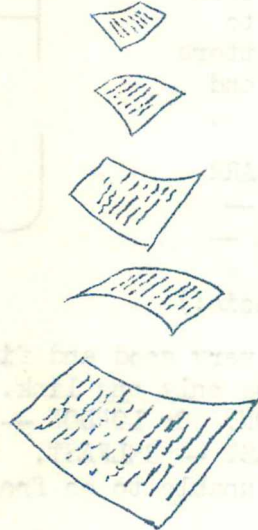


THE SCARR



Editorial



THE SCARR

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All Artwork by Arthur
Thomson.

LIKE MANY ANOTHER I hate writing Editorials but I have to.

In the last issue I tried to make it at least unusual. As Terry Jeeves wrote: "About your Editorial, I'd give it an 'e' for effort, but that would spoil it as in its whole length it doesn't have a single 'e.'" Similarly the nursery rhyme doesn't have an 'i'. Do I win the gold-plated foodley donk?"

Torry, I'm having it engraved.

And yes, the last issue was a long time ago. The reasons are many and varied. During most of the cold spells I was hibernating and during the warm periods mostly estivating.

In between times I was sleeping and resting, with occasional time off for reading. (Which reminds me: Mills & Boon, publishers, say their Westerns are authentic. I meant to send them a postcard about it but didn't have the energy.)

More time was spent on book-binding. At the rate I'm going I will have all my magazines bound by 2075, and, after that THE SCARR will appear much more frequently.

The next issue will be delayed too, I'm afraid, because I will be visiting the USA again. If I put it off too long I might never be able to go as our present government (if it can be called such) is trying to make the £ equal to ten cents.

Thank heaven, I'm near the bottom of the page.

Slainte,

Geo.

IN A BOOKSHOP not long ago I saw a book containing quite a lot of the writings of Lewis Carroll — NOT including his work on mathematics! I had only time to read a part of a piece about what he called syzygies. (Called back the next day but the book had been sold.) A syzygy, he says, is linking two words according to certain rules. For example, WALRUS and CARPENTER: take away some letters from WALRUS, leaving, say, RUS. Add some letters to this and get, say, PERUSE. Take away some letters to leave PER. Add to get HARPER. Take away and leave ARP. Add to get CARPENTER.

The
CHO-
PHO-
USE

This is easy, I thought. To change THE SCARR into YANDRO all you have to do is: THE SCARR — ESC — ESCHSCHOLTZIA — HOL — HOLLAND — AND — YANDRO. (And thus, incidentally, I fulfilled a lifelong ambition to use that word eschscholtzia!)

But having several links like this is all very good and fine for leisurely Victorians — to be up-to-date there should be only one link. For instance: CHARTERS — ERS — SHOULDERS — OUL — COULSON. Or LONDON — OND — CONDOLING — DUBLIN. Or DUBLIN — LIN — CASTLING — AST — BELFAST. Or BELFAST to BANGOR. Or BANGOR to DONAGHADEE. But I was unable to go from DONAGHADEE to PORTAFERRY, although I know the road well.

Pokeness: Are you going to make a pun about a redent?

Me (virtuously): No, I've run out of conflu.

His mother goes around dressed up as a woman.

Ireland has many old romantic names (I nearly wrote romantique) like Killarney and Glendalough and Connemara but there are lots of our names that are not remotely romantic. Like Magheradroll, Tattykeeran, Ballymuckleheaney, Manordougherty, Hamiltonsbawn, Ballykeelednagannel, Magherasharkin, Drummatticonnor, Magheraliskmick.

I once knew a girl called Charlotte Alloly. Friends shortened her Christian name to Shally, and, believe it or not, she lived in Ballyalloly!

And who could feel romantic about Loughmuck or Portmuck? But perhaps the people who coined the names had a sense of humour!

"I would just love a fur coat," she said presently.

A policeman in Rio de Janeiro was annoyed because the increasing number of beggars was making the streets look very untidy. He made up his mind to do something about it. He had drowned thirteen before he was caught.

Maybe he had a sense of humour.

Recently there has been a report that the Republic of Ireland (to which I am privileged not to belong) intended to introduce legislation about divorce. (At present there is no divorce there.) Immediately Cardinal Conway said that

had been started without consulting him. He added that it would be a break with ancient traditions dating back to 1922. And Roman Catholics, he said firmly, don't want it, so why should anyone have it?

Maybe he has a sense of humour?

The trouble with this island is that politics and religion are almost one and the same thing. Down South they are plagued by narrow-minded, bigoted Roman Catholics and up here in the North we are plagued by narrow-minded, bigoted Protestants. For example, here is an extract from "The Protestant Telegraph," written by Pastor Jack Glass (January, 1968):-

Members of the Roman Catholic Church, Church of Scotland and Episcopalians are to unite in worship for the first time in Glasgow, during the month of January. There will be three services convened in the city's three cathedrals. The readings will be taken by the clergy of these denominations. The first act of betrayal will take place in St Andrew's Synagogue of Satan, better known as the Roman Cathedral, on January 18. The readings will be taken by the latest Judas to arrive in Glasgow, namely, Rev Dr William Morris of Glasgow Cathedral, who succeeded Dr Devil Davidson, a former monster or if you like, minister, of the Cathedral, who has now retired (emeritus, but without any merit). Dr Davidson awaits a call from Hell to lower service on account of his apostate ecumenical activities.

On January 21 it will be the opportunity of the clergy of St Mary's Cathedral to play traitor. On this occasion, either Pope's puppet, Roman Catholic Archbishop Scanlon, or a substitute apostate, will say their party piece.....

Maybe he has a sense of humour!

"I'd die before I'd be buried in a Roman Catholic cemetery."

/Pokenose: Enough of this religion lark. How about some of those bits and scraps you found in the attic?

Me: All right, all right!/?

It's queer to look through the junk that accumulates over the years -- and then burn it! Most of it has no name or date. Like this piece:

Jan, as everyone called him, was the first-born of a family of twelve. At one point it looked as if there might be a baker's dozen but the project came to an abortive end. At sixteen, Jan, orphaned, found himself sole breadwinner for the family. So he supplemented his meagre wage by peddling dope until betrayed by his kid sister, May. (She was always trying to queen it over the others.) "January brings the snow," she said to the policeman who called. And that is how January came to have thirty-one days.

"I'm wearing a red shift," she said astronomically.

