# GENERATION FEMIZINE


edited by
ROB HANSEN

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*Cover photo:* Ethel Lindsay, Frances Evans and Frances Glynn at SUPERMANCON (Eastercon 1954). Photographer: Eric Bentcliffe.

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**Pam Buckmaster/Bulmer**



**Joy Goodwin/Clarke**



**Bobbie Wild/Gray**



**Ethel Lindsay**

# Foreword

*Femizine* (familiarly known as *Fez*) was not the first all-female fanzine. That honour belongs to *STF-ETTE*, published by Pogo (Mary Corinne Gray) of LASFS, the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, in September 1940; there was a second issue in July 1941. Another all-female LASFSzine published during that group's celebrated Bixel Street period (see *Bixelstrasse*) and worthy of note here is *Black Flames*. A one-off published in January 1946, it was edited by Virginia "Jim-E" Laney and qualifies as the first anthology of SF stories by female writers.

*Femizine* (not to be confused with the earlier similarly-titled US zine *Femzine*) was launched at SUPERMANCON, the 1954 Eastercon, held that year in Manchester at Whitsun. The idea of an all-female fanzine had been bubbling up for a while and several letters had passed between Frances Evans, Joan Carr, and Ethel Lindsay shortly before the convention in which they decided it was time. Carr volunteered to edit the zine and a flyer was produced in time for the con, with the first issue appearing soon afterwards. As can be seen from the cover photo (taken at the event by Eric Bentcliffe) there was a certain amount of excitement among female fans at this finally happening.

As is now widely known, "Joan Carr" did not exist (see Appendix 2). She was created as a hoax to be played primarily on the Nor'west Science Fantasy Club (NSFC), who then met regularly in Manchester. Frances Evans was in on it from the beginning, but no one else was. Hiding behind that pseudonym was a man – H.P. "Sandy" Sanderson, who even (with her agreement) used photos of a female cousin to further his subterfuge.

*Femizine* soon developed a life of its own, becoming a rallying point for female fans in the UK during the 1950s. This was the decade in which women first really began to assert themselves in the hitherto male-dominated SF fandom of these isles. In this context *Femizine* is a fanzine that is both historically and culturally significant. It ran from 1954 to 1960 and saw fifteen issues in all, plus mini versions bound into a couple of combozines. However, any examination of *Femizine* also needs to take OMPA into account.

The Off-trails Magazine Publishers Association was UK fandom's first APA (Amateur Press Association). These have existed since Victorian times, and were introduced into fandom by Don Wollheim:

> In that year *[1936]* while corresponding with the late H.P. Lovecraft, I first heard of the existence of national amateur press associations where persons interested in publishing and editing for the fun of it and not for profit would exchange magazines in general mailings. I joined the National, the United, and several local Amateur Press Associations. Likewise some of the New York fans, primarily John B. Michel and Frederik Pohl.
>
> Gradually it grew upon me that an amateur press association modelled after the decades-old national types and specializing in fantasy amateur journalism would be an excellent thing. [1]

In July 1937 the first mailing of FAPA, the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, duly appeared. At the time of writing FAPA is still going, though possibly not for much longer. As for OMPA, according to Vin¢ Clarke:

> In the advertising world it would have been called a brainstorming session. It began in the late afternoon of Saturday, June 19th, 1954, and carried on into the cool of a beautiful summer evening. When it had finished, Ken Bulmer and I had roughed out the plans for the first British SF fan publisher's association.
>
> It's hard to say what was the catalyst which finally acted on this particular project. The atmosphere was right. British fandom was on its feet in a burst of activity which made this, the year of the SuperManCon, a small Golden Age. Numerous fans were interested in publishing, and the SF professional 'zines were bringing in new faces, throughout the year. I think it was Ken who decided that now was the moment for launching into reality the dream of years, and I think it was myself who, after various euphonious titles had been tried out for a couple of hours, suggested that echo of a trombone, OMPA. It would, we thought, disperse any stuffiness about the introduction of an association with a real Constitution into the happily anarchic fandom of the time... and, moreover, it ran trippingly off the tongue. [2]

The first OMPA mailing appeared in the autumn, barely two or three months after *Femizine* #1, and contained the UK's first zines edited solely by female fans. Whether *Femizine* would even have existed had OMPA launched earlier is impossible to know, but OMPA would outlast *Femizine*

and female fans would contribute to it for the entirety of its existence. This volume covers the period when both were going strong so I've drawn material from each, as well as some from other contemporary zines. That's why this is *Generation Femizine* and not *The Best of Femizine*. Needless to say, the pieces selected reflect my personal preferences and bias towards material *about* fandom – including first contact and the like – and against poetry, but insofar as it was possible to do so – a full file of contemporary OMPA mailings being unavailable – I've tried to assemble a collection of their writing that not only reflects the personalities of those involved but also gives an insight into what fandom and the world looked like to young women seven decades ago.

One thing you should bear in mind when reading the pieces in this volume is the social context in which they were written. The 1950s opened with Britain still recovering from the war, our cities bomb-damaged, and rationing still in place. Things would improve as the decade progressed, but for much of it austerity reigned and money was tight, a substantially different state of affairs for our fans than was being enjoyed by their peers in a prosperous United States that in material terms had benefited greatly from the war. Also, there were mainstream views held by many back then in that long lost world of seven decades ago that would be unacceptable today. But then, I fully expect some of today's mainstream views to find similar disfavour with our descendants as social attitudes continue to evolve. Something that will seem very dated is the heavy use of "femme fan" and such variations as "femmefan" or "femme". A now archaic term, it hasn't been used in fandom in decades. It gradually slipped out of common usage during the 1960s but could still be found in fanzines as late as 1968 when a piece by US fan Lesleigh Couch appeared in *Starling* #12 (ed. Hank Luttrell) titled "Sex and the Single Femme Fan" after the famous book by Helen Gurley Brown.

There was a smattering of contributions from American fans in later issues of *Femizine* but, given the focus of this volume, the women I'm highlighting were all prominent UK fans, with one notable exception: Anne Steul, who for many years appears to have been an obscure, largely forgotten figure in German fandom. Only in the last few decades, as German fans have started to take a greater interest in their history, has she begun to gain the respect she deserves. Anne organised the first ever German convention and contributed her report on it to *Femizine*. This was a genuine scoop for the fanzine, and is included in this volume. Steul had a fractious relationship with Germany's nascent fan establishment – specifically Walter Ernsting – championing the fannish in that

determinedly sercon fandom. Those interested in knowing more about this will find it covered by Julian Parr in his reviews in the Benfords' *Void* #6 of Anne's *Fantum* #1 and of *Andromeda* #3, the journal of SF Club Deutschland, which carried his own report on the convention. (This was later reprinted in *Triode* #6 in English translation.) *Triode*, *Fantum*, and *Void* are all available at Fanac.org.

Sanderson bowed out with issue six, the Joan Carr hoax being revealed in issue nine. It would be over two years before the next issue appeared, and when it did it would be under a different name. New editor Ethel Lindsay intended *Distaff* to be a clean break with the past, but her fellow female fans made it clear that they valued the old name and wanted it to continue. Thus *Distaff* #1 retroactively became *Femizine* #10, with the following issue resuming the sequence as *Femizine* #11. The fanzine lasted four more issues, and the circumstances of its demise are covered in the chapter "The End of *Femizine*".

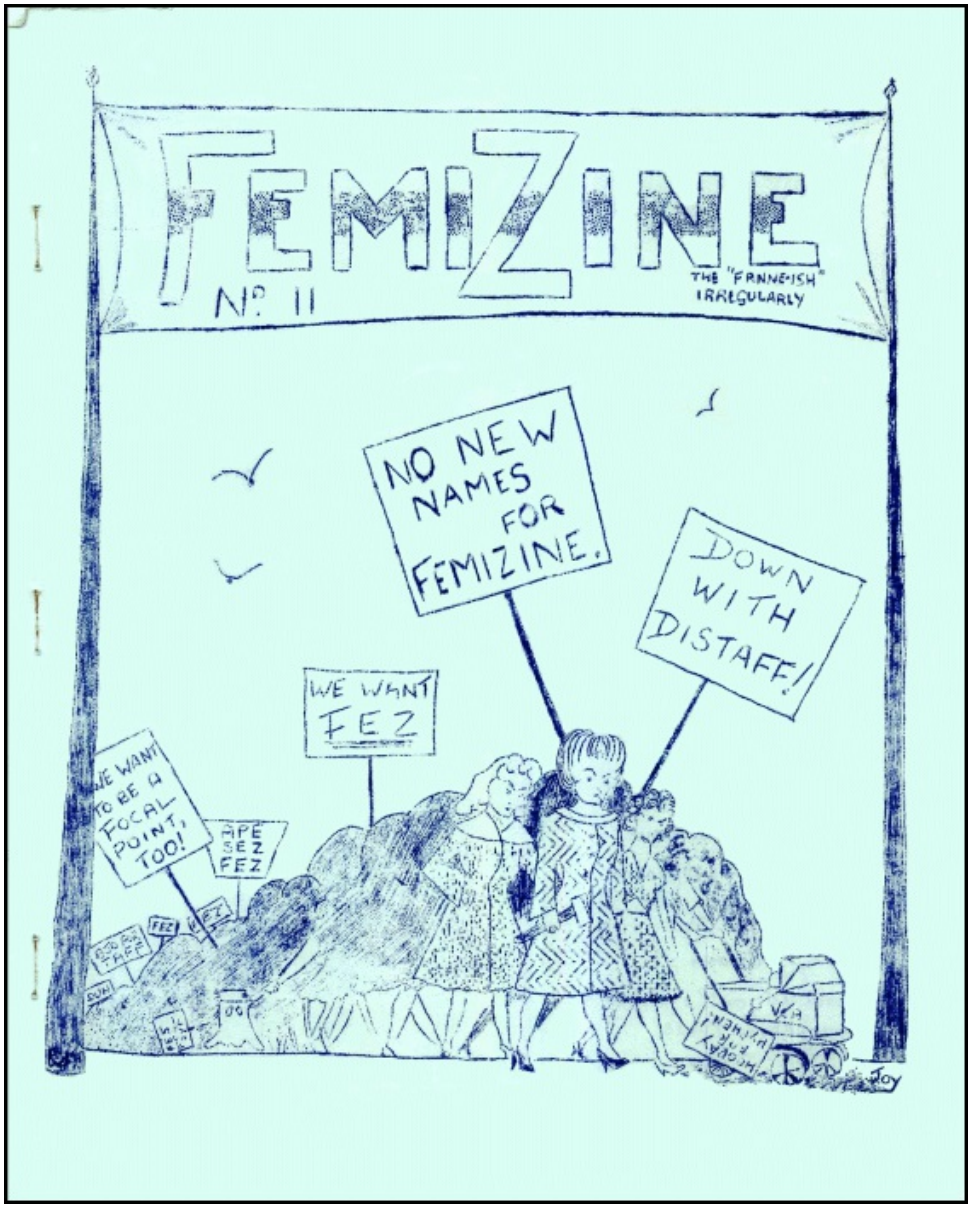
Given its subject matter, this volume may well attract people who have never read any of my earlier ones, so a brief explanation of the sercon/fannish divide seems in order. Sercon (serious and constructive) fans and their fanzines concentrate primarily on science fiction, whereas the main focus of fannish fans and their fanzines is fandom itself. For most of the history of the original book- and magazine-based SF fandom (as opposed to the film- and TV-based media SF fandom that predominates today) fannish fans have predominated. This did not mean they lost their interest in science fiction – indeed, many went on to write it professionally – but there were always a small number, a very small number, who found fandom without first having an interest in SF.

All the writing by others featured herein has been lightly edited and/or re-titled, and some pieces are only partial reprints or cobbled together from several smaller bits. As always my thanks to Dave Langford for turning the files I send him into a book after much back and forth between us, and to Claire Brialey for proofreading the result.

Oh, and for comparison purposes, £1 in 1957 would be worth around £30 today. This being the pre-decimal era of pounds, shillings, and pence, I'll note too that there were twelve pennies to a shilling, twenty shillings to a pound, and twenty-one shillings to a guinea. Half a crown was two shillings and six pence.

*Rob Hansen, August 2023*

[1] Donald A. Wollheim, *The Fantasy Amateur*, vol.5 no.4 (June 1942)
[2] *APAthy* (1959, ed. Joy Clarke); reprinted




Femizine *#11 cover by Joy Clarke*

# Before *Femizine*

## In search of the UK's first female fans

> *Note:* "Fan" in this article is used in its old sense of referring to someone actively involved in fandom as opposed to being just a reader/consumer of SF, so I've ignored letters to the prozines.

When the inaugural meeting of our first fan group, the Ilford Science Literary Circle, was held at 32 Thorold Road, Ilford, on 27th October 1930 two of those present were women. One of these was Mary Dew and she was also at many subsequent meetings of the ISLC. Therefore she or the other woman must be the UK's first female fan, right? Not so fast. Remembering the Circle later, Walter Gillings wrote that the owners of 32 Thorold Road were:

> ...a middle-aged couple who without quite realising what it was all about were willing to lend their front parlour so long as the group enlivened their Monday evenings.

This was George and Mary Dew (names sourced from local census records). The other woman at the first meeting was the wife of Len Kippin, who had co-founded the group with Gillings. While some women who would later arrive as the wives and girlfriends of male fans would go on to be active fans in their own right, there's no evidence Kippin's spouse was any more interested in fandom than Gillings's own wife Madge was when she accompanied him to at least two SF conventions in London.

Beginning in 1935, local chapters of the Science Fiction League started by *Wonder Stories* magazine in the US began to form in the UK, but there's no record of any having had female members. In 1936 Nuneaton SFL published our first SF fanzine – *Novae Terrae* – while in January 1937 Leeds SFL ran the world's first SF convention. Fourteen fans attended, all male. At the convention it was decided to form the UK's own national organisation – the Science Fiction Association – and *Novae Terrae* was made its official organ, which it became with the tenth issue. A membership drive was immediately initiated, and in *Novae Terrae* #13 (June 1937) we finally get possibly our first real female fan showing up. After trumpeting Professor A.M. Low and W. Olaf Stapledon being made Honorary Members of the society, the editors announce:

> Other new members are A. Bloom (Birkenhead); E.J. Carnell (Plumstead); Miss A. Feather (Anglesey); J.B. Jepson (Nuneaton); J.I. Stevenson (Hull); D.A. Wollheim (New York); and S. Youd (Eastleigh).

This was Alicia Feather. Despite various overseas female fans joining the SFA – the Los Angeles group joined en masse, for example – she would be both the first and last British woman to be named a member of the SFA in the pages of *Novae Terrae*. The next mention I can find of her is in the lettercolumn of *The Futurian* #7 (Winter 1940, ed. J. Michael Rosenblum), where she writes:

> I don't particularly care for the cracks taken at your contributors by your would-be clever correspondents. I never criticise unless I can do better myself.

Feather gets several mentions in issues of Rosenblum's *Futurian War Digest* (hereafter *FWD*) 1940-1945, mainly in acknowledgement of receipt of letters, Xmas cards, etc. The most substantial is this in *FWD* #23 (October 1942) from one W. Skelton, then serving in Egypt:

> I've had correspondence recently with Harold Gottliffe, and through him was second recipient of a bundle of stf sent out by the kind-hearted Alicia Feather.

Like Rosenblum, Gottliffe was another member of the pre-war Leeds SFL so it seems likely she was corresponding with several of them. Despite this being all we know about Feather, I actually have two photos of this (probable) first female British fan, courtesy of the Rosenblum photo collection.

Leeds SFL group must have had at least one female member because *The Futurian* #5 (Summer 1939) carried a "notice board" which was "available to all members of Leeds SFL for any reasonable announcements, queries, requests etc.," which included this:

> Miss Sybil Cowan of 48 Gaythorne Terrace, Harehills, Leeds 8, would like penfriends about her own age (19)....

Alicia Feather lived on Anglesey (Ynys Môn in Welsh, Mona to the Romans), an island off the coast of North Wales, in a village on its western edge named Rhosneigr. This meant she was pretty isolated geographically. The nearest fans to her were Bob Silburn and Syd Beach of Aberystwyth, who published the fanzine *Lens* in late 1942 or early 1943, and who in October 1943 even received a visit from travelling Los Angeles fan Gus

Willmorth, then stationed over here with US forces. Despite Aberystwyth being only a hundred miles from Rhosneigr, it's doubtful she ever visited them. Quite apart from the poor roads of the period, non-essential travel by civilians was frowned on during the war years, so it's entirely possible she never got to meet other fans in the flesh. (See Appendices header page for her photograph.)

Returning to *The Futurian*, issue 8 (Spring 1940) included "The Time Machine", fiction by Joyce Slater – originally assumed to be Ken Slater's wife. This turns out not to be the case, as he was still with his first wife at that point. He and Joyce Teagle would not marry until 1948.

