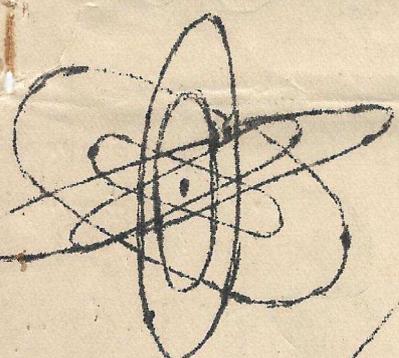
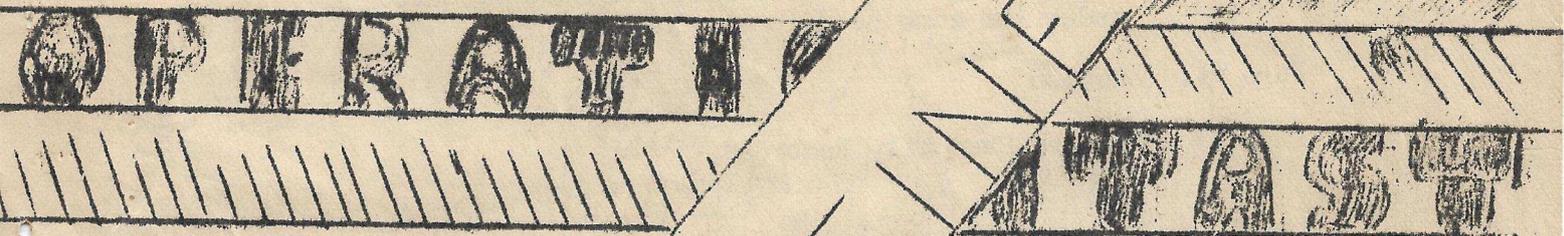


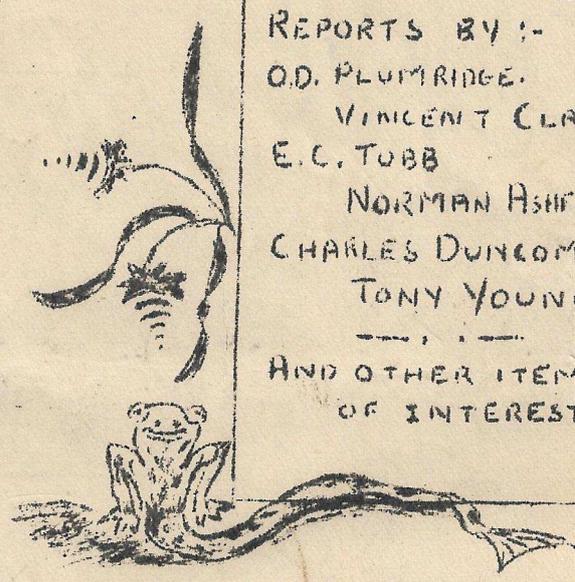
B.F.L.

1948



WHITE CONVENT

SPECIAL ISSUE
 REPORTS BY :-
 O.D. PLUMRIDGE.
 VINCENT CLARKE
 E.C. TOBB
 NORMAN ASHFIELD
 CHARLES DUNCOMBE
 TONY YOUNG
 AND OTHER ITEMS
 OF INTEREST !!



PRICE 3^d

THE WHITCONZINE

being a collection of reports on the S-F Fans Convention held in London, at Whitsuntide, in the Year Nineteen hundred, and Forty-eight.

- Page 1. A Fans-eye View by Vincent Clarke.
- Page 4. The Need for Organisation
by E. C. Tubb.
- Page 5. A Brief Whitcon Report, for the fan in a hurry.
by Owen D. Plumridge.
- Page 6. Our Society Reporter Comments on the Whitcon.
by Charles Duncome.
- Page 7. AS I SEE IT by Leslie A. Crutch,
(being a reprint of some material that appeared
under the same head in the CANFAN.)
- Page 11. Auction by E. C. Tubb.
- Page 13. Whitcon Sketchily Recorded,
by Tony Young.
- Page 14. Whitcon Comments by Norman Ashfield.
- Page 15. No Connection with the Whitcon.

WHITCON - 1948.

A Fans -eye View, by Vincent Clarke.

There must have been something in the efficiency of prayer, for Saturday, May 15th, the day of the Whitcon, brought just the weather that we wanted --- a clear sky, a blazing sun, and a temperature up in the 70's.

After a cheerful busy morning, packing books, mags, want lists, etc., I had an early dinner, entrained for central London, and arrived outside Leicester Sq., Underground Station punctually at half past two. I met collector - dealer Fred Brown at the entrance, & we descended into the depths. A psychic aura and a feeling of tension in one corner of the booking hall indicated the presence of either deros or fans, and on going over we were greeted by John Newman, Convention Organiser, and fans Jimmy Clay and Jim Burch. Some fans had already departed on book-hunting and exploration trips, so after the arrival of two more fans who were strangers to us, they, Jim Burch, and myself went out into the sunshine of Charing Cross Road to commence our own tour of the bookshops; Fred went off to the pictures, preferably to see 'No Orchids for Miss Blandish'; and the other two stayed to meet late arrivals.

Except for the book of a play, 'THE BRAIN', which Jim Burch found, we encountered no really 'off-trail' items, and Foyles, which we penetrated in the company of author - f a n Syd Bounds who had joined us half-way along the road, also proved barren, although we got some amusement from finding such titles as 'THE OUTSIDER', 'OUT OF THE SILENCE', 'THE RED PLANET', 'DARKNESS AND THE DAWN', etc., all of which were strictly non-fantasy. Five o'clock found a gradually increasing group outside Lyons Corner-House, including Newman and Clay again, Peter Hawkins, and so many new faces that I quite lost track of names. Fourteen of us sat down at adjoining tables for tea, and s-f fan- B.I.S. member Frank Fears brought in another half-dozen later.

As we finished tea, we made our way, in small parties, to the 'WHITE HORSE', venue of the 'LONDON CIRCLE' meetings, where the saloon bar gradually filled with chattering fans, whose clamour temporarily drowned the incessant ringing of a bell in a near-by office, which might have been sounding in celebration, but was probably a short-circuited buglar alarm.