A note about ZERO POINT by Rand le Page:

It is really a queer production. It has Jovians who can assume any shape at will, by Jove. In their usual shape they breathe methane and ammonia, but when they sprout two tentacles for legs, two for arms, and a human-looking head they breathe oxygen. And even when arrayed in a space-suit the hero can jab his

fingers in its eyes, and the stench of it makes his brain swim madly as he tries to get a hold on the slippery scaly skin. There is a space-ship. And what a space-ship! It starts off with a length of 2640 feet, shortens to 2500 feet and winds up as 5280 feet.

/Pokenose: A sort of Fitzgerald contraption?

Me: Of course, off course.

This space-ship, sometimes referred to as a plane, has airtight doors here and there in its corridors BUT if the airlock is opened in space all the air rushes out. Also, out in empty space, the enemy ship flies over it and DROPS a bomb on it. The crew, incidentally, can stand up to 20 gravities exhilaration — they just laugh at it! Going from Sol to Sirius they run into a storm which brings them back almost the whole distance in two days by means of the hyperadial orbit of Antares. When the hull is heated by friction during the storm metal oozes across the control-room floor.

They run across a derelict battleship; the hero dons his space-suit and goes to investigate; he finds — wait for it — a GIRL; brings her back to the ship. His friend, who had expected a whole bevy of damsels, asks, "Did you find any others?" And without batting an eye the hero says, "NO, SHE WAS THE ONLY ONE."

"I'd never trust a man who had committed suicide."

Here is a newspaper clipping about a man, aged 77, whose wife is in hospital 10 miles from their home. Every day he travels to see her as he has done for seven years. He goes by pedal-cycle. Why doesn't he go by bus? He can't — the fares are too high.

A hospital spokesman said: "It is a wonderful record of devotion. We had no idea he came by bicycle. If he ever has difficulty leaving the cycle outside we will issue him with a special pass for the car-park."

How's that for warm-hearted generosity?

CAFIA is a bye-bye product of fandom.

Another extract, this time from a Church Magazine:

It was alarming to hear that Mr and Mrs Ashton had been injured in a serious motor accident in which, unfortunately, another person was killed. Mrs Ashton's injuries were not severe and by the time these words are read she should be home again. Mr Ashton suffered a broken leg and will have to remain in hospital for the next week or two. We wish them both a complete recovery after what must have been a most harrowing experience.

That paragraph set my teeth on edge!

-Cornered: Rounded up but not rounded off.

A gardener planted some young lettuce plants in (of all places) his garden, expecting the usual good results. But, unknown to him, two rabbits had taken up their abode (it was a light abode and they could lift it easily) in the bottom of the garden. So next morning, when the gardener came out he found all but the roots of the lettuce gone. Thinking the plants might have been of mighty poor quality he went to another dealer and bought some more and planted them. But

the rabbits ate them up and next morning the gardener saw nowt but stumps.

Perhaps, he thought, the neighbourhood children were annoying him in this way, so to see if they were responsible he repaired his fences and wired the gate. Then he planted more lettuce, only to get a similar result.

Then he tried using DDT and various poisons, but the rabbits considered that this improved the lettuce immensely.

He did not lose heart. He tried other things and is still doing so — but without success, for he still doesn't know what is wrong.

But you and I know!

UMBRELLA: the only thing you can put by nowadays for a rainy day.

Nowadays we have a rough — a very rough — idea idea of what taxation is. But fifty years ago they naively thought they were heavily taxed. This is how a 1918 jingler put it:

Tax the honest working man,
Tax him, tax him all they can.
Tax his house and tax his bed,
Tax the bald spot on his head;
Tax his bread and tax his meat,
Tax the shoes upon his feet,
Tax his pipe and tax his smoke,
Tax his smile and tax his joke;

Tax his rooster, tax his fowl,
Tax his dog and tax its howl,
Tax his plough and tax his clothes,
Tax the rag that wipes his nose;
Tax his pig and tax its squeal,
Tax his boots run down at heel;
Tax his cow and tax his calf,
Tax his cough and tax his laugh;

Tax his barns and tax his lands,
Tax the blisters on his hands,
Tax the water, tax the air,
Tax his eyebrows, tax his hair;
Tax the living, tax the dead,
Tax th' unborn before they're fed;
Tax the riveter, tax his gun,
Tax his daughter, tax his son;

Tax his horses, carts and ploughs,
Tax his billy-goats, pigs and cows;
Tax his beef and tax his mutton,
Tax the thread and tax the button;
Tax the crutches, wooden legs,
Ham, bread, butter, cheese and eggs;
Tax the stockings, veils and hats,
Tax the mice and tax the cats;

Tax the pots and tax the pans,
Tax the cups and tax the cans;
Tax the weasel, tax the fox,
Tax the mule and tax the ox;
Tax the rabbits, tax the hares,
Tax the stools and tax the chairs;
Tax the wasps and tax the bees,
And tax the very bugs and fleas!

Nowadays he'd have to add electric razors, transistor radios, Gostetnors, tape recorders, washing-machines, TV sets, Jaguars, Cadillacs, radar installations, 200,000-ton oil tankers and moonprobes.

A B C D E F G H J K L M N O P Q R S T V W X Y Z U I

/Pokerose: Why are U and I standing aloof like that?

Me: Not exactly aloof.

Pokenose: All right — half aloof.

Mo: That's better! Because half loaf is better than no bread!

Fokonose: Crumbs! What an ill-bred joke!

Mc: No need to get crusty over it. Shut yer bake and go to sleep./

8 8 8 5 8 3 8 8 8 3 3 8 8 3 3 8 3 3 8 8 3 3 8 3 5 3 8 8 3 3 8 8 8 3 8 8 8

"You remarked in your letter that the "8" on your machine had a funny little tail on it. Strange how different people view things differently. I had been thinking that that little tail had a strange looking "8" attached to it. Just the point of view, I guess."

Hush! Hush! Whisper who dares! Christopher Robin is Ruby M Ayres.

More bits and pieces of poetry lying around, but no idea who wrote them:

He's gone to school, wee Hughie, an' him not four:
Sure I saw the fright was in him when he left the door.
But he took a hand o' Dinny an' a hand o' Dan,
Wi' Joo's cowl coat upon him — och, the poor wee man!

He cut the queerest figure, more stout nor thin,
But trottin' right an' steady wi' his toes turned in.
I watched him to the corner o' the big turf stack,
An' the more his feet went forrit sure his head turned back.

