's headquarters at Hayes, Middlesex, as far back as 1927. My records, however, do not reveal how long it lasted, what it achieved, or even what it set out to achieve--if anything. I know that it claimed to have produced what must surely have been the first British fan magazine, titled Fantasia; but the first I heard of either fan club or magazine was when one of its erstwhile officers sought my advice on how to go about publishing a journal which might serve to keep the organisation together if it could be revived.

That was, if I recall correctly, in 1931, when I was secretary of the Ilford Science Literary Circle, which had set out to achieve much but accomplished very little; for precisely the same reason--it just couldn't whip up enough enthusiasm. It did consider launching a journal, but abandoned the idea as pointless since there was so little potential readership and, anyway, its activities were amply chronicled in the local press. Its records show that, commencing in October 1930, it held regular weekly meetings, 37 in all, until it broke up in the summer of '31, never to resume its chatty, informal occasions. At best it had no more than a dozen members, not all of whom could be called s-f fans; and it never came very near to its avowed object of popularising s-f through a national association. Still, it did obtain for its lofty ambitions a good deal of publicity, and by other means inspired similar efforts by fans in other areas who felt the same urge to propagate science-fiction.

The publicity was simple; indeed, inevitable. I was by then in the throes of my first year's training as a reporter on the Ilford Recorder, where I had fortuitously found an opening after several vain attempts to storm the citadels of journalism. I got the chance on the strength of the promise shown by an amateur magazine,



laboriously produced in handwriting and ink-drawing while I was still at school, where I first developed an aspiration towards the editorial chair while exhibiting, at the same time, a certain flair for s-f writing. It was in this select publication, which had a circulation of ten, that I authored a serial entitled "2000 A.D.," inspired by some articles in The Mechanical Age of 1925-6 (to which, be it noted, I gave due acknowledgment). Like so many of my early works, it was never completed: the Merry-go-round Magazine came to a stop after seven issues, just when my hero had managed to establish radio contact with Mars.

Ever since I had feasted, at nine years old, on a George Goodchild serial in the Children's Newspaper concerning "The Message from Space" and a cosmic crisis in which the Martians saved mankind from asphyxiation, I had always had a yen for such imaginative excursions. But, 30 years ago, they were all too rare, at least in my experience. The only other thing of the kind I can recall relishing, in between the comparative boredom of "Robinson Crusoe" and "Tom Brown's Schooldays," is what must have been Burroughs' "At the Earth's Core," serialised in a boys' paper. Later, however, I went through the normal stages of the Nelson Lee Library and Boys' Magazine, in which I particularly recall a thrilling tale, well advertised on the hoardings, in which robots went to war--possibly because that also moved me to attempt an unconscious plagiarism, which was soon abandoned.

The wireless fantasies which enthralled me, as I sat beside a crystal set with headphones flattening my ears, were another formative influence. The first broadcast of Capek's "R.U.R." in 1927, with Ernest Milton and Grizelda Hervey (still going strong) as the robot Adam and Eve, is especially memorable. As for the films, it was in that same year I sat spellbound as I watched the lovely Brigitte Helm transformed into an automaton in Fritz Lang's "Metropolis," while the book by Thea von Harbou was to be had from Woolworth's for sixpence. It was natural, considering all this, that the itch to write which had possessed me since infancy should produce something more than usually fantastic, even before I had heard of Hugo Gernsback; and the tremendous effect of my studied reading of Wells' masterly romances remains only too obvious in my laborious typing, at intervals in my office boy duties, of an intended novel which I still have by me after 25 years--unfinished.

But, in spite of the opportunities for authorship they offered the veriest amateur through essay competitions and story contests, my discovery of Amazing and Wonder Stories only sublimated my literary aspirations into a single, passionate ambition--to edit a British s-f magazine. I didn't particularly want to write science-fiction, though in those days I had no doubts about my abilities. Unaccountably, in one so young and inexperienced, I had set my heart on becoming a magazine editor; and here was a field which fascinated me and remained uncultivated in this country. It was necessary, therefore, to create a demand for s-f of the sort that was being produced in America, so that in due course some British publisher might be persuaded to enlist my specialised



knowledge in catering for it.

So the plan grew in my mind; not at once, but gradually, over the course of the next few years. Remember, I was only 18, with one foot not yet securely placed on the bottom rung of the journalistic ladder. But something of the idea must have been behind my resolve to propagate s-f, induced in me by Gernsback, besides my earnest belief in its intrinsic qualities upon which he was always sermonising. It was not enough to try--quite ineffectually, for the most part--to communicate my enthusiasm to my more studious friends (who had usually succumbed to Edgar Wallace) and to my sweetheart (soon to be my long-suffering wife), whom I first lured, I remember, with Dr. Keller's "A Biological Experiment," complete with Paul's picture of babies growing in great glass spheres.

And so to the larger effort, with the sympathetic aid of my new-found comrade in s-f, Len Kippin. He was several years my senior, already married, a commercial traveller, with a sense of humour which bubbled in him constantly, and an interest in amateur radio. He was rather less in earnest about s-f than I, but he thoroughly enjoyed the magazines he came across on his travels and critically appraised the ideas they presented. Among them were some copies of Gernsback's Radio News and Science & Invention, and a few tattered copies of Weird Tales which had filtered through--the first I had seen of this publication, and the last I wanted to see after sampling some of the puerile stuff it was printing at that time. I had had my fill of LeFanu, Blackwood and other exponents of the creepy story represented in the local library; and although his sole contribution to Amazing, "The Colour Out of Space", left an indelible impression, it was not until many years had passed that I fell beneath the spell of Lovecraft. Nor, evidently, did I find the contributions of Edmond Hamilton, which Weird was featuring consistently in competition with Amazing and Wonder, as acceptable as "The Comet Doom" or "The Other Side of the Moon". But Kippin took it all in his stride, chuckling, and stowed it all away in his collection.

It was a "letter to the Editor" in the Ilford Recorder, carefully written and inserted by myself (with the full sanction of my indulgent Chief), that announced to the world the proposed formation of our Science Literary Circle, which was to offer readers with similar tastes "the opportunity of becoming familiar with more recent examples of 'scientifiction'." The response was hardly overwhelming; besides the Kippins and myself, there were only five at the first meeting, including the middle-aged couple who, without quite realising what it was all about, were willing to lend their front parlour so long as we contrived to enliven their Monday evenings. But the rest were already familiar with the magazines from which we decided to read stories aloud and proceed to discuss them and any topic they might suggest.

So we disposed of "The Thought Machine" of Ammianus Marcellinus; "The Moon Strollers", by J. Rogers Ullrich; Dr. Miles J. Breuer's "The Gostak and the Doshes"; Capt. S.P. Meek's "Futility"



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and other tales by such as Walter Kateley, G. Peyton Wertenbaker, Bob Olson, Raymond Z. Gallun, and the Schachner-Zagat combination, several of which still linger in my memory. The arguments which ensued upon these readings, if not the stories themselves, provided me with copy for my paper which I enjoyed producing under such headings as:

WAR WON WITH SMELLS! --- Yeast Soldiers Shot from Guns;  
or: BEFOGGING FIGURES --- Incomprehensible Depths of Space.

It was such a change from reporting the dry-as-dust speeches of Councillors on parish-pump affairs, or praising the pitiful efforts of Miss So-and-so's pupils at a Town Hall dancing display--events of the sort I was doomed to chronicle week after week for several years in my progression towards the more exciting realms of suburban activity.

Dr. David H. Keller's tale of "The Yeast Men" actually touched off a piece in the leader column, where my watchful Editor observed acutely that: "Although born to blush unseen, the Ilford Science Literary Circle is not wasting its sweetness on the desert air." Altogether, in the nine months of its existence, I filled in a good eight of the Recorder's capacious columns with accounts of its deliberations; which, considering its membership, was a pretty good quota of publicity. Not the least prominent among these write-ups was an initial splurge on the "ambitious project" of our NEW LITERARY MOVEMENT, in which chairman Kippin was purported to have described the thriving state of s-f in America, for the benefit of the uninformed. It also held out a challenge to those who would call us cranks: "We are always encountering sceptical people who seem to regard us as having peculiar and rather offensive literary tastes, but we are all unanimous in that although our favourite type of story looks....fantastic at first sight, there is nothing more entertaining, instructive and thought-provoking....," etcetera.

A later article on SCIENTIFICTION IN ILFORD also reviewed the history of the "American Literature That is Popular in England," mentioning all the magazines by name and once more reiterating (despite the heading) our "aim to popularise science-fiction so that publishers and authors on this side of the Atlantic may pay more heed to its development." This report concluded, more-or-less truthfully: "Large quantities of leaflets have been issued...all over London, and circular letters have been sent to English readers...advising them of the formation of the new movement, the novelty of which cannot be over-estimated. The existence of the Ilford Circle is now widely known, but the suggestion of forming similar clubs in other districts has met with but little response up to the present."

The leaflets were a subtle move. They were printed slips addressed "To English Readers" informing them of our effort to further s-f and appealing to all in sympathy to communicate with me, as secretary. Kippin took them on his journeys and, whenever he found back-numbers of s-f magazines on sale, coerced the shopkeeper or stallholder into slipping them between the pages. Meanwhile, I typed and despatched a stock letter to English readers whose names and addresses appeared in the correspondence columns, explaining our



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purpose more fully and urging them to follow our lead. Although hinting at the "tremendous possibilities" in store, this epistle did not attempt to conceal our realisation of what we were up against;

"The Briton, we feel, is invariably antagonistic towards American magazine literature and to anything scientifically speculative. It is, however, hoped that this prejudice will be eliminated by the concerted action of all who are genuinely interested in this type of literature, and that a thriving national society will be evolved for its popularisation. May we ask you to support us in this and organise a similar circle in your district?"

In an attempt to spread the germ, I myself procured the publication in my own local paper at Leytonstone, where I was still resident, of a letter similar to that which had initiated the Ilford Circle. But the trick was not to be repeated; there was no response. More encouraging results came from the announcement of our activities in Wonder Stories, which reprinted in its March '31 issue the send-off the Recorder had given us. Before we had the satisfaction of seeing the letter in print, I heard from three well-wishers in America, two of them s-f writers. One was Edward E. Chappelow, who had organised an Amateur Scientific Club in Chicago; the other, one of s-f's three woman writers, Lilith Lorraine, who now runs the Avalon World Arts Academy at Rogers, Kansas, and publishes the poetry magazine, Different.

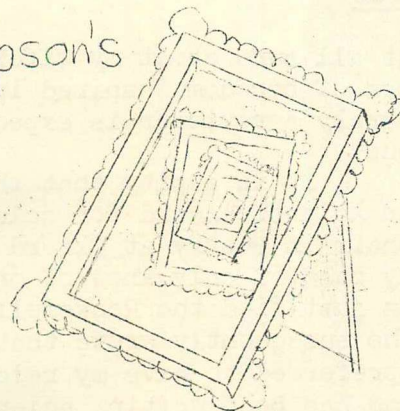
At that time Miss Lorraine still lived at Corpus Christi, in Texas, which her grandfather had helped to found and where her husband owned a couple of ranches; and she was interested in launching her own s-f magazine--in England, if she could be assured of its success in a country to which, it appeared, she intended to come very soon. Her object in writing to me, in fact, was to ascertain if there was any existing market for s-f here and what I thought of the chances of such a venture. No wonder I recorded in the Circle's minutes: "It was anticipated that great things might evolve from this unusual enquiry"!

The resultant correspondence did not last long, however. To a woman of 37 (though I did not know her age, then; nor that she was married) my earnest affirmations must have sounded much too eager. Anyway, after pronouncing her views on the standardisation of American s-f and declaring her more expansive policy for any magazine she might establish, she postponed the whole business for two years, while soliciting from me contributions for a poetry magazine she was editing; whereupon my enthusiasm, and my hopes, waned. Two years, to an impatient youth of 19, was too long; and I was never gone much on poetry anyway.

(To be continued).



On looking into Ernest Thompson's  
 "On looking into  
 John Christophers 'The  
 Twenty-Second Century'"



There are certain rules of conduct and etiquette which every writer must adopt if he is to merit the title of 'professional'. One of them is to treat reviewers as though they were all dead (although in fact probably less than fifty per cent are -- and then only intellectually). The professional writer does not answer the favourable review because it would be impossible to avoid the appearance of complacency if he did so. He does not answer the critical review because it is at once bad taste and bad practice. Nothing looks more silly than the righteous indignation of an author scratching his detractor's eyes out in print.