*FWD* #7 (April 1941) carried first mentions of Oxford's Alys Rita Pittman, fiancée (and later wife) of James Parkhill-Rathbone, and Glasgow's Marion F. Eadie. In *Then*, I credited Marion with being our first female fan, but if not the first she may well have been the most active of the early ones. As well as contributing pieces to several issues of the fanzine *Zenith* – edited by Harry Turner, her future husband – she also had a story – "Beast of the Crater" – published in the professional SF magazine *Tales of Wonder* #16 (March 1942, ed. Walter Gillings). While she and Harry were not regular congoers after they wed, she attended at least one in the mid-1950s.

Marion Eadie actually started out as an astronomy enthusiast in Glasgow at age 15 and had formed the Junior Astronomical Association with friends during 1933. This was the same year the British Interplanetary Society was founded. Which came first is unknown. Within three years it had 140 members in several different countries and from 1935 was producing its own magazine, *Urania*. This saw seventy issues before its demise in 1941. If you consider such activity as qualifying, then Eadie would hands down be our earliest female fan. However, while there was a substantial overlap prewar between astronomy/rocketry enthusiasts and SF fans they weren't the same thing and nor did those involved see them as such. (She and Harry Turner met via their shared interest in astronomy/rocketry, incidentally.)

In October 1941, *Futurian War Digest* #13 listed Denise Laws and Lily Jaggers among those at an open-air meeting of fans held in a London park the previous month, but after that it's slim pickings until we get to 1943.

Joan Burke – wife of John F. Burke – had a piece on the joy of hats in *Fantast* #13 (April 1942, ed. Douglas Webster), and she and Joyce Fairbairn both appeared in the letter column. *FWD* #27 (April 1943) mentioned that Joyce was at a London gathering. She would turn up at

various events up and down the country over the next few years, including NORCON 2 in 1945 and, eventually, marry Sam Youd. Anne Gardiner of Worthing in Sussex became the first woman to be listed as a member in *British Fantasy Society Bulletin* #9 (June 1943) and *FWD* #30 (August 1943) contained a poem by Hilda M. Johnson (*née* Crossen), wife of Les Johnson, as did *FWD* #33. Jean Murrey was listed in *BFS Bulletin* #11 (September 1943) as having joined up. *FWD* #32 (December 1943) revealed she had also been a member of an established SF group:

> We hear that Teddington's Jean Murrey has now moved to Bournemouth, leaving the Cosmos Club (almost) desolate.

The NORCONs of the mid-1940s were based in private homes (but included excursions further afield) and were closer to what we might consider weekend-long parties today. They drew out of towners and – importantly – were announced beforehand *as conventions* and so they count as such. The first was held in Manchester, the second in Leeds, and Rita James attended both. However, whenever a contemporary fanzine mentioned her it was almost always as part of "Ron Holmes and Rita James of Liverpool", so it's impossible to know whether she just attended these as Ron Holmes's girlfriend or as a fan in her own right. The first NORCON was held in 1943 over New Year and *FWD* #33 (February 1944) carried this report:

> At a recent convention (let it be nameless) I had my first glimpse of fans!!! I have never before in all my young life seen a more varied congregation. There were those who sat in corners, waiting to have food passed to them; there were those who blindly grabbed, and hoped no one would censor them. No sooner had they arrived than the place was in an uproar. It was impossible to either enter or leave a room without seeing fans, stumbling over fans, treading on fans... for, to add to the pristine confusion, fans themselves sprawled engagingly on the floor, preferring this natural environment when playing cards. And then the assembled people decided to have a little music... I don't know if you have ever heard Tauber singing "Vienna, City of My Dreams" to the accompaniment of a piano upon which Yellow Tie was playing hot jive. I have, and I suspect the neighbours have too, if the hints dropped later were any criterion.
>
> After the convention had broken up on the Sunday evening it was noticed by the family which bore the onslaught of the fans

> upon their (usually) peaceful abode, that the mascot of the house – that is to say the dog "Rusty" – was in state of nervous collapse, and ever since those never-to-be-forgotten days, she has been found hiding in various dark and secluded corners of the house, poor thing.
>
> I may add that I am on the verge of becoming a fan MYSELF despite the dissuasion of my brother who never had a friend to warn him!!

It was signed "My Brother's Sister" and is the earliest report on a convention over here written by a woman. As to who the author was; well, that first NORCON was held at the home of Ron Lane and in *British Fantasy Society Bulletin* #15 (March 1944) one Joan Lane at that same address is listed as a new member – followed by news of Ron's resignation from the Society, no reason given. Despite the timing, these two events were probably unconnected. In April, it was reported in *FWD* that he had received his call up papers and having just:

> "...successfully qualified as a chemist, Mr. Bevin *[Ernie Bevin, Minister of Labour and National Service in the wartime coalition government]* gives him the opportunity to become the first fan coal-miner. Yes, Ron goes down the pit and is he happy."

He also published the third issue of *Gemini* that same month, a fanzine whose contents included a piece on education by Worthing's Anne Gardiner.

The second NORCON was a small convention of just fourteen people and held over the 1944/45 new year transition. Those fourteen included Rita James of Liverpool (there with fiancé Ron Holmes – they would marry in March and have a daughter in December), Joyce Fairbairn (recently relocated from London to Sheffield), with Brenda Gabrielle Lee, and Miriam Harris from Leeds. An Arthur Harris is also listed in the *Bulletin* report on the event, but his relationship to Miriam is not. Neither are familiar names.

As the war drew to a close so did fanzine publishing in this country. *FWD* ceased publication in March – its first issue since December – leaving the *BFS Bulletin* as the main source of news about UK fandom. I'll note in passing the gathering of fans in London in early August 1945 during which Joyce Fairbairn first met Sam Youd, but then we leap forward to late 1946 and the establishment of a new regular meeting of London SF fans at the White Horse pub in Hatton Garden. In 1948 this

would be the venue for our first post-war convention, 1948's Whitcon. Eight women are known to have attended this but only only one of them – Daphne Bradley – was an active fan in her own right. The others were wives who attended this social event with their husbands, but do not appear to have been involved in fandom in any other capacity. Also present at the convention was Daphne's future husband, Ron Buckmaster, and thereby hangs an interesting story....

In 1947 Vin¢ Clarke caught a bus, went upstairs, sat next to a soldier, and pulled out an SF magazine. That soldier was Ron Buckmaster:

> The bus stopped at the corner of Wendover Way. A moment later a raincoated, ferly figure sat beside me and opened an American *ASF [*Astounding Science Fiction*]*.
>
> "You like that stuff?" I asked, tentatively displaying a BRE *[British Reprint Edition]*. "Well, as a matter of fact... I never read anything else – Neither do I – gabble – George O. Smith – gabble – Isaac Asimov – gabble gabble – White Horse Thursday nights – gabble – Welling station got to go now. See you next week."
>
> My body left the bus two stops later and plodded its sedate way homewards. My mind, though, lit out for far planets and pastures new. There it gambolled madly like a newborn lamb, afire with the wondrous, implausible, rightness of life. Part of me is still up there cavorting. Another part has been a fixture at the London Circle and at all the Cons ever since.
>
> Some low conniving on my part secured a posting to Woolwich as a Christmas present for 1948. Further conniving secured me the only femme fan then at the White Horse as an accomplice in the first Trufan marriage, thus combining two hobbies in one swell foop. Her insatiable feminine curiosity *[also]* enabled me to lure my sister Pamela to the White Horse... [1]

Just as he met his future wife there so she met her future husband, Ken Bulmer. Had Vin¢ Clarke not caught that bus, or seats been available downstairs (smoking was allowed on the upper decks of buses back then and Vin¢ was a non-smoker), it's unlikely Ron would have learned of the White Horse meetings, and the children and grandchildren resulting from those two unions would never have been born.

For a while, Daphne Bradley would be the only woman at the then weekly White Horse meetings. Writing in *Science Fantasy News* #4

(September 1949, ed. Vin¢ Clarke for the Science Fantasy Society) she revealed that:

> For over a year now it has been my privilege once a week to consort with a few of the more extraordinary, if not superfluous, members of the genus called homo. At the moment of going to press I appear to comprise the complete distaff side of the peculiar form of life which, as a species, is known as the S.F.S.
>
> At times the assembly is brightened by members of my own sex. This is when fans have brought their long-suffering wives along, making them sit for two or three hours surrounded by para-human ravings.

In November 1950, Bradford fan Derek Pickles launched his fanzine *Phantasmagoria*, with his sister Mavis credited as co-editor on issues #1-3, the first editorial credit on a fanzine for a woman in this country. (*Operation Fantast* was often credited to Ken and Joyce Slater prior to this, but editorial content was attributed to Ken alone.)

The Bradford group would be one of a number of such SF groups that would spring up in towns and cities across the UK during the early 1950s, and it was from the female members of these groups that *Femizine* would draw most of its contributors.

[1] *Esprit* #1 (December 1954, ed. Daphne Buckmaster)

# Ina Shorrock

“I was in love with Ina,” sighed Jim Linwood. “We all were.”

And who could have blamed them? Lovely Ina was the ever-smiling heart of the Liverpool group and she was at the very centre of British fandom all through the fifties and sixties. In 1947 Ina Picken was nineteen and already a secret SF reader when she went to a neighbour’s party and amazingly – because he lived on the Birkenhead side of the Mersey – she met Norman. Was it love at first sight? Well,

maybe, but after they'd been courting for six months the romance literally took off when she saw a copy of *Astounding* in his sports-coat pocket. Wow! – they both read science fiction! "After that I had to marry him, for his collection," Ina said.

– Peter Weston, *Cytricon Programme Book* (2008)

*Formed in November 1951 and originally known as LaSFaS (not to be confused with America's LASFS), the Liverpool group were unusual in directing most of their energies to socialising. For a while they published the groupzine* Space Diversions*, and they put together several impressive dramatic productions – particularly their "taperas" (tape operas) – yet unusually for so large a group they never ran a convention.*

*Though a very prominent and well-liked fan, Ina Shorrock usually only appeared in fanzines in the writings of others. Beginning with a bit by her from a multi-author report on the SUPERMANCON, this is one of the few times she herself wrote anything for one:*

Pat Doolan and I, with the rest of the Liverpool Group, arrived at the Grosvenor just after 10:30 a.m. We had to battle our way through the crowds of fen (and Brian Burgess) waiting to greet us on the steps and in the foyer, in order to reach the reception desk.

After finding our rooms, which were all in the same corridor, we wended our way downstairs to the Con room. On the way we met Sandy Sanderson who greeted us with "Shush, I'm still in Egypt". It was unfortunate that Sandy was on his own. Joan Carr was unable to get there too.

The Con room was very crowded with folk greeting each other and setting up their displays. Womanlike, the first thing I looked for was the *Fez* display which was not bad considering we had very little to display really. In the *Fez* corner I met Ethel Lindsay and Frances Glynn. Frances Evans was at the door very busy helping Brian Varley to collect subs.

– *Femizine* #2 (August 1954, ed. "Joan Carr")

# 1. A Call to Arms

The amount of ridicule we women have had to put up with down through the ages is really surprising. Nowadays we have a fairly good foot-hold, and we mean to further our gains in every way. (Without losing our feminine charm too.)

Nothing riles a man more than to be beaten at his own game by a woman. That is why, if we join them in their games or work, they tend to look down on us as if we were stupid. Even in "this modern age", the majority of men try to keep us down, though they won't admit to this.

Therefore we – the feminine side of fandom – must start to push much harder than we have been doing in order to equal the men in science fictional affairs. I wouldn't like to say that we will eventually pass them in this sphere of activity, but we must, no, we will have a really good try.

Up to now women in Great Britain have done very little (if anything) in fandom. There are a few, though, who would like to change that little into a great deal. This means that YOU must help as well. Every little thing you do counts. Don't be afraid of doing an article for us. Everything will receive attention. If it is considered to be below standard, we will tell you why. There's no harm in that, is there? If you are an artist, then you can also be of great value to our fanzine. So please introduce yourself to us. Even if you feel you can't do anything, we will still be pleased to meet you.

This is the very first time I have ever done an article for a fanzine, despite the fact that my husband, Norman, is one of the co-editors of *Space Diversions*. Some of this may be scrapped. In fact, for all I know at the moment, all of it might be scrapped. But I wouldn't mind, for at least I know that I have tried to help. I feel sure there are some amongst us, perhaps not yet known, who can do much better than I.

SO LET US BE HEARING FROM YOU!

– *Femizine* #1 (Summer 1954, ed. "Joan Carr")

*Noted for their parties, LaSFaS decided to make the one they threw at 1954's SUPERMANCON a fancy dress affair, and while most approached this through the medium of hats Ina Shorrock and Pat Doolan (later Milnes) decided to really push the boat out and went in full costume as Bergey girls. (The first*

*person to appear in costume at a UK con had been Dorothy Rattigan the previous year as part of a dramatic production put on by the London Circle.) They also made their 1955 Eastercon party a fancy dress affair too, and in 1956 half of LaSFaS donned costumes that were the most impressive seen at a UK con to date (and for many years after) and that tied in with that year's tapera. This was the UK's first group cosplay. It helped that Liverpool was blessed with more female members than most other groups. Many years later SF fandom would become large enough for costumers/cosplayers to become a distinct and separate faction within the whole, but it was Ina, Pat, and the Liverpool group who really pioneered it in this country.*

# 2. The Other Half

> It is about time that the idea – Sadie Shaw's – of asking femme fans the *real* lowdown on their actifan husbands, came into force. In our next issue we shall commence.
>
> – Ethel Lindsay, *Femizine* #12

So you want the lowdown on husbands, huh? Well now, let me see, what can I tell you about Norman... but of course! That he talks in his sleep: this, I believe, is supposed to denote a brilliant mind... ha! I wish I had a tape recorder in the bedroom so that I could prove it to him.

He really does say the most queer things, and has the craziest conversations with himself. This is rather annoying, like listening in to one side of a telephone conversation. You don't know all the story – or dream, as it were.

Sometimes you can guess what he is dreaming about. When the snips you hear are "Stan, put those lights over there" then it's filming. "This plug is loose, fix it will you" could be either filming or recording. But when it's "Now then Nancy, don't do that; it's dangerous, you will get hurt" it makes one wonder. Nancy *[Pooley, another LaSFaS member]* is the type who brings out the protective instinct in men.

With the help of the LaSFaS boys, Norman built a Monster. It resided in our garage for 12 months and left room for nothing else. The first person to be scared by this monster was the woman who delivers our groceries. It was raining and I was out, so she decided to leave them in the garage. It was dusk, and as she opened the door it was facing her, hanging about three feet in the air, with ropes she could not see. The yell she let out was heard miles away. Now she leaves the groceries on the front step, rain or no.

There have been many other victims since then. Fortunately the neighbours have grown used to the noise of someone being scared by monsters. This one's ghost now haunts our local woods, where it was foully done in by a group of fans.

Life with Norman means life with the LaSFaS boys, as they seem to spend as much time here as at their own homes. I am thinking of getting a larger house, and making it into a hotel for fans – it might be more profitable! All of them are easy to feed, having large appetites, male and female. Fancy male and female appetites; I wonder what they would look

like.

It is not a dull life!

– *Femizine* #13 (Spring 1960, ed. Ethel Lindsay)

*Pat Doolan (later Pat Milnes) and Ina in costume*

# 3. A Femmefan's Farrago by Pat Milnes

I am on the horns, as they say, of a dilemma.

You see, I adore fandom and (nearly) all the glorious off-beat individuals who inhabit it; but – whisper it softly – I'm afraid I no longer enjoy reading science fiction itself. To be honest, I'm frankly beginning to detest the bloody stuff.

I must confess I sometimes feel rather guilty about this – even at LaSFaS meetings. Now LaSFaS, as you may have heard, is not the most sercon of fan-groups; conversation at Society meetings usually ranges from women, drink and movies, to drink, movies and women; but occasionally – just occasionally, mind you – SF has been known to raise its ugly head. At such times, when I see the enthusiasts of the group aglow with zeal and Sense of Wonder, I feel positively traitorous. I've often wondered what these zealots would do to me if they could read my thoughts – hang, draw and quarter me no doubt, and be damned to the mess on the new linoleum. Still, after they read this little True Confession they won't need ESP any more, will they?

To resume, I no longer like or read SF; and I think the rot really set in about two years ago, shortly after I became Mrs. Frank Milnes. Before this, I'd been an absolutely avid reader of the genre – I mean it, absolutely avid! However, soon after my spouse and I moved into our rose-covered cottage in Maghull, I gradually found that I was reading less and less of the stuff; moreover, I began to acquire the heretical notion that it might be considerably over-rated....

