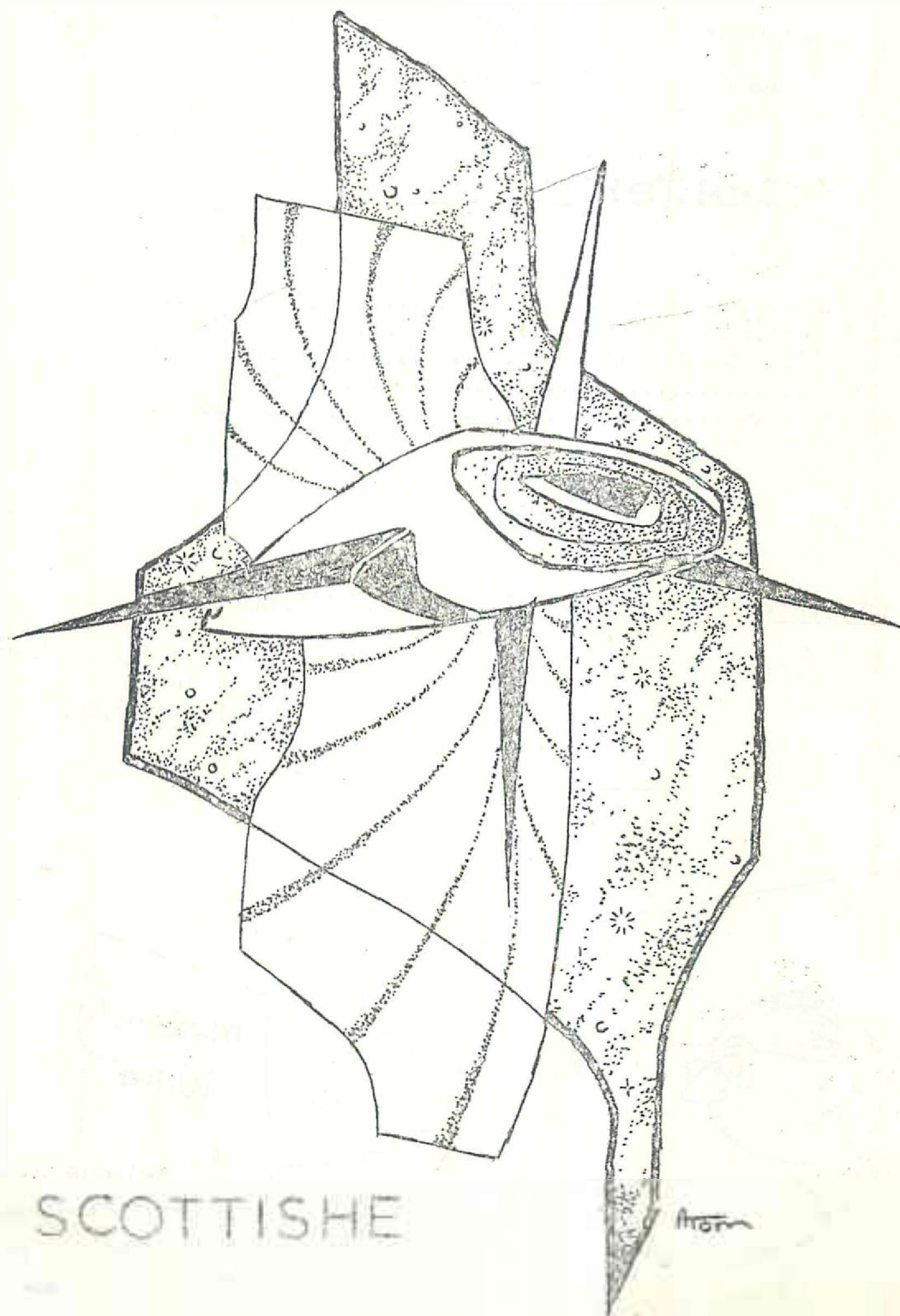


SCOTTISHE



SCOTTISHE

Atom

Scottishe 48

A Chuck Harris appreciation issue
(and congratulations Sue)

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Nibblings

Ethel Lindsay

I meant to nibble at the subject of BUG JACK BARRON this time around; but the serial of this is still running in NEW WORLDS and I may as well wait until the finish. Just as I was casting wildly about for something else, in came a parcel of books for review. It's quite a while now since I have sat down and read four sf books off in a row; and so I enjoyed the experience. I must admit that after a diet of NEW WORLDS it was rather nice to get my teeth into something straight-forward. But let me tell you about them.

All Judgement Fled: by James White. Rapp & Whiting. 21s

It does seem to me that this author improves with every book; here he tackles the theme of man meeting the first aliens to enter our solar system in a very convincing way. I feel that this is just the way it might happen - with all sorts of silly mistakes cropping up. The astronauts involved are not supermen..just brave men trying to do their best. James White brings out very well how difficult it would be to try to conduct first contact with all Earth listening in avidly over radio and tv. There would also be the problem..who would give the orders on what to do next? Would it be Control back at Earth or the spaceman at the place of the problem? The story tells of an alien spaceship discovered in orbit some sixty miles from the sun. Two of our spaceships are launched in an effort to communicate with it. On arrival thomen can get no response to their signals and so board the ship to investigate. From there everything seems to go wrong. They are attacked by small extra-terrestrials and, in defending themselves, have to kill one. What a way to start in the act of trying to communicate! In the fight some of the spacesuits are damaged and so some of the men are marooned on the ship. They have to wait there the long time it takes for Earth to send another suit. Here comes one of those good touches that makes it all believable..."Precisely on time the high-acceleration supply rocket homed in on P-One's beacn and was taken aboard the alien ship. It contained, in addition to the promised water, a twenty-day supply of food, film, paper and a collapsed, carefully packed spacesuit. Some well-wisher had tucked a .45 automatic inside the space-suit, probably on impulse and without taking time to think about packing it properly, and the forty-G acceleration of the supply vehicle had caused

In our next issue:- Chuck Harris and the pill. (A Frank (Harris) disclosure)

Nibblings 2

the heavy gun to tear a large hole in the hip and leg sections, rendering the suit completely useless. They had lost a spacesuit and gained an automatic pistol for which there was no ammunition." This book leaves one brooding on the implications of how the first actions when meeting alien life could affect the whole situation of Earth. It also leaves you thinking of what makes men do the things they do..how we react to fear, panic and loneliness. In addition to this -it is a rattling good story that sweeps you along in its adventures.