So I have very compelling reasons against writing this note. There is only one reason in favour: that Michael Rosenblum appears to be under the impression that I promised him some sort of contribution for the magazine, and this is the easiest way of complying (if in fact I made any promise, which I gravely doubt). ((No, Sam there are two other good reasons. One is that we should all like to hear from you both from the viewpoint of your own rich personality, and as one of the most competent fanzine writers of all time; and secondly because fanzines should be free to any degree of intellectual argument within the bounds of good taste. I am certain that Ernest Thompson was deliberately trailing his coat, after my statement to him before he wrote his critique, that it would certainly be answered by those who disagreed. And you did say that you would try and produce something for me -JMR))

I have some advantages, should I wish to cross swords with Mr Thompson. I have been a librarian, though not a Senior one (I had better say 'library assistant' and be on the safe side), while it is only too painfully clear from his 'critique' that he never has been and never will be a writer. In this connexion, while I can pierce together his meaning most of the time, one sentence has me completely floored. 'Is it the attempt to be the gathering in of a new type of writing?' If anyone is going in for new types of writing, it is rather Mr Thompson than the unfortunate science fiction writers, who have to meet the standards of more severe editors than J. Michael Rosenblum. ((touché, JMR))

But there would be little point in tackling the minutiae of his article. The main job should be to decide what he is getting at, and meet it on those grounds. Unfortunately the grounds are hardly discernable. He hints at a number of different lines -- an analysis of the reasons for science fiction's present vogue -- an inquiry into what precisely science fiction is -- a critical study of the inferior methods of a particular science fiction writer in establishing that atmosphere which is the necessary mark of the science fiction tale -- but none of these approaches is carried through. In the end we must be contented with the bald statement that the short stories of John Christopher are not up to the standard of those of Ray Bradbury, or the novels of John Wyndham. It is at least a clear and understandable statement, and one which anyone but my wife would naturally agree. (And I'm



not at all sure about my wife\*) "I would not like to distinguish between the degrees of boredom inspired in me by science fiction writers - Joyce Youd" But surely a reviewer is expected to do something beyond a mere statement of the obvious?

It is a pity that the Atlantic Award was dragged into this. I did not get an Atlantic Award for science fiction stories, any more than C. Day Lewis got the Chair in Poetry at Oxford because of his Nicholas Blake thrillers. Although, in any case, I only know of one Atlantic Award winner who could be described as having justified the Rockefeller benefaction: the gentleman (whose name escapes me) who subsequently wrote that West End smash hit, Reluctant Heroes. I should have preferred to have my relative inexperience put forward in my defence. John Wyndham has been writing science fiction (to my knowledge) since 1932, and I believe I remember seeing a statement attributed to Bradbury that he wrote a million words before first getting published. Two things make a writer -- talent and practice. It is all too likely that I lack the first, but it is certain that, compared with the two cited, I lack the second. The earliest story in the volume, Monster, was amongst the first three or four science fiction stories I had written, and dates back only to 1948. I believe the Martian Lubla, to which Mr Thompson so rightly objects, is no more than a year later in origin.

I should like to touch very briefly here on the difficulty raised for the writer by the question of atmosphere. In my usual dogmatic way I will say that science fiction is fiction in which the development hinges essentially on the action taking place in the future. It has two main varieties. In one, which I have called The Old English School, a recognisable contemporary world meets the impact of fantasy. In the other, an attempt is made to portray the events in a world that is completely futuristic. Examples of the first are H. G. Wells, and (in his novels) John Wyndham. Another example, although he may not seem to be so at first thought, is Ray Bradbury. The second variety includes the two science fiction short stories of Kipling, and such novels as Brave New World, 1984 and Player Piano. It would be difficult, I think, to decide one kind is better than the other. The first kind lends itself best, perhaps, to narrative fiction; the second certainly lends itself best to satire, as my examples indicate. In 22nd Century, all the stories are type II, with the exception of numbers 8, 12, 13, 14, and 15.

In type II science fiction, it is difficult to avoid such trivialities as the aromatic Martian lubla. See, for instance, the opening of chapter VI, Brave New World. '.....whether she shouldn't change her mind about the New Mexico holiday, and go instead to the North Pole with Benito Hoover. The trouble was that she knew the North Pole . . . the hotel too hopelessly old-fashioned -- no television laid on in the bedrooms, no scent organ . . . Need I pursue this? And just have a look at With the Night Mail, especially the advertisement insert!

There is one other teeny weeny point I should like to raise with Mr Thompson -- not on my own behalf so much as on those of Bradbury and Wyndham. Could we have, laid on the carpet, a brief summary of the kind of thing he himself likes? I cast a leery eye on the literary taste of librarians in the bulk, having known one or two. If, as I suspect, his selection is of the kind that would include Henry Green and Christopher Fry, then I'll take Bradbury and Wyndham. If it should be Jane Austen and Will Shakespeare -- we aren't competing, Mr Thompson.

One final tip, which may come in handy in the future. It is often useful to read the dedication.

John Christopher.



A short note of comment on Mr Thompson's

Critique,

from

Eric C. Hopkins.

Book reviews are the stock-in-trade of editors, and at first sight a (neutral) Senior Librarian would seem an admirable stroke of luck for you. Here is an impartial fellow who is good on books, we are inclined to say, on reading your introduction. Such an inference is, of course, entirely false. There is no more reason to suppose that a Senior Librarian has especially reputable standards because he works in books, than there would be for supposing that a film censor has especially reputable standards in film because he works in films. (And these cases are very closely analogous). The film censor is out to maintain reputable moral standards, of course. So is the Librarian (in part). But this makes neither of them sound in criticism. I make this point because you do not, and I think you should. Your use of "Senior Librarian" is like magic: it charms us into supposing that here is someone who must know what he is talking about. But you might just as well have gone into the street and picked the first literate forty-year old.

Not that I am rushing to John Christopher's defence. Nobody writes as well as Bradbury. Indeed, he writes so well that we are inclined to say "Bradbury does not write science fiction". "The Silver Locusts" is the only contemporary science fiction novel worth reading, and this is partly because it is quite unlike science fiction (by which I mean van Vogt, Heinlein, Asimov, etc.). Briskly speaking, we only call it 'science fiction' because it has spaceships and Martians in it, and these might just as well have been covered wagons and Indians, for all the difference this change would make to the sense of the book. Such qualification apart, I grant Mr Thompson his Bradbury.

But the success of 'John Wyndham' has gone to Mr Thompson's head, I think. I have shared the beer of "The White Horse" on many a Thursday with JBH; I like the man, and his success gladdens my heart. But, he is not a polished writer. Concepts wobble when we call him a 'good' writer. When I say this, I must admit that - from experience - I find that most novels published any year are not worth reading (needless to say, I sample the years novels, but not at random). On the other hand, Shakespeare, The Bible and Thucydides are worth reading. This sounds platitudinous. So it was, before the 20th century. Sound principle and evaluation is only platitudinous in times of established and accepted standards (unless the principles are revolutionary - see Socrates, Christ, Rousseau, three of many examples). But in times of wavering and re-forming standards (aesthetic, social, moral) the platitudes need to be reiterated. For example, Science fiction is rubbish. This ought to be a boringly platitudinous remark. The horror is that it needs to be reiterated. It shocks the young who read the stuff. It alarms the middle-aged who live off the stuff. All the same, historical periods of taste, virtue and justice are the great periods of the Platitude. So let's have it again; Science-fiction is rubbish.

Of course, some science-fiction is worse than other s-f. John Wyndham's - in the light of this remark - is not bad at all. Even so, compare it with the American school of Disaster - e.g. with Bob Tucker's "The Long Loud Silence".



Tuckers book has the virtues of the contemporary American stage-play. It is realistic, economical, tough, unsentimental. The soldier, on his own in a devastated and malignant world, is thoroughly human. He thinks of survival - that is, food, shelter and sex, in just that order. This, I feel, is what life in a shattered world would be like. Tucker's soldier is shrwed, opportunist, merciless calculating. He'll do anything for a well-lined stomach and a woman. He is amoral and unsympathetic. Naturally we find him unsavoury, and although his fight to survive interests us, we don't much care if he loses it. But this is what makes him unpleasant, the fact that nobody cares whether or not he does survive, indeed all are out to kill him.

Now the British tale of Disaster does not have to be recorded in just this same way. The Americans are much more at home with homicide than we are, for various reasons. They have a tradition of self-defence against the occupying forces (War of Independence), and they live in a tough country where it is still often safer to shoot first and ask questions afterwards (see any report on Chicago). Nevertheless, are we so much more circumspect in our approach to life, that in a dangerous world, we would hesitate to shoot? This seems unlikely to me. It seemed so to Wells too, whose Cockney mechanic ("War in the Air") so far revised his ideas of fairplay as to shoot out of hand the rival for his girlfriend. This action wasn't cricket, but then, cricket is a highly civilised activity for the leisured classes (the workers and a handful of the rich).

Wyndham's two novels suffer from frivolity and idealism. The gay chit-chat which characterises the main relationships in "Triffids" is what the Oxonians call 'twee'. It is precious and flippant, but not flippant as the Cockney is flippant when in danger or distress. The plot is otiose insofar as it requires two extraordinary major occurrences to set it going - both Triffids and universal blindness. "The Kraken" is marred by the frivolous know-all who is quite clearly mad. No-one could have his certainty and be so infantile, and still be supposed sane. These errors of "Triffids" & "Kraken" are not to be found in the competent non-s.f. novel. And this is why Wyndham's books cannot be called 'good'. It is simply because they are not good novels. But what could be said of Wyndham's novels on this count, could be said much more of almost all other writers of s-f novels. (Van Vogt, for instance, is a very poor novelist. But this is a poor comment without reasons).

Mr Thompson refers to the "more polished standards" of Wyndham and Bradbury. He also talks of "stories of a more interesting and imaginative calibre". Both of these remarks make me wonder whether Mr Thompson would recognise 'polish' when he saw it. Writers do not polish their 'standards', they polish their writing. The analogies are straightforward in use: standards are 'raised', etc., writing is 'polished' etc.. I boggle at a 'calibre' which is 'interesting and imaginative'. Surely 'calibres' are greater or lesser than or even equal to, other calibres? Maria Edgeworth is a writer of small calibre; Austen is a writer of greater calibre. A simple matter of ordnance. 'Stature' is used in analogous fashion.

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We are delighted to be able to present the foregoing two reactions to Ernest Thompson's short essay in the first issue of The New Futurian especially as they are the proof of our belief that we have a live circle of recipients, who can be depended on to enter the lists if and when they have varying ideas from those expressed. We certainly hope to hear more from Mr Thompson. And we must make quite clear that all views expressed are those of the contributor and not necessarily those of the editor. Your editor only feels now that he will have to be extremely careful of his English.



# THE GLASS GIANT OF PALOMAR

by Alastair McLean.

The White ribbon of highway 395 heads north to Riverside from San Diego. At Temecula Creek some fifty miles from the Pacific naval base a fork to the right gives access to route 71 which climbs eastwards into the San Gacinto mountains.

This, the so called "Highway to the Stars", after twenty miles of twisting and climbing deposits the traveller on the summit of mount Palomar. The mountain top is a long hog-back and despite the altitude of 6000 feet is carpeted by lush meadows and pine woodland. But it is not the scenery or the crystal-clear Californian air which draws the first admiring comment from the visitors - rather, it is the aluminium domes and auxiliary buildings which are neatly laid out along the two main ridges. On one stands a large dome flanked by two smaller ones and on the other are machine shops, service buildings and water tanks. Across the slopes, among the pines, are the living quarters of the permanent staff, the "Residence" and the "Monastery". This then, is the home of the giant 200 inch telescope.

The first step in this great enterprise was taken when an article on mammoth telescopes by Dr. George Ellery Hale appeared in Harper's Magazine early in 1928. Twenty-one years of great endeavour were to elapse before the Palomar Observatory was able to embark in 1949 on its first co-ordinated assignment- the compilation of a vast new stellar atlas. Some brief, and all too inadequate notes on the development of the project may be of interest.

George Hale built his first telescope in 1881 at the age of thirteen. He had a natural bent for astronomy and it is not surprising that on going to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology he embarked on research in the field of solar physics. He invented the spectroheliograph when he was a junior at college and at the age of 23 was considered an authority on the sun. He soon realised that progress was being hampered by lack of larger instruments and such was his personality and genius for raising funds that he persuaded Charles T Yerkes, a Chicago tycoon, to part by degrees with sums which finally totalled 349,000 \$. This was used to build the world's largest refracting telescope- the forty inch instrument in the Yerkes Observatory. It was now evident, however, that the refractors of more than 40 inches were not a practicable proposition owing to distortion caused by the sheer weight of the lens.

By 1908 Hale had persuaded the Carnegie Institution that they should finance the construction of the large reflecting telescope- a sixty inch mirror to be installed in a new observatory at Mount Wilson, Pasadena, at a cost of nearly \$ 200,000. But still he was plagued by the need for more optical power. John D. Hookes, a wealthy patron, put up \$ 45,000 as a foundation for a hundred-inch mirror and Andrew Carnegie eventually provided the substantial balance required. Both these large discs were ground and figured by George Willis Ritchley, a man with a genius for glass. The larger mirror took six years of heartbreaking preparation and it was 1917 before it finally was installed at Mount Wilson...

During the 1920's the hundred inch reflector was in the forefront of astronomical progress but new techniques, laboratory methods, and the mathematical work of Einstein, turned the thought of Hale towards the possibility of a larger mirror. Came 19



of Einstein, turned the thoughts of Hale towards the possibility of a larger mirror. Came 1928, and his article in *Harpers magazine*. The article caught the imagination of Dr. Rose, President of the Rockefeller Foundation in New York, and he promised Hale his personal support. By the end of the year the astronomer had a guarantee for the cost of a 200 inch reflector and the observatory to house it - and the figure was six million dollars! But it was stipulated that the grant was to be an educational one and the whole project was to come under the auspices of the California Institute of Technology, affectionally known as "Cal Tech".

To plan the innumerable details of the new observatory Dr Hale then gathered about him a first-class team of specialists largely recruited from Cal. Tech. One of the older experts was Russell Porter, the advisor and friend of the American amateur astronomer -- particularly those who made their own reflectors -- and he soon became an invaluable designer and ideas man. He played a large part in designing the Grant.