He was lookin' would I call him! Och, me heart was woo.
Sure it's lost I am without him, but he be to go.
I followed to the turnin' -- when they passed it by,
God help him, he was cryin', an' maybe so was I.

Which of the rich Irish witches wishes to switch stitches?

The night is shovelled
Slowly on the world,
And patted down
Very carefully into all
The little crevices.

And the workmen stand back
To light cigarettes
And chew the fat;
While the Foreman
Looks on and puffs
On a big cigar.

No idea who wrote it — nor do I know who wrote a totally different type of
verso that used to appear in every issue of F & SF:

Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine
Mercury Mystery Book-Magazine
Bestseller Mystery Books
Jonathan Press Mystery Books

The rhyme is poor, the metro is lousy and it ain't got no punctuation, but
even so, it's better than a lot of poetry published nowadays!

You're getting old when you begin to notice how young all the police are.

Vin Clarke used to have unusual introductions to his 'zines. Like the
June, 1952, issue of SCIENCE FANTASY NEWS:

"You could call it APFOGGIATURA, the fanzine that's a note before the rest."

"Or SIGNAL, the 'zine that stops you in your tracks."

"Or GECKO."

"GECKO?"

"A lizard with adhesive feet. GECKO, the 'zine that sticks up for itself
....GECKO, by hecko. Published in cold blood....gunshoe....a long tale....
nothing newt under the sun....iguana tell you something, so lizard to me...."

"Oh shut up. Uh...ATTIC, what the fan is missing....LINKED, slightly over-
inked, all of a difference....off the cuff....between ourselves...chain gang..

"I kept one GECKO, but I had to salamander rest...."

"Shut up. MILKY WAY....un....UDDER WORLDS....cream of s-f pasture you....
one good churn deserves an udder....GALACTARY....the nobull 'zine..."

"Other fanzines have comedians, but GECKO will have chameleons....haw-haws
of a different colour....why are you looking at me thataway?"

"I've just decided....we're just going to have plain old SCIENCE FANTASY
NEWS."

Every mink coat is second-hand — the mink wore it first.

IN CASE I forget to mention it elsewhere this is THE SCARR, available for
trades, letters, postcards, contributions, old copies of PAGEANT or COROMET
or what-have-you. It is published monthly (except when it isn't) by

Geo. L. Charters,
3, Lancaster Ave,
B A N G O R,
Northern Ireland.

Proud - - and Kinda Hungry

James
White

FOR THE FIRST TIME since the Worldcon I was to have fannish company on the way to a convention. Bob Shaw, gourmet, bonvivant, originator of the slow glass bushel, flogger of three s-f novels inside one year and Ireland's answer to prolific John Brunner, was flying with me to the Thirdmancon. We were using an aeroplane, of course, to avoid being mistaken for Walt Willis, and were travelling light. I had a small handgrip of delicately-tooled, Hong Kong imported plastic, while Bob had his pyjamas and toothbrush folded foolscap-size in a document case.

The journey was without incident until we landed at Ringway — we both have a superstitious fear of making bad puns on an aircraft in flight — and were confronted by three large notices in the arrivals' lounge reading "Welcome to Manchester. Please walk carefully." We began to feel bad because our shoe soles and heels were worn down below the two millimeters of tread required by law and were generally not in a pavement-worthy condition. But a few minutes later we felt even worse on finding that the airport coach and rail connection to Buxton would not get us to the con earlier than four-thirty and it was then only ten-fifteen a.m. Buxton was just twenty miles away and the con was going on without us. We decided to take a taxi.

Bob and I were strangely silent during that trip. The thought of the awful inroads the taxi fare would make into our beer and tomato juice money was a somewhat depressing one, but eventually we cheered ourselves up with the thought that Ted Tubb was reputed to be bringing along forty gallons of his famous home brew, a foully corrosive liquid with properties in common with paint stripper, aviation spirit and even fermented fruit juice. But our troubles were not over even yet.

St Anne's Hotel had a semi-circular, inward-looking format like a Roman amphitheatre cut in half. A fountain played very carelessly outside, throwing up a thick jet of spa water which blew about the forecourt and eroded the paint and chromework of the visitors' cars drawn up around it. The fountain made it sound as if it was raining all the time and was probably there to make the Manchester visitors feel at home. There was a stone veranda arrangement to protect pedestrians from the health-giving waters and we used this to get to

the overflow hotel next door.

I had booked a room several weeks earlier but Bob was going on spec. Due to some mischance they did not have a room for either of us, they thought. It appeared that both con hotels had been bought over by new owners earlier that week, the staff and management were brand new to their jobs, they had never been exposed to science fiction people before and they were terribly sorry but their bookings were all mixed up. Eventually Bob was able to share a room with Brian Hill and I got a single. There was some difficulty getting to my room because the manageress, a nice, elderly lady very anxious to please, could not find it. She grew very embarrassed about this but suggested that it might not be ready for me anyway and would I mind awfully leaving my luggage with a friend, and she would probably have found it by teatime if I'd care to call back then.

We went into the con hotel to find Ella Parker ordering tea in the lounge. Ella Parker orders teas in convention lounges practically twenty-four hours a day. She graciously allowed us — well, she allowed us — to leave our stuff in her and Ethel Lindsay's room and we moved to the con hall to find the Guest of Honour, Ken Bulmer, auctioning a bundle of New Worlds containing James White stories. I thought it was very nice timing on Ken's part, and when the auction was over I asked him what he would have done if our taxi had had a blowout. But apparently there would have been no problem because he had been holding that bundle behind his back until I arrived, and did I know how to waken an arm that had gone to sleep?

Following the auction there was a two-hour break for lunch. After permeating for an hour or so Don Wollheim, Bill Pettit, a fan whose badge was pinned on at an unreadable angle, Bob and I found a restaurant downtown Buxton and were directed to three different tables for four before they found us one that would seat five and upon closer examination turned out to be a table for eight. Bob and I had had a very early start, we were gripped by a strange and terrible lust for food and we had not yet completed our withdrawal from the real world, so we graciously allowed the others present to scintillate.

On the way back to the street I noticed a large mirror at a bend in the stairs which had a plate screwed to it at chest level reading "DANGER — HIGH VOLTAGE." It reminded me of the time Chuch Harris had stuck a plaque on Walt's shaving mirror reading "Fan Face Number One."