The Dolphin Rider: by Roy Meyers. Rapp & Whiting. 21s

This is an unusual story in one way; and in another it is rather familiar. The blurb on the jacket likens it to the story of Tarzan; and indeed, this is from where the familiarity comes. The hero, John Averill, is brought up by dolphins just as Tarzan was brought up by the apes. The other point of similarity is the rather wooden story of his parents meeting, marriage, and the radiation poisoning of his Mother. This has the result of John having an abnormally slow respiration rate. This point, of course, is absolutely vital if he is to live with dolphins who travel for great distances at great speed before requiring to come up for air. The other needful point about dolphins is that they could suckle a human baby. Most of the characters are very cardboard and the 'love story' is perfunctory. Yet (again like Tarzan) as soon as the story moves underseas it is fascinating. One is given a marvellous picture of the world of the dolphins. The ending leaves me with the suspicion that the author plans a series of adventures for his Dolphin Rider. He handles the underseas part so competently that I feel this could well become a very popular series. Certainly it will appeal to both adventure story readers and those attracted to the idea of dolphins as a superior species in the animal world.

Watchers of the Dark: by Lloyd Biggle Jr. Rapp & Whiting. 21s

Jan Darzek, the detective character in ALL THE COLOURS OF DARKNESS, is again featured in this story as is also his secretary, Miss Schluppe. With the advent of a Mr Smith, who does not hesitate to produce the fee of a million pounds, these two are off on an outer-space mystery hunt. What they are hunting is something named "The Dark". This describes a mysterious madness which overtakes all the natives of a planet causing them to fling out every foreigner. Up until this phenomena had arrived the "Certified Worlds" had lived in peace and amid amicable trading. Earth is an "Uncertified World" - people there do not live in peace! This story is along lines that are a favourite of mine --the conception of a galaxy full of strange worlds and stranger inhabitants. Biggle has never wanted for imagination in his stories; and here he has a grand time describing the various 'monsters' that are met by our hero. He gives these 'monsters' character too, such as Gula of the "elongated snout" who is anxious to marry off her four daughters, and the tangle of limbs called E-Wusk who seems to be the only one with a sense of humour. I mainly enjoyed this for the grand descriptions of alien beings and life; and particularly enjoyed one scene of a party. There is also a mystery to be solved, however, and a villain to be unmasked. As detective fiction is another favourite of mine as well as science fiction - I had a bonus read with this book.

Nibblings 3

Search the Sky: by Frederick Pohl & C.M.Cornbluth. Repp & Whiting. 18s

Older fans will have read this book as it first came out in 1954 in the States. Younger fans can be urged to obtain a copy as this is one of the classics of sf. It is so long since I last read it that I confess I had forgotten some of the details and so was able to enjoy it that much more. Yet there are some scenes one could not forget. This story tells of a time when the planets are all inhabited by men; and the only communication between them is through the spaceships that come to them after a journey of hundreds of years. The hero, Ross, becomes involved in finding out why life on these planets seems to be decaying..and why some of the once habitable planets no longer respond to the spaceships call. By the use of a ftl ship, which had been hidden in case it might provoke war, he starts to visit some of the other planets to find out what has happened. The denouement will come as no surprise to even the youngest fan, nowadays everyone knows a lot about genes. However the fascination of finding out what happened on each planet remains as engrossing as ever. There is one where to be old is to be top dog; and another where to be a woman is to be superior. Some of the scenes at the latter planet are ones that remained in my memory..any man-hater would have a lovely time dreaming about this one! The characters are well-rounded, and the heroine is one of the better efforts of sf.

As you can see I have had quite a batch of 'old' sf..and to me it is still highly worth reading. To be sure I would not recommend it as a steady diet and I particularly would not recommend it as one's only reading diet. Yet it is still a highly satisfying diet..one guaranteed to take you away from the mundane world, to broaden your horizons, and to make you think about the future. Most people rarely think about changes in the future, science fiction fans do. Which is why, conversely, they should not close their eyes to any changes in sf in the future. I would like to see plenty more stories like these which can revive my sense of wonder; but I am also willing to enquire my way through something like CONCENTRATION CAMP.

About BUG JACK BARRON..I'm not so sure..let me see the ending first!

Ethel Lindsay.

Back copies available:-

Scottishe Nos 46 and 47.
2 shillings or 25/- per copy

Haverings Nos 26, 28, 29, and 32
2 shillings or 25/- per copy.

Also on sale a few copies still of THE LINDSAY REPORT at 7/- or 11/-...This is the report of the TAFF trip to the Chicon 111.

DONALD A WOLLHEIM

G O H SPEECH

LUNACON 1968

It's hard for me to believe, even up here, that I started being a science-fiction fan over thirty-five years ago. That, I suspect, is a lot longer than many of the people in this audience have been alive on Earth. It gives me a perspective that startles even me. Because I do not feel that all that time has passed. And though science-fiction has become a lifetime career for me, I still get the same kind of kick out of the visions of these stories as I did back when I was still in my teens.

There are two views in the world of fandom about this sort of thing. One says that fandom is just a god-damned hobby. The other says that it is a way of life. Well, I know that for different people, one or another attitude is right. For me, there can't be any question that it's been a way of life.

And for me a good one.

By becoming an active science-fiction fan in my teens, I first developed my ability to express myself on paper, to handle correspondence on controversial subjects, and to feel at ease in print. Believe me, that's invaluable to anyone who is due to end up in publishing.

I met my basic circle of friends. I learned to differentiate character and to contest egos--as well as the fine fannish art of acquiring that mysterious substance known as egoboo. I developed into more muscular form my world views and my social attitudes--through fan activities. Through science-fiction fandom, I met the girl who became my wife, and through the same channels I found my life's profession and mastered it. Though I have risen comfortably into the world of general publishing, it is still science-fiction which is the keystone of my career.

I have even raised a daughter who shows all the signs of being an active fan--and if that doesn't prove that fandom is not only a way of life, but an inheritable one, I don't know what does.

Back in those days, back in the dismal thirties, science-fiction was a

dream that sustained me through some very gloomy perspectives. It was usually restricted to three poorly circulated pulp magazines with lurid titles and lurid covers--and nobody took it seriously save the handful of fans. But we believed in it because those stories spoke of wonders to come which we desperately longed to see. The elders about us scoffed at these Buck Rogers visions. But we believed in them--a tiny stubborn minority.

Now, here in 1968, look back and see what it was we believed in. We believed in space flight. We believed in television. We believed in robots and mechanical brains. We believed in communicators which could be carried around in your pocket and we believed in universal aviation in common use. We believed in messages from the stars and in the exploration of the sea bottoms. We believed in some world-wide system of government...and we believed in atomic power.

Above all, we believed in the universality of life--that other planets were inhabited. Even to believe in other planets outside this solar system was daring then--most astronomers denied them. We even believed in heat rays and death rays and suspended animation.

Sounds banal, doesn't it? Boring, everyday stuff, isn't it? Especially if you were born in the forties. That's just the world of today and what of it? Nothing to get excited about. Certainly no grounds for reading science-fiction.

The fact is that this world of today is really and truly a world created by science-fiction. The ideas that were dreamed up then are the living substance of today. In short, what I see from my perspective, is that I am living in a science-fiction story. This is it--this is a science-fiction world.