It was quickly decided that the "yoke" type of mounting of the 100 inch reflector was not suitable as it rendered impossible any study of the area around the Pole Star - the yoke mounting getting in the way of the tube at anything less than 34 degrees from Polaris. The final solution was the horseshoe design depicted in our cover.

The casting of a mirror almost 17 feet in diameter raised a tremendous problem for Hale and his associates. The 100 inch disc had been cast by the French glass-makers of Saint-Gobain but it had expended their resources to the utmost limit. It would be necessary to seek a solution nearer home. Professor Thomson of the General Electric Company made the first attempt with fused quartz as his medium; but even with all the resources of that great company behind him he had to admit defeat after two years of unremitting effort. The challenge then went to the Corning Glass Company of New York, makers of Pyrex Glass. Pyrex being a low expansion glass held out considerable promise. The Corning project got under way in 1932 with a Dr. McCauley, one of their executives, in charge. As a solid 200 inch disc, two feet thick, would weigh some 40 tons it was decided to mould the back in a honeycomb pattern by means of cores in the foot of the mould. But these cores gave endless trouble as the great heat melted their moorings and allowed them to bob to the surface of the molten glass. Eventually, special designs were adopted and by December 1934 discs of 30, 60 and 120 inches had been completed and sent to Pasadena. The first attempt to pour the 200 inch mould was a failure - core trouble again - but the second attempt was a success and the disc was moved to the annealer without incident. In order to remove internal stresses from the glass it was planned to let the pyrex "soak" for two months at a steady heat and then drop the temperature by 7/10ths of a degree per day for the next 8 months. But in the summer of 1935 the nearby Chemnung River overflowed and flooded the electrical installation controlling the operation. For 3 days the disc bled its heat away unhindered but in November when the schedule was completed the glass was found to be perfect.

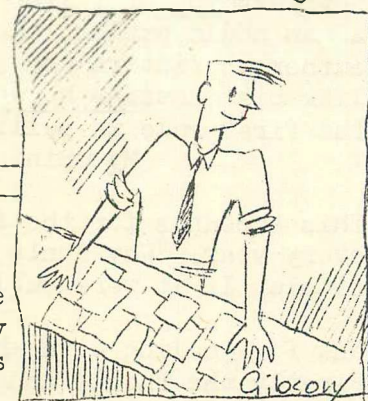
Hale now had to find a man to grind his mirror. Ritchey, who had figured the 100 inch reflector for Mount Wilson at the Pasadena Optical Shop, was dead and everything depended on the choice of his successor. Dr Anderson who was on loan from Mount Wilson was in charge of all optical work and back in 1932 he has appointed a young man by the name of Marcus Brown to be his second-in-command and to work on all equipment as it was received in the optical shop. Brown was admirable suited for the job in a psychological sense. He had infinite patience and had worked tremendously hard at Pasadena to learn everything he could about grinding and polishing theory. When the Corning disc arrived from New York in 1936, Brown realised that the great task was to be his although he had never received a formal appointment. Since 1932 he had assembled a team of 21 young enthusiasts and with their

Continued on Page 16.



# ON SELLING SCIENCE-FICTION

by DEREK PICKLES



This is not another of those innumerable and interminable articles on how to write science fiction !!

No; my concern is with selling the finished product -- the magazine or novel that has been purchased and published by an enterprising personage who hopes, and intends to do his best to make a profit out of it.

This is the crux of the matter. The publisher (apart from very special exceptions) is investing his hard-earned money in the publication of science fiction in the expectation of making a profit. He is not, nor would he claim to be, a philanthropist catering to the enlightened amongst the reading public; he is in fact a hard headed business man who sees in the present interest in science fiction a chance to make some extra profits.

Before we go any further, let me give some comparative figures of the sales of a few varied publications.

News of the World -- over 7 million copies per week.

Daily Mirror -- over 4½ million copies per day

Radio Times -- over 3 million copies per week

Woman & Woman's Own -- over 4 million copies per week

Galaxy SF (British Edition) - no definite figures available but approx. 40,000 per issue.

Authentic SF -- again no figures but I doubt much over 20,000.

General 1/6 British Pocket Book --- 12,000 or so.

In view of these I can not believe there are any grounds for assuming that the public pants eagerly upon the publication of every new science fiction novel and magazine.

Please remember that we are only talking about the paper-backed type of publication aiming at a mass sale. Hard-cover books are a different world but one which will parallel this more plebian sort of sales-outlet in its own comparisons.

From a booksellers point of view, his sales are made up of the following in order of popularity.

1. Childrens Comics.
2. Other childrens items (painting books, story books, ABCs etc)
3. Gangster Thrillers.
4. Westerns (as a point of interest, Westerns sell much better if no woman appears on the cover)
5. Straight Novels (Romances, Leslie Charteris, Peter Cheney etc.)
6. Magazines (especially those featuring girls, dressed or undressed)
7. Oddments -- science fiction, non-fiction items, straight detective stories and those that cannot be classified. (why? Ed.)

Science fiction may appear rather higher up in some retailers lists depending on the area they are selling in; and if they have made any special effort to cover this field in particular. Some might even bracket it with the Westerns under number 4; and so, for the purposes of the rest of this article I will now regard them as being worthy of this position.

Being enthralled with science fiction is like being in love.

In both cases obvious faults are ignored and prejudices are sustained.

In the publishing of science fiction, as in the publishing of anything else, it is



not what you or I like that matters one tinker's cuss. It is what the Public likes. A man could publish the finest magazine ever produced; using the finest artists and authors, printers and salesmen available in the world; but if the public did not like his magazine he would soon go bankrupt.

The first rule in selling anything is:-

My opinion does not count - will the public like it?

This accounts for the frequent cries and lamentations that arise like crocuses every year. "Why don't they publish good science fiction?" The answer is so very simple. If it were published, the sales would not pay for the cover picture.

Now for dealing with what does sell.

Firstly the Thorpe and Porter magazines (Galaxy, Amazing, Fantastic, If, Weird and Beyond); these magazines sell better than the other magazines on the market because of three reasons. Namely that Thorpe and Porter have one of the finest distribution organisations in the country; secondly because of the advertising Thorpe and Porter give them; and thirdly because of the publishers treatment of the wholesale trade. You will note that what can be classed as 'salesmanship' is much more important in trade circles than intrinsic merit.

The second group of sellers are the long complete novel. The public simply will not have collections of short stories disguised as a pocket novel. If there are short stories it must be clearly labelled a magazine. And the biggest sellers of the long novel type are those by Vargo Statten and Volsted Gridban (never erd of em -- JMR) I should estimate that titles by these authors (or at least under these bylines) outsell other novels by fifty per cent at least.

I have not dealt, nor do I intend to deal with the various other publications on the market, and any that I have quoted above are for purposes of illustration. Magazines such as New Worlds, Science Fantasy, Nebula, Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, are fairly steady sellers but do not have the following of the magazines or authors I have quoted.

One last word. When you go into a bookshop, or to a bookstall and ask for science fiction, don't be offended if the bookseller offers you Vargo Statten. He is only offering you what he is asked for. To him it is just one line which he stocks to attract the people into his shop. He undoubtedly makes more profit in a day from his sales of comics, than he does in a month from science fiction.

Derek Pickles.

# GLASS GIANT OF PALOMAR (continued)

help and the use of specially designed machines he slowly brought the mirror to near perfection over the next four years.

By 1935, Palomar Mountain had been chosen as the site for the telescope. This followed long experiments by Cal Tech students who camped out at many likely locations in Southern California and with standard 4" refractors made assessments of the "seeing".

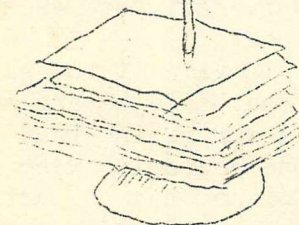
The war retarded progress at Palomar but the compilation of a sky atlas was eventually begun in 1949 and this is now nearing completion. A 48 inch Schmidt wide angle telescope-camera is the instrument used for this work and in all, it will take 1870 plates each about the size of the bowl of the Plough constellation. The 200" mirror - now known as the Hale telescope - photographs only a small area and is not suitable for the Survey but is used to pinpoint and analyse anything of interest found on the plates. The two instruments make a wonderful team and the resulting map will show objects up to 500 million light years away. Already thousands of new galaxies have been mapped and who can say when some really exciting discovery may be made.

George Ellery Hale died before the consummation of his greatest work, but could any man desire a more wonderful memorial than these shining domes on a sunlit mountain top.



## SOMETHING and NOTHING

by "PHOENIX"



To what extent asks P. Schuyler Miller in the June 1954 "Astounding Science Fiction" has the growth in popularity of science-fiction contributed to the present unenviable position of the American scientific world, whereby, he maintains "every kind of science, including archaeology, appears to be under surveillance", and there may be detected among the public at large a growing anti-scientific attitude and turning-away from belief in, and reverence of, The Scientist and his works.

His conclusion, that, in airing our private jokes about mad scientists and so forth in front of the laity, we have been taken too seriously, begs the question in a way that I suppose one might expect in a non-political magazine published in the America of 1954. Is it really credible that the technically-minded American public bases its conception of science on the paranoid fantasies of aliens and world-wreckers that fill the pages of its newspapers and the screens of its TV sets?

In the course of his article, Miller makes a revealing statement. At least, it should be revealing to anyone who may be about to pile his magazine collection in the yard and contritely set it afire.

He says:

"It is becoming almost impossible for any leading American scientist

"to attend a meeting held abroad, or for Europeans to come here.

"If there is not downright prohibition, passport visas are

"conveniently held up until the meetings are over. Nor does this

"state of affairs pertain only to men who might conceivably carry

"secrets of military or security value out of the country ... "

and he goes on to give the remark about archaeologists which I quoted in the first paragraph above.

It is difficult to see how anyone could seriously attribute this attitude on the part of the U.S. Immigration authorities, supposing it is correctly represented, to anything quite so intangible as an anti-scientific reaction. The United States has yet a little way to go before Nehemiah Scudder steps out of the pages of Heinlein. In point of fact, I do not for a moment suppose Miller to be under any illusion as to what is happening. He has always seemed to be a thoughtful and liberal-minded man. But no doubt Professor Dirac, who has just been refused an entry permit to the States, would be better qualified to pass upon the matter.

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Talking of the McCarran Act, there is the story of the British merchant seaman being interviewed by the U.S. Immigration official, who was asked if he had any pornographic material.

"Who, me ?" he replied, "Why, I haven't even got a pornograph."

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Recently I was looking at the progress of the work on the new 250-foot diameter radio-telescope at Jodrell Bank, where the University of Manchester's research station in radio-astronomy is located.

In view of the size and importance of this project and of the remarkable advances already made by this ten-year-old science, it is surprising that the telescope is not more in the public, an eye. One scarcely expects science-fiction fans to talk about it, of course. Science has no particular interest for them. But I should have thought that an appreciable section of the public would respond, look at the interest in underwater exploration, or electronic brains, for instance.

Apart from a very occasional article in "The Times Science Review" or in the Penguin "Science News" it might as well be another ground-nuts scheme.

I'll say nothing of what I saw. Does that tantalise you?

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Permit me to introduce myself, if one may do so while maintaining cover behind a pseudonym. The reason for anonymity is not particularly that I am shy of seeing my name in print, or that I should be ashamed if the vicar got to hear of what I do for a hobby. It's not even that, safe behind the mask, I may make faces at all and sundry: it would take only superficial effort to unmask me, if anyone thought it worth while.

The simple truth is that I have always wanted to write under a nom-de-plume; it is so dignified and so beautifully dilettante. Away with self-advertisement, they seem to say (these Autolycuses and Viators and Atticuses) Let there be only the polished phrase and aloof demeanour, the detached appraisal of the "lists of Mars from a seat in the stalls: and occasionally....oh, very occasionally..... the arch witticism that leaves the reader feeling vaguely One Down.

So long comes Michael from the deep-freeze, bent on reviving a lot of stiffes who havn't been heard of for years, at least on the receiving end of science-fiction. Contributions, he says emphatically, are solicited: very well, then! At last I can have my wish. I can also cease turning in my grave on account of fandom.

It remains only to choose the name under which to be born again. It should, I feel, be something symbolical; to suggest that I am, as it were, a sort of primal horror rashly conjured from some Lovecraftian past: a Shub-Niggurath, but purring. I did consider Coelacanth, a fishlike creature recently dredged up after having been thought to be extinct for 70 million years. Quite appropriate, you say: but since at the rate Coelacanth is being caught for the museums he jolly soon will be extinct at last, it might lead to my being pickled and put on show like Jonah the Whale.

My final choice has obvious connotations, and the symbolism should be apparent to all. Among other things, there is of course only one phoenix alive at a time. Thus I fear no competitors. Only assassins! Most fitting of all, though, is the fact that, if I should happen to write something that calls forth fiery indignation, I am, as The Phoenix, fireproof.

Your servant, gentlemen!

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The announcement by the Home Secretary of an enquiry into Homosexuality and Prostitution seems to have been made with some hesitation. Surely it was not very many months ago that the official view was that no such enquiry was necessary?



One had the impression that an almost Victorian reticence prevailed in the Ministry, and that H....y and P...r didn't bear thinking about, let alone discussing in the M...r of Parliaments.

Certainly times have changed. Many subjects once thought fit only for the smoke-room have moved into the lounge, where they are freely discussed in the most varied company. I suppose it's all this television.

