

SD



SPACE DIVERSIONS

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MUSING... MUSE-ING... MEWSING.....

A guide to what to read and how, in the world of fznz.

by

John Roles

LET'S START off with A - for ANDROMEDA - This year's biggest surprise. When I found that this was a large fanzine devoted to fanfiction primarily, I began with a heavy heart to wade through its 50 duplicated pages. I do not suffer fan fiction gladly and I was well forearmed with an armoury of searing epithets and invective. I struggled through the first piece, that by G. Whiting and found it much as I expected, a dull and quite commonplace piece of writing. I manfully faced "The 58th Variety" and here I sat up. This was a genuinely amusing piece of writing by Editor Pete Campbell himself. Note-taking forgotten I raced on avidly through the rest of the zine. Chuckling over the amorous robots and Paul Enever's excellent story "Tourist Trade". Even the ubiquitous Saucerana was good reading, I thought, and I am NOT a Saucer fan, at all. If this high standard can be maintained, it will become the best fan fiction fzn in the world - (I hear "Slant", and there's nothing there --- but S. has become too self-conscious anyhow.) All this and evened margins too. Keep it up Pete; I have but one criticism and that is avoid the worse Americanisms, such as "gonna" "ain't".

MAGAZINE COLLECTOR No.2. April, 1953. G.F. Clements follows up his first issue with commendable promptness. May this become a steady feature. His mag is only partially SF as yet though, as a large chunk is devoted to old boys and other type of material. However you chaps can remedy that by rallying to the Eds support with your fanads.

We should like to thank K.K.Smith of Washington, for his notice in Achronic Chronicles (No. 76!). I must clear up one point though and that is regarding the financial report which was printed in SD 4. This was not a statement of Space Diversions's accounts, but that of the Society, which is a different kettle of fish. We point this out in case anyone else was under a misapprehension.

SCIENCE FICTION NEWSLETTER, No. 28 Winter, 53, comes our way for the first time. This fanzine has a small quantity of breezy, newsy stuff. The Story of Philadelphia fandom was a good documentary article; most fans are interested in the pattern growths of other fancultures. As far as book reviews go, they are quite helpful in describing the content. But in this field no-one does a better job than Editor (Ron Squires ?) of

SCIENCE FICTION ADVERTISER, for which I have nothing but praise. Why, even Kuttner appears in this issue - V.6.N.4. Jan '53.

And there is a brilliant little gem of an exposee of Orson Welles's famous pre-war 'War of the Worlds' broadcast. Apparently it was just a fortuitous circumstance which made this famous.

SF TRENDS. No.11. Feb., '53. This number is only fair and compared unfavourably with the high standard set by the previous issues. Was that the peak we just passed? The letter section seemed to overbalance an issue of only average fanstuff. Those letters were not of particular interest to my mind and ran much as our column used to... "...was good", "...stinks", "I liked..." etc. We could publish reams of this, but we thought that as most of it was in the "...was good" vein, we would omit these tiresome eulogies. However, as Norman pointed out, popular demand seems to call for a letter section - so you get one, of sorts. Apart from the highly interesting information contained in the Editorial tour round Oak Ridge Atom Museum, Richard Elsterry had no competition at all in this issue. Covers:- Front, quite stirring - Epic? Back, gay - Lyric? March - 1953, No.12. I think a cartoon on the cover of a moderately serious magazine is somewhat out of place. Surely the cover should reflect the nature of the content. The zine is not a frivolous one on the whole. Lack of material of a controversial nature made this issue rather mediocre affair, even with my favourite columnist giving forth only a dissertation on the latest on 3D cinema.

SPACETIMES. Double issue for Dec.'52 & Jan'53, arrived here 31st March. This fzn keeps improving with each issue, but with the double number this progress line cannot be traced. Taken as one issue it makes a very good impression - being two of many things: Editorials, American Correspondent's Column, and sundry other short pieces. There was only one front cover though and nothing on the backcover. I'm pleased to see a fzn reviewing British pocket books. Glad too, to see that they are reviewed by an unbiased United Statesian. This department should be cultivated and perhaps expanded, made a bigger thing. The cover drawing, hekto-ed in three colours - was something of a new departure for a fzn cover - depicting the Hindu Dance of Creation.

GEMFONES. Conglomerate Issue. This number is devoted almost entirely to fanzine reviews, making a useful guide and reference list. Backcover Belcher advert made breezy reading.

SPACESHIP. No. 21, April '53. Oh I say. A photo cover. But which is the editor? H.G.Wells: Time Traveller. Is this pure coincidence? I beat Boggs by 6 months on this theme. See Space Diversions No.3. I mean to be unbiased when I say this but I do think that Boggs's story of "The Time Machine" is just a bit muzzy and the thread of Wells's writings were rather hard to trace through the irrelevancies. More readable perhaps, than that version in SD, but not so succinct I think. Roger Dard relates his and others' sad tale of woe with regard to the position of US SF in Australia. And the trials and persecutions he has suffered at the hands of the Customs. I did not believe such fanaticism could exist. I am not surprised C. Wells came bottom in your rating of the previous issue; his latest effort 'Together' seemed quite flat to me. He, Chappell and Cantin and share honours of First Three Prizewinners in the Paper Wasters' Championship. But to offset their trite tittle-tattle, Hirschorn, Mason and Browne rally to the cause of constructive fanning. Good show! Subscriptions for this zine are obtainable via Ken Slater, at 2/- for 3 issues.

SCIENCE-FICTION PERSONALITIES

MY FIRST conscious memory of Science Fiction as such was a series of stories about Moon-Men which appeared in 1928 or thereabouts in "Adventure" or "Wizard". From then on I read such S.F. as came to hand, or could be found. The best-remembered was "Scoops" No.1 of Vol. 1 appearing on Feb 10th 1934. This copy is before me as I write, as are all the remaining issues, and some of the stories will always be memorable to me. "Voice from the Void," "Cataclysm," and other stories seemed to have an appeal lacking in so much present-day S.F. Other stories, such as Conan Doyle's "Poison Belt" linger in my mind. However, "Scoops" is long defunct and this complete edition actually belongs to E.R. James, a cousin.

In those days I hunted libraries through for H. Wells's stories, though some of them were stiff going and others seemed rather pedestrian. Later, I found Olaf Stapledon. Many of his stories remain unbeatable. "Last and First Men," "The Star Maker," and others have such an imaginative breadth that they surpass any dozen copies of any S.F. magazine published in this country or USA. But unfortunately his narrative style does not attract those who were more accustomed to minute paragraphs and endless (and often pointless) action. I remember, however, the pleasure with which I received Olaf Stapledon's most high and generous praise of the Ms. of my novel "Tomorrow Sometimes Comes." But now these men are gone and we must look to the present and future.

The present trend of S.F. has several admirable traits and several that are deplorable. Unfortunately a writer can do very little to influence such trends -- the onus rests on editorial shoulders. If the editor does not like what the writer sends in, then he does not publish it. Accordingly the writer is usually committed to write, from time to time, stories which he deduces the editor will like. These are published. The others fill the W.P.B. Hence the choice, in turn, is governed by what he supposes the readers want. Deplorable traits, in my view, include:- women dragged into stories for the sake of the feminine or romantic interest; pictures of the later undressed yet unfrozen in space, etc; stories based on series of "clever" incidents which do not really intergrate. Admired traits are:- real originality, fully reasoned and logical development, scientific premises which will stand pondering upon, and lack of superficial emotion. (In a recent issue of a USA mag every hero was so terrified that sweat was running down his body --- in one case it squelched in his boots!)

