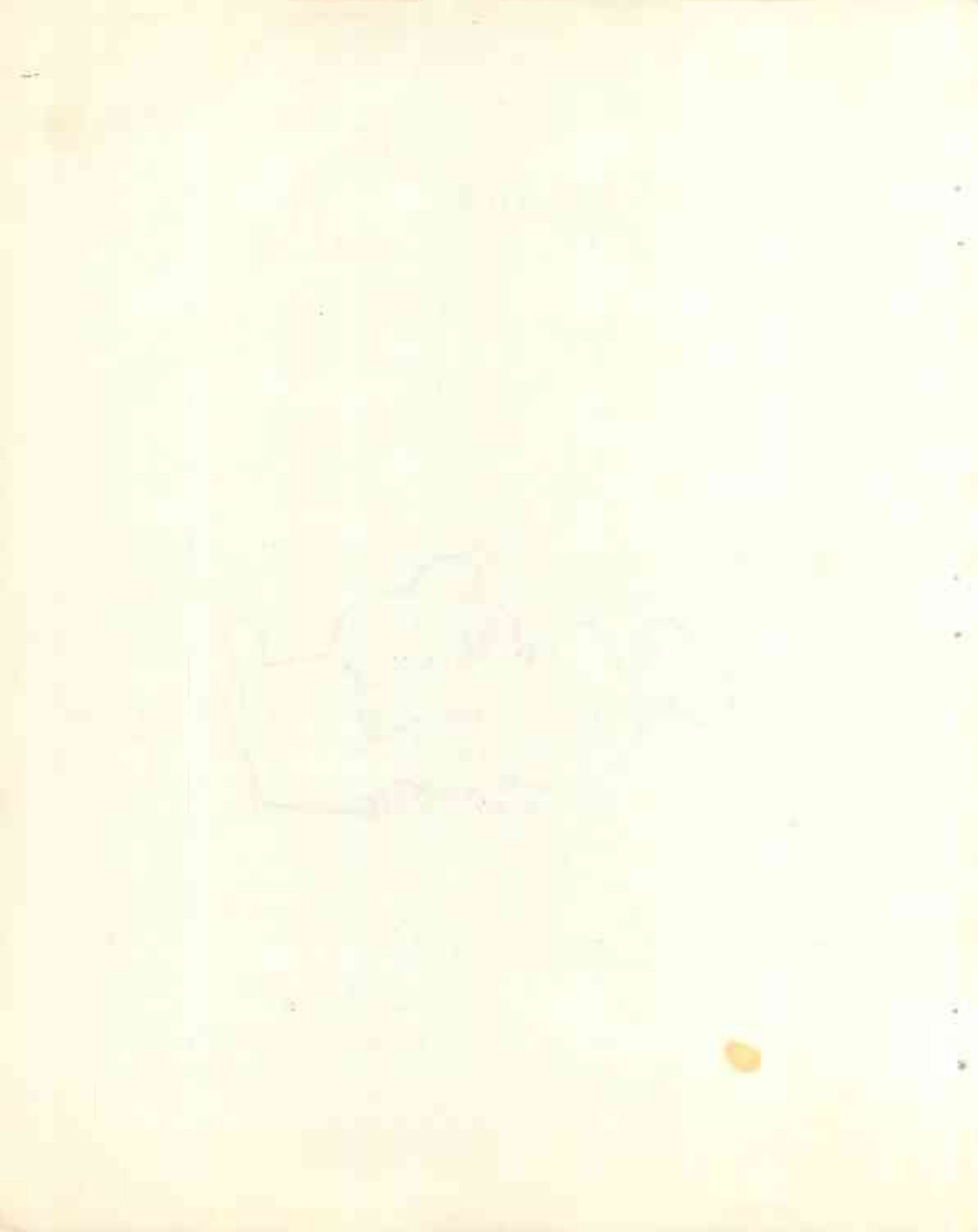


# THE SCARR







February 1965

The SCARR

Number 7

THIS FANZINE IS PRODUCED for the Off-Trail Magazine Publishers Association and other interested and interesting people. It is free for letters (not necessarily of comment), trade, articles — or the January 1930 issue of Astounding Stories!

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Again the OMPAn deadline has snuck up on me and this, combined with the fact that so few contributors contributed, means that most of it had to be written by myself. So I picked more Diary extracts and more Irish hospitality to fill up the blank pages.

THE BIG JOB on page something or other is taken from The Tryon Daily Bulletin (of North Carolina), the biggest little paper in the world.

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Several people have asked me why I read so many bad science fiction books. I don't really know, but it is a relief to turn to them after reading more and more and more stories in the promags about psi and psionics and even, referring to a number of "psi" people, psis. Psi by itself is bad enough, but in the plural it looks like a typo.

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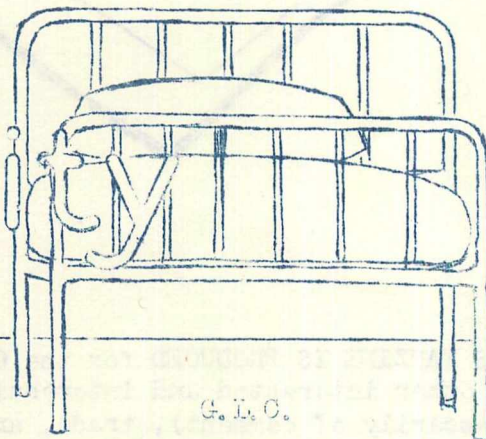
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In case I forget to mention it elsewhere this 'zine is published by

George L. Charters    3, Lancaster Avenue    BANGOR    Northern Ireland.