It was amazing how many fans not connected with the 'CIRCLE' turned up --- far too many to meet individually. The feminine element was there, represented by fanette Miss Bradley of Chathan, the wives of Carnell, Chapman, Chandler, Duncombe, Gillings, and Temple, and the fiancee of Don Doughty, who is to be married next month, and who was thus introduced to the strange company her husband -to-be keeps for the first time. Another firsttimer was Ronnie Gillings, Walter's son, who is quite an enthusiastic fan.

At half-past six, with the bell still ringing, we trooped upstairs to a prepared room. Striking decoration was provided by originals of 'TALES OF WONDER' covers arranged around the walls, several advertising posters of horror films, originals from 'NEW WORLDS', and other fantastic illustrations. At the back, a piano and table were covered with a quantity of mags, books, and illustrations for the auction, whilst in various corners, other small tables bore current mags lent by Newman and Bounds, various oddities such as old fan mags, and an old 'CHUMS' with an s-f cover, and a number of 'FANTASY REVIEWS', and propaganda thereof. Stretching down one side of the room were the buffet tables, laden with various kinds of sandwiches, cakes and tarts.

The five or six rows of chairs were soon filled, and Walter Gillings took his seat as Chairman, flanked by Chandler, Carnell, Newman, and A.C. Clarke. Mr. Gillings opened the proceedings by giving a brief resume of the various fan

gatherings that had taken place in this country, and of the growth of the 'LONDON CIRCLE' into a regular weekly meeting. He then introduced authors Chandler, Temple and Clarke, and mentioned that the latter had a number of stories coming in future 'Astoundings'.

He expressed pleasure at seeing so many present, not only the old fans, some of whom had attended the pre-war meetings, but a number of new faces also. There had been some talk of starting a new fan association, and he thought that it was, in general, up to the new fans to show what they could do. The question would be brought up for discussion later in the evening if there was time for it.

John Newman then read out the names of fans who, although unable to attend personally, had sent good wishes and donations, with special mention of Lt. Ken Slater, now in Germany, who had sent £2 to buy drinks all round. (Loud cheers, which again drowned the bell.) Ted Carnell then took the floor, and started by recalling the difference between the first s-f convention held in this country and the present one. He and Walter Gillings had gone to Leeds to attend it, in the SFA Clubroom there, the backroom of an already condemned house! (Laughter). War had broken up fan activity in this country, and Ted struck a graver note as he mentioned some of the missing fans, including Sid Birchby, now a regular soldier living in Africa, and the late Maurice Hugi. 'Fans Abroad' led to the subject of the 'BIG POND FUND'. This had been started by American fans for the purpose of providing the passage money for an English representative to attend the last World S-F Convention in the States. Unfortunately, only half the money required was collected in time, and the fund had been held over. If fans were interested in having a representative, picked by themselves, at next years convention, he thought that some sign should be made, or cash collected so far would be diverted elsewhere. This again called for discussion later.

Giving what was, to some, the first news of the cessation of NEW WORLDS, Ted said that S-F publishing had been very unlucky in this country. It was obvious what had been wrong with 'SCOOPS', the first s-f publication; the publishers of TALES OF WONDER had been unable to develop it as Editor Gillings wanted, and it had been finished by the War; as had the pre-war FANTASY, whose editor had only read a few of the contemporary magazines, and lacked the necessary knowledge of its background history.

Post-war, the publishers reluctance to expend some of their diminished paper quotation ^{on} FANTASY had ended it. Pondulum, the publishers of NEW WORLDS had other publications and a subsidiary company which failed, and caused the company's bankruptcy. 'N.W.' itself, after a poor start, improved so much as to oversell its 3rd issue before printing, and many more copies could have been sold. At the moment, however, no publisher could be approached concerning a new s-f magazine.

Ted then went on the gove what is probably the biggest news since T.O.W. first started. Four fans, Eric Williams, Ken Chapman, Walter Gillings, and himself, had, during the last few days discussed the idea of publishing a magazine themselves. The title rights to 'NEW WORLDS' had been acquired, there was a good deal of material on hand, and an artist had offered to do the illustrations of No. 4 for nothing.

While emphasising that the project was still very nebulous, it had been suggested that a company be formed, with 2,000 x 5/- shares available to fans. Ted saw no reason why, if the BRE A.S.F. sold 20,000 copies per issue, another magazine couldn't be a success. The gathering was too informal for a business discussion, but he would like to get the fans re-action to the proposal after the buffet break. Ted here answered some questions concerning probable sales - (judging from NEW WORLDS, should be good); the stories held - (too English for the States); the shares - (single ones would be available); and various minor questions. He then finished with a few words about books, which he said were very awkward to get. "TRIPLANETARY" had started coming in, apparently advancing from the West, as he had letters telling of its arrival only from the West country so far,

but 'WITHOUT SORCERY' was held up by a printer's strike. Walter Gillings then spoke very enthusiastically of the new project, although emphasising that it was still very much in a preliminary stage. It was about -time the fans ran their own mag!

Arthur C. Clarke then combined his two hobbies by giving a brief, neat, speech on the question 'Whether S-F had been a good or bad thing for Astronautics'. In the early days, he said the B.I.S. had been inseparable from s-f, but times had changed, and members were now more interested in the technical side than in the philosophic aspects.

Wells, Vorne, and others had spread the idea of interplanetary travel many years ago, and the serious students of astronautics had also used s-f as a vehicle for propaganda. Here s-f had been of great service. Arthur then recalled an incident of an eminent mathematician who had attended a B.I.S. conference with a suitcase bulging with what were presumed to be technical papers, but which had later been revealed to contain a number of 'WONDER STORIES' - (Laughter). Although bad, and juvenile s-f, such as Buck Rogers, etc., had cast a shadow on American rocket research, in particular, on the whole, although there were stains on its character, s-f had done good in breaking down psychological barriers of opposition to astronautics. In future, I.P. s-f would have to be more factual, owing to the technical advance in the theory of space-flight.

