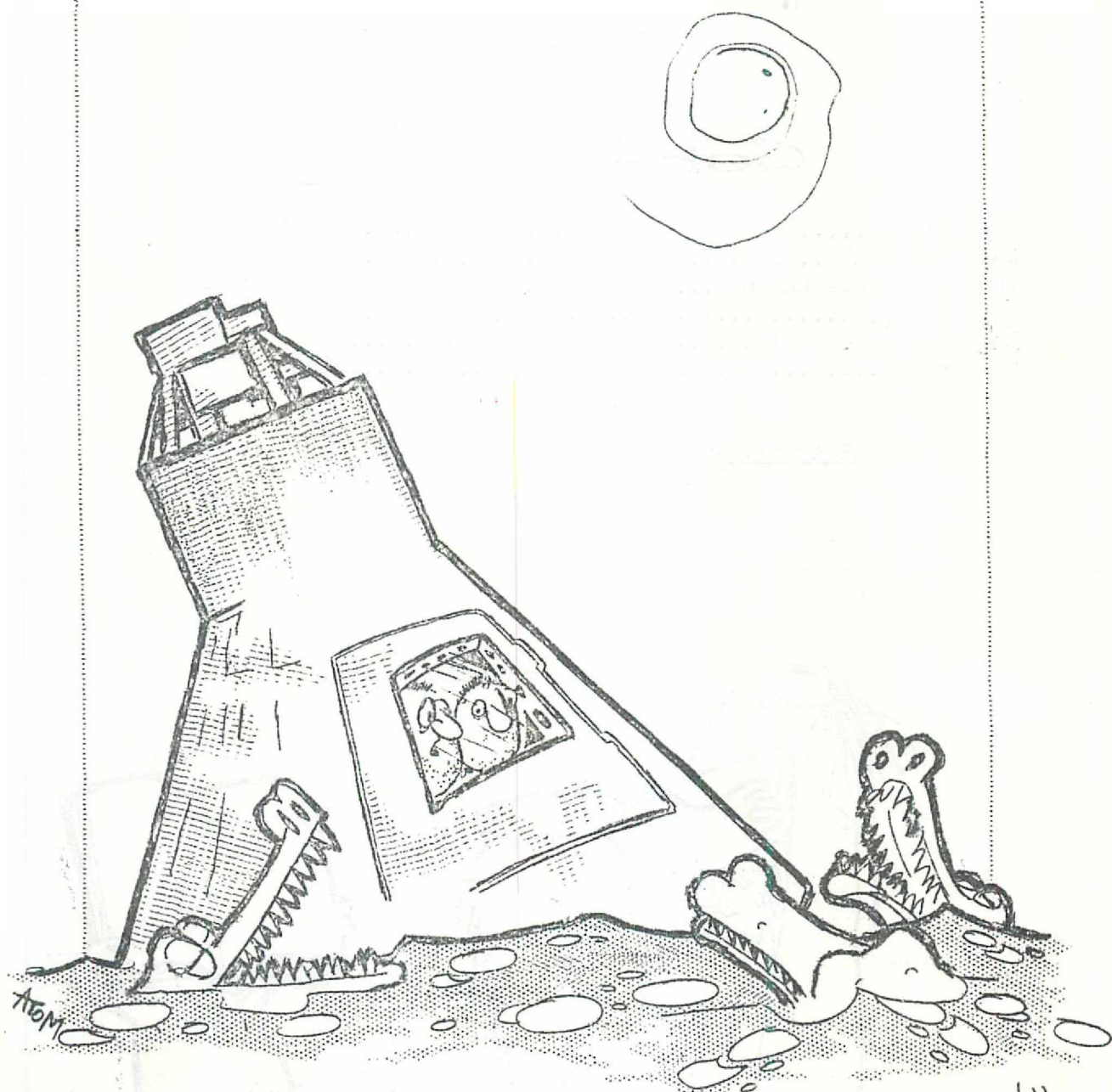


SCOTTISH



"Well they certainly don't look like recovery frogmen to me!"

Scottishie 52

Published by Ethel Lindsay
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May 1969

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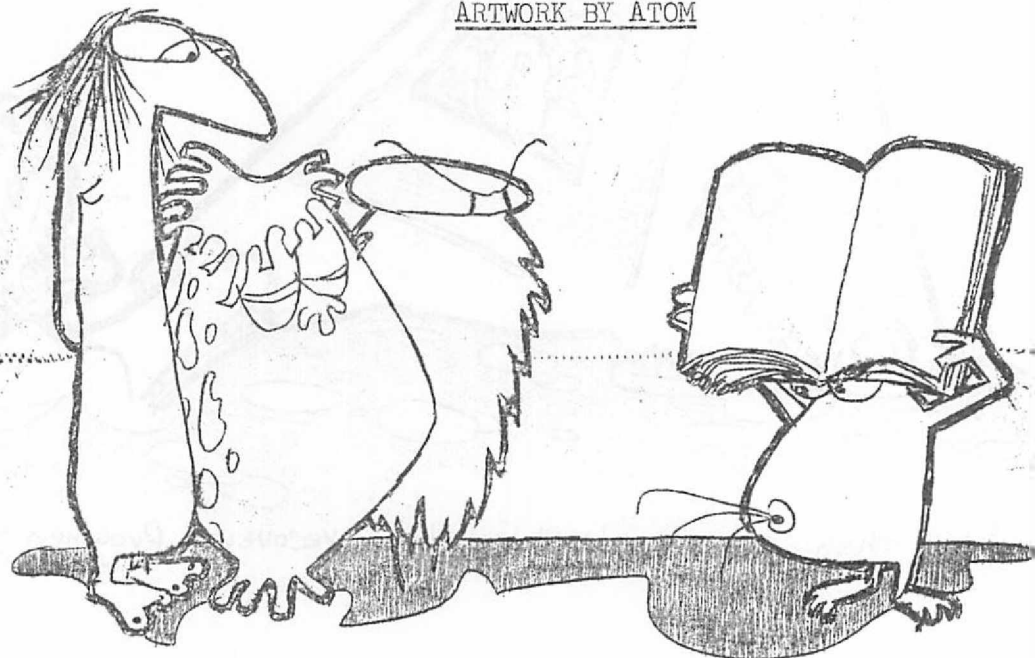
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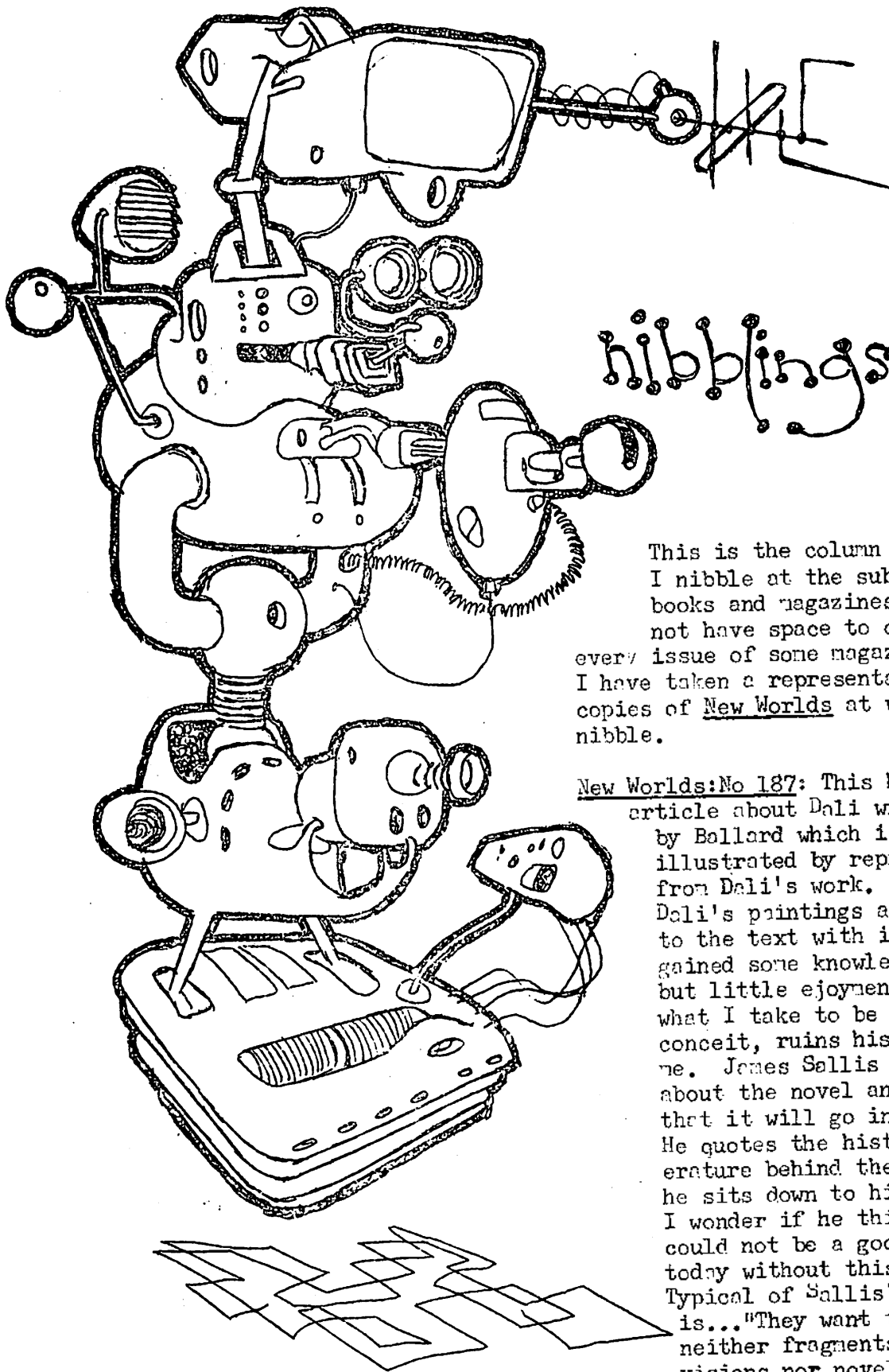
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ARTWORK BY ATOM