# Irish

## hospitality



episode two

G.I.C.

AT THE OUTSET let me make one thing clear — it was the Royal Victoria Hospital I went into — NOT the Maternity Hospital. Admittedly, when I spent some time in the Ophthalmic Hospital in 1943 they put me in the Women's section, but that is another story.....

It all started at 5 a.m. on Thursday 8th September, 1955. A back tooth in my upper jaw which had been giving me trouble for some time obtruded itself very forcibly on my attention. I went to the dentist at 10 a.m. I left at noon and the contortions that the dentist and I went through in that period would have to be seen to be believed. He pulled most of the tooth but left a hole into my antrum, which you in your ignorance don't know is the cavity behind the nose. God knows what it's for, because I don't — and I don't want to hear any cracks about the Glands of Antrum either. But as you may guess a hole in the head is a nuisance, particularly when it goes from the mouth to the antrum. Take my word for it — I know. One cannot, for example, blow a whistle or smoke a cigarette. Even blowing the nose is an adventure, as one never knows what kind of a snorting, slurping, furshlugginer noise will emerge. And when one talks, bubbles form in masses in the mouth and drool down the chin like an advanced case of rabies.

The dentist sent me to the doctor, who gave me large doses of ~~that stuff~~ that stuff that Sir William Jenner or somebody grew from mouldy cheese. (It may not have been Jenner: when famous doctors are mentioned I'm jennierly wrong.) The dentist also X-rayed my jaw and sent me with a note to the Eye, ~~Nose & Throat~~ Nose & Throat Dept. of the Royal Victoria Hospital. Before we leave the dentist



for good let me (you can't stop me, anyway) let me quote his note to the doctor:

"Would you please arrange for Mr J L Charters to have a course of systemier prdicillin. I exliacted a rather difficurl L8 for him today but in so doing have created an oxo-oretal fistula.

Yours faithfully,  
reWhimmm"

I went to work Thursday night (on Night-shift, natch), but couldn't stick it, so went to the First Aid, and the Old Firm kindly provided a car to convey me (the Old and Infirm) to the Railway Station, and by making intelligent use of the railway travelling facilities arrived home at midnight, got up at 7.30, left home at 8.20, entered the HENT/ED/RVH at 9.20, and in the waiting-room there joined a sort of slow conga on eight rows of chairs and at 10.30 was admitted to the presence of Mr Kennedy Hunter, the surgeon who had performed the opening ceremony on me in the Ophthalmic. He is a good surgeon — he certainly knows all the antrums, for hardly had he begun to peer behind the scenes as it were than he sez: "You had an operation on your antrum before?" "Ah, wirra, Mither Hunther," sez I, "an' wasn't it yourself that done th' operatin'!" So we reminisced about ould times and then he sent me down to the X-ray dept where I joined another conga. When the plates were seen by Mr Hunter he said there was some infection of the sinus and I would have to come to Hospital for a few days to have it fixed. So I left, happy in the knowledge that with a waiting-list of 4,000 at the Royal I wouldn't have to go in for a year or more.

On the 12th the blow fell. I was to go in on the 14th.

There were about a dozen people waiting with me for admission. One by one their names were called out and they were led away. There was some mix-up in the case of one girl of about 20 and there was no bed ready for her. I felt so sorry for her and offered to share mine but they all treated my night-errantry with dignified contempt. At last my turn came and I was put to bed in a two-bed ward, the other occupant being a Mr Samuel Ball. They told me cheerfully that I was for the high jump the following afternoon. So the next day I got breakfast and dinner but no food with them.

At two o'clock they gave me an injection of omnipom, which makes the ~~the~~ patient drowsy. At 4 o'clock two nurses wheeled in the tumbril, I climbed on, and they wheeled me away to the theatre. There they fastened down my arms. In the background I could hear Mr Hunter talking, and above me I could examine a chandelier sort of thing with lots of lights like stars. One of the nurses seemed nervous: she kept on lifting my feet and dropping them with a thump until Mr Hunter called out, "Stop that — let sleeping dogs lie." That was the last thing I heard. I went out like a light.

They tell me the operation lasted until 6.30, and during all that time I bled and bled until the floor was like an abattoir. They wheeled me back then with two stitches in my upper lip. And I may as well mention here that they were left there for four days and my lip remained numb for about six weeks, so I had to keep a stiff upper lip.

At 7 o'clock they began giving me a blood transfusion and this lasted until about two o'clock in the morning. The amount transferred was four pints: another four pints and it would have been a gallon attempt. I began to come out from under just before it finished. I tried to move my arm and the nurse said, "Please lie still, Mr Charters." I waited a few minutes, hoping she'd go away, and tried again and she said, "Mr Charters, please don't move your

arm." (I learned later that young or middle-aged patients are called by their Christian names, but the aged are always Mistered. I didn't know this then — it was a mystery to me!)

At last they took the thing off my arm and the nurse washed off most of the blood and sweat, then turned me over and washed my back with cold or nearly cold water. It felt lovely, and I said, "Come on in, Nurse, the water's lovely." But she only laughed: women never take me seriously.