John Newman then announced that more notice would be given of the next convention, and plans would be started about Xmastime.

Instead of the money from the auction going to the COSMOS CLUB (LIBRARY ?), as originally intended, it had been suggested that it be put into the BIG POND FUND instead. A show of hands was called for, and an overwhelming majority voted for the suggestion. This, again, would be discussed afterwards. It was proposed that an outing in Kew Gardens should take place the next afternoon, and anyone who cared to come would be welcome in his house in the evening. A CONVENTION BOOKLET was to be prepared, and everyone present would receive a copy. If we would all sign our names on the paper by the door, the signatures would be incorporated in the booklet. In finishing, thanks were given to Messrs. Gillings, -Carnell, and Chapman for distributing convention details.

Ken Chapman then proposed a vote of thanks to John for organising the con, which was carried amid cheers and clappings.

It was 8-15, and the buffet interval began. The tables were surrounded by hungry fans, and a constant stream trudged down stairs to get Ken Slater's round, and a few of their own. The bell was still ringing, but it had become an ordinary background noise now. Fans were sitting and standing all over the place, eating, drinking, talking, meeting old and new friends, etc.

Frank Fears was trying to get Miss Bradley to join the B.I.S.

Whitstable fan Tony Young was trying to draw some sketches, but everyone kept roving. Some of us got a glimpse of the fabulous WEIRD TALES NO. 1, owned by

Fred Brown. Ken Johnson, North-country fan, who had come down without making arrangements for the night was being promised a bed by Jim Clay.

Dozens of conversations were going on at once.

And, in time, hunger and thirst assuaged, the chairs were gathered in a huge semi-circle around one corner of the room, and the auction commenced. Ted Tubb, assisted by Plumridge and Sandfield, was the auctioneer, and he scored a great success, causing much amusement with his urging of the bidding, and various wise cracks.

After a few WONDERS at small prices, Gillings and Carnell ran the bidding up to 24/- for HOUSE OF THE BORDERLAND, before Wally was struck with a sudden doubt

as to whether or no he already had a copy, and Carnell secured it. After a few more mags at low prices, a set of AMAZING containing SKYLARK OF SPACE fetched

the price of the book - 16/6. There was also some high bidding for two F.F.M.'s containing FACE IN THE ABYSS and SNAKE MOTHER and they eventually went for 10/-.

After a June '48 AMAZING - (a time-machine fetched this book said Tod), some

Weird Tales (don't bother about the stories, look at the cover) and an Astounding with the first installment of SKYLARK OF VALERON (Technical comment of 'Quite

unsound' from A.C. Clarke anent the space-ship cover), a mixed bunch, including

a MARVEL SCIENCE STORIES, stopped the bell -- at least, that's what Ted put its ending down to. Time was growing short, and the tempo speeded. Two P.Bs. (SHIP OF ISHTAR) were followed by 'LO!', followed by Padgett's detective story 'THE BRASS RING', (I haven't read it, says TED, but its excellent paper.), & WAR OF THE WORLDS (Anyone get a small boy that they want to bring up the right way?), THE TIME STREAM caused a three-cornered match between bibliophiles Chapman, Syms, and Carnell, the latter securing it.

Then a number of small lots, growing larger in size, then a original nude (the female being accompanied by a pensive-looking python) drew a number of ribald remarks, including Carnell's 'Anyone got a small boy---?', it became apparent that British fans set far less value on originals than do their American counterparts, and the sole T.O.W. cover original offered was bought by Gillings while he was trying to boost bidding! An original unpublished manuscript by Chandler, and some originals from NEW WORLDS also had few bids, and a final item, Ted displayed a pile of Carnell's pre-war fan-mag NEW WORLDS, and on calling out '6d each, The No. 4 that didn't come out!' was immediately mobbed by a dozen fans amid much laughter, and emerged without a single copy in less than two minutes. It was too late for the discussions now - past ten, and the WHITE HORSE had to be vacated by half-past, so the convention slowly broke up, with many 'for the road', and John Newman received everybody's congratulations. It was generally agreed that another couple of hours could easily have been used up, but as it was, the questions raised will have to be settled by post and at the LONDON CIRCLE. Half a dozen of us went off to a cafe for a cup of coffee and a final chat, and I finally tip-toed indoors in the small hours, tired, but well satisfied that, although so many British s-f mags have died, fandom, at least, is alive and growing!

.....ooOoo.....

THE NEED FOR ORGANISATION. (by E. C. Tubb.)

The WHITCON, if it did nothing else, proved the need for some form of organisation between fans in this country. It was a remarkable achievement that so large a gathering was assembled at such short notice, by the unaided efforts of one man. This was our secretary, John Newman, and but for him there would have been no convention.

FIFTY FANS assembled for the get together, and fifty is hardly representative of the vast majority of lovers of science fiction who would no doubt have liked to attend, but who had no way of knowing that a convention had been proposed and was under way. How could they know? Who was to tell them? And how can such a state of affairs be avoided in the future?

WE have no organisation at present to which science fiction lovers can turn for information, help, and the obtaining of social contacts. We need one. We want one. But of those who want such a club how many will take an active part in founding one? It has been the curse of such organisations in the past that fans who want them, who are all for them, will not stir themselves to get them. It is not for the older fans, those who have passed the first enthusiastic stage of clubbing together, to take the lead. These fans have done all that already. Who can blame them if they now are content to let others, the younger readers, have their chance? Nothing succeeds like success, and unfortunately, nothing fails like failure. The record of past organisations has been one of failure. Have the new fans, the newcomers, into the field, anything new to offer? ENTHUSIASM is not enough. It is necessary, we will never organise without it, but something more is needed. The glamour of seeing your name in print, via a fan mag. The organising of regular meetings. The enjoyable conversations across a table; these are not sufficient to found an organisation capable of living beyond its originators. And unless a strong groundwork is laid, then the club is deemed to failure.