But whilst one set of topics gradually become acceptable in polite conversation, another set go out of favour. We are in process, it seems, of exchanging one lot of taboo subjects for another.

One of the surest ways of making a social gaffe these days is to confess to doubts about democracy. One has to choose the company, of course, and the approach; but in certain circles, to suggest, let us say, that the common man is not like unto one with the sun shining out of his eyes is to dice with death. Class, it has been said with some truth, is the great unmentionable of our time.

Other lesser taboos will come to mind, of potency only in certain places or among specific classes of people. There is a subject that even I would hesitate to discuss among the British miners. Let's call it....I do not want to offend anyone..... encouragement of output.

And we all know what is Senator Macarthy's Dirty Word.

Sigmund Freud's statement in "Totem and Taboo" is worth quoting. He said, if you remember:

"The oldest and most important taboo prohibitions are the two  
"basic laws of totemism: namely, not to kill the totem animal  
"and to avoid sexual intercourse with the totem companions of the  
"other sex".

How far our modern ethos goes towards limiting the former uncompromising attitude towards these prohibitions is a matter of opinion. One thinks of the breakdown of family life which is said to be reaching some proportions: the totem animal, if killed, has perhaps suffered severe mauling since Freud's day.

His other taboo subject is still not admitted in general conversation, although a recent science-fictional treatment of the theme appears to have raised little adverse comment. As frequently happens, fans are afforded first chance to guess which way the tide is running.

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We are now, by courtesy of "The New Statesman and Nation" able to reveal the fundamental cause of the strike of footplate workers which in May, 1954, so seriously affected British Railways that at one time it looked as though Londoners might have to walk to the Supermancon. It was of course fairly obvious that the revision of working regulations and the subject of "lodging turns", by which certain workers were required to spend occasional nights away from home was no more than the superficial cause of unrest.

The real point at issue, which we anthropologists scarcely needed The NS & N. to express, was, as the issue of May 29th. says:

"Undoubtedly, one reason for the unpopularity of the system is that it often  
"involves not only absence from home, but also the parting of a driver from his  
"own engine, to which he is strongly attached."

--- May I refer those interested to my forthcoming book: "Lodging-turns & Taboo", to be followed at a later date, I hope, by a sequel: "Growing Up in BR-R."

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# anticipation

Some information on Continental science-fiction....by

eric bentcliffe

Being a collector as well as a fan I have found considerable interest in what is appearing in the genre in other countries. Even if I am unable to read with any understanding the publications of France, Holland, Italy etcetra; I do find it very interesting to obtain their magazines and compare them with those of the English speaking world. In this article I would like to leaf casually through some of the Continental magazines, for your interest too.

**URANIA.** This is the magazine which has been mistakenly referred to as the Italian edition of Galaxy, it is true that this magazine does reprint stories from Galaxy but it also reprints from other sources too. The format of the publication is very, very attractive, and is in my opinion far ahead of any U.S.A. or British science-fiction magazine in layout. The artwork is by Italian artists and is very good, the covers are in at least four colours and very well executed. It is quite impossible to convey to you in words the attractiveness of the artwork in this magazine, but I think that this facet of the magazine alone will repay you for any trouble you may have to go to, to obtain it. URANIA, is slightly larger than digest size and contains 160 pages; apart from the story content (wich is Galaxy - ASF standard) it contains several departments, notably La Posta de Urania -- which is of course the letter section, the size of this feature would indicate that s-f is becoming very popular in Italy.

**I ROMANZI di URANIA.** This is a companion magazine to the above in the same attractive format, both are edited and published by Arnoldo Mondadori in Milan. While Urania features the shorter stories (up to novellette length - and serials) this companion magazine features a long novel per issue plus a couple of short stories. Some thirty top s-f novels have already appeared in this magazine; Prelude to Space; Weapon Shops; Sinister Barrier; Dreaming Jewels; Beyond the Horizon... to mention just a few. An occasional reprint of French s-f material has also been featured, an instance being 'Terrore Sul Monde' by Jimmy Guieu.

This magazine is also well illustrated, 'Anni Senza Fine' .. CITY, is particularly worth looking over, the artist, Bett, seems to have translated the mood of the story exceedingly well. There are several interesting features in this magazine also, La Sfinge Moderna, a section devoted to s-f crossword puzzles etc. An unconsciously humorous note is struck in issue number 18 wherein a photo of Arthur C. Clarke appears under the heading of CURIOSITA SCIENTIFICHE.

**FICTION.** This is a French publication reprinting stories from the Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction. This magazine is in no way comparable with the Italian magazines as regards format and makeup, neither is it, apart from the cover (issue No. 1, carries a reproduction in black and white of one of the Bonestell Moon-Rocket ship paintings from the original edition) illustrated. FICTION also contains a small amount of original material by French authors. There are several features not found in the American edition, a letter section,

\*\* The French have a word for it.







I looked at it, and did a double-take. It was still there. Page 8, "Looking Backwards," near the bottom - " --- the name Horbinger, and his theory of the creation of the earth at the gathering of experts ---"

Experts in what? Horrifying visions of a macroscopic chemist, biologist, micro-physicist and ballistician meeting together to planet, swam before my bemused brain. "Shall I put traces of the element here, brother?" "No, brother, it would be better to put them lower down, away from the Radiations" "But brother, what about the balance?" "Well we can stick a blob of something over here a little distance away to compensate, can't we?" "Suppose so, brother, but it'll give the thing a sort of lopsided look." "What about it, brother? What the hell d'you think we are anyway-a lot of ruddy artists?" Etc.

No - it doesn't ring a bell, does it. Personally I suspect a typo. Not Experts, perhaps, but Exports. That's far more likely. Repercussions of some prehistoric transportation strike, maybe, with comets from Centaurus, solar radiation from the Sun, cosmic radiation from the cosmic raising-ground, spores and rubble and assorted stardust from here there and everywhere else, all piling up at the entrepottery faster than they can be redirected, until they take on the shape of a coherent world.

Or - hold it - maybe I've got it wrong. Maybe the word "earth" was intended in its basic aboriginal sense - ground, soil, good clean mother dirt. This reading has the added virtue of tying it up with Atlantis again. After the cataclysm, not only is Atlantis no more, but the rest of the world's become s sort of gigantic dust-bowl. Desperate measures are essential to avert the doom of the race, and a few surviving top-level scientists hold vital conclave to organise soil conservation and recovery measuras within a microsecond of the crack of doom. Good for them- they did it, too. Three cheers.

Anyway, what's a little ambiguity here and there? Life's an ambiguous thing at the best of times. And it IS rather fun being able to write an article on something one knows nothing whatsoever about and - maybe - get away with it.

[illegible]

## BOOK REVIEW (Continued from next page)

Dahl was born in Wales of Norwegian parents in 1916. He spurned college after a public school education, and worked for a time in Newfoundland and Tanganyika before joining the R.A.F. in 1939. Injuries invalidated him out of the air three years later, and he spent the rest of World War Two in Washington, first as an air attaché, and later in the British Intelligence. His first full length book (Over to You, 1946) was a collection of flying stories, and he has sold a fantasy script, later made into a children's book (The Gremblins, 1943) to the Walt Disney studios.

Most of the titles in Someone Like You appeared during 1948 - 1953 in quality periodicals like The New Yorker, Harpers and Town and Country. This reviewer unreservedly recommends Roald Dahl's latest book to new, old and ex-fantasy addicts alike. He also especially recommends it to those present-day editors who have been having such a hard time assembling decent fantasy anthologies---mostly because they haven't been able to get their noses out of the pulp magazines.

---A. Langley Searles.



Author: Roald Dahl.

Type: Short Stories (s-f &amp; Macabre)

Title: SOMEONE LIKE YOU

Pub. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1953 359pp

Review by A. Langley Searles.

Are you tired of Astounding Science-Fiction and Weird Tales? Are A. E. Van Vogt and L. Sprague de Camp boring you? Does the contents-page of the latest Galaxy look a bit dull? Do you sometimes wonder even if those brightly-jacketed s-f volumes crowding your bookshelves were really worth the buying? In fact, have you begun to think that very little top-drawer fantasy is being printed at all these days? Those who have been answering "yes" to these questions should run, not walk, to their nearest bookstore for a copy of Someone Like You.

There are eighteen short stories in this book, and every one of them is excellent. Two can be classed as science-fiction; three are horror stories; and most of the others include enough macabre, off-centre happenings to be called fantasy too, even if your definition of that much-abused word is not charitably broad. Be that as it may, those five entries of unquestioned status are alone easily worth the price of the volume. The quality of the writing is on an exceptionally high level throughout; Roald Dahl's prose can be rolled over one's tongue like a rich oloroso sherry.

The two s-f stories in Someone Like You are "The Sound Machine" and "The Great Automatic Grammatistator." The first tells of a scientist who built a device to detect the language of plants, and what resulted. The second is a beautifully biting satire on modern-day fiction writing, describing as it does the assembling of a machine which can produce fiction faster---and often better---than can professional authors. These themes are not entirely new, but their treatment is one of the most mature and competent I have ever encountered.

Just as expertly constructed are the horror tales. Two ("Rummins", and "The Wish") are given an effectively oblique cast, while the other one, "The Ratcatcher," deals the reader a nasty mental uppercut with plenty of warning. This last story is one of the most powerful examples of writing I have come upon during twenty-five years' reading in the field; in its own way it is just as memorable as Machen, Lovecraft or M. R. James at their best. In fact, I defy any sensitive person to forget the damned thing!

At the least half-a-dozen other titles in Someone Like You are contes cruelles that would make Villiers de L'Isle Adam or Maurice Level toss in their sleep. There's the faithful wife who murders her husband and gets away with it because she uses the oddest weapon on record ("Lamb to the Slaughter"); the man who throws himself off a transatlantic liner in order to be rescued --- and why he isn't ("Dip in the Pool"); and the famous artist who tattooed a masterpiece on his friend's back ("Skin"). My own favourites in this group are "Man from the South" and "Poison". The first tells about a chap who loves to bet --- his Cadillac against, say, one of your fingers---with a butcher's cleaver poised in the air to collect on the spot if you lose. "Poison" is a truly suspense-filled account of a fellow in India who woke up to find a krait viper curled up on his stomach under the sheet--he might be dead as mutton if one muscle quivered.

It is hard to compare Roald Dahl with anyone else, for he is an original, in a class by himself. John Collier, another original, comes first to mind: but although the themes these two writers use are much alike, their prose styles are from different matrices entirely. Collier is offhandedly malicious, baring his horrors with an insouciant tartness, but Roald Dahl is usually deadly serious and playing for keeps all the time. He is to fiction what Charles Addams is to the macabre cartoon.

Continued at foot of previous page.



THIS ESSAY IS CALLED

TOPSY
 BY  
 JOHN K. H.  
 BRUNNER  
 \*\*\*\*\*

--- because she didn't just grow - she came from somewhere, and that seems to be a pretty apposite title for the first of this series of articles which comprise an attempt to analyze the literary values of science fiction. It would not be merely presumptuous but silly to pretend that in this short space I can try to cover the whole of even the relatively narrow field of fiction that we know as s-f; therefore these articles are designed to act as a starting place; to provide talking points which may ultimately lead to a reasoned critical evaluation of the present position of the sf writer in the field of modern writing; to present opinions for which I take full responsibility and which I reserve the right to change at a moment's notice, and to give more or less valid reasons for those opinions.

Setting aside s-f's social value (which is tremendous) and its mental value, here it is proposed to consider only the fiction part of science fiction. Is it good? Is it bad? Has it even the seeds of greatness?

Let us set a background for s-f. It is a branch of fiction, which is a branch of literature, one of the five arts (I consider the use of poetry as one of the arts too limiting). In the fiction field, it is a branch of imaginative fiction, which makes it a close - but not too close - cousin of the fairy story, the folk tale, and their immediate adult relative, the pure fantasy and ghost story, or weird. Literature is an art - but equally it is a craft, the difference being roughly that art is inspirational and craft is perspirational. It is a job; an author may write because he has to eat and for no other reason, or he may forget to eat because he has to write.

Therefore there are two standards by which to judge the content of any literature: artistic success and technical proficiency. Voltaire, brought up on the rigidly classical plays of Corneille and Racine, called Shakespeare a drunken savage - but Shakespeare was an artist. He was also a hack turning out plays to order. Each criterion of judgement is useless independently, for both of them are tied to the one ultimate test of any form of writing: does it go over?

Literature, more than any other art, is the art which uses ideas. A statue is an object and as such has an objective existence. Music cannot be tied to a meaning. Architecture is functional as well as artistic. Painting, whether representational or abstract, works less with ideas than with impressions. But words have no objective value unless there is someone to understand them and appreciate them.

Words are the means by which we convey our ideas. Where there is a paucity of ideas, though the words themselves may take on a quality akin to music, there is no real worth in them. As Masfield said of "The Phoenix and the Turtle" strange words in a noble rhythm for no apparent cause. There may, equally, be an overflow of ideas, ideas perhaps of value in them selves, but let the writer of those ideas lack the magical gift which makes the words into a harmonious whole, and they might as well never have been written. A rose by any other name, Korzybski and his minions notwithstanding, does not smell as sweet, for the word and the object are so inextricably confused in our minds that most of us will run screaming at the first hint of what Peacock calls hyperoxysophistical paradoxology.

