

Scottishe



"Tell me Sir, how does it feel to be one of the last few characters to be cut with a steel stylus, by hand, onto a mimeo stencil to illustrate the front cover of a 'fanzine', instead of being 'Electrostencilled' as is more usual these days?"

"Proud... an' kinda humble....."

scottishe 59

Contents

NIBBLINGS.....	reviews.....	Ethel Lindsay
The Pat Riots.....	by	George Charters
Come Offit.....	by	Chetynd Griffith-Jones
LETTERS.....	BY THE READERS	
NATTERINGS.....	by	Ethel Lindsay.

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SF SNIBBLINGS REVIEWS

The UNIVERSE MAKERS: by Donald A. Wollheim. Harper & Row. \$4

In this book, the author gives his view of science fiction writers and their relationship to our world today. Mr Wollheim says of himself... "I was of that pioneering group, the fanatical science-fiction fandom of the thirties, who had believed when others scoffed...". Since then he has become an editor at ACE BOOKS which publishes the biggest amount of SF; and so he has been in a unique position to study SF through the years. That he should come out with his opinion of the genre is not surprising; what is surprising is that he has done so in a crisp, honest book of only 118pp. For once SF is discussed without verbosity; this book is all meat and no fat!

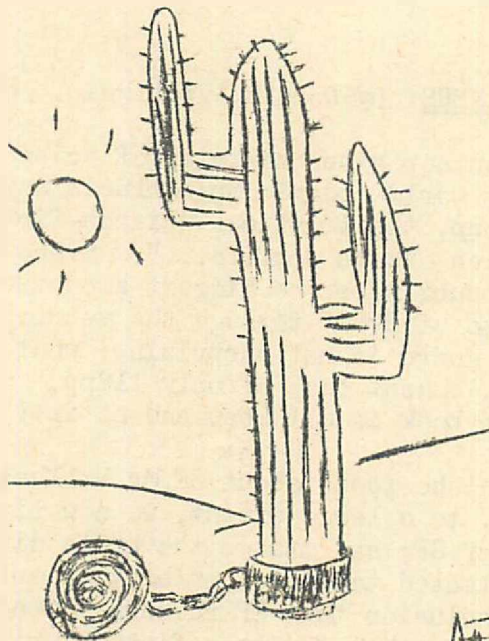
To discuss what he feels about SF, Mr Wollheim first describes how it got that way - and how, to a large extent, we now live in an SF world. He is firm in his definition of SF; and states the basic divergence between Verne and Wells is still reflected today. When he goes on to analyse the history of SF, he comes to the conclusion that SF readers "cannot believe that humanity has limitations". He says that "Science-fiction writers are not just universe makers, they are also universe savers". He makes the point that he has calculated the people who have read Norton's DAYBREAK 2255 must number millions and that from this it must follow that the children who read this grew up taking it for granted that an atomic war will spell the end of civilization as we know it. Mr Wollheim clearly sees this as explaining a great deal about youth today. His thoughts on the fuss about getting into the 'mainstream' of fiction are illuminating; and a chapter on Vonnegut makes his theory even clearer. A further chapter on J.W. Campbell is as clever an analysis of the man as I've seen.

Nibblings 2

Mr Wollheim discusses the growth of pessimistic SF. I took an especial enjoyment in reading his chapter on the phenomena of the 'New Wave' which he has title...Apres Nous Le Deluge. In denying that pessimistic SF has the edge today, he points to the great popularity of Tolkien with youth today; and explains why he thinks this proves that the doomsayers are wrong. I must say that to find a book such as this that is optimistic about the future, is very heartening to me.

As Alan Nourse says - this is a book that will be useful "for the general reader who is puzzled and confused to find himself living in a science-fiction world." It is also a book that should be a must for every SF fan; as it is the first good text-book of SF.

I have been told that Collancz will publish this book in Britain.



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'68

Nibblings 3

COMING OUT PARTY by Richard Frede. ACE 11550/75¢

On the surface, this is a spy story. Young Peter Marr, author, with big debts to his publisher is approached to impersonate another author and help with the defection of a Soviet poetess. One gradually sees there is more to it than that as the story's air of realism gathers one in. It continually surprises and intrigues to the point where, although this is written in the first person, one begins to wonder just who this Marr is. He writes under another name, the man he impersonates writes under another name..and it is strange how they intertwine. There is the surface excitement of Marr entangled with both the KGB and the CIA; but below lurks another story that will delight all readers who are interested in what makes an author tick. Recommended.

THE WASP by Ursula Curtis. ACE 87351/60¢

Ever since I was a child I have had a nervous dread of wasps; so this story had me shuddering very quickly. Kate is out driving when a wasp distracts her attention so that she almost kills a child. From this small incident her life becomes a nightmare in which wasps appear continually and almost drive her mad. By coincidence? Well, read the story and see..the suspense is handled very nicely and you'll have to read to the end.

THE THIRD HALF by Mildred Davis. ACE 80660/75¢

This is told in three parts and is about three people who disappear mysteriously. But it is told from the viewpoints of the people who are left.... the wife of an aeronautical engineer distracted with five children...the ageing physicist whose young wife disappeared from a ski-slope..and the relatives of the head of an electronic firm director who live in gloomy Dunboyne Castle. An interesting bunch so that one leaves one group reluctantly only to become fascinated by another. The method of telling heightens the tension.

THE TRAVELLER IN BLACK by John Brunner. ACE SPECIAL.82210/75¢

Pure fantasy elegantly told. In this universe chaos is all and one man - the Traveller - has the task to impose Order. This is the story of his journeyings and of the people he meets and affects.

BETWEEN PLANETS by Robert Heinlein. ACE 05500/95¢

A Heinlein juvenile but engrossing for all that. Don is a young lad stranded when war breaks out between Earth and Venus. Born of a Venusian mother, he has an Earthian father and was born on a spaceship. No wonder then that as he tries to rejoin his parents on Mars he finds himself aloof from the general excitement. Events swirl around him..and aloof he cannot stay!

RED PLANET by Robert Heinlein. ACE 71140/95¢

Another in this juvenile series - sure to appeal to every young man. Jim lives on Mars and, as the story opens, is worried about his Martian pet Willis. It is time for Jim to travel to school and he wants to take Willis with him. School turns out real bad and he runs away. Most of the story concerns his long trek across Mars. Well thought out and told with all the usual competence.

Nibblings 4

THE ECLIPSE OF DWN by Gordon Eklund. ACE SPECIAL.18630/75¢

I didn't like this. For one thing it is a story of tomorrow that is full of today's hangups..or that's how it seemed to me. Full of pessimism, of course. Ostensibly it is the story of a future Presidential election, told by a writer who is to follow one contender and write a book about him. Actually the story meanders..although there is always a fixed frame..and depicts the usual crazy scene that today's American sees as the future. At the bottom of it all is the theme of the possessive brother brooding over his sister. For you, if you like to feel broody.

ALICE'S WORLD and NO TIME FOR HEROES by Sam Lundwall. ACE DOUBLE.58880/75¢
SF from Sweden arouses the interest..how will it stand up against the rest? Very well indeed! ALICE'S WORLD is a fine story on the theme of man returning to Earth and finding his myths waiting for him. NO TIME FOR HEROES has a story that is touched with more humour(though the author always has an ironic eye)and more swashbuckling in a bumbling sort of way. The hero is no ordinary hero, that's for sure.

THE MONSTER MEN by Edgar Rice Burroughs. ACE SF CLASSIC.53587/60¢
Dr Van Horn attempts to create life..and Number Thirteen finds himself on a jungle island as Experiment 13..along with the monster-men who had preceded him. Echoes of Tarzan here..but a good adventure yarn for all that.

