

# ZENITH







# Zenith

is an amateur magazine put out once in a while for that lunatic fringe known as fandom. Published by Derek Pickles of 22 Marshfield Place, Bradford, Yorkshire and Harry Turner of 9 Willow Bank, Moston, Manchester 9. Price tentatively fixed at one shilling a copy, and if you insist on sending a subscription see that it is for three issues only - beyond this we make no promises! All exchanges are welcomed: if your mag is good a copy would be welcomed at each address - if it's not so hot, just send one along to Derek for his collection ....

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HARRY TURNER.

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PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS

AN OLD FAN





Once upon a time, we published a magazine ... way back, twelve long years ago. It brightened the early war years for a few fans until your editor was whisked into the RAF in the middle of the sixth issue. It was a good magazine, we were told recently, why not revive it? Why not, indeed! And so we set to work.

Then came the snags. Where did we get the time to spend on those early issues of Zenith? It was a struggle, but we found the time. Then came the problem of material. We can no longer rely on many of the original contributors who did so much towards establishing the earlier reputation of the magazine. We were cheered somewhat by the comments of Walt Willis in BLAST! and appeal to the intellectuals of this sophisticated New Fandom he describes. We need your contributions on which to exercise our slight editorial talents, and the future of Zenith depends largely upon your support. We do not take our science fiction (or fandom) too seriously and while we favour material with a light-hearted approach, we don't mind getting some down-to-earth discussions going. Whether or not you can stomach this first issue, write and tell us your reactions. We plan to revive Hot Air in the next issue and look forward to some lively comment in this letter column. So drop us a line soon. And if there happens to be any - ah - money lying handy, you can put that in the envelope too. Remember, we promise to produce three issues: after that ... it depends on you!

Deek Pickles

Harry Turner.

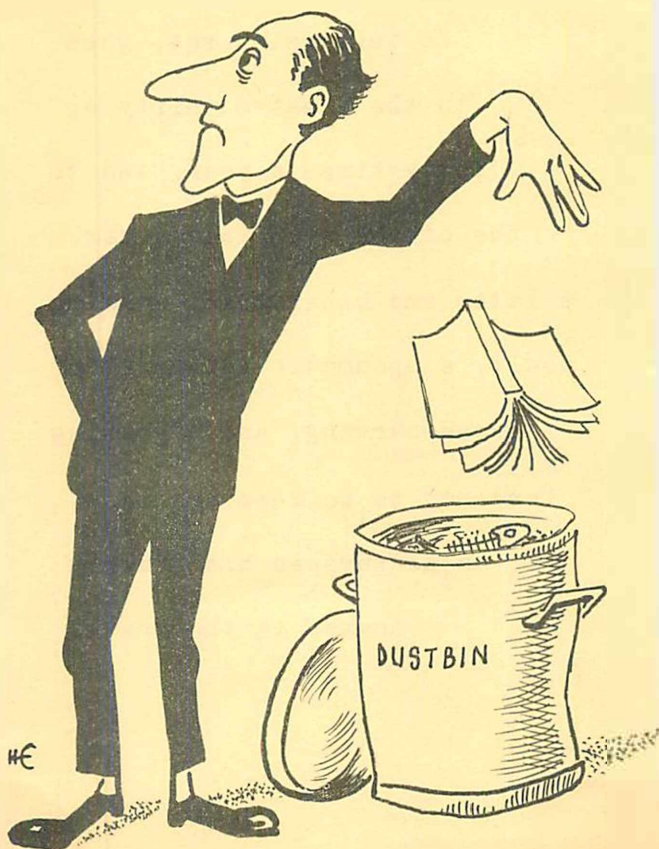


"The age demanded an image  
Of its accelerated grimace,  
Something for the  
modern stage... "

**LAMENT**  
**for**  
**science fiction**

by

D. R. S M I T H



DONALD RAYMOND SMITH

has been writing for fan-mags since the early '30s when he contributed to Claire Beck's Science-Fiction Critic and the British Novae Terrae. His self-imposed isolation from fandom earned him the title of the Hermit of Nuneaton.

DRS is a bachelor. He reads little fiction apart from whodunits, science fiction, and comic stuff. Has not got a television set, goes to the theatre thirty or forty times a year, and to the cinema once. Has a car, a lathe and other metal-working tools, a spasmodic interest in wood-carving, and a growing tendency to do less and less, as he pursues his orderly course to the grave.



There appears to be a general conviction held by many shallow thinkers that science fiction today is flourishing, flourishing to an extent never known before. There are numerous magazines on the market which claim to be devoted to this form of literature: there are also vociferous groups of persons who I understand refer to themselves as science fiction fans and who publish fan-magazines purporting to deal with the subject. I have heard too some talk of a drinking den in the middle of that gloomy pall of smoke and grime which is such a blot on the south-eastern part of our country. There - so claim observers presumably equipped with infra-red devices for piercing the murky atmosphere - there gather certain obscure persons whose tipsy chatter includes frequent mention of science fiction and allied topics.

It is time that this profound misconception was dispelled. Although I yet study many of the magazines earnestly, as I have done for more than two decades, it is very rarely indeed that I find even a trace of science fiction in their pages. Looking back - like that insufferable bora Bellamy - I can recognise now that the seed of destruction was sown at the same time that I first perused a U.S.A. science fiction magazine. Not, of course, by myself; I am much too humble a person to desire even to change the course of such a monster. It was a mere coincidence that that first issue I read was also the first issue of Astounding Stories. As I have remarked elsewhere, even at that early age I had sufficient sense of the fitness of things to throw it on the fire. It was the chance investment a few days later of a precious threepence in the August 1930 copy of Amazing which converted me to the cult in spite of this inauspicious beginning.

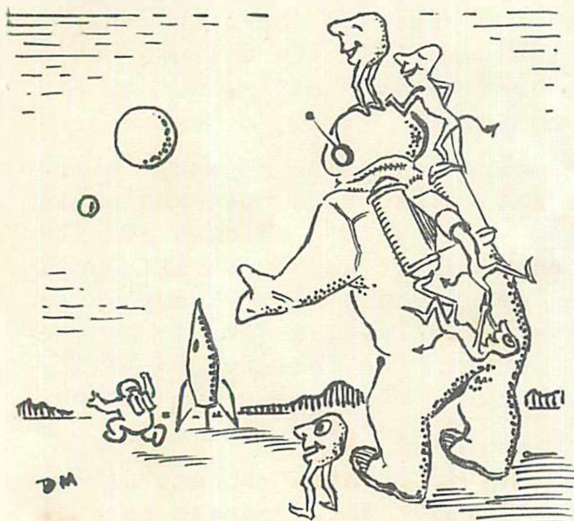
The point is that Astounding was the first magazine to capitalize on the essential vulgar fact that what old John Q. Public is after in a story is excitement - preferably sexual of course, but other forms will do. John Q doesn't give a tinker's for where, when, why or how the excitement is laid on. Johnny boy has been reading Amazing and Wonder because of the exciting things he found there, deftly skipping over the slabs of tedious long words that cropped up here and there. Astounding came along with a policy which said that the science could be reduced to the minimum - let's get on with the battle, murder and matrimony. Just the job for Jack.

Slowly Amazing and Wonder sank. The market was poor anyway, since many people oddly enough preferred to eat rather than read and could not afford to do both. Even Astounding went under, kicked off its boots and came to the surface and grabbed a Street and Smith lifebuoy. It picked up rapidly. Wonder learnt the lesson and boldly incorporated Thrilling into its title. Amazing eventually followed a similar course. More magazines appeared on the market. Covers were designed to titillate in ways other than the intellectual. The rat-race was on. Science fiction was dead.

Few indeed are the authors now who try - or perhaps who are allowed - to expound on the widgets in their stories. The footnote is only

used facetiously. Anything goes, all things are possible, and in any case the least said the soonest mended. The reader does not want science, not even sugar-coated. He wants blood. He wants torture. He wants bags of bosoms and lashings of legs. He does not want 'explanations'. He wants - has it ever struck you what a silly language English is? Look at that word 'wants'. By the time you've written it three or four times it seems impossible that such a stupid conglomeration of letters can mean anything. Does it mean anything? Does 'does it mean anything?' mean anything? Does - GET ME OUT OF THIS...