Science fiction, more than any other literature of our time except the serious philosophical writing which is timeless, may truthfully claim to be a literature of ideas. Of new ideas to boot. Time was when a man with a radical new philosophy or a desire to extend the boundaries of man's mind, wrote either a lengthy treatise or an Utopia, and except amongst the intelligentsia, it mouldered on the bookstalls. Or he wrote an Erewhon, or the kind of 'improving book' that



our grandparents and greatgrandparents were given by well-meaning elderly relatives.

Somewhere along the line, someone decided that this material wasn't necessarily dry - that entertaining reading could be made out of imagination channelled into preset limits as well as out of unbounded flights of fancy. I believe that the first true science fiction was Edwin Abbot's "Flatland". It was not just science fiction in the narrowest sense of the word, the sense used in the twenties and thirties in the American pulps - scientific facts hung on a threadbare plot in order to make them palatable. It was genuine s-f as we know it today, for it not only treated the geometry of the time in an amusing and delightful style, it also extrapolated from what was then known to give one of the clearest and most thorough explanations of the fourth dimension ever written - and at that Abbot was writing some twenty years or so before Einstein wrote his paper on relativity.

The influence of "Flatland" wasn't great. As far as I know, it directly sired only one story, called Endless Dimensions, in an odd little booklet put out by Pendulum Publications shortly after the war. But it had the first germs of what makes science fiction successful.

For it is successful. The children of today are the first generation which was ever prepared for tomorrow. Their space helmets are the sign that s-f has fulfilled one of the greatest needs of any literature - acceptance.

We can see, therefore, that s-f must have a literary value of sorts. Granted that Mickey Spillane is successful too, but there is a reason for his success that has nothing whatsoever to do with either the quality of his writing or his ideas. His subjects are simply popular subjects - read your News of the World. The only idea he ever had was that of cashing in on it.

And the test of ideas can be applied to all literature: the content is essential, whether it be the happily caught simile of "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" or the enigma of life on Mars or the future development of mankind.

There must be ideas. There are. There must be a way of presenting those ideas. There must be - what is it?

Primarily, of course, the fact is that it is infinitely easier to put over your ideas, when the content of your work is important, when you know exactly how to set about it. It is not implied that nobody prior to the present century knew how to write; but one is not far wrong in saying that it a feature of the twentieth century that writing has acquired in it the techniques which other arts have used more or less consciously for centuries. The study of the means of presenting one's ideas was delayed longer than the study of presenting appearances. Perspective and harmony were well-organised before the real techniques of literary analysis grew up. With the advent of the latter, however, it became no longer necessary to rely on an innate feeling, on inspiration, to write well. That is not to say that one can write great literature by taking a correspondence course; but at least a writer today has the enormous advantage of being able to use consciously techniques that previous generations have had to work out by a painstaking method of trial and error.

The result may be very clearly seen by glancing at the ancestry of science fiction. Without tracing back as far as Lucian, it is plain enough that whereas say Wells is still read with enjoyment despite so much of his prophecy having been outdated, just because he was a good writer who happened to turn his pen to s-f; Bellamy's "Looking Backward" is read only by people whose business it is to know about that sort of thing.

It is interesting at this point to notice a remarkably close parallel in the development of the detective story and of s-f. Both have a history dating back a long way - to Lucian of Samosata in the one case and to the story of Bel and the dragon in the other. Kepler's Somnium and parts of Scott show that the ideas were there anyway. Poe was a major landmark in both, while Collins parallels



Verne. But it took the advent of a writer who just happened to turn his talents to the respective fields to bring about a growth towards maturity - Wells in one case Conan Doyle in the other. But because the human mind is lazy, and takes more readily to having a problem worked out for it - for it, let us emphasize, not by it - than to having itself put to work on totally new ideas and concepts, the detective story being first fashionable and then respectable. The science fiction is only now gaining the popular acclaim which, alas, is all too necessary in most cases to force critical appraisal of its worth.

Wells wrote "The War of the Worlds". He was an excellent novelist. He picked on a theme, which, owing to the speculations of Lowell and others, was much in the public eye. He wrote a first-class tale of interplanetary invasion, with a trick ending that still has an effect. But he could afford to spend a chapter at a time working in local colour. He had the writing ability to do it.

Consider by way of contrast Murray Leinster's "Nobody Saw the Ship". This is a short story on a remarkably similar theme, with a remarkably similar punch line. It is a gem of its kind, one of the finest he has ever produced. But its impact is concentrated. There is no building up of local colour at great length. The background is implied rather than exposed. And therein lies the secret of the effectiveness of modern science fiction.

Again by contrast: the science fiction novel of today. It is split into two directly opposed fields, and seldom is there a halfway mark. On the one side is the novel that is heavy on ideas. van Vogt has written several of them - take "The World of A" as the best known example. vV's writing technique is an explosive one. It is a technique in the strictest sense of the word - every item is calculated and conscious. Just as an engineer may look at what seems to the casual layman an ordinary piece of machinery and go into raptures over the beauty of the design, just so the literature that is technique without any artistry other than that of the workman who is good with his tools, van Vogt is appreciated most by the aficionados - the fans - and by people who, like Angus Wilson, are critics and understand the immense difficulty of using those tools in just that particular way.

The opposite side of the penny is the place where science fiction and the straight novel blend. This field is currently giving us our best work from the literary point of view. Clifford Simak's "Time Quarry"; Farmer's "The Lovers"; Theodore Sturgeon's "More than Human"; and of course Bradbury - who, I read in this very magazine recently, was instrumental in introducing a new fan to s-f by the comparatively unlikely route of a study of the modern short story. Also, on a very much lower level, and at all points in between, the novel which, like so many in the twenties and thirties, is written by a more or less good author and just happens to have a plot into which the elements of science fiction enter. Jerry Sohl's "The Haploids"; Sam Merwin's "The White Widows"; Fletcher Pratt's "Double in Space".

The basic difference between the novels of Wells, which are good from a literary point of view, and the best novels of today, is that while Wells happened to write science fiction, Simak and Leiber and Sturgeon and the others are science fiction writers who happen to write superlatively well.

The difference is all-important. It bears out the argument in favour of the refinement of technique which was mentioned above. From the technical point of view, a short story by such a minor author as, say, Ray Jones, written now, is infinitely more accomplished than a comparable short story written fifty years ago. In the narrow field of science fiction alone it is possible to find authors who have the wit of a Saki, the subtlety of an O. Henry and the acute observation of a de Maupassant. But they know what they are after. They go for it, and generally they get it.

The tendency towards refinement of rules in fiction, therefore, has a double advantage. It raised the general standard of writing immeasurably. It

please turn to page 31



# SYMPOSIUM ON

Page 24

## "A WHO'S WHO FOR FANDOM?"

from the  
Readers  
min

Eric Jones

With reference to your "A Who's Who for Fandom", here are my humble suggestions as to how the thing could be run. I have put a bit of thought into the problem of keeping it up to date and also ensuring that corrections will be made and passed on to the people who hold the complete listing.

- \*1) The way I visualise tackling the problem is this: Someone, who has both the time and is willing to do it, should have a Master file compiled on 5 x 3 index cards; these cards in the first instance would be typed up into the format you suggest in "F" by all the various Clubs/Societies/Groups, and sent to the Central File. This has now dealt with the people who are/have been members of some organisation at some time. There is bound to be some duplication of cards at this stage but that is a fairly simple matter once the system has started to sort them out. Next come the "odd" fans; fans who, although interested in some capacity, have not joined a club, but are "known". Central indexing would type cards out for these people from information either supplied (A) By the fan himself (B) through information supplied from a Club source (i.e. the person has been approached by the club(neofan) but has not joined) There are probably one or two more sources such as the S.F Book Club (if they would pass on the addresses) which might render a few more of the obscure fans.

Having assembled our Master File the next thing to do would be to canvass fandom to ascertain how many people will be interested in receiving copies of the listing regularly and would be willing to pay a set charge for the list and alterations and addition supplements.

Central Indexing, after doing this research (I assume that the various clubs/groups/ would back the financial side of the canvassing) would prepare stencils taken from the Index to conform to 4to size page which would fit into a folder. The copies would be distributed as required, the fans providing their own folder or purchasing one from Central Indexing. Every three-four months (if required) addition supplements be issued to the holders. This includes alterations which, would be duplicated in "strip" form so's they could be pasted over the old entry. The additional addresses could also be done this way the entry being either pinned or stapled into the correct page as the fan himself wished.

After more than 3 additions to any one alphabetical section, a complete new page is issued. Alterations can be coped with by the above method without necessitating a new page. (I have based the six additions on the size of the 5 x 3 space you have used in "F" ...you'll get about 3 per one side, and I am assuming that between, say, (get it right in a minute) Jacks and Jarrold (assumed to be two following entries in surnames) we get 3 new entries Jackson, James, Janser which have been distributed as slips for insertion. When a fourth name appears i.e. Jacobs, a new sheet is made out for the preceeding three. This then will have one blank side upon which new insertions can be stuck. I am not quite sure on this method, but perhaps someone will come up with a better suggestion. there are a lot



of snags if one collates the first and second characters of a name, perhaps it would be better to just put out an alphabetical section i.e. "A" and leave it at that, putting the insertions, wherever more than six appear, on to a new sheet and putting it anywhere within the alphabetical section. I think that the combined card and 4to sheet will answer the question, but the accuracy of the list will be in doubt as long as fan do not send in changes of address etc.. It's entirely up to fandom as a whole to make such a scheme workable.

With ref to \*1) on the other side. With the case of large organisations such as O.F. the work of compiling the cards would have to be farmed out...

Nigel Lindsay

About your FANDOM'S WHO'S WHO, I agree this sort of thing is very desirable, but it will never see the light of day on the scale that you suggest. A simple directory of names and addresses, yes. All you need is a combolist of subbers to all the fanmags. Anyone who doesn't sub to at least ONE of 'em doesn't deserve to be on it. (Not counting the contributors and letter-writers of course; they are in a class of their own).

But to obtain all the other details on your suggested entry card would rely on all these people WRITING IN. I ask you, can you honestly imagine them doing it? Just stop a minute and consider the situation. As WW Night approaches every fan in the country sharpens his pencil or brushes off his typer. He sits down and eagerly writes out how he was introduced to Fandom. What a lot of flannel that will be. He paws through dusty files to find out what defunct organisations he was a member of. He carefully considers how best to describe his occupation and education. Then a frantic search for his birth certificate, and the children being told to hush while they are counted. Hours in front of a mirror concocting an apt physical description that won't be scoffed at. Furtive glances at the wife as he confesses his other interests and ambitions. No I tell you that just cannot be. You might as well expect Mohammed to go to the Mountain. A compromise perhaps? That is a different story, and here for your edification is what I think will happen when you go ahead with the scheme:

First you get every fanned to publish your appeal and questionnaire. After three or four months you will have heard from all the conscientious fans. You can then publish these in a section of their own, and call them the CONCHIFANS for short (but not for long).

Next you advertise the names still outstanding and ask their friends to supply the details. Another three or four months wait and you can publish this section. They will be known as the libelled fans, or BULLEDFANS.

Any names remaining go into the hermit section. No one knows them and they don't care anyway. Mind you, these HERMITFANS might well be pseudonyms for otherwise respectable citizens, but in any case their section will provide a useful suckers list for embryonic faneds.

As for the actual publication, a card index system is ideal, but I should think the cost would be way up. However there is a simple method of overcoming that and making sure that they sell like hot cakes. All you have to do is print them on ordinary plain "cartes postale", then you can oh-so-innocently advertise the fact that your FANDOM'S WHO'S WHO is printed on the back of French Postcards! With that thought I leave you.

Ken Slater

I've a superKolossal cardex of several thousand fans, ex-fans, semi-fans, and what not, but so far as I can see no one is really interested. And Stan Thomas, keeper of the records (sic), is sitting on top of the OF Conbu index at the moment, which contains the names and addresses



of the 500 plus British OF members. Of course, a percentage of those are Aussies, South Africans, and a number of purely business addresses, like the British promags. However, Michael me boy, you are biting a leaf - a whole bunch of leaves, as a matter of fact - out of the proposed O.F. HANDBOOK( revised loose-~~leaf~~-leaf type). That was going to be section umpteen.

However, you are facing the problem of production, a matter which I considered, and the grater one of collating the detail, which to be honest had me a little scared. I'm enclosing a copy of the form I'm currently using in O.F. matters. Now, when Tony Thorne gets the job finished there will be 5,000 of these available, and of course as many more can be run off as we like. If your scheme will work, we could rubber stamp or over print, by the fanzine editors issuing 'em, a return address and the title of the collecting agency, and distribute them as widely as possible. I'll gladly contribute say, 3,000 copies for that purpose.

On production - it will be expensive, um? I'd suggest that collecting should be centralised; publishing should be undertaken only on pre-payment by interested people, that amendment/ additional sheets should be sent out on subscription basis. Clubs, etc., who aid in collecting might be given one free copy.

Archie Mercer About your Who's Who project. Personally, I'm afraid I can't see it'll be all that use. Surely people are mixed up and integrated with each other sufficiently for one to be able to get hold of anybody's address one suddenly desires to contact without much trouble. If you can't, the odds are that he doesn't want to be contacted particularly, anyway. The only people I can see finding any particular advantage from such an index are first-issue fanzine publishers trying to drum up a public.

And in particular the person who ran it would have the dickens of a job keeping people posted with the latest developments. Ken Slater's OF address list has fallen through quickly enough, you'll notice. And your idea seems to embody both that and contact-bureau particulars to boot.