nibblings

This is the column in which I nibble at the subject of books and magazines. I do not have space to cover every issue of some magazines; so I have taken a representative two copies of New Worlds at which to nibble.

New Worlds: No 187: This has an article about Dalí written by Ballard which is richly illustrated by reproductions from Dalí's work. I admire Dalí's paintings and turned to the text with interest. I gained some knowledge from it but little enjoyment; as always, what I take to be Ballard's conceit, ruins his writing for me. James Sallis is writing about the novel and the way that it will go in the future. He quotes the history of literature behind the writer as he sits down to his task— and I wonder if he thinks one could not be a good writer today without this knowledge. Typical of Sallis' own style is.... "They want to produce neither fragments of personal visions nor novels that seem

Nibblings 2

all method, each reminiscent of charts, like those a woman keeps for her menstrual cycle". How odd, I think, of all the charts that can be kept - for a man to choose this one! Sallis is a bit short on clear and simple statements but I've nailed one down:- "For the new fiction is a fiction of misdirection: it points one way and happens another". I must say it is a very helpful statement as one approaches the fiction of NW. The authors are engrossed with the end of the world- I wonder if this stems from the feeling - after I die - how can the world go on? There are certain words that appear frequently such as "spermatoza" and "metastasis". Norman Spinrad writes a piece that has a word or two standing alone at intervals like 'pacification'. This strongly reminded me of a 'Laugh-IN' running gag. I thought the best piece in this issue was an article by Moorcock on Mervyn Peake; which has some photographs that cannot have appeared elsewhere. A poem by Peake is quoted whose last line is "Nor greed nor fear can tear our faith apart. When every heart-beat hammers out the proof. That life itself is miracle enough". It is the only hopeful statement I've seen in NW and is what I call writing.

New Worlds:No 188

This issue announces the retirement of both Moorcock and Platt from the editorship. Lead story is by Moorcock A CURE FOR CANCER. This features Jerry Cornelius and is to be continued. It is supposed to take place in 1970 and is an action-packed parody of the Bond style--but naturally without the explanations for any of the action. The opening scene in the roof garden of Derry & Toms has its amusement--but the continual switches does not involve me; I began to become bored. I don't mind suspending my belief to follow an author but this one really lost me at the opening scene. It finished by having Jerry climb up into a helicopter after a gun battle and I could have happily followed him. Only Mike had to add the touch of having the ladies left behind vainly trying to obtain tea and -presumably- starving to death in a genteel fashion. That, said I to myself when I reached this part, is Mike bugging about. At the panel discussing New Wave writing at the Oxcon Lucie-Smith quoted an old-time SF story and asked how we could believe this? When I asked the panel how then I could be expected to believe this Derry & Tom episode, John Brunner answered loftily- "You just don't understand an alternate world!". Well, it's a fact I don't believe in this alternate world! The rest of the stories in this issue I would sum up as being of the doom, gloom, and boom boom variety..they sure are a pessimistic lot! One thing I would like to praise in NW is their review section; the standard there is excellent. NEW WORLDS can be obtained at 5/- each or 60/- (10\$), only: 271 Portobello Road, London, W.11.

Cosmos:No 1:Science-Fantasy Review, obtainable from 115, Wanstead Park Rd. Cranbrook, Ilford, Essex. 2s or 35¢. Yearly rate-24s or \$4.50. Monthly. The editor is Walter Gillings. Older fans will recall that he is a professional journalist (newly retired) who entered fandom in 1927 and who published TALES OF WONDER Britain's first shilling SF magazine. There is an article that describes the beginning of a new SF magazine VISION OF TOMORROW which will be published in June. John Carnell writes his work with NEW WRITINGS IN SF. Tim Stout discusses horror films; and Geoffrey Giles described the progress of the SF Book Club. There are also book reviews. Highlight is undoubtedly Arthur C. Clarke writing about 2001..and his reactions to the reviews of the film. This magazine has made a great start and deserves support.

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Well, now to some books..

Binary Z: by John Rankine. Dobson Books. 21s. This is the story of the headmaster of a secondary modern school. Excavators in the school grounds have revealed a black ovoid which has apparently lain there for ages. It is Hartley, the headmaster who recognises that there is a binary number on the ovoid and so christens it Binary Z. The story is composed of two strands--attempts to deal with the ovoid which appears to be indestructible; and the headmaster's reflections at the idea of his school becoming comprehensive. I wish I knew more about the educational setup and the coming changes; I'd be better able to check if my unsympathetic feeling towards the views of Hartley are justified. The attempts to deal with the ovoid and the love affair between Hartley and one of his teachers are not so much interwoven as marching side by side. An unusual book for the SF genre.

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep: by Philip K. Dick. Rapp & Whiting. 21s. The year is 1992 and Earth is covered with radioactive dust. For those that remain life is really weird--hardly any animals left alive so that the possession of a live--instead of artificial--pet is the abiding obsession of Rick Decard, bounty hunter. An absorbing novel, full of new concepts, and told in a compelling fashion. A book to read for a second time to ensure you have grasped all that happens to Decard and why Earth is in such a mess. Also liable to make you think about how precious life is, and to eye your pet with renewed appreciation. There is a cult called "Mercerism" which involves the use of an 'empathy machine' that is intriguing. And what is it that Decard hunts? Wild androids!

These Savage Futurians: by Philip E. High. One could not complain of a lack of ideas in this book; but I got the feeling that there were just too many! An Earth dependant upon disposables with a very short life; and the resultant chaos when this broke down. Scientists who remain hidden in order to get the culture ahead again. An island of technology which uses whole villages as laboratory tests to find a stable culture. There is even an alien element towards the end of the book. The protagonist, Robert Ventnor, becomes a rather colourless character in the process of telling all this. He starts as a member of one of the villages marked out as having a dangerously high ability for gadgeteering. For this he is to be destroyed but manages to escape and so meets up with the men of the title. Whilst the characters are all very uninteresting; the ideas about the shaping of cultures are more provocative. Dobson Books. 18s.

The still, small voice of trumpets: by Lloyd Biggle Jr. I enjoyed this story very much for here the hero, Forzon, is likable, interesting and his ideas of what is worthwhile in life are excellent. This is the story of a culture which is being manipulated by a team trying to make it fit for membership in the Galactic Federation. This must, however, be done by underground methods - and the team has been trying unsuccessfully to foment revolution for four hundred years. How Forzon tries a different solution which uses the people's love of beauty makes a very exciting and satisfying story. Rapp & Whiting. 21s.

Stand on Zanzibar: by John Brunner. I do not think it possible to review this without mentioning dos Passos' "U.S.A." as STAND ON ZANZIBAR uses a similar construction. It is an exceedingly useful way to show a whole

Nibblings 4

culture - and one can only wonder that no SF author has thought of using it before. Elsewhere I have read that one could read this book in three parts..the main plot..the 'context'...and the 'happening world'..but I enjoyed reading it as the author intended. I would not praise one part above the others. The three strands are skillfully woven to show what life could well be like in the 21st century. The three main characters are full of life and absorbing to read about. There is Norman House the negro who has become a successful 'corporation' man; and who then finds that there is a far more rewarding job for him to do in Africa. There is Chad Mulligan, a sociologist who detested his world so much he dropped out; yet in the end could not stay away. He too rises to the challenge of what is happening in Africa..and also to working with the computer Shalmaneser. Really, Shalmaneser could be counted as a main character too! Lastly there is Donald Hogan the character to whom I at first felt most drawn; and whose tragedy I found most saddening. He is the one who practises the art of synthesis and is paid by the government to do nothing but read. There are heaps of other characters whose lives help to fill out the picture of this world with men on the moon; advanced computers; advanced medicine; and yet people who must sleep on the streets in New York. A vastly over-crowded world..the action moves from New York to Africa and back and always the details are cumulative and convincing. The things that Brunner foresees - the changes in fashion, drugs, marriage, speech, are logical from present-day trends. I am immensely impressed by this book and cannot praise it too highly.