It still thrills me. But it doesn't mean much to the fans of today. I can still get a kick out of the story that was on the front page of the New York Times a month ago about the pulsating star-points that had been just discovered. In cold print, a perfectly sane astronomer advanced the suggestion that perhaps these radio pulsars were interstellar beacons of an advanced star-navigating confederation.

Pure Edmond Hamilton! And nobody blinked an eyelash about that theory. It didn't rate an excited editorial or a scarehead in some tabloid. Everybody who read the paper had already been indoctrinated in the pure science-fiction concepts involved--and, of course, there could be advanced star civilizations--and, of course, they could be setting up beacons for their star ship routes. Just common sense. Take it for granted. Newspaper story. Don't call it science-fiction. Not worth a minute's conversation.

As I said, I got a kick out of it. It bore out once again just how thoroughly our world has become a science-fiction one. People born and raised in it take all this news for granted, greet each new invention with matter-of-fact indifference. Atomic submarines, laser beams, Mohole projects...poof! What's new in the sports page today?

The fact is that this has seeped into the imaginative stratum of society. Science-fiction reading is a big thing. It sells hundreds of thousands of books every month--not like the piddling sales of three decades ago. It's standard fare for television and in the movies.

Something therefore is still making people read science-fiction. And that is strange. Where the basic ideas of new inventions are concerned, there are not many that haven't either been realized or have a foot stuck in the door. Time travel we don't have--but that seemed always a gimmick rather than anything we seriously expected to materialize. It was a gimmick useful for future projections and for exploring the past--but I don't think anyone ever expected it. Transportation of material objects by radio--that hasn't come about yet--but when it does there won't be any surprises in it that haven't been anticipated in long-published stories.

We haven't met any interplanetary civilizations yet--not really--though there are already tens of thousands--maybe hundreds of thousands--who believe we have through the medium of the so-called "flying saucers". Wish fulfillment perhaps, but surely, even if delusion, a product of this science-fiction environment we breathe in every minute of the day.

So what's keeping young people reading science-fiction? What's the compelling attraction?

It's obviously not the thrill of new inventions. It's not the first space flight. That's as obsolete as Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea. I know what it is for me.

It's the grand adventure. It's the lure of other worlds. It's the Wondrous Vision of days to come and the land on the other side of the mountain. It's escape reading, sure, but escape into something one would love to be involved in. It's the road away from the humdrum world of cold reality. It's the inborn human desire for the victory of good over evil. The glorious trek on the Golden Road to Samarkand. The crusade for right against wrong. It's an innate belief in the rightness and goodness of mankind. A belief that all too often must be sustained through fantasy as a barrier against the ugly cynicism, shoving and pushing, and crass commercialism of daily life.

Science-fiction fans, and I here include all habitual readers, perhaps several million of them, are still idealists deep down. That's where the compulsive attraction lies. Science-fiction is the last bulwark of idealist literature, of the wondrous vision.

That's the only way you can account for the phenomenal popularity of Middle Earth and Frodo's marvelous quest. It's not science, not invention, but it is the pure depiction of pure good against pure evil. It tells of a sacred crusade to right a wrong--and of victory in that crusade. The success of the Tolkien trilogy was no accident.

Nor is the continuing success of the novels of Edgar Rice Burroughs and Andre Norton--to mention but two among many--any accident. Good will triumph, the wondrous vision will be justified.

This is the key to the reading of science-fiction today. This is what really sustains science-fiction in this epoch. Not smart-aleck "New Wave" writings—all stylistic claptrap and downbeat. Not writers whose desperate ambition is to be mistaken for mainstream writers and abandon all this childish stuff about idealism to wallow in cynical satire and hold up distorting mirrors of the world about us.

We all know this world is a frightening place. That's why we read escape literature. So what do these writers think they are doing?

Fortunately, though they are noisy and self-advertising, their numbers are restricted to a little clique. Their novels get published—fans are tolerant and will take an occasional ugly vision in their stride. But it's time to suggest that these embittered distortionists stop trying to persuade everyone else that their sick fiction is the right science-fiction. If they ever succeeded in persuading the majority of writers to turn out only their ugly satires, their thorny futures of sadistic societies and Freudian anti-heroes, you would see how rapidly the sale of s-f would dwindle. There is no nourishment in such visions. Science-fiction cannot survive incarceration in a Coney Island house of mirrors.

A couple of months ago Terry Carr asked me to read the first installments of a novel entitled "Bug Jack Barron" I read them and the outline of the rest of the novel and sent Terry a memo, as follows:

"There isn't a nice thing I can say about this depraved, cynical, utterly repulsive and thoroughly degenerate and decadent parody of what was once a real science-fiction theme...except that it is a shoo-in to be the 'in' thing with the so-called science-fiction literati and may very well stand a good chance of being the 'in' thing with the college crowd and the would-be intelligenzia. If that happens we may make a lot of money with this packet and you may even be right about it as a candidate for a Hugo or a Nebula...."

As you see, I did not block the possibility of our publishing this work. Ace Books has a large enough output to enable it to publish all varieties of science-fiction—and to do well, too, on a work as highly publicized and notorious as this one is going to be. It's just good business—even if it is abominable science fiction.

Well, just for the record, we are not going to publish this nauseous epic for the thing was sold to another paperback publisher on terms no different from ours—save one—the other publisher offered to do the abomination without any editorial changes, suggestions, or alterations, not even for the betterment of the plot. This we could not in all ethical decency agree to. So you may see this work in all its revolting splendour from someone else's imprint. It may even win a Hugo—who knows?—but it's garbage just the same. It is worse than that—it is the sort of thing that is a true counter-current to science-fiction. It is anti-idealism; it is in opposition to the Wondrous Vision that alone sustains this whole field of literature.

Another good example of this counter-current is the much touted anthology called "Dangerous Visions". A remarkable book, have no doubt, and I am not knocking it when I say I regard it as a superlative horror anthology, but not

as a science-fiction collection.

We don't read science-fiction for dangerous visions--we read it because we are irresistibly attracted to wondrous visions.

There were a few such among the contents--but too few. By and large the so-called dangerous visions consisted of attempts to shock sensibilities rather than to charge the imagination. What the anthologist proclaimed as the best thing in the book turned out to be thirty thousand words of Freudian nonsense. The sun-glass bedecked, weirdly accoutered editor of the book himself presented a future world story thoroughly unappetizing--a reflection no doubt of the notorious sewers of Hollywood he unfortunately has to dwell in.

As a horror collection, it was quite impressive. Terrific, in fact. The clique contrived to vote honors to a lot of stuff in it--though it is to be noted that the prize-winning short story, taken from that book, was a winner perhaps because it was an exception--a piece of poetic imagery and a refusal to surrender idealism even amid so bitter a collection.