THE BATTLE OF FOREVER by A.E.Van Vogt. ACE 0460/95¢
In this future only a thousand human beings are left of Earth. They live behind a barrier, are born from test-tubes and live by drawing nutrient from the sun. One decided to grow large and back into the old human form to take a look at what had happened outside the barrier to the animals converted to take the humans place. There is a typical Van Vogt plot upon plot..and a curious philosophy all the way through that in the end is completely negated. An odd one.

BEYOND CAPELLA by John Rackham and THE ELECTRIC SWORD-SWALLOWERS by Kenneth Bulmer. ACE DOUBLE. 05595/75¢

Terrans spreading out meet up with trouble when they reach Capella. There the Terrans had to come to a halt, baffled by an opponent who prevents them from going further. Commander Kane is sent out to tackle the mystery.Well told and will keep you guessing. The Bulmer story has Ferdie Foxlee as the protagonist and we first meet him fleeing after his protoplasmic Delilah falls to bits at an awkward minute. Next he lands on a War-games planet..Ingenuitive and carries the reader along.

THE BLACK MOUNTAIN by Fred Saberhagen. ACE 06615/60¢

Chup had been a great Lord, now he is a crippled beggar at the gates of what had been his own castle. Little wonder then that, when a demon comes with a message and help, he seizes it eagerly. Adventure in full with technology and magic well mixed together. Chup as a character seems more full blooded than is usual in this type of adventure tale.

HAVE SPACE SUIT -WILL TRAVEL by Robert Heinlein. ACE 31800/95¢

Of all the Heinlein juvenilse - this is my favourite. I think it is mainly because I am tickled with the idea of a boy winning a space suit in a soap competition - and because of this landing out in space and being judged as a typical human in a galactic court. As usual Heinlein keeps the pace going well. The characters of Clifford and his friend Feewee are nicely balanced

Nibblings 3

FURTHEST by Suzette Haden Elgin. ACE 25950/75¢

Coyote Jones is an agent sent to find out what the planet FURTHEST is like -- what makes people tick -- and why they keep themselves so aloof from the rest of the universe. In the beginning he could not find anything to report; only when a crisis arises to his young assistant does he begin to get a glimmer of the great secret held by the whole planet. Highly imaginative and very well written, I enjoyed it as much as THE COMMUNIPATHS. There is a heroine in this story who holds the unusual position of Mindwife. It would spoil the story to explain just what this entails -- but it is apt to make all those 'sex' novels look rather small. I was glad to see by some references that Elgin has a universe in her mind that should supply many more such good stories.

FAREWELL EARTH'S BLISS by D.G.Compton. ACE 22830/75¢

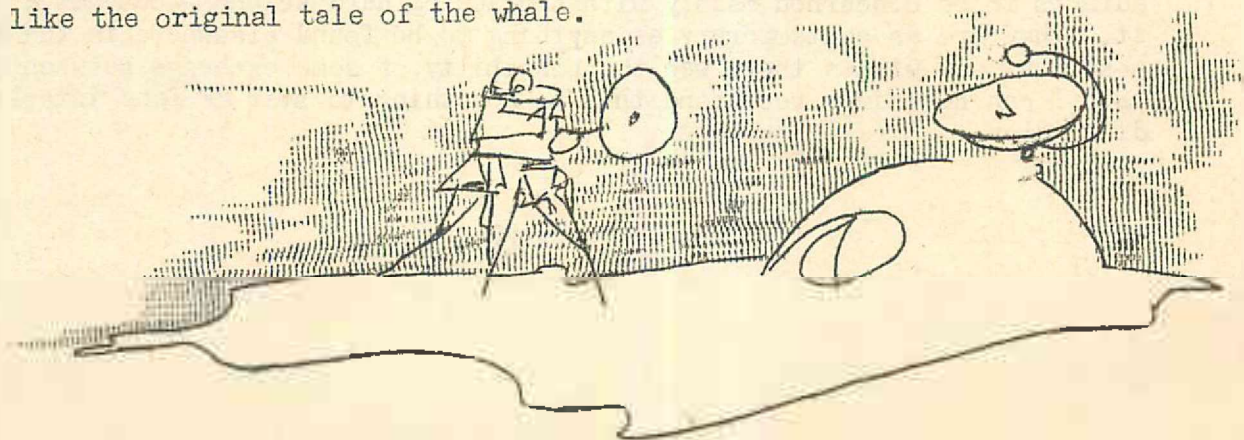
The story opens with a spaceship full of people being deported to Mars. We get to know them during the journey as they all wonder what lies ahead. The colony they are to join consists of people like them who had been deported earlier -- and there is no way of knowing what sort of culture has evolved. It is fascinating to see the social patterns that have emerged; and what happens to the various characters. The ruthlessness that sheer survival demands is well depicted -- even to a last sting in the tail of the story.

CLOCKWORK PIRATES and GHOST BREAKER by Ron Goulart. ACE DOUBLE. 11182/75¢

That handy character the Agent is here called John Sand and his task is to find out who is behind the robot pirates. They have appeared on the planet Esmerelda and kidnapped the Governor's daughter. Lots of derring-do. GHOST BREAKER features Max Kearny who has a hobby of investigating rather "screwball" occult cases. There are 9 stories here and, typical of them is the first where Max finds that his friend Dan has a problem. On every public holiday Dan turns into a small gray elephant.

THE WIND WHALES OF ISMAEL by Philip Jose Farmer. ACE 89237/75¢

Ishmael is the only survivor of Ahab's PEQUOD and is now on another ship. As if surviving the first were not enough -- he now finds his ship falling through empty space where once the sea had been. He lands on Earth, but not of his time. In this time there are still whales -- but whales that sail in the air where man still hunts for them. I guess this one is mainly for people who like the original tale of the whale.



Nibblings 6

POSTMARKED THE STARS: by Andre Norton. ACE 67555/75¢.

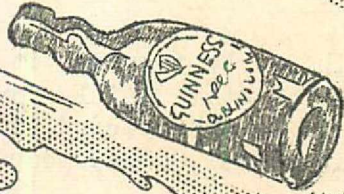
This seems a bit different from the usual Norton story. It tells of the free-trader SOLAR QUEEN - whose troubles started when its cargo-master, Dane Thorson goes to collect a package. Although kidnapped and doped he manages to get back to his ship--to discover a dead man in his place, a man with a mask just like his own face. The puzzle is why this substitution and what is the mysterious parcel they carry? Well worked out.

THE GLASS TEAT: by Harlan Ellison. ACE 29350. \$1.25.

This is Harlan's name for the TV screen; rather a good one, I thought. It is the name of his TV column for THE LOS ANGELES FREE PRESS - and this book holds a collection of pieces from it. Any British fans who would like to find out what Harlan is really like - ought to get this book for his personality permeates every page. He is pretty lethal in his criticism of American TV and a lot of it relates to what we see over here..to say nothing of the fact that we are sent many American programs. Highly recommended.

