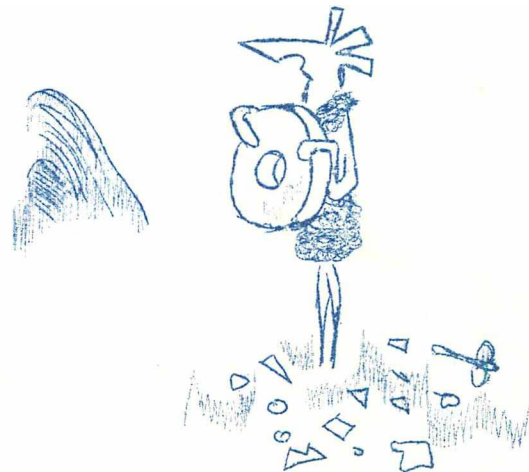


the story



"Harry, guess what I've made"



The SCARR

Number Eight

June 1965

THE TROUBLE with Editorials is writing them. The trouble with writing them is what to write. A promag Editor, if he has been in the chair for thirty years or so can write sixteen pages: I find it difficult to write one.

For example I could mention a book I saw recently by John H Secondari. It recalled the time WAW had a Varityper. He explained to us country boys how it worked, took off the fount of type, put it on again, etc. He had, he said, four different founts altogether. He kept the spares in an old tin which he also used as a repository for any foreign coins he happened to get in his travels. "I see," said Bob Shaw, thoughtfully, "three founts in a coin-tin."

Or I could tell you about the first time Peggy white entered the dining-room at 170, a place of hallowed memories, now emptied of Willises. The light came from two glass bowls at the ends of an upside-down-T gadget in the ceiling. Peggy's eyes were phototropically drawn to this object and she remarked, "That must be what is called a candlebra!"

Or about the time James White remarked, "The difference between me and a fan is that after I've been insulted I don't go home until I've had my tea."

When the talk at 170 on one occasion was about vivisectioning dogs, etc., Madeleine asked us to change the subject: her feelings, she said, were lassieorated.

James played ghoddminton in a pair of old shoes -- very old shoes. The idea, apparently was that he got a better grip of the floor through the holes in them. But eventually they disintegrated. Looking at them James sorrowfully remarked, "I will have to get a new pair of old shoes."

A flashlight photograph taken at 170 once showed me with a sort of halo, due to some accident of lighting. Asked to account for it I explained, "It comes from using the telephone so much." This is one of my most halced memories.

But things like this don't make an Editorial, so for this issue I'll pass.

This zine is produced for the Off-trail Magazine Publishers Association. For other interested or interesting people it is free for articles, letters (not necessarily of comment), postcards or the January 1960 issue of Astrauding. Artwork by Arthur Thomson. And, if you haven't already guessed, it is perpetrated by Geo. J. Charters, 3 Lancaster Ave., Bangor, Northern Ireland.

Geo

SLOBLAND REVISITED

BOB
SHAW

ONE MORNING in work last winter I realised everything looked depressing, and had been that way for days. It was nothing to do with the appearance of the surroundings because British industrial areas are permanently drab, and, in fact, one wouldn't expect them to look any other way — there is nothing more astonishing or unreal-looking than a large industrial structure seen in brilliant sunshine on a blue summer's day. This greyness was coming from inside me and it was there because my defences seemed to be failing in some way.

All Britons have these defences to a degree, especially those whose most impressionable years — say, from eight to eighteen — were spent in the bleakness of the war and the even more exquisitely refined misery of the immediate post-war period. They have the knack of looking at urban wastelands like a gardener who sees flowers but not the bare soil beneath, being aware only of the pubs, the confectioners and tobacconists, the clean red buses and so on. As a fanatical science fiction reader with an over-active imagination I grew up in a Belfast which is like nobody else's Belfast and is certainly far removed from the city as it really stands. Even today I don't move through the same streets that strangers see.

But on this particular winter morning everything was grim-looking, and I had no idea what could be done about it. I didn't want to work or play, eat or drink, read or write, love or hate — a walk on the sands of a Pacific atoll might have been all right, but then it might not. I sat for a while staring at the papers on the desk, then my eyes focussed on the top one of a pile of glossy publicity photographs for which I was supposed to write captions. It was a new in-flight shot of the company's big freighter aircraft flying low over Belfast. The camera had been pointing slightly downwards, and behind the aeroplane was spread one of the regions of the city best known to me since childhood.