We arrived in the con hall for the start of Alan Whittaker FRAS's illustrated lecture on "Life in the Solar System." The Fellow's style was rather pedantic for a fan gathering and most of us had learned all that stuff when we started reading ASF. The fact that his screen was positioned under a large skylight which could not be blacked out made it even more difficult for the spectators to feel agog, even though we could not help but admire the lecturer's persistence. He kept saying things like, "You will notice slight colour variations in — but then you can't see it, can you?" and "In this area the majority of stars fall into the main sequence as you can, er, cannot see...." while Bob Phil Rogers and myself kept saying things like, "Is he talking about stars or sequins?", "This is terrible", "Let's leave inconspicuously in small groups", and "Yes, fifty at a time."

It was much better fun in the bar helping the Guest of Honour, who was on next, worry about his speech.

Ken made a very good Guest of Honour, and his speech compared very

favourably with his GOH predecessors of the last five or six conventions — a nice blend of humour, serious comment and fannish reminiscence, delivered at breakneck speed. He opened by announcing, "Ladies and Gentlemen, according to the Programme I finished this speech an hour ago," and tearing up the first half-dozen sheets of his typescript. One had to listen carefully so as not to miss a word, and concentrate hard to catch the subtle nuances and atrocious puns. The people who tell you that a speaker must talk slowly and appeal to the lowest mental common denominator in the audience do not know what they are talking about. There was absolute silence in the hall while Ken spoke — except when he made puns — and anyone in the outer lounge who raised a voice was promptly shushed, even though one felt that he had recorded his speech at 7½ and was miming to the playback at 15. He ended by tearing off a series of capsule con-reports of every con held since 1951, with particular emphasis on the Supermancon, Operation Armageddon and the parcel of animal entrails Brian Burgess hid in a s-f editor's bedroom until it was time for the sacrifice. The editor, Peter Hamilton of Nebula, found them and threw them out, apparently, and they would have sacrificed Brian only they did not have the guts.



The next item on the programme I really enjoyed: a professional panel discussion entitled, "What's Happening in S-F." This was cancelled!

In the lounge we were able to stop Ella and Ethel from ordering more tea, and talked them into eating something instead. They were booked for full board at the Con hotel, and so were Don Wollheim, Bill Pettit and the fan with the twisted badge, so we decided not to go out to eat. Besides, Bob had been talking about feeling the cold and damp, meaningfully. It was a chilly April, he said, and every time the doors opened the damp spa air came in. We nodded sympathetically without speaking to him. Finally he said, "The cold that came in from the spa, ha - ha - ha." We continued not speaking to him for a while.

Perhaps we were unkind to him, but at that time we did not realise that the dread, skeletal figure of Starvation was hovering over all of us and that it would lay its bony finger particularly upon Bob Shaw.

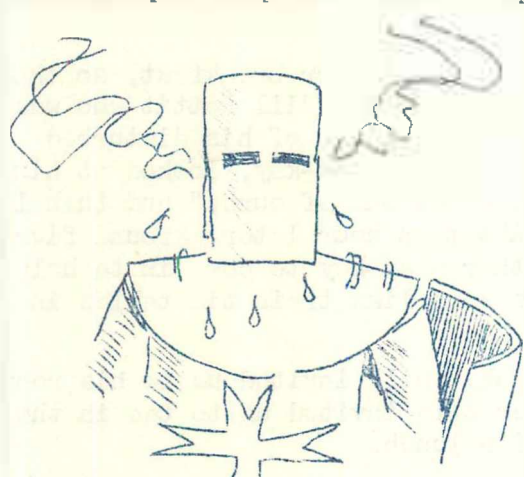
That was the first of the two meals at that convention which will remain etched in our memories. Our head-waiter dashed about the dining-room, listening to complaints and making sudden turns and stops so that the tails of his coat swirled dramatically around his knees. He was not able, however, to speed up the arrival of the food, or raise its temperature much above freezing-point or control the quantities, which were microscopic. At one stage we sat looking at our plates while the cold food got colder waiting for something bulky to arrive like mashed potatoes or chips, only to have the grim realisation dawn that the two tiny, brown, wrinkled potato croquettes were all the spuds we were to receive. Bob did not even get a croquette — the waitress forgot to come back! When another one asked him what he would like for dessert he asked hopefully for a plate of mashed potatoes with custard. He got a marble-sized portion of ice-cream with nuts in it. He sat there looking brave and forlorn, his slacks growing visible baggy at the waist and his cheeks beginning to curve inwards instead of out until I reminded him that I had sandwiches in my bag and that usually Brian Burgess brought a supply of meat pies to every convention and would no doubt sell him a couple, although he should try, if possible, to

buy two of the current crop. I seem to remember that the Yarmouth meat pies were not a particularly good year.

After that frugal meal Bob went looking for Brian Burgess and I returned to my hotel to see if the manageress had found room 22 for me yet. She had. What's more, she was eager to pass on this knowledge in case she should forget it again, and she apologised again for the fact that she had taken up this job just three days ago and was still finding difficulty in fixing the geography of the hotel in her mind. One could have said some very sarcastic things at that point, and one was tempted, but at the same time one could not help noticing the eagerness to please in this hotel compared to the couldn't-care-less attitude in the one next door. Neither could one forget the plentiful, hot food that they served so promptly and cheerfully or the hot-water bottles they put in the beds.

At three or four in the morning they were lukewarm bottles, but it was the thought that counted.

Back in the Con hall the Fancy Dress Party was getting under way, with an average of three photographers for every competitor. Brian Burgess should have won the special prize for his impressive suit of armour — which made him look



about twelve feet tall — instead of the imaginative but simple plastic Black Cloud worn by Tony Walsh. Later Brian's armour proved itself in battle when he and Ted Tubb featured — actually their features were steaming gently inside their helmets — in the Grand Jousting Tournay, during which they broke two shields and three swords trying to prove that the other one's armour could not take it. The welkin rang with the clatter of sword against hardboard and blood ran freely from skinned knuckles, but there was no clear decision, so they raised their visors and called it a knight.

While the dust was still settling we went up to Ella and Ethel's room for a quiet chat. It is possible to have a quiet chat with Ella when her resistance is low between cups of tea, and the service was very slow in that hotel. Don Wollheim, Bill Pettit and Ken Cheslin wandered in, and a little later Bill invited us over to his room. This turned out to be an oasis — well, four crates of beer and assorted hard stuff — of peace and quiet cultured conversation. Bill forced beer on us and between gulps we talked about his s-f and fanzine collection; while in the corner Ella and Ethel explained American politics to Don. Don is a sort of linguistic chameleon who adopts the accent of the person he is talking to within a few seconds. He says it comes easy when talking to Bob or me because he was born in an Irish colony in Harlem or some place like that, but when Tom Schluck joined us and he started talking to Ella, Tom and Bob at the same time the effect was startling.