It is so easy to be fantastic -- and it can be interesting. "The doorknob opened an eye and blinked." "Mars in no place for Earthmen, the wall whispered in the dead man's ear...." Very well, very interesting -- but all too often a mere trick to catch attention, having no real place in a logically intergrated story.

I have found such things to be particularly disliked by intelligent readers who have newly come to S.F. to see what it is about. If they look for an explanation and find none, or search for a reason and find it absent, they are inclined to dismiss S.F. like any adult dismisses a donkey who floats to the moon with a 2d balloon tied to him. This may be doing S.F. a disservice, accordingly. Readers of detective stories require a logical solution, feasible development. S.F. should have no less a standard.

These feelings, strong as they are, may have arisen from the large amount of work I do on electronic equipment; here, there is always a reason, though sometimes complex deduction is required to discover it. I should like to see some of the electronic devices of the future. At present, should the Editor see a mobile device come along the road, halt, survey him with an electronic eye, then withdraw, he will know that one of my radio-controlled models is on reconnaissance. (Similar mechanical infiltrations into Ireland have been prevented by the maximum range of pocketable equipment being only about eighty miles.)

My hobbies and interests seem so numerous and confused that I can scarcely distinguish or list them. Photography, growing succulents (cacti), fishing, poetry, drawing, and other things. I have spent over four years on a pianoforte concerto which has now reached a vast length but still does not express all I had in mind. I find that I have over five hundred stories and articles published in various periodicals, plus ten books in whole or part (the latter including two horribly ponderous encyclopaedias, one listed to appear in 1954, anticipated price £5/5/-.) Before returning to S.F., I should mention a further hobby -- the writing of stories exactly as I like them! (Most of these are never sent to any editors or elsewhere.)

Authors I most like and remember include Ray Bradbury; stories I most dislike but still remember include "The World of Null-A". A lot of good shorts are still appearing, here and in the USA, as readers will know. People's tastes differ; the more variety the better, I think.

It is notable how magazines seem to prosper or fail largely in accordance with the rates they pay writers! A few moments' thought suggests why this is so. If the magazine or publisher "A" only pays £1 a thousand words (shameful rate) for Copyright, and magazine or publisher "B" pays 21/6d. a thousand words (equally shameful), then immediately writers have noted this they will send their Mss to "B" (especially if he only buys 1st rights). This means that the stuff published by "A" consists almost wholly of "B's" leavings. Hence "A" is likely to lose thousands of readers for the sake of a few shillings. As a publisher who does not insist on taking Copyright (usually for no clear reason) will in general receive the best

F. G. RAYER

stories. (Was it £35 in all that "King Solomon's Mines" brought its author?) Good stories are frequently published again and again. It is not wise to rely on the generosity of the publisher --- he may not feel generous, but instead be eager to make money from himself. (I have before me a letter from a publisher who shall be nameless, in which he refuses me permission to quote from one of my own stories, Copyright of which I have sold to him! I hope writers who may be among the readers of "Space Diversions" will never do anything they afterwards regret.

It is saddening to recall the S.F. magazines which have appeared and faded away; or which have failed to appear. Among the former let us remember Walter H. Gillings's "Fantasy", which appeared at a time when conditions were terrible difficult. Among the latter Hulton's project, the paper for which was apparently absorbed in "Girl". Let us hope that "New Worlds" and "Science-Fantasy" will continue until the Editor's beard tangles with the clips (no disrespect meant, E.J.C.) as the ten-thousandth issue is prepared. Those deserve support. A lot of the stories in them are better than a lot of the stories seen in a lot of the USA magazines.

All fans have a duty! It is to write briefly to editors saying which stories they like, and, perhaps, why. (Not lengthy screeds which require sifting, however.) If they do this, then eventually more and more stories of the type which are most generally liked will appear, and more readers will be better satisfied.

THE END.

(Poll results, contd. from page 13)

Here are the next in order, although point ratings are so low as to make them almost meaningless. Points thus /3/
11.) DRACULA /40/, 12.) THE BOOK OF PTATH /37/, 13.) WHAT MAD UNIVERSE /36/, and DWELLER IN THE MIRAGE /36/, 15.) SEVEN FOOTPRINTS TO SATAN /32/ and THE DARK WORLD /32/, 17.) THE UNPLEASANT PROFESSION OF JOHNATHON HOAG /31/, 18.) CASTLE OF IRON /30/, THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES /30/, and THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES /30/. FOLLOWED BY: JOURNEY TO BARKUT, FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER, RATS IN THE WALLS, AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS, TYPEWRITER IN THE SKY, LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD, INCOMPLETE ENCHANTER, THE WORLD BELOW, THE ENCHANTED WEEKEND, THE HURKLE IS A HAPPY BEAST, BURN WITCH, BURN !, CASE OF THE FRIENDLY CORPSE, HAROLD O'SHEA SERIES, TURNABOUT, and THE DEVIL WITH YOU ! etc., etc. Had enuff ? there's another 399 to go, all with 17 points or less each tho'.

'A Treasury of Science-Fiction' Groff Conklin Anthology goes to Frank Farnell, 23 Finchley Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, who scored 29 pts., and D.H. Tuck, of 17 Audley street, North Hobart, Tasmania, Australia will have received a no acubt welcome parcel from KFS, his score being 26 points.

Good ratings were also made by: Lewis Conway, Jim Mooney, Dave Gardner George Whiting, Staff Wright, Race Mathews (Australia), John Roles, Ron Robertson (S. Africa) and Arthur Duell.

* * * * *

In conclusion I would like to say thanks for your support, and for those who don't subscribe to SD a special booklet of these tabulations is in course of production, from the same stencils, plus some other stuff, which will be free to all who entered. Limited to 100 copies, nearly 90 are earmarked for this purpose, others go to those who ask first, and enclose postage. In retrospect the whole thing has been a lot of work, with apparently little to show for it. However, I hope it has held your interest, and may encourage you to catch up on any of the "top ten" you may have missed up to now! I'm quite satisfied, as I am sure that I have learned a lot, about items normally beyond my scope in the S.F. field. Here's to the next one!

((Some of our readers are also editors of fanzines, we hope that they find something to smile at in this slightly fictionalised account of publishing issue number Five of SD. Others of our readers don't go in for such a hard hobby grind, we hope this points out that you can have some fun regardless of the time, expense, and, very often, the heartaches that fall to our lot. So let us recap Space Diversions number five.))

"TAKES THREE TO BOTCH A FANZINE"

by

DAVE GARDNER.

I'VE SPUN A yarn at the office that I'm taking the wife and kids over the water to New Brighton for the day. The sun is shining and well-wishes follow me down the steps. I hang round the entrance until I think that my desk-bound colleagues have got tired of waiting to see if it really is my wife I'm meeting. Two blondes walk up and as no wolf-whistles sound from behind me I decide the way is clear. I follow the blondes up the road and regretfully leave them at the corner as I turn off to meet John Roles. All this subterfuge is necessary because I daren't let it leak out that I co-edit a fanzine: they don't mind me spending office hours writing for the promags but they're bound to think I'm more than half-loopy if it leaks out that I also do something for nothing.