Where was I? Oh yes - science fiction is dead. These numerous magazines of escapist fantasy are no more science fiction than Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall' or Evelyn Waugh's ditto. And if anyone thinks I regard this situation with anything but the greatest approval, he should read what I wrote in 1935. That will cure him of reading fan-magazines.



"But they're only hallucinations  
... they said so themselves!"

## THE VILLAGE STFAN

By Vil Bryant

(with no apologies to Longfellow)

Beside his trusty mimeo,  
the village stfan stands:  
The fan a puny jerk is he,  
with skinny, ink-stained hands,  
and the muscles on his scrawny arms  
are microscopic strands.

His hair is wild, unkempt, and long:  
his face is pinched and grey.  
To get his fanzine done on time  
he toils till break of day -  
and looks the whole world in the face  
...and the whole world looks away.

Day in, day out, from morn till nite,  
you can hear his mimeo.  
You can hear him turn the cursed crank  
with measured squeak and slow -  
And you wish that Mephistopheles  
would take him down below!

The children coming home from school,  
gawk in at his open door,  
Insulting him with snide remarks  
about his littered floor -  
And pelt him with old fruit and eggs  
to hear the crittur roar.

He never, never, goes to church,  
nor does like other boys...  
He cannot stand their games and fun,  
so rough and full of noise.  
His personality is pffht -  
he lacks both grace and poise.

Thanx, thanx to thee, my futile friend,  
the lesson thou hast taught.  
Thus on Life's turning treadmill,  
we never must be caught -  
Or else our lives, like his,  
Too soon will go to pot.

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$

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Ghosts are conservative...

perhaps because

they have to be!

# **BLESSED PLOT**

by J. F. BURKE





JOHN FREDERICK BURKE

has his place in the pre-war history of fandom as Britain's Most Aloof and Refined Fan.

Editor of the Satellite, one of the earliest of British fanmags, he became one of the key members of the Second Fandom era.

During the war years he saw service in the RAF and REME. He won an Atlantic Award on the promise of his first novel, published as Swift Summer.

He still writes occasionally for the science fiction pulps.

This piece was written for publication in 1947, when it was planned to revive Zenith. Despite the six-year lapse, we think you will find it of interest and even be tempted to pursue the theme in the author's novel These Haunted Streets.

The publication of books dealing with psychic phenomena and various brands of mysticism is on the increase. Whether this sudden gush of matter has anything to do with the revival of superstition that always accompanies a great war is a subject that I am not intending to deal with here: any interested student of world affairs might well devote some of his time to a thesis on this topic. What is of great significance to me is that a large part of this ghostly verbiage tends to deal more with places than with people: the name of Borley Rectory is better known than the name of any individual phantom: haunted houses and ruins are in themselves of more interest to psychic investigators than the personalities of shades who were once presumably living human beings.

During a visit to London, Doug Webster asked me: "Are you more interested in people or places?" To which I rashly replied: "Places".

I can still remember his horror. When I touched on the subject again in a letter, he shuddered delicately but refused to be drawn into argument. It seems that one is branded as an outcast if one does not pay homage to the current idol, the Common Man, who is of more importance than all the architecture in the world. As an interest in places rather than in human beings has always been one of my major failings/virtues (take your choice) I would hardly have bothered to consider the matter any more at the present time, but that so many things conspired to remind me of it.

These things include the above-mentioned output of books and periodicals dealing with occult matters, my own attempt to write a novel dealing with the effect of an extremely ancient town on a sensitive youth, and a book by Winston Clewes entitled Sweet River in the Morning.

The first shows one thing quite plainly: that ghosts are very conservative. Travelling ghosts are rare. It seems that a spirit is unable to leave the place where, as a mortal, it felt its strongest passions. Apparently the place acts as a gateway to this dimension, and only in this one place can the ghost appear, make noises in the woodwork, clank chains or whatever it plans to spend eternity doing.

Not so very surprising, really. Most living people are more bound up than they realise with some spot on this earth. The countryman is usually more strongly aware of this than the townsman, though one can make exceptions in the case of inhabitants of some of the larger cities like London and Paris, both of which command an affection that is far stronger than local loyalty. Novelists and poets have long been aware of these attachments, perhaps never so much so as in recent years, when there has been a notable increase in the writing of nostalgic novels and poems that attempt to capture the spirit of place. One thinks in the past of A.E. Housman and such poems as Belloc's The South Country - even of Kipling on the subject of Sussex. In the present there are such novels as John Marquand's Wickford Point and Rachel Ferguson's Evenfield. And, as I have mentioned, there is Sweet River in the Morning.

Winston Clewes tells the story of a seventeen-year-old boy who attempts to burgle an old house while the owner is away. It is a house full of memories, a house with a personality of its own, anxious to have a summing-up, and it uses the boy's mind as a mirror to reflect all the little incidents that have made up its long history. Mingled with these scenes are flashes from the boy's own past, combining to form both a picture of what led him to this crime, and also a subtle little morality play. One accepts without question the importance of the house as an entity with a soul of its own. It is the house that gives the ghosts life rather than the other way round. Ghosts, I repeat, are conservative - perhaps because they have to be.

But are they happy in this restraint? Many are bound to places they would gladly have forsaken in life if it had been possible. One would have thought that the freeing of the spirit from its earthly prison would have made escape possible, but apparently it does not. Ghosts, if we are to believe those who claim to have seen them, haunt the accursed place where they suffered most. It would appear, indeed, that the phantom suffers more than the recipient of its attentions, especially these modern enlightened days, when it is more customary to grab a notebook and pencil at the first eerie moan down the passage than to dive beneath the bedclothes. The place holds the spirit as it held the human being.

"But," says the plaintive voice of Mr. Webster (accompanied, I may add, by the voice of my severely critical wife), "how can anyone who wants to be a writer be more interested in places than in people?"

I will not be deliberately obtuse and awkward by quoting Hardy, Thoreau or Hudson. I will not even try to be funny at the expense of much-admired science fiction writers who are more interested in the interplay of spacewarps and the vagaries of Martian landscape than in human beings. I admit that no writer can afford to neglect human beings - and it's such an obvious admission that it looks silly when written down. No-one denies that human beings are, on the whole, important, in life and in literature. They are not, however, all-important, and in many cases they are important only in what they do. The Tower of London is more important to Londoners than the people who built it: the shattered ruin of Rouen cathedral does not dispose one to feel kindly towards these infernally superior human beings. There are times when, it seems to me, what man has made becomes more important than what any individual man is. This is, to Mr. Webster and others, the worst blasphemy.