Meanwhile, in the corridor Ted Tubb was worrying loudly about all the free booze lying undrunk in the boot of his car that he would have to take home again. Bob began telling me that he felt like a breath of air and I told him that normally breaths of air did not weigh fourteen stones and come wrapped in Harris tweed sports-coats, but his bottle was making gurgling noises just then so he probably did not hear me.

At the hotel entrance we were met by Duncan Lunan who insisted that somebody

was firing a machine-gun outside. We scoffed politely — a very hard thing to do when guzzling beer out of a bottle — and went outside to investigate. (We must have been drunk.) But it turned out to be only a fireworks display.

On our return to the Con hall we found Ted Tubb, once again his old unworried self, dishing out his home-brew. This was a full-bodied, tightly-corsetted, impertinent wine which had been matured in plastic for all of three days. It came in two colours, murky and bright red, had a bouquet that was a mixture of pineapple, turnip and Delrosa, and attacked the palate like cleaning-fluid. Ted, a persuasive fellow, assured me that after all it was only fruit juice.

Sometime later I joined Ethel and Ella in the lounge for a chat and a cup of tea. They had just finished their pot and I could not talk very well because my teeth seemed to have gone all soft, and articulation was hampered by the long green fur growing on my tongue. Ella said that even my glasses were bloodshot and I should go to bed before I went to sleep.

The semi-circular plan of the hotel made the corridors curve away in both directions as if the place was the interior of a giant starship, complete with muties, armoured knights, wild-eyed crew members and one drunken Black Cloud. It made things very difficult for someone who was trying to prove something by walking a straight line.

Next morning I could not find Bob's room to wake him for breakfast, so that when he surfaced around ten-thirty he was hungry. We met Bill Pettit who was also hungry. Over scrambled eggs and Coca Cola he told us of his disturbed night when a girl fan had opened his room door with a pass-key, looked at him and yelled to someone out in the corridor, "He's not one of ours," and then left again, forgetting to switch off the lights. About an hour later, around five-thirty, a bunch of about twenty fans used another pass-key to come in to help him round off his party. Apparently pass-keys were like train timetables in that hotel, available on request.

The BSFA AGM was in progress when we got back. Bill invited us to his room again to help dry up the oasis. A little later Ella invited us to tea in the lounge again, and then it was time to go out for lunch.

The first item of the afternoon was a speech by TAFT delegate Steve Stiles. Steve made a very good if rather short speech, having first arranged with Ella Parker to stop him no matter what in exactly fifteen minutes — he was the nervous type, Steve explained, and he desperately wanted someone to put him out of his agony. Ella handled it very well, we thought, when after the stipulated time she bellowed, "Sit down, Stiles, or go home....!" It was the only item in the programme which did not run late or get cancelled.

The Quizmaster Final which followed, with Phil Rogers asking difficult questions about early s-f stories, was won tentacles down by Ken Bulmer because, he said later, "of knowledge gained during a misspent youth."

Dave Kyle spoke enthusiastically on the subject of the film, "Year 2001, A Space Odyssey," to which someone must have given him a free pass. I remarked to Bob that he was making me feel all twisted up inside with envy because we in Belfast would not get a chance to see it for years. Bob said yes, the year 2001.

During the series of auctions which followed we went in and out of the bar and lounge for tomato juice and tea respectively with Tom Schluck and Ella Parker — Tom was plying me with so much juice that his friends had begun to call him Tomato Schluck. When the auctions ended everyone disappeared into

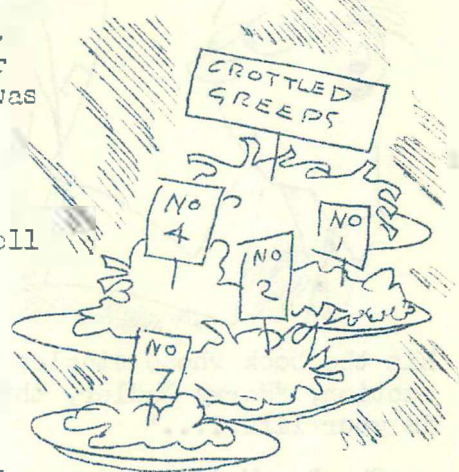
How do you get such wonderful material to write for you?

the TV lounge to watch Dr Who, and the next item, the second pro-authors' panel was cancelled. It was to have been a discussion on "The Relation Between Real Life and Fictional Speculation," and I was glad, glad.

People, mostly Bob Shaw, began to feel hungry. The same people expressed a strong preference for Chinese food in a ringing brogue — or maybe it was for Indian food in a wet moccasin.

It had seemed to be a fairly ordinary, three-storey Chinese restaurant called the King Fong. There were a lot of other fans eating in it as well as normal people, and the food looked very good. Ordering the food, however, was a complicated business.

Possibly the trouble began because we ordered everything by numbers — a Number 2 soup and a Number 5 Omelette to follow, then a 57 ice cream and an unnumbered tea. The fact that Ella wanted to order five or six different dishes and share them with Ethel may also have confused the waiter, especially as Ethel was unaware of Ella's intentions until after she had ordered for herself. Bill Pettit's mixed grill and coke was unusual, but not really complicated, while the dishes ordered by Steve Stiles, Bob and me were almost conservative. The result however was that the waiter became so confused that he multiplied the numbers instead of adding them, and started bringing us five Number 2 soups and so on. Bob got really worried over what would happen when he brought twenty-nine Number 65 Sweet and Sour Porks. He was especially worried about his bill.



Eventually we made the waiter understand what we did not want, like 56 surplus ice creams, and it began to look as if we might settle down to enjoy the food, which was very good. But we reckoned without Ella Parker, who had a simple and on the whole, I thought, reasonable request to make. She had ordered a variety of dishes, far too much for her to eat alone, and she needed an empty plate on which to assemble a manageable quantity.