VORTEX, NEW SOVIET SCIENCE FICTION: PAN BOOKS. 25p. Edited by C.G. Bearne
A collection of 7 stories. The collection is prefaced by an analysis of the position of contemporary SF by Ariadne Gromova. THE TIME SCALE by Aleksandr and Sergei Abramov tells of the experiences of a man who is induced to enter time 'sideways' with terrifying results. FUTILITY by Andrei Gorbovskii is a short 'gimmick' ending type story. THE TEST by Artur Mirer and also THE OLD ROAD by the same author are part of a cycle called ARTIFICIAL JAM and the main character in this is a giant superbrain..and the main item under scrutiny by the author is the concept of 'humanity'. I would have liked to have read the whole of this. THE SILENT PROCESSION by Boris Smagin is another story by an author obsessed with the quality of time. HE WILL WAKE IN TWO HUNDRED YEARS by Andrei Gorbovskii has a nice little twist ending. THE SECOND MARTIAN INVASION by Arkadii and Boris Strugatskii is sub-titled A FANTASTICAL TALE and NOTES OF A SANE MAN. It is the longest story and the most intriguing. Told in the first person it introduces a small town and the varied reactions to the invasion. Along with the air of fantasy there are many touches that ring true among the characters. Man's ability to think of his own mundane concerns no matter what events whirl around him is very well brought out. I must confess that these stories, and particularly this last one, surprised me a lot. I expected Soviet authors to be concerned mainly with stories of hard science--but not a bit of it. They are as contemporary as anything to be found elsewhere in the SF world --so that one wishes there was the possibility of some exchange between them and us. I can certainly recommend this as something to stir SF fans into lots of discussion.

Ethel Lindsay



The Rat Riots

by George Charters.

Fighting in Ireland began when the first two men stepped ashore! Mind you, until the English were invited over to join in, it was just good clean fun, with a few hundred killed here and a few hundred there, just enough to keep the population at a reasonable level until America would be discovered. When the English came over about 900 years ago there was savage, merciless fighting, treachery and murder, ambushes and betrayals - from everybody, friends and foes alike.

A new reason for fighting came with the Reformation -- if any more excuse were needed. From then on England was sometimes Catholic and sometimes Protestant. In the Emerald Isle Irish and English seized on it as a God-given opportunity for persecution, murder and general beastliness. There was nothing to choose in the behaviour of either Protestant or Catholic: if they were in power they wanted to prove it.

One of the highlights of the struggle was the defeat of the stupid Roman Catholic King James II. by the sour, dour Protestant King William of Orange at the battle of the Boyne on 12th July, 1690. About 100 years later Protestants in Ireland began to celebrate this event as their moment of liberation and now it is regarded as a great occasion for rejoicing and Guinness. The "Twelfth Week" in July is the official annual holiday in Northern Ireland.

Well, anyway, the final rebellion came in 1916, and it, like the Great Fire in Chicago, started more or less accidentally. This was the Easter Rising, and even it might have petered out but the Government decided to execute the leaders instead of imprisoning them. (After all, about 300 people were killed in the Rising.) But the executions kept the pot boiling

The PatRiots:2

until in the early twenties it was more or less agreed to divide the country: the Irish Free State mainly for Catholics and Northern Ireland mainly Protestant. (Just for the record, in 1961 N.I. had about 500,000 Catholics, 420,000 Presbyterians, 350,000 Episcopalians, 75,000 Methodists and 100,000 others.)

One might imagine that for a few years the Irish people would live in peace, if only to see what it felt like. Peace, how are you! There was Civil War in Eire (the new name for the Irish Free State or Saorstát Eirann), and I.R.A. assassins began to make raids in N.Ireland. They may not have been subsidised by the Eire Government but they were never hindered in collecting funds and bringing in money and arms from America. They were encouraged by the government passing an Act in the Dail (parliament) claiming jurisdiction over the North. Their murderous forays ceased a few years ago, but when civil rights marchers began they joined forces.

After a few minor disturbances the civil righters and the people's democrats staged a march from Belfast to Londonderry, but were warned by Police that their proposed route would cause trouble. But they seemed to want trouble and were aided and abetted by students from Queen's University, Belfast. (Students all over the world know all the solutions to every problem and the younger they are the more they know, but to understand the Q.U.B. mentality send 2/6 for their annual magazine, Pro Tanto Quid - to them, not to me!)

The marchers were ambushed and fighting resulted. There were many injuries similar to those sustained in many an Irish brannagan, but newspapers and TV blew it up into another Sharpeville Massacre. Riots in Londonderry and Belfast escalated and only died down when the British Army was called in.

The riots were bad enough -- about fifteen killed and about twenty million damage -- but things were made worse by stupid people who should have known better. Newspapers made statements that had little basis in fact. The TV concentrated on the worst aspects of the riots and told lies which they only half-heartedly retracted much later -- and the retractions naturally didn't get the world-wide coverage which the lies got. Cardinal McCrory said that Protestants were not Christians. Cardinal Conway made a statement carefully calculated to rouse moderate Catholics. Reverend Ian Paisley (with a degree from Bob Jones University) made speeches which heaped oil on the flames. (Clergymen are all divinely inspired.) (A story went round that Ian was injured by a motor-boat while walking across Lough Neagh!) Bernadette Devlin, Member of Parliament, had her picture taken while breaking bricks to provide ammunition for the rioters. (Which made another M.P. remark that she was, in her way, a user and distributor of building materials.) Jack Lynch, prime minister of the Irish Republic (the new name for Eire), sent half his army -- over a hundred men -- to take up positions along the border, as if ready to invade. The real reason was to take people's minds off the odd way he was trying to run the country. Our own prime minister, Chichester-Clark, said reforms took time -- they could not, he said gravely, be carried out in a snap of the finger. And his party had been in power for fifty years! Some finger -- some snap!

There was need for reforms. The unionist party retained power because of their one-way ticket: union with Great Britain. A sensible and laudable idea, and it was of considerable help in winning the war, but apart from that

The PatRiots:3

their minds were still in the ancient days and ancient ways. Terence O'Neill the previous Prime Minister, tried to lead the party and N.Ireland and the South into the twentieth century, but many of his party would not see the light and the leaders in the south paid lip service to his ideas while figuring out ways to use them for their own petty aims.

In voting for Parliament the rule was one man one vote, but in local elections business men often had several votes. In allocating houses, districts controlled by RCs favoured RC tenants and Protestant-controlled districts favoured Protestant tenants - but most districts were Protestant-controlled. The same thing held good for jobs. For example, in County Fermanagh where the number of Catholics was nearly as great as the number of Protestants about 80% of public offices and jobs went to Protestants. Most Protestant employers tended to give preference to Protestants and Catholics to Catholics, but since most of the employers were Protestant the system militated against Catholics. RCs also tend to have slightly larger families than Protestants and this exacerbated the situation. Too, unemployment pay is just about sufficient to live on so Res tend to stay at home instead of emigrating, as their forbears had been doing since 1492.

One thing's for sure: No decent, God-fearing man, Catholic or Protestant, would throw stone or petrol-bombs at his fellow-man. That means that the trouble (which has not stopped yet) is being carried on by hooligans, scum, yobbos -- sub-human creatures with nothing to lose and a prospect of excitement, looting and general nastiness. Aided and abetted, of course, by rabid nationalists who think a united Ireland would be Utopia.

Apart from the belief that a united Ireland is not worth one life, the idea does not appeal to the majority of Northmen for many reasons. They were annoyed by that Act of the Dail (pronounced "doyle") claiming NI whether NI wanted it or not. Another Act gives the Catholic Church almost unlimited authority, and your Northman does not like being dictated to by any clergy -- except his own. (Any Parliamentary Bill before the Dail that the RC Church doesn't like belongs to a dead duck.) Censorship in the south, though relaxing a bit now, is crazier than even Australia. Unless one has pots of money there's no divorce there -- and no contraceptives either! The standard of living is lower in the south. Education there is saddled with the useless encumbrance of the Irish language, the revival of which was one of poor old De Valera's dreams. Old Dev, as he is called by friends and foes (the latter often adding two letters) also dreamed up the name of his Party: Fianna Fail, which roughly translates into Warriors of the Dawn. (Come to think of it, that would be a good name for the British Labour Party with their primitive ideas of finance.)

