

DO NOT READ PAGES 4 & 5 OF THIS FANZINE!! Or rather, do not read the article called "Then" which appears thereon. Of course you can not read the rest of it if you like—see if I care (sniff)—but I specially exhort you not to read that article. No, it's not that it contains something mind-blasting, something liable to sear into your brain and send your shattered reason gibbering into insanity. I leave that sort of thing to G.M. Carr. No, all I mean is that the whole thing is repeated later in a revised form on pages 9 & 10, so you'd only be wasting your time.

P A M P H L E T

No. 3 October, 1956 FAPA77

Walt Willis, 170 Upper Newtownards
Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland.

If you want to know how this peculiar state of affairs came to be—and even if you don't, because you should have told me before I ran off this stencil, so you should—well, you see pages 2 through 8 (note my fluent command of American idiom) were run off a very long time ago for OMPA and I did extra copies for FAPA and put them in a time capsule behind the bookcase. I didn't actually forget about them....I knew for years that there was something

else behind the bookcase as well as old dust jackets and dust...but I forgot that the first two pages of my "memoirs" were among them. So when I started on this Fapazine I stencilled them all over again, just for you, you spoiled childrer of fortune. Then I found they were already in print for FAPA. Now, you wouldn't want me to scrap all that expensive paper and high class mimeographing just to save you the trouble of not reading it, would you?

Besides, think of the joy of coming across something in a Fapamaling which you can skip with a clear conscience. Ah, you see, I know your guilty secret! You skip bits of the Fapa mailing! So do I, and I know how you feel deep down...how you toss and turn during the night in agonies of guilt and bitter self-reproach. Was that ticket from Wilfred Myers actually a transatlantic plane ticket valid for next September? Was one of those poems in Higg's fms fantastically obscene? Was there a superbly hilarious misprint in Coslet's bit about Bibles? Well, here at last is something guaranteed absolutely one hundred per cent skippable. Skip happily, friends.

I've just read through three mailings myself in the last month or so, so I speak with feeling. I knew I'd read most of them before, but I happen to be the sort of maniac who hates to think he may have missed something—if I pick up a magazine in the barber's for instance I have to stay behind and finish it, a habit which gets me even more peculiar stares than my appearance when I go in—so I had to read through the lot to make sure. I am suffering now from slight mental indigestion, but it was worth it to get that panoramic impression of a year of FAPA.

I think that if there are two people who stick out in my mind more than others they are Danner and Speer. Danner for his brilliant ads, his lovely little typographical tricks, his quite unique ability to produce a handprinted fmz which reads spontaneously and his sheer sterling worth to FAPA. And to watch Speer's fine mind dissecting the thought of GMCarr (and others) is another many splendoured thing. Every time I read one of Gen's fmz I feel the urge to try something like that, but I usually just go and take a cold shower. I know very well that GMC would come back with something so infuriatingly outrageous that the frustration of having to wait three months to reply might make me hate her: whereas at the moment I must admit that I rather like her (except when she fights too dirty, as with Jansen and Gould.) I met her in Chicago (before she got her head caught in the elevator door) and she was very pleasant to talk to....friendly, intelligent and not at all opinionated.

(continued outside backover)

H A N D S O P H P H E L M E R P E R D U E !

LOVE ALL

MADELEINE WILLIS

Soon after Bob and Sadie Shaw came to live with us, Sadie decided to take up phoodmin-ton. She and Bob used to sneak up to the attic when there was no one there for practice sessions, until one fan night Sadie announced that she was ready to play with the other. John volunteered to partner her. Their opponents were James and me.

John loves to play: at the prospect he quivers ecstasically with anticipation, his moustache crackling electrically. Sadie became worried lest she let him down and begged us to be easy on her. She also pointed out she would need a good bat. Now, John has a wonderful bat. He made it himself. He spent weeks looking for extra strong cardboard for it, and it has a loop of electrical flex attached to it for holding it onto his wrist so that his opponents won't be able to knock it out of his grasp.

Sadie smiled sweetly at him and said "Lend me your bat John."

John, dazed at the concept that people could ask to borrow his bat, handed it over somnambulistically. Then, returning to his senses, he burrowed in the heap of bats which James and I had already picked over. He took the least flabby one and swished it with a dissatisfied air. The game began.

There was an unaccustomed grimace in John's expression, but his conduct was normal. "For service!" he shouted, stamping his boots on the floor, glancing to the right, smashing the shuttlecock onto the wall on the left, slapping the table with his bat, and shouting "UNPLAYABLE!!!" We had played with him before so we were comparatively unmoved. James whirled round to face the rebounding shuttle, caught it on his bat, and shook it down so that it would lean against his chest while he shot back to the wall to avoid John's slash at him. He curled up his lip in a sneer and hefted the shuttle up in the air. Just as he was unciling himself for a mighty smash, Sadie said, "Just a minute, I must take off my cardigan." James shuddered to a stop, swaying slightly, a study in arrested motion. Sadie said brightly, "Ready now." I think James may have been put off a little. He mis-hit, and the shuttlecock hit me on the back of the neck as I was leaning over the table poking John in the ribs with my bat to keep him at a distance. I looked round at him and he apologised, but we had lost and the others were to have first service.

0-0 John handed the shuttle to Sadie with a courtly bow and she served. It wasn't a very hard service and I waited confidently for it to come off the wall. Instead it slithered down the wall like a snake. I couldn't get to it in time and we lost the point.