Cosmos:No 2:Address and rates as before. This issue has another varied list of contents. It starts with an article on No 1 Fan,Forrest J.Akerman Then a parson writes on the thought that it is time "that the Church and its leaders took notice of what the sf writers are saying." There is a short Oxcon report followed by an article on author John Beynon Harris..better known, of course, as John Wyndham. Efficient book news and reviews and a page for the bargain hunters and collectors. The cover features a photo of Anne McCaffrey.

Ethel Lindsay

A special message to British readers....

Have you voted yet for TAFF?

The deadline is May 31st.

The number of votes that has come in for the last few campaigns has been pitifully small from this country. Please try to make our total better this year. TAFF is a Good Thing.

and while you are at it
Vote for Eddie!

ace paperbacks



Challenge to Reality by John Macklin. H-103.60¢. This is the eighth in a series by Macklin; so his collections of ghost stories must be a good seller. Each collection has about forty stories.

Subspace Explorers by Edward "Doc" Smith. H-102.60¢. Maybe I ought not to admit it but this is the first Doc Smith story I have read. This is a real SF old-timer; the action is fast and the whole of space is the background. Deston meets Barbara and discovers that they are both psionic. There is war on Earth and war in space and plenty scope for them to meet action.

Edgar Rice Burroughs, Master of Adventure by Richard A. Lupoff. N-6.95¢. Not being much of a Burrough's fan I was pleasantly surprised to find this highly readable. Probably because it is very well written and has an objective approach to the subject that is refreshing. The pattern of Burrough's books is covered in an interesting way. In citing possible sources for the ideas of Burrough's this book gives a lot of information about early SF. There is also a biography by H.H. Heines and it ends with a useful Checklist.

The Demn Breed by James H. Schmitz. H-105.60¢. ACE SPECIAL. This is an adventurous tale of a young woman pitting her wits against enemy invaders --and aliens at that. She is trapped on an island where the invaders are preparing to take over the planet. How she foils the enemy with the aid of mutant otters is imaginatively told.

World of the Starwolf by Edmond Hamilton. G-766.50¢. This is the third in a series which features Morgan Chane and tells of his return to his home planet Varna and his efforts to set in motion a scheme to steal a fabulous treasure. High adventure, humour, and a hero who is red-blooded.

Ace Double...Code Duello by Mack Reynolds and The Age of Ruin by John M. Faucette. H-103.60¢. The first is good fun - a secret service team is sent to Firenze to deal with an underground movement which is preventing progress on the planet. The fun lies in the team sent--a pack of six people each endowed with special talents. I enjoyed most Jerry, whose special talent lay in the fact that he is always lucky. The title comes from the fact that Firenze has a culture much preoccupied with 'honour' and liable to duelling at the drop of a hat. Fast paced plot. The second half of this Ace Double is an after-the-Bomb story told in the fantasy style I dislike. On the first page..."I, Jahelazar of the purple locks, sprang awake, a sinewy arm reaching for Chernac, the Throwing Sword...." I just can't read stuff like that.

Ace Paperbacks 2

The Tin Men: By Michael Frayn: 81290.60¢. The satire in this is very sharp; it is funny and witty and quite outrageous. The characters are as grotesque as any in GORMENGHAST. The setting is that of a research centre for the study of computers; where men are solemnly considering—computerised ethics; computerised newspapers, computerised sport, and even computerised pornographic novels! "There aren't too many variations after all." There is something here for nearly everyone; whatever you may dislike about life today you will find that Frayn has taken a savage dig at it. Now I laughed most at the notion of a computerised newspaper with files of stories to be used such as the "I plan to give away my baby says Mother-to-be." No doubt other aspects of this computerised comedy may make you laugh. On the other hand if you think of Cricket as rather a sacred subject..you may cry!

The Left Hand Of Darkness: by Ursula K. LeGuin. It's quite a while since I've read of a planet that truly seemed so alien. It is called Winter and it really makes you shiver with cold to think about it! This world is first seen through the eyes of Genly, the first Envoy to the planet and he is able to describe it's whiteness and the cold that the natives take for granted. Estravan is the native who also tells part of the story. Estravan; like all the inhabitants, is neither male nor female..but so used are we to thinking only in these terms that it was well towards the end of the book before I, like Genly, would recognise this fact. In describing how this lack of sexual differentiation effects the culture, the author produces a haunting tale of human relations. This is descriptive and perceptive writing at its very best. Ace Special. 47800.95¢.

The Unfair Fare Affair: By Peter Leslie. A Man from U.N.C.L.E. book. This one concerns the abduction of Mr Waverly and the subsequent adventures of Solo and Illya in tracking down an organisation specialising in the transfer of wanted men. 51701.50¢. No 18 in the series

Envoy to New Worlds: by Keith Laumer: 20730.50¢. This is the first book about the adventures of Kietief; and it is really a collection of short stories. In them he starts as a Vice-Consul in the Corps Diplomatique of the Terrestrial Embassy and ends as a First Secretary. Not that he moves up the ladder by conventional behaviour, anything but! Amusing and inventive.

Ghosts of the Golden West: by Hans Holzer: 28620.60¢ A collection of ghost stories told in some detail by an author who firmly believes in them.

The Planet Wizard: by John Jakes, 67060.60¢. This tells of two planets in the days after the fall of a great Galactic civilisation. One planet is sunk in poverty and superstition. The other contains the machines that could guide men back to scientific learning and decent living. The first is called Pastora and the second Lightmark. From Pastora goes Magnus who fakes wizardry to the other; his daughter Maya and her admirer Robin. With them is Catto, descendent of the former Manager of the machines. Catto is the one with the dream to restore the working of the machines and so gain power. Yet Magnus is really the one who sets the knowledge free. An interesting adventure story.

Flowers for Algernon and Other Stories: 9th Series of the Best From Fantasy and Science Fiction. Edited by Robert P. Mills. 05448.60¢. The one in the title is the best known, of course, and it is good to have it here in such a handy collection. Other authors who are represented are Heinlein, Tenn, Bester, and Sturgeon. The most poignant is Sturgeon's THE MAN WHO LOST THE SEA. One couldn't pick out one and say 'that's the funniest' for it isn't that sort of collection. The one I received most enjoyment from though, untinged with any sadness was FAR FROM HOME by Walter S. Tevis, a delightful tale of how a whale got into an Arizona swimming-bath and a small boy got a wish.

The Green Millennium/Night Monsters: by Fritz Leiber. Ace Double. 60¢. The first half of this is of good length; taking up $\frac{3}{4}$ of the book. It is the tale of a green cat and some very kooky characters. Phil, the hero, isn't particularly unusual, in fact he's been rather a dull young man, till he meets the cat. As fast as this cat jumps into Phil's arms and you think all is well...some character pinches it from him and he's off on another hunt for it. In the course of his adventures he meets up with Jack and Juno Jones the male-female wrestlers, Moc the red-haired gangster, Mary and Sacheverell the weird-cult couple, and last but not least Dion and Dytie the strange pair who had brought the green cat to Earth. Fast-paced and amusing. The second half consists of 4 short stories. The 'straight' ghost story I'M LOOKING FOR JEFF impressed me the most. The one called THE BLACK GONDOLIER which seems to substitute oil for deros, impressed me the least. Worth getting for the green cat!

Dobson Books issued another in their SF series...just as I thought I was finished with the books for this quarter. Just enough space to nip it in here....

TIME TO LIVE: by John Rackham. Dobson Books. 18s. This opens with a bang.. a man in a speeding vehicle which is alien to him and which he cannot control, a man who has amnesia, and who is rescued by an alien when he crashes the vehicle. To all intents and purposes this man is Jim Hart; at least according to the photograph in the identity card he carries. He then discovers he is wanted for murder. You may guess some of the twists of this plot; but I'll venture to wager you do not guess them all. The other main character is the alien Kalmede Aporia; and the relationship between the two is kept interesting and lively. I enjoyed this mainly because the characterisation is good. It left me wondering what happened next!

Ethel Lindsay.