Laurence Sandfield This oofoo idea of yours seems to have something. I don't see the need, however, for anything quite so elaborate as outlined. Why not publish with Futurian every issue a couple of half-quarto sheets containing the required info of half a dozen fans? They could be charged for at say 2d., and also be available from the LSFA at the same price plus postage. There's no need for the fan history section, or the ex-member one, or ambitions. The rest can be as shown. I'd suggest that all those fans who have typewriters be sent two or three of the hand written data sheets to put out on half quarto paper and return to you. All fans interested should of course send their info in, either to you or to the LSFA. Of course every "typey" fan would make say a half dozens carbons of his or her stint. All you Leeds lads would do would be to stick them together, pin or staple, and transmit them with "Futurian", "Orbit" or when sent for.

Terry Jeeves I like your idea for a loose card fan file, but to be of use, this list must be held by some central body, which must be known to ALL fandom. Who fits that bill, and would want to have the job of keeping such a file up to date, not to mention printing summaries of it, as most fen would like copies. I suggest that you adopt the standard post card size, which everyone can acquire very easily. If everyone fills in their own, at least, you have all your cards of identical size for filing. I'd like to hear more of this.



VINCENT CLARKE. Now, you seem to be occupied with the details to be obtained in such a list. I don't know whether this is too relevant...I'm not particularly interested in the physical appearance of people to whom I write, and such details as 'education', 'married', 'children' are only useful if a general ego-boosting "Who's Who" is to be issued as a magazine. The mere collection of addresses however, is not sufficient for fan purposes. For professional purposes...sending out catalogues, etc, throwaway stuff...yes. But this is being done at the moment, in the SPACE TIMES RESEARCH BUREAU survey ((What is happening with this - JMR)). And MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & S-F managed to fool a number of fans into collecting addresses a couple of years back and have apparently used the accumulated 'sucker list' to distribute PCs advertising the mag (with, I add in all fairness, reductions in sub. rates), without letting the list out for general circulation.

It seems to me that the purpose of collecting a list is, for a fan, to have the addresses of all his correspondents and BNF's on record, to avoid searching for old letters and as a convenient source, to catalogue people to whom it is worthwhile to send Convention propaganda, and to mark those to whom a first issue of a fanzine can be sent with the reasonable chance that, even if a subscription doesn't result, the person will be interested and will remember the sender in a similar fashion. For this reason, I noted on my Directory various loose categories, the first time that I think it has been done, and as far as I personally am concerned the thing has been very useful. But there is still a lot of 'deadwood'. Fandom, my idea of fandom is still not much over the 200 mark in this country...witness the London Convention membership figures, which in the last three years have been located between 160 and 200 and by reports the Mancon is similar. I should say there are about 50 fans who do things (probably comprising the total British readership of HYPERION), there are about another 150 who pop up inconsistently without being generally known, about 300 more who belong to OPERATION FANTAST because it's 'for s-f fans' and they get news of books etc. from all over the field, and the rest of the regular readers of s-f in this country, 50,000 or so, just couldn't care less. My own idea of fandom comprises the 50 active and the 150 occasionally active types. It may be useful to collect details of the others, but I should say that it is generally doubtful. There are some fans in the London district to whom I've been sending stuff for years with no acknowledgement.

So here are my suggestions: a definite collection, run by two or three or more fans, would be very useful...the single fan, like either of us, just can't spare the time to keep a list properly up to date. Any name that crops up in connection with s-f should be noted, put on record, and a short impersonal questionnaire sent. "Are you interested in having your name on record for being sent booklists - magazine lists - news of local clubs - convention news - put on a list for a free copy of a fanzine when it appears -- etc." If the person can't spare the time to reply they are obviously a dead loss, keep their names for a year or so as 'unlikely' and if no further news - on to a black list, to prevent possible duplication. Fans to be denoted by various, fairly loose categories, for the benefit of such people as, say, the new fanzine editor who wants artists, or the bibliophile to find other bookmen. My own personal file is merely one name and address per postcard, mounted in a wooden box...the thing is a foot long and jammed tight now...with an odd jotting as to what magazines I've sent personally and any sub received, plus various odd cryptic crosses indicating they have been sent convention stuff etc. Nothing about 'ambitions'.

JAN JANSEN ...I believe that there is one item: how introduced etc. which should actually belong on the back of the cards were the plan followed thru'.

Anyone else with comments to make :: we will wait until next issue at least before attempting to sum up. How about some progress reports on the plans that have actually been thought up, so far, by various persons and organisations?



Author: The Earl Nelson, F.R.A.S., F.R.G.S., F.R.S.A.

Type: Non-fiction.

Title: LIFE AND THE UNIVERSE

Pub. Staples Press, 1953.

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Synopsis: A hotchpotch of data rather like a series of Readers Digest articles ranging from (Chapter Headings) "The Expanding Universe", "The Atom", "The Chemistry of Life", "Lightning", "Interplanetary Travels", "Flying Saucers".

Reviewed by Arthur W. Busby.

The array of letters after the author's name fills one with hope but the results are disappointing. Of course to discuss Life and the Universe in 211 pages is an impossible task. One expected something like Spencer's 'Life on other Worlds' but this is only perfunctorily explored. The book, as already mentioned in the synopsis, is little more than a string of articles touching airily on Cosmology, Astronomy, Evolution, Biochemistry, Geology, Physics etc. The most useful part is the Bibliography at the rear, directing one to the substance of which this is merely the shadow. The author, too, has an annoying habit of straying far from the topic under discussion and then remembering where he was. The chapter dealing with Interplanetary travel is obviously nearly all a rehash of Arthur C. Clarke. The chapter headed 'Flying Saucers - Fact or Fiction' must of course contain some philosophising as well as facts, but how exasperating! Earlier the author has conceded that there may be life elsewhere in the Solar System. Following Hoyle he admits to a plethora of kindred solar systems throughout the universe and further admits that it is only logical to assume there is life elsewhere. Having dismissed the idea that flying saucers are of terrestrial origin he forgets all his previous remarks, and asserts that if we assume they come from another planet this could only be Mars. "If the objects come from Mars they might be unable to land here safely or if they did to take off. What is more Martians would perish as soon as they emerged from the machine just as we would if we set foot on Mars without protective clothing or breathing apparatus. Ergo they don't come from Mars". But how on earth (or perhaps in air) does the ergo follow. Having proved the origin not to be of the solar system, the theory of Relativity is invoked to prove that they cannot be from other systems. And that leaves us where? The author's theory is that they are of electrical or electro-magnetic origin - "I think it possible they may be some kind of electric tornado in the upper atmosphere or perhaps in the nature of ball lightning" strikes me as being extremely naive. No, I feel Fort was right. We are fish. Fish that have suddenly gone mad and developed atomania. We have to be watched.

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TOPSY (Continued from page 26)

also enabled the writers of science fiction to make themselves acceptable to their public. You and I - who are that public - are both grateful for it.

Of course, there are people who just happen to write science fiction. George Stewart is one. "Earth Abodes" brings to one of the oldest themes in s-f the hand of a master who is confidently working in the manner of one of the greatest periods of English - that of Jacobean and Elizabethan times. Huxley's "Brave New World" and "Ape and Essence" are examples of the work of a first-rate author in the modern manner turning his attention to tomorrow. Orwell represents today's counterpart of Swift, a social satirist of unusual ability who finds science fiction a perfect outlet for his ideas. Voltaire did the same thing in "Micromegas". Gerald Kersh, creator of that wholly charming rogue Karmesin, has written stories of an atom-blasted world that compare very favourably with such old masters as Nelson Bond. But more and more there are people who write because s-f exists. In the next article it is proposed to take a number of selected stories which have called forth acclamation to some degree, and try and show just what it is that gives them a right to be considered a major contribution to the literature of our time.



# How Dost Thou, Benedick? saulh *AK Smith*

Many long years ago, in the Golden Age of science fiction, when it was possible for a three-toed sloth to count the magazines on the claws of one hand, there appeared in an American fan-mag the first and possibly the best of all fan-mag skits deriving from "Alice in Wonderland". Amongst its most prominent charms was some artful, and justifiable, jibing at the type of story being professionally published at that time - it was, of course, before fan-mags had to consider the reactions of a review department in the pro-mags. It was alleged that too many stories were based on a Formula, the key ingredient of which was the supreme clause "The World Must Be Saved".

This ancient slur on the noble race of science fiction authors occurred to me the other night as I finished reading the May issue of 'Galaxy' - a magazine widely proclaimed, particularly by the editor, to be at the top of the field. It did so because I had a sudden feeling that there was something of a muchness about the stories I had been reading, and I checked back to see whether by any incredible chance the Formula was still in use. Naturally the investigation showed no such lamentable state of affairs. Not, at least, so far as the old Formula was in use, instead it revealed a far more deplorable state of affairs. There was indeed a Formula, the oldest, corniest of all, the Hollywood special, "Boy Gets Girl."

Look at those stories. "Granny won't Knit" - Boy in a static civilisation of the future is pushed hither and back to break the stasis, but his great triumph, in the end, is "Gets Girl". "Mate in Two Moves" - scientist involved in struggle with malignant virus, his ultimate triumph is "Gets Girl". "Back to Julie" - a scientific thug messes up the civilisations of two worlds on parallel time-tracks and "Gets Girl". The other two stories in the issue have to do with the troubles of married people.

Well cor - if you'll excuse the expression - cor chase my aunt Fanny round Harwell Atomic Research Station! How did all these flipping women get into the act? Time was when heroes like the Arcot mob could go rollicking all over the space-time continuum, blowing up planets here and suns there, saving the world twice per page for tens of thousands of words, and never come within heat-ray range of a floozie. I can remember some of Edmond Hamilton's merry men throwing a Triton loaded with Neptunians away into the interstellar void without even the promise of a rewarding kiss from a winsome lass. And how about Malone, the venturesome narrator of "The Lost World"? He joined the expedition to impress his beloved, and his reward was to return to find her the spouse of another! That sort of ending wouldn't for Galaxy - or Peg's Own Paper, whichever it was I was reading... Stap me if there's much difference in tone between the two.

As a hardened old bachelor myself I take a twilight view of this utter surrender of science fiction to the cherished female myth that men are so insatiably uxurious they cannot resist a good bust measurement. Is there anything so very incredible in a hero who has more important interests in life than slobbering over an attractive female? Let us be outrageously fanciful and imagine a hero who meets only women devoid of any physical charm for him whatsoever. Stretch the bounds of credibility even further to encompass the case of a hero who meets a charming girl who manifests no interest in him of any kind. Finally, make one supreme effort, and think of either of these unfortunate - but surely true-to-life - persons reacting to this sad state of affairs by shrugging his shoulders and carrying on with his job, instead of going into a sickly decline.



The female audience would not exactly go a bundle on such a situation. They would depreciate it all the more because of its dangerous realism. But the female audience is catered for by masses of exclusively sappy magazines bulging with fiction based on the ridiculous proposition that the mating instinct of the emotionally immature is the only interesting or important thing in life. Let them therefore be - for once - unselfish and not insist on this sickly theme slurping over into science fiction. Let us return to the happy days of science fiction stories which were stag parties, not necking sessions.

I trust I have made my point? Good. I must now hurry away to play for the thirty-seventh time my favourite record - "There is Nothing like a Dame."

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A.N.T....A.R.G.O.S.Y....O.F.....S.C.I.E.N.C.E.....F.I.C.T.I.O.N.....R.M.BENNETT.  
.....

A Review of a Departments first year --- "ARGOSY's" 'Science Fiction Choice'

The Amalgamated Press' short story magazine, "Argosy" began with the July 1953 issue to devote space to a science fiction story, under the heading 'Science Fiction Choice.' As a fan I was both thrilled and enthralled by this innovation, and especially by the standard of the first story in this monthly department. As a lover of the short story as a literary entity, however, the setting aside of a story of any particular subject, wide enough though Stf may be in subject matter, can do no other than lower the standard of the magazine as a whole. Once limitation of any kind is placed on subject matter the result must be a cramping of a writer's freedom of scope, and a consequent lowering of quality in style and presentation. The later stories to appear under the tag of "Science Fiction Choice" tend to bear out this argument. Not only have they been bad science fiction but they've not been stories of particular merit either. It is interesting to note in what light the editors and/or powers that be regard stf., for no fewer than eight of the first year's offerings have been more in the nature of light fantasy than science fiction. Only two of these come up to the standard of Argosy in a more literary and less ostentatious frame of story printing. Both are by American authors, i.e. MacDonald's "Ring Around the Redhead" and Brown's "The Waveries" which does, it is true, carry a moral. Three of the remaining four have been reprinted and rereprinted. They deserve their honours, but are poor fare to offer in Argosy under a special heading when most of the readers who will buy the magazine specially for this department will already possess the stories in their own stf. libraries.

Science fiction in one or other of its many disguises was no new thing to "Argosy" prior to the segregation. Notable stories to be reprinted in the magazine are Anthony Boucher's "Nine Finger Jack" (August '51) and the stories from "The Martian Chronicles" around 1950. I also remember an excellent story by Wyndham called "Chinese Puzzle", (February '53) a terrific off-traility.

The first story to feature as the magazine's science fiction choice was Paul Ernst's "Nothing to Report", which I have since learned (to my never-ending amazement) was originally published in Astounding (Feb. 39) as "Nothing Happens On The Moon". It has also been included in the Conklin anthology, "Strange Travels In Science Fiction". At the Mancon I heard Ernst and his stories being ripped to shreds, but can find no grumble with this evergreen. The atmosphere of expectancy, horror and near-futility is handled in an adult manner, whilst Hartigan escapes from his invisible tormentor very cleverly and in a plausible manner too. The same issue of "Argosy" also ran a humorous tale by John Wyndham.