Why this change of opinion? Perhaps it was due to the fact that Frank, my husband, brought to our new abode innumerable back numbers of *Astounding*, *F&SF*, etc. (not to mention a small library of hardcovers), and I had the unenviable job of keeping the damn things tidy; or it may have been that he rarely had – or has – his nose out of Heinlein, Asimov and Sturgeon; but no, I don't really think these are valid reasons. I honestly believe that I no longer read SF because I've suddenly become bored to tears with Outer Space, Hyperspace, Aliens (both sluglike and godlike), New Technologies, and the half-baked conjectures of pulp-magazine hacks on the Future of Civilisation; most of all, I'm fed up to the back teeth with hackneyed plots and situations which are transferred to another time or

solar system and glibly labelled SF.

Also, I like my fictional characters to have at least some semblance of reality – I'm funny that way. Now, I'm genuinely unable to think of more than half-a-dozen SF stories that I've read wherein the characters were real people, or even credible people! Most of them are merely stock cardboard-cutout figures with no more life in 'em than MaD Productions' new BEM. (Three of the above-quoted half-dozen stories I may add, stem from the pen of Eric Frank Russell, an exceptionally gifted story-teller who is squandering his talent, in my opinion, in this medium.) Perhaps, though, my recently-acquired preference for general fiction is merely a temporary reaction from a surfeit of SF? But, no, I don't think that's the reason; at any rate, I've recently tried, after quite an interval, to become re-interested in several books and stories by erstwhile favourites, but I'm afraid the old enchantment is just no longer there. Let's face it, I seem to have reached the Dreaded Saturation-Point.

So what? you may grunt; and I'm well aware, dear friends, that many a better fan than I has gone GAFIA and retired from the fannish scene. But the whole point is, I don't *wanna* retire! I still enjoy fanzines which, as you will readily agree, have very little to do with SF. I look forward with drooling anticipation to Conventions; the Liverpool gang are like brothers and sisters to me (well, perhaps that isn't quite the relationship, but you know what I mean); and I never miss one of the magnificent local parties if I can possibly help it.

But can one be a fan under false pretences? I'm not alone, I know; nearly half the current LaSFaS crew have rarely, if ever, opened an SF book in their lives, and good luck to 'em... But you see, I'm more than merely indifferent to the medium; I regard most of it as mind-rotting, barely literate trash – and yet I still think *fen* are wonderful!

Am I a schizophrenic?

And please, can I stay in fandom?

– *Space Diversions* #11 (June 1960, ed. Norman Shorrock)

*While incomprehensible to some, a person staying involved with fandom after their interest in science fiction has waned is not uncommon. And there have always been a few who* never *had any interest in SF yet who, having been introduced to fandom, stayed involved because they enjoyed our little sub-culture. As it happens, Pat's piece (so far as I can determine the only one she ever wrote) had a bigger effect on her fellow Liverpool fans than*

*she can have anticipated. In his "Drums Along the Mersey" column in* Bastion *#1 (August 1960, ed. Eric Bentcliffe), John Owen announced the demise of LaSFaS as a formal SF fan club and its rebadging as the Liverpool Group, or LiG, explaining:*

Many of us – though by no means all, of course – heartily endorse Patty Milnes's recent, succinct definition of the bulk of SF as "the half-baked conjectures of pulp magazine hacks"; maybe our Sense Of Wonder is evaporating (Bester novels appearing too infrequently to keep it alive), or perhaps our critical faculties are beginning to assert themselves – at any rate, we've lost our proselytising zeal.

Fandom will remain the basis for many of the Group's activities, both social and otherwise. We still hope to attend fan conventions – if they will let us in – and will continue to see our feeble outpourings promulgated to fandom with the help of our Stockport Branch *[i.e. Bentcliffe]*. On an individual basis, of course, such sterling fen as Roles and Shorrock (OMPA, and like that), and Ina Shorrock (BSFA Chairman), are maintaining contact with fanac at its more serious levels, and you've most probably heard that we are sending a missionary to the New World this year *[Bentcliffe again, as TAFF winner]*, but one can say that as far as our ordinary, average, hemp-chewing member is concerned, LiG is now officially a "fringefan" organisation.

Those who know us will hardly need reminding that we've always been a social rather than a fannish group in effect; therefore, it might be said that we're merely bowing, gracefully, to the inevitable.

*Pat Doolan (later Pat Milnes)*

# Frances Evans

The club's pin-up girl who came along to see what SF fans were like, and stayed. Frances walked in on an early meeting of the club to find the members discussing when they could expect a female fan to appear on the NSFC horizon. It's noticeable that since she joined the club certain male members have attended far more frequently than before. Frances, alack, is married. She is steadily converting her husband into a fan so we forgive her for this.

Vital statistics. Age: ?? (no, we are not feeling caddish tonight); Height: around five

> feet five; Hair: brown; and of a photogenic build as was agreed by a *Manchester Evening News* photographer who, at the trade show of *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, posed her with Gort the Robot. Favourite drink: gin; Favourite drunk: Sandy. Frances advocates: more "Beefcake" on magazine covers.
>
> – *Space Times* #10 (April 1953, ed. Eric Bentcliffe for the NSFC)

*It was Frances who first conceived the idea of* Femizine. *She was the only female member of the Nor'west Science Fiction Club for much of its existence (a contemporary photo of that Manchester group shows Frances as the only woman among twenty-five men).*

# 1. The Meeting

Sunday night in Manchester, and the rain was falling in that steady monotonous drizzle that seems to preclude the hopes of it ever stopping. Bill Johnson trudged his way through Hightown with the rain misting his glasses, and running – despite upturned collar and hunched shoulders – down his neck. He looked, and felt thoroughly miserable. The echo of his wife's knife-sharp nagging voice still lingered in his brain....

"Science Fiction!" she yelled scornfully. "A bunch of grown men talking about flying to the moon."

"You wouldn't fly to..."

"Oh, don't talk to me. It's just another excuse for you to go out drinking. It's about time I had a night out, but oh no! I've got to stay in night after night with the kids."

"You went out last night," he said patiently.

"Good Heavens! The first Saturday in months and where did I go to? My Mother's!!"

"That's not my fault..."

"Well, things are going to change around here anyway. I'll show you. I do my best to be a good wife and a mother and what do I get for it? A husband that grabs every opportunity to go out drinking."

"What do you mean, drinking? If I have two halves of bitter that's the most..."

"I don't care what you have," she said. "It's not fair."

"I'm sorry, you'll have to continue when I get back. I'm late as it is."

"Oh! You make me sick," she called after him as he muttered "Good night" and slammed the door. He knew from long experience that once she started she'd probably rake up every past misdemeanour, real and imagined, and metaphorically speaking throw them all in his face.

Oh well, Bill thought, I'm free for a couple of hours at least....

The Victoria Hotel seemed warm and inviting. It was a relief to take off his dripping raincoat and make his way upstairs to the room that the club hired. He was late. Everyone he knew had arrived already. Taffy Jones and Sid Bates were arguing amiably on the respective merits of various covers, Frank Price was reading Les Mitchell's mail, and about five of the younger boys – hands lovingly cupped around glasses – were engaged in their usual pursuit of seeing who knew the best dirty story. Judging from the laughter there were some pretty good ones being told.

“Hi!” said Bill. “Subject normal I see.”

“’Lo Bill – Hiya!” The greetings came from all round and he felt at home.

“Oh Bill,” said Joe Wildes, coming forward. “I’ve got that copy of *Amazing* #35 you wanted, and I’ve some more stuff you might be interested in.”

Bill grinned. “Hope it’s cheap,” he said, and ambled over to have a look through Joe’s case. He sat down, leafing through the mags happily, wondering how many he could afford, and which to take....

It happened about half an hour or so after Bill had arrived, during one of those quiet spells that occasionally seems to fall on any company. There was a knock on the door and everybody turned, wondering who it could be at this time of night. Then the Alien walked in.

The creature was not a great deal different to themselves – its hair seemed a little longer, and it wore a sort of tunic affair that stopped just below where its knees would be. That is, assuming it had knees. On its feet were some sort of sandals fastened with tiny buckles of a metal that could have been gold. The creature’s face – well, it had two eyes and a nose and a mouth put together the same way as their own, yet every man present – though he didn’t stop to analyse it – saw and felt the difference.

The Alien opened its mouth and in a voice pitched slightly higher than a man’s, speaking in English without a trace of an accent, enquired, “Is this the Science Fiction Club? I’d like to join if I may.”

They all smiled in welcome. Except Bill. He bent his head over his book and muttered fiercely to himself, “Blast it to hell. A woman!!”

– *Femizine* #3/4 (December 1954, ed. “Joan Carr”)

# 2. Liverpool Minicon

*Not actually a con but one of the large weekend parties hosted by Norman and Ina Shorrock.*

Cyril *[her then-husband]* and I arrived at the Shorrocks' residence in Liverpool about 7 p.m. on Saturday. Felt sure we were at the wrong place – it was so quiet! Everything was all right though, it was just that the fans were feeding. Somebody introduced me to the new girls that were present, Stan Nuttall's girlfriend June, and Jim(?) *[Mooney]'*s popsy, Ethel. The first thing I said was, "Can you draw?" (You see, I do try.) No luck though, so I made Ina promise to put both her daughters through art school. Did you know that the Shorrocks had recently had an addition to their family: Linda. Just imagine this femme getting up on the platform at some future Con or writing her biography for *Fez*. She will be able to start with: "My first pre-natal memories are of the SuperManCon, and I attended my first party at the age of three months." If Pat Doolan has her way she will also be able to boast that she was brought up on the zap-gun *[i.e. water pistol]*. Pat's idea is that if you squirt the feed down a baby's throat, it won't get wind. This child is really a marvel. We only saw her at her mealtimes – she slept the rest of the time although Ghu knows how through all the racket.

Mal Ashworth was there (I hailed him ecstatically as Burgess), and Ken Potter, Dave Wood, Eric Bentcliffe, John Roles, Stan Nuttall, Frank, Jim (?) and Don McKay, the bloke responsible for that extremely good drawing of a tiger on the front of Liverpool's contribution to the Combozine. The weaker sex (ha!) were represented by Pat Doolan, Ethel, June, Don's sister, myself, and of course Ina. She and Norman were perfect as host and hostess although Ina remarked sadly that she was just beginning to get friendly with the neighbours and Norman was a little worried wondering where the lolly was going to come from for his next new house....

Gin and fannish wit were soon flowing freely. People kept telling me about the "big fat red man" but it was some little time and a couple of screams later before I found him. I went to the toilet (see, I am human) and there he was, a huge red balloon complete with bemish face and horns, placed in a very strategic position. (Big Brother Is Watching You.) There was also an advert from *Ballyhoo** pasted up in there. Something about

going to Venus for your holidays. I remember the last line was an exhortation to “make this your first real all wet vacation”. I suppose this is what fannish critics mean when they talk about “lavatory humour”.

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** A US humour magazine of the 1930s, revived more than once between 1948 and 1954: it was known for its spoof ads. [Ed.]*

While the night was still young we played the usual party games. The others came later. The boys sent the girls out of the room, although not for long, and then made us go through a Japanese Wedding. You know, you choose a bridegroom (he holds you down) and a best man. They persuaded us to remove our shoes, and then tickled our feet. I had a mild case of hysterics and my piercing screams reaching the girls still waiting their turn filled them with terror. When Pat came in for her turn, and saw what was going on, she said how sorry she was to spoil their fun but she was not in the least ticklish. “At least,” she amended, “not there.” Ghod, you could practically *hear* the fans speculating where.

We gals decided we had to have our vengeance. Aren’t women naive? We decided upon the old game of kissing the boys while mauling their faces with hands dipped in soot, lipstick and chalk. The mistake we made was in putting the intended victims in the lounge and the ones that were “done” in the kitchen. Naturally they all washed their faces and dried them on Ina’s tea towels (it was a very smutty party). And how they loved it. Ken Potter decided to dress the part and came lounging in dressed in pyjamas. When this game ended the boys had all cleaned up but we were filthy and had as much, if not more, soot etc. on our faces as they had. Ho hum! Vengeance???

We also played charades. The picture of fans miming various SF and film titles is not one I will soon forget. It was about this time that the house began to take on the aspect of “The Snake Pit”. Exhausted bodies began to take a horizontal position on the floor. (Naturally. What would a fannish debauchery be without its usual quota of fans on the floor?) I crept quietly into a corner (no rudery here please) and was followed by Dave Wood, Ken Potter and Mal Ashworth. Until you have sat in a corner with these three, you haven’t lived! You don’t know anything of the big wicked world. They told me the gruesome stories of their lives. Mighod, they went on and on and on, and just when I thought this *must* be the end – my blush was permanent and my back hair curled – Ken urged Dave to “Tell her about when we were in the Scouts”. Gone forever, brutally destroyed, are my conceptions of this movement; my picture of those clean living, upstanding specimens of all that’s best in British youth, bent only on

earning badges by tying knots, being kind to dumb animals, and helping old ladies to cross roads. Dave complied to Ken's request with some lurid tales of debacles in tents and descriptions of Girl Guides' anatomies, and neither of them can light a fire anyway. They rounded the whole thing off by putting paid to what few illusions I had left with a description of Ken's visit to Paris with his school. I gathered from this that, whilst the rest of his class were busy absorbing French history and culture, Ken was equally busy – studying Parisian art. Contemporary – but very!

Pat was talking about the psychology of colours and said you could read people's characters by the colour of their clothes. Black was sophistication, white – piety, red – cheerfulness, yellow – optimism, grey – shyness, brown – dullness, etc. You know, I was surprised at the accuracy of this. I was wearing a dark grey dress with a white collar. Ken and Dave asked her for their characters and Pat took one look at their clothes and said, "You're just a couple of crazy mixed-up kids." When we asked her what people were like who wore green she smoothed down her green skirt and said – "Passionate with a strong intellectual leaning." I was thinking of Sandy's get-up at the SuperManCon. Black shirt, pink-lined grey tie, light green sports coat – the silly, twisted Norman had his tape recorder in operation whilst all this was going on. Ugh! I never knew what a ghastly Lancashire accent I possessed. Hearing my own voice, from the outside as it were, for the first time *almost* made me decide never to open my mouth again. But then one must eat, one must communicate, and I got tired of missing everything. It is so difficult to translate "gin and orange please" into actions.

Sometime after 1 a.m. Dave Newman arrived – with popsy. The really low people present started a gambling school at one end of the room (well, it was Sunday) and I retained my position in the corner. I had to. Dave Wood was reading the juicier bits out of *Fantastic* à la Tubb, and Ken – for some obscure reason – insisted on unfastening his shirt and exposing himself to me. I think the lad ought to see a psychiatrist! Whether he wanted to prove that his vest was clean or his chest was hairy, I don't know. I naturally averted my eyes.

I am a bit ashamed of this next bit, but honestly, travelling, drinking, and the passage of time began to take their toll on me and – how can I say it? I fell asleep! There, it's out now, and I feel better for the confession. To my everlasting regret I was snoozing when some of the livelier souls made their excursion to the nearby woods where I believe they lit a fire (with help from the ex-boy scouts), roasted potatoes, and were nearly run-in by a policeman. They came back about 5 or 6 a.m. – I don't know. I awoke to

find the room in darkness and sleeping forms everywhere. I cried out in agony for a drink and Dave Wood brought me one, grumbling all the time about what a hell marriage must be. Things were quiet for a bit. Only Ken Potter kept breaking the silence now and again by groaning aloud for "Irene" (her mother wouldn't let her come) and Dave kept muttering something about "If only Brenda were here", which made Ken groan louder. It must have been too much for him and eventually he got up, stumbled across the sleeping forms (some of which cursed him roundly) and mixed himself a drink of rum and wine. At least he thought it was that. There was a terrific array of bottles on the sideboard and it was very dark. He fell back to our particular corner, drank it, breathed on me, and I remembered no more until I awoke again to see morning reluctantly beginning to shed its light over the sordid scene. I was only half conscious as is my usual state in the morning (ONLY) but I saw Dave Wood come in fully dressed in mac and muffler etc. and lie down again. "Where ya' goin'?" I demanded. "Got to catch an early train," he replied. "Oh," I said, and we both slept again.

It was about nine o'clock when I fully regained consciousness or at least enough to enable me to stagger up the stairs to the bathroom. It appeared to be occupied so I prepared to wait, but on announcing my presence I was dragged into my first bath-con. Dave and Ken were there – Ken showed me his vest again (it *was* clean) – and Eric Bentcliffe and June. Someone suggested that to make this a *genuine* affair we should all get in the bath, but I was hungry. Ken shaved whilst I washed. He was using Norman's electric razor, and as the mirror was above the basin, there was a bit of a mix-up. He got soaked, and I am busy growing a new left eyebrow. Downstairs again to lashings of tea, some goodbyes, and then to help prepare breakfast for thirteen. I viewed with a somewhat jaundiced eye the lashings of bacon, eggs, tomatoes, and beans in their raw state, but by the time the bacon was sizzling and its beautiful aroma was tickling my nostrils, I felt a sense of well-being pervading my mind. I cracked eggs into a saucer and passed them to Pat who slid them into the pan. Don McKay's sister made the toast, Ina dashed in and out with dishes etc. and the whole thing assumed a sort of crazy rhythm. The bacon sizzled in the background, the eggs went crack – flop – splash, the oven door clanged the down beat, and an occasional roll of cutlery from Ina completed the symphony.