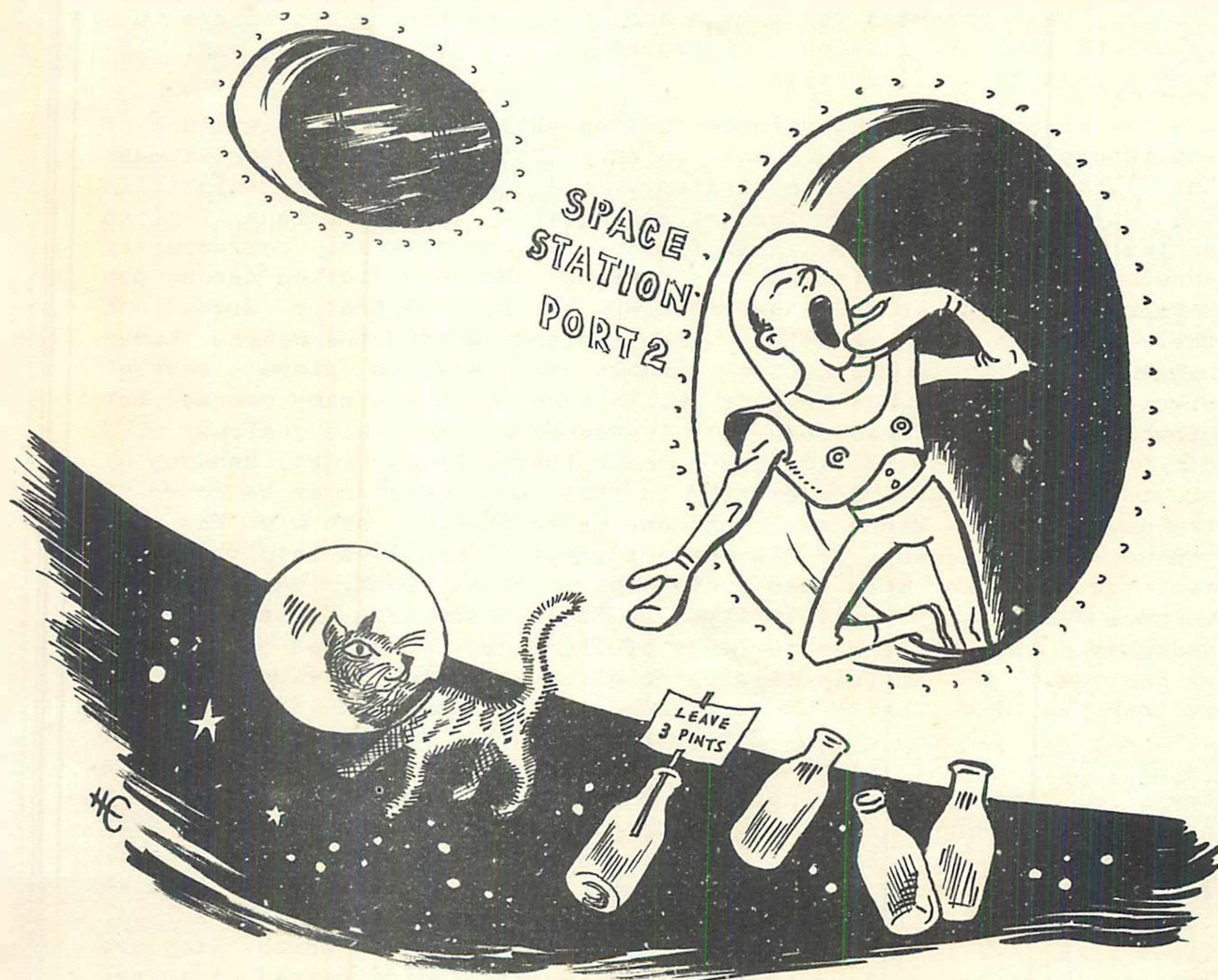
In this collection of speculations I have purposely avoided too many references to places unrelated to human achievement - that is to say, I have no intention of rhapsodising about the countryside. What I say is this: that when men have built a house or a village or a city and lived in it, the place sooner or later acquires a life of its own. This life is, admittedly, derived from its creators, but when the creators are dead and gone, something lives on. Towns - particularly



old towns - acquire their own personality, which may be quite unrelated to the succeeding generations who come to live there. Perhaps every generation adds some little thing, and some try to destroy part of the old life, but destruction is hard.

Men and women who have created something live on in their handiwork: great writers live on in their books, musicians in their music, and those who have lived their eventful or uneventful lives in certain houses or towns live on in the stones. They may not show themselves as ethereal apparitions, but they are there. And when the stones themselves are dust, something is left - an impalpable something that may remain for a while in a few minds merely as a name, until even the name is forgotten and only something impalpable remains...

But it is there. This is our only immortality.



## WHY DO WE READ SCIENCE FICTION ?

That is a question which has plagued each generation of fans and given rise to much introspection. It is a refreshing change to hear an objective consideration of the question by a novelist of repute. In a recent radio talk, Arthur Koestler dismissed the grotesqueries of science fiction - the space operas, children's gimmicks, and lunatic fringe of fandom - to search for the deeper causes of the sudden popular interest in future ages and other worlds. He suggests that the rapid advances of technology in this atomic age have created new nightmares as well as new vistas. The imminent threat of the H-bomb has forced upon people the uncomfortable possibility that human civilisation may be approaching its end: the Wellsian view that there is a suicidal impulse in the nature of homo sapiens offers little solace to a biological misfit doomed to extinction. Koestler believes that this apocalyptic intuition may be one of the reasons for the vast dimensions of the science fiction craze. Art and literature have not yet assimilated the mushrooming developments of science during the twentieth century. A gap has been created which science fiction, mass-produced for a mass audience, is trying to bridge in a crude and fumbling fashion. It expresses, in its distorted way, the unconscious need of the time.

Is it possible that science fiction will become the literature of the future? Koestler thinks not. Science fiction is good entertainment but fact catches up with fantasy, and insistence on scientific accuracy does not make up for artistic quality. Descriptions of alien societies do not open up fresh fields for the stagnant contemporary novel because of our limited imaginations. Science fiction heroes may have unlimited power and possibilities, but in fantastic situations their feelings and reactions are limited within the narrow human range. "Let Romeo and Juliet inhabit two hostile planets several light-years apart: the tragedy will take much the same course. Let Othello subject Desdemona to a lie-detector test: his jealousy will still blind him to the evidence. Tom Corbett, Space Cadet, behaves on the third planet of Orion exactly in the same manner as he does in the drugstore in Minnesota, and one is tempted to ask him: 'Was your journey really necessary?'" We cannot project ourselves into the distant future, any more than into the distant past, because every culture forms a distinct entity. Few Englishmen, says Koestler, really understand the habits and feelings of Frenchmen, much less of Russians or Martians. We can only imagine an alien existence in vague outline: we lack the familiarity that would enable us to identify ourselves with strange figures moving in a strange world. Without this act of identification, of intimate understanding, there is no art - only a thrill of curiosity that yields to boredom. Art shows the familiar in a new light, asserts Koestler, to broaden and deepen our understanding of ourselves. The oddities of alien worlds serve merely as a background or pretext for a social message in such great works of literature as Swift's Gulliver, Huxley's Brave New World, and Orwell's 1984. These works are literature precisely to the extent to which they are not science fiction, to which they are works of disciplined imagination and not of unlimited fantasy.

- Richard Webb

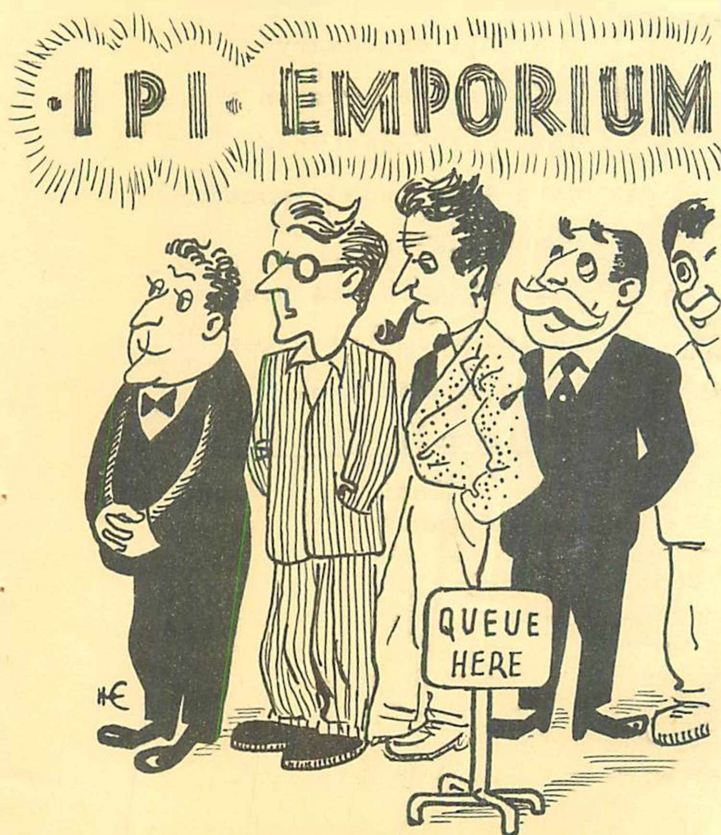


"... my chief aim was  
the altruistic better-  
ment of fandom ..."

***Tapping the***  
**INFINITE**  
**WILL**

by

F R A N   T .   L A N E Y





Our information on

FRANCIS TOWNER LANEY

is scanty. We do know that he was one of the many fans who haunted the clubroom of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society: that he had a hand in the publication of Shangri-L'Affaires and contributed to many US fanmags; and that his customary sitting position on a chair is knees under ears and hands clasped round ankles.