If there is any danger to science-fiction today it is that the influence of embittered writers will be allowed to dominate. People do not read science-fiction because they want to be told how lousy the world is or how rotten people are. That's exactly what they want to get away from. And because these particular writers--and I include much of what is not humorously called the Milford Mafia--themselves have become sour on the wondrous vision doesn't mean the rest of us are. If they want to write sick mainstream literature, let them. Only don't clothe it in the garments of fantasy.

It was remarked to me by a writer whose first contact with this group was through attending the recent awards banquet of the Science Fiction Writers of America that he had never felt so many cross-currents of hatred, feuding, and back-biting in any similar group. And that is a most true observation.

I belong to several professional writers' associations, such as the Western, Mystery, and the Aviation writers, as well as the S.F.W.A. In the journals of these other organizations you do not encounter the curious continuous undertone of bitterness, vituperation and sheer nastiness that continuously peeps out of the pages and records of the S.F.W.A.

I say that's a bad sign. These writers are mainly the purveyors of the Wondrous Vision. It is only a handful among them that scoff at that, that pander to the Dangerous Visions of disillusionment.

Fortunately the readers know what they want. And the success of such a fan as myself in picking for publication what pleases me--the wondrous visions that can still attract and delight me--is evidence that all such counter-currents, however loudly publicized and momentarily successful, are just minor eddies that do not and cannot reverse the inner drive that keeps science-fiction as the natural reading of our age, founded on science-fiction and living it in every aspect.

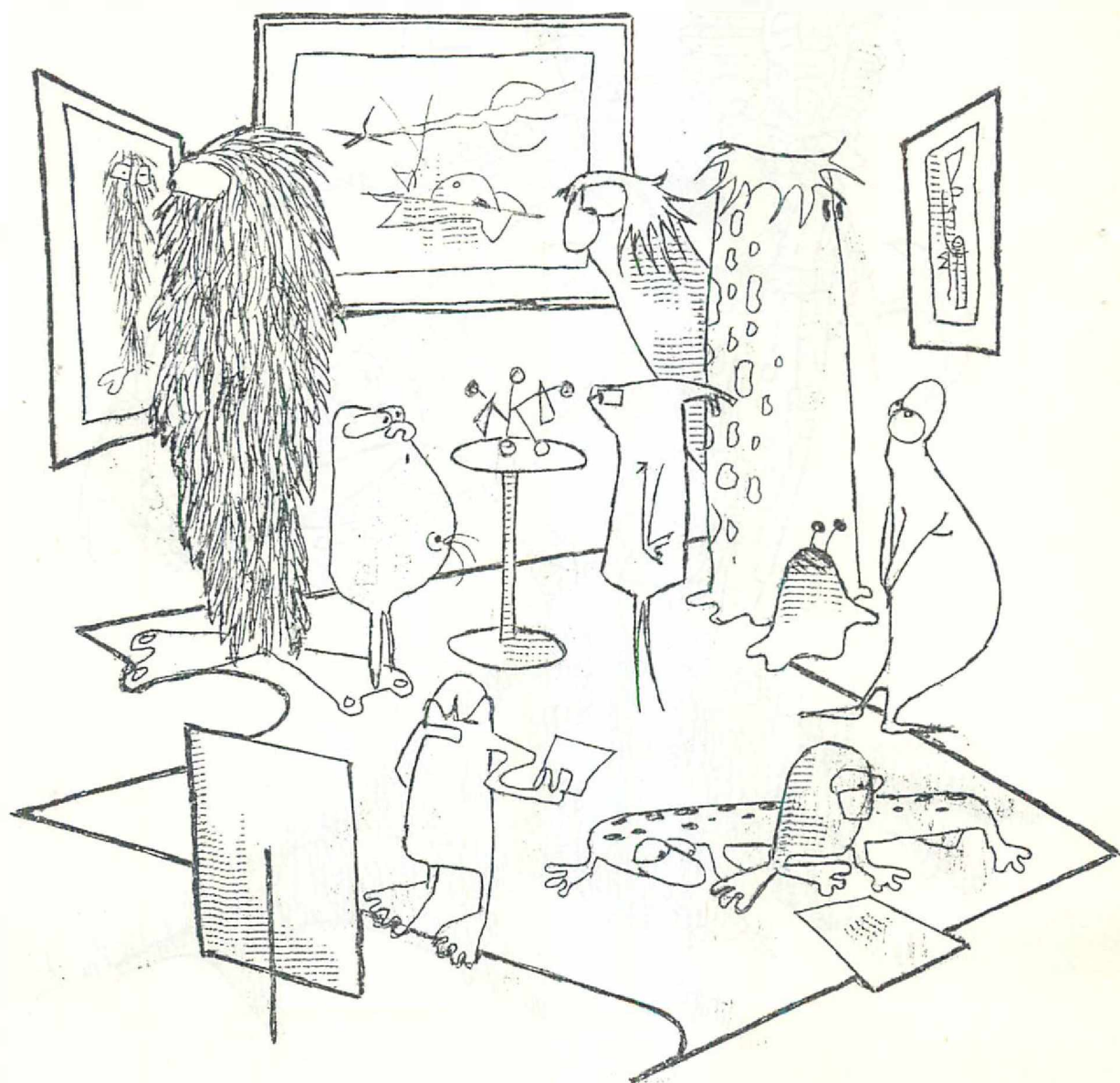
This is a science-fiction world and the Wondrous Vision still leads us on. I am happy to have played and to be playing my small part in that.
Thank you.