1-0 "Wonderful service," Sadie," breathed John. Her next one angled upwards too sharply and hit the ceiling, which cost them the point. John turned a reproachful look on her and said, "Oh Sadie". She was determined not to make the same mistake twice, but this time the service angled downwards and she had to take it again. After watching this happen three times running Bob could contain himself no longer. "Serve from the waist," he shouted. "But I am," answered Sadie with asperity. "No you're not," said Bob, "watch how Madeleine does it." This was the last straw. She darted over to him. "You'll have to make your own supper tonight," she said, tapping him smartly on the head with her bat. "Stop!" shouted Bob, "You're giving me flat dandruff!"

Sadie returned to the fray and this time served in the approved manner. James dealt with it summarily. "Hit it harder," advised John. Sadie did so, and hit the ceiling again. "Oh, Sadie," groaned John. She turned towards him, but managed to restrain herself. Stamping her foot, she cried "I wish I were married to you for a minute."

Her next service was returned by James with such force that it bounced three feet off the floor.

It was now my turn to serve and as we were leading I felt magnanimous. I served gently to Sadie. She darted forward, caught the shuttle safely between her bat and her left hand (we had decided to waive the 'no-holding' rule for her as well as George) and slammed it down ungratefully on our side of the court

Pulling myself together I served again as hard as I could. John jumped for it. The doors and windows rattled as he landed three feet away, but before he could play it James had leaned over and negligently slapped the shuttle onto the floor. The same thing happened next time and Sadie informed James that she hated him. The next time John was a little quicker. He managed to get the edge of his bat under the shuttle before James put it away, and deflected it against the wall. He lunged at it again and it re-appeared rolling along the back of a large chair at the other end of the room. In a flash John was on it again and bore it triumphantly back. He slammed it down on our side of the court.

This time I served a cannon off the picture on the side wall and John slid to his knees in a vain effort to reach it. "It's past praying for, John," we giggled.

John now started to serve, and in spite of our best efforts he reduced our lead to one. It was now James's turn. He has a good service too, but he is best when he is leaning over the table slapping the shuttle out of the opponent's grasp. This infuriated Sadie, and once when she had the shuttle on her bat she took time out to tell him that she intended to buy the Stan Freiburg recording of 'I Laughed At Your Wedding' and play it at his reception. (She didn't, actually.) This prospect so enchanted her that she took her eye off the shuttle and James blew it off with a blast of air from a furiously fanned bat. John hurled himself at it with a despairing cry, but it had reached the floor.

Sadie was now to serve again. She rolled up her sleeves and took a firmer grip on her bat. John unshouldered his braces and moved closer to the table. Sadie served well, and we lost this point.

She served again, and James flipped the shuttle back over her head. She ducked and caught it deftly, but hit it just out of court. "Oh, Sadie," said John. The next service hit the ceiling. John had a beaten look, but he said nothing.

She served again, and I knocked it in John's direction. He slammed it back and James trapped it. John leaned as far over the table as he could without actually falling over it, thrashing the air six inches in front of James. James took a terrific swing at the shuttle and it hit John on the face and bounced onto the table. John yelled with pain, but retained enough presence of mind to knock the still quivering shuttle onto the floor.

Sadie's final service came towards me. I hit it back over the net and John intercepted it. He turned to make for the safety of the wall, intending to return it at leisure in an unplayable manner. I seized my chance and John's braces, and hauled him back to within James's reach. He yelled for Sadie and she rescued him by snacking my arm. We lost the point.

It was my service, and I was determined to increase our lead. However John was equally determined that we shouldn't. He stationed himself close to the table and as I served his bat flashed out in my path. Twice the shuttle returned to our side, having travelled only about six inches. I served harder still but John still blocked it. This time though he stopped my bat with his fingers. He dropped the bat from his numbed hand, held his hand between his thighs and hopped about in agony. But even this didn't deter him. He took up the same position again and I had to vary my service.

I decided to give it height at the expense of pace, and serve to Sadie. Sadie collected it on her bat, but in dodging back from James she dropped it. "Oh Sadie," said John.

I next tried to serve high and hard, but I hit the ceiling and our scores were level as John took his turn at service.

John really excelled himself and he and Sadie were ahead when James took over. There was an air of tension in the room. James gritted his teeth and swung mightily. We won the next three points on service only.

The game was now in the balance and the protagonists looked grim. Sadie caught the

20-19 shuttle as it rebounded from the wall, but she couldn't get back from the table quickly enough and James was able to knock the shuttle out of her grasp. "Oh Sadie," gasped John from the floor, where he had flung himself with such force that everything in the room rattled. This is a standard ploy of John's—it is his hope that the shuttlecock will land on him and thus be still in play.

The next point could be the final one. James hummed 'Dragnet' as he prepared to serve. We all hung forward, ready to spring into action. The shuttlecock arced in John's direction and he flung himself towards it. In midair he stopped, his arms flailing wildly and a look of consternation on his face. Then he was catapulted back to the door, against which he arrived with a dreadful thud. His braces had caught on the door knob.

21-19 James and I danced in jubilation.

"Oh, John!" said Sadie.

T H E N

WALT WILLIS

A couple of years ago the headquarters of Irish Fandom moved from a room at the back of the house which had been so small as to baulk all our activities (hence called the baulks room) into the large front attic described by Chuck in *Through Darkest Ireland*. I installed power points in it with the help of Bob Shaw and a toy motor of Carol's (the latter to help thread cable down under the floorboards at one place and up at another) and erected bookshelves all over. After everything was moved up I looked round happily. For the first time in my furnish career there was room for everything. I even brought up some books from downstairs to fill up space.