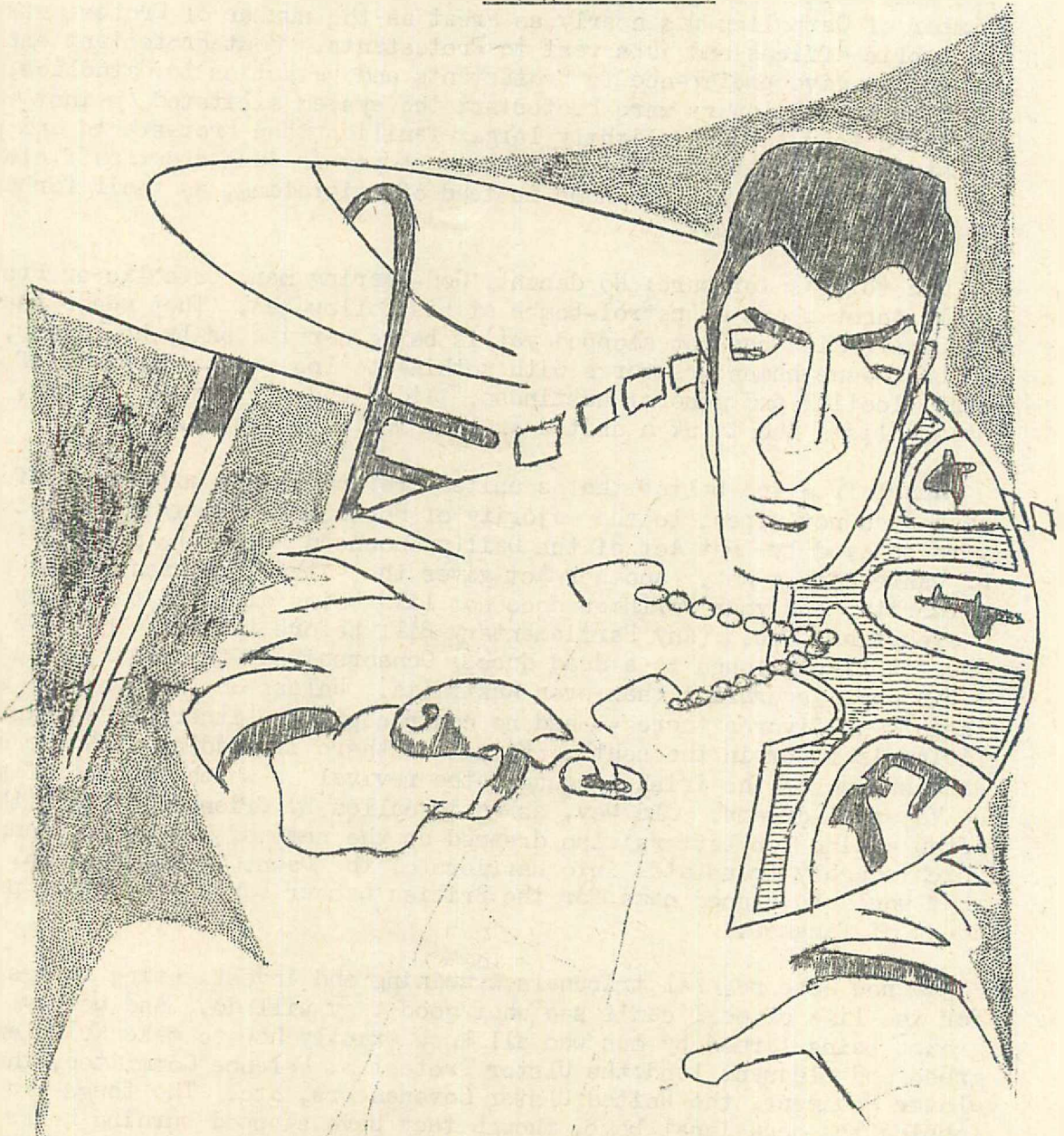
We now have several tribunals examining and investigating things, though for the life of me I can't see what good they will do. And we have new groups being formed by men who all know exactly how to make N.Ireland a green and pleasant land: the Ulster Protestant Defence Committee, the New Ulster Movement, the United Ulster Covenanters, etc. The thugs are still lobbing the occasional bomb, though they have stopped burning houses to prove there is a housing shortage and burning factories to prove there is unemployment.

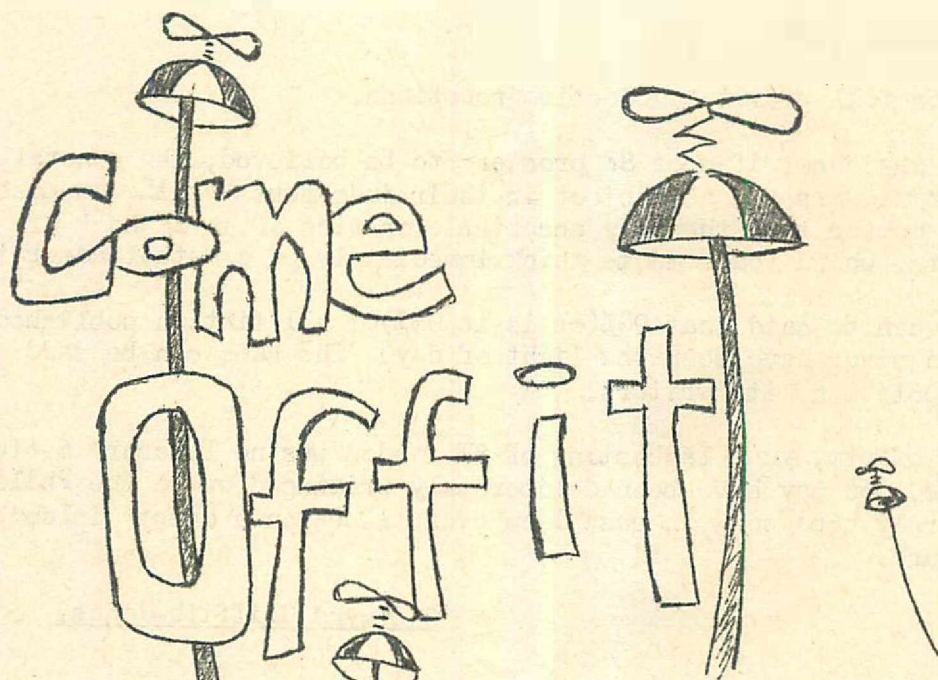
The Patriots:4

The 7,000 soldiers are having a rough time controlling the mobs, several of them having been injured, and their G.O.C., General Sir Ian Freeland is talking about pulling out. (During the tougher rioting which took place before their arrival the 3,000 Royal Ulster Constabulary had 800 casualties.)

The whole mess is inexplicable and I don't pretend to understand it. But one Orangeman did. When asked if religion was at the root of the trouble he answered: "A lot of bloody nonsense --it's just them damn Catholics."

George Charters.





by
chetwynd
Griffith-
Jones

Freedom is just a goddamn hype?

On no?

Freedom is a place where some penisbutter-brained adult with terminal senility can 'review' a group of people called fandom and imply that the way-out characteristics of a few individuals represents the whole.

It's a place where some wished-he-had-it-in-him-to-be-married-to-his-hand senior citizen can knock hell out of fandom without appearing to know what he is talking about.