I shared a seat with Dave Newman for breakfast. I almost shared his breakfast too, but he was too quick for me. Dave is a "weird": he takes sauce with his cereals and milk.

After breakfast we forcibly pushed the male volunteers into the kitchen to wash up. Dave Newman washed, whilst Frank Milnes, Cyril and John Roles formed an orderly queue at the sink in order to dry. They were interrupted in this job when they all went outside to say "Cheerio" to Dave Wood and Ken Potter who were dashing off to catch the early bus. Dave and Ken took one of those display dummies with them in the shape of an enormous bottle of milk stout. I wonder if they took it back to Lancaster, or dumped it somewhere? The dishwashers were all wearing aprons. Dave Newman had a neck frill over his head. They all looked rather cute, stood there, waving....

A late churchgoer took one look at the scene and reeled away rubbing his eyes and muttering something that sounded suspiciously like "Never again." Maybe he wasn't going to church after all.

When all the chores were done we settled down to a jazz session. After listening to some of Norman's records we decided to make one ourselves. Now the joint really began to jump; doors and windows were practically bending outwards; we were real gone! Eric Bentcliffe played piano, John Roles had a thimble and washboard, Mal Ashworth on "drums" (sorry, "chair"), Ina Shorrock on a baby's rattle with bells, Pat Doolan on a soda syphon with bottle opener, Dave Newman on the kettle drums (upholstered dining chair) and yours truly on the maracas (tin box with chalk). When we played the tape back we were pleasantly surprised at how well it sounded. Eric's piano playing came out like a vibraphone. I hope Norman keeps this on the tape. All jazz enthusiasts at Kettering should hear it.

While this was going on the baby had made one of her infrequent appearances. She sat there, perfectly quiet, with her head tilted in a sort of critical listening attitude. She looked at her Mum with a look that said, "Dig Ina Shorrock" or "Rattle kids!". She *sends* me!

Norman wondered idly what the neighbours thought when they heard everything twice. They probably put it down to some ingenious form of double torture. (Stop! you're driving us crazy, we "hear" everything "double".)

We had more tea and cakes, and as the drinks and we were exhausted Dave, Mal, Eric, Cyril and I made our departure. As the setting sun was sinking redly, leaving its reflection in our eyes, we bade a reluctant farewell to Upper (please) Bebbington, thinking sadly of how far away the Convention seemed. We arrived in Manchester at about seven o'clock and guess what? It was raining! We were home.

– *Femizine* #6 (April 1955, ed. "Joan Carr")

# Madeleine Willis

Already married when she and her husband Walt discovered fandom, and never very prolific as a writer, Madeleine's contributions to fanzines have somewhat unfairly but perhaps inevitably been overshadowed by those of Walt, probably the most celebrated fan writer ever. Her tales of the Belfast group often refer to members and spouses by their first name only, so you need to know that these eventually included Bob and Sadie Shaw, James and Peggy (Martin) White, John and Diane Berry, and George Charters.

# 1. The Hostess with the Mostest

I had been reading science fiction since before I left school but the first other addict I ever met was a boy called Walter Willis. You may have heard of him. As a matter of fact we'd been going out together for nearly a year before we discovered this similarity between us... I suppose we'd been too interested in the differences... and it might have been longer if we hadn't taken shelter from the rain under the awning of a newsagent's shop. Suddenly we both dashed inside and found ourselves trying to buy the same copy of *Astounding*. There was only one copy left so we read it together and I think I first realised his intentions were honourable when he started to let me read the novelette first.

From then on the two of us haunted the second-hand book stalls in Smithfield together, instead of separately, for our favourite reading material in the US editions. Far too often we were told – "There were plenty of those mags earlier in the week but they are all gone now." It wasn't until Walter had got into touch with Ken Slater and – through him – science fiction fandom and James White, that we realised why the mags disappeared before we could get hold of them. Our half-day was on Saturday, whereas James was free on Wednesday afternoons. James was soon visiting us regularly, and we used to discuss science fiction... just as fans were once supposed to do. We also discussed fanzines... and one day when we had received Norman Ashfield's *Alembic* I uttered the momentous words: – "Why don't we publish a fanzine; I'm sure we could do better than that?" (Sorry, Norman.)

And thus *Slant* was born.

During the next few years I assisted Walter and James occasionally, but a printed fanzine entails so much sheer hard work that I was soon shunning the press room instead of rallying round and giving a hand at setting or dissing the type... well, at least I know some of the technical terms.

After James and Walter had been working steadily for about two and a half hours I would take them up cups of tea and murmur encouragingly and perhaps slip-sheet if I couldn't get out of it gracefully. I also decided the colour scheme on some of the covers, and gave my opinion on the mss. sent in for *Slant*.

Soon after this I met my first femme-fan, a Mrs. Douglas from Helen's Bay, who monopolised any conversation within a radius of fifty

yards with her fervent admiration for *Fantastic Adventures* and *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*. We, trufans all, preferred *Galaxy, Astounding* and *Startling Stories*... this, of course, before James started writing for *New Worlds*. When she wanted to exchange her copies of *Authentic* for some of the wartime *ASF*, and tried to get Walter to print her fairy stories in *Slant*, we rebelled, and I was detailed to take her to the cinema to get her out of the way. We eventually managed to get rid of her, but this experience made me less than enthusiastic to join the femme-fan club then being organised in the US.

With the advent of *Quandry*, Max Keasler's mags, etc., I became more interested in fandom. Since then I've been reading all the fanzines Walter receives – about five a week. Then meeting other fans at the Conventions (I attended my first Convention in 1951) and, having such likeable people to stay with us as Evelyn Smith, 4sj Ackerman, Vin¢ Clarke, Bea Mahaffey, the Bulmers, and, *of course*, Chuck Harris, restored my belief that most fans are interesting, intelligent, and good company.

With the birth of *Hyphen* and the demise of *Slant* (unlamented in Belfast), actifanning became less arduous (Walter says the only difference is that he now does it all himself) and the twice weekly meetings gradually metamorphosed into social occasions. We had added Bob Shaw to our group and for a time we had a craze for Lexicon. It seems likely that the figures on the back of the old fanzine now in Sandy's possession refer to a game between Walter, Bob, and myself. Don't let Bob's high score fool you, Sandy, the lowest score wins though Bob was the first to get a ten-letter word – Lexicon's Holy Grail.

Over the next few years other newcomers – George Charters, Sadie Shaw, Peggy Martin, and John Berry, came along – and were assimilated, bringing the group up to a total of eight. Although the actifans now had more time to enjoy themselves, this expansion brought a problem for me. How to carry refreshments up the three flights of stairs to the fan-attic? Most of the Irish fans are enthusiastic tea drinkers. James has been known to drink seven cups of tea at a sitting; admittedly this was on an unusual occasion, when he had just escorted Bea Mahaffey across a couple of miles of moon-lit fields in Donegal. Even honorary Irish fans seem to share our liking for tea. When Chuck Harris was here at Xmas he was heard to complain offendedly that no one had offered him a fifth cup. I became tired of having to run down to the kitchen for more hot water or to brew mere tea. At last I found a solution, or rather an outsize teapot, which holds twenty-two cups (of tea that is). Though there is still the problem of getting it *and* the tray upstairs. Walter suggested that we instal a small lift

and a speaking tube, a shout from me (in the kitchen) being the signal for the fans to haul on the ropes. James's suggestion is really worthy of a pro-author (which of course he is). Briefly, it is that once a week a pound of tea be placed in the hot water tank.

Our latest craze is Ghoodminton, and all of us are so eager to play that lots have to be drawn. My gambit is that, as I will have to make the supper, I should play in the first group. I do *not* threaten to refuse to make the tea at all.

– *Femizine* #6 (April 1955, ed. "Joan Carr")

# 2. The Kitchen Cynic

Carefully, so as not to disturb the accumulation or dirty dishes, I extracted my article and lifted the typewriter off the table. What will the others say, I mused; it must be over six years since I was first asked why I had never attempted to write anything. Somehow I hadn't had the faintest interest in writing about science fiction "from a woman's viewpoint", which was James's suggestion. Why should a woman's viewpoint be any different from a man's? Walter had often wanted me to try my hand... offering me the latest copy of *Authentic* to review... but somehow I felt that it wasn't so much that he wanted me to become an active fan as that he wanted to get out of doing reviews. But no... yes, it was perhaps time to let fandom peep behind the scenes at Oblique House... and for me to leave the wings and come on stage even if only to reveal myself as a ham.

Then Ethel Lindsay asked me to write something for *Femizine*, and I agreed. I little realised the magnitude of the task. I found myself writing the whole history of Irish fandom in five sentences. I started over... now I had seven... and so I laboured for five days on and off. The off was mostly when Walter wanted to use the typer himself, and I knew that I would be incapable of using the Berry-Shaw typer. (John hasn't taken it away yet – mainly because he knew people would wonder at him if he got on a bus with it, and he was worried about how he could take it on the bicycle.) Thankful to have the article finished, I read it again. Awestruck at my genius, I put the masterpiece into an envelope addressed to Ethel. The carbon I sent to Chuck Harris. We BNFs must stick together... at least, that is what Chuck is always telling me... I wonder if he has any ulterior motive? Happily awaiting his congratulations, and his hurt protest at my not offering it to *Hyphen*, I managed to live through Thursday.

On Friday morning I heard the postman's step outside and leapt out of bed and rushed downstairs, pushing Walter aside on the way. I swooped on the letters lying on the mat and leafed through them rapidly. Then again, more slowly. But they were all for Walter, excepting one from Antwerp. I opened it; inside was a short note asking me to pass the enclosed letter to Sadie. Wondering what Bob had been up to, and how Jan Jansen had found out, I called to her and handed it over. She tore it open and found inside a note asking her to pass the enclosed letter to Bob. The lengths to which fan-editors will go to get into touch with contributors! So that was why Walter had lit the fire every morning for the past month and had

looked so guilty when I told him how much I appreciated it.

After dinner I stood at the gate waiting for the postman, but there was still no word from Chuck. There was, however, a parcel addressed to me bearing the Rainham postmark. I opened it. Inside there was a white towel. Had Chuck been so overcome that he was leaving fandom? If so, where was the sponge? Or, equally awful thought, was it intended for wrapping round my head, a subtle hint that the article needed revision? But then my keen analytical mind deduced that he hadn't read my last letter carefully enough. (It had asked if he had left a white towel behind after staying here at Xmas. Maybe I should have asked him had he lost a fitted carpet?)

Saturday came, and still no word from Chuck, though the blow was softened by a nice letter of acceptance from Ethel Lindsay. Ah well, I philosophised, at least tomorrow I can tell the actifans about my joining their ranks.

I heard George come in while I was getting Carol ready for Sunday School. Telling her not to be late, I pushed her through the door (she's thin, like Walter), and rushed upstairs to the attic. "Look George," I said, "I've had an article accepted by a fanzine. Here's the letter from Ethel Lindsay, you may read it." I took a deep breath. George read it and smiled kindly at me (I like George). "Would you care to read my Sixth Column?" he asked. "I've made a good pun I think. Only been used three times before." I turned to Walter... surely... but no, all he could mumble was something about how he hoped my success wouldn't go to my head, and said that he didn't get married in order to live a bachelor life.

Swallowing my discomfiture and one of George's sweets, I passed the letter and the bag on to Sadie, pointing out that I'd left her the big purple one. (I should explain that George often brings with him a packet of "Quality Street Assortment" and Sadie always tries to get "the big purple one". She says that George should bring up a dozen packets so that she can get enough of them.) "It was very good, I thought," said Sadie with her mouth full.

John came in and I passed the letter to him. "How many articles have you written, Madeleine?" he said politely. And without waiting for an answer he turned to Walter and asked, "Has anyone been able to think up a good title for my article about the funeral of Bob's bike?"

James hadn't turned up. He said he was going to a ratepayers' protest meeting; it seems a very queer way of sublimating one's fan instincts but then James *is* queer. No, no, Towner*, I mean *odd*. Witness the poor reason he gave for being found on his knees in front of Bea's bedroom door. I only wish I had been able to talk to that chambermaid who tripped

over him before she fled the hotel. These ratepayers' protests concerned the state of the roads in Riverdale, which turned out to be an only too appropriate name for the district. (One resident was reported as stating that children could be drowned in the pools of water lying in the roadway. Amongst what kind of people is poor James living?) Although James's house has been built more than eight months there is still no access to it except by amphibious tank, and Peggy complains that the journey costs her a fortune in shoe repairs. At this Bob, always eager to help, suggested that she might walk on her hands. Peggy pointed out that she would get them wet and dirty or ruin her gloves. I asked whether she hadn't seen the advertisements for barrier creams.

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** The US fan Francis Towner Laney was notorious for allegations of widespread homosexuality in the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society – see his polemical memoir* Ah! Sweet Idiocy!, *also available as a TAFF ebook. [Ed.]*

I asked Sadie what was keeping Bob and she said he was just finishing his last cup of tea when she came up. Clinging desperately to a fast fading hope (I had just polished the banisters), I went downstairs again, knocked on his door, and entered. "What's this," he asked, "is it your recipe for gingerbread? I've been wanting Sadie to get it from you." He read it through slowly and handed it back with a frown. "I hope this hasn't been keeping you from your baking," he muttered darkly.

It's at times like this that I realise how well the male members of Irish Fandom hang together, and sometimes I think I would like to arrange it.

– *Hyphen* #13 (March 1955, ed. Walt Willis & Chuck Harris)

# 3. Spades Are Trumpery by Sadie Shaw

*Bob Shaw's wife Sadie – who in later years preferred to be called Sarah – introduced this slice of Belfast life with: "In response to numerous requests and in return for many Big Purple Ones* [see previous piece]*, here is my first article...."*

I had got a new hair-do especially for the occasion, after a lot of blotting my lipstick was just right, my lemon dance dress fresh from the cleaners made me feel wonderful, and I was ready for an evening out dancing. As I waited for Bob in the dining room I looked myself over in the mirror to make sure there were no flaws in my ensemble, and at last I heard him on the stairs. I posed smilingly, belle of the ball fashion, so that when he came in he wouldn't be able to wait to get dancing with me.

Somehow, when he opened the door I sensed that Bob hadn't been preparing to go dancing at all. Maybe it was because he wore his peep-knee Ghoodminton trousers and mud-caked boots and was carrying a rusty spade on his shoulder.

"Is the dance fancy dress?" I asked sarcastically.

"Dance?" he said in astonishment. "Did I not tell you that we are going to dig James's front garden tonight?"

"Who taught *you* to use a pneumatic drill?" I said.

"Don't need one," he replied. "I can use this spade."

"Spade!" I moaned. "James says the earth is so hard that even the worms carry pickaxes. Well, I won't go and that's final."

A few minutes later, on the way to James's house, we were crossing to the bus when Bob, as usual, made a bee-line for the rubbish receptacle. I should explain, before you run away with the idea that he is an *eccentric* idiot, that he once found a pound note in a used ticket box and never quite got over the visions it gave him of a new, easier way of making a living.

As I caught up with him, he looked at me and said bitterly, "Nobody ever throws anything into these things but a lot of rubbish." He picked up the garbage carefully and replaced it in the bin.

Finally, the bus came along. I suggested we went upstairs – I was afraid people might not understand Bob's outfit if we sat on the lower deck, and there was a chance that there would be a few farm labourers already on top.

Anyone who has ever walked a countryman's mile will understand the way I felt as we walked and walked after leaving the bus at Riverdale. I just kept going, alternately fretting because Bob had lost the way, and rejoicing in false hope every time we turned a corner to see a rock formation in front of a house. Unable to stand the agony any longer, I decided that I was not going to let Bob's pride in his sense of direction stop me from asking the way from the next person we met.

Suddenly a little girl materialised out of the twilight. Ignoring Bob's hurt whimpers and his frantic plucking at my sleeve, I asked her the way to Riverdale Gardens. My heart began to glow with anticipation, and my feet ceased to throb in my sandals as I thought that soon I would be sitting on a chair – any chair at all. My hopes collapsed when she mumbled that she didn't know of such a place. I was horrified – firstly because I was no nearer to my cosy seat, and secondly because this poor defenceless girl was growing up in the district without her mother having warned her to run away when she saw James White SF approaching.