But now things are just as bad as they were before and there isn't a bigger room in the house. The downstairs books have long since been moved back again. Clearly, something will have to go, and the correspondence files are by far the biggest and most unsightly item. However, I find myself faced with the same problem as the civil servant who asked his superior if he could destroy the old records. "Certainly," said his superior, "Providing of course you make copies of everything first." These files of mine contain virtually every letter I've received since I came into fandom and, of every reply I sent, even before I got a typewriter. (The first item of fanatic equipment I bought was a ballpoint pen.) It seems to me that such a detailed dossier is bound to be of some historical or psychiatric interest, if only to me.

I think I've solved the problem, to my own satisfaction at least. I will now go through these files destroying everything, but making notes here of any letters which might conceivably be of interest to anyone. This way you will not only have the semi-illicit pleasure of reading someone else's mail, but I will have ready-made notes for my Memoirs, should I ever feel a mad urge to write them. In fact, now I come to think of it, so will you. If anyone would like to write my memoirs, just go ahead.

In the summer of 1947, in a secondhand bookshop in Austin St., on the Newtownards Road, I came across the January 1947 issue of *Astounding* containing the first part of the Padgett serial "Tomorrow & Tomorrow". This was a terrible shock to Madeleine and me. Hitherto we had innocently assumed that the BRE was all there was. The idea that we had been missing at least half of it, including serials, was indescribably shocking and at once we began searching Belfast for more copies of the US edition. We never found any, but Madeleine came across a copy of Walter Gillings' *promag Fantasy* with a letter in it from somebody called James White in Belfast. I wrote asking him to call, telling him by way of bait that I had quite a few old BRE *Astoundings*. He replied on 26th August...a date which we propose in future to celebrate as Irish Fandom Day.

Dear Mr Willis, I received your letter this morning and am more than pleased to hear of another science fiction fan in Belfast.

I am interested in Astoundings mostly and have a small collection of them, chiefly wartime British editions....

"Chiefly"!! That meant he had at least one American edition. It might even be February 1947 with the second part of "Tomorrow & Tomorrow". We suggested a night and up he came. He was very tall, dark and gently mannered. (He still is, except when playing goodminton or writing to Chuck Harris.) He had not only a virtually complete file of NEEs, but dozens and dozens of American Editions. He was the reason we hadn't been able to find them in Belfast.

For the next few months we read each other's books and magazines and combined our collecting efforts. By this time, through the advertisements in Fantasy, we'd made contact with S.F. Service in Liverpool and had included each others wants in our own lists. Later we saw an advertisement for a thing called the British Fantasy Library and on 16th December I sent a stamped addressed envelope for particulars. We still had no idea that there was any such thing as fandom...in fact there wasn't ever any particular point in time at which I became consciously aware of its existence....we just thought this might open up another way to get copies of the US Astounding.

The first letter I ever got from a fan was, neatly enough, dated 1st January 1948. It was a brief note from one Ron Holmes of Liverpool enclosing a mass of duplicated matter about the BFL. There was a 'Booklist' and 'Wrapper Supplement' (sic) containing apologies for the reproduction and the delay in publication and the non-appearance of the Christmas Card; also a complaint that half the members had failed to renew their subscriptions. I didn't at the time appreciate how typical this was. Another enclosure was the BFL Handbook, which had a potted history of British Fandom in the last ten years....

During the ten years before World War II there was much activity among those interested in fantasy fiction...we recall such titles as NOVA TERRAE, SATELLITE, FANTAST, NEW WORLDS, FIDO and GARCOYLE.

But at the height of keen activity the war called away the enthusiasts, many never to return; fanmags struggled for existence, then fell into a lethargy.

When it seemed that the star of fantasy was on the wane, a champion arose in Michael Rosenblum of Leeds, who formed the British Fantasy Society. Its purpose was to hold together the rapidly diminishing remnants of fandom---and it succeeded....

The termination of hostilities found things somewhat different; the actual work of the Society was being done by a few individuals only.... Officially the Society was wound up, but the two remaining enthusiasts combined the Library and 'chain' into what is now known as the BFL. It is, perhaps, the last struggling effort of organised Fantasy Activity in this country; or the first brick of a new structure.

The two Last Men were Ron Holmes and Nigel Lindsay. The list of members at the back contained only eight names familiar to present-day fandom---Norman Ashfield, Rick Dalton, Charlie Duncombe, E.R. James, F.G. Rayer, Mike Rosenblum, Ken Slater and D.R. Smith---and only Ashfield, Slater and recently Rosenblum were to take a prominent part in the next seven years. D.R. Smith had been of course a very important member of pre-war fandom. The others have been mildly active over a very long period of time, but only mildly.

TO BE CONTINUED

READ LETTER DAY

John Berry.

I heard the door knocker rapped softly. I opened it. The postman stood there, furrows of perplexity creasing his forehead.

"You are late," I grinned, trying to be sociable.

"Late," he says, " gasped the postman, screwing up his eyes tightly. "Look, mister, does anyone named Goon Bleary live here. I've tried number one of every street within a six mile radius, and I am a desperate man."

Goon Bleary ? Goon Bleary ?

"Er, no," I said.

The postman staggered back a couple of paces, then he stepped forward menacingly. He jabbed me in the chest.

"Mister, I'm all in. Do me a favour, and take this letter. Please."

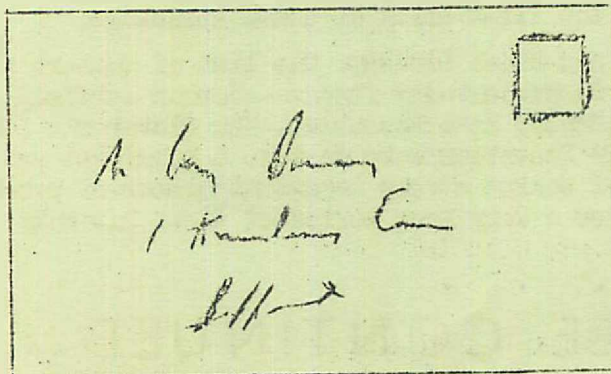
He broke down.