I felt much better later on that day and was able to put down a good dinner. After it, I asked the Sister when I could go home, but she only laughed. I was able to get in a good day's reading, enjoy my food and my numerous visitors. The nurses were very kind and cheerful and made my stay very pleasant. When the night nurse came in that night and asked me how I was I said, "Yes, you can ask about me now, but you never came near me all last night." She was so astonished she could not say a word, which was not surprising seeing she had hardly left me the whole night.

The days rolled on as they have a habit of doing if left alone. They let me get up and I played with an invalid chair in my ward, running up and down and trying to turn on a sixpence as Max Brand's heroes could always do on horseback. One day I went a little too fast and hit the swing doors, pushing them partly open. A visitor in the corridor, on seeing this, sprang forward and opened the doors wide. Was my face red! I mumbled something about not going out yet and hastily backed into the ward. I was more careful after that.

The window in the ward was in the ceiling and every morning the bloody sun (this is not swearing — just a quotation from "The Ancient Mariner") used to shine on my face.

On Tuesday Madeleine Willis called to see me and brought a pile of fanmags and prozines and mundane mags, and were they welcome! I had run out of reading matter. I was so glad to see her — and as surprised — as when I saw her at the Airport Terminal in Manchester. Relatives and friends called in flocks (or is it droves?) and I was glad to see every one. Funny how fond one can get of relatives in hospital!. And letters came for me. Let's see:

CHUCK HARRIS I'm sorry to hear that you are in hospital whilst other members of Irish fandom with far greater holes in their heads are still allowed to run around loose. Just because you drool every time you open your mouth is no reason for confining you ((It was NOT a confinement. —GLC)) in a home for the aged. Seriously though, I know it must be pretty painful, and it's the sort of thing I've always dreaded happening to me. Dentists invariably scare the hell out of me. Even when I used to look at McCartney ((dentist who lives next door to Walter Willis)) I shuddered. He used to shudder right back at me, which only goes to show the Irish are naturally polite and courteous. I'm glad I didn't hear about your teeth before or I would never have been able to visit my own dentist last Tuesday. I had to have a filling replaced; there was no drilling at all. I didn't feel a thing. After he'd finished I casually mentioned that I hadn't screamed once. He said I'd probably make up for that when I saw him next March.

JOHN BERRY Suffering catfish, I suffered severe pangs of remorse after reading your harrowing letter, and I have just made a resolution that henceforth I shall write you up as being young, virile, passionate and romantic. I know this will completely shatter my carefully-built-up reputation for

authenticity but it is the least I can do. Before I hand over the typer to the next in the queue I want to tell you.....no, I haven't finished yet.....aw, heck, just one more line.....suffering ca.....

PEGGY WHITE Well, George, I have draped my old black jacket over your rocking-chair to keep it warm till you return. Ghoodminton is now in progress, John making his usual wild charges and yelling his head off. Sadie arrives with the tea. Can't type with my mouth full. Eye for now.

BOB SHAW The next few lines will be B-Sh. All bosh. I'm sure that you must be feeling a bit depressed lying there on a sick bed. The best way out of this is to give your bed some of your medicine and make it better. If you can't make it better let one of the nurses do it. They can make your bed as nice as pie. Walt and I have worked out a way to be a real practical help to you. You know that blood transfusion you got? Well, the other night Walt and I waited in the hallway and when John came in we jumped on him, tied him up, and with the aid of my bicycle pump withdrew about three pints of his blood. We sneaked this into the hospital and put it in such a position that it would be used on you. Just think of it, George! Now you will be able to drool over MM and sweep the court at ghoodminton. You too will be virile, lusty, masculine.....just a minute.....John has just told us that he didn't show up that night. Madeleine says that the other night when she was returning from her mother's she was.... Oh, George! Congratulations!

JAMES WHITE As I sit (uncomfortably) here pondering....ccps....it seems to me that the next step will be to plaster me with diabetic custard tarts and rippp off my John Collier lapels (awvt.) As BoSh points out, if a nurse can cure a sick bed, would it not be possible to expand this concept a little, say by staffing a large boat with doctors and nurses and going around the world curing sick bays!

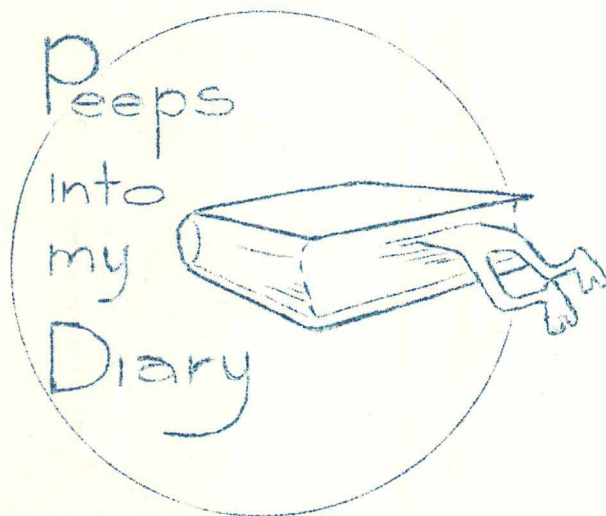
WALT WILLIS Sick bays indeed. I suppose this has something to do with mal-demare. Have you ever thought how horrible it'd be if you were injected with blood from a person who had taken an Apal stop-smacking course? That must be the origin of the old cockney proverb: "Never introduce your donor to Apal." I suggest that you show this letter to the doctor next time he comes round. He'll conclude that if you're strong enough to survive those puns you're strong enough to go home. That is, unless he prescribes a merciful release for you. All depends on his age, I suppose. An old doctor will choose a hard way out, and a euthanasia.....Isn't that horrible? Let's see, what else happened tonight? I asked James whether the Latin for "give us each day our daily bread" was "ora pro Hovis"? and he said, "Why don't you join the Church so you can get excommunicated?".....John said he'd hurt his shoulder at ghoodminton and wouldn't be able to go to the office: I said he could apply for embrocation leave....Peggy said she'd stick to James through good puns and bad....We'll put the red carpet out for you on Sunday — or would you think it a bit of playful bandage? Tell you what, we'll get Sadie to order a fatted calf — that'll show you how we veal, i.e., hoping you'll heifer swift recovery.