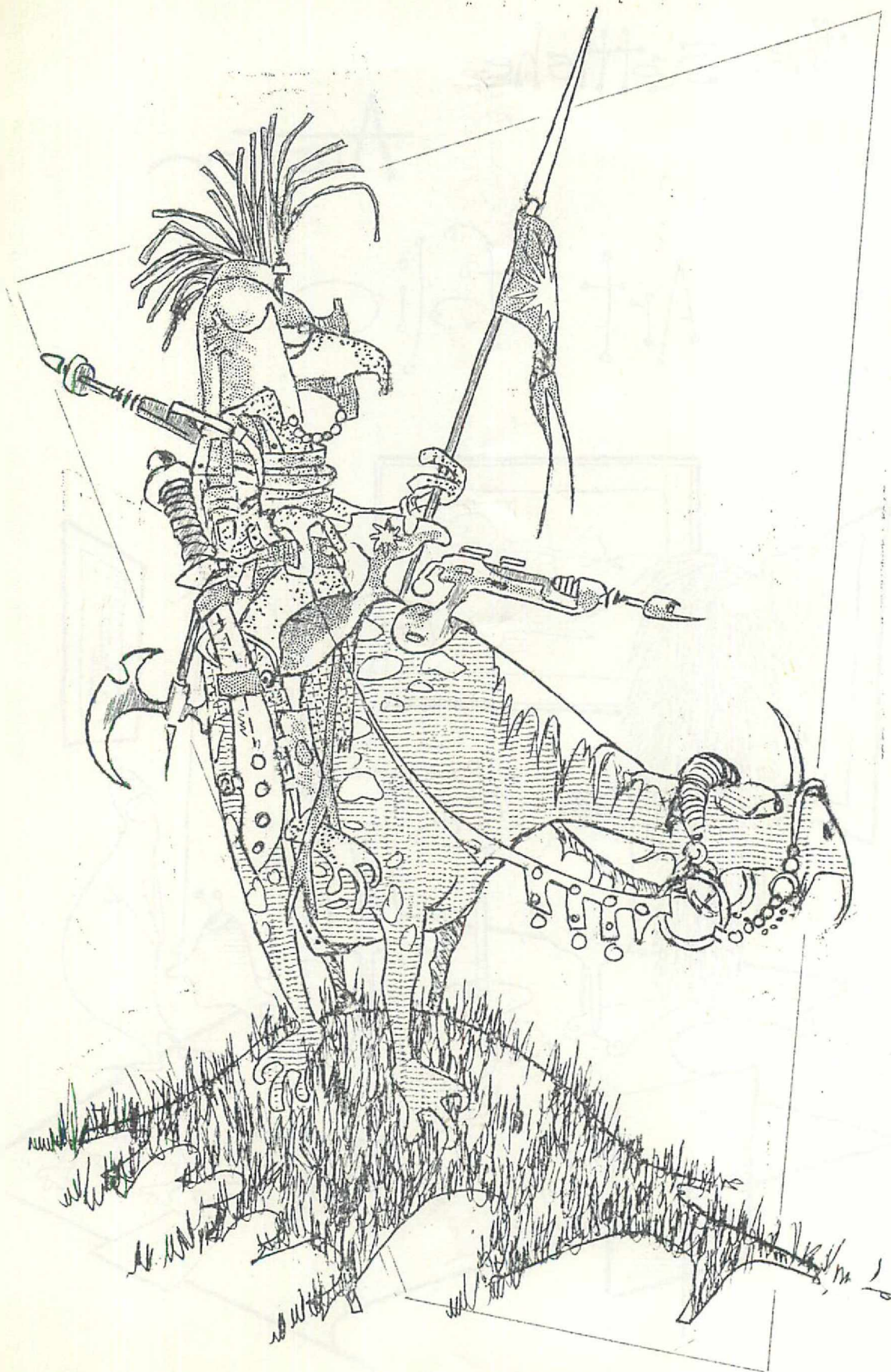
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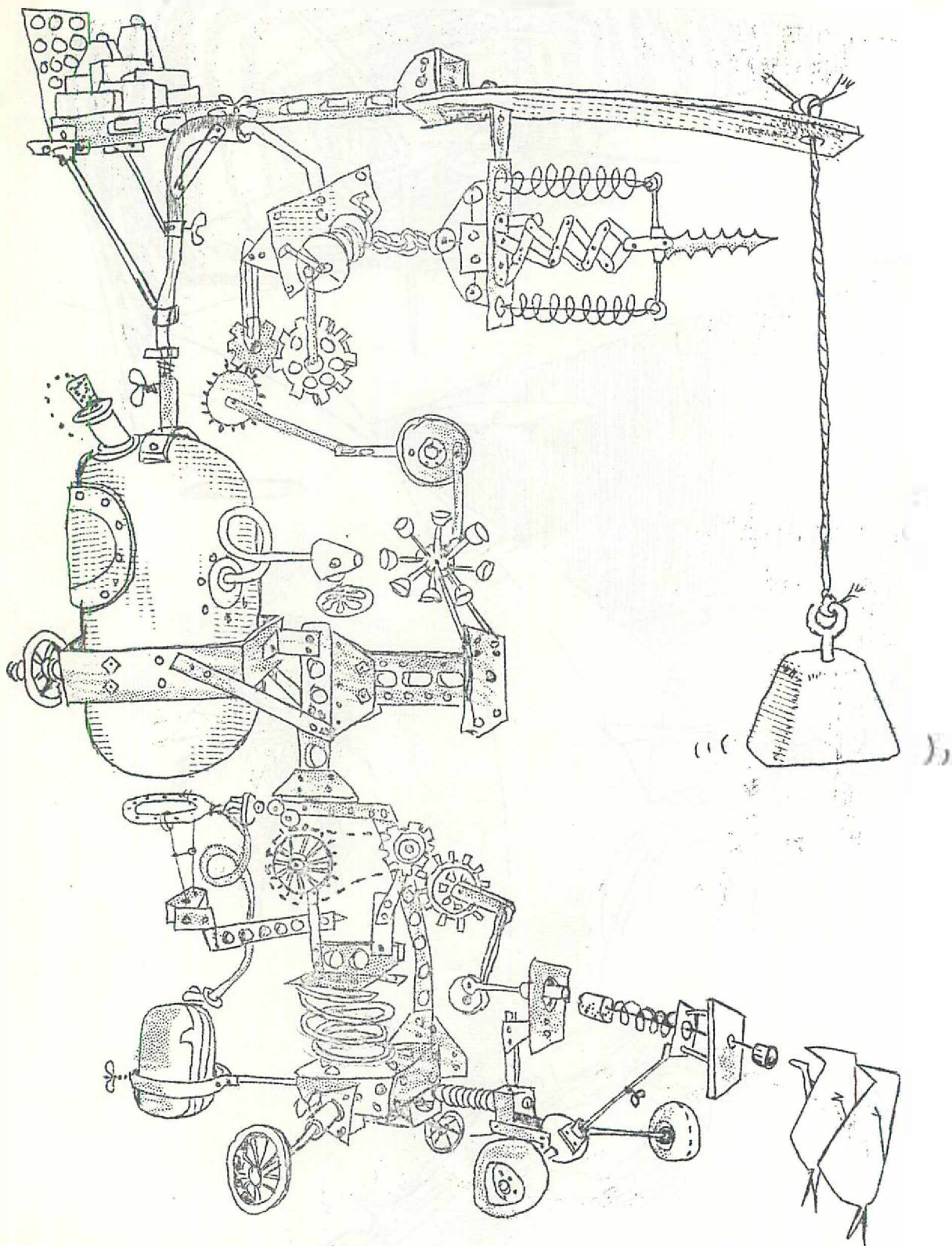
Atom

Art folio









You mean I just Press this teeny button and it cures
my Ixprl craving immediately

Hattering's

On the Mancon 111....What makes one con better than another is a puzzle sometimes; but undoubtedly each con registers an atmosphere of its own. The friendlier this atmosphere, the better the con. It was very noticeable to Ella Parker and I, as soon as we got into the hotel at Suxton, that there was this asset to any con. Perhaps the small front lounge had something to do with it. One was always passing through it to get anywhere.. and if you sat there you got to meet everyone. Once Ella discovered that she could order tea there; it's a wonder she ever left it!