"PLEASE."

He knelt down and kissed my boots.

"PLEASE+ PLEASE."

I took it. Damn it, I like to think I am considerate. I looked at the address on the envelope. I saw something like this :-



I cannot explain my feelings, exactly, but I understood why the average postman is so cynical. I steamed open the envelope and found a folded piece of expensive blue writing paper. I don't want to illustrate what I found written when I unfolded the envelope, but it was even more illegible than the address. All sorts of strange ideas passed through my mind M.I.5 commies counter- intelligence it could be anything.

Now, by a strange coincidence, I am very friendly (rather, I was very friendly) with the members of a nearby Forensic Laboratory, so I called to see them. I showed the letter to the most experienced expert. He winked confidentially.

" I think infra - red treatment will reveal something," he said knowingly.

I waited for two and a half hours.

The expert staggered out of his studio. His eyes were red and swollen, and he had a look of sheer frustration on his face.

"Negative," he gritted. " Absolutely negative. I've tried infra - red, ultra violet, gamma, cosmic, alpha, beta and johnnie rags, with no result. However, if it is of any help, the watermark of the paper depicts a rampant currant bun, surmounted on a fish fork."

Ah, I thought, maybe Bob Shaw is getting his own stationery made. You never know with these big name pro - authors.

"However, if I might make a suggestion," continued the expert. " Go and see Proffessor Snitfrugal. He is an expert on ancient languages. He is your only hope."

I thanked him. He pulled out a hip flask. I nodded understandingly, and departed.

* * * * *

Proffessor Snitfrugal was working in his study, when his maid led me in. He looked at me over his pince nez. I explained my problem, and handed him the letter.

" Wait outside," he barked, pulling a microscope towards him.

Five hours later, I heard a strangled cry emit from the study. I rushed in, and saw the Proffessor trying to make a noose out of his table lamp flex.

"What's wrong, ? " I asked.

"The strain is too much," he sobbed. I felt really sorry for him, he looked so pathetic.

"Why ?" I soothed.

"Well," he breathed, " after vorking out all the details, I cannot make up my mind vether it is a Tibetan Fertility Chant, or the long lost password to open the tomb of Lutenchamen."

He banged his head several times on his desk. I tiptoed out. I was getting worried myself.

* * * * *

Then I remembered about Doctor Scrollball. He is a great friend (he was a great friend) of my father - in - law. 7

But, more than that, he is a handwriting expert. When I telephoned and explained the urgency of my mission, he invited me over immediately. I handed him the letter, and he smiled smugly. For some moments he perused it, and, gradually, his earlier exuberance began to fade. But he gave me a brave smile, obviously very forced.

"Come back this afternoon," he muttered.

As I closed the door, I could hear him swearing quite fluently to himself.

I arrived back at Doctor Scrollball's house in time to see a crowd disperse from his front gate. Nevertheless, I knocked the front door, and an old lady appeared.

"I have an appointment with the doctor," I announced.

"You just missed him, young sir," she cringed. "He was taken away, you know." She tapped her head significantly.

"Did he ... did he leave a letter for me?" I asked.

She looked on the hall stand.

"There is one for a Mister Goon Bleary," she said. I grabbed it, raced home, opened it. My original letter was inside, plus a strange missive from the doctor. I read:-

Dear Mr. Bleary,

Whilst still struggling to retain an iota of sanity, I want to let you know that according to my calculations, your letter reads .. Dear Goon, Am hatching a machine gun riding on free bays, signed, Kan Flitter. That's all. I must confess that I do not yah .. ah.. ah.. ah..a ...

What a funny man, I thought.

There was only one thing left for me to do. The best brains in Belfast had been baffled by the mysterious message. My one hope was to see the man who was, and is, respected the world over as being one of the greatest brains of our age. With great reverence and awe, I called to see him.

"What do you make of this, Walt?" I asked.

He examined the documents with the attention we have come to expect.

"Ah," mused Walt. "Let me see ... Dear Goon, am hatching a machine gun riding on free bays, signed Kan Flitter.. the style seems familiar ... yes ... mm ... yes.. I have it. Literally translated, it says .. Dear John, Watch, your BREN will be ready in three days, signed, Ken Potter .. you see, John, its quite simple really ... if you happen to be a clairvoyant."

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As a matter of courtesy, I felt I had better visit the mental hospital, and explain the solution to the doctor.

I found the three of them arguing about it together.

I R E M E M B E R M E

W A L T W I L L I S

A couple of years ago the headquarters of Irish Fandom moved from a room at the back of the house into the large front attic described by Chuck Harris in Through Darkest Ireland. I installed four power points in it with the help of Bob Shaw and a toy motor of Carol's (the latter to help thread cable under the floorboards) and erected bookshelves all over. After everything was finally moved up and the floor was found not to sag noticeably I looked round with satisfaction. For the first time in my life I had room for everything. I even brought some books up from downstairs to fill up empty shelves.

But now things are just as bad as they were before, and there isn't a bigger room in the house. The downstairs books have long since been repatriated. Clearly, something will have to go...and the correspondence files are by far the biggest and most unsightly item, apart from myself. These files of mine contain virtually every letter I've received since I came into fandom nearly nine years ago, and carbon copies of every letter I wrote, even before I got a typewriter. (The first item of fanac equipment I ever bought was a ball-point pen.) It seems to me that such a comprehensive dossier is bound to be of some historical or at least psychiatric interest, if only to me. I hate to destroy it without at least taking some notes.