The work of the afternoon takes place at Norman's office, he's barred the doors so that no business callers can interrupt the flow of blood and sweat that is yet to come. We rap on the door 13 times and yell, "Null A, Null A, sacred is the Book of Don E. Day."

Now Norman knows that no sane person would stand and shout anything like that, so he slides back the bolts and we squeeze in. The office is below ground level and Liverpool being a grimy town the windows are none to clean, maybe that's why he's got the gas fire turned on full: you can't see the sunlit sidewalks from here. John and I puff and gasp and Norman evidently thinks we're cadging cigarettes again. He hands them round. We weren't but we take a couple apiece to show there's no hard feelings, and remove our jackets. I remember that I'd forgotten to wash above my wrists for the past two months, I put my coat back on, quick. The fire is still on full but it's so blessed hot that none of us can get near enough to turn it off. We open the window and shut it again. Somebody's been dropping things through the grating, we don't quite know what they are and the smell debars us from investigating. Dead cats or maybe something worse. Could be the stink that's going to be raised about my comments in Hero and There on swearing. Seeing that it hasn't been circulated yet I presume that Frank Milnes has gotten hold of a time machine from Stan so I instantly lose interest.

The Gestetner duplicator is on the far end of the long table that runs down one of the walls. There's also moisture running down the walls but we know that the Mersey has never flooded Norman's office before and so it's not very likely to do it this afternoon. "Right," John says. "Let's get to work." He looks business-like about the whole affair and I sigh as I realise that I'm not going to have such a restful time after all.

Norman unlocks the stool filing cabinet and starts to pile up the printed pages of NUMBER FIVE on the end of the table. We rush to get them spread out. Rush because the table is tipping up and we don't want to have to sort them all out off the floor.

We would be all ready to start but for the fact that the heading for the contents page didn't turn out as well as we hoped. We decide that we'll have to do another one, with stencilled headings. John and I sit back and watch Norman twist his tongue round his nose as he applies stylo to stencil. By the time he has finished we've smoked half a packet of cigs we'd found in his locked drawer. He's always locking things up when John and I visit him: it never does any good, ever. The stencil finally comes over to me and I slip it in the typor. I start pounding away because it's already two o'clock and we said we'd start at one sharp. I use up nearly all his bottle of Fil-wax and forget to put the picture titles on the page. I decide that it doesn't really matter, fans are intelligent enough to realise that the one on page 19 illustrated Asimov's FOUNDATION, and the one on page 23 was THE SHIP OF ISHTAR (okay, Don? Happy now?...He's the art editor you know, I've got to keep well in with him - he's got some terrific mudo studies that I want.)

Norman says he's got to strip the duplicator first as it's dirty and the ink won't flow properly. I tell him I'd strip anything, the word 'dirty' having started me off it takes them all their time to get it into my head that we're here to produce a fanzine not to listen to my latest idea for a Sf story which deals with a nymphomaniac. I'm rather disappointed in this lack of interest but I buck up a bit when John manages to get the inked silk wound round his neck. His neck is practically as black as my arms now so I take off my coat and say something about "Surprising where it all comes from." Meanwhile sticking two scraggy arms under their eyes. They say yes, and maybe the smell wasn't from outside. I can't understand it, I had a bath when the first issue of SD came out and that was only...let me see... yes, about the time of the '52 London.

They can see that I'm upset and so they start to laugh. "Never mind," says John, planting an inky palm in the middle of my back. "It was just a joke." "Yos," says Norman, and manages to squeeze the tuho of black ink over my brown shoes. "Actually you don't smell half as bad as some of your stories."

We start working. I get the job of picking up the sheets and piling them into unstapled heaps. Whilst I do the work John and Norman fill the stapling machine with those bent pieces of metal which we are always hoping OTHER WORLDS will use instead of that goo which doesn't.

Then Norman starts showing John how the stapler works, he's scared stiff of machines is John and we have to convince him that actually he's handling a blaster which was time tracked through to us via PS. He says that he doesn't believe us as PS always has its heroes using swords. We tell him that he's got a mental block and that anyone can see that he's holding a sword. That gets him down and he makes a few wild slashes with it crying, "Death to all Weird Tale fer." I wonder what would have happened if we'd told him it was a cover girl. Norman sees the lock in my eyes, recognises what it means and hurriedly tells me that the contents page is now dry and I'd better start adding it to the copies I've already stacked. I have some difficulty in doing this because I've counted out the number of copies and it comes to 128. Have you ever tried to tear up a piece



of paper 10" x 8" into 128 pieces? It's a bit bitty.

"Hey, Norm," I say. "How are people expected to know what we've got inside? This won't tell them much." I hold up a scrap of paper.

He calls me some very unpleasant names and shows me the pile of contents pages which he has left on the floor. How was I to know he meant one full page to each copy? Some people expect wonders from unpaid help.

He remembers to ask me how many copies we have. I tell him.

"Hell," he says, "we should have printed 150 just to cover the mailing list and a few spares."

I show him that three of the piles still have 22 sheets left but all the other piles aren't.

"Hurrah," cries John. "We've got a scarce issue at last!"

"Yes," says Norman, looking a bit more cheerful. "We'll be able to charge 2/- for these instead of one." We plan what we are going to do with all that extra money and then we remember that we have a price increase notice in this very issue and we can't go against that. Our faces drop and we say good-bye to the three cars and complete files of ASF we had planned on picking up.

"Never mind," says Norman, seeing that he did the duplicating and the whole lack of copies reflects on him, "we can forget all about the folks who didn't send us a letter about number 4. That ought to give us some spares."

John points out that those who didn't write in were subscribers and you couldn't expect them to have any more correspondence with us, not at 22d a time.

We console ourselves with the knowledge that should any mug write in for a copy of NUMBER 5 we can always send back a terrific spiel about it being a complete sell-out and that we haven't got a single copy left on hand. That ought to boost up the paid circulation a bit...we hope.

We take stock of our position. We have an unstapled batch of SDs, a filled stapler, a packet of 100 unfolded front and back covers, a tube of glue, a pile of envelopes and stick-on labels, and somewhere, if we're lucky - enough Irish stamps which Walt pinched from his local Post Office, to stick on said envelopes. Norman appertitions out the work. I get the job of folding the covers to fit the contents. John has to do the stapling, and Norman does absolutely nothing.

Says John, suddenly, "Fancy old Sam Mosscowtwitch being the editor of a mag like SCIENCE FICTION+." He takes another bundle of loose pages, staples them, and places them on the pile to his right.

I carry on folding the covers. Norman told me to lay them out face (i.e. printed side) down and fold lengthways leaving an overlap of 1/8th of an inch at the end; turn it round and do the same the other way. That then leaves a spine and a folded cover for the guts. I don't believe him when he says that the measurements must be correct, and I have no idea how big an eighth of an inch appears. There's a rule on the desk, one of those things with little marks along the edges. To hell with that, I think, I want to get home sometime tonite. I guess at the overlaps. I have done about half the covers when Norm stirs himself and comes across to see how I'm making out. I think I have done pretty well. Norman doesn't. I wouldn't like to print what he said but it all boils down to the fact that the spine instead of being 1/8th" it is now a 1/2". Personally I don't see why he is worried, we can always pick out the best copies for ourselves and friends. He doesn't think that way, he makes me put them away for the big annish

and start all over again. I wonder how I am going to pass off being late when I eventually get home. I guess that I'll have to tell the wife that I've been working late again at the office. That one's always good for a night out late.