THE ATLAS publication of A.S.F. sells something like 20,000 issues. This means that 20,000 people buy and read it. They buy it because they like it. How many of those people are interested enough in science fiction to want to delve deeper into it? Even a conservative estimate of 5% gives a thousand readers who would like to share the benefits of organised fandom. The need is there, the potential members are there - who will supply the organisation to cater for them?

ALL REGULAR FANS will join such an organisation. Fans are friendly folk. They like to meet others to whom they can talk and be understood. They have proved this in the past. Every roll of members of every organisation that has existed, shows much the same membership, but this is not enough. Most fans now know each other. I am talking about the older ones, those who have drifted into contact with each other over the years. It is for the others, the newcomers, that the desperate need for organisation is apparent.

TAKE THE CASE of the reader of about twenty years of age. When the war came he was eleven, and with it came the end of the cheap 'remainder issues' from America. These cheap issues formed the most fertile field for the recruiting of new fans; how many of us found science-fiction through them? The young fan however did not have that opportunity. He probably obtained a reprint edition. I like ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION, yet I would hesitate to recommend it to any new reader. The policy of A.S.F. is hardly one which would appeal to any youngster still fresh from Wells and Verne.

IF HE SURMOUNTS this obstacle, then what? He can only get the reprint editions. He may not even know that there are other mags. He can hardly have any inkling of the great amount of his favourite reading there is lying in either one of the two libraries, he has nowway of ^{knowing} that he has something like twenty years of magazines to catch up with. Even if he does happen to bump into a fan, obtain FANTASY REVIEW, or get hold of a catalogue, will that help him? Books at 15/- and 16/6 are a little beyond a man of twenty's pocket. So are back issues at anything from 2/6 to 8/- a time. And how is he to know if such issues are worth it?

THE RESULT is that he becomes one of the vast horde of reprint readers. He cannot develop because he just does not know how. The brief experience with the two post war British Mags has shown the great demand for fiction of this type. Letters of enthusiasm, of praise, poured into the editorial departments. What would have happened if the mags had continued is hard to say, all we can say is that the readers are there, but that there is no way to help them.

ANY ENTHUSIASTIC, sincere, hard working group of fans could fill a great need, but do not think it would be all plain sailing. The things that a well organised group of fans could do are remarkable, the COSMOS CLUB proved that, but may I end with one plea? Do not start to organise if you cannot make a good job of it. We have had too many failures, we cannot afford more. The need is there, the fans are there; if you want a club nothing can stop you, but make it a good one.

How about it, oh?

.....+++++,.....+++++.....+++++.....

A BRIEF WHITSUN REPORT, for the fan in a hurry to buy the latest mag.
by Owen D. Plumridge.

The Whitsun S.F. Convention held in the WHITE HORSE, Fetter Lane, London, on Saturday, 15th May, 1948, was attended by over 60 enthusiastic fan, was enjoyed by all, and voted a huge success.

In the chair was Wally Gillings, supported by Bertram Chandler, Ted Carnell, John Newman, and Arthur C. Clarke, and among others noticed were Ken Chapman, Eric Williams, William Temple, Fred Brown, Jim Clay, Norman Ashfield, Vincent Clarke.

Charles Duncombe, and Ken Johnson.

The formal proceedings opened with a short address from Walt. Gillings, who outlined the programme and quickly put everyone at ease with his humorous reminiscences of earlier conventions.

Perhaps the 'high light' of the Convention came from Ted Carnell, who spoke next of the untimely end of every British S.F. magazine yet published, and who revealed that a new private venture was under consideration, and of a small private company in which every fan could become a stockholder, albeit even in a small way.

A discussion here took place, and the project received an enthusiastic welcome and many helpful suggestions from the gathering. It was generally agreed that such a magazine, run by and for fans, not faving to conform to an 'a priori' publisher's policy, or bolster up other publications which were losing money, stood a very fair chance of survival.

Arthur C. Clarke next gave a polished and humorous address on the past and present attitude of scientists to S.F., revealing among other calculated indiscretions, that Lord Rutherford had been known to read 'WONDER'. (Mr. Clarke did not say whether this happened more than once.

After John Newman, the genial secretary, had made other announcements, this ended the formal proceedings, and after all had drunk the health of Ken Slater (at his own expense !!!) the running buffet was attacked.

And of this spread, it is fair to say that many present had not expected to see it's like in the austerity G.B. of today. Mine Host of the WHITE HORSE is to be congratulated for his efforts on our behalf.

The finale was the eagerly awaited auction of the donated books, magazines, and illustrations.

It had earlier been agreed by a large majority that the proceedings of the auction should be devoted towards the BIG FOND FUND (to send a fun from G.B. to a U.S.A. Convention) rather than toward expenses of the next Convention in G.B. or towards the Cosmos Library.

Bidding was brisk and many scarce items were snapped up quickly, and as a result over thirteen pounds went to the B.P.F.

It was then time to think of homeward trains, and this the writer proceeded to do.....

OUR SOCIETY REPORTER COMMENTS ON THE WHITCON !

Well, the great event has come and gone, and I suppose anything I write will be stale news as half the 'WHITE HORSE' seem to be writing reports, but it would be churlish not too, so - pin 'em back !

When the WHITCON was first mooted John was dubious about my bringing the wife, but I insisted and it must have encouraged others; there were present Mrs. Gillings and Mrs. Carnell, who hadn't thought of coming at first.

As we arrived I spied Jimmy Clay who introduced me to two characters Dave and Speedy; I elicited from the former that he was suffering from subscription trouble, so I put him in touch with Eric Williams, whom we persuaded to fix up some subs for us.

I noticed Norman Ashfield playing the loan wolf so I made him say how-do to the wife who had read his letters but had never seen the man.

Breaking into a gallop at the sound of the gong, Don Doughty stopped me to introduce his fiancée in order to show his girl it is possible to be happy though married.

High lights of the speeches were the bit when Wally Gillings told us that publishers considered us as children - as some of us there as grey as badgers !!! Second childhood, doubtless. Also Wally gained a welllearned round of applause by and for keeping FANTASY REVIEW on its feet. Ted Carnell drew ripples of mirth with his

anecdotes, especially the trip to Leeds in 1937, the occasion of the first British S.F. convention. He also commented on the fate of NEW WORLDS, much deplored by one and all. But he really stood the crowd on their heads when he announced the tentative proposal that a company should be floated to run a mag. !!!