Practically the first fan we met was Ken Cheslin..a Ken full of smiles and very happy; and the girl-friend accompanying him was so easy to talk with that we all beamed at each other. A welcome like that from Ken was, we felt, a good omen for the con. We were soon chattering with Don Wollheim Phil Rogers and the Guest of Honour -Ken Bulmer. Ken was not only a good Guest of Honour---he is a good guy and promptly helped carry up our cases! So with a happy babble of talk from friends we started the weekend and this was the way it went--so that by the end we agreed it was the best con we had attended for years.

On the Saturday morning I chaired a panel which discussed "So you want to start a fan group?". With me were Ken Cheslin from Stourbridge, Rob Johnson from Bristol, Gary Klüpfel from Munich, and Tom Jones from Doncaster. We all gave potted versions of our attempts to form groups and then to keep them going; and the audience began to join in with anecdotes of their own. Irene Boothroyd of Bolton gave a vivid description of the trials of being the only femme in a group.. "there is more than one tea towel". She also said that "as the members drifted away so did my books." From what I could gather from hers and other comments---femme fans could well give a panel on the topic of being in a fan group...a free suggestion to any con committee looking for a programme item. This seemed a good item as there was a lot of participation from the audience.

I met long-time fan Tony Glynn who told me he had orders from Betty Kujawa to take my photograph some time over the weekend. At intervals thereafter he would meet me and tell me this--but somehow it never did get done. Tony was one of the first fans I met at my first con--the SuperMan-con..a nice guy but you can never get him to become active; I suspect he has too many other interests.

Dageheham Town Hall. 8pm. A talk by C. R. HARRIS NEW:
'S-X F--nds of the World Arise' (GIR PIPERS in attendance)

Natterings 2

Ella and I went out shopping, taking with us young Alan Shorrocks. Each year I am amazed all over again at those wonderful Shorrocks children...good-looking and bright and all as good as gold..and yet not the least stuffy. Allen set off with us as confidently as if he saw us every weekend. Ina Shorrocks ought to write a book on how to bring up children..Dr Spock has got nothing on her!

Umm, perhaps I should have explained that this isn't a proper blow by blow con report (I was scared by a Buck Coulson review..)but just the odd memory as it stirs up being aired to you. Like- we had lunch with Val and Jerry Jeeves and were glad to find them as friendly and unchanged as ever. We only meet once a year with no correspondence in between; yet we talk away as if we had met yesterday. Afterwards in the lounge over an after-lunch cup of tea we were amused to hear from Don Wollheim that someone had tried to sell him some ACE books. Don began to kid Ella about her tea-drinking habits--and then never let up on her all weekend. By the end she was looking around cautiously to see if Don was near before lifting her cup! Somewhen I had a talk with Tom Disch about BUG JACK BARRON; and was assured by him that the dialogue was authentic for the locale. Some other of his explanations of NW were enlightening enough for me to reflect that it was a pity Mike couldn't give Tom away with every copy as an interpreter. Later I met Jerry Webb staggering away from Tom quite awed to find how well-read was Thomas Disch! I hope I took the opportunity to chip Jerry about his own reading habits again!

We met two new(to us)fans from the States..Billy Pettit and Gardner Dozois, and were not surprised to find Gardner carried the nickname of Dozy. They both were the kind we like - easy-going, fond of a laugh and sharing our interests. They were also very good-natured that we often brought up the subject of US politics. The other American..Steve Stiles, TAFF delegate also mixed well. Billy held open-house and had crates of beer laid on--a very generous guy!

One night we snagged the big table in the dining-room and had dinner with Billy, Dozy, Don Wollheim, Bob Shaw and James White. By this time in the weekend the portions being served were getting smaller and smaller. Ella and I felt really ashamed as we watched what was being served to these visitors; but it was only at the end we discovered that Bob Shaw had not received any potatoes at all. How he kept quiet about this I'll never know! Anyway..right after he and James went straight out and had another dinner.

We had breakfast on Sunday morning with Mary Reed and her friend who's name I forget. First chance I've ever had to talk to Mary although we have shared the same car for a few years now; but then it was a friendly con and the mixing around was very good. I then got routed out of the lounge by Don wanting to go for a walk; we were joined by John Roles. As it was a pleasant sunny morning we enjoyed our tour of this pretty town. I was entertained by Don and John exchanging reminiscences of Olaf Stapleton. At one time, apparently, John was in the same folk dance group as Stapleton. John hastened to say that he was very young at the time and suitably awed at the thought of mixing with such a personage.

Natterings 3

The programme item THIS IS YOUR FAN LIFE was revived at this con and the subject turned out to be Harry Madler. So they were able to utilise some of his monster filming. It wasn't as funny as some I recall.-I think the funniest one ever was the one done for Eric Jones. A highlight of that was a small acting cameo by Alan Rispin dressed as an Indian. Still: this fan life of Harry did have a grand climax..all the Liverpool Group doing a big kick dance; Norman Woodal, Eddie Jones, Dave Kyle, Norman Shorrocks etc all cavorting around was amusing to watch. You'll not be surprised to learn that the best legs on display in the line-up were Ina's.

I was asked to help with the collection of money for the auction-and did so for Eric Bentecliffe feeling as if it were old times. This was something else that reminded me of the Supermancon. But oh..the difference in the bidding and the prices! Artwork went like a bomb thanks to the Americans in the audience, a Kelly Freas going for £11. When it came to the sf books and mags it was a different story. Eric had brought along a lot of early sf and took it all home again in disgust at the prices offered. The young fans just don't seem to want to collect anymore..and they will not bid above a few shillings. It seems to me that British cons ought to give up on this; it's not as if they need the auction money anymore. Time was when it played a vital part in the con finances..but the increased numbers of attendees now attend to that.

For the St Fanthony ceremony I had asked the favour of being allowed to 'grab' somebody for the ceremony. I had always longed to do this ever since Ina had cropt up behind and grabbed me when it was my turn. So I was kindly given the job to grab Ken McIntyre. I went through the routine of walking up and down for a bit as if I were not sure where the guy I wanted was seated. Actually he had been guarded for us for over an hour by Irene B. Othroyd. When I pounced on Ken - I've never seen anyone who looked so astonished - Ken is modest as well as nice.

On Sunday night I went party-crawling..My! I had a good time. I talked with old fans and new fans till its a wonder I wasn't hoarse. I had been keeping notes all weekend which now began to degenerate into a scrawl. I can just make out the last one..."Tom Schlueck made a pun at 4am..*You are a leaning library"..it was a lousy pun". I see that I keep my critical faculties alert even at 4am.