Hence this journal. I will proceed to go through these old files ruthlessly destroying everything, but making notes here of anything which might conceivably be of interest to anyone. This way you will not only have the semi-illicit pleasure of reading someone else's mail, but I will have a ready-made set of notes for my Memoirs, should I ever be possessed with a mad urge to write them. In fact, now I come to think of it, so will you. If anyone would like to write my memoirs, just go ahead.

Incidentally, this could be of interest to anyone thinking of writing a history of fandom during the last decade. There were many things that happened behind the scenes that were confidential at the time and which never did become public. I will tell everything here....

In the summer of 1947, in a second-hand bookshop in Austin St. in the slum quarter of the lower Newtownards Road, I came across the January 1947 issue of the US Astounding containing the first part of the Padgett serial "Tomorrow & Tomorrow". It was a tremendous shock for Madeleine and me, for hitherto we had innocently thought that the British Reprint of Astounding was all there was. The realisation that we had been missing more than half of it, including all the serials, was indescribably shocking. Immediately we began searching Belfast systematically for more US editions. I even made forays to provincial towns by bicycle. We never found any more US Asfs, but Madeleine did run across a copy of Walter Gillings' promag Fantasy. It had a letter in it from somebody called James White with a Belfast address. I wrote asking him to call, adding by way of bait that I had quite a few old MEE Astoundings. He replied on 26th August, a date now celebrated as Irish Fandom day:

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pleased to hear of another science fiction fan in Belfast.

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For the next few months we read through each other's books and magazines and combined our collecting efforts. Through the advertisements in Fantasy we made contact with SF Service in Liverpool. We included each other's wants in our own lists and took turns to share the spoils. Later we saw an advertisement for something called the British Fantasy Library, and on 16th December 1947 I sent a stamped addressed envelope for particulars. We still had no idea that there was any such thing as fandom....in fact I don't remember any particular point in time at which I became consciously aware of its existence as an entity. Certainly I remembered vaguely reading in the 1930's letters from a fellow called Tucker and some talk about staples, but it never struck me as something anyone could join in. These people were too far away in space and time...the Astoundings and Amazings I was reading then were newstand returns shipped over as ballast, appearing in Woolworth's in tattered jumbles many months later. And though they were only 3d each I could never buy enough of them, even living on chocolate and walking home from school. No, all we were interested in at the time and for a long while to come, was getting more copies of the American Astounding.

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new member Ken Slater was to play a really important part in the revival of British Fandom. In fact he might almost be said to have revived British Fandom singlehanded. His OPERATION FANTAST, the first issue of which appeared in September 1947, was the first British fanzine to appear for almost a year.

I got my own copy at about the same time as the Booklist: I can't remember whether it arrived separately or with the BFL mailing. It consisted of ten duplicated quarto pages containing an announcement on the lines of a military "Operational Order" about OF and its aims ("To encourage and promote greater interest and enthusiasm in sf...to complete own files of magazines with missing issues"..), extracts from correspondence between KFS and Carnell about the inordinate delay in the publication of New Worlds, an invitation for suggestions for new sources of power (this was the time of the fuel crises), reports of flying saucers, information about US sf mags, news items and ads. I really don't remember what I actually thought about it at the time; probably I just accepted it, having no standard of comparison. Anyway this man had magazines I wanted; obviously I should try to get into his good books. I wrote my first fan letter...

Dear Mr. Slater; You haven't heard from me before as I am just a new member of the BFL....I received Operation Fantast No.1 only a few days ago which is why I'm so late in replying to it. However may I say that I found it very interesting indeed---I hope you will be turning out further issues.

I have been reading science fiction myself since about 1934....

I went on to ask him for the '46 & '47 Asfs he'd advertised for sale and finished up by throwing in a quote from Wireless World about electronics and space flight which I thought he might be interested in, and a request to be told if he knew of any other fans in Belfast.

I got a business-like reply dated 3rd January mostly about the mags he was sending, apologising for not being able to write more at present, and adding that he didn't know of any other fans in Belfast. Since he'd just sent an unsolicited copy of OF to James White, my opinion of the efficiency of his organisation sank a little. However I thanked him sincerely for the mags he'd sent, told him the story Conklin was asking about in the preface to his Best Of SF was Taine's White Lily, and sent him a longer Want List.

There didn't seem to be anything more to do. For the next few months I paced up and down on the fringes of fandom, pestering Ken and SF Service for the mags I wanted, comparing notes with James and making out checklists with little squares for each issue so that I could have the lustful pleasure of filling them up when I got the magazines. James, who has an orderly mind, went even further. He kept a book listing the stories, authors and cover artists of every Astounding he'd got, and knew the lot off by heart. We still had no particular desire to write to other fans, unless it could help us fill the gaps in our collections. If this seems unhealthy, remember that we were starved for sf. For years we'd been subsisting on the meagre Atlas quarterly reprint. We'd try to read them slowly, counting the pages left, or save them up for a special treat, and then read them again and again. These American editions were a glimpse of paradise for us, and we had succumbed to collecting mania in the worst possible way. And make allowances for the fact that what little we'd seen of fandom...and indeed what fandom there was at the time, for our kind of fandom wasn't really in existence then...had little appeal for us. We didn't feel ourselves a part of it, any more than we identified ourselves with the dealers we wrote to.

The December OF, No.2, came out towards the end of January. As well as some fan fiction, a poem by Rayer and some articles with rather more merit, it carried the addresses of some American fans. I wrote to one Paul Doerr, who wanted to trade US for British mags, and to David MacInnes, who offered free copies of his fanzine Necromancer and who I thought might be interested in trading too. Also in the issue was a report by MFS on a visit he'd made to London: he had met Ken Chapman, Ted Carnell, Walter Gillings, Charlie Duncombe, Eric Williams, Fred Brown and others, and discussed among other things a poss-

ible revival of the British Fantasy Society round some sort of London organisation. He evidently hadn't got much encouragement.