This article has been culled from the pages of Helen Wesson's mag The (unspeakable) Thing.

"... a Supreme Being, Mind, Will, Power, or whatever He or It may be, that is infinite in knowledge and ability ... though most men are unable to make complete contact, anyone who follows the broad general outline of His Plan can gain much in Power, and, more important, in Happiness and Peace within himself."

E. Everett Evans, TIMEBINDER 4, pp 1 & 2.

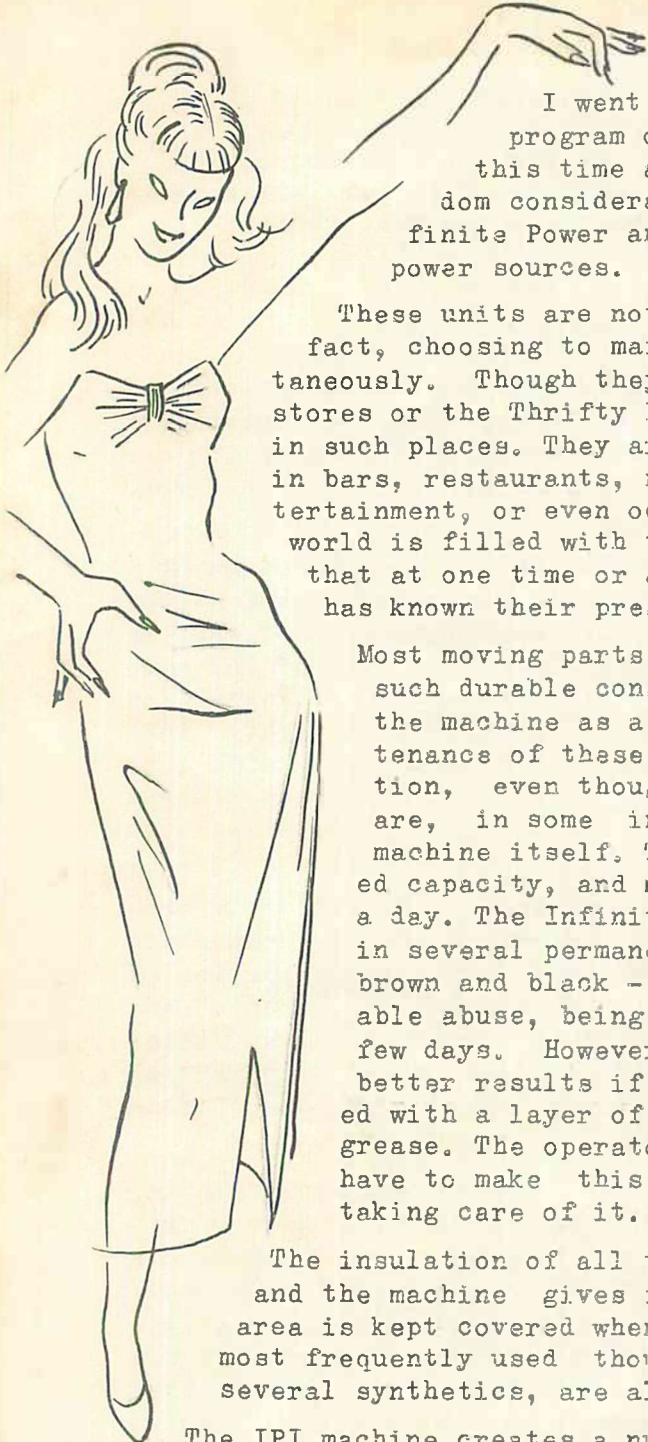
A HAPPINESS MACHINE : Certainly this is not a fantastic concept for one steeped in science fiction - with its ray guns, time machines, rejuvenation machines, space ships, and similar bric-a-brac. The man in the street might boggle at such an implement, but when I read Everett's article I was inspired.

"I can, I must Create!" I cried, and forthwith fell to designing a whole factory for the dispensing of Infinite Power and Inspiration. There were difficulties, even for me, but when I thought of what my friends could do if they had a hot and cold running tap of Infinite Will into which they could insert themselves and draw off Power and Inspiration, I was carried past them as though borne by a mighty torrent. The very thought of a Power and Inspiration Emporium, with tens of thousands of fans standing in orderly, ecstatic rows - each plugged into a socket of some kind while they literally filled themselves with the essence of Infinity: ah, I was swept out of myself.

The technical difficulties, as I have implied, were literally tremendous, but they were surmounted. Such was my boundless enthusiasm that not only was a site purchased and cleared, but a large portion of the Infinite Power and Inspiration Emporium was actually erected and fitted with various models of my new Infinite Power and Inspiration (henceforth abbreviated IPI) machines, before I got around to patenting the literally scores of startling innovations which were embodied in IPI.

What a shattering disillusionment! IPI, I found, was unpatentable, being a public domain idea. It seems that there exists in nature millions of units of a power source into which any man or would-be man can insert himself with the most beneficial results to all concerned. This source, moreover, has an advantage not included in IPI as originally planned: to wit, the power units are self-contained, do not require massive installations, and are self-propelled, so that they may be moved from one spot to another without the use of expensive handling machinery.

Unlike one whose chief interest in life is the garnering of egoboo, I was not cast down. Since my chief aim was the altruistic betterment of fandom, the failure of IPI and the consequent loss of prestige for myself went unnoticed. (The name is spelled L-A-N-E-Y, in case you are having difficulty in remembering it).



I went into a very gruelling and thorough program of research and consultation, and at this time am happy to be able to present to fandom considerable information on the tapping of Infinite Power and Will through the use of natural power sources.

These units are not difficult to obtain: many men, in fact, choosing to maintain several different models simultaneously. Though they are not sold by leading department stores or the Thrifty Drug Company, they may often be found in such places. They are most often to be obtained, however, in bars, restaurants, night clubs and similar places of entertainment, or even occasionally gotten in the streets. The world is filled with them, and it is probably safe to say that at one time or another every single haunt of mankind has known their presence.

Most moving parts of these natural IPI sources are of such durable construction as to outlast the life of the machine as a whole. On the other hand, the maintenance of these Power units requires constant attention, even though many of the maintenance operations are, in some inexplicable manner, performed by the machine itself. The fuel tank for example, is of limited capacity, and must be replenished two or three times a day. The Infinite Power and Inspiration machine comes in several permanent finishes, including pink, yellow, brown and black - and this finish will endure unbelievable abuse, being capable of self-regeneration within a few days. However, for some reason, the machine gives better results if the upper portion is frequently covered with a layer of powdered chalk, perfume, and colored grease. The operator of the machine does not, as a rule, have to make this application himself, the machine taking care of it.

The insulation of all the models I have seen is rather poor, and the machine gives far better service if the bulk of its area is kept covered when not in use. Cotton, wool, or silk is most frequently used though many other substances, including several synthetics, are also suitable.

The IPI machine creates a number of waste products but the operator need not concern himself with their disposal, since the machine is self-emptying.

The natural machine embodies one very marked advantage over the synthetic IPI with which I was going to equip my Emporium, since the operator does not have to be equipped with any special jacks, plugs, or other attachments. The collet on nature's IPI dispensary is



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has his place in the pre-war history of fandom as Britain's Most Aloof and Refined Fan.