We walked on. Bob, with his spade on his shoulder, gave me a glowing description of how his animal instinct would unerringly lead us to James. Three quarters of an hour later he was still telling me the same thing when we turned into a short alley. There, in the gathering dusk, we saw James toiling away in a tiny front garden.

The next thing I saw was Bob bounding along the street, waving the spade above his head, and screaming to James not to dig all the garden, to leave a foot or two for him.

Suddenly he stopped dead. "James, you beast!" he sobbed. "You just didn't want me to have any fun. You have played here all day, digging and digging, making yourself tired trying to get it all done before I came, and I could have done the whole thing in a few minutes. I HATE you, James."

Poor James! He's so tender-hearted. The sight of Bob's tears moved him so much that he promised that if Bob came the next day he could re-dig the whole garden.

Bob *would* have gone up the next day, even if only to get some more of Peggy's cakes, but in the middle of the night he wakened me.

"What's the matter?" I asked him, thinking that he might want me to go down again and reassure him that there were no burglars in the house.

"Promise me one thing," he moaned. "Promise me that you will at least think it over before making George your second husband."

"Promise," I said patiently. "You dying again?"

"It's real this time. I knew I should never have gone out into the wilds around James's district without getting inoculated. I've contracted some

fatal disease. Ohhhhhh... my shoulder and back! The agony of it! I think they'll have to amputate my chest."

The doctor was very kind when he called the next day. He said that Bob should have lots of rest and sleep, and that his shoulder was strained with carrying some heavy object.

I don't like to think that it was the spade that did it, but I sometimes wonder if all the resources of medical science could have saved Bob if he had actually got *digging* that night.

– *Hyphen* #15 (November 1955, ed. Chuck Harris & Walt Willis)

# 4. Hi-Fan Fi-Fan

Walter Willis is a fan of fandom. But it was not always so. When we met first he was one of a small group of left-wing intellectuals, to coin a phrase. They discussed, instead of “rain on Venus”, trends in painting, the merits of various recordings by differing symphony orchestras, and the newer authors. They read, among other things, the magazines *Horizon* and the Penguin *New Writing*. But it was their musical interests which were to have the greatest effect on my life.

When we bought Oblique House the first thing Walter thought of was that he could now knock holes in the walls. Not that he had any destructive tendencies, he only wanted to instal a loudspeaker. This was the starting point in his search for high fidelity. He had already arranged for the ordinary kind.

The next step was to start building an amplifier. For months I only saw Walter across mounds of flex, valves, resistances, condensers and a home-made testing meter. It was my job to hold the crocodile clips in position till he got a reading, then drop the components into the proper labelled boxes. (He was using unlabelled government surplus equipment.)

A couple of years later the amplifier was finished. I was almost finished too. I wondered if Walter would now take more interest in decorating the house and in the garden, but no, we needed loudspeakers in the kitchen, the bedroom, and the study. The dining-room was okay. It was already served by the one in the wall. This job didn’t take so long as I had feared. There were telephone lines along the outside wall of the house and he made use of these. Years later the Post Office at last got around to salvaging the (so far as they knew) disused wires, but they were very nice about leaving the ones which now formed part of our loudspeaker system.

Walter still looked dissatisfied, however, and one day when he was reading the latest copy of *Wireless World* he saw a blueprint for an acoustic labyrinth. This contraption is supposed to give perfect reproduction of the bass notes and Walter immediately realised that this was what he was waiting for. He got a carpenter to construct it for him.

It was a horrible great monstrosity five feet high by two feet wide and one and a half feet deep. He wanted to keep it in the sitting room. A few days later, after we had calmly agreed to place it on its side across the bay windows, we got the bill. It cost as much as the easy chair I had been hoping to get. However, Walter pointed out that at least three people could

sit side by side on the box.

Soon after this a Mr. Arnold advertised that he was interested in starting a Gramophone Society. We went along to the meeting and eventually joined the group. That Society gave me some of the most uncomfortable evenings of my life. The idea was that the members would sit and listen while other members played selections from their record collections. Some were enthusiastic enough to give a talk on the interpretation of the music selected. We all sat on hard chairs and looked intelligent (at least, I tried very hard). One evening the chairman asked me what kind of music I was interested in and I replied the songs of Tino Rossi and Jean Sablon. I stayed home after that.

Some months later the group got into financial difficulties. Like the Liverpool SF Society, the cost of renting a room became too much for them. So Walter returned to listening to records in privacy.

It was about this time that we met James White, and it turned out that not only was he a science fiction fan, he was also interested in music. Very often when he and Walter were engaged in setting up *Slant* I would put on a selection of records for them. Early in the evening the most popular records were jazz ones. As they became tired and felt like slowing down I would put on symphonies and sentimental songs, always including at least one of Doris Day's. Although James had no gramophone of his own, he admired Doris Day so much that he had actually bought several of her records and left them at our house.

When the corporation decided to change our electricity supply from DC to AC we were without the gramophone for a while. But we had more time for fanning. At last the new motor was installed and we had several musical sessions until the motor broke down after only about three months' use. We sent it back to the manufacturer, we thought, through the retailer and the wholesaler. We waited and waited and waited. After about a year we wrote an indignant letter (we had called at the retailers several times) to the manufacturer and the letter was returned marked "gone away". We rushed down to the wholesalers, who said that they had been waiting for further instructions! The motor had been lying on a shelf gathering dust the whole time!

We decided to save up for a new motor and continue without the gramophone for another while. We had forgotten our enthusiasm for music and we now preferred to talk fannishly and play Ghoodminton.

I sometimes wonder how different our life would have been if we had continued to listen to music regularly and spend money on records instead of on paper, stencils, ink, postage, and fanzines. How many more walls

would have holes in them by now? But I am almost beginning to think that it is inevitable for the walls in our house to have holes in them, for one of the attic walls is well on the way to having an extra window in it. The fans have kicked away the plaster while playing Ghoodminton a little too vigorously.

– *Femizine* #8 (March 1956, ed. Pam Bulmer)

# 5. Second Fiddle
# by Diane Berry

> Is John Berry a fake-fan, a figment of the lush imagination of Irish Fandom? Certainly the Berry portrayed by *Hyphen* is a travesty of fans. *Femizine*'s Unfannish Activities Committee has unearthed the *real* Berry. At great risk to her personal integrity and always under the handicap of being mistaken as a figment of someone's imagination, Diane Berry has succeeded in passing her story of the debonair man-about-fandom, John Berry, from secret agent to secret agent so that we are now able to reveal the real and horrific figure sheltering behind the phenomenon known as John Berry. How many more femme fans suffer the same fate as Diane? Madeleine too revealed her plight and under the auspices of *Femizine* disclosed that Walter is in reality – a Frustrated Hi-Fi Fan! Is Fandom to be merely a sublimation for baser instincts? – Pam *[Bulmer]*.

I married a man of integrity, patience, understanding and (I suppose I should be modest) an above average physical and mental specimen. A kind and considerate father, house-proud... fond of gardening... just waiting for me to ask him to do odd jobs around the house and very, very careful about his appearance.

Then he met a man known as Walter Willis.

He became a fan.

You wouldn't believe the change possible.

No matter what arrangements I arrange for us beforehand... a supper with the curate... an evening at the Group Theatre... a visit to my mother... he has just to go to the Newtownards Road. That isn't so bad. Wait until you read this.

After a few weeks, he came home one night with his left thumb out of joint. "Ghoodminton," he said. A week later, as I was washing his clothes, I found a patch of blood on his vest. "Ghoodminton," he said.

I don't mind so much about moderate physical injury; his wounds have healed remarkably well. But his clothes...

John purchased a pair of Gabardine Lovat Green trousers in April, and I was darning the knees in May. The local cobbler, delighted with my twice weekly visits with the remains of John's shoes, asked me to take a

long-term partnership. I have worked my fingers to the bone to try and keep his dark brown shirts clean... they were originally light blue.

I have tried to be considerate about his clothes and injuries. But a young wife expects some attention from her husband.

Let me recount a typical evening with John since he became a member of Irish Fandom. He rushes home. “Any letters?” he gasps.

“One from Eric Bentcliffe,” I answer.

“Good – o,” he grins, and reads it avidly over his tea. He doesn’t look at our baby daughter. He ignores our five-year-old son.

Tea finished, he curls up in a chair and, surrounded by *Hyphen*s and *Orion*s, he starts writing. “What are you doing?” I ask.

“Article for Walt,” he answers, without as much as lifting his head. And there he sits all evening.

Now even *that* I could forgive.

But the crowning insult was to come.

He staggered home one night with a rusted chunk of metal that I thought at the time (and still do) was a cross between a TV Inventors’ Club reject, and a scrap-metal merchant’s nightmare.

“Just bought Bob Shaw’s typer,” he said proudly. “Only three pounds.”

Femmes, I cried.

Oh, he can do what he likes with his own money; but fancy expecting me to keep that monstrosity in my house. The brute.

One consolation. I’ve met all his friends. John has brought them to my house on several occasions, and I have found them all to be very charming. But what I cannot understand is that Madeleine, Peggy, and Sadie seem to thrive on their husbands’ fan activities.

Just one more thing mystifies me.

Why won’t John let me meet Chuck Harris?*

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** A reference to Chuck’s mock reputation as a Lothario. [Ed.]*

– *Femizine* #8 (March 1956, ed. Pam Bulmer)

# Anne Steul

A reader of American prozines for many years, Anne Steul didn't become aware of the existence of fandom until introduced to it by prominent Belgian fan Jan Jansen when she placed an order for some books with him. (WETZCON appears to have been their first actual face-to-face meeting.) She quickly became enamoured with fannish fandom and even had a fanzine – *FanANNia* – in the fifth OMPA mailing in 1955. She also wrote a regular column for *Femizine* and was probably the German fan who engaged most with UK fandom during the 1950s. She attended both the 1956 Eastercon and the 1957 London Worldcon.

# 1. Wetzcon 1956

*Femizine* is happy to present the first report in a British fanzine of the successful first German Science Fiction Convention held in Wetzlar over the weekend of 14th and 15th January, 1956. Sponsored by Anne Steul and Jim and Greg Benford, the Wetzcon had many similarities to early British Conventions.

We called it Wetzcon 1956, but we did not get away with it. Not by a far shot! Right from the start there seemed to be certain dissenters who tried to publicise our brainchild as Witzcon. Witz = joke. Though we did not object, it proves what jokers they are, doesn't it? Others, fully convinced that a German nuthouse was on the loose, told Ellis T. Mills he was going to attend a German "Spinnertreffen". But since he is a trufan he bore it in good spirits.

One Saturday afternoon the twins and I got together to type and print the programmes. After addressing them to all the goons who were supposed to get one, we stuck the stamps on, stapled them, and I mailed them at the station in Giessen and was glad to be rid of that job.

The next Monday I returned from town, thinking no evil, when my mother, full of pity, led me to my room. I damn near fainted! There, in the centre of my desk, was every single letter I had mailed. Mailed without my name: mailed without my address! German detectives must be good! After dinner I took a large bag, with the letters, all spare cash available, and grabbed my club. On the way I met an old friend to whom I told the dreary story and he, as a man of the world, decided to protect poor ignorant me. We discovered that it was not easy to see the manager of the local post office but at last the big boss came. My friend offered him a cigarette and pleaded my case. Some time later, like two wet poodles, we left the post office and bought a pair of scissors, rolls of string, glue and so forth. In a quiet wine restaurant we began to unstaple over 200 copies "printed matter". Get the stamps off 200 copies "PM". Refold over 200 copies "PM". Cut well-sized pieces of string for over 200 copies "PM". Wrap said pieces around over 200 copies "PM". Stick glue on stamps and put over 200 back on over 200 copies "PM".

So the two of us sat drinking coffee and slaving. My friend was soon glued to his own fingers. The glue had laid several layers of artificial skin which soap and hot water would not remove. Poor fellow! Five minutes to

20:00 we hurried back to the post office and unloaded more than 200 copies of stringed and printed matter. The clerk swallowed, sighed and looked weak on his legs. All consideration for others had left me. My hand kept diving into the bag and drawing out bundles of “PM”. I heard my friend fell sick after this. I saw him after the con and he crossed hurriedly to the other side. Perhaps he had seen my bag with a few old envelopes sticking out?

Another kind of suffering had been going on from November. What a difficult thing to convince a German movie-owner he should bring a SF film for a matinee! Weeks and weeks I ran to his office. So far SF films had audiences of no more than 15 people, the German public being conservative and staying away in droves. He tried to argue me into *Rififi* since he did not know what SF was all about – when I explained he said I was crazy, the house would be empty. Since I persisted in a trial he said he would see what “crazy” films were available. That was Christmas. The argument continued. At last I went to the *Wetzlarer Neue Zeitung*, our local paper. Here we discussed SF and they promised me full support on anything they could provide. So I asked why not print an article on SF? They said: “You write it, we print it.” So I wrote it. And they printed a special paragraph on the movie and everything was running smoothly. *War of the Worlds* was the best he could get and I thought it was better than nothing at all. When the article came out I was promised space for another one after the con. Information would be passed to the radio and so forth. Well, so far the deal was shaping up nicely.

Since I had already arranged quarters in November, oh, yes, in Germany this has to be done early because on 11/11 at 11:11 each year starts the Fasching *[Carnival]* season and all the nuts have their meetings. But all this had been taken care of. The programme itself was supposed to be the sole responsibility of the other half of the committee. They procured a speaker all right. For a time I was afraid there would be none and I most certainly was not willing to take any part in this. However, I learned a lot from all the things that had to be done and I came to one conclusion: if I ever do this again I ought to be hanged, quartered, burned at the stake, shot, knifed and drowned afterwards.

One of our local bookdealers had agreed to order books and hold a sale connected with an exhibition of SF books and magazines from anywhere. In fact there must have been over 300 books on exhibit (mags included). Three large tables were flowing over and a good part was arranged on the carpet. Hardly a mag worth mentioning that was not there. Friday afternoon I got a telegram from Ellis T. Mills, now stationed at

Rhein-Main in Frankfurt, and I hurried down to the station. Ellis had promised tape-recordings from US conventions and especially a recording of Willy Ley. This had to be translated for those who did not understand enough English, so I was anxious to lay hands on him. The more so since I had learned the hotel was not available till the next day and the poor guy had to sleep somewhere.

I was early, so sat in the waiting room solving crossword puzzles, a favourite occupation. At last I was able to check the passengers on the train Ellis was supposed to be on. One after another they went away, none burdened enough to be him – you cannot hide a tape-recorder in your pocket. I hurried outside and checked the taxi stand. No heavily burdened American. By now I was desperate. Half of my programme was highly endangered! I went back to the station. Finally I saw someone leaning placidly in a corner. On the ground his two legs nearly covered a blue bag. A BLUE BAG! That was it! These guys at Rhein-Main ought to have blue bags! “Pardon, did you come on the train from Giessen?” I enquired in my Sunday-best German. He looked stupidly at me – probably thought I was nuts, and made an enquiring noise. I looked him up and down and noticed a copy of the latest *Galaxy* sticking out of his pocket. It had to be him! It was. So we hastened outside and drove home. I paid the cab and in we went. The only thing I distinctly remember from this evening, eve of big events, is Ellis sitting dog-tired before a tape-recorder and stopping Willy Ley every so often in order to let me take down what he said. Since I am no shorthand expert, it took quite a while and the heel was reading while I slaved! Then he went to bed and I sat till three o’clock in the night and translated the darned thing. Worse, since I had to get up early in order to get Jan Jansen from the train.

Jan was the next to arrive and Ellis was up early for once to come along to the station. We decided to wait for breakfast until Jan was there and my brother drove us down. Jan was supposed to be heavily burdened too, since he would be bringing 170 copies of *Fantum*. He only brought 100, the Schlauberger! I checked up on the train schedule and was amazed to see the train Jan was arriving on was a very slow one. Was it slow! And did Jan have a lot to say about it? You should have heard him! We recognised him immediately and grouped around his luggage while he got rid of his tickets.

Most of the time Jan and Ellis were busy discussing things and ordering me to go on with my work. I was still slaving at my typewriter while they were taking it easy, drinking wine, smoking, laughing and generally making themselves at home. Whenever I wanted to know what

they were talking about, Jan chased me back to the grindstone. At that same spot I was still typing my fingers down to the very bone when the Benford twins came in. We had supper and a coke and then settled the books for the exhibition. My brother had agreed to drive us to the Convention hotel. In the afternoon Julian Parr 'phoned and notified us of his arrival.

A lot of the German fen had arrived too and so we made ourselves ready. I will never understand how two bags, one large valise, a tape recorder, and several other pieces of luggage went into that Volkswagen and less will I ever understand where Ellis, Jan, the two Benfords, me and my brother ever managed to get into that four-seater. Fog was settling on the town as we drove to the hotel and – what luck! – there were no police about.