On 25th January, KFS sent out a circular with the news that he was being posted overseas, but that OF would continue operating with the help of a Miss Joyce Teagle, the girl he'd left behind him. There was also a news item: Ron Holmes was going into hospital.

This left Britain without a single active fan. (Except perhaps for Nigel Lindsay, who was still carrying on the work of the BEL Chain Magazine scheme with quiet efficiency.) However KFS soon demonstrated that mere exile to Germany couldn't remove him from the fan scene. Another OF only appeared in March. There was a letter from one James Grimes bitterly bemoaning the lassitude of the membership of the BEL, and a complimentary one from Fred Brown explaining patiently that the London fans ("The LONDON CHORUS, if you must have a name for us.") did NOT want to form a club. This was the first round in a long long struggle.

More important to me than OF, as it turned out, was one of its enclosures...the first issue of Norman Ashfield's ALBIONIC. It was just two duplicated foolscap pages, stapled together in the top lefthand corner. It was this that started me off as a fanzine publisher, for Madeleine held it up and said, "Surely you could do better than that!" ; and I thought maybe I could. I hope this doesn't hurt Norman's feelings. It wasn't that we had such a contempt for ALBIONIC, it was rather that it was more our sort of thing than OF had been. OF had had news items and all sorts of proper magazine stuff, whereas ALBIONIC was just comments and general talk by Norman. Besides this was only the second fanzine I'd seen, and it made me realise that there was no closed shop. (I was of course getting Walter Gillings' Fantasy Review but that was professionally printed and, I thought, professionally written. Gillings never answered my letters and his contributors were all strange names. I assumed they were all august literary figures, whereas of course they were actually pseudonyms for ordinary fans.)

I wrote Norman a letter of comment, in which I made my first joke in fandom. "I notice these flying utensils have been reported from Italy: I wonder what they're seeding in the Plains of Lombardy?" This was a pretty good joke, but no worse than the draft first issue of our fanzine which I eventually came up with. I finally got a friend in the office to type it out for me, and it worked out to three closely typed pages of foolscap, in a form which I now recognize as that of a column. It started off.....

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

Way back in the bad old days when Asimov was just a name in *Express* Books and Van Vogt had not yet found his vocation, all an author needed was an idea, and the more fantastic the better: as long as he destroyed a few million people or a universe or two and made everything come all right in the end by marrying hero to heroine he didn't even have to worry about style. As for science, it was enough to mention rheostats or coils occasionally or possibly to wedge in a slab of impressive jargon which the morons could conveniently skip, flattered at the thought that they were supposed to understand it. This was known as the educative value of science fiction.

and continued thus for almost a page, followed by other shorter items of comment and 'news'. One, headed *SIRIES SYRES SOARED CIVILISATION*, was about a certain Egerton Syres who had according to the press formed an "Atlantis Research Group" for underwater exploration. This same Syres, who was continually being reported as being about to go to Mount Ararat to look for the remains of the Ark, was to make a brief but stormy appearance in fandom before long. There was also a dig at Hubbard and a little article about bookbinding, based on my own attempts to bind my little collection of Asfs. Hardly any of this stuff ever saw print.

Meanwhile the April 1948 Booklist unexpectedly came out, Ron Holmes having been discharged from hospital. It mentioned that one Tony Young would be enclosing a sheet with the next mailing. With excessive delicacy I wrote to him that I'd meant to do the same and would be likens to hold mine up so as not to queer his pitch. He replied sensibly "The more the merrier", so we went on with our plans.

By now I'd had replies from Doerr and MacInnes. Neither was particularly chatty, but Doerr suggested I join the NFFF and MacInnes (who at that time had the superbly science-fictional address of "Mars Estates, Baltimore") sent me a copy of Necronomicon, the third fanzine I'd seen. I still have it, because for some time I filed away the I received along with my correspondence, but I don't recall that I was particularly impressed. It was very much a science fiction fanzine, which was all right by me at the time, but it was mostly about American sf which I'd never seen. All I was interested in was ASF. Even the fanzine we planned to put out was primarily intended to increase our net for pulling in the back issues we wanted.

When I'd got the draft typed up I made enquiries as to how much it would cost to have it professionally duplicated. Then the project was quietly abandoned. Until one afternoon a week or so later I happened to call on a friend who worked in a chemist's shop. I went up to the attic to help him sort out the junk while we were talking, and I came across an odd looking metal box festooned with levers. It was a little printing press the boss had bought ages ago to run off billheads, and then dumped in the attic and forgotten. I borrowed it and smuggled it out under my coat, along with a composing stick and all the type we could find. There proved to be enough only to set up 28 lines, but I wanted to see if the machine worked before I bought any more, so I sent away the roller to the makers (Adams Ltd.) to be recovered.

While we were waiting, OF No.4 came out, dated June 1948, closely followed by the July 1948 BFL Booklist. This was an Emergency Issue, leading off with the following editorial:

Since the conception of the Library I have struggled against adverse circumstances, blow after blow has rocked me, unemployment, illness and many other misfortunes, the latest of which—I need not give details—has finally broken up my existence. I am almost on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and I look to the members to return, in what measure they can, the thirty odd hours per week I have lavished upon them during the last three years. Primarily, I need your co-operation in having all items borrowed returned to me by August 1st. I need someone to take over the Library temporarily until I am on my feet again. I need money and request that those interested in the items I have for sale respond quickly. To those who have the power, can you get me a decent job, anywhere?