The first time the waiter brought her a large plate of rice. Next he brought two plates of rice, and when she waved that away and asked again for an empty plate please he brought a large plate of peas. By this time the people at adjoining tables were shouting and pantomiming at the waiter in the efforts to help him, and Ella was beginning to look slightly embarrassed. When he brought a small empty plate we cheered in spite of ourselves: he was getting warm. And when he did bring the large empty plate, looking so pleased with himself, we felt all choked up. Very solemnly Bob made a pencilled addition to the menu and passed it around. It read, "Number 103 — Empty Plate."

Just before we left, as we were working out the tip, Don Wollheim said, "I don't understand this crazy money. What is ten per cent of a pound sterling?" Bob said, "A florin," and Don said, "I don't understand about florins," and Bob said, "Then you shouldn't travel so much in florin countries."

We returned to the hotel in two groups, one comprising Bob Shaw and the other running a fair distance ahead. The next scheduled item was, "This is Your Fan Life," emceed by Eric Denteliffe — an ambitious production using tape, film and more or less live performers, and, I think, the best single



item in the convention programme. The subject was Harried, as he came to be called during the con, and Nadler and Bontcliffe did the subject full justice (nobody, including Harry, expected mercy). During the item the people stationed behind the screen responsible for showing the filmed sequences started a party and missed their cues a couple of times, but nobody minded because the top of Eric's head was just built for talking off. But the only bits of script I can remember are "...But, Harry, when your mother discovered an embryo pterodactyl nesting in her best hat and the refrigerator upped and walked out on her she began to realise....."

And then there was the climax, when Eric reached him the book whose staples had come out, and said, in a voice throbbing with emotion, "Harry Nadler, this — when I put the damned thing together again — is your life....."

The Doc Weir Award presentation followed, which this year went to Mary Reid, and then came the Trieste S-F Film Festival Award Winner, "Voyage to the End of the Universe." The photography was very good but every corny situation that had ever appeared in an s-f film turned up in this one: everything from spaceships which made loud, zipping noises to dread diseases and a baby born while a brooding menace of some description (it was never fully explained) tried to put everyone on the ship to sleep. It was much more successful with the audience! Then there was the stupid old robot who sacrificed itself, and the way words like Universe, Galaxy and Solar System were used interchangeably — a piece of careless translation which was particularly annoying to lapsed members of the British Interplanetary Society like myself. In fairness I should say that there were no Indian attacks or charges by the United States Cavalry, but I may have dozed during those bits.

As several people around us said when it finished, "If that won first place I'd hate to see the fil that came last....."

Officially the programme ended with the St Fantasy Ceremony so that Harried Nadler and the rest of the hard-working con committee could relax and begin enjoying the convention with everyone else. Everyone was invited to the St Fantasy party, but we divided the con attendance (close on two hundred) into the volume of the Shorrocks' room and decided to call in on 201 a little later. We started instead with Bill Pettit's room, but this began to break up around one o'clock when Ella started eating aspirin instead of potato crisps for her head and decided to go to bed. Don Wollheim wanted to go to bed, too, but was delayed by wall-to-wall fans apparently practicing group marriage outside his door. Bill Pettit was growing worried by the possibility of being invaded again by fans with pass-keys looking for his party and had the brilliant idea of putting his party on the road. This involved distributing his two remaining cases of beer between Bob, himself and me and moving from room to room to confuse people (mostly, as it turned out, us). My sports coat has a special inside pocket designed to carry fanzines, rabbits and things, and I am able to store quite a lot of beer in it, especially when it is in bottles.



Very soon it became impossible to read door numbers and we were forced to use our acoustic sensors, or even our ears, to find the various parties. The German fans' party in particular was a roaring success. I can remember at one stage standing with Bill Pettit, each of us holding two unopened (?) bottles of beer and listening to John Brunner telling us what he considered to be the worst Ferdinand Feghoot story he had done. It was ghastly, but our groans were lost in the high (noise) level of the surrounding conversations and the room was jammed too full for us to retreat. I replied with my story about the man on the spaceship full of frozen-sleeping fellow crew-men, colonists and domestic animals, who "thought he'd thaw a pudgy cat" for company. Visibly shaken, John came back with an even worse Feghoot ultimate deterrent. It took us a while to recover from this one. I found that someone had taken the caps off my beer bottles, and someone else, possibly me, had emptied them. Bill was drinking from two bottles of beer simultaneously and Bob was close by, sniffing cautiously at a glass (his first) of Verguuz. I yelled at John the lousy Charters-type pun about the reservoir of clear mountain water that was suffering the tortures of the damned, and Bill, who had been soaking up the cross-fire, began to twitch and whimper and cringe in a way terrible to see in a grown man. Bob had just finished his first glass of Verguuz and his nostrils were making whistling sounds as he breathed through them. His eyes had retracted about two inches inside his head and his tear ducts were leaking. I tried to explain about the tortures of the damned to the German fan who was refilling Bob's glass, but without much success. Some time later John Brunner came past and yelled, "It doesn't translate, James, it doesn't translate." Somebody else was saying, "This is the sensitive fannish face which was stood on by James White," and Brian Burgess arrived in full armour. The place was so crowded he had more room inside it than we had outside, and I began to edge towards the corridor. As I left Bob was sipping from another glass of Verguuz, engaging in desultory conversation with a fan sleeping under the bed on one side and the couple occupying the wardrobe on the other.

The other parties in the con hall, bar, corridors and other rooms were much the same. Most of them even had Bill Pettit and Bob in them. Somebody started a humming and swaying party, and somebody else, mostly Ted Tubb and Bob Shaw, were struck with a fiendish new idea for wakening fans who had chickened out and gone to bed. In previous conventions Ted had led processions around the corridors clinking beer bottles and chanting, "Go back to your wives!", but this was much less subtle. The idea was that they would launch themselves at the sleeping fan's door, singly and in small groups, and scream and claw at it. Bob gave it up after a short time because of wear and tear on his typing fingers and spent the rest of the night playing cards with Norman Shorrocks.

The last thing I remember clearly about Sunday night as I returned to my hotel was the dawn breaking over Buxton and a high-pitched roaring — like the sound of an aeroplane engine under test — coming from the open window of the German fans' room.