Half-heartedly I began picking out landmarks and identifying streets. There was the Newtownards Road, there was the first pub in which I ever had a drink, there was the library in Templemore Avenue. Above the library was a street running off the Avenue to the right which I knew was Madrid Street, my favourite short-cut to the Albert Bridge. I followed its length among the grainy rooftops and got a minute but icy shock. Unbelievably, there was no sign of the Albert bridge at the end of the street. It vanished into haze but the great hump of the bridge would have been unmistakable at the far end.

Considering the matter over a pipe of Ogden's Rich Brown I was forced to an inescapable conclusion — the street I had so confidently labelled as Madrid Street was really some other street. But my memory said this was impossible. I had walked, cycled and driven up Templemore Avenue thousands of times, had gone to the library in it, had attended evening classes in it, had gone to the swimming baths in it. I would have bet large sums of money that only one street ran off it to the right, and that was Madrid Street. In fact, I had complained bitterly about the one short-cut to the bridge being blocked when Madrid Street

had recently been made one-way.

With a strange feeling of unreality I picked up the internal telephone and made a few calls to people in the firm who knew the area. I told each of them to imagine he was walking up Templemore Avenue from the Newtownards Road and asked him how many streets he could see on the right. The answer was, one. And its name? Madrid Street. One of these men had actually lived right in Templemore Avenue for some years, and I began to feel a kind of uneasy excitement. Could there be an invisible street? Not really invisible, of course, but unseeable in the sense of the postman in Chesterton's story about the invisible murderer. Could there be an accidental pattern of architecture or topography which somehow erased itself from one's memory cells? If so, then this invisible street could lead anywhere, perhaps into some unknown romance-land hidden behind the familiar like a secret garden.

I don't want this account to stray into fantasy, so it must be explained that the new turn of thought was only a little mental exercise of the sort that any keen reader of UNKNOWN might do. All the same, the concept triggered off an upheaval somewhere in my memory and I began to think of my Slobland dreams. When asleep I often get very vivid, detailed dreams, some of which can form a connected series even though they happen months apart. In the Slobland series I dreamt that you could go to the end of Belfast's Corporation Street and turn right, although in reality this would bring you into the waters of Belfast Lough, to reach a strange low-lying district. This dream place was a dark landscape composed largely of black cinders, railway-lines and marsh, but there was a village there and some dim little shops. The people who lived in the village were small, poor and surly towards strangers. They were conscious of being different from the city dwellers and never left their own district, but after a few dreams I began to like the place and the people and they slowly began to welcome me.

That series of dreams stopped years ago without anything conclusive happening, but I used to waken up from them half convinced that in Corporation Street there might be a tricky turning which would take me to Slobland if only I could spot it. Now here I was sitting in work, on a most undreamlike winter's morning, with indisputable evidence that such elusive, self-effacing byways really do exist. Here was a similar turning which I would never have known about had it not been accidentally recorded by an air-borne camera.

At lunch time I went down to the car after a quick sandwich, drove along the Newtownards Road and turned up Templemore Avenue. The street was there — right where I would previously have sworn there was no opening — and it was called Beechfield Street. I drove up it, following all its angles and turns, and of course it didn't lead to a Slobland or a secret garden, but just travelling along it gave me a weird, dreamlike enjoyment — a sense of breaking all the rules. It went roughly parallel to Madrid Street and terminated a few hundred yards from the Bridge in another unnoticed, unremembered corner. This meant my lunch hour hadn't been entirely wasted, because I now had a new short-cut to replace Madrid Street.

This account was written about next-to-nothing, and it proves nothing, but in work that afternoon I realised everything had stopped being grey. Helen Keller once said, "Not the senses I have but what I can do with them is my kingdom." I wonder did she say in fourteen words what I have just tried to say in a thousand. Or was she talking about something else?

MODERN
POETRY

Here are two
pages of verse,
taken from
various sources.
I would like
readers (even
those who do
not care for
poetry) to
let me know
which they
would consider
the best of
this selection
and which the
worst.