PEDLARS

I HAVE KNOWN

Pedlars come in as many shapes and sizes as the wares they sell. Tall, short, sauve, awkward, agressive, timid, smooth, incoherent -- you name it and there's one to fit. But despite their being such a motley crew, they're not as exotic as their predecessors of bygone days. No longer the horse-drawn cart with the bagful of magic -- or the essential service; what we get today is a stream of people selling insurance, logs, lace, pegs and other indiscriminate paraphernalia. And many don't even come to the door themselves but prefer to be long range pedlars, pumping advertising material through the letter box.

However, of those who do come a-knocking a few are out of the ordinary either in approach or in what they are selling, and leave you with a greater insight of the world at large as a result of their calling. Generally all you get is further evidence of the depths to which a human being can sink, but occassionally there arrives at your door someone like the young vacuum cleaner salesman who visited us one day.

He was only about 17 years old and this was obviously his first selling job -- lured, no doubt, by promises of wealth beyond etc. Anyway, he got off to a good start by getting our name right (almost) which showed that he was willing to work at it. After making sure we knew of his Company, he launched into a long stereotyped spiel about the magnificence of the machine. Only to be told, when he stopped for breath, that we already had one. A fleeting look of defeat and dejectedness passed over his face; but he had been well trained and his teacher would have been proud of him. He immediately tried to get me to trade in our almost new cleaner for exactly the same model. I was astounded at the sheer cheek of it, and after throwing him out I wondered if I should have got his autograph, for all I can say is "Look out Mr. Hoover".

But this sort of inspiring contact rarely takes place in any dealings with pedlars. More often it's a battle of wits and will power -- and sheer cunning. You have the man selling brushes who lays out all his wares on the doorstep and then rings the bell. When you open the door you are confronted by a hairy kaleidoscope and a vaccuous little-boy grin, appealing for approval. Can you refuse to buy, negating such obvious effort? In these circumstances it is recommended that you send your wife to the door; she invariably has had much more experience of this sort of attack and feels no compunction, no pang of conscience as she firmly closes the door.

On the other hand, the male presence is preferred when the visitors are diddicoys. These quasi-gipsies will invariably bang on the door with their fists despite the presence of an adequate bell and/or knocker. They will stand there and glare at you, and spit out beligerantly "Buy a piece of lace/bunch of flowers/bundle of pegs", all at exhorbitant prices, and add ominously "for luck". The only luck you are likely to get, however, is that they will go away and leave you alone -- for the time being at any rate.

A hardy annual is the religious pedlar. These come in a variety of

depths and denominations, but with one thing in common -- Salvation. This is their product; they are all selling Salvation, some at a price which is difficult to determine, some at the very economical price of 4d a copy. This lot is the easiest to get on with; if you're in the mood you can spend many happy hours having them explain their product to you, if not they will quickly go away.

One of my most memorable encounters with the peddling fraternity was in connection with the sub-species Insurance. One morning we received a most ornate letter telling us that we had been nominated as members of some society, and a committee member would be coming round to interview us to see if we were good enough to join. On making enquiries we found that this society was nothing more than an insurance company. Annoyed at the underhand approach we waited for the 'committee member'.

He came; a tall, well dressed, suave individual sporting a luxuriant hairy growth beneath his nose. He was so impeccably, but casually dressed that most people would have felt scruffy, awkward and at a distinct disadvantage in his presence. At the time, however, I was doing a building/plumbing job in the house, and greeted him with my hair full of rubble, plaster and spiders, and wearing disgusting trousers and a sweater which had ambitions of being a string vest. He held out his hand and I took it with my filthy paw (I wouldn't have shaken hands with me if I'd been him).

He was so glad that we had been nominated as members of his society and if we had a few moments to spare he would tell us what it entailed. "It's an insurance company, isn't it?" I said. Recovering his composure remarkably quickly, he said that it wasn't really an insurance company; it was something more than an insurance company; it was, well, yes it was an insurance company, but a very good one, and wouldn't I like to hear about it? A voice from the kitchen said "We're not interested, we don't want any". "But the benefits are very good in cases of sickness and in old age" he said. I explained the principles of the Welfare State and told him I was paying the Government quite sufficient already, thank you. "Ah, but we have a marvellous scheme for orphans" he said, in a trump card sort of voice. In a serious tone I told him, "We haven't got any orphans." He went away.

I often greet with horror reports of the results of high pressure salesmanship, but in some ways I would be sad to see the methods ruthlessly suppressed. If you make up your mind right at the outset, the exponents of high pressure peddling can be used as a wit sharpening diversion, and if you don't have TV they are almost indispensable. So next time the pedlar-man comes a-knocking at your door, don't kick him out --- exploit him.

JOE PATRIZIO



Robert Coulson
Route 3
Hartford City
Indiana, 47348

"Well, I certainly wouldn't have called THE FINAL PROGRAMME realistic. Anything but. And I even gathered that it was supposed to be humorous, though I didn't find it so. For someone who is telling other people to relax and enjoy life, Moorcock takes himself and his humor awfully seriously. And his humor suffers from it; I don't know if he does. I agree with Singleton's comments on erotica, but after reading Spinrad's material in various fanzines, I emphatically disagree with Peter's assumption that Spinrad didn't expect his readers to be shocked over his wordage. The more shocked they are the better he likes it...Tell Gray Boak that the first volume of Harry Warner's fan history is supposed to be out from Advent by April.15th. However a fan history is hardly what's needed; a sort of general compendium of fandom, including history, mores, etc. would be more useful. In fact, what is needed is an ACE book titled THE IMPROBABLE FANNISH by Walt Willis. To date Eney's FANCYCLOPEDIA has been the best item available, but it's too compartmented for the job I envision... If Andy Porter is correct that NyCon had no Spanish members it's somewhat of a shock to me because I was under the assumption that I'd sent in the money for Dr Dupla's membership. Maybe they never got it, US postal service being what it is, but at least one Spanish fan tried to become a member. I think you're wrong in your definition of "World" conventions, however. A World Convention in which every fan in the world participates is impossible. (Make that "attends" rather than "participate") A World convention is one which is supported and attended by most of the fans in the world. Where most of the fans in the world live in one country, then World and National conventions are synonymous. This is not longer true, of course, but it was true for most of the history of World Conventions, and the lag between extended fanac and a change in the Worldcons is simply

Letters 2

the inertia that influences all human activities....I can't enlighten you too much about the WSFS, but I keep hearing mentions of it and I guess it still exists, somewhere. Maybe after being defeated in the open it went underground.***Dave Kyle told me that the biggest fandom anywhere in the world now—is in Japan. Now if they hold a Worldcon because of that—are they entitled?***

Sid Birchby
40 Farris Wood Ave
Didsbury
Manchester, M20. QND

"Predictably, 'The Old Mill Stream's' remarks, or laments, about whatever happened to the Dream, has aroused fannish feelings. I don't propose to add to what has already been said, but may I say something about the decline of the specifically fannish Dream, which is always a sad thing to observe in a Truefan, and absolutely ghastly to encounter in oneself. It does seem to me that if I were entering fandom for the first time today it would arouse much less sense of wonder than at one time. I don't say that the fans would be less interesting, but that SF itself would not seem much to become excited over. As far as I can remember, I began reading SF for the not unusual reason of Escape; that is to say, for the fascinating Worlds of If that it opened up. Part of the delight, I think, was the feeling that, although these worlds were possible, there wasn't really much chance of achieving them; they'd be most uncomfortable, anyway. There they were...the worlds of space travel, time travel, other dimensions, and the like...beautiful to look upon, like so many soap bubbles glittering in the sun, and to weave dreams upon, of a grandeur beyond anything in the everyday world. (and don't ask me just how one goes about weaving on a soap bubble!) Perhaps one knew that actually to grasp one's dream was not possible. Who, after all, wants a handful of wet suds?....Yet maybe that is what we are left with today. There has been just enough scientific progress since then to make our bubbles go pop in our collective faces, but not enough to sustain the myth-making instinct that is an important part of the human make-up. Myths die, said Jung, when they no longer live and grow; and one myth that is most grievously ailing today is the belief that Science will go on and on, opening up new worlds of wonder to us all.***Well I personally would like to live till I was 100 just to see...***

Archie Mercer
10 Lower Church Lane
St Michael's
Bristol, BS2, 8BA

"Your point to Andrew "Pineapple" Porter about World Cons being essentially national Americans under an erroneous title is a good one. However, things have probably gone too far by now for the simple recognition of this fact to clear everything up with everybody going happily their various ways. Pity, really....The thing I really want to comment on is your own "Natterings", about age-divisions in fandom. One could almost be forgiven for suspecting that you were deliberately exaggerating your feelings in order to try to match equivocal statements from some of the younger element. I remember the party at Platt's to which you refer: I spent most of the time in the company of Chris Priest, Mary Reed, Pete Weston and Daff Sewell, so you'll have to excuse my wondering what age-bar you were talking about....However, in a more general sense, and you understand I'm trying to say this in the nicest possible way - we're all ten years older than we were ten years ago. If we were 30 then, we're 40 now. And in many ways this does make a difference. A 30-year-old and a 25-year-old are on far more equal terms than are a 40-year-old and a 25-year-old.