At last John has all the 128 copies stapled up and I have 129 covers folded. I give the extra cover back to Norman and he thanks me profusely. Maybe I was wrong, maybe he's a nice guy. He tells me that he's going to frame it, it's the first time that I've ever given him anything. I remind him of the one occasion when I couldn't get out of giving him a fag. "Did you really?" he asks. "Of course I did," I tell him. "I got it out of your desk, you told me to." He says that he must pay me back, he doesn't want to think that I've got a hold over him. I remind him that it was so long ago that I should get interest on it. I should have kept my big mouth closed. He forgets all about the smokes and says we really must get some work done.

"Hammer," he shouts. John takes up the chorus, "Hammer, hammer. We must have the hammer." "What Thor?" I want to know.

They ignore me. I feel squashed. I start to sulk and then I rub my eyes. I can't believe what they see. Norman opens a polished oak case and takes out a bundle. He unwraps the silks and satins and produces a hammer. John gives him a tin of metal polish and he burnishes the head. Next he sandpapers the shaft. I'm so flabbergasted that I forget to press for that cigarette. I open his drawer and help myself.

Carefully, reverently, John and Norman lay out each stapled copy of NUMBER 5 and proceed to hammer hell out of them. I ask them what this is in aid of. Norman looks at me as if I'm a moron. He tells me I am. "We do this," he says, in a superior tone, letting me know that he lives in Nocturnum and not Liverpool, "in order that the little bumps in each staple do not show through when we stick the covers in place. See?" He holds up one of the poor, beaten copies and I notice that it now has two deep depressions on the spine edge. I also note that the staples are bashed flat. I congratulate him. "It's nothing," he says.

I agree, silently. I suddenly start to laugh and they want to know what gives. I don't tell them. I want to make them jealous, maybe they'll think I've just recalled an unrepeatable joke. I haven't though. I can just visualise J.W. Campbell going round hitting each copy of ASF whilst G.O. Smith gets ready with the glue pot. Maybe that's what all the sticky business was about. Maybe Smith didn't run off with J.W.'s wife after all. Maybe he glued the covers in place before J.W. had a chance to hammer the staples. I guess that must have been about '43 - '45 judging by the way the staples stick through the covers.

Norman picks up the tube of glue and starts tracing two thin lines down each side of the interior spine of the cover. John and I drop each pile of pegs in place, fold the covers and sit on them. We give them five minutes and then peel them off our trousers. We take a bunch of 60 envelopes addressed to people we can count on getting in a quick reply. (4 so far!)

At last we stand by the door, ready to post them on the way home. "It's a wonder anyone would do it," says Norman. "Do what?" John and I want to know. "Edit a magazine like Science Fiction," he says. "We'll forgive him," I say, "maybe he does it for fun: like we bring out SD."

"Do we?" John and Norman chime.

"Do what?" "Bring it out for fun," they mutter.

I load the way to the Post Office. It's now dark. It's also late. I begin to think we're the mugs, not the subscribers.

Futuristic plausibility. Please !

by

STAN NUTTALL

I EXPECT to be sat upon about this. Still, here goes.

It is my contention that whilst Science-Fiction has improved considerably over the past ten years, in one major field it has still a long way to go. That is in the way characters think and act. In the late 'thirties characters were more like cardboard figures who moved through a formula plot containing as much scientific jumbo-jumbo as possible. Due largely to the policy of ASF's editor, John W. Campbell, Jr., this was greatly changed and now, in the best stories, it is the impact of Science on Social behaviour that is important, not the science alone. So far, so good. However, the characters still react to any given situation in a strictly mid-20th century manner. This is quite in order while the action takes place in the near future, but I refuse to believe that people of the year what-have-you of the Galactic Era will behave in a like manner.

I don't, of course, mean matters of language; one has to accept the translation into terms we understand. One has only to do a little historical research to see what I mean. I would guarantee that if I placed you even in early Victorian times you would have difficulty in understanding quite a lot of what people did, why they did it, and their reactions to any given situation. Go back to Elizabethan England and - provided you understood the language - you would be even worse off.

It is true, I think, to say we have broadened our minds considerably over the centuries and grown less intolerant - although we have a long way to go yet. Mores change even over so little as twenty years. Even methods of love making change. What swain goes on bended knee to his beloved these days? And Valentine looks a little silly now. Yet a majority of our authors place a typical 20th century hero in the problematical future and have him react to everything in a typical 20th century manner. Much as I enjoy Asimov's "Foundation" series I'm afraid I could find his characters anywhere around me. I agree that it must be extremely difficult for an author to try and imagine how people will react in the future - but at least he ought to try. After all, while I don't think much of von Vogt as a litterateur he does try to give some of his characters a different outlook. Gosseyne surely is using the silent areas of the brain? And the idea of a Null A Society evolving is much better than a Galactic Empire run on 20th century lines.

Do I detect a similarity between Asimov's Galactic Empire and the British Commonwealth, with Governor Generals representing the Emperor on each planet? Transpose "Emperor" for "Queen" and "planet" for "Dominion". This is particularly noticeable in "Pebble in the Sky". The Governor-General for Earth acts in just the stiff-upper lipped way one expects of British Governor-Generals - which is very admirable, and, for all I know, the best way to run a Galactic Empire - but I don't think it is at all likely.

True, we tend to associate ourselves with characters we are reading about, and too different a thought process might be tedious, but I do think a little more might be done in this direction.

Anyway, think about it. -12-

POLL RESULTS (Conclusion)

SECTION THREE -- AUTHORS

From the point of view of statistics, this is probably the section which will appeal most of all. Any serious constructive fan has pretty definite preferences here. This is borne out on the point values, which show a more definite pattern than the 'story' sections.

The top ten.

	<u>Points</u>
1.) A.E. VAN VOGT	419
2.) ISAAC ASIMOV	315
3.) R. HEINLEIN	297
4.) E.F. RUSSELL	272
6.) R. BRADBURY	246
6.) A.C. CLARKE	182
7.) L. SPRAGUE de CAMP	152
8.) T. STURGEON	150
9.) E.E. SMITH	142
10.) H. KUTTNER	123

It seems we have at least two top ranking authors in Britain !

A total of one hundred and nine authors were listed, others of popular appeal are: -

	<u>Points</u>		<u>Points</u>
11.) J.W. CAMPBELL Jr.	101	16.) POUL ANDERSON	72
12.) J. WILLIAMSON	84	17.) L. RON HUBBARD	63
13.) A. MERRITT	78	18.) FREDRIC BROWN	58
14.) CLIFFORD D. SIMAK	76	19.) E.R. BURROUGHS	50
15.) H.G. WELLS	73	20.) HAL CLEMENT	46

"Best S.F. Stories 1950" autog. Bleiler & Dikty, has been sent to Fred L. Smith, 613 Great Western Road, Glasgow W. 2, whose preferences rated 41 pts. Egoboo to John Roles (38) Ina Shorrock (38), Brian Lewis (37), Eric Bentcliffe (37), John Gutteridge (36), H.P. Sanderson (34), D.S. Reeve (34), Peter Jobling (33), Lewis Conway (33), Stan (mcneybags) Nuttall (33), H.J. Campbell (33), Jim Mooney (32), David Wood (32) and Walt Willis (30).