I wrote him a sympathetic letter, but I'm afraid that, vulture-like, I was really more interested in the Asfs he had for sale; not that I got any of them. Ron Holmes was never heard from again.

This Booklist also carried a second reference to the BFL Directory of Anglo-fandom, a mysterious Necronomicon-like document which had a curious history. The previous Booklist had said it was now available. This one formally blacklisted one Thomas MacDonald of Carlisle, who had "promised to print it but had not returned the material or answered our letters".

Round about this time there arrived "Whitconzine", a report of an informal one-day Convention held in the White Horse on 15th May, 1948. It was in this I first saw the name of A. Vincent Clarke. He had a long, serious and comprehensive report of the affair, which had apparently been attended by some 50 or 60 fans, almost all from the London area. It had been organised by one John Newman, and the platform party was Walt Gillingham (Chairman),

A. Bertram Chandler, Ken Chapman, Ted Carnell, John Newman & Arthur C. Clarke. Attendees included Bill Temple, Daphne Bradley (later to become Daphne Buckmaster), Sandy Sandfield, Ted Tubb and Ken Johnson from the North.

The Whitcenzine included also an article by Ted Tubb called "The Need For Organisation", in which he appealed to the younger fans to show what they could do. Ken Slater had been present at the Whitecon only in spirit, having sent along £2 for drinks, but on 1st August he issued a circular headed "The Time Has Come" in which he put forward proposals for a national fan organisation. There would be a series of levels, from single fans through town or area groups, county representatives, regional representatives etc., culminating in a Council. Each fan would register his abilities and resources with the next higher formation and orders from the Council would be transmitted to him through this chain. (All it needed was a uniform and a Fieldmarshal.) Ken himself didn't want to be more than a fairly active member.

I wrote offering to help, but suggesting that if the chain of command broke down the rank and file fans would be left in the air and that it would be simpler to have communications issue direct from the Council to everyone than have stencils cut all over the country. On 15th September KFS issued another circular saying that sufficient enthusiasts had come forward to form at least the nucleus of a Society. There would be a Conference in London on 26th September and an open meeting at the White Horse on 9th October.

Meanwhile our roller had come back and we'd tested the machine. It printed. I hadn't much faith in Adana so I took down a couple of letters from our little supply of type to a printer's supply house in Belfast and ordered half a font of the same. When it arrived it was nothing like the stuff we had, being a very bold condensed type, but we figured it would be stronger. Anyway we were too keen to get started to have any more delay. We had set up about half a page when the 'i's gave out. I reworded the editorial to reduce the incidence of 'i's---this was to become standard practice---but that still gave us only a few extra lines. Here it was that James leapt into the breach by volunteering to do woodcuts to fill up the page. All we knew about woodcuts was that you got them by cutting wood, but James set to determinedly with plywood and a razor blade and produced results that we thought were wonderful. This was the origin of James' famous wood and linocuts, which were the most remarkable phenomena in the history of fan art. He did a symbolic cover showing a spaceship and an open book (a more polished version of which I still use on my posh notepaper), which nearly led to our first editorial argument. He had been to immense pains to carve out a border for the picture; I thought it looked more tasteful without it and persuaded him to chop it off. I was backed by Dick Herritt, a friend of mine who was mildly interested in sf and who'd come in on the fanzine project. Before the first issue was completed he moved to England and we eventually lost touch with him.

On 20th September I wrote to John Gurn in Nottingham, who KFS had told me had taken over the BFL, to say that we were producing a fanzine and could he let us know his next mailing date. He replied on the 23rd that he was sending out an emergency issue next week, and the deadline for the following one would be 15th October. By 11th October Slant 1 was ready and Gurn still hadn't sent out his emergency issue. I wrote to him asking if Slant could go out with it. He ignored my letter and distributed his emergency booklist on 20th October. I wrote to him the day I got it asking for his next mailing date and offering to pay part of the mailing costs. He ignored this too and sent out another Booklist on the 9th November. I wrote to him again more in sorrow than in anger, offering to send out the next mailing for him. We would have sent out Slant on our own, except that we didn't have any addresses. The Emergency Booklist had announced, with apologies to MacDonald, that the BFL Directory of Anglofandom was a splendid job and now in circulation, and copies could be obtained from the Editor. But neither money nor entreaties could produce anything from Gurn but booklists.

So by the time Christmas was near we had been sitting on our first fanzine for over two frustrating months, and our first creative pride had cooled to misgivings. Viewed dispassionately, it wasn't much to look at...three folded foolscap sheets, saddle-stitched to make a twelve page magazine...and there weren't any big names in the contributors. In fact there weren't any names at all, since there weren't any contributors. As well as the editorial (in which it was mentioned that the name of the magazine had been chosen by sticking a pin in the dictionary and choosing the second word thus impaled---the first had been "pamphrey", a kind of cabbage), I had written two columns, a story which was pretty poor as a story but which contained a gimmick which still hasn't been used by anyone else and still seems pretty good to me, a little article called "Telekinesis and Buttered Toast" which was supposed to be deadpan funny and two bits of satirical verse written expressly to fill up spaces of a certain size. After all these years I can at last (I think) look at it quite objectively, and on the whole I suppose it wasn't bad for two inexperienced neofens, considering the standards of fandom at the time. It suffered from a certain lack of intimacy as well as naivete, but then we didn't know any of the people we were sending it to...and in any case printing is an inhibiting medium for spontaneity, when you are setting the type yourself.