Letters 3

If one is going to let this be important, then the older one gets, the more cut-off from the young one is going to feel. One of the things I like about fandom - when it's functioning properly - is that things like age, class-background, even nationality, are of less importance than such matters as interests and opinions....You query what Mike Ashley has done to earn the title "Britain's Mr.Fandom". Very recently, since his family circumstances changed in fact, he's done nothing visibly at all. For the couple of years before that, however, he was everything. Masterminded at least two fanzines - XERON and PLINTH - the former running to large-sized issues. Written stories, articles, skits, things in general - hardly a British fanzine of the late PaDS era used to appear without at least one Mike Ashley contribution therein. Their quality varied, of course, but the standard was overall surprisingly high. He also did a lot of indexing and checklisting on the side - PLINTH was mainly devoted to the results of this. If you haven't been receiving the fanzines with his work in, you may or may not be the poorer for the loss - admittedly, they were never Golden Age zines, with too much cruddy artwork and amateur fiction. But they were the zines of their time, and Mike Ashley was in every direction one looked.**** I think I'll leave my comments on your comments about the age-gap thing till I get to NATTERINGS; I want a bit of space for that! As to Mike Ashley..I gather that what you are saying is that in the world of PaDS he was the big fish. But how big was the world of PaDS in British fandom? Surely Mr Fandom for Britain would be known to all fandom there? When PaDS first started I did get some of the zines; I found it hard to say in HAVERINGS anything kind about the "cruddy artwork and amateur fiction"..and they stopped coming very quickly. So I must take your word for the era you mention. ***

Mervyn Barrett
179 Walm Lane
London,NW2

"Don't think I can agree with Peter Singleton about this observation that people who continually use the word, "fuck" have limited vocabularies and can't express themselves any other way. I mean, this might be so but it seems to be presenting an opinion, admittedly a widely held one, as truth,i.e. that the best way of expressing oneself verbally is through the use of a large vocabulary. I don't think this is necessarily so. Given such an excellent word as "fuck" to use one is capable of all manner of communication and self expression. It's all a matter of how it is used, surely. I think it is a fucking marvellous word, myself, I really do. I had a friend who used to use it a lot and to excellent effect but gradually this business of "limited vocabulary" and stuff got to him. We were in the Green Parrot and it was a Saturday night and they'd just closed and so we were eating steak as was our habit on Saturday nights after they'd just closed and this was back in the days when they closed at 6. Billy Graham was in New Zealand at that time on his first crusade there. My friend, Jack Richardson said to me, half way through our meal, "Mervyn, I've made a decision for Christ." I just looked at him. He was serious. "It was at the church at Wainui O Mata. They had his talk relayed and played in the church through loudspeakers. They had counsellors there too and when he said to people to come forward I thought, its now or never and so I went forward. I've decided to give up using the word,"fuck". Naturally I just broke up completely. I went around telling everyone about it and getting the same reaction that I'd had. "Hey Alan, Jack Richardson's made a decision for Christ. He's going to stop saying,"fuck"."What? Christ, he'll have nothing to say." Well Jack stopped saying it for about a week,I don't think he was able to stop himself doing it for even that long. But,

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anyhow, that wasn't part of the decision. Chris Priest's letter: I get very pissed off with people who live outside the United States criticising the cost of the Apollo Project. Even in what could be called serious discussion there seems to be this extraordinary tacit viewpoint than can be summed up as, "Our money belongs to us but America's money belongs to the world."..When you talk about the age gap between older and younger fans, Ethel, you make the gap larger and more real. It's kind of like saying, "Why, Negroes are no different to anybody else as far as I'm concerned." To make a sweeping generalisation or two the difference is not a matter of age so much as a matter of personality groups. A lot of older fans were basically pretty introverted types I'd say. They got into fandom and made contacts through letters and later through personal meetings and got confidence in themselves probably eventually found that they got along easier with mundane types too. Usually fandom was the only and all consuming interest at the beginning but later interests expanded beyond fannish things through getting to know other fans and finding out that they were developing interests beyond fandom. I like to think that the new, younger fans come in without the personality hang ups that our age group might have had and that therefore fandom is just another outlet to them - not the outlet. Because they are largely uninterested in older fannish things and "traditions" doesn't mean that they are any less fans. Things such as fanspeak, or numbered fandoms or old time feuds aren't terribly interesting to anyone who wasn't involved in them. And there is the cultural revolution you know...."***That sure was a sweeping generalisation.. to imply that all older fans had some personality hang-up.***

Billy Pettit "...comment on John Brunner's letter. Before I got any further I want to say that I agree with John's conclusions and feel he is on the right track. He quotes Liebling that half the population of the US lived in a town with only one newspaper. Since I could only remember one city where that was the case, I had to check it. I used the 1965 Information Please Almanac. Going down the list of the 50 largest cities only three had but one newspaper. These cities did not represent 50% of the population, but only about 70 million people out of 200 million. However all of our major cities have huge suburbs and combined with the so-called Sun(weekly regional papers)editions, I don't think you can say or prove that half of the Americans can only have one newspaper delivered daily. Especially not with the mega-cities now forming, where you never really leave a metropolitan area as you drive down the coast of the East or West. Next is the tv station relationship to the population. This is even more favorable. I used the White's radio log for this and went down the lists till I found cities in each part of the country that had but one station. Their average population was under 15,000. And granting tv the minimum range of 50 miles that a cheap set can still pick up successfully, the figure of half just doesn't come close. I think I can prove with a map, Almanac, and tv log that 75% of the US population can view two or more stations. And this is assuming that people will read nothing or view nothing unless it is local....John is trying to use this to say that the American public is controlled by a small monied group because they have to read locally and cannot become aware of the world in general. It is a nice concept and backs up his theories; but it just ain't so. Why does he ignore radio when radio can have a normal effective range of 200 miles on

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a little portable? In Billings, a city of 50,000, I used to buy NEW WORLDS on the stands. I can hardly do that now in London. With a home-made radio I logged 40 states and 18 countries. It is ridiculous to treat American communication as backwards or inefficient. I could use other arguments here too. The US phone system, where you can directly dial any place to any other place across three thousand miles. Compare that with the difficulty of going from London to Ireland or Scotland. A telephone exchange like that is hard to censor. Compare library statistics and see how many American libraries have more books than the British Museum and what the bookrate per capita is in Europe and America.....But in essence, John is right. The statistics don't tell everything. For example how many of these newspapers are owned by a chain and have their overall policy dictated by one or two people? They don't show how many tv newscasts come from the reporting of two or three small groups of newsmen. And the magazine circulation figures don't consider how many people can't/won't read. The American news media is tightly controlled. But it is not controlled like John wants it, by being scattered, local and inefficient. It is controlled by being tightly organised, super-efficient, and originating from a very small number of sources. We could go further, but this is a minor point in John's letter....It annoys me no end when people in Europe tell me how bad our news media is. Even those like John who have seen much of our country. It annoys me because I can see how atrocious your own media is. Granted, the English have huge newspaper circulation figures. But their papers are among the most chauvinistic in the world. I have to buy three or four daily to read even small news items concerning Europe, the Middle East and America. The newspapers here in London simply do not carry any information about the outside world unless it is bad. A good example was the recent election. They told who was elected President but how about the half of the House and third of the Senate that went through elections? What were the names of the new governors and their parties? For this, I had to go to relatives in the states to cut out articles for me. The English newspapers, (with the occasional exception of the Times) are the most limited in scope I've ever seen. The people who usually rave about English papers are the same ones who swear there is no segregation or starvation in England. You can show them for rent signs saying No Coloureds, and they will deny it is segregation....That is why it annoys me so damn much. This country has the same problems that America does, some worse some better. But try to get an Englishman to admit any fault with his own way of life. They are full of criticism for other countries, but so goddamned blind to their own faults that it becomes frustrating to even talk to them. I have seen a few letters from John mentioning our racial problems, and they are damn serious problems. But he has never once mentioned, even in passing, Wolverhampton. But then it is English and Englishmen aren't prejudiced. Not even a little bit. Everybody laughs at Enoch Powell. Why he is no more a serious person than George Wallace...Sorry Ethel, but I just get so damned shook at the blindness of some people here. Really, it is like being home. The same problems, the same people denying there are problems...But back to John's letter. One thing I cannot let stand unchallenged is his statement that Jews were being denied admission to holiday resorts in Florida. I want some damn proof of that statement. I want him to also explain how the religion of tourists was checked, and how many authenticated cases he can prove or show information on. And

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when he has proved how badly the Jews in Florida were treated and segregated, let us talk about the current regulations concerning Commonwealth immigrants. Or sticking to the Jews, let us talk about the British actions from 1940-1948 concerning Jews. How many were allowed to stay in England after escaping from Hitler? Did your papers tell of those whose boat was sent back to the continent before Normandy? Did you ever see pictures of the British prison camps in Cyprus? How many Jews did British sailors and soldiers kill in Palestine? God, you criticise an isolated case of perjudice that happened at a time when your country was killing people.