*****Ethel Lindsey*****

letters

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"..I am delighted that you made this experiment of buying and reading NEW WORLDS - a great deal of criticism appears to come from fans who have never read the magazine. One doesn't mind hostile criticism from people who have actually read one's stuff, but nothing is more irritating than to have to suffer the comments of those who patently know nothing about what is currently being done. One is able to buy magazines which deal with art or science, but NW is the only magazine that deals in detail with both of them. The people who buy the magazine tend to be interested in both the arts and the sciences, and surely something can be gained by having a publication that covers the whole field - the kind of perspective one obtains is very useful. I think that the 'literary thinking' you object to in Butterworth's stories is a perfectly legitimate technique. There are many books written in the first person, having as their protagonist an uneducated character, and yet which have a perfectly normal literary style. I am at present reading A Woman of Rome by Moravia, the central character of which is an uneducated street-walker; and yet she can say things like: "This constant ebb and flow of his deepest vitality was first revealed to me by the frequent alternation in him of states of ardour and enthusiasm with others of apathy and inertia." Perhaps you personally object to this, but I think it is wrong to expect the author to 'justify' this, in view of the fact that it is a convention fully accepted by the best writers. Another thing with which I disagree is the sentence: "The writers have all realised that to sell to Mike they must experiment with both form and style." This is totally untrue. What is happening is that a large number of young writers are beginning to use these techniques, and that NW provides a useful outlet. Many established writers have stories using experimental ideas, that they were not able to sell - now they can. It is certainly not a case of writing for a market. Brian Aldiss justifiably thinks of his 'Charteris' stories as among his best work. My own recent stories were not written 'for' NW - if the present markets (not just NW) didn't exist I would still write these stories, but probably not sell them. I think that your criticism of MASTERSON AND THE CLERKS is rather arbitrary. I can assure you that the 'source' is not the Gormenghast trilogy at all - Sladek has never read it; but even if it was, this would not affect the story, which should be taken at its own merits. CAMP CONCENTRATION owes a great deal to Thomas Mann's Doctor Faustus, but this does not invalidate it. Trace influence by all means, but it is a mistake to complain about them unless you are reading only a mannered shadow of the original. Your comment about the 'over-use of the plain anglo-saxon word that begins with F' is also rather subjective.

Recommending reading: Bottles Bums and Bassinets
by Charles Randolph Harris an exciting tale of nightlife in the
wilds of Essex. Burnt in Bangor - Banned in Ballywater.
Free transistor radio given with every copy. Published by PeePee Press

Letters 2

You are not objecting to the fact that it is used too often, but because you think it is a nasty word. If I complained that the last issue of SCOT over-used the word 'instant', it would seem a strange criticism indeed. I can assure you that the author's who write for NW are not so childish that they like 'the novelty of seeing it in print'; this is rather insulting. Personally I have never used it in a story, but if there was a need I would use it as many times as I saw fit. When I was in the army I once sat in the guardroom listening to a normal conversation, calculating how often obscene words were used by the soldiers. The average was one word in five. Supposing I wanted to recreate the conversation of these soldiers? What would you have me do? Print hundreds of asterisks? Leave tasteful blanks? Or falsify their conversation completely? You see the influence of Ballard everywhere, Ethel, where it doesn't exist. When I look at the current state of the field, I am surprised that Ballard's influence has been so minute. Mind you, I'm not sure whether this is a good sign or not. The use of headed sections is nothing to do with the influence of Ballard; it is an accepted technique, old-fashioned or not. I didn't say that there has been no experimentation with the form and structure of writing. I said 'a steady tradition of development' which is a different thing entirely. In music and painting techniques have been developed and assimilated, and the character of each of the arts has changed continually. The experiments of Beethoven have been absorbed completely into the tradition of music, as are being those of Webern. What I was implying was that although there has been experimenting in writing, literature, as an art, has not moved forward to the extent of the other arts, and is at present in a stagnant condition. This leads to the kind of ephemeral and mannered work that we are seeing so much of today, and is, I think, an extremely unhealthy and dangerous state for an art to be in. The Eye of the Lens was not designed to be something on which to use one's imagination, if by this you mean a sort of starting-gate from which the reader's mind gallops away into the distance. They were purely meant as stories to be read, and the reader should take them as they are. I'm sorry that you didn't like them, but I'm very glad that at least you gave them a try. This is all we ask." ***My apologies for having to omit any paragraphing..I too have economics to think about! Thank you for giving my criticisms such a detailed reply. On many of the points you make I guess we must agree to differ..but I would like to dispute over one of them. If I complain that the overuse of the word 'fuck' makes for dullness in a story --you must not tell me that I am complaining because it is a 'nasty' word. How do you know what words I consider 'nasty'? I said it made dull reading--and that is what I meant. Go through BUG JACK BARRON and substitute for 'fuck' any other word you care to choose--and then tell me it does not make dull reading! I am moved to only one other comment...NW authors are never childish --aw come on now!***

Archie Mercer

10 Lower Church Lane

St Michael's

Bristol 2.

one that I just couldn't bring myself to read at all, I and the magazine parted company. I guess it and I just don't belong in the same continuum any more.

...Then Richard Labonte and yourself arguing about trade unions. "Unions" say you, "are not an abstract thing..they are made up of workers." True enough.

Those workers then proceed to elect themselves leaders on various levels. The

"..Each to his own taste of course, but the subsidised NEW WORLDS repel me. I bought and read the first 3 or 4 - I found the artwork thoroughly off-putting for a start, and the text unreadable. After having bought

Letters 3

resulting union comprises leaders-plus-members, and although the former are technically ancillary to the latter, they tend on the whole to have a somewhat wider social conscience than does the mass that has elected them. Anything constructive done by the union is probably done by the "head" while the "body" isn't looking. The "body" is simply and selfishly concerned with its own well-being. Its own, that is, and nobody else's. For instance: every union victory on the wages front adds to the national cost of living. This should be self-evident. But unions still strike, to the public inconvenience, trying to get their own way. If they get it, everybody else's cost of living goes up, including (particularly) that of the pensioners. But one never heard of unions going on strike for pensions to be raised, since pensioners have no equivalent weapon...I agree that unions were necessary when they were formed. Selfishness is not prerogative of the employee - employers have it in equal measure. Right now, unions are not, themselves, necessary. The trouble is, of course, that were they to be abolished, there would then be an immediate need for them again. Therefore unions are something of a necessary evil.***

Sid Birchby
40 Farris Wood Ave
Didsbury
Manchester 20.

