

50p

* INTRODUCING *

* THE *

Science Fantasy
Society

FOR THE READERS OF

* SCIENCE-FICTION *

* WEIRD-FICTION *

* FANTASY-FICTION *

S.F.S. ADMINISTRATION

The Committee who are carrying out administrative work and planning in 1949 are as follows :-

Secretary. Francis R. Fears,
3, Ferme Park Mansions,
Ferme Park Rd.,
Crouch End, N.3.

Treasurer. Owen D. Plumridge,
4, Wide Way,
Mitcham, Surrey.

Members. A. Vincent Clarke.
James Clay.
Charles Duncombe.
Kenneth Slater
Edward Tubb.

S.F.S. members have been grouped into areas, each with its own Secretary. All communications concerning the Society should go to the members appropriate Area Secretary.

Here is the geographical location of each area, and the address of its Secretary.

SOUTHERN AREA All Southern England, with the exception of the 'London Area', south of Gloucester, Oxford, Bucks, Hertford and Essex inclusive

Secretary. L.G. Street,
30, Vine Rd.,
Southampton, Hants.

LONDON AREA The 'Greater London' area, and including all regular visitors of the 'London Circle'.
Secretary Francis R. Fears.,

3, Ferme Pk. Mansions,
Ferme Pk Rd.,
Crouch End, N.3.

(Cont. Over)

MIDLANDS AREA From the 'Southern Area' to Shropshire, Worcester, Warwick, Leicester, Rutland, Cambridge, and Norfolk inclusive, and including WALES.

Secretary.

P.S. Medcalf,
55, Elmbridge Rd.,
Perry Barr,
Birmingham 22B, Warwick.

NORTHERN AREA
Scottish border.

From the 'Midlands Area' to the

Secretary

K. Johnson,
69, Warrington St.,
Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent,
Staffs.

SCOTTISH AND N. IRELAND AREA.

Secretary

P.B. Bell,
12, Barfillan Drive,
Glasgow, S.W.2,
Scotland.

OVERSEAS Enquirers and members should write to the S.F.S. Secretary, Francis Fears.

DEPARTMENTS

The S.F.S. MANUSCRIPT BUREAU for the distribution of amateur mss. is managed by Kenneth Slater, from whom full details can be obtained. Address:-

Lt. K.F. Slater,
13 Group, R.P.O.,
B.A.O.R. 23.

The S.F.S. CONTACT BUREAU will put members of the S.F.S. and the British Fantasy Library in contact with American and other overseas fans for the purposes of correspondence and trading magazines and books. Details are available from:-

L.E. Partlo,
16, Milford Rd.,
Walton, Stafford.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

SCIENCE FANTASY NEWS and other SFS publications

Publisher:- A.Vincent Clarke,
13, Wendover Way,
Welling, Kent.

FANTASY REVIEW. A printed, bi-monthly publication, giving articles, book-reviews and professional advertisements and news. 1/- per copy from the Editor and Publisher :-

W.H.Gillings,
115, Wanstead Park Rd.,
Ilford, Essex.

OPERATION FANTAST. A trading organisation, with a fanzine giving adverts, articles and news of the same title. Address:-

Lt. K.F.Slater,
43 Group, R.P.C.,
B.A.O.R. 23.

OPERATION FANTAST POSTAL LIBRARY. Contains a large number of recent British and U.S. fantasy books. Not magazines

Librarian.

H.Tealby,
8, Burfield Avenue,
Loughborough, Leics.

BRITISH FANTASY LIBRARY. Contains most of the published s-f magazines, and some books. Is in the process of being split into sections, but details can be obtained from :-

J.Gunn,
Miltons Head Hotel,
Milton Street,
Nottingham, Notts.

BRITISH FANTASY LIBRARY CURRENT ISSUE DEPT. A mag. library in which current issues (American Editions) are circulated from member to member by means of a 'chain' system.

Librarian:-

N.Lindsay,
311, Babbacombe Rd.,
Torquay, Devon.

MIMBIO . A fanzine containing articles, amateur stories, news and other items of interest, issued with a trading supplement giving adverts of books and magazines for sale.

Editor & Publisher :- N.Ashfield,
27, Woodland Rd.,
Thornton Heath,
Surrey.