....There are other statements in the letter I would like to jump on, but I think this is enough. Because I agree with John's conclusions. The US is in a very bad condition of sickness now. The evils of a hundred years are now festering in open wounds. The country is falling to pieces and it won't take the end of the century to do it. We are going to be mighty lucky if we have 20 years left. And here I say we because the world is too close and too small today for isolation to work. When America goes down, it is going to drag half the world with it. And that is the real tragedy, because some peoples are solving the problems posed. And there is a lot of innocence that will be hurt along with the American guilt. The current economic problems indicate how close we are tied to France and Britain. And they to us. And as for countries like Sweden and Denmark that are making reasonable progress in democracy/socialism, take away their English and American markets and they too will come. Or worse, be in the middle if some silly sob in the White House has a bad dream and pushes the button...I don't think the dream, pardon Dream is there any more. I think we better start worrying about survival now. Things are bad, more so than most people realise. For a while, Europe had a chance to get out of the interdependence and create a third world. But De Galle has stopped that. Perhaps there is still a chance that Europe can be united and not follow the Americans down their road to Hell. Perhaps. I haven't seen any signs yet that that blessing has a chance to come about. Oh certainly there are strengths here that the Americans badly need. Culture, lawfulness, and most of all, an enjoyment of life and recognition of other people's feelings. But the faults are here too. I think it is unnecessary to mention the current economic problems of England and France. You can believe that you have no racial problems and I won't argue with you any more. Your schools and students are calm. Most of the time. And there are no religious problems, if you ignore the Indians and the Irish. Unions in France and England are uncontrolled and becoming a destructive force the Americans can't match. Yet. No, we are all going together... Unless. Well unless what? What can change this downhill ride on greased tracks? I don't know. I see a little promise in the rejection by the younger people of the way of life they are pushed into. But it is a small segment of the youth. There are still the ten million Wallace voters to consider. Religion? The churches have failed in every previous major upheaval. Oh, they always manage to save their own skins. Look at the Vatican in World War. II. Revolution? Violently, yet? I don't think so. In fact I think it would do just the opposite. Look who has the guns in America and whose side the police and militia would be on. What the hell can you do? It is like one of those nightmares where you watch a loved one being slowly killed, and you can do nothing because your feet are in invisible quicksand and your hands are paralysed. What the hell can you

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do that will have the slightest effect on the sickness?...Ethel, here is a quote for your American Dream from Stewart Alsop. "There are many factors, other than Vietnam and De Gaulle, that have promoted a rebirth of American isolationism. But perhaps the most powerful factor of all was Lee Harvey Oswald's bullet. For the bullet that tore through John Kennedy's head seems to have torn something vital out of the country's soul, eroding both our idealism and our self-confidence, turning the country in angrily upon itself." I don't really agree with that. I think more of a great predator, sick and maimed, seeking his lair to die out of sight of the other animals. And he is not really behaving rationally even for an animal. All he can think of is to attack anything that stands between him and his dying place. And sometimes he even gets delirious and doesn't know he is sick and tries to act like he did before...You really can't use this for publication at such a late date. So I'm going to send a copy to John Brunner. Maybe I can get him to expand some of his ideas. I would certainly be interested in anything that points to less than destruction of the American peoples and their way of living."***It's never too late to carry on a discussion in a fanzine letter column..even a quarterly schedule one! I paused more before the length of your letter; but then I could not resist publication. Honest indignation is always fascinating to read; an outsider's view of one's own country is always illuminating; and the dialogue between my American and British readers has always been a major force in keeping this fanzine going. Your idea of sending on a copy of the letter to John was a happy one..for I am now able to print his reply right away***

Dear Billy,

Carbon to Ethel. Very hastily, because we've just been told that the loan we applied for to buy a house with has been approved and from this day things are going to be frantic but frantic!..I'm much impressed with the documentation of your counter to my argument concerning news-dissemination in the US and I'm pleased to find that the trend which was so marked at the time when Liebling(my quoted source)was commenting on the press has been halted or even reversed - maybe the anti-trust laws have something to do with this? If I had time, though - which I don't - I think I could show that the situation isn't exactly rosy at present, through reference to the regular reports from the US which appear in the official organ of the NUJ The Journalist. I belong to the Union and receive its monthly publications, and there's a column on the back page devoted to the American scene in which several times a year news of the proposed mergers, cessation of publications, etc.,appears. But this isn't absolutely to the point. Let me hurry forward a bit in this letter of yours to the bit where you mention the faults of the British news media....Yes, very valid. There's the classic tale of the newspaper placard which read:FOG IN CHANNEL -CONTINENT ISOLATED, and that says everything that's wrong with our news. Luckily, though, this isn't the sum total of what we're exposed to. I'll cite a couple of examples which bother me personally. Consider the point which decided Friendly to quit the TV chain he was working for in the Sates; at a peak hour there was the choice between an important senate committee hearing and a fifth re-run of a Lucy Show, and they put out the latter, and Friendly resigned. I don't blame him. And consider the crucial difference between British and American commercial TV; the latter uses shows bought and paid for by the sponsor, whereas under our system only the advertising slots can be bought and it was the

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competition of BBC non-commercial documentaries which forced ITV companies to develop their own -now admirable -documentary series in order to grab a larger slice of the viewing public. I think this suggests we're marginally ahead in that respect...But as to prejudice, particularly race prejudice: who's saying it doesn't exist here? To my dismay, I've found rabid xenophobia even among members of the London Circle, when one might have hoped that as SF readers they would regard people as people - citizens of earth. They don't - I've heard from people at the Globe opinions that would be approved by Enoch Powell(may be rot)...Exclusion of Jews from Florida resorts? Yes, I'm afraid so, up to about WWII; personal information from Floridians and ex-Floridians is my source. The signs at the entrances and the publicity brochures used to say in discreet lettering RESTRICTED CLIENTELE, meaning white Gentile. But I know all about the British equivocation of this - I don't suppose many people around nowadays have dug as deeply into that subject as I have, and I can commend books like Douglas Reed's Insanity Fair and All Our Yesterdays and Disgrace Abounding as evidence of anti-Semitism even among those British intellectuals who were fervently opposed to Hitler. For a country inhabited by mongrel stock whose commercial success was founded on giving refuge to people such as Jewish bankers and Huguenot weavers, we're developing a terrible case of parochialism lately!...If I weren't in such a frantic hurry -apologies! -I'd follow up all the points in detail. I can't; I'd have to start quoting from printed sources, and that's a risk I daren't take because once I start I find I've spent an hour reading through something I'd forgotten about....****Thanks, John, for taking the time to write this. Between the two of you - you have covered quite a lot of fertile ground for discussion. I don't know if Billy has ever seen our TV..I know he does not have a set.***

Harry Warner
423 Summit Ave
Hagerstown
Maryland.21740

"It may be too late to prove the matter, one way or the other. But I have a sneaking suspicion that the World Science Fiction Conventions got that grandiose title for a ridiculous reason: because a world's fair was held in New York City in the same year as the first worldcon. I've never found any written evidence to show that the con ~~was named~~ after the fair and the chances are that thirty years later, you would get a half-dozen different memories if you asked a half-dozen NYC fans who were active at the time. But it seems certain that the biggest convention ever was arranged in New York that year because the world's fair would serve as an additional reason for some fans to make the trip. Moreover, there are several passages in The Immortal Storm that seems to link the "world" in the con's name with the world's fair designation. Wouldn't it be silly if this new controversy resulted from the fact that nobody remembered to drop "world" from the convention's designation when the second national event was held in Chicago?...But in defense of my favorite sport, I should point out that there is no real similarity between fandom's misuse of "worldcon" and the baseball World Series. For one thing, there's not the slightest doubt that the best baseball in the world is played in the US. Major league teams from this nation go to Japan every other fall to play the best teams in that nation and always win most of the games. Many major league players join teams in Central and South America during the winter months and in that competition the pitchers and batters have such improved records that the competition must be weaker. Europe and Australia don't have enough baseball to count. And for another thing, I'll have

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you know that major league baseball is now an international affair. Montreal is now a member of the National League, as a result of expansion." ***I always understood that the only teams that played in the World Series were American ones..but now you tell me a Montreal team joins in..wow..... guess that makes it World alright! Sorry, Harry, I just couldn't resist that; I don't really want to interfere with your favourite sport! As to the Worldcons, I'm sure that this is something that American fandom will have to sort out for themselves..I don't see how anyone else can "take" it from them..if they want to hold onto the title.***

Darroll Pardoe "It's an interesting indictment of most of the newer
95 E.12th St British Fans to read your quote from Bryn Forsey "Mike
Columbus Ashley was for quite a spell Britain's Mr Fandom". To
Ohio.43201 anyone with either a sense of timebinding(which I agree
with Ted White is the main missing factor in present day UK fandom)or any
contact at all with US or German fandom, such a statement is plain ridic-
ulous. To make it at all shows sadly narrow horizons...I still think the
trouble all started with the New Wave of 1963. They DID deliberately set
out to isolate themselves from the main stream of British fandom up till
then, and I think they influenced later newcomers, and a tradition, almost
of isolation was set up."