The August "Argosy" contained a story by a name then new to me. Since reading this thoroughly enjoyable story I've read everything I can lay my hands



on by this author, but I still think this is the best he's done. The story was John D. MacDonald's "Ring Around the Redhead". This was a really amusing, intriguing and novel story about an infinity of other dimensions. The idea is the thing, however, and one the originality of the worlds at the other side of the 'gawk' has been exhausted, the story loses its interest. This point must have presented a problem to the author as overlabouring of the gawk would have killed the story even quicker.

The September issue prompted a biting little note in "Space Diversions" to the effect that "Argosy" were running both Bradbury AND Science Fiction in the same issue. The Bradbury story here was obviously one he wrote for one of the slick magazines after his recent renunciation of stf. for the higher paying markets. Shades of H.E. Bates! I'll bet the "Argosy" snapped this one up.

As for the "Choice" story, I had to read the opening paragraph through no less than three times before I could grasp enough to comprehend fully the next paragraph. Since I started reading stf, this is the nearest I've reached towards giving up the medium altogether. The story in question was "Non-Stop" by A.J. Deutch, first printed in Astounding (Dec 50) under the title "A Subway Named Mobius". What a tale. Complication! Suspense! Mathematics! What more could any true follower of Stf. ask? I've since read the story through time and time again, but I still cannot make heads or tails of that first para. The story is about a train which takes a sudden turn on a complex subway system and disappears into a topological dimension. Great fun.

The October issue also ran both a poetic Bradbury AND a more conventional Stf. story. This was "Female of the Species". The best had come first. The quality was flagging. This was the worst Wyndham I've ever read and its fanfictional slapstick was indicative of what was to follow in later issues. The plot hinges round the theory that if robots of the household variety ever do come on to the market, they'll be far, far different from the conventional idea of human-proportioned. This was a brand new Wyndham, or at least it was billed as such, (and judging from a later issue this does not necessarily mean a thing) and I almost hope it has died the death.

Then came another name I've never heard of before or since. William L. Bade was featured with "Lodestar" a fairly serious study of a man who wakes up to find himself in the year 2634 A.D. I was not particularly impressed with this story but there is always the case of one man's fish being another's poisson to be thought of. The Bradbury this issue was "Price of Silence" which always tends to remind me of Ray Price the Rugby League Test half-back. Anyone who doesn't know the story can look it up in "Golden Apples" as "En La Noche".

William Saroyan, Lin Yutang, Walter de la Mare, Nicholas Monsarrat, Eric Frank Russell. All were contributors to the December "Argosy", and as might well be expected the Choice story was by the last named author. Entitled "The Man from the Morgue" it combines cleverly the horror of the walking dead with the fear of alien invasion. When it so happens that the invader can read one's thoughts the question is how to trap him:

"Dr Blain leaned forward, braced his arms, and calculated that his intended spring would barely beat the lift of the opposing automatic...

"It is not wise", warned the creature who claimed to be a corpse.

He raised the gun with lethargic hand. 'Your thoughts are not only observed but their conclusions anticipated.'"

The manner in which the invader is finally overcome is not in the best of scientific taste and is really somewhat irrelevant in a lighthearted way.

Halfway through the year, and on the whole some good science fiction with three stories attaining the standard of outstanding. What had the second half of the first year of the department to offer in comparison? Little. The New Year dawned with the amusing story of "Sheamus and the Immunity", by Martin Jordan. The theme is really frightening. The time is the future, when colonists to Mars have



returned to invade and conquer their native planet. Men are little more than slaves, with the 'Martians' all powerful. And Sheamus falls in love with one of his rulers, but fails to overcome her fleet of guardian robots to win her outright.

The February issue ran the name of Fredric Brown on the cover and I could hardly wait to get through tea to read it. I thought it very good too, but it wasn't science-fiction, only a story of a jazz saxophonist. (The things you learn; when did jazz AND saxophones ever blend?). The Choice story by the way was "Valentine for Betsy" which appeared, and still does appear, to be a variation of the preceding month's story. This time it was the girl who was doing the chasing, and a man from Saturn too. Why, Lavinia, positively disgusting. The writer was billed as Harriet Frank Jr., which indicates that the story was written by a woman, but after that boner in "Science-Fantasy" which announced Gene Lees as 'Miss Lees' one cannot tell.

Bradbury was back again in March with that Poeish "The Fruit at the Bottom of the Bowl". Great. Cleve Cartmill was the Choice author with a tale of mutated rabbits I'm sure I've read elsewhere, "Number Nine". Not really outstanding. Cartmill kicked off in the second year of the department in the July 1954 issue, but happily I can ignore that here.

To balance the disappointment I felt when the February Choice story turned out to be by an author other than Brown, the April "Argosy" printed Fred's "The Waveries". I may be biased towards Brown who is one of my favourite short story writers but I rate this as the outstanding story of the second half year in this department. Naturally I do not consider Clarke's story which has been anthologised more times than I care to think about. "The Waveries" is one of the best Brown pieces I've read for some time and it can be compared in standard with "The Last Martian" and "Pi in the Sky". ((What's coming over this guy? A rave and not about Bradbury! Can he have seen the light at last?)).

This was followed in May by Raymond F. Jones' "Pete can Fix It" which was poor, and not only by comparison with the previous month's special. The beginning was promising, the middle intriguing and the ending poor. Still, Jones had to explain it all somehow. But when a child of thirteen meets himself in the future, it can become just a little confusing. Almost like that sequence of never-ending mirrors in "On Looking into John Christopher's On Looking into Ernest Thompson's On Looking into John Ch...etc." The same issue announced that the June number would include a story by Arthur C. Clarke. Which would it be? Surely not "Breaking Strain" the story from "No Place Like Earth"?

It was. Under its original and American title "Thirty Seconds, Thirty Days" too. For the record the story first saw print in Thrilling Wonder Stories (Dec 49) and if the magazine hadn't also got printed in it Leinster's "Lonely Planet" and more especially Bradbury's "A Blade of Grass" I'd gladly sell you it. I'm not "knocking this story. I think it is wellwritten and entertaining (even if the trick ending didn't come off), but I must have a grouse at the people who printed this story, which after all, is now considered as something of a classic. Let's hope that with the second and coming year of the department the stories therein revert to the promising standard of the earliest stories. Lined up for the early part of the year have been Cartmill, Bradbury and Wyndham. Why don't you have a shot at joining them?

=====

#### RON LANE

It is with deep and genuine sorrow that I learnt of the death of Ron Lane, on Friday, July 9th. Ron had gone away with three friends in his car, to tour Scotland and have a climbing holiday. After spending some days at this, they settled down to fish in a stream, and Ron was crossing over when he slipped on a stone and fell into a deep pool. He must have banged his head and his friends could not find him despite diving in. The police had to drag the pool for him. Our sympathy goes out to his mother, sister and uncle. Harry Turner is going to put out a memorial publication and old friends of Ron are requested to write to him. Although not active of late Ron was one of the trio of wartime Manchester actifans. JMR.



# Argumentative?



— Wherein the Readers have their say

SID BIRCHBY :: It's funny the way the word went around that you were planning to revive "Futurian". Some months ago, I received a circular about the then forthcoming Supermancon, forwarded from an obsolete address, and saw with some surprise that Harry Turner was handling publicity. So I wrote to him for old time's sake and in due course he asked me round. He was republishing "Zenith"...had in fact done so...and excused himself by remarking that you in your turn were planning to republish "Futurian".

And now it's here.

This brings me to dig out the last issue, Vol.V. No.2., dated -- or rather undated, some time in 1945 and compare the two. The last of the old series had a number of extremely interesting points which at the time I intended to write to you about, that is until I reached the last page and read that you were bowing yourself out. I can still remember the frustration I felt. I have a very good mind to devote this letter to releiving myself.

But there's so much good stuff in the new "Futurian" that I'll confine my remarks to the present and put the old magazine back in the cupboard.

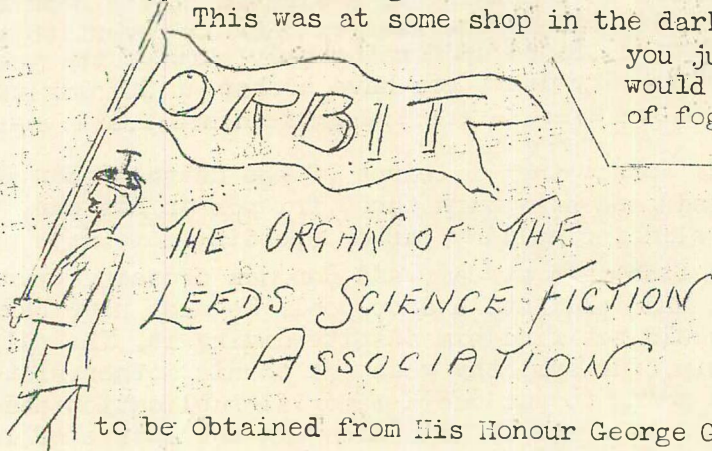
The gem of the issue is Don Smith's dedicatory squib, which even my wife, an anti-fan, enjoyed. The Chinese, formerly, had the custom of going in front of a triumphal procession letting off fireworks: how fitting that you should adopt a similar practice.

Potent indeed is the wit of the Master of Hartshill. It is evident indeed that the brew they hand out at the local Working-men's Club is as stimulating as ever. O fugleman of my youth, lead on !

"The Glamourous Dreamers", as I am sure Wally Gillings told you at the Supermancon, was more correctly but less amusingly the CLAMOUROUS Dreamers. When he told me, I nearly spilt my beer laughing. Picture the scene: a typical convention uproar, with wild-eyed characters shuttling to and fro watering each other's persons and reputations, while in the bar a less ebullient but hardly more elevated crowd consisting of crafty-looking editors, calculating authors and fuzzy fans. "I ask you!" snorts Wally, waving an arm about him, "What on earth's glamourous about us lot !"

Did you notice what Wally was paying for 1927 "Amazing Stories" back in 1927? It's no wonder prices stay inflated. Fancy paying up without a murmur. I'll bet they saw him coming.

This was at some shop in the dark underworld of the capital. Can't you just imagine the sort of place it would be...tucked away in a mews...wisps of fog curling round the gas-lamps....



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and a furtive figure sidles into the shop... an "East End Shop": that is all we are told: but we can visualise--can't we? -- the inscrutable Chinaman who comes shuffling forward as the cracked bell tinkles.

'I am interested in.... "The Green Splotches"! whispers our hero. The shopkeeper makes the countersign. Finger and thumb grasping the nose.

'It will cost you dearly.....' he answers, and names his price. A dreadful price.

Know, then, wally, that at Ida's Bookstall in Walthamstow, the regular price was threepence, not fourpence. Sucker!

E. F. RUSSELL :: Dear Mickey:

That's to infuriate the bunch in Belfast. Time they were reminded that the oldest Irish fan is Mickey R. O'Senblum ((ugh!!!))

Thanks for the NEW FUTURIAN. A voice from the past. A mumbling out of the mists of time, like unto the querulous yammering of some toothless old trembler in the corner. A parade of zombies. A jerking aside of the mortuary curtain to give us a look at the bodies. A wholesale exhumation of those poisoned by stf. A pawing through of vital organs to determine wot done it and by who (pronounced whom). How disgusting!

Look at page 1. Obviously a roster swiped from the third papyrus of the Egyptian Book of the Dead. D.R. Smith, a bygone character who was around when Eddie cavorted with Mrs Simpson. Ralph Milne Farley, a relic of the first World War. Walter H. Gillings whose voice is recorded, like Francesco Tamagno's, on a scratchy wax cylinder cranked by hand. Richard G. Medhurst, as senile a wight as ever tottered along Ammersmiff Broadway and who, by God, quotes stf published in 1894. Harry Warner, who not only rots but insists on doing it before our horrified eyes. John F. Burke, a name contemporaneous with Chamberlain and Hitler, or was it Wellington and Napoleon.

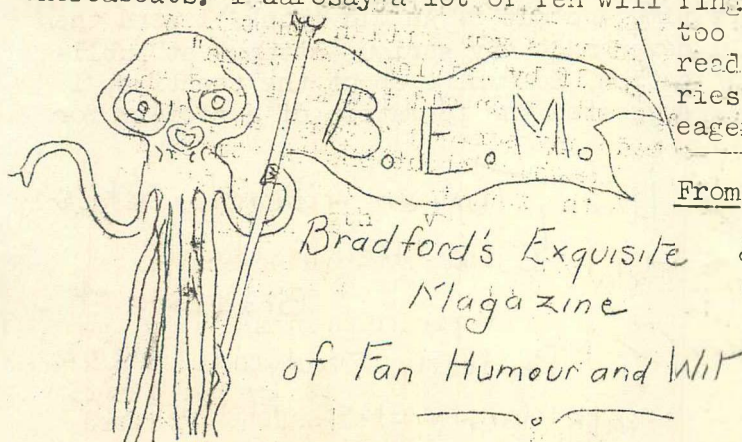
There's a law that one copy of everything published must be filed at the British Museum. I should say so, too.

Like a ghoul in a graveyard, you duly note the next vaults to be opened. P. 24 gives the revolting list: Youd, Arnold, Lewis, Temple etc. etc.