WONDER A fanzine containing articles and fan-fiction. Issued at irregular intervals. For details, apply to Editor and Publisher:-

M.Tealby,
8, Burfield Ave.,
Loughborough, Leics.

SLANT A printed fanzine, containing articles and fiction. Details from Editor and Publisher:-

W.Willis
170, Upper Newtownards Rd.,
Belfast, N.Ireland.

FANTASY ADVERTISER. A planographed U.S. publication, containing an article, book reviews and many advertisements of magazines and books, mainly from U.S. fans. 2/3d per annum from the British representative:-

J.M.Rosenblum,
4, Grange Terrace,
Chapelton, Leeds.

U.S. FANZINE CHAIN. Run on same lines as BFL Current Issue Dept., but with a chain of fanzines.

Details:- N.Ashfield,
27, Woodland Rd,
Thornton Heath,
Surrey.

THE LONDON CIRCLE. A weekly meeting of s-f readers, editors and authors, held every Thursday night in the Saloon Bar of the 'White Horse Tavern', Fetter Lane, E.C.1. This is not a club, it is quite informal, and visitors are welcomed.

INTRODUCING THE S.F.S.

Ken Slater

Fantasy literature has been known ever since man developed the ability to express his imaginative powers in writing, but the modern type of science, weird, and fantasy fiction, which dates from the novels of such authors as Verne, Wells, Machen, Blackwood etc., only began to reach a very large public with the advent of 'Weird Tales', (1923), and 'Amazing Stories', (1928), in the fertile field of American pulp magazine publication.

As soon as these magazines appeared, they attracted a following of people who were sufficiently interested in the stories to write to the editors and point out errors in logic, in science, in the illustrations, and not only to point out errors, but to make suggestions of a constructive nature. These people were the original 'fans', as they are known in modern parlance,

Suprisingly, the editors took note of what these 'fans' had to say, and either improved or explained, the replies forming part of a 'readers letters' section which became a regular feature in the 'science-fiction' magazines. This has led to the present-day position, where editors, authors and artists frequently correct readers ! But that applies more to the States; our fan history in the U.K. is no such story of successful mutual achievement. It is instead a record of failure 'glorious failure', maybe, but still failure.

The earliest fan organisation in this country was the 'Science-Fiction Association'. Formed in 1937, it closed down at the outbreak of war, it's guiding members being unable to carry on for various reasons. During its period of activity, meetings were held; mimeographed magazines were produced, and contact was established between a number of fans who have since taken an active part in the various projects connected with fantasy fiction in this country.

Co-existent with the S.F.A. was the British Inter-Planetary Society; not a fan organisation, but a scientific body derived from fans with technical leanings. Commencing with a membership of 13, it has today a healthy following of well over 300, and public recognition. In that achievement the fan can take some vicarious pleasure, for it was from the fans that the organisation started.

During the war, two more fan societies were started. One of them, at the Teddington Paint Research Station, commenced as a library of magazines and books donated by fan Frank Parker, its purpose being to help N.F.S. members to pass the time when they were 'standing by'. From it sprang the virile 'Cosmos Club'.

I think that much of the club's success was due to the fact that it suffered oppression from 'Higher Authority'. At least, while this oppression existed, the club existed. When its membership spread beyond the confines of the Research Station laboratory, and the oppression and the war ceased, the club also ceased. Its ghost remains in the form of the 'Cosmos Library', which now operates under the aegis of the group known as the 'London Circle'.

The other war-time organisation was the British Fantasy Society; somewhat different in form, as its membership was drawn from all over the U.K. The B.F.S. also continued whilst its operative difficulties were greatest, and went into a decline when most of them were removed. Again a 'ghost' of the society remains, and the 'British Fantasy Library', with the 'Cosmos Library', fills a great need for those of the fans who know of their existence.

I shall not comment at length on the pre-war British professional magazines, 'Fantasy' and 'Tales of Wonder', except to say that 'T.o.W.' might still be running if the war had been a few years shorter.

Nor shall I say much of the abortive post-war efforts to publish professional magazines in this country 'Fantasy', re-introduced, folded after three issues, due to paper shortage and lack of understanding by its publishers. 'Outlands', a semi-professional effort, was a one-issue affair. Three 'New Worlds' were produced, and then due to publishing difficulties, it also vanished for a time. 'N.W.' is now (April '49) back with us, published by a fan-financed company. Much has already been written about this elsewhere, so I shall say no more.