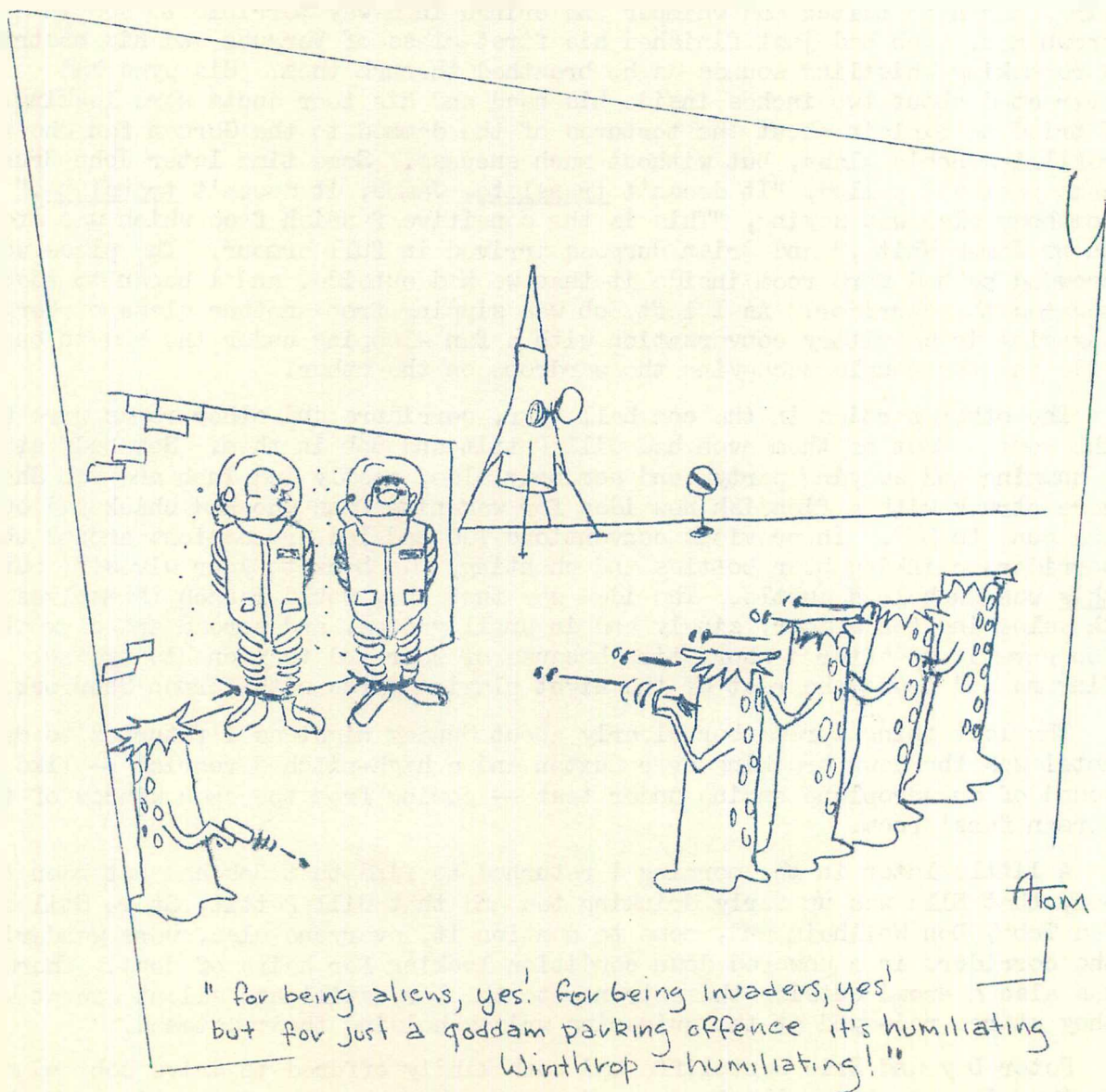
A little later in the morning I returned to find that Bob had not been to bed, that Ella was up early drinking tea and that Bill Pettit, Steve Stiles, Ted Tubb, Don Wollheim and, come to mention it, everyone else, were wandering the corridors in a powered down condition looking for hairs of dogs. There was also a crowd outside the entrance to the bar, still and silent except when they stared red-eyed at the quivering wrists holding their watches.

Peter Day and Eric Benteliff had both kindly offered to drive Bob and me to the airport, thus allowing us a few extra hours at the convention. We had

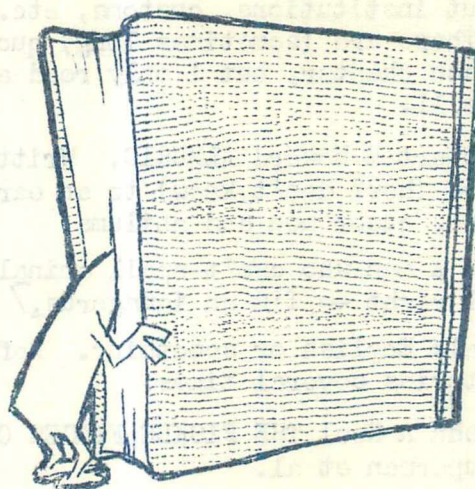
the choice of making Peter's family uncomfortable or squeezing Eric's s-f collection, so we decided to go with Eric, figuring that his magazines were not likely to squeeze back.

It was a very pleasant run to the airport with the sun shining brightly and the Peak district looking beautiful despite the bare trees. At one stage Eric got very worried because he thought he was running a big end, but it turned out to be Bob snoring in the back seat. At Ringway he could not find a parking spot so we unfortunately had to say good-bye and thank-you to him and check in.

We kept expecting to see fans in the departure lounge or in the coffee bar, and had to keep reminding ourselves that we were back in the real world. As we moved to board our aircraft we looked at the signs welcoming us to Manchester, a city whose pavements our down-at-heel soles had never even touched, and told each other that this had been one of the best cons ever and that it would take several days before our feet really touched the ground.



Peeps into my Diary



1967

July 3 P M Hubbard A HIVE OF GLASS. A glass-collector who kills to get possession of a rare glass. Would I kill for the January 1930 ASTOUNDING? No, a thousand times no -- unless I could get it no other way!

Aug 4 Had an odd experience toady. I was

/Fokenose: You forgot to make your usual joke about a toady bear.

Me: What a grisly idea!/?

I was removing blade from razor after shaving, a thing I have done thousands of times, and managed to cut my finger. Blood spouted in a torrent, covering the basin, floor, hallway and down the avenue in a wave.

/Fokenose: A sort of after-shave ocean, I suppose?

Me: Take your paws off my typer!/?