Don Shackleton of New York gets something from Operation Fantast, with 36 pts. (K.F.S. now offers an alternative to that stinkcroo 'Star of Ill Omen !') more 'boo to Dale R. Smith (U.S.A., 33 pts.), C.S. Mustchin (Australia, 32 pts.) and Nic Oosterbaan (Holland, 32 pts.)

SECTION TWO -- FANTASY STORIES

This classification has taken longer to integrate than any of the other three. FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRTY FOUR stories were listed, despite the fact that 15 entrants did not state any, and many others only the first two or three.....and many were the rude comments !

The top ten

	<u>Points</u>		<u>Points</u>
1.) THE SHIP OF ISHTAR	175	6.) SHE	65
2.) LEST DARKNESS FALL	109	7.) FEAR	64
*3.) SINISTER BARRIER	98	8.) DARKER THAN YOU THINK	50
4.) THE DREAMING JEWELS	80	9.) SLAVES OF SLEEP	47
5.) THE MOON POOL	66	10.) CREEP SHADOW, CREEP	42

The most remarkable fact above, is that 'Sinister Barrier' in third place, is, as you will remember, eighth position in the S.F. section. I wonder how E.F.R. would classify it ? Might make a good discussion point !

BY CHU!

by

Frank Milnes.

I AM inclined to agree with Dave Gardner that far too much science-fiction bearing the "Modern Adult" label is in reality old fashioned, rather childish, pornography in ill fitting, futuristic dress.

Sometimes, however, the story demands a more sexual treatment than the normal. "The Lovers" (Dave's rave) had to be treated in this manner. Sex, in this instance, is a fundamental part of the plot but is not permitted to obtrude more than the story demands. As in some of Stapledon's works, notably "Odd John," sex is introduced as one of the basic parts of the plot without producing what is commonly termed a "sexy" story. I hope I never see anything entitled "White Slaves of the Martian Depths."

It should never be forgotten that an author of any kind of fiction is primarily a story teller. He may also be a stylist using beautifully constructed, perfectly rammatical prose, but he must, from the first word of the first chapter, to the end of the last page, be able to tell a good tale and tell it well. A sin of syntax is forgiven more easily than an ill told tale.

Dave seems to have forgotten this first principle of fiction writers when he sounds that strange, even paradoxical note about swearing. "Science-fiction is growing up," he trumpets. "Let there be some good old cuss words to prove it."

But - would a generous admixture of Dave's recommended vocabulary prove anything but the author's intellectual poverty? No matter how much an author makes his characters curse and blaspheme, their invective can never supereede good story-telling.

One of the many methods of character identification is the use of a favourite phrase or type of speech. French, German, Jewish or Chinese characters often have their own fictional idiom, and alliterative cursing is sometimes used in the same way. This device although rarely used by the better authors, is quite distinct from the mere use of expletives which are frequently inserted by fifth-rate writers under the mistaken impression that bad language and strong language are synonymous.

Strong, forceful speech need never include bad language, the mere use of which tends to become boring in the extreme when repeated, but there is certainly room for some good original invective to take the place of the current overworked words and phrases which too often despoil the pages of so many science-fiction magazines.

One facet of the late Mr. Shakespeare's genius was his amazing ability to allow his characters to curse effectively without exceeding the bounds of contemporary decency. Fortunately he is not alone. There are modern authors whose abilities include the use of effective invective. Surely it is not too much to hope for that some budding S-F author should fill this gap; perhaps even a fan, some follower of Chu, the old Chu (and what an old Chu) may fill this great need and provide at last Adult Science-fiction.



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GLASGOW S. E.

Received for review....

From Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd., 44 Museum Street, London W.C.1.
ISLANDS IN THE SKY and PRELUDE TO SPACE by ARTHUR C. CLARKE.

ISLANDS IN THE SKY : 190 pages and priced at 8s. 6d.
Cover and interior illustrations by Gerard Quinn.

This book is concerned with the experiences of a teen-ager, named Roy Malcolm, from the time he is a judged winner of the World Airways contest with a prize of a trip, all expenses paid, to any place in the world -- to the time when he returns to Earth. That final statement is not as crazy as it may seem.

Roy Malcolm is space-conscious, his ambition is to visit the Inner Satellite Space Station, and under the Tycho Convention of 2054, the Atlantic Federation members decided how far into space any planet's legal rights extended. Under the definition reached the Inner Station is a part and parcel of Earth because it is inside the thousand-kilometer limit. Naturally, Roy's claim to visit the Station is based solely upon a legal question which was certainly not expected to be called upon for such a reason as this and although the contest holders are loath to arrange the trip, under the terms of the prize they have to permit and arrange his flight to, and stay on, the artificial satellite.

So much for how Roy Malcolm managed to get out there. The above took place in the first chapter, the other eleven take place out in space.

This book may be slanted at the younger reader but that is only because the leading character is a boy. If you have any doubts that this book may be dull, juvenile, written down to fit the obvious market at which it is aimed let me reassure you by saying that you will be pleasantly surprised upon reading it.

It is factual, as much as anything not yet attained can be factual. It is scientifically possible, it is scientifically plausible, as one may expect from the typewriter of the Chairman of the British Interplanetary Society; and above all it is a book which well prepares any reader, young or old, for the dawning interplanetary era with its inherited ISLANDS IN THE SKY.

D.S. Gardner.

PRELUDE TO SPACE: 190 pages and priced at 9s.6d.
Cover by Gerard Quinn.

It is with a slight amount of hesitation that I approach a once-read book. More often than not I discover that the initial attraction has been lost and that a generally good book becomes mediocre, sparkling passages lose their lustre, and characterisation is not quite as refreshing as it was at first perusal.

That is the general feeling, but occasionally - and only occasionally - do I find that there is an exception to the general rule. The exception in this case was provided with Prelude To Space. I read it first in Galaxy Novels in 1951, I read it again this week and I discovered that it was even better than I had at first thought.

I cannot praise this book too highly. To say that it is good is an understatement. It is one book which must be purchased by everyone who has the slightest interest in future space flight. It is also the kind of book to pass on to a friend who scoffs at space flight, for once he or she has read it I guarantee that never again will they slight science-fiction as being fanciful, over-imaginative literature. Naturally it is imaginative, but it is written with a depth of feeling that makes it appear as though the launching of "Prometheus" is happening right here and now.

The plot is straight; it is one of the few excellent novels that have not needed a murder, mystery, or a sexual undercurrent to maintain reader interest throughout.

The principal character is an American official historian, one Dirk Alexson, but the locale (for a welcome change) is London and Australia. Three-quarters of the story takes place in and about London and at the offices of INTERPLANETARY at Southbank, the remaining quarter at Luna City and the five mile long launching rack in Australia.

It is Dirk Alexson's task to set out for posterity his impressions of the staff of Interplanetary, and the stages that are being covered prior to the actual launching of the ship. What happened, the things he saw and the things he came to realise about the men around him, his impression and his preliminary work can all be found in these pages.

The characters are almost unbelievably real, everyone of them has something to say and a part to play and regardless of the simplicity of the plot there is no slackening off of interest anywhere along the line. It is a book which I would like to have written, and when you have read it, as read it you must, I think that you too will envy Mr. Clarke his name on the title page and spine.