(1)

It was, I think,
on top of a bus
I saw no more
than a mop of
dyed black hair
that made my face
into a warm black
hole that screams.

(2)

Why that we should, with accents bold,
Ride through to perish nil,
And on this cloud meet any fold
Of flowers beneath the hill.

And then they fly to yonder Zeus,
And kiss their tired prone.
Two moon-bent rustics trip them loose
And wander on alone.

(3)

A learned heathen told me this:
Dwell in pure mind and mind alone;
What you brought back from the Abyss,
The Slug was taught beneath his
Stone.

(4)

The proper scale would pat you on the head
But Alice showed her pup Ulysses' bough
Well from behind a thistle, wise with dread;
And though your gulf-sprung mountains I allow
(Snow-puppy curves, rose-solemn dado band)
Charming for nurse, I am not nurse just now.

(5)

The multiplier's two-edged sword goes aft agley.
The vikings burn the abbey,
And dance gleefully as the rabbits gobble, gobble,
The wet plum pudding.
Cavort and gambol —
"Good old Stonehenge!" they shriek,
And sail with hands on brow on the Thames.

(6)

My love is a bag of nails, is a bag,
is waiting for me, watching me, is there
outside the street, the barman moans.

(7)

We like to come to this estate for a time.
It would take three days to cross the mountains
From end to end, on foot.
Winds are high. There are no forests.

On a one-day path (once there was a drovers'
Road here but now there are no cattle)
I counted skeletons of the abandoned crofts.

(8)

The poem has need of a solidity
And now you yield it
Mounded against your shadow.
If you were earth
Kneaded to such a hump
You could not weigh
Blunter against the eye
Or on the air more thickly
Than where, from the broken rind,
Autumn wells out.

(9)

Alone and unannounced,
Oenone-like, she waits upon the hour
Of liberation, and the framed dusk
Caroms against
The unfeeling wall of night.

(10)

A weight, walking
feels itself
dragged along and

slowed in
this air. Here
a leaf

falls, there
the fruit
market opens

in a turn of
corners. The air
clears

the street to
your foot
stepping over drains,

down, the curb
shocks it, asphalt
hardens under it,

moves up and
down aiding,
impeding that

progress. Colours
shape in
this air, it

pulls you along,
stops, starts
up again

a bicycle bell,
a policeman's whistle
sounding

it, brings you
to the curbstone, hangs
there, now all

weight parts,
settles, your
toe hits it.

(11)

They do not need the moon the ghostliness
These mists jostling the boles,
These bog-vraiths and ogre-fumes
That hollow to a breasting walk;
They are harmless enough in all conscience,
Wetting eyelashes and growing moulds,
And do not speak at all, unless their walking flood
Is a kind of languid speech. Like ghosts
Dawn filches them for dews.
They wink at me from grasses pushed aside
And impart a high polish to my shoes
That dry-dullness, milky, sloven leather,
From walking in ghostways where tall mists grope.

(12)

An enormous name? Could be:
These gyring rails must mount no higher
Firmly descend into another cut.

Their duty's done. What though
Across the numinous gulf uprear
Sheer spires and sunlit snow;

Along this ravining brink
Are wheels will wind their squeal;
Tunnel to trestle to tunnel blink

On down, past footways to
Known heights, now out of sight
To this pass come, and through:

Who, 50 odd years ago,
Happened here first to lift
My young mere eyes to snow.

(13)

I want the cries of my geese
To echo in space, and the land
They fly above to be astir beneath
The agreement of its forms, as if it were
A self one might inhabit: life
Under leaf, gulls going in
Behind the encroachment of the plough,
Futurity, now openhandedly
Leans to the present and the season
Re-establishes a reign of outwardness,
Begins to build the summer back in cries
Still haunted by the cold, as geese
Cross over skies where mid-March balances.

BITS AND PIECES ruthlessly torn from readers:

LETTERS

PETER SINGLETON, Whittingham Hospital, Lancs.