Sep 19 Got my new car this morning. A blue Morris Minor 1000. Cost: £466, to which must be added seat belts (compulsory) £7-10, carriage from London to Belfast £29, purchase-tax £103-10-3, number-plates £3-10, road tax £17-10, insurance £10, making a grand total of £642 approx. It is in perfect running order except that the wind-shield wipers are not working properly, the steering is too stiff (my arms ached after 40 miles), near-side door needs an almighty bang to close it, no valve-caps on two of the wheels, no bottle fitted to hold water for the wind-shield wipers. A friend tells me the manufacturers don't bother to employ inspectors at their factories: they leave things like these to the wholesaler to fix for them; fired by this example the wholesaler leaves everything to the retailer; not to be out-done the retailer doesn't bother: why should he spend money looking for faults -- the purchaser will do so, or may carry out repairs himself, thus saving trouble and money for everybody. What a lovely racket!

Oct 20 Frank Herbert DUNE. Read a bit of this as a serial in ASF -- or maybe two serials. All about the planet Arrakis (or Dune) held in bondage -- the feud between the Harkonnen and Atriedes -- the age-long work of the Bene Gesserit --

and lots of additional curiosities, like mentats, drugs, ESP, 200-foot worms, gladiatorial combats, etc, all meshed together to make a good story. There are 36 pages of appendices, which could be useful for those who want to know everything about institutions, customs, etc. Maybe I should have read those, but I didn't. There are (sometimes long) quotations from an imaginary history at the head of each chapter, but I only read a few -- they might have been written by John Campbell.

Nov 23 Robert E Howard ALMURIC. Written in 1930 and shows it. Esau Cairn is transported (how? don't know) to an earthlike planet called Almuric. Finds lots of fighting, queer men and anilums.

/Pokenose: A man who can't spell animals shouldn't parade his ignorance.

Me: So all right -- I'm an igmagorus./

The men talk English or something. Before writing this Howard read all the Barsoom stories several times.

Nov 30 John A Keel THE FICKLE FINGER OF FATE. Take-off on sex mags, comics, Batman, Superman et al.

Dec 10 Piers Anthony CHTHON. Told in flashbacks and flashforwards, the reason for which, says Anthony, is that every episode in Aton's life in prison is mirrored in his life outside. So we have section one and section 1, section two and section 2, and so on up to section 18. The ardent reader will chart the entire system and its parallels. I didn't. (Told straightforwardly the chapters would be numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. Anthony puts them 4, 1, 5, 2, 6, 3, 10, 7, 11, 8, &c.) But I liked it.

Dec 16 Have been collecting phrases heard recently, such as not much cop (meaning almost useless), argue the toss (harp on one point), lose the bap (become angry), be great with (be friends with), I can fairly have it (I am good at it), away and put on ye (go and get dressed), a brave day (a good day as regards weather). Wonder are they used all over.

Dec 21 Arthur Sellings THE GUY EFFECT. Adolphe Guy discovers anti-gravity (no, not Cavorite!) and eventually manages to sell it to Israel since the British Government are naturally not interested in any new invention until it has become expensive.

Dec 31 John Colman Burroughs TREASURE OF THE BLACK FALCON. Party goes down in a special sub to a depth of 5 miles or so and find a bubble of air with "people" living there. (Not really people, just their bodies taken over by a microscopic organism.) That the bubble doesn't whoosh to the surface and that the water pressure is the same as that at 200' is explained by some alien machinery still functioning after 2,000+ years. I read the first 50 pages and skinned the rest. Not worth the time or the money.

1968

Jan 2 So far it's been an unexciting year. 'Course, it's young yet....

Jan 14 Tod White THE JEWELS OF ELSEWHEN. Policeman Arthur Ficarra meets Kimberley Nonzek who, unknown to herself, is wearing one of the jewels which can bring one through time or into other continua. So, willy-nilly, they visit a couple of other elsewherewhens, going back to 1512 and meeting Leonardo da Vinci who started the whole thing, and who returns them to 1967. But somehow in between they managed a time-trip or two without using the jewel. And why must Tod keep on using the word "independant"?

Feb 1 Quote from NO-EYED MONSTER: "Not so here -- maybe because I had just finished reading A ROSE FOR ECCLIASTES shortly before the talk and its spell enwrapped me."

Feb 12 William S Burroughs NOVA EXPRESS. The main difference, I think, between this kind of stuff (I almost called it writing) and Ballard's is that occasionally Ballard produces a tiny bit of brilliant writing (in the middle of something that even his devotee Judy Morrill admits she can't understand) but W.S.B is incapable of doing as much. Here he produces a mass of words and phrases; if it is intended to mean anything he is so ignorant of English that he is unable to express it; but it may be that he is laughing up his sleeve at his adoring dupes -- and other "writers" jump on the wagon so as to get paid for writing nonsense. His extensive use of lavatory-wall scribblings is intended to show his broadmindedness, modernity, savoir-faire and je ne sais quoi.

Mar 8 Clifford D Simak WHY CALL THEM BACK FROM HEAVEN. Fearfully and wonderfully padded.

Mar 28 L Sprague de Camp AN ELEPHANT FOR ARISTOTLE. How Leon brought an elephant from India to Greece. Very good.

Apr 13 John Norman OUTLAW OF GOR. Sequel to Tarnsman of Gor. As good as ERB's later stories. The hero, still seeking the secret of the priesthood of Gor, is now waiting for another sequel.

Apr 29 Colin Wilson THE MIND PARASITES. Micro-organisms from the moon are taking over man's minds so the only thing to do is to send the moon into the sun.....

One way of stopping inflation would be to slash all the tyres.

Letters received after the last issue are a bit dated so I've decided not to have a letter column. However, I can have a Question & Answer Corner:

Terry Jooes asks, "Fancy using George VI stamps on envelopes -- are you breaking up a collection?" ((No, just some odd stamps I disinterred and used because they were breaking up the symmetry of my collection. And how do you like the stamp you're getting this time?))

Bob Shaw wants to know "Why do you always put on one coat of flat and two coats of gloss paint?" ((Because I'm a second-gloss citizen.))

John USA Berry asks: "Where is the next issue of THE SCARR?" ((Heavens above, man, you're reading the current issue now and already asking about the next! Even I, the All-Seeing, All-Knowing, cannot answer that!))

Walter Willis wants to know what comes out of a wardrobe at 150mph? ((Luckily he provides the answer himself: a Sterling Moth))

The space below has been chemically treated. Keep it at a constant 86 $\frac{1}{2}$ ° and eventually you'll see the hidden message. It makes an excellent paper-wait.