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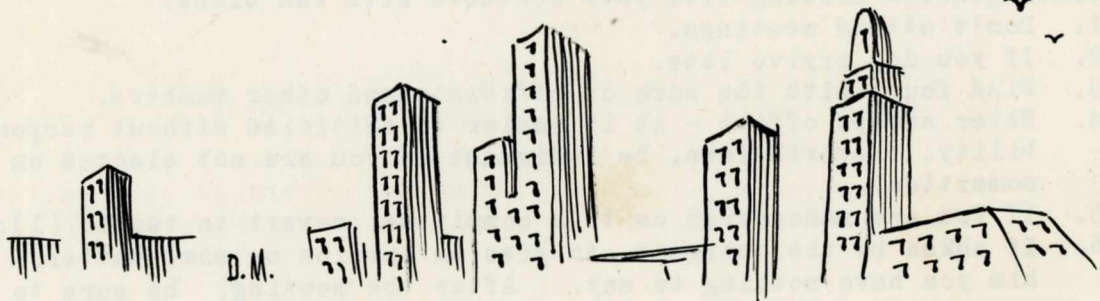
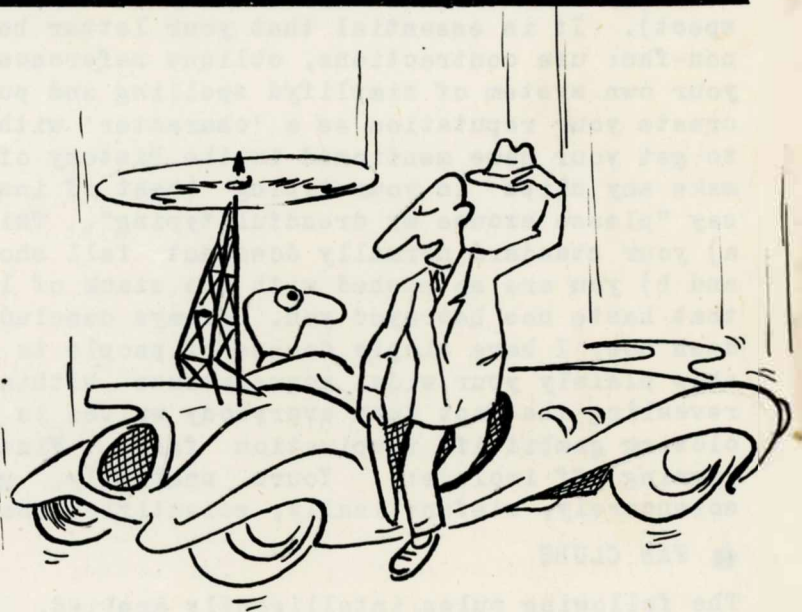
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capable of almost indefinite expansion or contraction without becoming permanently distorted.

Some difficulty may be experienced by the unskilled operator in getting the best results from the IPI machine, but even a totally inexperienced individual can usually get reasonably satisfactory results on his first attempt at operation. Though truly skilled operation is surprisingly involved, the learning of the proper techniques is seldom onerous, even for the inferior workman. And since the machine possesses in some inexplicable manner a certain vestigial intelligence, it can often teach the operator new modes of tapping this Infinite Power and Inspiration source, many of which are fascinating as an end in themselves.

And though Everett mentions that "most men are unable to make complete contact", the tapping of Infinite Power and Inspiration is a truly holy endeavour, one which should appeal to the basic instincts in us all. Evans deserves an accolade for bringing this matter to the attention of fandom.

"Thanks for the lift, Bill.  
She's a nice car but  
I don't think I'd ever  
get used to her . . ."





Write to your editors in complete confidence about any fan problems on which you hesitate to seek the advice of your fellow fans. However difficult, however simple, we shall be very pleased to help you. Be sure to enclose a stamped addressed envelope for our reply if you do not wish the matter to be dealt with on this page. In cases of extreme urgency you are recommended to consult your nearest branch of the National Fan Guidance Council.

# ADVICE TO *Neofans*

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## ● CORRESPONDENCE

If your contacts have proved disappointing it can only mean that you have, no doubt in all innocence, adopted an unfanconventional approach.

Always address a correspondent by his forename, even if you have never written to him before. Better still, use a nickname (especially if insulting) or initials (parents are often so thoughtless in this respect). It is essential that your letter be incomprehensible to the non-fan: use contractions, oblique references to fans and stories, and your own system of simplified spelling and punctuation. This helps to create your reputation as a 'character' without which you cannot hope to get your name mentioned in the History of Fandom. If you happen to make any slips in your typing (heat of inspiration) don't forget to say "please excuse my dreadful typing". This conveys immediately that a) your standard normally does not fall short of absolute perfection, and b) you are so rushed with the stack of letters you have to answer, that haste has betrayed you. Always conclude by saying "Well, I must dash now, I have simply dozens of people to write to . . ." and thus show plainly your wide acquaintance within the realms of Fandom while revealing the fact that everybody writes to you. This can be a useful closing gambit if inspiration fails. Finally, orthodox methods of signing off include: Yours spatially, galactically, FANatically, sciencerely, stefanatically, scientifictionally, etc.

## ● FAN CLUBS

The following rules, intelligently applied, will be found to cover all contingencies arising from your contacts with Fan Clubs.

1. Don't attend meetings.
2. If you do, arrive late.
3. Find fault with the work of officials and other members.
4. Never accept office - it is easier to criticise without responsibility. Nevertheless, be indignant if you are not elected on to a committee.
5. If you are manoeuvred on to a committee, revert to tactic (1).
6. If asked by the chairman to give an opinion on some matter, tell him you have nothing to say. After the meeting, be sure to tell everyone how things should be done.

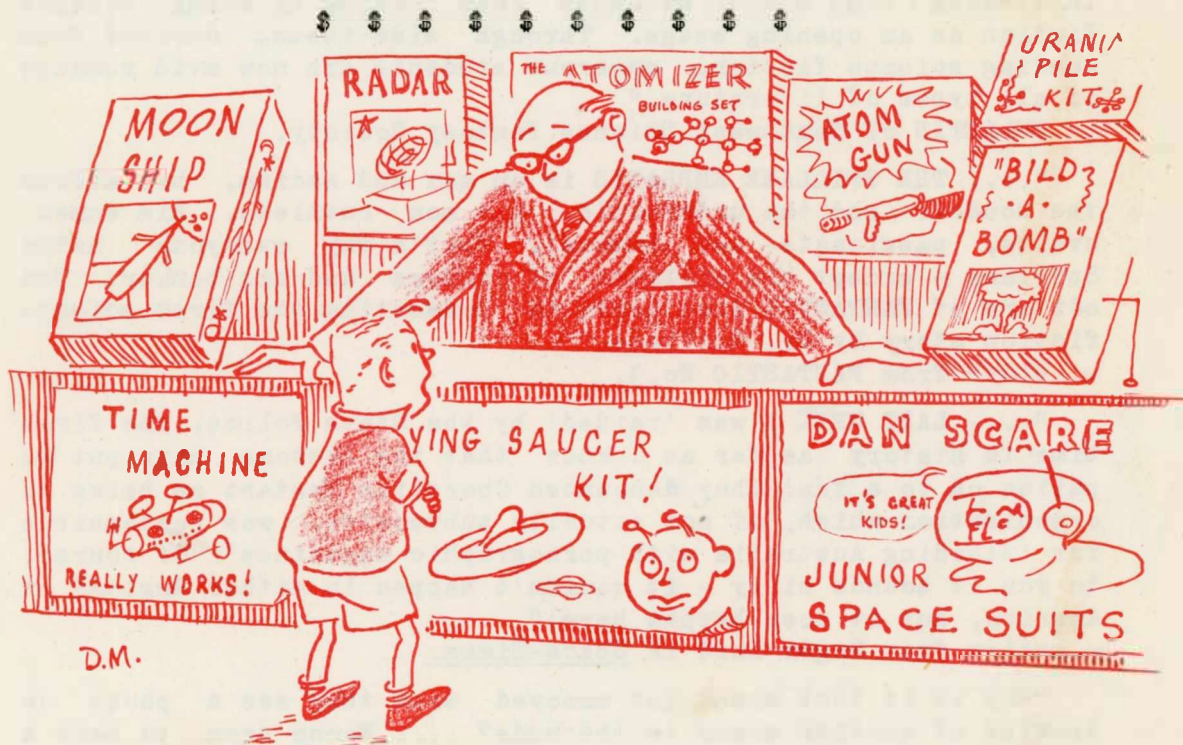
7. Do nothing more than is absolutely necessary, but when other members roll up their sleeves and unselfishly use their time and abilities to help things along, shout that the organisation is being run by a clique.