He drew a word of protest from ^{me} when he mentioned that an artist was prepared to do the illos for nothing. I commented that a mag that started on the cheap was deemed to an early demise. No-one seemed to agree with me - most unusual (?).....

Arthur C. Clarke then gave a short discourse on Astronautics, which must have rambled a bit, because I best remember comments on scientists who read S.F.!!!

John Newman then rather diffidently referred to Ken Slater and a little matter of a few drinks. So we had 'em, and also tackled the grocery and eatable section of the proceedings.

Whilst making with the masticatory glands I noticed a girl alone, and knowing that a young lady named Daphne Bradley was coming, I grabbed her - 'twas she, so I steered her to the ruler of my destiny. Even though she had abandoned the prerogative of her sex, she still clung to a remnant of feminine prosaicism by eschewing all things weird and supernatural. A girl after my own heart !!!

Time had broken into a gallop, so we rushed to the auction, and that was completed only just in time for a last snort at the bar.

Then my clan trod its well-worn path to the place where we insert our noses in the feed bag, dragging Speedy in our train.

I question^{ed} him on what he expected from us to aid provincial fans and he said that he would like to see some organisation and a mag put out by us. I dropped the subject like a hot coal, but assured him of a welcome at the White Horse any old time.

On Sunday, John turned up at Kew Gardens with Syd Bounds and Sandy Sandfield - had he known his entourage could have been increased 100 %, for Vincent Clarke, Daphne, and Speedy turned up, but could not find the others.

All in all, I am certain everyone who came enjoyed themselves, and lots of new contacts were made. I sure did enjoy myself, and without boasting, I made a couple of new contacts, who I hope will in future be regular attendees at the WHITE HORSE.

Charles Duncombe.

A S I S E E I T .

This particular piece has nothing to do with the WHITCON, as such, but has been included, because I hope the WHITCON may have inspired some of the British Fan to fanzine production. It consists of extracts from two articles published in CANADIAN FANDOM, and written by Leslie A. Croutch, in his column - 'AS I SEE IT'. My thanks to Beak Taylor, the Editor, and to Les Croutch, for permission to reprint.

CANFAN, No. 11.

'AS I SEE IT' by Leslie A. Croutch.

For the inauguration of this suspicious occasion I want to do a little spouting about publishing in the Fan field. I feel I can talk with some little authority as I have done my stint in this direction and will continue to glut the market with more of my output.

What I am driving at is the fact that every little fan who gets his mitts on some means of duplication immediately thinks in terms of putting out a magazine. (Please note that in pro circles a magazine is a periodical that appears on a somewhat set schedule). Anyway Joe Fann and Josephine Fann are going to print, so it's got to be a magazine, or so he/she thinks.

W H Y ?

Yes, why ? Why a magazine with all its pitfalls that lurk waiting to trap the unwary ? The road to a successful magazine is long and twisty and closed in by such delightful dangers as Schedule, Deadline, Material, Paid or Unpaid Circulation, and so on and so forth. And IF you DO get by these demons then you find the Biggest Demon, of them all, Pleasing the Reader.

Consider --- you have a schedule or else you haven't a true magazine, it might be annually, or semiannually, or bi-monthly, or monthly, or what have you. No matter which one it is, it means a deadline you have to meet. You think that this is easy once you have the material onhand. Is it ? The only man who can meet a deadline successfully and continue doing so is the man with money, the man without a job, and the man with the sustained interest to slave away at it day after day with no let up.

Let us suppose you are the mythical Fan. You have the filthy stuff to buy the wherewithal. You have the time -- no job to interfere. No wife --- no friends --- no nothing to tie things up now and again. You meet the deadline every month or whenever the deadline is. Things are smooth then, for a time, assuming of course, that you also have the material. Material is easy to get, if you know how. I never had any trouble. In fact, I never have any trouble, and don't expect any in the Future. Lucky y o u ! Your magazine is then going to go along nice and smoothly.

But is it ? After some months y o u suddenly wake up some morning and find you have lost touch with the original idea --- you have a slightly paler interest.

A magazine without a policy will help you prevent this for then you can print nearly everything that comes your way. BUT suppose you sell it --- you've got to satisfy the cash customers. If you are going to charge for your little brain brat y o u have to give the readers what they desire. Of course, you can give it away; that's fun. Or at least I think it is. You can print what you like then and to hell with what people think - to a certain extent, anyway.

But there are still certain things you can't touch. You mustn't, for instance, touch spicy stuff ; you know, sex, the flowers and bugs and beezes and such. Naughty, naughty ! And you have to be careful what you say about politics, especially if it's the politics of some other country, for some of your readers may be gosh-awful sensitive about their local small-fry. And the same with religion. You mustn't call the Catholics whatever you think they are, for someone is a Catholic. You mustn't laugh over Baptismal Rites, for someone is a Baptist. Sure as guns you do something, someone will want to cut your what-ever-it-is they cut-out out.

Some of the more mature Fen might like to do some nice barefoot pictures, or write some nice barefoot stories, or do some nice barefoot verse, but you mustn't touch. Junior, who is only 10 and reads Shaverology, might get them and then the fat would be in the fire. And there are always some so-called grownups who are just as straight-laced as a Mid-Victorian corset.

Not that I approve, completely, of HOT STUFF, tsk, tsk, in a magazine, or all o f the time. But I, like many of the mature boys, like some real snifty handouts now and then.

Another thing. Joe Fann, the publisher, gets it into his head to turn out a very elaborate magazine, maybe his first, maybe his third issue. He works like mad for weeks and turns out something really creditable. But he has shot his bolt doing it. The fire dies down and that's the last we hear of him. The bad: a genius in the making got unmade.