At the hotel we met all the bigshots of German fandom, who are herewith introduced to you:

Walter Ernsting, founder and president of the SFCD – Science Fiction Club Deutschland. He is co-editor of *Utopia*, one of the only two promags on the German market. The smaller volume is exclusively kids' stuff, the larger one translations mostly of American and British authors, but there, too, the space opera is overwhelming. The Sonderband* is new and prints a few articles, short stories, mostly on space-travel and similar subjects.

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** German for "special volume". Ernsting's magazine was variously titled* Utopia Sonderband, Utopia SF Magazin *and* Utopia Magazin. *[Ed.]*

Heinz Bingenheimer, second chairman of the SFCD, but not professionally interested in *Utopia* or fandom as far as I know.

Ernst H. Richter, author who writes under a pseudonym. A very nice and friendly fellow.

Wolf Detlev Rohr, also an author.

Walter Spiegl, editor and young enthusiast for SF.

Many others too were present and attending the Convention. Alas, we were not able to hold out very long after midnight, since the movie was important for all of us and it was scheduled for 11:00 in the morning. So Jan, Ellis and I went home for a bite to eat before retiring, watched by the cat, a nice red and white fellow.

Poor me! If I had known the kind of guests I had, I would have started waking them an hour earlier! At my first hesitant and polite knock at the door, there was no answer. On the second try, a dull grunt was all I received. I was getting breakfast ready and thought the boys were up! How

mistaken one can be. When I went to check up, there was no one up and about. I stormed into the room, pulled up the shades and wished the gentlemen a very loud “good morning” and how about getting up?

Ellis looked at me as if he had never seen me before and Jan lazily remarked that I should shake Ellis out of his feathers and let him sleep on. I told them what I thought of them and they should get the heck up and shave themselves. Back I went to the kitchen, where meanwhile the rolls were a little burned – not much, just a little. When I went to my room I noticed that the bathroom was still empty. Now I got het up, looked for my whistle and found it, stormed into the room once more and blew that whistle – and can that whistle blow! It makes a sound to raise the dead and it was successful. I should have thought of it in the first place. Perhaps it might be a good idea to take it along on further Conventions. How about Kettering and “Anne, blow your whistle!” What a slogan to keep people away!

Well, the lazy dogs finally appeared, and I rammed the breakfast down their throats and hurried them out. Jorg Teichman, “painter” for *FanANNia*, was already waiting for us. With all the trouble I had with those guys, I forgot my glasses and without them I am nearly as blind as a bat. Well, we were, of course, very late. When we rounded the last corner, the other part of the Convention was coming to us and together we entered the place. Here I and we all got the surprise of our lives! There was a long line waiting in front of the paybox and the owner was all polite smiles.

I collected the money for the entrance and the members of the convention were shown into the booths by courtesy of the house. While they lounged comfortably behind all the people present, 277 of them, I sat in the fourth row – due to the glasses left at home. The theatre was packed and never before was an SF film attended by so many people! With a full house behind me, I regretted that this was not just a game of poker.

Afterwards, we had much fun in the discussion. There was a guy from Berlin. The Berliners are famous for their “Schnauze” and whenever a guy from Berlin discusses anything, you bet that most of the laughs are on his side. I enjoyed this fight of words, mainly since I was sitting in a back row now and the bigshots from the SFCD were facing the music. But also true to Berliner custom, his bark was worse than his bite. I deeply regretted my ignorance of shorthand, because this guy was tremendously delicious in his arguments. By the way, this winds up my Conrep nicely and if there should be any “funny” interlineations appearing, especially in *Void*, better ask Mills or Jansen for the details; the twins were the only ones who took notes.

Females at the Con were a crushing minority of four. It was very interesting to meet the German promoters of SF. How nice it will be when, in a few years from now, we will somewhere meet the German fans! Right now fannish spirit and fandom is sorely missing, and until something better comes along SF will have to do at present. So I am still looking forward to Kettering, the place where I will meet F A N S....

– *Femizine* #8 (March 1956, ed. Pam Bulmer)

# 2. Femme in Deutschland

*With editorial comments by Pam Bulmer:*

Nowadays, when I read American fanzines, I really can't understand why they are yapping off about this and/or that. They have a rich schedule of SF plays on both radio and television; but are they happy about it? No. They have a rich assortment of science fiction and science fantasy magazines published in their country, and are they happy about it? NO.

Now Gold is on their shooting list. If you ask me (no one ever will, I know), we poor German fans would leap sky high if we had an editor like Gold and a magazine like *Galaxy* in our country. At present there is not a great deal of SF reading matter on the German market; but since every Bundesburger may order as many books or magazines from other countries as he can afford, there is no limit to buying Ace and Ballantine books, Panther and such, and thus keeping up with fen in other countries. But, just as other fen, I have found out that SF can be an expensive hobby.

For years I had been reading SF magazines like *Galaxy, Astounding* and such without being aware of the fact that there was something like fandom existing at all. After ordering a few books from Boardman & Co. my name was passed on to a certain Jan Jansen. Need I say more about being introduced into fandom? Until the Wetzcon and the Kettering con I had met few fen. However, there is in sight an event which might change all that. I mean, of course, the foundation of the Science Fiction Club of Deutschland (SFCD). Members have been contacted first on "Meteor" – a section of the last pages of *Utopia*, a recent production on the German market, which tries to familiarise SF. There are Gross und Eleinbande (large and smaller volumes) of which the last are space opera with just no niveau at all, while the former specialise in translations from English and American authors. Almost most initiative in the founding of the club was a British fan, Julian Parr, who is doing his best to get the lazy German fen on their way to rosy horizons. By letting his own collection of zines travel all around German fandom, he has done much to interest them in the edition of a zine of their own.

For some months there have been persistent rumours that, somewhere down in southern Germany, around Munich, there is another femme in existence, who had an article in *Authentic* about women's fashions in the future, or something like that. I still have hopes of getting in touch with

this rare bird, sometime or other. Up to now a femme fan in Germany is like a lonely wolf, howling for company and getting only echoing cries from way back over the canal. How long will I have to howl for other European sisters?

(That heart-rending cry was written by Anne some time ago, since when she has plunged into the whirl of the Cytricon. There is also Rose Ebert of Nuremberg now in the European fannish scene. About the con, and her fanzine, Anne goes on:)

I have given up *Fantum* for a later date, a year or two at least. I was very pleased with the con and English fen in general. Some members of my group were delighted about my report and will probably move heaven and earth to get over next autumn for the BIG affair. If cheaper rates could be arranged that way, I guess quite a few guests from abroad might stay for a week or two at the consite. Here, you get special rates when you stay a week or longer.

Anne finishes – "How about it?" The answer is: London in '57.

**Ethel Lindsay:**

I spent a day with Anne Steul, who had come over from Germany to attend the Con at Kettering. First we went to Buckingham Palace to watch the Changing of the Guard. As usual, there were large crowds of people; there always are, goodness knows where they all come from. It is as much fun to watch the people as the ceremony. Every nationality can be seen there. The Americans with their lovely cine cameras, and the Indian women with their gorgeous saris – these are the owners of the two things I covet most. We watched two children who seemed more interested in the ducks sailing calmly round the fountain than in anything else, and the classes of chattering schoolchildren, all armed with notebooks and accompanied by harassed-looking teachers. I suppose the next day's composition would be on "Our Spring Walk". At least they would have more to write about than I ever did.

Two military bands arrived, one composed of Scots Pipers. As the pipes struck up, I was delighted to see a very nondescript woman, small, elderly, rather tattily dressed, stringbag over arm, down at heel shoes, hat jammed over her head. The pipes enthralled her. She could not resist them, and started to sashay up and down in a sort of "Gay Gordon" jig step. Up and down she went, heel and toe, hips and arms, swinging, in front of Buckingham Palace. Hardly anyone turned round to look. She was almost lost in the crowd. Oh, she had a fine time. I wouldn't have minded joining

her but she was mad and I am sane, or at least I do my best to pretend I am.

Next we went to Westminster Abbey and wandered among the tombs of dead kings and queens. It is all too huge and impressive to be melancholy, until you come to the tomb of the baby Princess, shown lying in her cradle. Because of course, the dead men and women there at least lived full, if not always satisfying, lives. A dead baby in any century is sad.

At night Anne and I met Ted Tubb for Ted to discuss her acting as his agent and translator in Germany. It ended with my copying out all his titles and wordage amount. He said I was the only one in fandom he trusted to see inside his notebook. Larry and Lee *[Shaw and Hoffman, recently married and also attendees at CYTRICON II]* were there, proudly displaying two whacking great swords and a pair of iron spurs they had acquired whilst antique hunting. They intended decorating their home with them. Whilst conceding that a gal may find them handy around the house, just in case, I really prefer contemporary art myself. Nor is there much to beat the old-fashioned rolling-pin.

– *Femizine* #9 (May 1956, ed. Pam Bulmer)

# Daphne Bradley/Buckmaster

For a long time the only female regular at the White Horse, Daphne Buckmaster (*née* Bradley) once described herself as "mathematically-minded" and famously looked much younger than her years. Jim Linwood recalls: "I first met Daphne at the Globe in the late 1950s and thought she was a teenager, like me." Having been born in Medway in 1926, she would have been in her early thirties by that point. Photo with her husband Ron Buckmaster.

# 1. Fannegenesis

I notice that most fen have, at some time or other, published their fan-life story if only in a "potted" form. I haven't yet seen any autobiographies from my fellow-fenne though, so here's mine for a start.

The first book I can remember reading (that should have been SF book) was H.G. Wells's *Invisible Man*, which I discovered at the age of eleven. I found it rather dull but, fantastic literature being so rare, I plodded through it. I did not live near one of the street markets which seem to have formed part of the early environment of most fen and thereby missed the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the American magazines. Even had I seen any of them it is doubtful whether I should have bought one – for the following reason: I had been eagerly snatching at such titles as "The Purple Comet" or "The Phantom Train" which appeared occasionally in comics but I soon became disillusioned about these. The former would deteriorate into a fight with purple monsters and in the latter the "Phantom" would turn out to be nothing but a front put up by criminals. Even at that age I had no interest in action stories and so the covers of the pulps would have been enough of a deterrent to me, as they have been to so many other potential fans.

Meanwhile I tried the rest of Wells, Doyle's *Lost World,* Haggard's *She* and other classics. I picked up such crumbs of fantasy as were dropped incidentally into ordinary books: mysterious happenings in the fifth form and ghosts in old mansions.

This state of affairs continued until about the end of the war when my brother began buying the British Editions of *Astounding* and *Unknown*. For a long time I scorned them but, after continual urging on his part, I at last gave in and tried one. That, of course, was my downfall. Or uprising. How long it was between then and the time when I bought a copy of the first issue of *New Worlds,* which was to put me on the road to fandom, I do not remember.

I bought *New Worlds* from a station bookstall, wanting something to read on the train (but don't tell that to EJC). It filled me with joy. *Astounding* was rather a heavy meal for anybody new to the field and *New Worlds* was light and entertaining. I looked out for No. 2, and it was in either this or No. 1 that I saw an advertisement for the British Fantasy Library, then being run by Ron Holmes.

The B.F.L. provided me with books and American magazines in

profusion and with the first fanzine I had seen – *Operation Fantast*. This was really something. At last – contact with other readers! In *O.F.* appeared a letter from which I learnt that the London Circle met every Thursday not five minutes walk from where I was working!

Now, had I been a man this would have been the end of the story but I was (and still am) a woman and could I walk alone and unintroduced into that stag gathering? I could not. On two occasions I got as far as the door but could not pluck up the courage to go in. Once I even persuaded my brother to take me in and we sat at the other end of the bar from most of the mob. Unfortunately my brother at that time was even shyer than I was and neither of us could think of a way of introducing ourselves. So we left.

Fate, however, took pity on me. It was announced (in *O.F.*, I think) that a convention was to be held and would anybody who wanted to come please write to John Newman? This I could do and did not hesitate. And so it was that, having introduced myself, I found it easy to turn up at the Whitcon in 1948 and announce myself. I was in!

Two incidents of that occasion come to mind. The first is that sometime during the evening one of the men approached me and asked me if I were enjoying it. I replied that the trouble was that there were so few women to talk to upon which he answered immediately that that was his trouble, too. From what I can remember of his appearance and even more from the content of his remark I now believe that this was none other than Ron, although I was not to meet him again until a year later. *[They married in Chatham in 1949.]*

The other event occurred during a discussion that started later on. The beer (it had not acquired an aspirate at that time) had been flowing quite fast and the subject under dissection was the ethics of nudism. After a little while one of the men (not a well-known fan so don't start guessing who it might have been) remarked that it would, perhaps, be wiser to stop this discussion as not only was there a lady present but she was too young to be listening to such things! I was the only lady present and I replied that I was twenty-two. This the fan flatly refused to believe but I insisted that I was; then he insisted on seeing my identity card, a thing which we all carried at that time or were supposed to. On seeing it he seemed at first to be trying to make up his mind between two alternative possibilities, namely: a) I was twenty-two, and b) I indulged in forgery. Apparently the latter seemed even more unlikely than the former because at last he apologised, but for some time afterwards he would look at me in a bewildered way and mutter to himself.

After that I came to the White Horse regularly and, except for a

couple of efforts which I wrote for Vin¢'s *Science Fantasy News*, I settled down to the inactivity for which the White Horse was so famous. *[London fans moved from this pub to the Globe in December 1953.]*

This last year's burst of frantic activity, with the production of "i" *[aka* Eye*]* and, now, the formation of OMPA has caught me up in its mob enthusiasm and here I am typing my first ever stencils and hoping they make a good impression. On the wax, I mean. I'm quite cereous.

Well, there you are with my past in front of you – brother, you'd better turn round. You're travelling the wrong way.

## Fanne to Fenne

In case you haven't noticed it, there are no less than five women fans in OMPA* and one more on the waiting list. It is time we agreed on a suitable term for the feminine of fan, don't you think? We have been referred to variously as femmefans, fanettes, fannes and, this latest from Pamela, fams. (If there are any other versions in the US, I'd like to hear them. M-L?) I, personally, have an aversion to "femme", probably because when I was about twelve it was the fashion among my male contemporaries to refer to all women as "femmes" in the derogatory tones reserved by them for speaking of the ruling sex.

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** Pam Bulmer, Joy Clarke, Ethel Lindsay, American Marie-Louise Share, and Daphne herself. [Ed.]*

"Fanette" puts one in mind of flannelette and "fams", although having the virtue of being short and snappy, puts one in mind of hams.

Those amongst you who are amateur detectives will, by now, have deduced that I have a preference for "fanne". Well, girls?

Not that any agreement we may come to (unlikely as that is in itself) is likely to have any influence on the rest of fandom. Still, there's no harm in trying.

> *Given that we now use "fan" as a catch-all term, one you can qualify with "male", "female", or something else if you have the need, the importance female fans of the time appear to have attached to finding "a suitable term for the feminine of fan" is a little bewildering. Then again, "femme fans" being a term imposed on them by men, it's at least understandable that they might seek an alternative of their own – particularly if, like Daphne, they considered it derogatory. As the now equally*

*archaic gendered term "editress" popping up a couple of time in this volume demonstrates, the past really is a different place.*

– *Esprit* #1 (December 1954, ed. Daphne Buckmaster for OMPA)

# 2. Sheep’s Eyes Over Fannedom

*This was accompanied by a cartoon depicting a be-suited wolf standing at a bar.*

A young femme attending The Globe for the first time will probably be overwhelmed by the attentions which will be paid to her. In order to give a guide to the possible attacks which are likely to be made upon her virtue, we have prevailed upon a well-known authority to list for “i” the various approaches, most cases quoted being ones which she has personally experienced.

While the girl should realise that these are to a certain extent of necessity stereotyped, she should use her imagination at all times when dealing with such extensions of the pattern as are likely to be used.

Without further delay, then, let us make a quick survey of the various phrases most often used.

**1.** The Franciscan Approach. “COME AND SIGN THE VISITOR’S BOOK.” This at times is a perfectly genuinely intended phrase; maidens of attractive appearance may find, however, that an attempt will be made by the fan to guide her signature, thus affording a wonderful opportunity of holding her hand.

**2.** The Edwardian Approach. This one is usually accompanied, in a suave and polished tone, by an invitation to see how an editor’s office is run. “DO YOU NEED ANY MORE COPIES OF *NEW WORLDS* TO COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION?” This gambit may be counteracted by seeing that the curtains in the office are not drawn, and that the lights are on while searching for the required copies. Don’t be led down the corridor with the excuse that they may be in another office.

**3.** The Brunnerian Approach. “TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK OF MY LATEST PIECE OF POETRY.” This is usually accomplished in a quiet, gentlemanly fashion, with a great display of puns calculated to disarm the unwary with resultant laughter. The character who uses this approach may try to blind you, with your own admiration of his ability to sell stories to such magazines as *Astounding,* but hero worship of this nature should not be allowed to overwhelm your sense.