Our 'Fanzines', (a wide and varied field of amateur publications produced by the fans; some printed, some typed; some duplicated) have as their chief representative 'Fantasy Review', a semi-professional printed booklet, and details of this and other fanzines can be easily obtained. If you are interested enough in these, or in any of the other matters upon which I have so lightly touched, a few letters and a little investigation will get you all the information you could desiremaybe more !

Now at last I come to to-day, and the Science-Fantasy Society. This society, springing to life as it does with a membership of over 50, has a higher opening strength than any of its predecessors. That is a good sign. It also commences when it is obvious that the number of people in this country who are interested in s-f and fantasy is larger than ever before. Witness the production of so many ~~fantasy~~ books by publishing houses, and the large sale of the British Reprint Editions of 'Astounding Science Fiction' and 'Unknown Worlds'.

The S.F.S. combines the good points of both the 'Cosmos Club' and the 'B.F.S.', in that it has a central organisation which can get together to discuss and do things, but has a nation-wide membership; scattered, it

it is true, but at least, every single member in a town is a prospective point of contact for new members.

The Society has come into existence because there appears to be a need for it, and it will continue to grow as more people become aware of it, and what it has to offer. And what has it to offer?

A seven-point policy which states the objects of the S.F.S. has been laid down by the Committee. I shall quote it here, and then enlarge upon the points.

- (1) The furtherance of all s-f and fantasy matters both in connection with fans and with the professional field.
- (2) The speedy dissemination of news to all fans.
- (3) The encouragement of all 'fanzine' editors, artists, authors, etc.
- (4) The promotion of international correspondence between s-f and fantasy readers.
- (5) The possible stabilizing of magazine prices.
- (6) The fostering of local groups, of national fan functions and similar matters which benefit, indirectly, the individual fan.
- (7) More publicity for the entire field of s-f and fantasy, and its recognition as a separate form of literature.

The first item is just a good old 'general coverage' clause, which will serve as a heading for anything, anyone, at any time may think of, which is not covered by the other six points.

Point two is an important one. By 'news' is meant all items of interest, both personal and professional, and these will be covered by the official organ of the Society, the 'Science Fantasy News'. It is hoped to publish this every six or eight weeks, depending on circumstances. The S.F.S. will also publish indices of magazines and books, etc., and other items of benefit to the members.

Point three is also of importance. The 'encouragement' that the S.F.S. can offer fanzine publishers will be advice and material help, financial and otherwise. As part of this service, the S.F.S. is distributing other fanzines in the 'S.F. News' mailing, thus saving extra postal expenses for the publishing fans.

To aid editors, artists and authors, etc., a 'Manuscript Bureau' has been set up, to which all miscellaneous mss. (i.e.; those not directly commissioned or written with reference to any particular fanzine) should be sent, and from which editors may request material.

In addition, all items will be carefully inspected, and if the author, artist, etc. desires, those that show promise will be placed before a committee who will advise with a view to making the material sellable in the professional field. A small agency to place such material may be arranged at a later date.

The object of item four, the promotion of international correspondence, is covered by the S.F.S. 'Contact Bureau'. S.F.S. and British Fantasy Library members who wish to correspond, and/or trade, with other fans overseas, particularly in the U.S., can get in touch with them through this bureau.

In regard to item five, it is not possible for the Society to do more than to quote a list of magazine prices which they consider fair, and then request all fans to stick to these prices when buying and selling. It is pointed out that anyone paying more than the quoted prices will be doing so of his or her own free will, and the S.F.S. is not going to bind its members down with any rules about what they may or may not do. This subject will be thoroughly investigated, and the Committee will always be glad to receive the views of the members concerning it.

That part of the policy contained in item six does

not permit detailed planning, but the Society will probably arrange an annual Convention for fans, and similar matters will be dealt with as the need arises.

To aid local groups, the S.F. News will publish details of meetings, lists of names and addresses, etc. We will try to put new fans, (and newly discovered ones) in touch with others in their locality, and will naturally advise and help those wishing to form a group in any way possible. But this is mainly a matter for these fans, and is something which the S.F.S. cannot start as a whole; the initial desire must be present in the individuals concerned.