I've gone through most of this myself. I like publishing, but hang it all, I hate schedules and deadlines and having to refuse to touch certain items because of this and that and the other thing. Out of my Mailing list for LIGHT, perhaps 20 or 25 would like a dandy issue all hot and bothered now and then, but the rest would shoot me for it. Now and then I get rebellious and would like to

whipup a shocker, but I don't like foisting my likes and dislikes too much upon those who don't go for such things. Publishing a magazine is almost 100% creative work. You have to have that urge to get going and keep going. This urge doesn't run true. It wanes, it ebbs and rises like the tides. This is no good for a magazine, which should show either a consistent outlook and interest, or else a gradually rising interest and improvement.

How many GOOD magazines have suddenly disappeared? Widner's YHOS. Laney's ACOLYTE (maybe). Warner's SPACEWAYS. LIGHT almost did. Hurter's CENSORED did. It even looked once or twice as though Taylor would follow suit.

So what are we publishers to do? Must we publish a magazine, or just withdraw and let the rest do the work? Must we, like Widner, write for those that do continue? That is a darned dark and dismal outlook for those of us with duplicator ink for blood, and for Joe Fan who wants to publish, yet hasn't the time to run a magazine.

How about a one-shot affair, I hear somebody ask. Shoot the beggar. Turning out a one-shot magazine is as highly undignified as robbing the poor box at church or spitting in the font. Most one-shot affairs are lousy, hurriedly put together, containing nothing worth while. They are what their name implies - something whipped up on the spur of the moment, with no forethought, no preparation.

So where does that leave us?

IT LEAVES US A FIELD THAT PUBLISHING FAN SEEM TO HAVE NEGLECTED EXCEPT FOR A VERY FEW ITEMS. The Fencyclopedia is a notable example of the output of this little explored field.

In professional publishing we have magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, and books.

In fan publishing we have magazines, one-shot affairs, news sheets, now-and-then worth-while pamphlets, BUT WHERE ARE THE BOOKS?

The Fantasy Amateur-Press Association is the closest to it - members issue what might be termed as books, but they are not true efforts in that direction.

Consider the advantages of book-publishing for Fan; no deadlines, no schedules; you publish when you have the

interest and the urge. You can give your output away or sell it. You are not limited to a set format from issue to issue. You can vary the number of pages per copy. You can publish absolutely anything, for when you advertise your new book, only those who desire to read it will buy it. You can take as long as you wish on each edition and make it as elaborate as you like. You need have NO policy. You can plan anything you like that you get an idea for.

Suppose, for instance, you get the notion you'd like to turn out a collection of fiction of a certain type. You contact various writing Fan and state what you'd like. You can get some illustrators in on the deal, and have the stories actually illustrated. You can take two months, six months, a year, for the project. When it is finished you can have a book 25 pages in size, or 50 or 100. You work on it when you can, when you have a creative desire. You are not pressed by a deadline and therefore you can do your best work.

When it is finished and being sold or distributed, you can rest for as long as you like. If you put so much into it, you don't feel like doing any more, that is all well and good. In a few weeks or a few months another idea will come along and off you go again.

The only type of material that I can't see as being suitable is news. Unless, of course, you were to issue a yearbook chronologically listing the most important fan happenings for the proceeding year. In other words, thresh the Fan World, weed the seed from the chaff. Bring out the Fanworld occurrences so they assume a reality, a connecting whole, to form a sort of history.

So there you are, Publishing Fan. As I See It, it's about time some of us started investigating this new field in Fan publishing, started experimenting. Who will lead the way? Who will forsake magazine publishing and enter the riper and more dignified field of FAN BOOK PUBLISHING?

And in the next issue, Leslie goes into the question a little further.

A S I S E E I T .

" Let's plan a fan book as a sample of the idea that I have in mind.

First is the format. I suggest that the publisher stick to the so-called "standard" format of fan publishing: 8 1/2 x 11. It isn't necessary, of course, but consider the collector and what a switch in formats will do to his bookshelf. And besides, if you are going to do this sort of thing very often, wouldn't it be nice to have your output fairly standardised, in size, so they'll all sort of fit together on the collector's shelf. As for the number of pages, that isn't important. You can, of course, decide ahead of time to make it a certain number of pages or you can just keep cutting stencils and gathering material until you suddenly figure you have a big enough edition and it is time to quit. But I do think it shouldn't be smaller than 25 or 30 pages, with 50 a better size.

Now, what to publish? You may have a lengthy mss already to hand. Suppose some fan author has written something no magazine publisher will touch because it is too long? Suppose it consists of 25 pages double spaced. You decide this will make a good fan-printed book.

First to decide if it will be illustrated or not. Why not? In such a project I feel certain you'll find a good fan artist more than willing to work with you on it. You have to send him the mss so he can pick the scenes. Or you can talk things over with him and work with him on them. You will have an idea of what certain pictures should be like and he will execute them for you. Let's say we are going to have 40 pictures. To make it a high quality output, each picture would look better in a frame with a margin of, let's say 1 1/2 inches all round. This can be varied, of course. We are supposing this will be done in straight black and white, of course.

Then to stencil the story. At the top of each page it would look nice to print the name of the story and the page number. We are, you see, trying to copy regular publishing technique with a mimeograph. Each chapter should begin on a fresh page, better the right hand one.

The cover should have on it ONLY the name of the story and author. Nothing else. Inside will be a flyleaf, left blank.

Then will follow the title page containing title, authors Name, and at the bottom, name only of the publisher. Next page or sheet will contain dedication if any. On the back of this page I consider it would be a good place to put the publisher's name and address and information desirable such as number of copies run off, whether first, second, or what-have-you edition. Oh yes, I forgot back there; below the author's name on the little page, put the illustrator's name.

Then the next page will contain the index, if the book has chapters.

At the end of the book there should be a fly leaf before the cover. Covers should be of heavy stock, preferably at least twice the weight of inside stock; better about four times the weight. Pages should be stapled before the cover is put on. Cover should be all in one sheet warp around style, glued on.

Such an ambitious publication should be worth, I think, at least \$ 1.00 for a 50 page copy.