MADELEINE WILLIS After James and Peggy had gone John started talking about "this year's Hallowe'en cerebrations," and suggested making a giant rocket. Some of the things suggested were: having it a two-stage rocket; sending up a photographic plate (with knife and fork, Bob demanded) in order to get a picture of the curved horizon; incorporating a parachute in the design to bring back the plate; send Walter to the moon (to show that Irish Fandom is









Geo. L. Charters

1961

Feb 17 Fri Daily Mirror readers are having a hassle as to whether a hole can be seen. Toady (pause for joke about a toady-bear!) someone wanted to know if the pauses between rings of a telephone could be heard!

Feb 18 Sat Lewis Patten BACK TRAIL. Half-way through this western th' hero and heroine get married. To stop his gun-play she smashes his right hand. It's not fair: things like this didn't ought to happen in a western. Have all th' rustlers an' Injuns been killed off? An' bandits? An' how about the mortgage on th' old ranch? But what's the use? I'm just a voice crying out in the Panhandle.

Feb 19 Sun Gerald Heard DOPPELGÄNGERS. (10) 250 pages of the "psychological revolution, 1997." The gabbiest characters in fiction, rivalling even APROPOS OF DOLORES. Even the two murders in it are dull. One good point: one can always skip a page or two without missing anything. Spelling & grammar good.

Feb 22 Wed Ian Fleming FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE. First of Fleming's books I've read. It's a Secret Service story, well-written, suspenseful, but with some (to me) irritating features: occasional irrelevant descriptions, and a tendency to make all the main characters strip every now and then (to get down to the bare essentials, I suppose). In the end Bond is poisoned by one of the baddies and I'm not sure if he dies or not. I'm afraid he doesn't.

Feb 27 Mon Pel Torro (10) WORLD OF THE GODS. Supposed to be SF. Allasame as Lec Brett: bad plot, worse grammar, typos galore.

Feb 28 Tue Ian Fleming (50) CASINO ROYALE. Sex, torture, Secret Service and gambling. Apparently standard Fleming: a mixture of Mickey Spillane and Hank Jansen.

Mar 2 Thu George Harmon Coxe (70) THE FRIGHTENED FIANCEE. Woman murders her half-sister's fiances one by one. Half-sister considers the high rate of mortality among her fiances very aggravating. :: Listening to a tape on recorder tonight was interrupted by a radio broadcast, apparently an amateur

"haa." It went on and on, spoiling the tape-recording. If I were Dictator I'd exterminate all "haas." That would be my favourite radio program.

Mar 6 Mon If 1961 is turned upside-down it still reads the same. This won't happen again for 4,048 years.

Mar 16 Thu Aidan Higgins (20) FELO DE SE. Thought this was a story about a seaman, but oddly enough it's all about suicides! The Times said it was brilliant! Hah!

Mar 20 Mon Yehudi Menuhin got so many curtain calls after a concert in Leipzig that he finally came on the stage wearing his overcoat & hat as a gentle hint to the audience. This is known as the overcoat-and-hat-trick!

Mar 21 Tue Visited Dr Bowman. Was again amused by notice on door: PERSONS WEARING STILETTO HEELS NOT ADMITTED.

Mar 24 Fri Lionel Roberts THE SYNTHETIC ONES. SF PB. Runy O'Tarka, an Irishman, investigates the case of the amoral female androids, but there is absolutely no connection of any kind between this and another story told at the same time: a sort of invasion by Atlanteans and a sort of invasion by Kelts, a race from the stars. A queer hybrid — and sterile, too. Quote: Do you oil him or does he work autonomously? Unquote.

Mar 30 Thu John E Haller A 1,000 YEARS ON. John E, Lionel and Leo have all putrid plots, turgid typos, stupid spelling, gravid grammar. Perhaps they're all twins! Quote: The Karnaks, weird quasi-reptilian vertebrates, held the outer realm enthralled and the Ruins controlled the heart of the continuum with their time-velocity capsules. Unquote. Three errors in one sentence.