A hole obviously can not be seen. You only get a butcher's at the material gathered around it and a hole is something that isn't there. Hands up those who can see an object with the naked eye when the object doesn't even exist! Ergo, all that glib gibberish the doctors handed to you about having a hole in your antrum of all places was just a crafty ruse, because how on earth can you have something that, by logical deduction, doesn't exist? For example, put your fingers in your mouth and what happens? You don't feel a hole there because otherwise the hole -- if it existed -- would prevent your fingers from entering your mouth! The bright light of reason must prevail, and one day everyone will know the truth about "holes" which forever lurk around pretending to exist in all sorts of out-of-the-way places. Martians in disguise? Could be, I feel, because being something that couldn't possibly exist is the perfect way of remaining undetected.

Leo Brett? Lionel Roberts? Pel Torro? Mention of these three names in your Diary brings back memories of the time I jumped off the chair in my bedroom in a frenzy of self-torture because I had to punish myself for being foolish enough to purchase at full face value four Badger Books, the above authors being represented. R. L. Farthorpe supplied the fourth name. I landed on the floor head first, as planned. Amid the resultant pool of blood I proceeded to rip the volumes in question apart with my teeth. Very satisfying, this. It was a real delight to behold the crimson tatters of paper as I gloatingly held the dripping remains aloft. ((So you didn't like them?))

MARTY HELGENSEN, New York.

The SCARR appears to be in the fine old tradition of Irish fanzines. I hope it doesn't follow the tradition of RETRIBUTION and HYPHEN by disappearing as they did. Yes, I know "it" is still around, but it's terribly irregular. ((Sure and isn't that the charm of it?)) It is almost a cliché that after writing something like that it will appear in the near future, so maybe I'll get a copy tomorrow.

Are you a certified fresh air fiend or would that only apply to an heiress? Of course, changing your will so often must agitate your heirs very much. ((Yep, it certainly puts the wind up them.))

SID BIRCHBY, Manchester.

I like most of the issue, but especially the Diary extracts. ((Aw, shucks!)) I enjoy reading about what you have been reading or rather what you were reading in Spring, 1961. Is there any particular reason why you let such a long maturing period elapse. ((If I ever put out a 100-page issue I'll need lots of material and this will bring me up to date!))

Here are a few remarks about what I've been reading in the last 24 hours. I don't claim that there's any great merit in this instant Pepys, but at least I've got it out of my possession before it goes rancid. ((You mean.....))

I've been looking through an early S E B Mais, namely, "See England First." dated 1927. And dated is right. Rarely have I realised how much the attitudes of the English have changed in the last 40 years. The book is a light-hearted

travel-book in various holiday spots. On the one hand it is strangely modern. He refers to helicopters, for instance. But also he talks about the "real Derbyshire peasantry" and an encounter with a "black-haired native" (in Cornwall) in a sense that just doesn't occur today.

Mais, by the way, was educated at Cambridge, and a very intelligent and perceptive man. He was influenced by Henry Williamson, and is a contemporary of L. du Garde Peach. The latter is a graduate of my own university and now runs the Hucklow Players, a very good village theatre in Derbyshire. I am proud to say that I have met him.

I say all this to show that Mais is not an ignoramus. There has been a tremendous revolution in social attitudes. Would one today find a fox-hunting enthusiast being quite as blunt as this?..."the new huntsman kills them standing if they won't run, in order that the rumour may be spread through foxland that it is wiser to bolt." If this doesn't convert anyone who approves of fox-hunting into the opposite view, then nothing will, surely!

Well, my space has really run out....or rather, I have to go out for the beer now.

HARRY WARNER, JR.. Maryland.

"When in doubt, write about the hospital" is an old fannish maxim that has proved increasingly useful to me as the years go by and other sources of invention falter. Increasingly, my remarks about my hospital stays have borne less and less resemblance to things that really went on there. Not too long ago, I told someone about the problems that fanzines caused me while the hips were mending. Mike McInerney was publishing during one recuperation period a fanzine whose exact title I no longer remember, but it was something like Hkrlpoid. Vividly, I related the turmoil into which the seventh floor was cast the day that I asked a nurse's aide for my Hkrlpoid and she went to tell a nurse about it, and the nurse said she didn't know what had happened to it, and anyway she'd better ask the doctor if it was all right, and the doctor said sure, if he's lost his, send down to the snack bar and get him another one and charge it to his Blue Cross bill. I also told the manner in which my roommate with plumbing difficulties got the idea that I was a doctor specializing in such things, because I was reading a fanzine entitled Void, obviously a publication containing the latest developments of my medical specialty. And so on, quite realistic depictions of how the strange world of the fanzines can react on the equally strange world of the hospital, and the only difficulty is that these things never happened. The only notice people took of the fanzines occurred when the cleaning woman wanted to dust the windowsill.