Then there is the annual sort of thing. Or the collection of various works. This can be made up in book form but would carry stories, articles that can not be dated, verse, and illustrations.

These can come out on an if-when basis. No deadline need be met. You set the price of each copy according to the work done, or amount of material presented.

It is possible, I think, to adopt a system that would be a hybrid--a sort of cross between a magazine and a book. Such a publication would have a standard name as does a magazine. But you don't date it. You merely number it. If you have to date it, put this information in a byline inside somewhere, say with information as to who put it out where, and so on. This publication could appear just whenever you felt like it, but should appear once a year at least. Number of pages can vary. Format should not. Material can be anything a book or magazine would present with this difference: nothing can be dated, and length can have no restrictions. Price per copy to be varied according to size, etc."

AS I SEE IT (cont.)

(I think Beak will allow me the privilege of plugging here! LIGHT will come out on the principle of the foregoing para-graph, this fall. Run will be 150 copies. Size not yet known but will be closer to 30 than to 20 pages! Format standard. Price not set.)

And that my friends, completes the extracts from AS I SEE IT. At the moment I think these of great interest to all British Fen, as one or two people have mentioned in their letters their desire to commence a fanzine, but deploring the fact that they have not a) the time, b) the energy, or c) the method or means.

Perhaps a few of you may be able to 'get together' to do some book publishing. One chap to draw the art work. A couple to type the stencils - a fourth (some lucky man) who can 'run-off' the product.

If anyone is interested in such a scheme, and can't contact others, drop me a line - I'll interdoose yer!

And one closing note - the 'BALL' referred to in the closing remark of the article was 'FALL' - '1947'. A bit late now, but the CANFAN would welcome you as a subscriber, I guess. Editorial address appears below.

BEAK TAYLOR

9 MacLennan Avenue,

TORONTO, 5,

Ontario,

CANADA

A U C T I O N

e. c. t u b b

Auctioneering can be great fun --- if you are not the auctioneer - but having been beguiled into promising that if there should be an auction I would preside, I became it.

Now auctions as a rule are pretty grim affairs. All the friends of the club, society, what have you.....send along anything they can't sell, and the rest of the troupe divide their time between making stupid bids and praying that they won't get stuck with the stuff. The auctioneer meanwhile shouts himself hoarse, tells uncounted lies about the quality of the stuff he has to offer, and feels like a barker at a fair.

Auction (cont.)

When it comes to persuading fans to part with money it is even more of a task. Passing a camel thru the eye of a needle is a modest afternoons sport compared with selling a fan something he may not need. And at this kind of auction, you can bet your life that everyone has been offered the goods at cut price long before. This time the change was so great as to be unbelievable.

First the quantity of the goods was equalled only by their quality. Lying heaped up on a great table were items that would make many a hardened fan drool with delight and envy. THE SKYLARK OF SPACE in it's original magazines was there. THE TIME STREAM rubbed shoulders with STAN and many other brand new volumes, many of them donated by American Fans for the BIG POND FUND. Early Amazings, Astoundings, Science Wonder Stories, lay intimately with late Fantastic Adventures, Weirds, and other recent magazines. The amount was stupendous, books, original illustrations; even manuscripts and fan mags dating back to the ark, all were there and all without any reserve price, and all for the good of the cause.

I felt a tinge of misgiving. It seemed impossible that all of it could be auctioned off at reasonable prices, but there was no way out, the thing had to be done. Fortifying myself with a couple of strong assistants, plenty of small change, and a modest supply of tonsil juice, the fun began.

At first with many a quip and sally, mostly at my expense, the massed fans tentatively began the bidding. Then, as things grew serious and the choicer items made an appearance, the banter died, and stern looks, grim expressions, and a reckless raising of bids made an appearance. Opening with a couple of rarer items to attract attention, I switched to late Amazings, and believe it or not they needed little pushing. Soon the two assistants were weaving among the audience collecting cash, and without their assistance the thing would have been impossible. Even as it was an hour and a half was not time to clear the table, and certainly not enough to do justice to each item. Towards the end of the evening group sales of books and mags had to be introduced, and even with this device we beat the deadline by only minutes.

As time was short bids had to be swift. There was little time for persuasion. This led to several fans bidding at the same time, and one fan even went so far as to raise his own bid twice against no opposition. We thought it kinder to leave him in ignorance of his error.

Several amusing instances arose. Offering a lurid illustration of a peerless woman neck and neck with a snake, a dry voice suggested that it would serve to "bring a small boy up the right way". The suggestion was adopted and some small boy is certainly going to be lucky. It was a dream woman. One fan having run out of cash offered himself as a bond servant if he could but have the SHIP OF ISHEAR. Luckily for him there were two copies of that famed work. The majority, knowing that this was the best chance that they would ever get, plunged recklessly into the hosekeeping money and paid up like heroes. Fortunately there were few wives present.

The whole thing was a great success. Where there had been a great pile of mags etc., we were left with a great pile of cash. This was transmutation at its best, and all who gave mags, books, illustrations, etc., can rest assured that they did not give them in vain. Those who bought them know that the cash they paid will be wisely used for the BIG POND FUND, and this I think was well worth the temporary loss of voice, the vivid dreams of snakes....not women.... and the bitter disappointment I suffered at having sold all those wonderful items, and getting nothing for myself. The next time, though, if there is a next time, I'll have a stooge in the audience.

- - - - -

PICTURES OF CELEBRITIES, BUT -
FIRST WE THOUGHT WE'D DO
JOHN NEWMAN, THE SECRETARY
BUT HE ASKED US FOR MONEY -



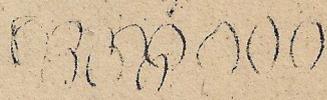
WHICH FINISHED HIM!
WAIT GILLINGS, THE PRESIDENT,
CAUGHT OUR EYE -
TILL THEY

ANNOUNCED KEN SLATER'S FREE DRINKS!
WE THOUGHT WE'D GOT TED CARNELL -
TILL THEY OPENED THE RUNNING
BLIFFET - THEN WE WERE BOTH TOO BUSY!