Apr 8 Sat Leo Brett (5) MARCH OF THE ROBOTS. Up to Brett's usual standard. In addition to his other faults Brett repeats things for emphasis, often and often. Quote: Things were stirring within the disc ship. Strange metallic things; things that were alien to the soft green grass of earth. Terrifying things, steel things; metal things; things with cylindrical bodies and multitudinous jointed limbs. Things without flesh and blood. Things that were made of metal and plastic and transistors and valves and relays and wires. Metal things. Metal things that could think. Thinking metal things. Terrifying in their strangeness, in their peculiar metal efficiency. Things the like of which had never been seen on the earth before. Things that were sliding back panels.....There were strange flickering lights all around the ship. Terrifying lights, weird lights, uncanny lights, awful lights, inhuman lights, alien lights, robot lights; and all around a great hemispherical glowing shield sprang up. A thing with a pale, greeny blue luminescence. An electronic thing, a mechanical thing. A thing that was part of the robot genius. A thing that was as strange as the ship and its occupants. Unquote

Apr 15 Sat Britain now holds the water speed record for coffins: students from Battersea College of Technology bought a coffin from an undertaker, fitted it with a 3 HP engine, went to Coniston and there flashed over a measured mile at 4.87mph. (HP means, of course, Hearse Power.)

Apr 18 Tue Topsy Atkins showed me an old Irish National School Arithmetic. One problem in it was: If the sun is 93,000,000 miles distant how long will it take a horse to get there, travelling at 3mph? I can picture that poor old horse, going on day after day, week after week, nothing to eat or drink, no space helmet....and all uphill!

WASHINGTON: I had no conception that parties would go to the length I have witness to: nor did I believe that every act of my administration would be tortured and the grossest misrepresentations of them be made.....in such indecent terms as scarcely could be applied to a Nero, a notorious defaulter, or even a common pickpocket.

JEFFERSON: To myself personally it brings nothing but unceasing drudgery and daily loss of friends.

ADAMS: I can tell you this -- no man who ever held the office of President would congratulate a friend on obtaining it. Make no mistake about it, the four most miserable years of my life were my four years in the Presidency.

JACKSON: Cartloads of coffin handbills, forgeries, and pamphlets of the most base calumnies are circulated. Mrs. Jackson is not spared, and my pious mother, nearly fifty years in the tomb, and who from her cradle to her death had not a speck upon her character, has been dragged forth and held to public scorn as a prostitute who married a Negro, and my eldest brother sold as a slave in Carolina. I am branded with every crime.

VAN BUREN: Mr Jefferson said that the two happiest days of his life were those of his entrance upon his office and of his surrender of it. Possession of its powers and duties must, from the nature of things, to a right-minded man be one of toilsome and anxious probation.

HARRISON: The jobseekers pack the White House every day, pushing their applications at me -- in my hands, in my pockets. They pursue me so closely that I cannot even attend to the necessary functions of nature.

PIERCE: After the White House what is there to do but drink?

BUCHANAN: When I parted from President Lincoln, on introducing him to the Executive Mansion, I said to him, "If you are as happy, my dear sir, on entering this house as I am in leaving it, you are the happiest man in this country.

LINCOLN: My position is anything but a bed of roses. I would rather be dead than as President thus abused.

HAYES: I am not liked as a President by the politicians, the press or Congress.

GARFIELD: My God! What is there in this place that a man should ever want to get into it.

TAFT: I'll be damned if I'm not getting tired of this. It seems to be the profession of a President simply to hear other people talk. And to those who envy me, let me say the White House is the loneliest place in the world.

WILSON: The office of President requires the constitution of an athlete, the patience of a mother, and the endurance of an early Christian. The President is a superior kind of slave.

HARDING: The White House is a prison.

EISENHOWER: The nakedness of the battlefield when the soldier is all alone in the smoke and clamor and the terror of war is comparable to the loneliness, at times, of the Presidency.



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Ivor Latto      Not having the January 1930 issue of  
GLASGOW      Astounding Stories, this will have to  
                 express my thanks for the copy of The  
SCARR 6. Is it legit for me to receive this, not  
being a member of OMPA? I thought you had to  
swear an oath and learn the handshake or some-  
thing. ((You only swear when the fanzine editor  
cuts a good letter. And have you really looked for  
that 1930 issue?))

William F Temple      You seem to read an awful lot  
WEMBLEY      of books by a lot of awful  
                 authors whom you know to be  
awful authors. Why do you do this to yourself?  
For the old reason that it's so nice when you  
leave off? ((I just don't know -- maybe I'm a  
masochist.))  
For quite a while now fanzines have been arriving  
faster than I can write LoC's, which would need  
to become a full-time occupation if this snow-  
balling continues. And I already have two full-  
time occupations.  
It was obvious something had to be done, so I made  
it my New Year resolution to quit fandom for keeps.  
Else I'd never be able to do any pro-writing  
again. After all this time I find it a wrench to  
do this, and I realise that life will be that much  
greyer, but the break just has to be made. ((We'll  
miss you more than you'll miss us, I'm afraid.))

~~~~~  
Chuck Peterson      The editorial, believe it or not,  
CALIFORNIA      I found amusing. For a next  
                 installment you might try re-  
printing MATHEMATICAL TABLES FROM THE HANDBOOK OF  
CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS! It's absolutely hilarious.  
((Sorry, I'm printing  $\pi$  to 100,000 places first.))