There must be something about the Presidency that causes men to run for it even after having served one term. Egoboo might be the explanation that compensates for the awful nuisances. I've been thinking about this today, because I spent ten minutes this morning in close proximity to President Johnson, and this first extended real life inspection I've made of him showed me something that doesn't appear in pictures and on television screens. It's the superbly healthy appearance of his complexion, the aura of cheerful confidence that radiates from his eyes and the way in which this quite mature man moves around like a teen-ager on the way to a big party. I don't think that he could fake this appearance that he is having the time of his life.

Maybe I'd better explain that Lyndon did not drop around to the house to consult me on his chances of getting into FAPA by the time he returns to private life. Without warning, he decided to go to church in Hagerstown this Sunday morning, while going back to Washington from somewhere or other. It was a semi-secret event with none of the hordes of attaches, photographers, reporters, and other wildlife who normally follow him around. I got the secret whispered in my ear by a police-

man while I was having breakfast in a downtown drug store. By bad luck the company camera that I use is back at the factory for repairs and no other reporters were on duty at that time to lend me another camera. Of course, the traditional thing to do would have been to rush to the counter of the drug store where some cameras are for sale, buy one, stuff film into it, hail a taxi, and rush to the scene of the big local story. I regret to say that I ate calmly my eggs and bacon, finished my coffee, walked back to the car, drove home, got my own camera, drove partway to the church, and walked the rest of the way up the street down which his car would come in case he left before I got there. Even so I arrived in plenty of time to take a batch of pictures, which turned out splendidly. I think I was the only person there who was too busy to have time to shake hands with the President.

EARL E EVERS, U S Forces, 09058.

I wonder why it's been fashionable for Presidents to publicly and eloquently run down the office? Anyone with a fraction of the abilities to get himself elected knows about the slander, nervous pressure, and plain oldfashioned loneliness any high official has to live with. I can't see a President seeking sympathy, and stating distaste for the personal miseries of the job doesn't imply humility or any virtue. Neither do I think it's meant to imply honesty or frankness -- there's nothing particularly soul-baring about citing your dislike for the distasteful part of a job. Me, I take a more sciencefictional (Shaverian?) viewpoint. I think the President is a slave. There's a little green man in the background who really rules the country.

Or something like that.

SAINTFIELD T ARCHER, Ireland.

Spackman's Circus visited here recently and the proprietor offered a pound note and a large melon to anyone who would dive head first from twenty feet into a barrel of water. But he had so many successful divers that he ran out of melons and the only suitable thing left was a number of boxes of figs. When these were opened, however, they had all gone bad -- except the very last one. After so much anxiety the proprietor was glad that he now had a good fig for headers.

|||||

THE CON-MAN

SHORT STORY

THE CONVENTION was in full swing when a big man, with a lion on a leash, entered the hall. Nobody knew him, but nobody questioned his right to be there, because, after all, he WAS a big man. And besides, there was the lion.

He found his way to the bar.

"Do you serve neo-fans?" he asked the bartender, in a rumbling voice with menacing overtones and boyacing undertones.

"Of course," replied the barman.

"Right," he said. "A beer for me and...." -- with a fond glance at the lion -- "a neo-fan for him."

the end

PEEPS

miles tall. With the heroine (coloured) he takes over the alien spaceship and the — tragedy! — begins to shrink back to a measly six feet. But his girl-friend saves the day; she smashes all the controls before she too shrinks. Then they jump into a water-tank and when the aliens throw out the water the Earth pair find themselves in the centre of an iceberg, and a very boring conversation has to be got through before they "land" in the Pacific Ocean. All this takes place in a sea of typos, bad spelling, bad grammar and phrases repeated over and over and over. Quote:- "He seemed to be shrinking on a mathematical squaring principal." Unquote. But this story does awaken one's sense of wonder —

INTO

Atomic waste gets into a river and mutates a colony of beavers. They mutate something fierce: become as big as houses; become telepathic; acquire telekin-esis; can teleport. They capture a boy, and by contact with them he mutates something fierce: he gets all the teles but no size increase. The boy builds a machine to remove his own powers and that of the beavers. Egoboo for Chataway on P 44:- "His wife passed him at a speed that would have done credit to Christ Chataway...." Madeleine's comment, "If this had happened in Belfast the beavers would be called The Beasts from the Black Lagan."