And seven ! The most important, I think. The subject of publicity for fantasy and fandom has received as much attention and discussion as any other two matters together. In this brief outline, I cannot do more than to say that the subject will be fully covered in separate articles in the 'S.F. News'. That also applies to a number of other items, such as requesting publishers to print, or reprint, certain books, etc.

I have said enough to give you a brief idea of the aims of the S.F.S. ; now, how it will operate.

The country has been divided into a small number of 'Area's', each with its own Secretary. The Area Secretaries have been chosen by their expressed willingness to help, and where possible, geographical location. Each Secretary will act as a sort of 'Liason Officer'; a link between the individual fan and fan-groups in his Area, and the central co-ordinating Committee. At present, most of the Committee members are London Area fans.

Duties and responsibilities are being split up and distributed as much as possible, and the addresses of members who are taking an active part in the organisation

will be published in each issue of the 'S.F.News', and elsewhere.

Enquiries which do not specifically concern one of these departments should be sent to the local Area Secretary. Points not answerable by the Secretary will be forwarded by him to the Committee. Each Area has been allocated a Committee member to whom the 'A.S.' will write.

Postage expenses will be remitted to the Area Secretaries and other organisers (on their application to the Treasurer), but members who want a mailed reply from them or any other branch of the S.F.S. must enclose a stamped and addressed envelope.

The annual subscription to the S.F.S. is 5/-, or in the case of overseas members, current magazines with a face-value of that sum, and it will date from the member's entry. A membership card is ~~available~~ ~~Funds~~ are held in a joint account by the Treasurer and the Secretary.

This brief resume will, I hope, serve as an introduction to the S.F.S. The Society is still in its initial stages, but the Committee are going to work hard, and those of the members who can will also be asked to work on the various projects. Some of these are now in operation, some are still in the planning stage, and members will be kept fully informed of these activities through the S.F.News.

In conclusion, I would like to thank, on behalf of the Committee, all those fans who have offered advice and help, and to assure all members that the S.F.S. will continue to operate with as few 'rules and regulations' as possible, in the belief that a co-ordination of voluntary effort will be of benefit, and give greater pleasure, to all of us.

BRITISH FANTASY PUBLISHING

A.V. Clarke

With the advent of a number of small U.S. publishers whose present policy consists of putting well-liked magazine s-f and weird fiction 'between hard covers', the old division between fantasy book and fantasy magazine publishing appears to be vanishing. With it vanishes a curious paradox. As Ken Slater points out in his article, British magazine fantasy has had a very hard job in getting started. A pre-war juvenile fantasy paper, 'Scoops', ran for 20 issues, 'Tales of Wonder' for 13, the pre-war Newnes 'Fantasy' for 3 issues, the post-war Temple Bar 'Fantasy' for 3, and 'New Worlds' has just reached No.4.

Apart from these, only a few minor paper-covered booklets have appeared. Yet in the U.S., there are at present 15 regular magazines, and in 1941 the figure was as high as 20! One would naturally expect a similar position to exist in the fantasy book field, and there lies the paradox. The similar position has existed---in reverse! Until this recent increase in the U.S.A., we led the field---and not only because of the famous 'names' such as Wells, H.R. Haggard, Conan Doyle, Lord Dunsany, Blackwood, Machen, Chesterton, James, and many others who are known by the general public to have written various kinds of fantasy. The book-collecting fan will, for instance, have half-a-dozen volumes by Doctor Olaf Stapledon on his shelves. S. Fowler Wright has written many s-f books; Neil Bell, John Gloag, Andrew Marvell, C.S. Lewis and Dennis Wheatley have all written fantasy books during the last few years, to name only a few.

Prolific authors of earlier years included M.P. Shiel, W.H. Hodgson, E.F. Benson, J.D. Beresford, G. Griffiths, B. Pain, F. Anstey, etc., and of course there are many who have written only one or two fantasies. There is, then, no lack of support for British fantasy amongst the reading public; none of the adult fantasy magazines have failed for that reason, and once the initial difficulties have been overcome, an intelligently managed and well-written magazine has every chance of success.