## RUNNING A FANZINE

Sooner or later the Neofan gets the urge to go into the publishing business. There is a fair choice of methods and equipment available, and for the fan of modest means, the following are essentials:

|  |     |     |     |     |       |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| One offset litho machine                 | ... | ... | ... | ... | £ 175 |
| Plates, inks, solutions, etc.            | ... | ... | ... | ... | 25    |
| One Vari-typer                           | ... | ... | ... | ... | 150   |
| One camera, plate-laying equipment       |     |     | ... | ... | 500   |
| One guillotine                           | ... | ... | ... | ... | 50    |
| Saddle-stitching machine                 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 75    |
| Paper, envelopes and sundries            |     | ... | ... | ... | 25    |
| One addressing machine, electric-powered |     |     |     | ... | 200   |
| Addressing plates, cabinet               | ... | ... | ... | ... | 50    |

Thus, for a mere outlay of £1250, the Neofan has solved the mechanical problems of producing a fanzine. There remains the slight difficulty of persuading fellow fans to provide suitable material.



"But I don't want a URANIUM PILE or a MOON SHIP or a TIME MACHINE  
or an ATOMIZER - I want a catapult!"

# Seen IN PASSING

"WHILE FULLY APPRECIATING the difficulties with which educationists and teachers have to contend, we cannot but regard it as deplorable that as high a percentage as 30% of those aged 15 in 1948 had a reading age of 12 or less, a standard which makes it impossible for them to read books with sufficient fluency for enjoyment or the acquisition of knowledge."

- letter from Publishers' Association to the Ministry of Education.

"IF YOU THINK science fiction consists solely of stories about lean and noble heroes, lovely blondes who scream well and show a lot of skin, humanoid natives of other planets who go telepathing all over the purple landscape, ray guns blasting the Martian griffsk from its lair - well, you're all wrong!"

- blurb from FANTASTIC No.1.

"AT THE NEXT MEETING, the guest speaker was Lloyd Baskerville who delved into his own experiences to bring us "The Use of Science Fiction as an Aid to Teaching of Literature". After considerable opposition from both other teachers and school system, Mr. Baskerville has converted many of his fellow workers to initiating high school students into reading by using science fiction as an opening wedge. Through side-issues derived from reading science fiction, numerous students are now avid readers of all types of literature."

- BULLETIN of Southwest Science Fantasy Society.

".... THE SPILLANE EMPHASIS is on sex and sadism, his milieu the boudoir and the underworld, his men ruthless, his women svelte, passionate and immoral. That's why everyone hates Spillane - except his millions of readers and his banker! The editors of FANTASTIC take pride in presenting the first science fiction story by Mr. Spillane."

- blurb from FANTASTIC No.3.

".... LAST WEEK I was 'raided' by the State Police, the first time in history as far as I know that the Customs have put the police on to a fan! They denounced Operation Fantast as being an organisation which, if not actually subversive, was responsible for 'flooding Australia with pornographic magazines'. Of course, to you it sounds silly - it couldn't happen in either England or America, but it does happen here!"

- letter from Roger Dard in Space-Times.

"Why is it that women get annoyed when they see a photo or drawing of another woman in the nude? .... Women seem to have a kink about this."

- from a letter in REVEILLE.



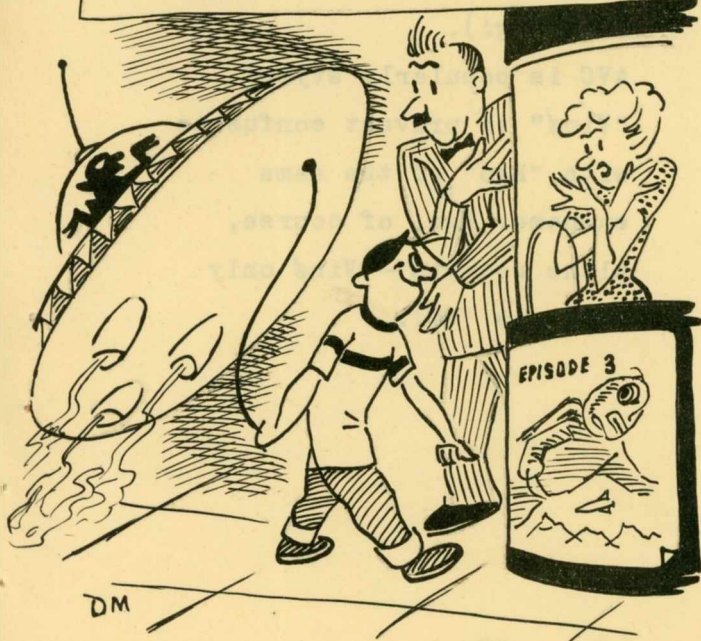
Power-packed adventure...  
dynamite-charged excitement...  
hair-raising interplanetary  
adventure in the hidden cities of  
the Moon... with the Only Man  
Who Can Save Earth from Awful  
Destruction...

## **CEREAL**

by

A. V I N C E N T C L A R K E

FIND THE FLYING SAUCER COMPETITI  
WINNERS ADMITTED FREE!



A. VINCENT CLARKE

is one of the leading  
actifans in present-day  
British fandom. Editor of  
Science Fantasy News, a  
magazine rumoured to be  
unique in presenting  
up-to-date news, and one  
of the organisers of  
the last three London  
conventions. Is the  
author of several  
science fiction novels  
published by Hamilton's  
(the things we do to earn  
a living!).

AVC is popularly styled  
"Vinø" to prevent confusion  
with "Ego" of the same  
surname. Ego, of course,  
plans rockets - Vinø only  
receives 'em...

I've been examining exhibitors' publicity notes for three science fiction serials - "King Of The Rocket Men", "Radar Men From The Moon", and "Flying Disc Men From Mars" (hereinafter referred to by their initials!). They're all Republic serials. With each one a standardised, lusciously illustrated magazine is issued, giving careworn cinema managers stiff shots of verbal adrenalin and hints for titillating the box office.

The cover of each 'zine is merely a hectic poster - ray guns raying, rocket men rocketing and ringed planets whirling. The second page teaches the exhibitor the Facts of Life:

"SPACE will fill seats! SPACE is the big thing these days with youngsters all over the country playing at being the men from the moon! ... Take full advantage of this craze in your lobby displays and in the stunts you use to tell your town about this sock serial! ... Announce via lobby and ads that 'flying discs' have been seen falling ... over ... town. Guest tickets will be awarded to persons bringing them in. (They) can be pie-tins or something similar ... with ads painted on them. Use a light touch in your copy, so it's obvious to everyone that it's just a gag and not the real thing."

Of course, if you do happen to run across the real thing it doesn't count!

"URANIUM DISPLAY ... cover a rock with silver paint and place it in your lobby behind ropes with this copy near it ... 'IS THIS URANIUM? Part of this amazing mineral is used for atomic powered planes in FDMFM!'"

No comment.

Two ideas are plugged in a BRING 'EM BACK section: a jigsaw picture card, one section given each week, and a 'membership' card, punched each week. Eleven sections or punches get you in free for the concluding episode. This conjures up a picture of the shock awaiting some manager when a particularly strong (or fiendish) minded kid - one of the Charles Addams family - strides up with eleven carefully assembled sections, throws it in his face, shouts "Obscenity your obscenity picture", and stalks out ...

The pay-off starts with page 3 - "CHAPTER SYNOPSIS FOR EXHIBITORS ONLY: NOT FOR PUBLICATION". Here is the whole suspense-full story, each and every episode. I think FDMFM has the most heroic hero. After those heart-breaking moments when you realise that you'll have to pay again next week, Kent escapes from crashing cars, blasted bridges, plunging planes, and the Disc Men, as well as rescuing the heroine from burning oil. To break the monotony there's some adventurous stuff midway through each episode: Kent jumps before his plane explodes... Mota shoots Kent's plane down... fist-fight... fist-fight... fist-fight.... There, friends, is a He-man!



Commando Cody, of RMFTM, has a slightly more varied life, escaping from a ray-pistol, flood of lava, exploding bridge, crashing plane, fall off a cliff, cracked helmet on the Moon, avalanche, gas, and electrocution in successive instalments. However, I am prejudiced against Cody because he does not kill the villain in a clean hand-to-hand fight, but merely wipes him and his rocket off the screen with an ordinary ray-gun. A bit of a sissy.