Mr offutt, 15 to 20 years ago (if I've done my arithmetic correctly, I haven't learnt to use my abacus properly yet) Robert Silverberg was a teenage Sf fan publishing a fanzine called SPACESHIP. Undoubtedly, he reviewed SF books of the day, or printed reviews by contemporary fans. One of these was Harlan Ellison, also mentioned in your article. If I haven't got my dates wrong and am mixing him up with such stalwarts of the SF scene as Ray Bradbury, James Blish, Damon Knight, and Arthur C. Clarke—who never had anything to do with fandom, of course.

Give the lads a chance, Mr offutt. Fanzine fandom is one of the few places in the world where people with a penchant for the pen can get the experience in writing that really matters. Rejection slips don't help too much. Seeing your efforts in cold type (or somebody's duplicating ink) is the most effective place there is for making you realise that what you've just written should have stayed inside your head...and you learn why it is bad. The fact that other people are reading your work either makes you hide your head under a stone or makes you write better next time round.

Reviewing books is just one form of writing; and why shouldn't a peanut-butter-brained kid decide that one book is better than another. Reading is very subjective, and one will find that even the most objective, experienced

COME OFFIT...2

critics fall prey to subjective reactions.

In any case, if some SF pros are to be believed, the generally accepted book reviewers are as subject in their judgements as the youngest fan. It would appear that the only acceptable critics of an SF book are other SF writers, which leads me to think immediately of a mutual admiration society.

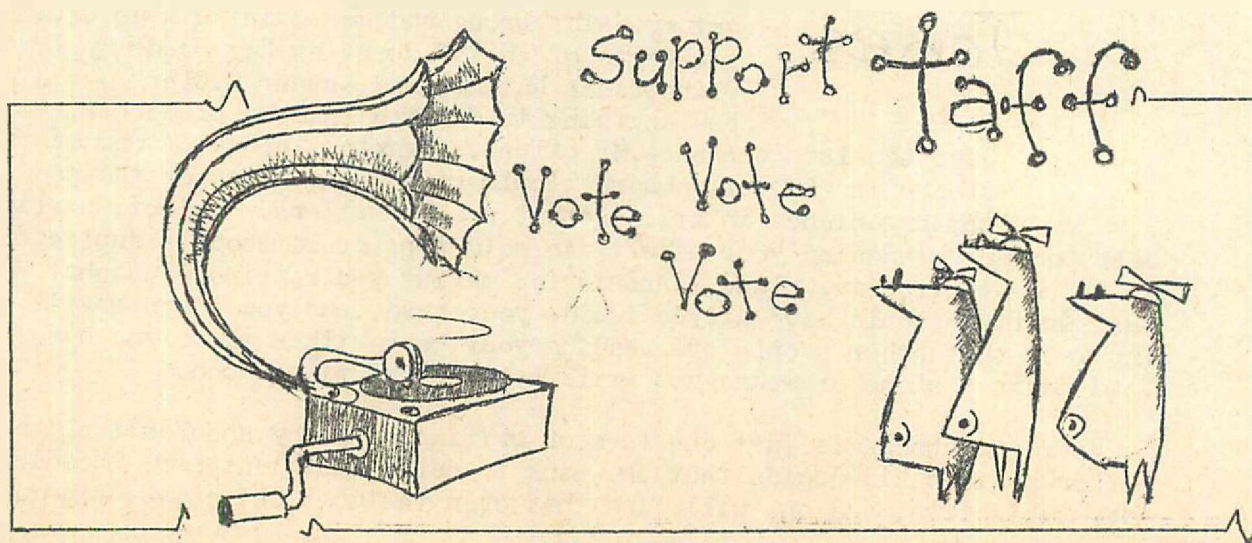
It can be said that 90%(or is it 95%) of all fiction published today or ever should never have seen the light of day. The same can be said of SF and, by extrapolation, its writers.

Mr offutt, your lambasting of SF fandom was no literary masterpiece. Of course, you may have been deliberately writing down to the Philistines. I sincerely hope so - in case I am ever stuck on a desert island with a book of yours.

Obetwynd Griffith-Jones.

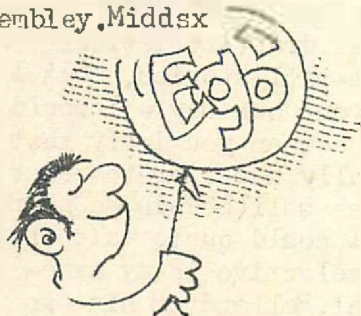
SF REVIEW may have folded..but not until issue no 43. I still have some back copies for sale at 20p each. Those will be collectors items..get your copy before they disappear.

SCOTTISHE No 55..the 15th year anniversary issue of this zine... there are still a few..but very few..copies left. At 15p per copy you get the biggest and best issue of this fanzine ever.



Letters

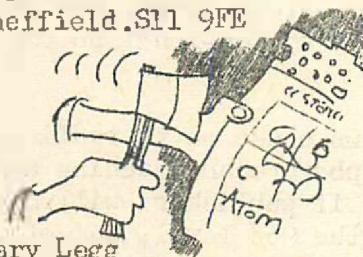
Malcolm Edwards
28 Kinch Grove
Wembley, Middx



is a bad sign). There may be stupid fans, but that's only half the story.
+++Umm...it is also a bad sign to make sweeping statements as you do here.

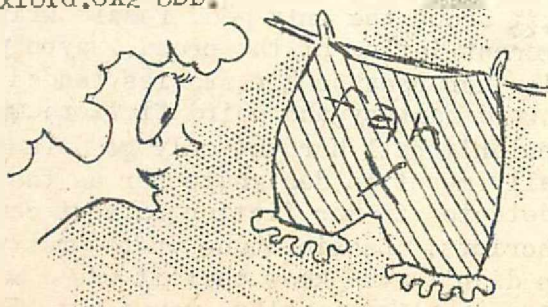
"Offutt's article has its accurate moments, but it misses one essential aspect of fandom: it is a place where hack writers with a massive sense of self-importance, who would be laughed off any literary platform in the world, can parade their inflated egos in front of an audience which, were it not incredibly long-suffering, would have long ago told them to gothemselves. The tolerance for the continual mouthings of boring third-raters never ceases to amaze me. When people are driven to complain, they avoid naming names (like I am -- I don't mean Offutt when I say this, although his article

Terry Jeeves
230 Bannerdale Rd
Sheffield, S11 9FE



Mary Legg
20 Woodstock Close Flats
Oxford, OX2 8DB

"Once again an art query- do you photo-stencil the covers or does ATOM do them by hand? If the latter can't you get ATOM to do a piece on how he cuts stencils. I'd love to see that. Andy Offutt was pleasing enough in his putting down of the fan types he dislikes. At least that way, he won't be accused of being big-headed by those he condemns- or will he?"