MY

week, but they are not to know until the actual day when it is to be. So if it does not come Mon Tue Wed or Thur the pupils KNOW it will be on Friday and the necessary condition cannot be fulfilled. Then if Thursday is selected the pupils know on Wed that as Friday is impossible the exam must be on Thursday, so Thur is out too. Similarly, Wed is out, and Tue AND Mon. So when will the exam be?

DIARY

shoulders. (That pun makes me shudder, but it stands head and shudders above lots of other puns I have committed. Besides, I've only used it four or five times.) The earth is being bombarded by missiles carrying radioactive dust, and after years of investigation scientists discover that they come from Planet

1961

May 26 Fri Leo Brett (10) MIND FORCE. One good thing: all Leo's stories in future will be better — they couldn't be as bad. Earth is invaded by seven-mile-tall beings from outer space, of all places! The hero (white) to meet this challenge also grows to seven wonder that even John Spencer & Co would publish it. Of course I don't know how much Leo paid them!

June 1 Th Bron Fane (10) RODENT MUTATION.

June 7 Wed At Bob Shaw's house one of the Star-begotten asked what "the falling sickness" was. Sadie suggested dropsy. I expect the idea just grewed. A problem from the New Scientist was mentioned: A teacher tells the class they will have an exam the following

after 100 years encased in ice after a jet crash scientists have reconditioned him, giving him a mechanical heart and reinforcing his body with a silicon lining. Also, he can breathe space, although as I understand it the air out there is pretty thin. Perhaps he can breathe by using the breadth of his

Blank. This planet is 500,000 miles from the Earth, but it has only recently been seen "by an amateur astrologer (sic) in Russia." It had not been seen before, I imagine, because it was hidden in dense clouds! Well, our Brian takes off from a space platform, 1000 miles above the Earth, to visit Blank and blow it to smithereens. He has to take off carefully, it says here, or the lunar gravity would ruin everything. Thirty-three minutes after take-off the space-ship is doing 19,000 mph, and 2½ hours later it has reached a distance of 18,000 miles above Earth! Impressive figures, but even more impressive are these: three days at this speed and they have done 1,368,000 miles of their 500,000-mile trip and have only 100,000 miles to go. At this point there is an increase of speed and then a decrease: the reason is that "obviously the space-ship was affected by the gravity of the planet Blank." They decide their speed is too high, so they turn the ship end for end and "use the retard motors." But this does not have the desired effect so they jettison the fuel tanks. They crash at 1080 mph and four survive. Blank is a red hell with seas of radioactive dust and two factions, goodies & baddies. Our men join the goodies, and, helped by 4½ tons of atom bombs, move the planet to a cooler location. Even though he has a mechanical heart Brian is not hard-hearted and weds the princess of the goodies, so all ends happily. Isn't that nice? Anyone can have a free copy of this book if they write to Ken Slater and enclose 2/9 for packing and postage. The swearwords used all the time are "goldarn" and "doggorn," so one can leave the book lying around even if there are children about.

June 16 Fri David Duncan (50) DARK DOMINION. Duncan has rediscovered Cavorito, but, just to be different, calls it Magollanium. The blurb-writer didn't like this name and calls it Maggellarium.

June 18 Sun Frederic Brown (60) THE MIND THING. Alien who can take over minds is trying to get home.

June 26 Mon John E Muller (40) THE UNINVITED. Contains a curious description of a chess game on p21: "Two pathotically futile kings running round and round the board." I'd like to have seen that ending. Also liked this from p112: 'Sacre Bleu,' said Pierre. 'Quelle mixture.'

July 1 Sat Got my first car this morning. For the record; Black Morris Minor 1000. Registration plates, 3478CZ. Approx 9½ h.p. Weight, 15 cwt. 948 cc. Speedometer reading, 95 miles. Top speed 80mph. 40-plus mpg. Quote from Ronald Priestly: "No motorist can even begin to think himself a good driver until he has driven at least 100,000 miles."