~~~~~  
Sid Birchby      I see that there's a pocketbook on  
MANCHESTER      sale of the selected writings of Wm  
                 McGonigall. Haven't bought it,  
because I saw another that I wanted more, namely,  
THE DAWN OF MAGIC, by Pauwels and Bergier.  
A lot of people in Manchester must think this is  
worth having. I saw it a week before I bought it  
and in that time the stock had dwindled to two  
copies. And this in a shop where there are racks  
and racks of paperbacks of all sorts, with this  
one hidden away among thousands of other titles.  
I've now read half of it, and I can see why it  
would be a sell-out, but I'd be very interested

to know who it sells out to. There's a lot that's pure SF, in spite of being non-fiction. A long chapter on Charles Fort, for instance, and one on alchemy and nuclear power. Lots of quotes from SF authors: Bradbury, Clarke, vVogt, etc. JWCampbell rears his head sometimes, too.

Peter Singleton     I enjoyed your account of your visit to the States back in  
LANCASHIRE           ish 5, but you went a bit too far where you indulged in  
                     kissing a poor, innocent five-year-old girl, and you  
brazenly admit this fiendish act for the edification of an aghast fandom!  
Watch out for Bill Donaho!

Ian R MacAulay     I am madly busy being a scientist, or a reasonable facsimile  
DUBLIN               thereof, lately. My current research involves the investiga-  
                     tion of conditions in Ireland about 300 million years ago.  
(You are not to assume by this that I have at last solved the problem of time travel.) Most of the work consists of picking up chunks of rock from sundry points around the country and subjecting them to various tortures. The procedure is to pack a kit-bag with crowbars, chisels, compasses and chalk and head for a disused quarry in a Land Rover. Having found a suitable quarry one disembarks and starts levering out a suitable lump of rock. At this juncture the local farmer who is usually aged and with an eye to the main chance customarily appears and observes the proceedings in silence for a few minutes. He then remarks that it is lovely weather for the time of year Glory Be To God. After a chat about the weather he gets to the point, which always seems to be to the effect that the rock from his particular quarry is the finest in the country and he is prepared to let us have full rights to it for a purely nominal sum. If we can keep him talking long enough for us to have detached a chunk of rock weighing about 70 or 80 pounds, we say thanks very much, but no, and adjourn to the local pub to recover our breath. This means that all our samples must come from localities which are conveniently located with respect to licensed premises, a hazard which we dedicated men of science are prepared to tolerate.

Harry Warner, Jr.     I can tell Ian MacAulay what happens to those pests when  
MARYLAND               they finally are discouraged away from laboratories. They  
                     begin to hang around newspaper offices. Even worse, they  
sometimes vary their procedure by telephoning newspaper offices incessantly instead of coming around, probably because they know that they cannot be thrown out bodily if they are present only in a telephonic incarnation. Usually these people tell us not of some great scientific discovery or revelation of an unsuspected natural phenomenon, but of their knowledge of a great scandal involving the nation's leaders. They invariably dare us to print it, and usually refuse to give an inkling of what they would like us to print. Occasionally they want a reporter to come to some dubious address and get the facts in person. I regret to say that journalists in Hagerstown are not enterprising enough to undertake such exciting searches for scoops.

Chuck Harris I am a sick man. I have influenza. Let us pause to give  
England thanx to a benevolent Roscoe who arranges such boons for poor  
faans who are behind in their correspondence and disenchanted  
with working for a living. I saw the Doc yesterday — fortunately he noticed  
my hands shaking just as he reached for the pad of Death Certificates — and  
after I'd convinced him that I'd been alive all the time he told me to go  
Straight Home And Go To Bed For Three Days. He gave me all the latest boons  
of modern science with the single exception of radioactive cobalt and — oh  
joy! — a Medical Certificate. Since then I have been sticking things up my  
nose, spraying my throat, inhaling noxious vapours with my head under a towel,  
and waging unceasing war on any histamines that may be lurking inside my head  
and chest.

Never felt better in my life.

Today I went out to Barking, about 12 miles away. I decided that I could  
walk down to the station and catch a train. I dis so, but it was a near  
thing. It was just like one of those comic pootsards. I was 50 yards from  
the station as the train drew in at the platform and I nearly killed myself  
racing down to the station, up and over the bridge and then using the suit-  
case I was carrying as a battering-ram through the people who had just  
alighted. The train was just moving out, but I pulled open the last carriage  
door, threw in the case and then dived in on top of it.

I was dripping with sweat so I pulled off my raincoat and sat panting in the  
corner. There were three Maiden Ladies in the compartment and I tried to smile  
my reassuring smile at them. They carefully moved up to the other end of the  
seat.

The next stop was Dagenham Dock. When we got there the Guard came up to the  
compartment. There was a lot of palaver. I couldn't understand him, wouldn't  
tell him I was deaf, and thought he wanted to see my ticket. I was busy  
telling him that I didn't stop to buy one but was willing to pay. What he was  
actually telling me was that this was a LADIES ONLY compartment and I would  
have to move to another. I finally understood him. It was horrible. I was  
still panting and sweating, and he must have thought that when I offered him  
half-a-crown (for the fare) that I was trying to bribe him to let me stay in  
the compartment along with the three vintage virgins. When he finally pointed  
to the minute sticker on the window and it dawned on me what it was all about,  
I grabbed my coat and my case and crawled out. George, those women looked at  
me with loathing. You could tell by their expressions that I was a moral  
leper. I often joke about being a sex-fiend but never before have I had four  
strangers accuse me of it with their eyes and do such a good job of it.