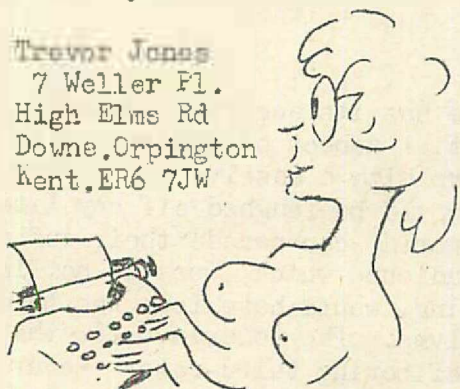


"Offutt's piece: I began it and thought "oh, gawd, another one" But despite that I read on having guessed it was Amerfandom, and isn't other people's dirty linen interesting? As to which, some could apply to our own fandom, I guess, but generally my impression is that we have here a pretty good bunch of bods. A pity Andrew feels he must dislike fannish colleagues. It will be interesting to see the reaction from the US. Something in John Trimble's letter, though I had seen it before, viz, why do Americans spell Vietnam as two

Letters 2

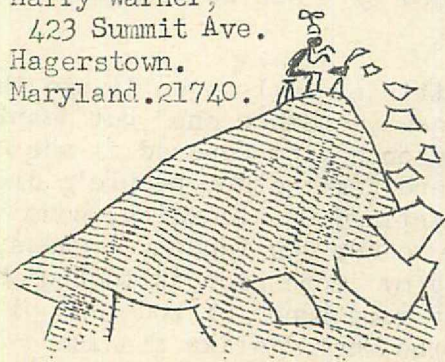
words? Churl and I recently became blood-donors and it was amazingly un-painful. In fact once the blood is being collected-in breathalyser bags even - you can't feel a thing. It would be relatively easy, it occurred to me, for one to be emptied altogether. Anyway, I don't know if those few lines will encourage other people to go and give blood. Julia has already done so, and of course everyone trots out saws about "blood from stones". The nurse told me in America it is sold for 3gns a pint, whereas in Turkey its £6 a pint to the donor. An interesting comparison to our "cup of tea and a biscuit!" ***John Boardman sent me an article recently about the fact that blood in the US has found to be giving the recipient hepatitis; this because all blood is bought..and the people likely to be selling are hardly likely to be in great good health. I think our blood donor system is marvellous!***

Trevor Jones
7 Weller Fl.
High Elms Rd
Downe, Orpington
Kent, ER6 7JW



"What women have always been good on in SF is style. C.L. Moore was one of the first - she had a style all her own, and, brother! - did she stand out in ASTOUNDING in the early 40s. I remember reading JUDGEMENT NIGHT and contrasting it to the usual drab (stylistically speaking, that is) run-of-the-mill stories. But I mustn't let you have all your own way - I would certainly take issue with you when you imply that female writers are generally superior to males. You pick your examples well (LeGuin, McCaffrey et al) but unfortunately they are picked examples. I could quote male writers who have advanced the field even more were I selective in my name-dropping. How about, for instance, Sturgeon, Heinlein, Pohl, Ballard (in his own way), Delany, Zelazny etc etc. Hmm? P.S. Just a belated comment on SCOT 55. I enjoyed Ron Bennett's article on Scotland and the Scots. It was so good I think you really ought to pay authors for material of this standard. (In all honesty I feel compelled to add that Ron himself asked me to put that bit in. I say that so that if you're looking for a target to throw something at, you pick Ron and not me!) ***Instead of listing me good male authors..how about a list of bad female ones? That won't be so long! As to Ron-isn't he the little practical joker though?***

Harry Warner,
423 Summit Ave.
Hagerstown.
Maryland. 21740.



"Your book reviews cause me to realise how closely normal-sized pbs are approaching a dollar in price. I wonder if publishers will make an effort to hold them at the 95¢ level, out of suspicion that sales resistance will build up when the purchaser finds a three-figure price? ..C.L. Moore is just about the only good female writer before the recent influx of the breed. Maybe you didn't mention her because her stories tended so strongly toward fantasy and weird fiction. Well, maybe I shouldn't call her the only good female writer; I really meant to designate her as the first whose feminine outlook could be detected in her fiction without causing the stories to read like soap opera scripts. Leslie Stone wrote pretty good SF at an early date but most readers didn't even know that it was a woman, because of the ambiguous first name...Professionally, you might like to know

Letters 3

that I found several futuristic improvements in the hospital this time. It had been eight years since my last ~~admission~~ hospital stay so I wasn't quite prepared for such new-fangled things as a bed which I could cause to go up or down either as a whole or in sections by pushbuttons within easy reach, thermometers operated electrically with the outcome visible in ~~anonymous~~ figures on a black box as I held the probe under my tongue and wondered how often a short circuit occurred, oxygen piped throughout the floor I was on in the walls eliminating the dreadful racket that used to wake me during the night as an orderly came rumbling down the hall with another tank, and television in the room. I didn't pay the extra fee required to use the set and it's just as well because a few hours before I was discharged, the cleaning woman happened to dust the set and discovered that it was completely empty. Someone, somehow, had swiped everything except the cabinet, protective glass, and control knobs." *** It seems that hospitals are particularly vulnerable to theft..at the other branch of mine a new electrical scrubber costing over £200 was stolen. I've just been for a 2-week refresher and so visited one of the new intensive therapy units. When I walked in it looked just like an SF illo..two women festooned in machines. One had an electrical continuous heart-scanning machine; the other was on a Bennett machine; This is a small new-type respirator which is worked by oxygen - not electricity. Made in California...However..we had piped bedside oxygen way back when I was a student nurse at my training school.***

Alex.Eisenstein
6424 N.Mozart St
Chicago.Ill.60645.



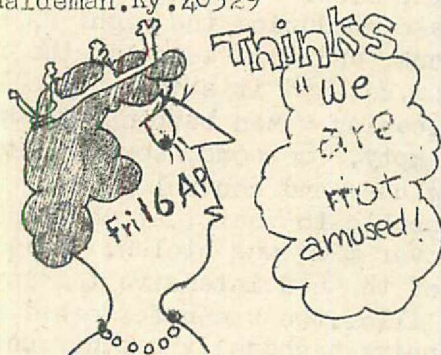
"I'm afraid I can't be so enthusiastic about the female authors in SF; to my mind Ursula LeGuin's characterisation is hardly superior to that of the better class of writers (male or otherwise) of the 40s and 50s. In her novel THE LEFT HAND OF DARKNESS, the human male lead is totally neuter at best, thick-headed to boot, and decidedly less masculine in any sense of manner, than the native protagonist, who is hermaphroditic/ambisexual. The book also has other deficiencies too numerous to catalog. About the only real plus she demonstrates is a fairly smooth style, but one distinguished by a heavy sprinkling of irritating rhetorical mannerisms, including unaccountable fondness for using the word 'isolate' as if it were an adjective like 'desolate'. Anne McCaffrey, though a

wonderful and hearty personage(not to mention hardworking and long-suffering as a former SFWA Sec'y/Treasurer), doesn't appeal to me as an agent of literary salvation for the field, either. I can't excuse the "occasional"(?) feminine gush, and her prose, while workmanlike, too often embodies dialog that is strained or contorted - and/or lacking connecting sequiturs in alternating snatches of conversation. I wondered how some of her characters in DRAGONRIDERS understood each other-and why. Both Russ and LeGuin, moreover, bring more pretention to their work and the field than real achievement. In this, however, they are little worse(if any)than their male counterparts in the genre, the ones who so desperately desire to break free of the pulp constrict-ion their bank balance...Agreed - Ballard is a cold fish - a pathological and even an ignorant one, too. An emperor without a stitch, and the one who started this whole rotten, invidious mess of "New Wave" vs "Old". In most cases bad writing vs good, although defenders of the New Faith will always cite Gernsbackian fiction from the early 30s to prove to one and all the lasting value of anything written before 1960.Pfui!" ***You rather lost me on that last sentence..but your handwriting is pretty awful! I wonder if I have any