July 17 Mon John Creasey 920) THE DROUGHT. This is a Dr Palfrey story and also (I think) Creasey's first attempt at SF. The world's water begins to dry up, but although rivers, lakes and oceans get lower we are not told where the water has gone. "Vapourization," he says! And the sun beaming down from a cloudless sky! The plot has been done before and will be again, but nobody has, or ever will, given any explanation.

Aug 16 Wed Cecil Jenkins MESSAGE FROM SIRIUS. Not, repeat not, SF. Unusual murder story, a bit on the wordy side. Here is an Irishman called Ireland. And within half an hour of the first murder by Sirius three people remark that things are serious. Like me, Jenkins is scraping the bottom of the barrel!

Aug 25 Fri Went to Tudor Cinema for first time. (Have not been to movies [SF or otherwise] for a long time.) Saw "Day of the Outlaw," based roughly on story by Lee Wells. Second feature was "The Invisible Invaders." They took over the bodies of the dead and gave the world 24 hours to surrender. But the brave U S scientisk & his beautiful dotter & her boy-friend are agin them. They find that certain sounds not only make the raiders visible but also turns each one into a small rock. (A sound idea!) As the invaders were establishing their reign of terror there was a heavy shower of rain on the roof of the cinema and some of the drops fell on me. The roof should be repaired but naturally I wouldn't expect them to go out in the rain to fix it, and in good weather it doesn't need fixing. (This joke appeared in the first issue of Punch.)

Sep 8 Fri John Creasey THE FLOOD. Complete with mad scientisk, his beautiful dotter and her boy-friend. (Hasn't this cast been used before?) Scientist grows octi which store huge quantities of hydrogen, and when the octi are broken this hydrogen combines with Oxygen in the air to make water. And when millions and skillions of octi make water at the same time.... This plot has been done before and will be done again and explanation always just as good!

Sep 24 Sun Andrew North or Andre Norton (or even Alice Mary Norton) PLAGUE SHIP and VODOO PLANET. Liked this Ace Double. Funny thing, though: she makes the same spelling mistakes over and over. E.g., "its claws scrapped the floor," and "they poured over the plans." [Walter called this "watering the plant."]

Oct 21 Sat Car in Toronto for Arctic exploration: speed 35mph; wheels 50 feet dia.; weight of machine 540 tons; payload 300 tons; length 120 feet; width 75 feet; 12,000 HP [4 engines]. Wonder how it would do on Mars!

Oct 28 Sat John Lynington NIGHT OF THE BIG HEAT. ROTM. Theme: invasion of Earth. What will these fellas think of next?

Oct 30 Mon Russia has exploded a 57 megaton bomb [equal to 57,000,000 tons of T.N.T. Now the US "must" (as Kennedy said) reply with a bigger one. The guy who coined the phrase "homo SAPIENS" had a wicked sense of humour.

Nov 12 Sun Verse attributed to McGonigal [in the "Daily Express"]:- The hen is a noble animal, / But the cow is much forlornier / Standing out in the rain / With a leg at each corner. I don't believe it; not his type of absurdity.

Nov 14 Tue Konstantin Tsiolkovsky (30) BEYOND THE PLANET EARTH. Most interesting part of this book is the foreword (written by Vorobyev; who he?) which, inter alia, tells us how Mikulin built an aeroplane in Moscow in 1876. This shows how inventive the Russians are. The story itself is set in 2017 and tells about the building of the first rocketship, 300 feet long, by Ivanov, Newton, Helmholtz, Laplace, Galileo and Franklin. The rocket carries 20 men, each having his own cabin, with violins, trumpets, &c., and material to build a conservatory outside the ship when in orbit. Then they send telegrams inviting the Earth's population to come out and live with them, and when the Earth began building thousands of ships I returned the book to the library.

DAFFYNITIONS:-	Sadist	Man who is kind to a masochist
	Cottago	Infancy
	Wardrobe	Hospital dressing-gown
	Synthesis	Essay on vice
	Eve	Lady who comes the day before Christmas
	Cascade	A drop of water