The launching of the first space ship bound for the moon, that is what Mr. Clarke has to tell. But how very well he tells it.

D.S. Gardner.

ROUND ROBIN

PART VI

HE, HOWEVER, was getting used to shocks by now. "What do you mean," he stammered. "You've been expecting me?"

"Since you turned the lens back to here we've been examining you. It's two way you know; only our method is more efficient," the being replied from his superior height.

"More efficient?" queried Bunny.

"Yes," said the figure, "we examined your minds, too."

"How about Roxanne?" asked Bunny, who was getting worried about his real body.

"She'll be through in a moment, she's trying hard --" And as he spoke --shwurip -- and there stood Roxanne.

Bunny admired his physique again. It looked good on her, he told himself, and then his train of thought broke off as she piped, "Help! Have we shrunk or is this bloke really that high?"

"I assure you, I am twenty of your feet," said the giant. "By the way, my name is Tregor."

"Who or what are you?" asked Bunny, who was beginning to grow curious about this Greek-godlike figure.

Tregor motioned to some queer looking chairs. "Sit down," he invited, "and I will explain."

They did as they were bid.

Tregor composed himself and began, "Many centuries ago, this planet was something like your fertile Earth. Then the series of disastrous wars began which were to lay waste the land with atomic warfare, and that most terrible of all weapons -- the Super-Ray. However, more of that later. A group of scientists and thinkers, seeing the total annihilation of our race imminent, collected together the most desirable of our population and took them to these caverns which honeycomb the crust of Mars. They also made sure that they would not be followed, by sealing the openings. They had brought with them all that was best of our civilization, plus equipment and the technical knowledge to further our progress. But, to avoid any unhappiness by desires for life on the surface, everyone was indoctrinated against such feelings. Hence we have never bothered to contact your race, which has recently colonized Mars, even though we watch them and have learnt their languages and cultures."

With a start Bunny thought that they couldn't have got quite back to their own time. The first Moonship had just been launched when he had been launched on this fantastic adventure. Tregor was still speaking, "That, more or less, is a brief summary of our history, and now to you. As I have remarked, we know your history and unlike the majority of your race we would like to help you. First of all, we'll transpose your minds so that you can inhabit your own bodies."

BY

STAN NUTTALL

Bunny and Roxanne jumped at this. "You mean now?" squeaked Bunny. "Yes," smiled Tregor. "A simple process. If you will follow me." They followed him from the cavern down a passage into another cavern filled with huge machines and some attendants who seemed too busy to notice them.

"We get power from here," explained Tregor. "Watch that far machine for a moment."

The machine he pointed to filled the far end of the cavern and was a mass of tubes and dials. At the top were two rods like electrodes. As they watched, a blinding green-blue flash shot between the rods.

"A by-effect," said Tregor, "of the Turvan-Guttren generator. But a magnetic force-field between the proxten rods and you can force the discharge out forty miles, destroying everything it touches. The dreaded Super-Ray. Thus was a power for good turned to ill-use." He turned and they went through another passage and on to a platform which rose to a higher level. They stepped into another passage leading to a cavern similar to the previous one.

"How man people are there here?" asked Bunny. "And where are we now?"

"There are four thousand people in the various caverns, most of which are an underground city. There is a restriction of the birth rate to that number to avoid over-population. There are other cities as well. This is the hospital part."

He continued leading them into a further passage. As yet they had met no one else. As if anticipating Bunny's question, Tregor spoke, "This part isn't used often and I don't want too many inquisitive people around. In here." He broke off abruptly and led them through a door. Bunny and Roxanne were out of breath by this time, trying to keep up with their guide.

The room was filled with huge beds and masses of equipment. "Lie down," commanded Tregor, and they obediently jumped up on to one of the beds and Tregor attached electrodes to their foreheads.

"Relax," he said. "It won't take more than an hour, and you'll be unconscious anyway."

Bunny relaxed and watched the huge figure slip a switch. He felt suddenly tired, terrible tired.

When he woke up the first thing he saw was the shapely bosom of Roxanne by his head. At first it did not sink in and when he finally realized he was back in his own body once more he was overjoyed. When Roxanne awoke she too was so pleased that she grabbed hold of him and hugged him. He liked that.

"And now," said Tregor, "to the next thing."

The next issue should see the last of the Round Robin. We say should because next time it's a long instalment to close it off and we are not too sure if we can spare all the space at one go. We'll not be sorry to see it end, although it was comforting to think that we always had something on hand for the next issue, still we don't think we'll be running another R-R so all you who disliked it can now breathe easier. But what the devil are we going to use for the next issue but one....? Umm, that's a good point. It rather looks as though somebody had better get busy on doing some hard writing!

THE INNER PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTIONS

The main impression that I took home from the Chicon, is that we in Britain won't really know what a convention is until we engage a hotel for it. In London we have as much, and more, talent for an official programme as the whole of America and the only thing that prevents our cons from being the mad and glorious affairs that the U.S. ones are, is the fact that we give up at 11 P.M., when the convention should only be starting.....I don't mean that we should have drunken orgies in hotel rooms, but that people who want to talk should have somewhere to go, instead of being restricted to odd moments between items on the official programme, or standing in a crowded bar.

I visualise the ideal set-up as something like this. The Con. proper is held in a place like the Royal Hotel room, with a lobby outside where people can talk and nip in now and again to see what's going on.

This we have got.

But in addition we need to have a place nearby where people can spend the night in revelry, publishing sessions, or even sleep. This is the sort of thing conventions are for. The real reason people come to them is to get to know the people they've only known as names.

When the opportunities for this are there, as in the US, you find that the active fans virtually ignore the official convention altogether, and the success of a convention is judged, not by the merits of the programme but by how well the arrangements facilitated informal get-togethers.

At the ideal Convention, the pros and the active fans, the core of the convention, would be accommodated in a small hotel where they can be hosts to others. With this arrangement you find that the convention quickly attains the sort of organic unity we know only in the closing sessions. It gathers momentum from day to day instead of, as with ours, being merely a couple of desultory lecture sessions.

The "sober Englishman" aspect is a myth, as is that of the US fan "going absolutely mad". I saw no more drunkenness at the Chicon than at a London con, no helicopter beanies or water-pistols at all except at the Masquerade Ball, and no more wildness than you would expect at a Convention several times bigger than anything we have had. These things are exaggerated because they make interesting reading. Generally, U.S. fans are much like ourselves, except that they are more "fannish". Hard to define, but I suppose I mean more enthusiastic, more informal, more individualistic, more proud of being fans than we are. It makes them easier to talk to and get along with than most of the people you meet at London, whose knowledge of the vast lore and traditions of fandom is limited to Operation Fantast and a couple of other insular fannags, and who are maybe slightly ashamed of being 'fans' and self-conscious and inhibited about it. Trouble is, we lack the common cultural matrix that US fans share. Most US fans know far more about the history of even our fandom than some of us! If we get together more maybe we'll find we're a lot more fun!

*I don't want to give the impression that US actifans totally ignore the official programme. They don't. When there is something they want to hear, they roll along in their dozens. What I do mean is that they are choosy. They regard the programme as something going on downstairs, which they can take or leave alone as they like, a sort of running buffet.