Letters 4

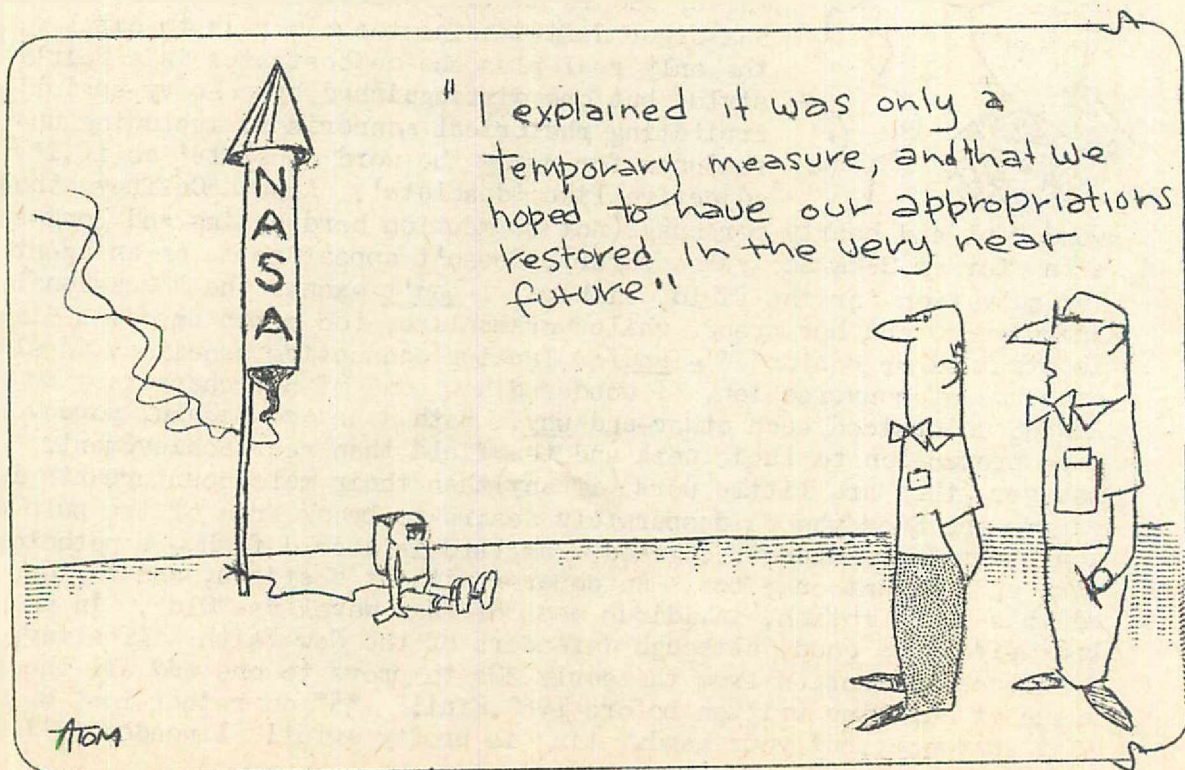
members of Women's Lib among my readership! Their blood pressure is liable to have risen rapidly over at least two words in your letter...."gush" and "workmanlike" --you are a mole fan, alrighty!***

Andrew Offutt
Funny Farm
Haldeman.Ky.40329



"I knew you'd be thrilled, delighted, excited and revolted to know that my copy of SCOT 57 arrived today, Fri. 16 April. The date stamped all over Her Majesty's face is 16 January. I hate to dispute the word of one of my personal gods, but...Bernard Shaw said that England and America are two countries separated by a common tongue. Mister Shaw would have made an addition, surely, had he been sent mail from one side Atlantic that arrived t'other side three months later. England and America are two countries separated by the common total and unconscionable incompetence of our postal systems. I hope there is no female chauvinist hawg-ism in your comments

on female writers. (I have the same thing about English writers.) We have rather a lot of f.c.h-ism over here these days -- a surfeit, in point of fact. Our own lovable and beloved Betty Friedan, while countless screaming women were doing their thing--HER thing--in demonstrations extraordinaire (demonstration is our word meaning riot), was downtown in court, endeavoring to persuade a judge to triple her take from her ex-husband for child-support. Asked why he married her in the first place, Carl Friedan said he merely married the most masculine woman he could find. One good hangup deserves another?"
*** Womenly-women bore me to tears..and manly-men turn my thoughts to Women's Lib..I like a civilised compromise. SF has been too male-dominated..it needs a little feminine influence sprinkled around***



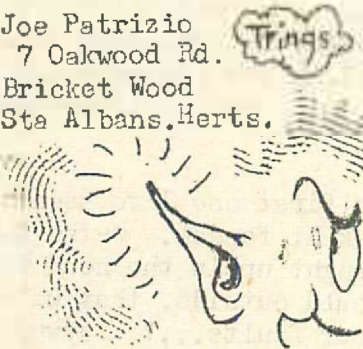
Letters 5

Brian Robinson
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Manchester
M12 4QH



Offutt says, "I'm in love with Fandom". I've hardly touched a book or prozine since the Con. Most of my spare time has been eaten up by the mountain of Ompazines I bought." **Do read something other than zines or I freely predict severe indigestion.**

Joe Patrizio
7 Oakwood Rd.
Bricket Wood
Sta Albans, Herts.



Offutt on fandom barely warrents even passing comment. The generalizations were so outrageous that you (me that is) can't comment seriously. It was all so contrived; you could almost see his eyes light up as he decided to write a 'controversial' article. Presumably he's sold something professionally and now reckons that he's 'important' and has got to show it. Ho, as the saying goes, hum. I asked Anne her opinion of Mr Spock, mentioning your preference for Capt. Kirk, but I'm afraid she doesn't agree with you. She says that Mr Spock has sex appeal and Kirk hasn't. Don't ask me why one should turn a woman on and the other not. I tend to agree with Alex Eisenstein. The sex in BJB didn't affect me one way or the other; I wasn't offended by it, and accepted it as indirect character development of Jack Barron - showing us the way he ticked. The sex in DAVY I can't remember at all. Now this perhaps indicates that the sex in BJB was gratuitous (I remember it because it jarred from the plot line) and that in DAVY was integral to the story - I don't remember it as a separate item because it fitted naturally into what was happening. Come to think of it, the only thing all this may prove is that I'm getting old. Entire agreement from this quarter concerning what you said about fanzine publishing. And it goes for fandom in general too. It all only has any meaning when you do it for fun. I'm sure that this is why you, for one, have stayed so long in fandom; it's a place for you to enjoy yourself and not a place in which to show that you are so much smarter than anybody else. I get annoyed with people who find fandom, join it, want to change everything and do great things (and sometimes do) and then leave all peeved because their genius isn't appreciated or because they find that fandom is not full of Godlike creatures who live up to his/her ideals but just full of people going their own way. If they would only think a little and realise that fandom is totally insignificant as a place for real achievement, not expect too much from it and just enjoy themselves (even if enjoying themselves means fighting other people). Lord, isn't it funny what buttons an innocent remark will push! I can't comment on NIBBLINGS as I haven't read any of the books you reviewed. However, I was impressed with your description of BE MERRY as a spell binging story, much more expressive than spell binding.

Sometimes, says she complacantly, my typos are real good.

Letters 6

Sid Birchby
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M20 0ND.



"The speculations in SCOT about how we're ruining our environment made me wonder not whether we are doing so, but can we turn back. It's being going on a long time. There's a fair amount of evidence that the fundamental cause of the westward migrations of the Indo-European tribes was the progressive drying-up of the Central Asian steppes. Lob-nor was once an inland sea, and well-settled, but it certainly hasn't been so for a long time. If this theory is correct, then the environment has been going downhill ever since the end of the Ice Age. It was the melt-waters that made vast areas habitable enough to support a settled community, and the primitive methods of agriculture that ruined them. If the level of society had been static, these areas would probably have been fertile today, but progressive societies are probably bound to wreck the ecology. However, the credit side of the deal has been the rise of all the great ancient civilisations of the middle East and Europe, and possibly of Asia as well. On the whole, we've always coped. Technology has risen faster than the deserts. But will it always do so? This seems to be the question nagging at the minds of your correspondants."