The guard escorted me along to an ordinary carriage, and I tried to pass the  
whole thing off as a joke. I said: "Ha ha, what's the matter, mate, you think  
I was going to rape all of them?" It failed dismally. He didn't say a word,  
he didn't even smile, but turned on his heel and went back to his van.

The next stop was Barking, thank ghod.

My nerves were shot to hell and gone, and I badly needed a drink. I had two  
cups of tea and a rock cake in the caff opposite the station.....

S T. Archer Have you heard about Mack Reynolds? He has a ranch, I understand,  
Ireland. somewhere out there in the mild west. Instead of the usual way of  
cattle-branding he has the side of each animal decorated with a landscape. It  
has such a picturesque effect that people come from all over to see Mack's  
brand.

----- end -----



# THE FLIGHTY TYPES

John Berry

WHEN I WAS ABOUT SIXTEEN YEARS OLD I imagined I was an aeroplane authority, and besides being able to identify hundreds of different aeroplanes and draw them and even be able to sketch them accurately, I could also tell them by sound. At least, I thought I could. One night there was an air raid on Birmingham, and I was walking along with my father who was a raid warden. Except for searchlights and anti-aircraft fire some miles away to the North it was fairly peaceful. Then a dull thrum-thrum of aeroplane engines grew progressively louder. My father jammed his tin hat firmly on his head.

"Don't worry," I said, "it's a Beaufighter."

My father had faith in me. One evening at tea-time there was an aeroplane quiz on the radio, and one member of a team had been asked the wing span of the Flying Fortress.

"One hundred and three feet, eleven and three eighth inches," I hissed between my teeth before the questioner had repeated the question. When the answer was eventually given, confirming what I had said, my father had thought I was a genius.

So, on this night, reasoning that I knew what I was talking about, my father looked upwards and said, "Oh, a Beaufighter."

He didn't know what he was saying, but I did. The Beaufighter was a new twin-engined night-fighter with Bristol Hercules engines, and I worked at a factory where they made Bristol Hercules engines, and I thought I recognised the two of them.

"Very high-pitched whistle it has, doesn't it?" said my father.

I had to agree. If I hadn't been certain it was a Beaufighter, I would have said it was a 500-lb bomb coming down in our direction pretty fast.

"The whistle seems to be developing into a very loud screech," said my father apprehensively, fidgeting the brim of his tin hat with pensive fingers.

The bomb landed half a mile away. It had a very funny effect on my father. He seemed to see in me the personification of the German pilot overhead. Or, on the other hand, having a deeply-ingrained paternal instinct, he may have been attempting to put his tin helmet on my head, to protect me in case it was the first of a stick of bombs. In his haste he seemed rather unduly rough about it, holding the helmet by the rim and bringing it down on

my head in quick motions, the rounded outside of the helmet catching me square on top of the head.

"Blasted idiot!" roared my father in rather a strained voice, and I was glad at the time that the German pilot couldn't hear my dad swearing at him in such an undignified way.

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This, I think, was directly the reason my father gave me permission to join the Air Training Corps and go to RAF stations for weekends. He readily signed the form which gave his permission for me to fly in training planes, in case there was a crash and I was laid up for a long time.

So I was at this aerodrome near Stratford-on-Avon for the weekend. I know this will come as a surprise to you, but in those days I was sort of naive and shy, and when a rough-looking sergeant paraded us and asked for volunteers to work in the cookhouse and peel potatoes, I immediately stepped forward. Actually, I was so sorry for the poor man when no one else volunteered, and I was trying to save him any further embarrassment. The only other volunteer was a couple of years older than myself, a youth who normally I would have assumed to be more balanced and cautious.

We marched to the cookhouse, and this older youth clapped me on the back.

"Shrewd devil!" he hissed.

"Oh, I don't know," I said primly. "It's just to give me a rest from hearing all those chaps in the barrackroom saying all those things about girls."

"Crafty blighter!" he smiled knowingly to me, and I was all bevil-dered.

We sat either side of a couple of hundredweight of potatoes and started to scrape like mad. The other chap actually whistled as he carved lumps out of the spuds.

"Been here before?" he asked conversationally.

"No," I said.

He sneered. "Pull the other leg!" he gritted.

"No, honestly I haven't," I said coyly. "Have you?"

"I come down here every time there's a trip," he smiled. "Never missed one yet."

"You must know a powerful lot about aeroplanes?" I asked.

"Aeroplanes? Who's interested in aeroplanes? I come down here to see the WAAF's."

"WAAF's?" I said. "But those are girls, aren't they?"

"Clever basket!" he grinned, nudging me again.

Honest, I began to think he was mentally deranged. Then a door opened, and a pretty head peered round it.

"Want a cuppa tea?" she said.

"Yus," said my friend, and he held up two fingers which I presumed to be an intimation that she was to bring two cups in. She blushed and withdrew.

"Who told you they've nothing on underneath?" said the chap.

"Who hasn't got anything on underneath?" I said innocently.

"Cut out the sarcasm," he said, making a circular motion with his potato peeler.

Whatever threat he had in mind was stilled by the WAAF, who swayed in, wearing a white overall, and clutching two cups of tea.

"You can come in the kitchen and butter the bread," she said, looking up at my friend.