**4.** The Ronaldian Approach. This technique is only applied when the user is chasing someone he has known previously. The usual gambit is: “I’VE SHAVED OFF MY MOUSTACHE, AS I’M TOLD IT TICKLED.

TELL ME IF YOU NOTICE ANY DIFFERENCE." Of course, the best plan here is not to have met him previously.

**5.** The Campbell Come-On. "COME AND HELP ME TRIM MY BEARD" may be regarded as being so old it has whiskers on.

**6.** The Beynonian Approach. "WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO WALK AS FAR AS THE STATION WITH YOU?" Mr. Harris, of course, uses this gambit with the discretion of a gentleman. So long as one is walking, of course, no evasive tactics are necessary, whilst once the station is reached, a murmur that you must run because your train is due in should be sufficient to preserve your equanimity – though I have heard it called other names.

**7.** The Jacobite Approach. "HAVE YOU SEEN MY CELLAR YET?" may, in its original form, have been intended innocently enough. However, now that Stuart is becoming a Trufan, all femme fans should beware of an invitation such as this, even if she does so need some duplicating done – for her OMPAzine, I mean.

**8.** The Thorneton Approach. "HELP ME CELEBRATE – MY NEXT ISSUE IS OUT!" It is probably the most difficult to refuse since it is rather difficult to distinguish between the legal interpretation and the publishing one. However, should you keep your wits about you, you should be able to refuse gently, by pointing out that you are in no state for celebration since your own issue is at present depressing you.

**9.** The Bulmer Approach. "THIS IS THE BEST WAY TO GET TO THE PLATFORM: LET THE OTHERS GO THE LONG WAY." It is a gambit that can only be used at Hither Green Station: only one word of warning – Mrs. B. knows the right direction. If you follow her, you should save yourself from falling into sewers, and other low perils.

**10.** The Vincentian Approach. As No.1 fan writer, of course, Vincent naturally would have a more unusual and therefore more disarming approach than other fans. His "COME UP AND SEE HOW I DUPLICATE" must be treated with considerable caution, as the final word is possible of interpretation in varying ways.

**11.** The Tubbic Approach. There is only one approach of this kind and being forthright, direct, and to the point, it is the more difficult to evade. In itself, it is the distillation of all the previous circumlocutory approaches. Consisting merely of three words, it is easily recognisable. What did you say? Oh, all he does is say, "GIVE ME WOMEN!"

*Those libelled herein, in order, are Frank Arnold, Ted Carnell, John Brunner, Ron Buckmaster, Bert Campbell, John Beynon Harris, Stuart Mackenzie ("Jacobite" because of his Scottish*

*surname), Tony Thorne, Ken Bulmer, Vin¢ Clarke and Ted Tubb.*

– *Eye* (aka “i”) #3 (Xmas 1954, ed. Ted Tubb, Stuart Mackenzie and Vin¢ Clarke)

# 3. The Day of the Mackenzies

Here in Camberley it is quiet and peaceful. Thirty miles from the Globe, surrounded by pine woods and far from the harsh cries of neofen, one feels at one with the Universe....

Into this haven of English beauty one Maytime Saturday come the Mackenzies. Stuart and Constance. Self-confessed publishers of *Eye*.

I had invited them down for the weekend. In all innocence and with my trusting girlish heart I had invited them. I admit it. May the people of Camberley forgive me.

The London weather had not been as good as ours, and right from the start it was evident that they had brought the heavy skies with them. They kept stopping every ten yards to put them down and change hands. We went into the house and, after they had washed their travel-stained faces (they had come through Staines on the way and had forgotten to protect themselves with Persil), they unpacked their bags and presented me with a joint of meat. I was naturally very pleased with this, not knowing then the dreadful Fate* we were so narrowly to escape as a direct result of it.

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** It's a moot point whether any reference to the magazine of that name is intended. [Footnote in original.]*

An hour or so later we heard the harsh cry of a dying rook on the landing. It was the doorbell. (I *must* get a new battery). I opened the front door and a tall young policeman stood there. He looked ready and eager to serve the noble organisation to which he belonged... rather like a serious and constructive fan.

"Good afternoon, madam," he said, in the best English tradition, intending to lull me into a false sense of security.

"Good afternoon," I said, making the score equal.

"I'm sorry to bother you," he said, which was a damned lie, "but I have to do my duty. There is a trail of blood leading up this road and on to your front door step, and" – peering over my shoulder – "up the stairs. How do you explain this?"

Playing for time, I asked him to come in and led him up the stairs (our flat is on the first floor). I dare not tell him the awful truth as meat is rationed and it is a serious thing to waste any part of it.

Then I had an inspiration.

Pointing to Stuart, who was just visible behind a half-open door, I

murmured confidentially in the ear of the Law. “It’s our visitor. He’s a vampire – had lunch on the train and –” I lowered my voice, “– he *dribbles*.”

At that moment, Stuart, wondering what was going on, advanced across the landing.

“Gaaaaaaahhh!” yelped the policeman, and leapt over the banisters and out of the the front door. Rather like a serious-constructive fan coming upon a Convention party.

After that, we had tea; and Ron mentioned a pottery which is only a few miles from here. We decided to go over and have a look at their window, which had some intriguing original pieces the last time we had been there. A notice in the window said:

IF WE’RE IN, WE’RE OPEN. IF WE’RE OUT,
YOU’VE HAD IT
BUT TRY THE DOOR, ANYWAY

So we did and they were open. Some of their work looked very much like BEMs so we really started getting interested and ended up by being shown around the workshop. Stuart and the proprietor learnedly discussing glazes and adhesives.

Meanwhile, Connie and I wandered round examining the exhibits. In a dark corner we came across a thing that looked like Aladdin’s Lamp, so we picked it up and rubbed it. Much to our surprise, it was. In a puff of smoke a genii appeared, saying “Anything you wish will be granted” or words to that effect. So we asked for three days of sunshine for the Mancon.

He looked extremely pained.

“Mistress, I am a genii of the highest species. I am capable of Class A miracles. But what you ask is unprecedented. Three days of continuous sun in –” he bowed low, “– the Place of the Sanguinary Ones is an occurrence which would shake the very foundations of the Universe. Is there nothing else that you desire?”

We thought deeply. Then...

“All future issues of *Hyphen* to have a hundred pages?”

He fingered his beard. It was actually beered too – large stains all over it. I suspect he got it second-hand from Campbell after his trip to the States. ((Or he may have been the original genii with the Light Brown hair? stencil-cutter avc))

“That would take some time,” he said slowly. “You see, there is a sea to cross, and although the Will is there, it takes a bob to cross the shaw. White should be I don’t know. My colleague George charters a plane

though....” he dwindled away thoughtfully.

By this time the men had tired of trying to get professional secrets from each other and returned to the shop. It was getting quite late so, with promises from the potter to give us a demonstration sometime, we left.

It was pouring with rain and pitch dark and it was not surprising that we got lost on the way home. It appeared that we had taken the wrong road back in the woods, but as we were all married it didn’t matter.

On Sunday the weather was still looking pretty unpleasant, so we hung around indoors talking about fan affairs in general. Sometime during the morning I went into the kitchen to see how the cooking was getting on. As soon as I opened the door, I was met by a thick curtain of blue smoke. Shaking off the momentary impression that I was entering a fan gathering, I quickly went to the oven and looked inside.

It was the joint, of course. The joint THEY had brought. Not content with nearly landing us in gaol, it had now got itself overheated and split the Pyrex right down the middle. Yes, the dish had a sheer clean crack in it. Which is more than you can say for *Hyphen* these days.

Well, genius that I am, I managed to get an edible dinner on the table, and after that nothing much happened. What ever does on a Sunday afternoon in the country?

After tea the Mackenzies packed their bags and we took them down to the station. Five minutes later they were on their way to London.

Here in Camberley it is quiet and peaceful....

– *Eye* #1 (June 1954, ed. Ted Tubb, Vin¢ Clarke, Stuart Mackenzie)

# 4. Full Circle

It seems that a great deal of irresponsible and inaccurate talk has been going the rounds lately giving the impression to all and sundry that the London Circle is dying on its feet or possibly fading away. How this rumour started it is difficult to say but it is having an unfortunate effect and needs to be counteracted now.

Possibly it stemmed from the fact that science fiction ceased to be the main topic of conversation and that several non-fans joined the group. Whatever the reason, the rumour started a downward spiral in the attendance of the irregulars. Now, these irregulars form a large part of Globe life and always have done. It made no difference to the life of the Circle that these irregulars outnumbered the regulars. By the law of averages they added to the regular bulk of attendance; a certain number of them would always be there in any one week.

Some of them lived near enough to the Globe to get there and back in an evening but far enough to make it inconvenient, through either time or money, to come every week. Their visits, individually, might be anything from every three weeks to about four times a year but, in their own cycle, so to speak, they were also regulars. So a constant attendance was assured. One could add to these the people, non-Londoners, who show up about once a year or less; Arthur Clarke and Mike Wilson, Brian Aldiss, Harry Turner, Sid Birchby, Paul Enever... to name only a very few.

Now if you are an irregular and you turn up one evening and it happens to be rather quiet (as sometimes happens in the best regulated circles!) and in addition someone says that the Globe is not the same these days, you are likely to leave it a bit longer than usual before you come again. This decreases the bulk again and so starts a vicious circle until there is more and more chance of coming in to a quiet night and the long distance travellers think it’s not worth risking their time and money. Here I’d like to make a tentative suggestion regarding another contributive factor; a habit that has arisen in the last year or two and that is the eating habit. People started going out to eat.

Not that I’m blaming anybody for this; I’ve been one of the worst offenders myself. It happens like this: The bulk of people, as might be expected, turn up between, say, seven-thirty and nine o’clock. If you work in the City and come straight to the Globe about six o’clock you will possibly find two or three others arriving in the next half hour. At this time

in the evening, with the effects of the day's work not yet worn off and the evening spirit not yet under way, things are pretty dead. It takes real enthusiasm or someone with news to break the ice and start a conversation. So somebody says, "Let's go out and eat."

Now it is an unexplainable but incontrovertible fact that, while four people can sit at a table in the pub and feel like zombies, those same four people only a few minutes later facing each other across loaded dinner plates will be talking nineteen to the dozen. And they're still at it (and absent) when the next few arrive at the Globe. And whereas the lot of them together would certainly have started the evening going, the second bunch, also faced with the cold emptiness of the early evening pub, will probably go forth and do likewise.

Another little change in the scenery which added its weight to the general effect was the sudden appearance, for a while, of two or three guitars. This was no doubt the result of the widely held idea, at that time, that jazz was the most common second interest of fans. Nevertheless, it wasn't as common as to be regarded with general approval by the majority of the London Circle. I'm not wishing to express any personal disapproval; I like guitars, amateur or otherwise, but most people didn't. It made conversation difficult.

What is more to the point is that the Globe has no music licence and that meant that the constant undercurrent of hostility and black looks from those who wanted to talk was aggravated by the irritation of Lew *[Mordecai, the landlord],* who was duty bound to quieten the guitar group whenever their voices became too audible.

However, this phase seems to have finished. I have a feeling the tide is turning. A little while ago, when Bob and Sadie Shaw dropped in, there were several out-of-towners present besides a large number of regulars, and good conversation and high spirits abounded.

Those who don't come so often have by no means lost interest or changed. For instance, a week or two back the Bulmers spent a weekend with us. It was not a planned fannish weekend. There was no bashing of typers, turning of dupers, or stapling of staples. Yet we sat up talking, quite unintentionally, until four o'clock in the morning! That sort of conversation about anything and everything which, to me, is the essence of the London Circle.

And, in spite of remarks to the contrary, we are not lacking in new faces either. In the past year we have had at least three new people who came and stayed: a very live wire called Ella Parker who seemed to be no sooner with us than she was holding a very good fan party; Sandra Hall, an

equally alive but somewhat shyer newcomer who runs a bookshop which actually sells science fiction and occult books, and other off-trail stuff; and Paul Campbell, a quiet but bright young man, who is studying Greek and who was introduced by Vin¢.

So let us not mind Ted Tubb and his ilk who sit there bewailing the good old days. Ted hardly ever comes to the Globe so what does he know? Ignore him.

The *[above]* article about the Globe is now a bit out of date, having been written about the beginning of December. However, what I have said is still valid and all that needs adding is that a large group of us, on the Thursday before Christmas, agreed that those of us who could not come every week should come on the first Thursday in the Month, thus concentrating a thin spread into tangible lumps.

Thirty-four people were present at that meeting. Ted Tubb gave a rallying speech and 34/- were collected towards a general fund – one member was so enthusiastic that he insisted on giving two shillings! The Thursday after Christmas was, of course, the first Thursday in January so again a large group gathered. Ted Tubb spoke once more to the multitude, more money was collected and the London Circle began to feel it was thoroughly re-established on a firm footing. And, as though it were an omen, Charlie Duncombe, our erstwhile permanent Treasurer, who had been gafia for fifteen months, turned up unheralded and was unanimously voted Treasurer of the new club.

The first Thursday in February is now only four days away and people I have seen in the last fortnight have all left me with the words: "Don't forget February the fifth!"

I understand that Vin¢, Joy and Sandy, after their exhausting move and promotion to older generation status (congratulations Joy!) are renewing their efforts to find a clubroom suitable in locality and price. The idea is, I believe, to be able to Do Things which befit an SF club and which can't be done in a pub.

Personally, I am not at all hopeful about this venture. Both locality and cost form almost insuperable problems. Take locality. The Globe is in the City. It is well served by a Tube station on one of the most convenient and efficient of the Underground lines; in addition, like most City pubs it is comparatively unpatronised in the evening since the City itself is deserted. Up to about six-thirty there are often a few businessmen there taking a drink on their way home (mainly, I suspect, to avoid the rush hour!). But after that we have the place to ourselves. It is "central" in the sense that everybody can come straight to it, roughly speaking, from any

direction.

Then money. Are members going to be willing to pay regularly whether they come or not? Hardly. That means that, to pay the rent, we should have to definitely be assured of a certain minimum number of attendances every week. So, supposing, extremely optimistically, that we were to find a place for as little as £2 per week, that would still mean at least twenty people every week (I can't see anybody paying more than two shillings). And I don't think we are likely to get a weekly attendance of twenty, especially now that we have agreed on a monthly meeting.

This brings us to a last possibility on which nothing much can be conjectured. This is Vin¢'s belief that if we have a permanent clubroom and can do interesting things, this will attract new recruits and keep them coming and so assure enough money to keep the thing going. It may be so. No one knows.

One other thing. What about drinks? Either we'd have the trouble of running a private bar or go without. We could go without but we would still need some sort of refreshment during the evening. What do we do? Buy a tea urn? Or pop round to the nearest café?

You may be wondering when I'm going to stop being destructive and start saying something useful. Well my vote is we stay at the Globe.

– *Esprit* #9 (January 1959, ed. Daphne Buckmaster for OMPA)

# 5. Women in Fandom

Have you ever wondered why there are so few women in fandom? Or have you, perhaps, wondered why there are any women at all in it, considering that science fiction is not a subject that is generally thought of as appealing to the fair sex?

There is one puzzling thing I have noticed about fannes and that is that most of them are fantasy rather than science fiction fans. I don't know why this should be. It is often said that SF and fantasy fans cannot and should not be distinguished from each other in any real sense because there is so much over-lapping of these categories. However, in my experience, there is a basic difference; while both require the type of mind that likes to speculate about impossible-seeming things, the type of mind that is common to all in fandom, the one (SF) requires imagination that is based on reason and logic while the other (fantasy) requires imagination based on the emotions and that cares not a jot about logic. In our society, women are brought up to think that it is "not feminine" to be logical; they are encouraged to be as emotional as possible and perhaps this accounts for the fact that those with an imaginative outlook turn towards fantasy rather than the more logical and "masculine" SF.

To find out just what are the comparative numbers of women and men in fandom, I took a look at Ron Bennett's current fan directory. This does not, of course, contain all known fans but it is as good a random sample as any. The total number of fans in this is 493. Of these, according to my counting, 53 are women. That is to say: just over 10 per cent. This does not include 19 wives who are listed by name along with their husbands but who are not, to my knowledge, active as individual fannes apart from helping their husbands with their publishing, though if a wife is active of her own accord, I have counted her as a fanne. These figures, therefore, must be taken as subject to my knowledge of who is active and who is not, which may not be accurate.

When we come to the number of fannes actually publishing, as against attending clubs, corresponding or subscribing to fanzines, the percentage becomes very small indeed. It would be interesting to find out whether the percentage of women who publish is different from the percentage of men who do so but I leave that for someone else to work out. I've done enough counting for this time!