In any case, whatever our private doubts...and we never expressed them to each other...the thing represented such a colossal expenditure of time and trouble that we had to go on believing in it. The thought that we'd wasted some 100 hours of backbreaking toil was too horrible to contemplate. So we continued week after week and month after month impatiently watching the post and thinking hard thoughts about John Gurn.

On Christmas Day a parcel and a letter arrived. The parcel contained nearly 200 copies of the December Booklist---two quarto sheets starting off: "Hi Members! Here's Booklist once again, with my very best wishes for a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year....Walter Willis and his gang in Belfast are distributing Booklist this month so that they can include their own production of a fan mag..." We thought ruefully it was a bad start for Slant that we should get the blame for holding up the Booklist till after Christmas. The letter said; "Herewith the new edition of Booklist, which has just arrived to hand, and I am bundling it off to you rightaway." There was also more about that mysterious document...

"I am also enclosing the only copy of the Directory of Anglo-Fandom in existence, so please don't lose it."

There was neither stamps nor money enclosed, and indeed we never did get any recompense for the cost of the mailing, but it didn't matter anyway because there was no postal collection until after Boxing Day. We spent most of the intervening time writing addresses and sticking wrappers for about 150 people---the 49 noted as fully paid-up members of the BFL plus 101 others chosen more or less at random---and on 27th December, 1948, the first fanzine ever published in Ireland was released on an unsuspecting fandom. (To be continued)

WABBERJOCKY

'Twas con-time and the happy slack
Did sell their fanzines in the wabe:
All mingsy were the neofens
And the ENFs outgrabe.

"Beware the N3F, my son!
The dues that bite, but don't go far!
Beware that Woolston man, and shun
The frumious G.M.Carr!"

He took his mimeo in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought---
So rested he on a typer key,
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as he stood there, simply bored,
The G.M.Carr, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the fannish horde
And huckstered as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and through
Elevator doors went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galurphing back.

"And hast thou slain dame G.M.Carr?"
They chortled in their joy.
"Oh frabjous day! Calloo! Callay!
Write us a conreport, my boy."

—Terry Carr 15

Anyway Speer usually says most of the things I wanted to say, and far better. There are though a couple of points on which I happen to have special knowledge. TAFF, for instance. It is not true that I resigned as TAFF administrator to carry on a crusade: it was because I hadn't any longer the time for it, nor the inclination for endless argument with people who did nothing for TAFF but mutter behind my back that Willis had a nerve to say their friends weren't fans. I admit I believe that (1) There has to be some verifiable definition of a fan for TAFF purposes to prevent abuses. (2) There's no point in sending a person across the Atlantic to meet people he isn't interested in and who are not interested in him (no point from our point of view that is—lots of people would like a free trip), and nobody will subscribe for such a waste. (3) The only way fans get to know one another across the Atlantic is through fanzines. (4) Therefore proof of participation in fanzine fandom should be the criterion for TAFF eligibility. I freely admit that many people who never see a fanzine from one Labour Day to another are very fine fellows and fully entitled to call themselves fans. All I say is that if they've never in their whole lives felt enough interest in fandom at large outside their own circle of personal friends to write a single letter of comment to a fanzine, then they're not qualified to represent fandom-at-large or to say who should. It's open to them to contribute money of course, as to any good cause, but if they're honest they shouldn't want to vote on a representative of fandom because they know they're not in a position to judge.

However, as I say, I'm not crusading for this point of view. I put both to the leading British fans in my letter of resignation, and it seems to have been generally agreed that the criterion for European TAFF elections should be participation in fanzine fandom to the minimum of one published letter of comment. The procedure in America is a matter for Don Ford and American fandom and I don't propose to intervene, except as now when I've been personally attacked.

COME BACK,
REDD BOGGS

The other matter was GMC's assertion that abstinence from sex as a substitute for contraception worked in Southern Ireland. All I can suggest is that she come and have a look at Southern Ireland. But she'd better hurry, because at the present rate of emigration there won't be anyone left there much longer.

Since Jean Young was kind enough to dedicate to me the pages of SUNDANCE dealing with bicycles, I suppose it's up to me to comment on Vernon McCain's fascinating article on behalf of the European Way Of Life. It is not true, however, that the bicycle here is "the standard mode of transportation for the average citizen". It is as far as most young people are concerned outside the upper classes, but when you get over 30 or so you tend to fall back wearily onto public transport. At least that's the way it was with me, especially after I had done some motor-ing. I have a good bike, light-alloy frame, drop handlebars, 4-speed gear and whatnot, but I seldom use it nowadays. But habitual cyclists do cycle from town to town, contrary to what Vernon thinks. You can see them riding out of Belfast in hordes on Saturday afternoons. Madeleine and I used to go on trips and tours quite regularly and we figured on averaging 50 miles a day, at an average speed of about 12 mph. I've known people who habitually cycle down to Dublin and back for the weekend, and that's 210 miles altogether. The most I've ever done myself was Galway-Athlone-Dublin-Belfast in 3 days, which is about 280 miles. I'd started off some two weeks ago with the idea of going right round Ireland on 5/- a day, all found. (About 75%.) At that time you could get bed and breakfast for as little as 3/6 to 5/-. I kept within my budget round the coasts of Antrim, Derry, Donegal and Sligo, and then I began to suffer from pains in my stomach. On the road to Ballina, Co. Mayo, I eventually diagnosed them as the symptoms of starvation, and started to eat mid-day meals. So by the time I got to Galway I was running short of money and had to hurry home.

Is the pressure to conformity really so strong in the States that you can't even ride a bicycle? My Ghod.

I have a taperecorder now, if anyone's interested. Any size of reel, either 7" or 3 1/2". Charles Wells should have called his mag WELLS FARRAGO, just as Lee Quinn should have called his Harlequinade.