"Is there another WAAF in there too?" asked the chap.

She nodded.

"Thanks for the tea. We'll be in in a minute," he panted.

When she'd gone he pulled out a penny.

"Heads," I said because it seemed the thing to do.

"Hard luck!" he said. "That one's mine."

I followed him into the kitchen, because that was what his arched thumb suggested.

Mine was a plump girl.

I walked over to her and asked her for my bread and butter.

"You're a cool one!" she said. "Who told you?"

"Who told me what?" I panted, getting all hot and bothered.

"Who told you we wear nothing underneath?" She opened the top button of her overall and gave me a peep.

I was flabbergasted.

She put her arms round me. "We daren't wear anything underneath because it's so terribly hot working in the kitchen all the time....makes us sweat and everything and it's very unhygienic....but I'd like to know who told you."

My friend turned his head, hair disarrayed, forehead covered in sweat.

"Watch that one," he said to the plump WAAF. "Dead cunning he is. Ooooh, he's dead crafty...."

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Next morning the sergeant paraded us again.

"Cookhouse detail, two men required," he breathed. I was the only one who didn't move, and believe me that was only because I hadn't got the strength to take two paces forward.



"What an enthusiastic crowd!" he murmured, choosing two, who sprinted towards the cookhouse.

"One volunteer for the Link Trainer," he said,....,then he saw me.

"He can go," he said, pointing at me, "to show my appreciation of the way he volunteered for the cookhouse yesterday."

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I'd been told that whatever I did I was to avoid the Link Trainer.

It was a symbolic model of an aeroplane built round a seat. The trainee sat in the seat. A hood was pulled down over him, and it gave an accurate simulation of what it was like in the cabin of an aeroplane at night. An instructor told you that you were airborne, and then he asked you to make a flight of twenty miles in such a direction, and the wind was blowing at such a speed, etc., and you had to control the thing, and a pencil on a map showed what you were doing so that you could carry out corrections. I knew that a neo wasn't expected to do any good at it, but they were looking for a mystic thing called "pilot aptitude." If you didn't show such an aptitude you'd never be a pilot. I had no such pretensions, but, if you get me, I was sorta optimistic.....

On instructions I closed the hood over me. An eerie blue sheen was filtered by the lights of the instruments on a whacking great dashboard in front of me.

A mysterious voice, confident in its anonymity, gave me a course to fix on a compass between my knees. I did it. The voice told me to watch my Artificial Horizon. This was easy. A line was fixed on a dial, and behind it was another line which seemed to want to revolve on its axis. All you had to do was keep one line behind the other and you were in level flight. "Check your engine speed." If you didn't press a lever at a continual pressure your engine either died of starvation or over-revved. So I got the correct pressure. "Watch your course — you've forgotten the wind speed." A little pencil line definitely wasn't going from A to B. At least it was going from A but not towards B. I aimed off for wind, and the voice, with a suggestion of annoyance in it, hinted that my Artificial Horizon wasn't horizontal. I looked at the instrument. It was in the form of a cross. With great difficulty I got it back again, and this time the voice, still slightly annoyed but with a suppressed snigger about it, announced, "Your port engine has just dropped off."

I felt that he was taking an undue advantage of my inexperience.

The pencil line was just concluding a rather ostentatious letter S, so I lifted off the hood and climbed out.

"Too much for you?" sneered the instructor.

"No," I said. "With my port engine dropped off and my Artificial Horizon revolving like the second hand on a watch and my compass kaput I decided to bail out."

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"Two volunteers wanted for 'Circuit and Bumps' on an Oxford."

No one stepped forward, so as I fancied even a monotonous flight in an

Oxford I stepped forward. One other man did too. I heard, "You cunning blighter!" whispered in my ear.

The reason no one else had volunteered was because there was every chance of a few of us cadets being able to get a long cross-country flight in a Wellington. The flight in the Oxford merely entailed taking off and landing again maybe a dozen times.

It was my cookhouse gigolo.

"Who told you about this little lark?" he grinned.

"Oooh, I was getting fed up waiting for the Wellington flight, so I thought the Oxford was better than nothing."

"You do keep a blank expression when you crack a joke," he said, in rather a perplexed voice. "Who told you that on the Oxford flight a WAAF fits your parachute?"

He gave me a knowing wink, a mute acknowledgement, so it seemed, of some particular prowess he seemed to think I possessed.

Personally, I thought the parachute fitting to be unrefined torture. This amigo of mine must have been a masochist. My parachute was obviously designed for a dwarf, and the WAAF who kitted me out seemed to find some delight in threading the two straps (which drooped down the back) between my legs and pulling like mad. I finished up hanging from one of the hangar struts.

On the other hand, my friend seemed to derive some sensual pleasure in this rather uncultured exercise. He didn't even go for the flight in the Oxford, merely waited for me to return.....

As we walked back to our hut he became quite friendly. He said that after tea we would be paraded and asked for two volunteers for I knew what. He congratulated me on my know-how.

After tea, the Sergeant lined us up, and right enough he asked for two volunteers to wash dishes at the NAAFI canteen. My friend leapt forward and turned his head, looking wildly around for me. I stayed in the back row, avoiding his darting eyes. They seemed to hint that wherever I was, I shouldn't miss this.....

Sometimes I wonder if it would have completed my education.....

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