ARTHUR CLARKE GAVE A
TALK ON "ASTRONAUTICS"
- WE HAD TO CONSULT A
DICTIONARY ON ITS MEANING!
(THE WORD - WE MEAN!)

WILL TEMPLE INSISTED ON HIDING
IN THE CROWD! -



A BERTRAM CHANDLER
ALSO KEPT MOVING - IN CASE
SOMEONE TROD ON "THE RATS
TALE"? (CRUEL!!)

WE CAUGHT FRED BROWN IN AN
UNGUARDED MOMENT - WELL, THAT'S OUR
EXCUSE!

A bargain
at 25d



WE'D HAVE GOT TED TIBB TOO,
BUT HE KEPT ON WAVING
MAGS AT US!

KEN CHAPMAN WAS AT THE BAR! -
BARRING US! (CAREFUL! - ED.) AFTER
THAT THE BEER WAS GONE, ALSO THE
FOOD, AND SO DID WE. THE RESULT IS HERE
ANY RESEMBLANCE TO LIVING PERSONS -!



Tom Young '48

PRESENT IN SPIRIT ONLY.



Ron Holmes.



Nell Lindsay



by

Norman Ashfield.

It was a success - the WHITCON. The White Horse Headquarters of the London Circle had a gathering of some 50-60 fen on the Saturday, May 16th.

The Chairman welcomed, among others present, authors A. Bertram Chandler, Will F. Temple, and Arthur C Clarke. He also spoke on previous conventions that had been held in England. One of the former enthusiasts was Prof. A.M. Low who used to attend, and say how sensible fans were in their ideas.

Laughter.

John Newman, the organiser, gave details of good wishes sent by fans unable to attend. These included R R F Bailey, John Greenfield, Leslie A Crouch, Nigel Lindsay, Dr. J. Aitken, Gus Willmot, Peter Bell, Don Berg, Stan Mullen, and Ken Slater.

Ted Carnell mentioned the first SF Convention, held in Leeds in 1937. He told the story of NEW WORLDS and TALES OF WONDER, and FANTASY. He provoked amusement from the fen when he said there seemed to be seven ages of fans. 1. Reading Buck Rogers. 2. passing to Amazing. 3. Graduating to Thrilling Wonder Stories. 4, then realising that there was nowt like Astounding. 5. thence becoming more and more interested in books. 6. making such a collection that they don't have time to read anything, and lastly 7. becoming a publisher and going bankrupt.

On NEW WORLDS Ted said that No.1 was a flop, and dropped £300, No.2, improved model, broke even. No.3 was oversold before publication...and then Pendulum went bankrupt. He mentioned the idea thought up by Walt Gillings, Eric Williams, Ken Chapman, and himself, of floating a company to print their own mag. What do the fen think? Shares at probably 5 --.

And so the Convention went on - but this column is headed COMMENTS - not report, so a few comments seem to be required. The report you can find in several other places.

Firstly, let me say that the whole show was well organised by John Newman, but that next time it would be better to share out the work in 'committee' fashion, in order that one man should not bear all the brunt. It most have been some job, and hats off to John. Secondly, need I say that we all enjoyed every minute of it? Thirdly, it would appear that the programme developed into something a bit larger than we had time for. That was the fault of the enthusiastic fen who kept us all talking. So lets have more time, next time. DON'T CUT THE PROGRAMME! I've lost my number, but the next, and I think, the most important item, is the magazine publishing scheme. This is something that must be seriously considered. Not that our four esteemed friends won't give it very serious consideration, but we must all help. If plans come to a stage where definite proposals can be made, do you want to be 'in' on it? Think it over, and when you have made your mind up, and have anything to contribute in the way of ideas, I recommend you write Ted. At the same time, give him an idea of how many shares you want. Then there is the point, returning to the actual WHITCON, of earlier notice to fen. I understand that this will be given next time. For out-of-towners, accomodation must be considered. A couple of people to check up on hotels, and arrange room bookings, at rates which could be published, would be very useful, and lets more folk would attend, I am sure. Can some social activity be organised? When we know the approximate number of people attending, how about hiring a small hall, for a dance, or something. Not casting any nasturtiums on the last Con., but as we were so well to the fore, lets try and enlarge a bit. Lets make it a real 'do'. Lets invite a couple of newspapers to give us a write up. A little publicity would not be a bad thing. We might get a few thousand more into the fold!

Anyway, those are a few comments for the organisers of the next Whitecon, or Luncon, London, or what have you, to consider. And for the fen to consider. To be done in a BIG way, a little finance will be necessary - we can't have a privilege?

NO CONNECTION WITH THE WHITCON.

The following is quoted from a letter written by Michael Wigodsky, who in turn was from a conglomeration of nonsense entitled '1000 Jokes'

'WHOSE NAVEL ARE YOU CONTEMPLATING?: THE STORY OF A CIVILISATION'

Once upon a time there was an American business man whose name was Jones, who suddenly pulled himself to a halt one day and said, "Where does all this speed get us?"

At that moment a hearse in a hurry sent him flying. "We're all racing to the graveyard!" he philosophized. "The Hindus have the right idea," he thought. "Contemplating navels is the sensible thing."

So he went to India.... and he coteremplated...and contemplated.... and contemplated....

Finally he yawned and said, "The only trouble is, they're dull!...Now if somebody could only bring out an improved navel!"

He experimented with colour and was not too displeased....He tried flowers.....and diamonds.....He invented the 'NOSTRAINNAVELMIRROR' for contemplators with stiff necks.

It wasn't long before other contemplators began to take notice...and when they looked at their own navels afterwards...they seemed shabby and old hat.

Soon, all they could contemplate was Jones' navel.

Finally he said, "Boys, how would you like a navel like mine.....a navel you could be proud of, for only \$4.99?" Well, the kits sold like hot cakes, and Jones brought out deluxe models and super deluxers.... and today the natives are working like crazy, so that they can afford the latest! Of course, they haven't much time for contemplating, but, gosh, you can't have everything!

.....
Published by 'OPERATION FANTAST', for the B.F.L.
(Kenneth F. Slater,)

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