On page 4 we get - "PUBLICITY". Here are personal stories of the stars, (it's unkindly revealed to any mathematical mind that the heroine of KOTRR is at least 40 years old), and potted synopses all ready to be sent en bloc to the local newspapers. One of them states: "Commando Cody - Sky Marshall of the Universe - is an able young scientist who ... is making rapid strides in the development of a flying suit and rocket ship to the moon". It seems to me that this Sky Marshall title is mere ostentation. I bet if you looked behind that star you'd find that he was a mere Galactic Sherriff.

And the films themselves? Decidedly depressing. They rely heavily on ordinary gangsters as the villain's henchmen, the villain being a solitary, exotic creature who is discovered, unmasked and destroyed in episode 12. Accepted wear for gangsters is a neatly cut suit, an automatic or ray-gun, and a trilby hat worn indoors and out. In one KOTRM advertisement showing eleven heads, three are the hero in a helmet, one the heroine (blonde), and the other seven are wearing the ubiquitous trilby. In KOTRM, King is a scientist clad in a helmet, rubberoid clothes, personal rocket-attachment and ray-gun. Cody is an able young scientist clad in helmet, rubberoid clothes ... surely I've seen that outfit before! The hero of FDMFM, old he-man Kent, is an aviator (well cut suit and trilby). Against this rush of originality, however, we must face the fact that despite the title, no one in the film actually departs from Earth into space. The menacing Martian war-lord arrives for the evil purpose of organising a force of trilby-hatted gangsters to take over this world and make it a satellite (sic) of Mars, but he is out of touch with HQ right until he meets a well-deserved fate - atomic bomb and erupting volcano. In fact, RMFTM is the only space opera. With no nonsense, the Sky Marshall completes his rocket in episode 1 and goes to the Moon to find 'a huge, walled-in city where the Ruler of the Moon, Retik, directs his campaign for conquering the World'. So long as the supply of cars, planes, bridges, and trilbies holds out, there seems no reason why Republic shouldn't continue to make these serials indefinitely.

We can only look forward to the day when the first alien spaceship lands and disembarks a task-force of herbivorous widgets full of high ideals and Christian endeavour. I sincerely hope that the Republic script-writers are thereupon tossed into their own molten lava, trilbies and all.

The warmongers!

C o u n t   y o u r

b l e s s i n g s . . . !

h e r e   c o m e s



We are concerned at some of the more pernicious effects of the Fancestor Worship creeping into present-day fandom. One of the leading exponents of the cult is Walter A. Willis, who is running a column in an American fanmag under the title "The Immortal Teacup". The column purports to be a history of British fandom - pre-war fans, the "old-timers", are presented in one-dimensional portraits as the legendary heroes of a lost Golden Age. Arch-romantic Willis justifies the movement by saying:

"Let us not decry the fine old fan tradition of ancestor worship. Us latterday fans encourage it because we know one day we too shall be legends. And being a legend has its advantages. The hours are good, and the work isn't hard. It is only right that after a hectic life of fan activity we should be able to retire and just be a legend...

Remember Tucker's story of THE GREAT FAN. This personage had acquired such prestige in fandom that at the time in which the story was set he was automatically invited to every fan gathering, automatically received complimentary copies of every fanzine, and yet did absolutely nothing himself. Now how can any of us aspire to this ultimate in fan ambitions if fans cease to honour and revere their predecessors? It is natural and proper that the neofan should regard people who fanned in the Dawn of Fandon as Ghods. It gives him something to look up to, set as a standard, encourages respect for tradition and fan lore, and encourages him to try and attain the same eminence vis-a-vis his posterity."



This fleeting vision of fandom's Welfare State, with old fans duly pensioned off, may tempt the neofan to the cult. But after this disarming prelude Walter proceeds:

"... I have read about 80% of all the fmz ever published in England and about 60% of all those published in the US. Very roughly. And I know that, to be quite frank, today's fandom is better, bigger, more intelligent and superior in every way to the fandom of 10 or 20 years ago. I have read through cubic foot after cubic foot of old-time fmz and found absolutely nothing worth reading, let alone reprinting. Whereas few modern fmz have not at least one item of interest or amusement. I know that most old-time fans are only notable because they are picturesque ruins with the patina of age. Sykora, Ackerman, de la Ree, Michel, Wollheim, even Speer, would cut very little ice if they re-entered fandom today in competition with Hoffman, Keasler, Boggs, Vick, all of whom are titans in the fan world for humour, literary ability and energy. But there ARE a few exceptions. For instance Clarke and Temple could become BNF's in a few months if they wanted to. They are entitled to respect not only for creating the tradition of British fandom but for being the men they are today. If I draw them somewhat bigger than life size it's not because I don't know them, but because as I said I regard . . . er, fancestor worship as a good thing."

The belief that we are living in an era of a more sophisticated fandom raises wider issues than we propose dealing with here: but we have no doubt that some of the "picturesque ruins" will be doing a little private BLASTing when they read these comments!

The amusing sidelights on early fan activities culled from the pages of Novae Terrae bear reprinting in the initial "Teacup" columns. There is little justification, though, for the inclusion of an article such as that which recently appeared on John Carnell - "Ted" of fancestral memory. This particularly lush piece of prose appeared in the January issue of ASFO\*, and is described by the editor (mildly enough) as an "exceptional biography".

We hasten to say at the outset that Walter is not the author, but he deserves a hearty BLAST for ever being tempted to give this tripe space in his column. The gentleman for whom our main BLAST is reserved is FRANCIS ARNOLD, author of this uncritical outburst - and a bosom pal of John Carnell.

To be fully appreciated, this five-and-a-half-page article has to be savoured in the original: space does not permit us to reprint it in all its richness of phrase. When first we read it we thought "Poor old Ted, we'll miss him". Then we realised that this was no glowing obituary notice, but merely a glamorised Ted presented for impressionable neofans. Nauseating stuff, but we re-read the article with morbid fascination. If this is what Fancestor Worship means, then let it be BLASTed forthwith ...let us still these Fancestral Voices!

\*Organ of the Atlanta Science-Fiction Organisation.



The whole world likes to hear a success story. In this real-life romance of the local boy who made good, John Carnell is portrayed without a single redeeming defect. Here is the foremost editor, expert, and entrepreneur of science fiction in Britain: the crackling wit, bon viveur and explosive humorist: good-humoured, nonchalant, never-at-a-loss, laughing, animated, brisk, alert John Carnell. After a glimpse of this paragon, wise-cracking and care-free, at home in his natural haunt (The White Horse, it appears) we start right in with the story of his life.

This "ordinary, intelligent youth of twenty-odd" absorbed visions from the pulp magazines while earning his living "like the rest of us" and made the acquaintance of a wide circle of fans, including one Frank Arnold, modestly described as "a stray fan". Then came the Science Fiction Association days. What blind fools were we pre-war fans for not recognising all the inherent Carnellian virtues - but Francis Arnold made no mistake. He knew genius: through his eyes we see the picture of Carnell "the tall, brisk, alert figure that was to become so well-known, witty, good-humoured, a natural focus of attention. There was a stir of pleasure whenever he entered the room, and as Chairman of meetings he called them to order and handled them with a natural mastery". Memories of occasional visits to SFA meetings and the usual rough-and-tumble certainly don't tie-in with this idyllic scene! And surely Franky is guilty of slight exaggeration when he remarks that Carnell "was handling plentiful funds as the SFA Treasurer in 1939" ... plentiful?