**From original notes by Walter Willis, first published by Clarke, Roles & Shorrock in 'Initiative Inc.' Nos. 1, 2, & 3.

RANDOM QUOTES

..... from your letters

((This new column is in a way a compromise, last ish we rashly stated "no more letter columns in SD". We still haven't enough paper to print them in toto, but to placate(?) those fcn who wistfully(?) wrote demanding their fair share of egoboo, here you are..... any comments ?))

"I dislike editors who yell blue murder for more letters in one issue, and just as emphatically announce their decision to drop the letter section in the next. Not only that, it's a wonder I've written in at all with that kind of treatment going on (my alter ego says it's because of my insatiable egotism, but I think not. Why -- when I see a letter by yours truly anywhere, I invariably utter 'did I write THAT?' " ((Okay John, we capitulate!)) JOHN GUTTERIDGE. *SD # 4 was a masterpiece of manual art and ingenuity, undoubtedly the biggest and best fanmag issue this country has ever produced." TED CARNELL ** "Many thanks indeed for that enormous wad titled SD. I've been reading in the papers about the "English Complaint" and how we're all tired, woebegone and dropping dead for lack of adequate nourishment. Therefore I have a dark suspicion that the Space Dive is nothing but a stiff cover for black market machinations, with Borgey covers serving to hide large plates of ham and eggs to be fried at midnight. Or, alternatively, if you fellows are expending energy denied to your women a day will come when you will be called upon to pay with your heart's blood." "As for SD in general it appears to me to have scared considerably, the illustrating being & out as good as it is possible to get within the severe limitations of such printing technique. Having tried one such mag, with Les Johnson, years ago, I know only too well the endless work and patience involved -- though I admit we increased our troubles by making letter-space counts through the whole issue, to produce level margins both sides of the page I don't recommend that tactic unless you're willing to be taken away by men in white coats" ERIC FRANK RUSSELL ((Them's our sentiments!)) ** "Say -- isn't yours a SF fanzine ??? If I hadn't seen -- -- Fisher grimaces at the taunt and CUTS IN THE JETS -- I'd never have guessed... Remind me to submit a love story with a background on Ganymede some-time, you'd probably print it... ROUND ROBIN -- well as I've already said, I consider this a waste of THOUGHT SPACE AND TIME. 'Fanlights' & the 'Quinn Story' were the best things in the ish." BRIAN LEWIS. ** "You will be pleased to hear that SD is still as diverting as ever in my opinion, especially the adventures of Bunny. One special word of praise for the illos and a prayer that you will never be tempted to go in for the thumb nail, marginal sketches which appear spotted over so many fanzines" STAFF WRIGHT ((Compare these last two quotes -- see what we mean about the R.R.??)) ** "Thanks a lot for the copy of SD. Either you have a better duplicator than Arthur Clarke and I had in the days when we produced this sort of fan-mag or else you're more skilled with such contraptions. Perhaps 75% of our pages were legible: all of SD's are. I liked Ken Slaters lowdown on Ken Slater, the Quintessence of Quinn, and Bert Campbell's yarn. --" BILL TEMPLE ((we are currently using a 1934 Gestetner "66")) ** " I thought I would risk a letter though I have very little hope of it being answered. I have wrote to many but there are no replies. Are these people all fiction like the magazines? but I find the magazine is based on Folk Lore. If you had read the works of J.F. Campbell 1860 I think you would agree with me. "E.F. YARR: " ((what shall I say??))

FRANCOM QUOTES (Contd.)

"Ish # 5 was the first copy of SD that I have seen, and I indeed enjoyed it thoroughly." "I fear I shall be unable to trade further, since my 'zine ALIEN is folding." "My acquaintance with England has been limited to old English movies on TV. Space Diversions indeed brightened my ideas of life in England." "I am going to publish an anthology of fan amateur fiction soon, and I wonder if you could contact editors in your district (from Willis to yourselves) and have them send at least three previously published (uncopyrighted) mss. to me. To be titled 'Science Fiction Omnibus' or 'Science Fiction Fanthology'. And yes, the mss. must be three or more chosen as the best yet published by the editors." VIC WALDROP, Jr. ((Hey! what does the first parenthesis mean? Interested in the Fanthology, Pete?)) ** "Absolutely terrific! that's the only suitable description I can think of. In comparison to the first three covers (which were all the same) this one's great. It's the best cover on a fanzine I've ever seen, and well up to pro standard." PETER HAMILTON Jr. ((Each vol. to be the same, Peter, i.e. change every three issues... hope we don't get 'too promaggy'!)) ** "I'm sorry you are dropping the letter column. Usually it's the only way I get any egoboo." "I envy the Liverpool boys their close association. The only thing we have here in the south is the White Horse and that is more an assemblage of separate cliques than a meeting place. Unless the one or two intimate friends you have happen to be there on the same night, you can sit and drink yourself stupid without saying a word to a soul." PAUL ENEVER ((the South shall rise! , and Paul, CAPITALS this time!)) ** "If you know of anyone else who wants fmz, refer them to me please. I started to collect them but fandom seems too damn weary even to sell your stuff, so I am clearing out my small accumulation. I shall merely keep contact via O.F. and SD" "One of the late but unlamented VOID subscribers says the MAGAZINE COLLECTOR is a good idea and to prove it, he sent a 1/- for the next 8 issues. If half of fandom gave me half as much support, M.C. would start rocketing. They won't though, most of them are science fiction spivs. want the Galaxy for nix." Yours deVOIDly, GEORGE CLEMENTS. ** "SD5 also came recently, and I enjoyed it hugely. I don't know whether I've mentioned that SD is fast becoming one of my favourite fan-mags, and it should shape up into one of the top group as you fellows pick up more material and experience." BOB SILVERBERG ((Yes, we could certainly use some material right now, and we certainly are learning... the hard way)) ** "I certainly will trade with you. I think I'll be getting the best bargain I've ever had in a fanzine. A copy of PENDULUM is on its way to you." "I'm also aghast at the price of your subscriptions. You must be losing money hand over foot, because SD is worth at least 25c, American." "The cover to the fourth issue was excellent. When you take the drawing apart and analyse it, it's really rather poor - - the hands are terrible as far as anatomy goes, and the drawing is quite simple in execution, and the spaceship jet just a little out of perspective. Yet the balance and design were so excellent and eye-catching that altogether it is an excellent cover." BILL VENABLE ** "It would appear that in the catacombs of Liverpool there are people not only with good ideas and perceptive selectivity but with the ability and drive to put those ideas and that selectivity into a regular and permanent form. I, for one, salute you all." BERT CAMPBELL. **

((After ghoulishly draining this last succulent morsel of 'boo, I think it's time to finish quotin' for this time. See you at THE CON.!!))