Mary Reed "..the excellent Jeeves contrib on butlers. Did it
5 Park Close grow from the Jeevsonian, as it were, headlines which
Longmeadow have recently been in the papers, Terry? I enjoyed it
Stevenage,Herts immensely especially the detective work. I must tell
you an anecdote concerning butlers. When I lived in Banbury,I lunched at
a Chinese Restuarant and generally sat beside the same chap. He told me he
had some friends who live in a sort-of stately manor. One day they were in
the drawing-room having tea, when the butler knocked, entered, and informed
the man of the house that a blackbird was about to fall down the chimney.
Which it promptly did on cue. They'd apparently been taking potshots at it.
Now I know this loses something in the translation, but I still find it
immensely funny". ***Well, I did too..I could just see that butler, no doubt
carrying a tray!"

Ron Bennett "This business of going to a fan gathering and feeling
45 Namly Garden left out and not being invited to join a group of young-
Singapore.10 er fans...Oh come now,Ethel. Things weren't so much
different when we were both neos(my first convention was also the SuperMan-
Con of 1954). Let's imagine that you and I and several others,youngfen all,
are attending our first con. Let's take two different situations. First of
all let's suppose that you walk into the lounge where are gathered several
groups of fans. Ken Bulmer, Walt Willis,Mike Rosenblum and various other
established fans are in one group. They see you, a neofan, and invite you
over to join them. Great,great. Now let's take the situation where you and
I and our contemporary neos are sitting in a group. Let's say that Ken or
Walt walk in. You've never met him but know him by reputation from reading
fanzines. Tell me..truthfully..are you, a mere neo, going to invite a BNF
over to sit in with you? I don't think the situation happened in our day
and I don't think that it happens now". ***As a neo I knew who Ken and Walt
were. At the Oxcon Ella and I got talking to some young fans..and one of them
assured Ella she would understand fandom today much better; if she knew more
about the BSFA.***

Letters 10

Joe Patrizio
7 Oakwood Rd
Bricket Wood
St. Albans.
Herts.

"Jhim Linwood's letter triggers me off into saying something about four letter words (the ungentlemanly and unladylike sort). Of all the books I have read where these words appear, the one that really stands out is ROCK WAGRAM by William Saroyan. It was only used once, and occurs when a friend of the hero dies. It's been a long and deep friendship, and when Wagram hears of the death he just says "Fuck", and the amount of feeling that the author gets into that one word is amazing. And what I am trying to say in all this, is that I disagree with Jhim when he says that he thinks the words will be used in their 'proper' context when everybody gets used to them. To my mind, their proper use is as expletives; Lawrence was flying in the face of language and will fail in his effort to get the words used in their original way....some writers tend to forget that a word (like most other things) tends to lose its edge with overuse. Mike Moorcock, in his letter, says that he didn't even notice the language in BJB; then all I can say is what was it doing there? If the use of these words were either boring (as the letters and reviews I've seen suggest) or not noticeable, it strikes me there was a remarkable degree of redundancy in the story and Mike, as editor, should have got rid of it.....Chris Priest's letter contains the seeds of its own destruction within it. How can he argue against a Lunar landing while at the same time spout about the benefits of orbital space stations etc? When the Americans sent up theirs they didn't know that they would be able to see dormant potato blight. So far there has been a considerable beneficial fall-out from the space programs--the American space programs--and there's no reason to believe that this state of affairs will not continue. And even if we (the human race) didn't get an economic return for a Lunar landing, I would still think that it would be worth it all--but then I'm not paying for it, I must admit, and what really matters is whether or not the Americans think like this .

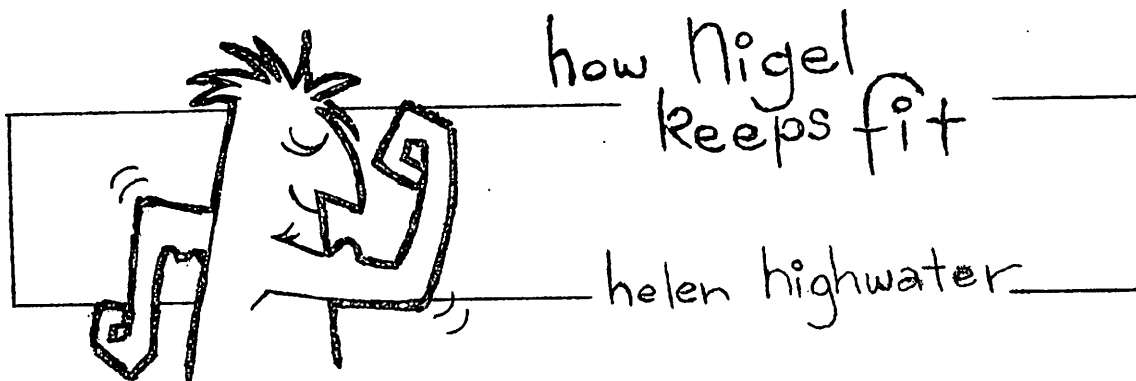
Terry Jeeves

30 Thompson Rd
Sheffield.S118RB

"Why do fanzines arrive in waves (no pun on New Wave intended)? After a few weeks of virtual non-activity a shower, gaggle, bevy or what-have-you all thump through the letter box at once. What about a contest to choose a collective noun for a number of fanzines..how about...a filling of fanzines?...Have watched the new BBC series and they seem to be making an honest try at presenting SF. So far they have been fairly well done, the only drawback being a tendency to choose stories which involve humans in everyday situations because these need little special effects..viz the Brunner yarn. NAKED SUN was more ambitious, and generally well produced, but I didn't like the reduction to absurdity of Daneel Olivaw. Nor did I like the stupid futuristic costumes in most of these shots..add high collars, pointed epaulettes, and military style jackets seems to be the formula. In the NAKED SUN, I also didn't feel that the murder motive came across well..nor did the idea of being on another planet..and as for the woman co-ordinator..how hammy can you get?***It gets more difficult all the time to think up a futuristic costume---just take a look at some of the latest styles---I'd say it's one of the toughest things for someone to foresee what will come next***

My thanks to the many letter-writers, my apologies to those whose letters had to be shortened for lack of space..

Ethel Lindsay.



Nigel's ambition is to live to 100 and still be fit enough to enjoy his love life.

Every morning he runs a mile before breakfast. This keeps his heart and lungs in condition and gives him unlimited staying power. He prides himself on having a resting heart rate of 60 beats a minute which he can work up to 150 with strenuous exercise. He is the only man I know who will stop in the middle of snogging to feel his pulse.

No matter what happens he always keeps calm and cheerful and never worries. This keeps him free from psychosomatic ailments such as headaches, indigestion and nervous twitches. And if any task seems too big for him to tackle he has the strength and will power to be able to abandon it.

He's very careful what he eats and refuses white bread because it is made from murdered flour. White sugar is out too because that has also been murdered. He takes cyder vinegar and honey because the natives of Vermont still do a full day's work in the fields at 80. Not that he's ever done much work in the fields in his life.....only got up to mischief.

He eats Fertile Foods such as seeds, nuts and roots because they give him Dynamic Energy. But if you should ever catch him fast asleep in the evening he's not really asleep.....Just relaxing his face muscles and doing his deep breathing. And if he appears to be suffering an attack of the cramps it's more likely to be his isometric exercises.

He doesn't take vitamin pills any more because you can get all the vitamins, minerals and enzymes you need from Nature. Unfortunately he has to eat such a lot of different things that he has difficulty in fitting them all into his daily routine.

He carries his tucker box around with him so that he can seize any precious spare moment to guths down a prune or a fig or a sunflower seed. In the evening he tots up what he's had, and if it's been a particularly bad day and he's been served no-good food at each meal, then he has to eat the rest of his quota. One thing I won't let him do is munch his carrot and crack his nuts while I'm watching the telly, so he has to wait until he gets home. If he should have a raw onion and cabbage leaf to get through as well this will make him late for bed, and then he has either to abandon his run in the morning or lose half an hour's sleep.