And between P.1 and P. 24 what have we? Names dragged from the dark ages, like Gernsback and Carnell, not to mention Carlyle, Captain Bligh, Yerke, Freehafer, Morojo and the incredibly ancient symbol of 4SJ.

No, no, no! I can stand no more! Send me N.F. only when it gets back into the Twentieth Century. 3/- enc.

NIGEL LINDSAY :: I was very pleased the other day to receive the NEW FUTURIAN. The F.W.D. was the very first fmz I ever subscribed to. At least, it would have been if it hadn't been defunct when I first wrote you, back in '44 or thereabouts. I daresay a lot of fen will find the first issue of the NF a little too refined for their liking, but for me, reading thru brought back a lot of memories of the old days when I was a puerile eager beaver.



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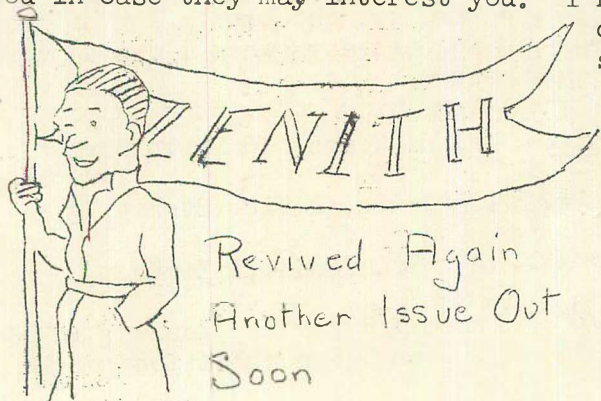


Eric JONES :: Thanks for the first issue of the New Futurian. I am very glad to see it back again. I had a few old copies of the original 'F' a while back but they were only loaned as I did not, unfortunately (fortunately?) find active fandom until 1952 altho' I have been an ardent follower of the genre since '36. Used to keep all the 3d. and 4d. mags one could get then and had begun to acquire quite a library until the war came..went into the RAF and my father persisted in binding about 'those old mags in the shed' as he wanted more room..I told him to leave 'em where they were but on returning from overseas service in '46 found that they had all gone up in smoke...sometimes I cuss like hell as the majority of the early Asf's were amongst 'em and now I'll have to get 'em again when finances allow..... It is certainly a pleasure to see the pre-war fan-mags coming back again First it was Zenith, now Futurian. Who is going to revive Fantast I wonder? I guess tho' that Doug Webster will be featuring in your "What Has Happened to Them" series unless something happened to him during the war years.....

Walter A. WILLIS :: How nice to see The Futurian again. I refuse to disfigure the hallowed thing by cutting coupons out of it, but please put my name down for the next issue and strike out the inappropriate words yourself. Incidentally congratulations on 'f' -- a really cunning piece of applied psychology. ....meanwhile I would just like to say that Nostalgia is the best idea I've seen for years and I enjoyed it best of all. I wonder would there be any chance of getting something from the people who have dropped out completely? Like Hanson, Michel and so on. Would probably be depressing but certainly fascinating ... D. R. Smith's poem was also wonderful.

Archie MERCER :: The contents as a whole, appear to fall into two main classes. One class is the back-to-the-good-old-days business, the other a sort of literary review. The latter portion is definitely worth reading. Also the former though not so much so - to me it reads much as a recital of names I've never heard of, which can hardly be calculated to excite. This applies particularly to the Nostalgia series "What Has Happened to Them".

C. Ashmore BAKER :: I was interested in receiving the New Futurian (although my personal predelections, at present, are for the study of the post-physical future., or "psy" as it is called nowadays by the esoterists.) You see, having got well beyond the 'Four score and four' mark that particular line of study (more than it would to you young fellows) is of personal interest to me. All the same, I still have a leaning towards science fiction including Flying-Saucers, and I am hoping to get hold of some of the stories you mention through my circulating library. Years ago I used to amuse myself by writing "Phantasma" and I turned up a couple of old ones a short time ago out of an old trunk. I send them to you in case they may interest you. I never made any serious attempt at publication. Somewhere about the twenties, I suggested the formation of a society for



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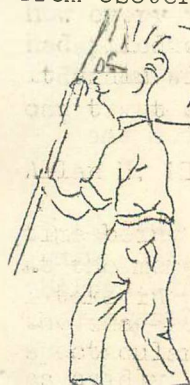
the scientific study of the future, but the Edwardian mind was still in evidence, and was not prepared for such a departure from orthodoxy. "You don't know anything about the future so how can you discuss it?" was then the attitude. I wonder if the modern mind is sufficiently enterprising to try out the idea seriously. By co-ordinating the general "ifs and an,s", quite a lot might be forecast with reasonable accuracy. However, all that does not bother me now; "Hale and farewell." is rather my attitude.

Bill TEMPLE :: Many thanks for the New Futurian. It's good to see its untidy collection of misspellings again, and to absorb the entertainment and even enlightenment they nevertheless manage to convey. Wally Gillings is downright lying to say that I ever hinted that anyone had ever become bored with his annual verbal history of his early struggles. Indeed, it was fascinating to see how every year the struggle became grimmer and grimmer as his brooding imagination had piled on more agony. I shall never tire of hearing it, and in fact am reading it again with relish. Flattered by the appeal for contributions but these days I can't get enough time to write what I have to write for my daily bread and butter.

Allan H. MILES :: ..My only excuse for not writing earlier is that I am up to my neck in Dianetic practise and group running, most of my free time being utilised in teaching, being group Secretary, and giving therapy. At the moment besides my normal employment (Collector of Income Tax) ((Sadist !!!)) I take in patients for dianetic treatment and this gives me a supplementary income. The snag to this is that it is a terrific time consumer. Still, I have had some spectacular results recently...I am still very keen on SF and my wife reads it just as avidly, but we have no contact with the fan world at all...I have written various short yarns, usually fantasy, but most of my writing is for the Bristol Dianetic Review, for which I have written some 100,000 words in the last couple of years.

Dennis TUCER :: ..Enjoyed the book reviews and George Medhurst's article. It gave me quite a thrill to see so many of the 'old names' on your contents page! 'What Has Happened to Them' is a first rate idea for a series; I hope you'll be asking Doug Webster for one, as I've often wondered about him. Speaking of Scotland, I still exchange Christmas cards with Edwin Macdonald, but he's been owing me a letter for about 2-3 years. But there's little point in going on saying I enjoyed this, that and the other, as I can quite honestly and sincerely say that I found something of interest in every item. And believe me, I'd soon tell you if I didn't, just to make it clear that I'm not merely mumbling sweet nothings.

Joan W. CARR :: I would like to wish you luck with the New Futurian. I think you might find it a hard struggle against the wit and puns of seventh fandom, but then sf. thrives on conflict. Perhaps it is about time we had a change from esoteric humour? ((But no, I like it, fandom likes it; but it just isn't my line to produce it; whilst the other facets of fandom are neglected. ))



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P.E.R.S.O.N.A.L...P.A.G.E. (Subtitled "Michael's Meanderings" - KSlater.)  
-----

WELL! WAT

D'YA KNOW My intention was to produce a magazine of some 20-30 pages and here we are on the 40th. I said last issue that a fan magazine in particular is made by its readers, and nothing has ever shown that to be more true than this issue. We have a change of intended format, because one reader was interested enough and kind enough to produce an unsolicited cover with illustration and a contents page heading. If other kind people will follow this example, we'll keep it up the same way, but I am easy going as to whether the cover is plain or fancy. What say ye? The reception The New Futurian has had is extremely gratifying, but I am most pleased at the fact that the kind words have come from all stratae of fandom. Any-one with a mathematical mind might care to work out how many of the numerical fandoms are represented on the contents page, and there has been a wonderful mail many items of which have not been able to be crammed in. I hereby thank all writers who have not had the replies I would have liked to have sent had there been the opportunity.

Readers will note that George Medhurst's Book Column; "What Has Happened to Them" and the suggested Ernest Thompson critique series are not in this issue. The reason is simply that quite enough material came in before these items could be rounded up. They should appear next time as all are asked for by you, the readers. But, please do not assume that other contributions are not required. They most definitely are. From anyone who has anything to tell us, to comment on, to review ktp.

GRATITUDE Thanks are due to the following people in particular for their valued assistance. George Gibson, who has helped with article headings usw.; Tom White who stencilled the Gillings article this ish; and the Leeds boys who are going to help assemble the magazine tomorrow night as I type, which is why I want to get the last bits done in a hurry, and not lose this most welcome aid. You try assembling 250 copies of a 40 odd page 'zine and see how long it takes you.

APOLOGIES especially due to Wally Gillings for the mistitling of his contribution last issue. Clamorous; not Glamorous -- tho' I still think the latter title rather nicer. Amateur psychologists had better not inform me why I should misread it several times. I shall not apologise for various spelling and typographical mistakes -- such mishaps must be taken for granted and if you don't like it, you'll either have to do better yourselves, or lump it.

SUPERMANCON was attended by your humble servant and enjoyed. Especially the hospitality of the Liverpudlians. But there is enough in other publications about the function so my magazine will not give any coverage to the affair. The big question now is -- where shall it be next year?

NEXT ISSUE is going to be aimed at for October, but if the amount of material is comparable with this time, my intention of managing four issues in 1954 will not be carried out. But as there will be more material per issue, coming to you for the same ninepence per time, there really shouldn't be any grumbles from the clientele.

PERSONAL AFFAIRS :: The Rosenblum family are keeping quite nicely, thank you all who enquired. My brother-in-law/business partner is also going on reasonably though medical advice is to the effect that he will be a semi-invalid for another couple of years. Business matters are becoming a little less hectic too.



Some more bits and pieces hacked from readers' letters will provide a further instalment of ARGUMENTATIVE ?

Vin/ CLARKE :: ((part of a 5 page closely typed epistle)).. re the moan on paper, the larger the supplier the better chance one has of obtaining the same quality paper, but there is definite limit to the amount one can store in a warehouse; it takes at least 3 months to obtain supplies from a manufacturer. The poor wholesaler has to gauge his customers wants accurately enough to hold supplies of all kinds of paper so that it will last over a 3 month period.. I speak with feeling, having recently worked in one such establishment. As for the size, here again only so much can be cut from the large reams at one time, and the difference of an  $\frac{1}{8}$ " placing of the paper on the guillotine (meaning  $\frac{1}{4}$ " difference between one half of the paper cut and the other) doesn't seem much when said paper consists of 500 sheets 19 inches by 27 and weighing 23 lb or so.....

Terry JEEVES ::: Thompson's crit of 22nd Cent. First of all, I strongly suspect you of getting this going just for the argument you will get. This is a damn good idea anyway. As for Mr T. I don't particularly like the stories of the author under fire. Let's have more by friend Thompson, but also run beside his piece, a companion crit by some s-f addict. Results should prove interesting. BUT, critics should give reasons, even if only 'I don't like it, you may'. Mr T blames Mr C for quoting 'Martian Lubla' to gain atmosphere. To my mind this is not a legitimate complaint, as I imagine Mr C used it to cram into one sentence, the following facts. I quote the sentence first. 'Max sat indoors, smoking his special brand of Virginian mixed with Martian lubla'. Facts, obvious and otherwise.

1. Max is in doors...stage setting
2. Max is a smoker...(pipe smokers tend to have a psychological advantage in that people credit them with brains)
3. Max is a sufficiently wealthy man, to have tobacco whims, (special blend) and be able to indulge them, even to expensive (presumably) imported varieties from other planets.
4. Space travel is a fact at the time of the story.
5. via fact 4, we must assume (unless parallel time tracks are introduced) that the story is set in the future.

Well Mike, do I make my point? If you criticise, give reasons, and if you give reasons, don't be too glib about them. There was more in that sentence (intentional or otherwise) than Mr T saw. THAT is ONE of the problems of s-f writing as distinct from a contemporary adventure story.

Jan JANSEN :: The way the book reviews are handled is excellent, especially the full details given at the top of the page, with synopsis. I hope you will keep to these 'outsiders' and not take those books which are generally recognised as sf and discussed repeatedly in reviews, one after the other. Neither of the two dealt with has been previously heard of by myself, and may bring some undiscovered items in the public library to light. John Gloag is actually represented in a French translation, but seemingly none of the three mentioned. Being kind of interested in bibliography myself, having worked in a public library at Schoten for some time, and at the present moment engaged in such time as I have free (not too much) compiling a list of all sf as far as it is recognisable as such having appeared in Flemish/Dutch, it is needless to say I enjoyed Sterne's article I suppose. Perhaps that is why NF pleased me as a whole, being mainly devoted to actual discussion of sf aspects and sf books instead of the usual fanac.

D. R. SMITH :: I perused the first issue of The New Futurian with interest and amusement. Even allowing for the items out of stock you certainly seem to have some talent lined up already. I look forward to more of Gilling's history of fandom - I fear it may arouse some nostalgia in me for the days when I was young and enthusiastic and certainly enjoyed science-fiction more than I do

now.

S'all for now, apologies to those people who sent very interesting letters which couldn't get in .. Julian Parr, Graham Stone, Ron Bennett, Roy Johnson (!) etc.



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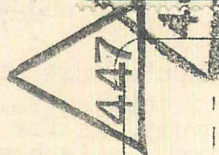
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Recd 31.7.54.



To — GEOFF M. WINGROVE. —  
— b TUTOR CHOSE —  
— CHEAM — SURREY. —