HERE & THERE

DAVE GARDNER'S DEPARTMENT

HERE AND THERE this time is mostly concerned with HERE but I'm afraid that it can't be helped, if the news doesn't come in I can't print it and the length of the column drops from six pages to one or two. If you don't like H&T that's fair enough, but we have to give you value for your money even if it's only bulk value in number of pages. Mind you, I'm not complaining - not this time. In fact I'm rather pleased that there isn't much typing to be done here. Why? Because I've been as busy as the devil with a one shot magazine titled A SYMPOSIUM OF SEX AND SADISM IN CURRENT SCIENCE-FICTION. It's big too, round about forty pages of articles and illustrations and it's foolscap size. The line-up runs like this: J.F. Burke, H.J. Campbell, E.C. Tubb, John Christopher, Dave Gardner, Les Johnson, J.F.M. Intosh, Sam Mines, F.G. Rayer, and Ken Slater. It all started with the appearance in the April AUTHENTIC of an article by John Christopher and the contributions to SD's sister one shot deal with the views and opinions of those listed above. Personally, I think that it makes for quite good reading but then maybe I'm not qualified to say anything about that. The price is one shilling and nine pence (1/9d) and it will be on sale at the LONCON. Don MacKay, our SD art editor has really surpassed himself on this issue and I can say without the slightest hesitation that every page of his is a perfect example of duplicated art work at its highest standard. It is a limited, numbered edition of 85 copies and each contributor and staff member receives one free copy for their help and assistance. That got rid of thirteen of them and then we decided that our country members and honorary members should each receive a free copy so that knocks another seven or eight off the grand total of 85. I think there will be a rush on them, I hope there will be a rush on them, so don't say you weren't warned if you aren't going to the Con and you want a copy you had better write in but quick.

Ted Carnall tells me that the latest NEW WORLDS and the first of his pocket-book novels were unfortunately delayed and that's why you didn't see them on the bookstalls at the end of April. He is hoping to have them out a day or so before the Con so at least you should have something to read on your way down there, and before you spend all your cash at the auction. If anybody can get the money out of your pockets it's Ted Tubb and it's all done above-board too.

Come the end of June or beginning of July I hope to be spending a week at Doncaster on holiday, so if the Secretary of the Leeds S-F group likes to let me know what evening they hold their meeting on I'd like to pop up and see them at their HQ.

As you can see, we have brought back the letter column with this issue and if we keep on getting the letters in it will be a regular feature from now on. We get a lot of nice letters at the Space Divo and whilst we certainly appreciate them we know that we aren't as good as you say we are and a letter that pulls us to pieces and offers constructive criticism will be more than welcome by our staff, because that is the only way in which we have a yardstick to correct our mistakes and make SD even better! And whilst I'm on the subject of letters I'd like to say that I have an idea in mind of bringing out a follow-up magazine to our Sex and Sadism Symposium one shot sometime in the future. This time the magazine would consist entirely of letters from readers of the original mag, featuring their ideas, likes and dislikes etc. The only way such a mag could be launched into print is for all those who purchase S&SS and are sufficiently interested enough in the subject matter to write in to me at 63 Island Road, Liverpool, 19 saying what they have to say. It all depends on the number of letters I receive, but if the number warrants it you'll certainly see the letterzine some time in the future.

With the next issue of Space Diversions we start off a new volume and we hope to have a new cover for it, this time, however, I don't think that it will be a printed cover, the cost is too high even though the results are good. Don MacKay is working on it at the moment and knowing him it should be good.

It seems that Mr. Clarke started something off when he sold his PRELUDE TO SPACE. It isn't often that you get a book length novel dealing with a project to get mankind into space, in fact I don't think I had come across it in novel length before Clarke's tale but Kornbluth and Leinster have both come up with wonderful tales somewhat along the same lines but with a different writing approach. One is TAKE-OFF and is about the first space ship, the other is SPACE PLATFORM and deals with the first space station. I enjoyed them both and I think you will too. Is it asking Ted Carnell too much to try and get them for his paper-backed novels series? I hope not - they are far too good to be missed by either fans or the general reading public.

J.F. McIntosh tells me that he has two offers already for his novelette, ONE IN THREE HUNDRED, which appeared in the Mag of Fantasy and S-F and as he is writing or has written another two tales following it up at the request of Boucher it looks to me as though it will eventually come out as a full length novel.

I hope by next issue to have some red hot publishing news from up North for general release. It's confidential at the moment but if all goes well there should nope, sorry, that's what I'm not supposed to tell -- as yet.

The latest S-F mag I have seen from Stateside, Universe S-F, is rather disappointing all round. The cost is 35¢ and the pages are few. There's one story in it that will raise quite a bit of talk even if it only gets pulled to pieces!

That's all for now, see you next issue,

Dave.

CONTENTS LISTING FOR "SPACE DIVERSIONS" VOLUME NUMBER TWO

Cover by D. MacKay

Excluding minor fillers, advts. etc.,

No. 1, issue No. 4

SUBJECT	AUTHOR	PAGES
Science Fiction Personalities	J. T. M'Intosh	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
An Introduction	Stanley Nuttall	1
The Glass Mountain	D. MacKay	2
Blackout	David Gardner	7
The Phenomena of S. F. Films	Stanley Nuttall	2
Round Robin Part IV	Frank Milnes	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Science Fiction Personalities	Alan Hunter	2
Cycle-clogy	A. Vincent Clarke	3
Knights of Magic	John Roles	3
Local Affairs	Tom Owens	1
Society Balance sheet	Shorrocks & Nuttall	1
Here and There	David Gardner	3
Mullayboecoe	John Roles	2
Comment	John Roles	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Lines from Letters	Norman Shorrocks	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Index to Vol. 1	David Gardner	1
Interior illustrations	D. MacKay	5 $\frac{1}{2}$

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No. 2, issue No. 5

Whiffing through	John Roles	3
Science Fiction Personalities	G. Quinn	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Science Tit-Bits	Lewis Conway	2
An Exposure	D. MacKay	2
An Explanation	David Gardner	1
Acid Test	E. J. Campbell	2
Penlights	Ken Slater	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Round Robin Part V.	Lewis Conway	3
1952-3 Poll Results, Part 1.	Norman Shorrocks	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Local Affairs	Tom Owens	1
Here and There	David Gardner	6
Interior illustrations	D. MacKay	4 $\frac{1}{2}$

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(over)

Ec. 3, Issue No. 6

SUBJECT	AUTHOR	PAGES
Musing...Mise-ing...Mowsing.....	John Roles	2
Science Fiction Personalities	F. G. Rayer	2½
Takes Three to Betch a Fanzine	David Gardner	4
Futuristic Plausibility, Please !	Stanley Nuttall	1
1952-3 Poll Results Part II	Norman Shorrock	1½
By Ghu !	Frank Milnos	1
Book Reviews	David Gardner	2
Round Robin Part VI	Stanley Nuttall	2
Inner Philosophy of S. F. Conventions	Willis/Shorrock	1
Random Quotes from your Letters	Norman Shorrock	2
Here and There	David Gardner	2
Index to Vol 2, etc.	Norman Shorrock	2
Interior illustrations	D. MacKey	3

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This completes a year of publishing,
Total No. of pages (inc. fillers) 184.

Comment.

The first volume was indexed by Dave, and his analysis was that 45½ pages out of 66 (listed) were contributed by ye eds. Vol. 2 shows 71 out of 104½ (listed), or, 70.4% to 67.9% approx.

This is a step in the right direction, but.....rather a small one don't you think? We should like to see 75% of the contents from outside of Liverpool.

Once more an invitation, open to all, to see your article, story, column, dept., stencilled artwork, or W.H.Y. in print. We can't pay you for anything we accept, but although SD hasn't a colossal circulation, let us assure you that it really gets around, not only in G.B. either ! and you will, of course, get at least one complimentary copy, containing your brainchild.

Closing dates: for SD7, June 20th; for SD8, August 22nd.

We will take practically anything of general reader interest, appertaining to S.F. and/or Fandom.

Go to it ! We'll have 100 page issues if necessary !

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