How Nigel Keeps Fit 2

He will probably choose the latter even though it will mean he runs the risk of nodding off during the following evening whilst we are smooching, which will give me the screaming abdabs and him nervous tension, which will make him smoke an extra cigarette that he doesn't want.

He gets his ideas from Magazine articles and library books and is always eager to learn something new. Suppose for instance he should read that eating tapioca prevents the Black Death....he'll think it over and then either say "Rubbish!" or else he can't wait to go out and buy some tapioca. He will also expect me to eat it, and if I don't he will feel sorry for me and think I'm an idiot. He'll also think that everybody else who doesn't eat tapioca is an idiot, until one day he reads about how they have discovered that there is after all no connection between tapioca and the Black Death.

I'll never forget one day when I was serving up his favourite fish and chips. He had just learned about cholesterol in the blood stream, and my goodness....you should have seen his face! He was horrified. You would have thought I was giving him poison.

When he retires from work he would like to run an old folk's home and give them the benefit of his wisdom. But I can just imagine him routing the poor old dears from their beds to go for a run over the Downs, and then having to gnash their poor old gums on nuts and shredded cabbage.

Just lately though he is becoming a little more human. One bitterly cold Saturday morning he came in clutching a paper bag, said "Bugger the diet!" and put a large Chester cake under the grill to warm for his canteen. Now he eats at least one thing every day that he shouldn't just to prove that he's not a fanatic. He will also occasionally hurl my cushions about the room and shout naughty words, because a little adrenalin in the blood stream does you good.

Anyway, he does persevere even though I tell him only donkeys eat raw carrots, and you have to admit that he is never sick. If he should ever appear to be under the weather it's only because his body is fighting off a most deadly bug which, if it attacked any half-fit person like you or me, would lay us up for a week.

And it's quite true what he says.....you never see a donkey in a doctor's waiting room.

Helen Highwater.



On Men and Women.....One of the fascinating things about STAND ON ZANZIBAR is Brunner's ideas on the slang of the future. In particular I am thinking of the word 'shiggie' for women. Nowadays the favourite word seems to be 'bird'; and I guess a shiggie is as probable a word as bird in the future. It's rather an odd phenomena altogether, the way men have always thought up a nickname for women. I've wondered if it has something to do with male bashfulness. A girl will say quite naturally "my boy-friend" if she isn't saying it boastfully; but a boy will find it easier to say "my bird". It makes him sound a bit tough about it..no hint here that he may have been coralled by some cnit of a girl. I think this must be the explanation, for women have never bothered to think up a nickname for men.

On the whole, women are much less worried about their femininity than men are about their masculinity. See all those men with a dislike for tenors—and see the explanation for the dislike that they came out with! Yet, this may be changing with lots of other things in our culture. Long

Natterings 2

hair is felt by the older generation to be a sign of femininity in men; but obviously the young men of today do not feel this. In fact, young men of today seem much more relaxed about the whole subject and much less worried about this masculinity fear. Would some young reader like to test my theory by giving his reaction to tenors?

Should this levelling out of the sexes continue one wonders if the necessity for a nickname for women will continue....and so will there be any shiggies after all?

On newspapers....I cannot agree with Billy's condemnation of our newspapers as easily as does John Brunner. For one thing I am by no means sure that US newspapers are as good as Billy says. When Al Lewis last visited here he brought me a complete copy of a Los Angeles newspaper. I found a thin column of news marching up the centre of the page with double columns of adverts on either side. It was a bulky paper; but take away the adverts and a very slim newspaper would have appeared. Compare the amount of space devoted to social news in the New York Times and our own Times as another check. All those 'debutantes' using up precious news space! At our next election which American newspaper should I read to find out which MP has won in my hometown of Dundee?

Our worst papers are, of course, atrocious. I would name the EXPRESS and the SKETCH as the two worst. These were the papers Michael Frayn was undoubtedly thinking about when he wrote of computerised newspapers in his THE TIN MEN. Then there is the MIRROR, another trashy thing which lots of people excused themselves from reading on the grounds that they liked to read CASSANDRA. I never felt myself that even CASSANDRA was enough to make up for the rest of the paper. The DAILY MAIL is about the same level as the MIRROR, except that it has a right-wing bias instead of a left-wing one.

To me the two papers most worthwhile are the GUARDIAN and the TIMES in that order. I just cannot agree that these papers do not give a good coverage of overseas news. The GUARDIAN in particular has more than one good American correspondent; Alastair Cooke has done much thought the years to expound the American way of living. Henry Brandon of the TIMES is also excellent in covering the political scene. In the Sunday papers, the OBSERVER and SUNDAY TIMES one finds long and interesting articles about every aspect of foreign affairs. One thinks of Anthony Lewis on American affairs and Victor Zorza on Russian. We even have a good evening paper - the EVENING STANDARD which has two regular reporters Sam White from Paris and Jeremy Campbell from Washington. These two rather tend to dwell upon personalities in their reporting but are enlightening nevertheless.

Then there is the DAILY TELEGRAPH; it is a conservative paper but still very objective in its reporting. It contains regular reports upon American politics and I found it one of the best when it came to following the recent Presidential election.

Billy's particular complaint - that no mention was made of what Governors were elected I would concede. Only the better-known Governors such as

Natterings 3

Rockefeller and Reagan are known over here; but Mayor Lindsay and Mayor Daley have been written up often. Also, Wallace and Maddox have had plenty publicity. One of the things any reporter must remember when writing of American politics is that to the average Briton it is a very strange affair indeed. Rarely will you meet many people who understand exactly the power of a Governor or Senator. The workings of American government are a bit of a mystery to many Britons.

Mind you the publication of books by writers like T.H.White over here has meant that public comprehension has become greater. Films help too, ones like ADVISE AND CONSENT and THE BEST MAN. One of the best possible 'educators' was a TV series featuring a young State Senator (for one thing that cleared up the difference between a State Senator and a US Congress Senator). Unfortunately this did not do well in the US ratings and the series was abandoned. Another unfortunate thing was the closing down of the Library at the US Embassy here. I used to be able to go in and borrow books about the US and browse through all the current newspapers.

If Billy thinks that English newspapers are insular - he ought to see the Scottish ones! They are ten times worse. Scottish news dominates them and news from outside Scotland is confined to small paragraphs. This applies to both the SCOTTISH DAILY EXPRESS and the SCOTTISH DAILY MAIL. It is impossible to buy the English editions of these newspapers in Scotland. The SCOTSMAN tries to emulate the TIMES and is about the best that can be bought

I haven't mentioned the DAILY HERALD. This paper was the one that came into my home for years, as it supported Labour. I can remember though saying to my Mother that I was fed up with it, and really couldn't be interested in what Jenny Lee was doing on her holiday! Recently I persuaded my Father to cancel it and take the TIMES instead. As it had been bought by Cecil King, a man whom he detested, he wasn't hard to persuade.

Newspapers are a kind of drug to me..I must have my daily dosage or I may bite chunks out of the carpet. Each day I read --my own copy of the GUARDIAN, the maid's copy of the EXPRESS, the sister's copy of the TELEGRAPH, Then I buy the EVENING STANDARD. I would be a very well-informed person if I could only ever remember the half of it.

That's it for another issue. Remember it's EDDIE JONES FOR TAFF..... and HEIDELBERG in 1970.

Day Dream....Now if I had a magic wand and could wave it over these finished stencils and -hey presto-SCOTTISHE all finished--no running off to do...no collating..no beastly staples..I bet you think I'd be doing away with all the fun!

Ethel Lindsay.

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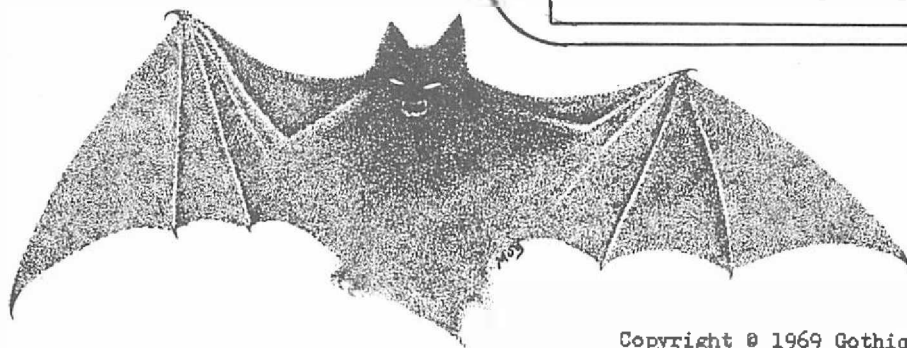
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Editorial Address: 5 St. John's Wood Terrace St. John's Wood London N.W.8 England