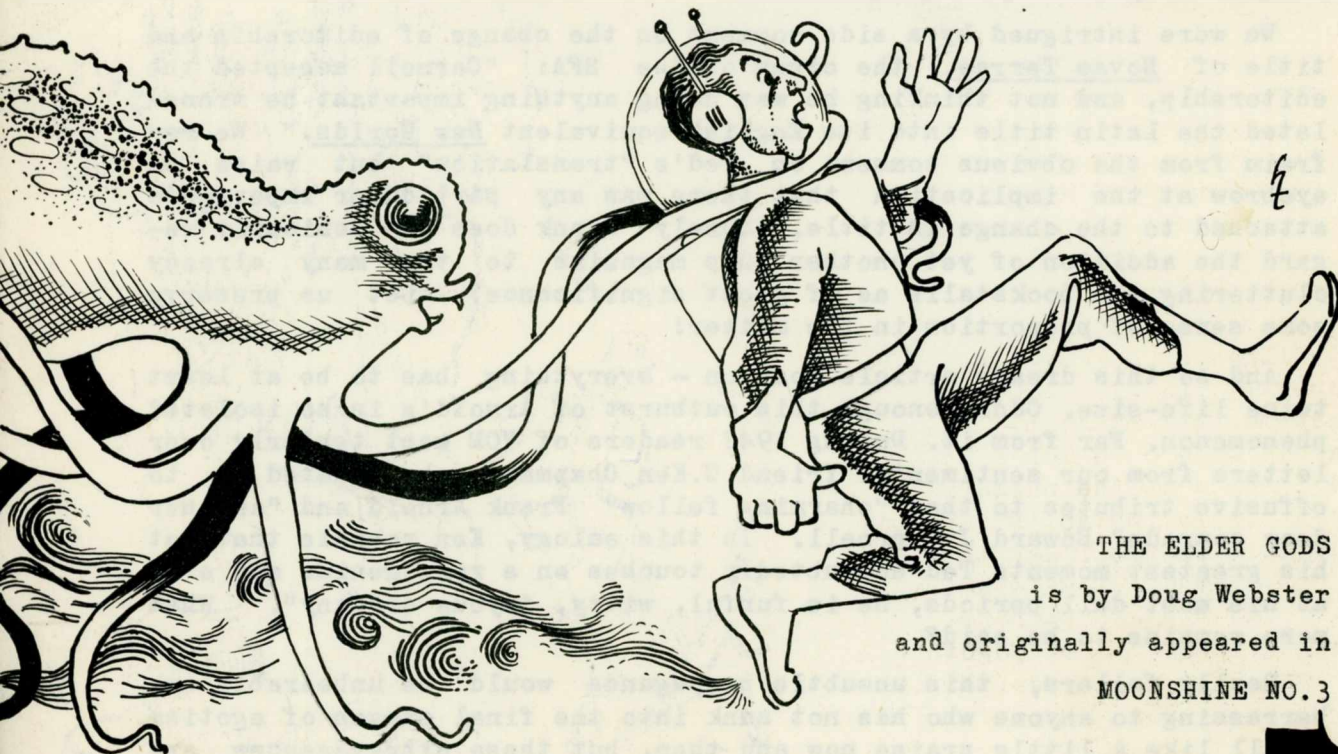
We were intrigued by a side comment on the change of editorship and title of Novae Terrae, the organ of the SFA: "Carnell accepted the editorship, and not thinking he was doing anything important he translated the Latin title into its English equivalent New Worlds." We refrain from the obvious comment on Ted's "translation" but raise an eyebrow at the implication that there was any particular importance attached to the change in title. Surely Frank does not seriously regard the addition of yet another pulp magazine to the many already cluttering the bookstalls as of great significance? Let us preserve some sense of proportion in the matter!

And so this dreary article goes on - everything has to be at least twice life-size. Oddly enough this outburst of Arnold's is no isolated phenomenon. Far from it. During 1942 readers of VOM wept tenderly over letters from our sentimental friend G. Ken Chapman, who treated us to effusive tributes to that "charming fellow" Frank Arnold and "another dear comrade" Edward J. Carnell. In this eulogy, Ken reveals that "at his greatest moments Ted undoubtedly touches on a rare genius and even at his most dull periods, he is funfuf, witty, joyous company". What more remains to be said?

Really fellers, this unsubtle propaganda would be unbearably embarrassing to anyone who has not sunk into the final stages of egotism. We all like a little praise now and then, but these extravagances are

beyond the pale. Admittedly, we do not know Ted so well as these intimates, but our impression of him is that of a cheerful extrovert, conventional at heart and suspicious of the intellectuals of this world. It may be that he is really a modest soul who does not appreciate the fanfares and limelight of these glowing public tributes. Both Frank and Ken are friends of long standing and perhaps Ted is reluctant to hurt their feelings with the sharp word of criticism. But something must be done about these embarrassing eulogies: They are sincere enough in their way but could only hoodwink the rawest of neofen. It seems a propitious moment to launch a "Save-Carnell-From-His-Friends" movement. Just a word from you, Ted, to reassure us that you are embarrassed more than somewhat by these ebullient biographers and we'll get weaving. It'll be a worthy cause, folks: who will strike a blow for freedom from the canting fancestor cult?

We hope that this initial BLAST will show Walt the error of his ways, and that fandom will be spared these phoney fancestral voices in future Willis columns. If we must be regaled with a serial history of Anglofandom, let us have none of this tongue-in-cheek support of fancestor worship!



THE ELDER GODS  
is by Doug Webster  
and originally appeared in  
MOONSHINE NO.3



## T H E   E L D E R   G O D S

Often I have felt the influence of the Elder Gods. It may have been while sitting on a cliff over the sea, in bright sunlight. Or as I pondered vaguely, walking alone in the rain; or perhaps, nodded deeply in a soft chair beside the enveloping warmth of a fire, when utter peace comes with the radio's low opiate music. Then the Elder Gods speak from the ultimate deeps of spaces vaguely imagined, from behind and beyond the palely-flaming nebular splatches, from out where the light quanta grow weary, lagging arrow-like through the black abysses of nothing. Through my mind come the echoing thoughts from these other times and spaces - slow throbbing waves of pure thought carrying tremendous messages. I often wonder whether our less fortunate brethren, those classed by their ignorant fellows as 'lunatics', unstable of mind, schizophrenes, divided personalities - whether they too are very often in a sublime ecstasy, exchanging hesitant messages with immense intelligences across the deepest gulfs of eternity. Sometimes a hint of meaning flashes before me for a second and I grasp at the unimaginable import of an instant's rapport. "Iä! Iä! Wza-y'ei! say the voices. "Ph'nglui mglw'nafh wgah' Cthulhu R'lyeh nagl fhtagen...Iä!... Yog-Sogoth cf'ayak vulgtmm... Shaggai... yggh...ly...Rhan-Tegoth!... Ai!...Cthulhu naflfthagn..."



## ● B A N A L     T A L E

The Prisoner paced his cell in an agony of frustration. In his mind's eye a picture gradually took shape of the Aliens closing in on the friends he had betrayed: he cursed at the inevitability of what he saw. Eagerly grasping the bar he attacked the bars of the small window, tore aside the weakened metal and looked out into the courtyard below. The sight of the sheer drop made him turn as white as a sheet. He ripped the sheet into strips and fashioned them into a rope, fastened one end to the bed and dropped the other through the window. It was pitifully short but he lowered himself down three feet, thereby just making the yard. As he made a dash for the outer wall an Alien crossed his path. Seeing the Prisoner look round, the Alien mistook him for a ball left lying about after the pogo-ball match held in the last exercise period. Breathless at his near discovery, the Prisoner picked up the match which broke in his clumsy grasp. Putting the two halves together to make a whole, the Prisoner crawled through the hole and came out on the great plain beyond the wall. He stumbled on until the impenetrable darkness of the Alien night fell and he felt the Alien thought-probes pricking his mind with insistent demands to return. Frightened, he shrieked himself hoarse, and leaping on the steed rode away beyond the reach of Alien whispers. Suddenly, to his alarm, the horse twisted its head and galloped around in ever-decreasing circles to reach the end of its tail.

Tale ... ?

● DENNESS MORTON (Scot) and HENRY ERNST (Sassenach) did most of the decorations on our pages. Denness has ambitions to become a commercial artist, regards Quinn as the best illustrator in British science fiction, does not believe Walter Willis is a leprechaun and does not read Quandry. Henry has lost any ambitions to become a c.a. and needs considerable persuasion to put pen to paper: has never heard of WW or Q. Denness used to be a cycle speedway rider and has two mangled bikes & a fine collection of surrealistic spokes to prove it. Henry's idea of sport is sunbathing or watching cricket. Both our artists confess to a liking for the verse of Ogden Nash and the honky-tonk piano of Winifred Atwell.