"You have pronounced shame upon me... See how you make me react... have you read 'Imaginary Friends' by Alison Lurie (Heinemann, 1967)? It is the story of a couple of sociologists who decide to study a group of people who believe that they are in touch with beings from another planet and what happens when the beings announce that they are about to visit Earth. Who is deluded? Who is manipulating whom? It is a mildly funny and wholly disconcerting novel of the type that magazine SF ought to have developed and never did... Ian Peters would query my remark that all the Stuart Kings were bad for the country. He was particularly thinking of Charles II. I respect his opinion, but beg to hold to mine. I judge that the main object of Charles was, to paraphrase Kipling, to keep his head when all about lost theirs. Or at least, his father. Having been invited back after the Cromwellian episode, his main concern, as I see it, was to do nothing that would put his own head on the block and to do everything that would curry favour with potential headsman. To be fair to him, he had to make his way among a nation that had got the bit between its teeth and was no longer prepared to admit the divine right of anybody... That does not however excuse his support of for instance the oppression of the Fuitans who had lately been in power. An ancestor of mine, and here I declare an interest... was one of Philip Henry's pupils at the time when the Five Mile Act was in force, and I would recommend reading the Diaries of Henry in order to see what that entailed... No, Ian: the most one can say is that Charles II gave the country was a space to recover its balance after the excesses of the Civil War, and, considering the shower of tyrants he permitted to flourish in doing so, one must conclude that the balance is against him. Who let Bunyan spend 12 years in jail? Who let the Duke of York put Covenanters to the thumbscrews? Do you really deprecate Rochester's epigram: "Here lies our sovereign lord the king, Whose word no man relies on; Who never said a foolish thing, And never did a wise one. ? Best wishes, and God Save the Queen."***

Rick Sneary,
2962 Sta Ana
South Gate
Calif.

"...I am given to wonder where you find all these odd novels. This one sounds delightfully whacky. If I weren't $1\frac{1}{2}$ lifetimes behind in my reading of what I already own, I might try looking it up. With so

Letters 4

much rain in this veil of tears I don't care too much for "serious" novels that only make me feel depressed about some one else's troubles..I think one of the great joys of old fashion s.f. was it was so optimistic. No matter how bad things were the hero, who was pure of heart and a right good guy, would always out smart the bems. Now days our lead characters are more crazy and mixed up than most average people, and their troubled world sounds worse than ours. Certainly no place I'd want to escape to....Your answers to my questions about mini skirts were about as I expected, though the sight of all those bare knees in London Winter does more to chill me than make my blood run warm"

Mervyn Barrett
179 Walm Lane
London,NW2

"The letter section is sort of grinding to a halt on the subject of the American Indian. I think you might dwell upon the significance of the fact that none of the letters you've printed have been from American Indians. I am not surprised by this of course; I know my red brothers too well to be surprised. They hold themselves aloof from the fork-tongued prattle of the white man. Lacking anything else to offer let me proffer a New Zealandly oriented riddle:Q. What is strong and green and climbs mountains? A.Sir Edmund Celery."*** Words fail me!***

Darroll Pardoe
95 E.12th St.
Columbus
Ohio 43201,USA

"I was very interested in reading your remarks on recent issues of New Worlds, as it is just about impossible to get NW here. Come to think of it, I had enough difficulty getting hold of a copy when I was back in England, but I did in the end manage to see the first three(I think)of the Arts Council-backed issues, and from your comments it seems the development of NW has gone on along the lines begun in these issues, only further. While I wasn't exactly avidly enthusiastic over the new NW, I did enjoy some items in it, and I think there is definitely a place for such a type of magazine, both in sf and more generally, and I wish Mike luck in overcoming the difficulties (and bad luck) that have dogged NW thus far...Does Roy Tackett really mean to be taken seriously when he says that in the US the various ethnic groups have 'mixed together fairly well' -tell that to the negroes in the ghettos! The racial riots that we hear about every summer, and also my personal observations since I came over here, have convinced me that the negro and white groups, at least, have definitely NOT mixed together even 'fairly well'. And I think the situation is polarizing, rather than gradually improving. The philosophy of 'I'm all right Jack' is notable in some areas of British society, but here I would say that it is the basic tenet of a majority of the people, white or black. Every man for himself and damn the underdog. And in the US, with its acceptance of violence as an everyday matter, this is going to lead to trouble soon. Something of a similar phenomenon may be noted in the American contrast of private affluence with public squalour, where for example the Columbus city council has little or no money available even for quite urgently needed projects."***I should think that US fans who wish to get NW would be best advised to write either to Ken Slater if they have an account with him or to Mike direct. Addresses: K.Slater, 75 Norkolk St.Wisbech. M.Moorcock,11 Goodge Street,London W1....NW costs 5 shillings.

Ed C:x!

"I must say the so-called "new Wave" hasn't impressed me a bit. I don't recoil from innovation, but I read this stuff for the enjoyment it brings. Just finished reading The Primal Urge by Aldiss which was enjoyable as hell and completely

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Arleta,Cal.91331,USA

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different in style and concept from Starship by the same author. So the new wave can innovate and experiment; but I don't have to like it because it is expected of me...Did anybody, anytime, ever publish any sort of index of OMFA? If so, I would dearly love to get hold of a copy. I will pay a reasonable sum for it..or I will trade old fanzines, or prozines.***Yes, there was an Index published once-by Inchmerry Fandom. So perhaps someone will listen to your plea for a copy.***

Harry Warner "I was impressed by the respect that you show to the New
423 Summit Ave. Worlds school of science fiction. Your tastes seem to run
Hagerstown like mine to a less hectic and more coherent sort of writ-
Maryland.21740. ing, but Nibblings leads me to wonder if I might not be
USA able to make partial sense out of the new school,too. Of
course, these efforts to write science fiction in the general style of ultra-
modern poetry have a couple of built-in defects. One trouble is the inherent
necessity for a science fiction story to reveal its own unreal environment
and assumptions unobtrusively to the reader; if the reader must untangle a
tangled web of language, he may not have enough intellectual energy remaining
to comprehend this implied background. The other danger is that too often
this kind of writing becomes more a game than literature, the contest to det-
ermine if the reader can spot the key passages and allusions that will enable
him to get the general meaning, without asking the author or a better-read
friend for help. I can imagine a person liking the avant garde fiction because
he's good at figuring it out, not because he enjoys the stories, just as some
people read murder mysteries only to try to deduce the identity of the killer
before the writer reveals it...Fog in Venice does seem like an unexpected
thing. But I once spent an idle half-hour trying to figure out which things
were impossible to imagine in celebrated cities. I couldn't conceive, in the
case of Venice, of anyone going to the grocery store and buying canned peaches
or pimiento cheese....The small TAFF vote from Britain probably is related to
the small number of fanzines over there. But I still feel that an occasional
TAFF report published in fanzines as a serial would be the best way to keep
the benefits of the project before the fannish eye."***Certainly TAFF does not
need the money brought in by these reports. This is because Con committees
have been so generous, I think. Well--any delegate who still has a report
to com out and wishes to use SCOT would be welcome to do so.***

MF THANKS TO ALL WHO WROTE -

I hope you all note that we have had a devaluation of sterling. I have not yet raised my subscriptions. I will have to do so after the next issue. So now is your chance.....I shall also be again pruning the list of those who do not respond either with cash or comment. These are hard financial times my friends. I bet someone will remind me that nurses have been given a 3 1/2% rise..true! Only the payments so far have been to ward sister level only; which leaves me out. Also..without the publicity given to the rise..the charge for board and lodging goes up also.

Ethel Lindsay

Reduced
Cost

Mr & Mrs Moffatt
9826 Paramount Blvd
Downey, Calif. 90240. USA

Come
Wednesday
shopping
in Kingston