Roger Waddington
4 Commercial St
Norton, Malton.
Yorks.



"offutt's article is the first one I've seen taking a hard dispassionate look at fandom. Maybe the trouble is that we've been so caught up in the need to present a united front to the world outside, that we've been just that bit blind to our faults...? Anyway, it's especially welcome; though I suspect it'll meet with a very mixed response. Still, with all its faults, fandom is still something very worthwhile. FIAWOL is maybe too extreme, I see fandom as more of a state of mind at that outside the normal run; but however you define it, it's a world in which everyone cares more, one in which everyone gets more involved; which is perhaps its greatest virtue." **Umm..one could call the offutt article hard alright..but dispassionate? With all those adjectives!***

Archie Mercer
21 Trenethick Pac
Kelston.
Cornwall.



"The leading item of SCOT 58 seems to be a trifle pretentious. But then, so does its author. Possibly he has a valid reason (valid to me, I mean) for spelling his name entirely in minuscules. In fact, very possibly he's repeated it both in and out of print so many times that he's entirely fed up with it. Whether he has or not, it obviously hasn't reached me yet - and therefore pretentious he seems. Anyway, wouldn't it be a lot simpler to use the accepted conventions of the language in which he attempts to communicate? Typographical idiosyncrasies apart, what the man seems to be saying is more or less: "Look at me; see what a great guy I am, to continue associating with this cruddy lot."

It has been highly amusing to me to see the various reactions to the article by andrew offutt--I hope it amused you all too....Ethel

ETHICAL INQUIRY

nattering

NOTE TO BUCK COULSON..WHAT FOLLOWS IS NOT A CON REPORT.

That was a very enjoyable convention we had at Easter. I liked Worcester; and was fascinated by the view from the hotel lounge. The hotel faced Worcester Cathedral, very imposing with its high tower. It looked especially majestic at night when it was floodlit. Right in front of it was a very modern roundabout carrying major traffic. Quite a contrast!

I was talking to Betty Rosenblum when she mentioned that there was the Worcester Porcelain Works nearby; and that it was possible to visit it. I pricked up my ears at this, for I love good china and I've always preferred Worcester china to all the others. So it was arranged that I should join Betty.

In the end we set out with her family, Wendy Freeman and Don and Elsie Wollheim. We lost Don early on but Wendy, Elsie and I were enthralled. The factory had a Reject Shop where one could buy china more cheaply than in the shops. I honestly could not see any reason for rejection; for the display there was very lovely. I came away with a coffee set; and dearly wished I lived near enough to visit there often. What a china collection I would have!

After that Betty led us to the Museum which the factory maintains. In this they have examples of many famous pieces and it was also possible to see how some of the figures had gradually been built up. It was hard to say what impressed us most. I think I recall best of all the reproductions of flowers with faithful attention to detail and colour; and the birds who almost seemed to be in flight. We spent ages there and came away reluctantly.

When we came back I found that there was a hue and cry going on for me. It seems that the fanzine panel was due to start. It wasn't that I had forgotten about it; but I had thought it was scheduled for the afternoon.

Natterings 2

"Some GOH!", said Pete.

I did think, though, that the fanzine panel was not half bad, certainly better than many I've heard. On the whole panels to do with fandom are rarely a success. I wonder why? Goodness knows it is a subject we mull over often enough in the fanzines. Perhaps it is a subject that lends itself to discussion only in a small group.

Originally Pete wanted me to chair a panel with fandom as a subject. I tried for almost a year to think of a title! Then someone came up with the suggestion...."My pet peeve about fandom is--". I tried this out on a few folks; most said readily enough that they hadn't any pet peeve. When I begged them to think hard they came up with very little. One was 'closed room parties' from a fan and another was 'amateur criticism' from an author. Then someone pointed out to me that this subject might lead to bad feelings; and why not turn it round into..."what I like about fandom is--". I am easily influenced by such suggestions; but truth to tell I was not crazy about either idea! So I was more than pleased when lack of time dropped that item from the programme. But isn't it queer about fandom as no-go panel topic?

One time that weekend I was in the lounge and began talking to some young fans. There had been some people at the con who had not registered at the hotel and who had formed the notion of sleeping in the lounge. They were not allowed to do so; and this was what we began to discuss. These fans could not see why the freeloaders should not have been allowed to remain. They would not say that there was anything wrong with someone coming to the con as a free-loader. I told them frankly that this was where I had to part company with their thinking. I was brought up with a work ethic; was caught and imbued by it too young to be able to change now. I can understand someone being caught short by a financial crisis and just for once not being able to pay their whack. I know what it is to be hard up, all right. What I cannot understand is someone who thinks they have a right to freeload. Whenever I cannot pay my way - I feel guilty. I gather this is one of the fundamental differences between myself and younger folks. But then they don't have my memories..such as being paid 6d for a day's work.

Whilst on the subject of the con - I must mention that in my speech I said that what I would most like to see was some young, eager, energetic fan gather and write a history of British fandom. I explained that I had often thought of doing this myself; but that wherever this feeling crept over me I went away and lay down till it had gone. Notwithstanding the latter part of that remark I have had two fans write in and tell me they would be very glad to publish my remembrances of things past in their zines. But, dear faneds, if I had the time and the energy to write it up..I would publish it in my own zine.

Advice to budding fan historians: You cannot do better than follow the example of Harry Warner. He started off by collecting fanzines and reading

Natterings 3

about what had happened. He started a series of file cards on each subject. This is all that needs to be done..but it takes time and patience. Ask Harry how long it took! All the source material for a history of British Fandom is still around. For example...to write about Manchester fandom one would need to do the following. Get a file of SPACE TIMES, consult the fanzines of the day for references to Manchester fandom. Check up on the names of the fans who attended the early meetings, the fans who were on the SuperMancon committee --and then trace references to them. There are even some fans still around who could answer questions..such as Eric Bentcliffe, Harry Turner, Sid Birchby. Like me, they would probably blench at the idea of writing it all up; but a polite letter with a few questions would get an answer, I'm sure. Fans have photographs (I have a beauty of Frank Simpson wandering down the hotel corridor with a nightgown over his arm); and these could often be a help.

Nearly every fan group of the past in Britain had a fanzine which would be the best source for what happened then, who was who then, and who is still around. There are plenty fans still active who, if cornered and plied with some light refreshment, could tell a tale. Of course, you might get conflicting stories..but all historians get that!

Yes, that's where to start, dear faneds, not with asking me to do it for you!

Two or three times I have spotted in fanzines references to the Scottish poet William McGonagall. So I guess some of you may be interested to know that there is now an LP record of this dreadful Scottish poet's dreadful poems recited by the Scottish actor John Laurie. Laurie said "I wanted to treat the chap fairly, I've leaned over backwards to try and make poetry of it" Laurie has studied the original broadsheets marked with the royal crest. McGonagall regarded himself as a poet By Appointment because, says Laurie, "in an inadvertent moment Queen Victoria accepted one--or at least forgot to return it." Perhaps though, she took kindly to his poem on her attempted assassination....

"For God He turned the ball aside Maclean aimed at her head
And he felt very angry because it didn't shoot her dead."

Ho and hum, as Joe would say..guess I've come to the end of another issue. I've got some nice contributors lined up for future issues..Sid Birchby, George Charters, and Ken Cheslin have sent me good articles, so I hope you will stay with it.

Have a nice summer,

Ethel.

Reduced
Rate

Joseph D. Siclari

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No 54

Tallahassee

Fla. 32304 USA