The figure of 10 per cent (women in fandom as a whole) while small,

seems to be a good deal greater than the prewar figure. I have not any statistics about prewar fandom but I have read accounts of prewar activities, especially in England, and I don't remember seeing any mention of women at all. When I joined fandom in 1947 I was told by Ken Slater that there had been one other fanne in this country before me! Certainly I was the only one at the White Horse for a year or two.

One good reason for there being more women in postwar fandom comes immediately to mind and that is that women in general have more leisure. Before the war women did not have time for hobbies but, now that labour-saving devices have cut down the housework so much, we are branching out more into spare time activities.

Another contributing factor, I think, is the changeover of fandom as opposed to the SF-oriented outlook it had before. This new outlook must have attracted women more than the serious discussion sessions of the previous period. Again there is the fact that we are all better off financially than we have been. This has led to more entertaining between fans and so the wives have become known to the fans and soon find that they are a part of fandom themselves. The easier financial position means, too, that some wives can hire baby sitters and thus go along to club meetings with their husbands.

But in spite of all these factors which are bringing more women into fandom there is still, as the figures have shown, a vast difference between the number of women and the number of men. It may be because males are freer to go where they like and make friends with whom they like than females are. This state of affairs is dying out gradually of course, but even today many teenage girls would not be allowed to get fanzines or correspond with strangers – especially once their parents have seen some of those fanzines! For let us admit that very few fanzines have an appearance (let alone content) that is calculated to inspire an urge in mothers to get their daughters into fandom.

We must remember too that fandom, perhaps because of its imaginative nature, tends to be unconventional in its way of life and women, as a rule, have not the courage to be unconventional – not so much as men have at any rate. "Publishing before housework" is not a motto that many women are willing to live by – they rely more than men on the approval of their families and neighbours and this approval is soon withdrawn when visitors see the chaos that is the normal state of the typical fan household!

There is no conclusion to this article (which does not mean it will be endless). The foregoing are merely a few thoughts that have occurred to

me in connection with women and fandom. I leave the conclusions to you.

– *Femizine* #15 (September 1960, ed. Ethel Lindsay)

# 6. Women in General

The thing which interested me most in the last mailing was the discussion about the subject of "women" in *Scottishe*. As I read it, my mind was full of comments. Mostly of the "but... but... but..." type. Let's see how many of 'em I can dredge up. Firstly, Bill Donaho says every woman he knows dislikes other women and this was in answer to Juanita Coulson who had said that few of her friends were women. Now I don't think it's fair to compare a fanne's attitude to non-fan women with other women's attitude to each other. After all, *male* fans are not much en rapport with non-fan men either; judging by many of the remarks seen in fanzines, all fans, both male and female, seem to hang on to fandom because only there do they find the type of people who speak their language. Why, Bill himself once said (and I remember the phrase because it was so eloquent (if that's the right word), "Fandom is the best source of 'people-type people' I have found since leaving college."

Secondly, there is the point made that women are always competing. In ordinary, everyday life I agree this is largely true. And I suggest that it is a result of the type of society we live in rather than something intrinsic in the nature of women, as such. All human beings want their merits recognised but whereas men can do this in their jobs, their position in life, etc., women, in their role of wives, can get recognition only from the egoboo of having nice houses, possessions and clothes etc. It is noticeable that women who have a career in which they can use their individual abilities – especially if it's a profession such as teacher, doctor, architect, etc. – are said to be more like men. But it is not that they are "like men" at all; it is that they no longer have the need for the artificial attitudes that women in the non-paying status jobs as wives and mothers have been forced to adopt. This is demonstrated by the fact that the same individual girl often appears to change character entirely as soon as she takes up full-time housewifery; one sees women who have been efficient and intelligent in their outside jobs apparently become completely dependent and unable to think for themselves as soon as they become a housewife. I see that Bill Donaho mentions this very thing himself in respect of his cousin and in the difference in response of girls in class according to whether boys are present or not, so it's pretty obvious that it's a case of "the done thing". Girls are told from an early age that "boys do not like intelligent girls" so one can hardly blame them if they start to hide any intelligence they've got

in the presence of boys.

But I think there is a confusion between “intelligent” and “studious” or “earnest”. I doubt if anyone, of either sex, really likes a girl (or a boy for that matter) who is always studious and earnest about everything. Intelligence is a natural characteristic that everyone must use to some extent and is not necessarily associated with a serious or earnest outlook. Because of this confusion, girls grow up to think that they must act stupid or near-stupid if they want to have boyfriends.

Another reason for the convention that girls should not be too intelligent stems from the old days of our grandmothers’ time when, if a woman was to do her full share of work in rearing a family and looking after a husband, she had to spend literally all her waking hours doing scrubbing, cooking, washing, sewing, etc., and, naturally, any tendency towards intellectual leanings had to be discouraged or the family would have suffered, gone hungry, or become ill through lack of cleanliness, because of time taken by the wife in reading or writing instead of doing the housework. And since women were neither required nor allowed to take part in community affairs, such as voting, etc., it was best that all their attentions should be directed towards the housewifely virtues.

But things have changed and, as usual, it takes a couple of generations for popular opinion to catch up. With the advent of leisure through labour-saving devices, women have been enabled to take part in things outside the home, to go out and earn money if they want to. There is no longer any need for them to suppress their mental abilities and, in fact, it is generally agreed nowadays that the country needs every bit of brainpower she can get, regardless of the shape of the body it appears in. I don’t think that men have any inborn dislike of intelligence in women though no doubt they, too, are affected by the convention insofar as going along with the idea that women should not be too intelligent. Of course, nobody of either sex likes another person to be always telling them they are in the wrong or acting superior to them. This is not a question of sex but of common courtesy for both sexes.

As for marriage, one can hardly believe that any man, once he is out of the adolescent stage, really wants to marry the silly type of woman unless he is a) of very low intelligence himself or b) so rich that she won’t be required to do anything but look decorative anyway. Contrary to popular belief, intelligence can be used in housekeeping and the work is all the better done for it.

I do agree with Elinor *[Busby]*’s remark (as quoted by Bill) when she says, “Women like other women better than they realise.” This “I can’t

stand women" jazz is partly to indicate their complete eligibility for masculine society. This *is* sometimes necessary, I should think. After all, if men, some of them anyway, take the attitude that they "don't like women's chatter", what can one do, if one is not to be ostracised by them, but suggest that one is not like that oneself? This same problem crops up not only in the man-woman relationship but anywhere where there is prejudice between one group and another. A person gets condemned along with the rest of his group, because of some real or imagined defect in that group, regardless of whether he himself has that particular defect and the only two courses open to him are a) to try and convince the ones who are prejudiced against his group that they are wrong – which is pretty hopeless – and b) to admit that his group are like that, but that he is different.

I wasted a good many years on the first alternative, namely, trying to convince men that women were not so stupid or inferior as men were taught to think. Needless to say, I was not only knocking my head against a brick wall but I got myself a reputation for being a "feminist". So we women are in a cleft stick. If we speak up for our sex, we are called feminists (a sort of term of abuse) and if we go along with the male view of our sex we are thought to be traitors to our own sex! It's a case of "give a dog a bad name and hang him". Whatever one does, one is in the soup. So what attitude would men have us take towards our sex? Should we say, yes, women are stupid creatures aren't they – in which case we are likely to get called catty, or should we say, no, women are as sensible and intelligent as men are – in which case we get called feminists?

Luckily, it is by no means all men who look down on women's company (and the number who do are getting fewer with each generation, I'm sure) especially men who are intelligent themselves, so I have found that just to talk naturally, be oneself, and not make any claims either for or against one's sex as a whole, is the best way to go. And I think most of the women in fandom do this too. There's so much to talk about with a group of fans that one doesn't often hear remarks made about females in general except by way of a joke.

I do not believe that, in ordinary everyday contacts and conversations, there is any need to draw attention to one's sex at all. One of the best compliments I ever had was from a man who had been talking with me for about a couple of hours at the Globe one Thursday and at the end of that time he suddenly said, "You know, I quite forgot I was talking to a woman!" I know that, according to accepted convention, it would not have been regarded as a compliment at all, for according to convention – especially as interpreted by the women's magazines – we are expected at

all times to do everything to heighten our femininity.

But I think this attitude is overdone. Femininity *should* be emphasised for parties, dances and other occasions when men and women get together expressly to enjoy each other's company. I'm all for being "feminine" on such occasions – but must it be extended to every waking hour? The women's magazines, of course, have an axe to grind in this matter. Since most of their income is from the advertisements of cosmetics and clothes, they naturally have to push the idea that a woman should spend every spare moment applying fresh make-up or getting her hair set or shopping for clothes, etc. Unfortunately, *The Woman* or one of its sister-mags is every woman's Bible today, and what it says goes. It is said that if one is a woman, it is natural to pay attention to feminine attributes and not to "ape men"; it is assumed that not to be female in a positive, noticeable way is equivalent to being "mannish". The ridiculousness of this idea becomes apparent if we apply this same argument but from the man's point of view. Is a man expected always to be paying attention to his masculinity? Must he spend every spare moment developing big muscles and swinging from tree to tree – or from the chandeliers, perhaps – so as to make sure he is not "aping women"? Of course not. A man is expected to be just a natural human being, not an imitation Tarzan. Why then cannot women, too, be natural human beings instead of imitation Marilyn Monroes or Florence Nightingales? As one of the early suffragettes said to the accusation that she wanted women to be like men, "We do not want to be like men. We want the right to be like ordinary human beings."

Most of us try – to be normal, that is – and when we are busy, either in the office, the shop or the home, we do usually succeed. Notice that when there is important work to be done – especially emergency work – we all, both men and women, just get on with it and forget all about which sex we are. It is only when there is nothing much important going on or when the occasion is social that we suddenly seem to become conscious that we are women and must act as such. In current everyday life, there is rarely much of great importance going on. Most jobs are routine, do not require either hard thought or even hard work (though naturally there are exceptions) and this, perhaps, is why the business of being feminine has started to intrude at every hour of the day.

But it is not only women who suffer from conventional notions of what constitutes "masculinity" and "femininity". Many a young man with the sensitivity to appreciate – or perhaps to create himself – music, painting, and other fine arts, has been subjected in the past to ridicule for being "effeminate". Here again, we have an attitude that was perfectly

valid fifty or so years ago. In a time when it was a case of every hand to the plough in order to survive, the dreamy-eyed youth was certainly no asset to his community; indeed, he was a downright hindrance. So, here again, it has been a question of bringing our attitudes in line with present day circumstances.

It seems that as we get further and further away from the days when we lived, both men and women, by manual toil, and nearer to a more civilised type of living, a way of life that is based more on emotional and intellectual characteristics than on physical energy, the difference in outlook and appearance between men and women will tend to disappear.

Do I hear indignant shouts of "No... No! Vive la difference!"? I'm sure I do. But listen. The superficial differences that we spend so much time cultivating are not important to sexual attractiveness. If you doubt this, take a look at the Bohemians/Beats/Intellectuals or whatever you like to call them. In every popular newspaper and periodical one can read indignant letters saying that you can't tell one sex from t'other among these people. They're not far wrong, either. The girls with their duffle coats, fisherman sweaters, slacks, sandals and straight hair are "not attractive" by conventional standards. Yet the same outraged matrons who sneer at these girls for "not making the best of themselves" as it is called, are the first to look down on them for their "lack of morals"! How inconsistent can you get?

So that is why I say we do not need warpaint and feet-distorters and perspiration-stoppers and all the other aids to ill-health in order to attract the opposite sex. Sex appeal is something that comes from your personality. You either got it or you ain't. Or rather, if you're alive and healthy and behave in a natural fashion, then you've got it.

Which brings me back – after a bit of a circular detour admittedly – to the point that sooner or later there will be no need for any remarks of the "I like women / I don't like women" type because a truly civilised individual can be him/herself and not have to conform to arbitrary characteristics which are supposed to be "masculine" or "feminine".

I believe that attraction must necessarily occur between masculine and feminine personalities – but that is not the same thing as between male and female. For it is quite usual for a person to have a "feminine" personality and a male body or a "masculine" personality and a female body. None of us need look far among our acquaintances to come across instances of men with gentle passive natures and women with outgoing, decisive natures. Looked at in this way, some instances of homosexuality can be explained normally – i.e. a man with a male personality attracted

towards men with a female type personality. The attraction between the male and female personalities is normal – as anyone would agree – and the fact that they don't have bodies to match is an unfortunate subsidiary factor. The same could apply in the case of two women – one "masculine" and one "feminine". This is supported by the fact that the type of men who deliberately set out to attract homosexual men always put on feminine airs and that many homosexual women have a masculine air.

Usually, of course, what happens when a person does not have a body to match his/her personality is that a man with a feminine-type personality marries a woman with a male-type personality, thus making a "normal" match. And I suggest that, contrary to popular belief, such marriages are not necessarily unhappy. We all tend to feel sorry for the "henpecked husband" but, surely, if a man has a passive nature, he'll be quite satisfied to let his wife run things and the only thing that makes him unhappy, probably, is the fear that people might laugh at him.

To sum up this business of personalities, I believe that personality can differ just as much between different persons of the same sex as it does between persons of opposite sexes and that much unhappiness is caused by the arbitrary conventions as to what characteristics should go with what type of body. The sensitive boy and the tomboy girl are natural types that we've all known in childhood, but as they grow up they are pressurised by social disapproval into trying to be what they aren't. It is not quite so bad nowadays as it used to be because we are already halfway along the road from a life depending on physical labour towards a life of leisure and appreciation of finer things. And in this more civilised life we shall not need such a rigid division between men and women on an artificial basis.

Well, I seem to have got well away from what I originally started to talk about but thank you, Ethel, for stimulating me into filling up nearly six pages. (Nearly made a typo there and wrote "sex pages". Reminds me of the time I wrote to a fan who asked for my zine and said, "I have put you on my mailing lust." Luckily I noticed it before I sent it, and altered it!)

– *Random* #2 (March 1961, ed. Daphne Buckmaster for OMPA)

# Pam Buckmaster/Bulmer

"A non-fan, who, like many non-fans, thought SF fans were mad, still does, for that matter, but has decided to join us in our madness. Pamela edits *Ugh!* in OMPA and has just been appointed editor of *Femizine*. Has appeared in Walt Willis's *Hyphen*, is noted for making Walt Willis laugh, and is generally acclaimed as the most beautiful fan-ed in fandom. Is beginning to write professionally."

– CLEVENTION Progress Report #4 (1955)

# 1. Meeting Chuck Harris

If ever you want a basinful of caustic wit you know where to go to get it. Chuch Harris was the subject of a great deal of excitement on the occasion when I was first introduced to the ways of fans. At the time I didn't know of course that all these mad hooligans would have such an effect on my life and I can only remember being retrospectively startled. Perhaps I was just too numbed with amazement – but I'd better start at the beginning.

Ken and I were not then engaged and Vin¢ had invited us to drop in on him and see Walter and the boys. I was introduced all round and then tried to look as if I knew what all the fuss was about. "He shouldn't be long," they kept saying, and every now and then one of them would daintily lift back a corner of the curtain with a clumsy great paw just far enough for the whole window to be exposed and try to look as if they weren't in the least bothered. They started talking in a foreign language – using a kind of code. I forget most of it but some of the words were BNF and SF and crudzine, fanzine, fanac and crifanac and suchlike and I said: "Yes" and "No" – "I don't read science fiction, just Rider Haggard" – and sipped my tea daintily, nibbling a biscuit the while.

After a spell they all became a little more frenzied and there was a lot of scurrying and Ken got hold of my arm and said: "Come on – we mustn't miss this!" When I got out into the hall I observed the most amazing phenomenon. One of the big tall Irishmen, who spoke an even more involved kind of code within a code – oh, I forgot, there were two big Irishmen, I mean the one with glasses – had put on the most horrifying-looking beard and was growling most ferociously. I began some mental arithmetic and wondered how long it was since this lot were let out of their padded cells. There was a knock at the door.

The bearded one – whom I later learnt was James White – opened the door and fired several short, well-aimed bursts with his gun *[a water pistol]*. We all took cover and there was a lot of skirmishing and the next thing I knew was that yet another big man* was being ushered into the room. By this time I was beginning to think this was too much of a good thing and it was just as well I'd got myself an original man. And that was how I was introduced to Chuch Harris. Of course, I didn't realise who he was then, or I would have been sure to have been suitably impressed. Still, I suppose he will forgive me for I had been introduced to so very many queer people that weekend.

** Walt Willis, James White, and Chuck "Chuch" Harris were all over six feet tall. [Ed.]*

Since then I have got to know Chuch much more. I doubt if there is any fan who has had more labels stuck on him, nearly all of which are quite inappropriate. Perhaps in some way his friends respect his bashfulness so that as they get to know him they are forced to invert all his good points.

We wouldn't be far wrong in an analysis of his character if we just inverted all those labels back again; but don't let him know you're doing it or he'll go out of his way to try and prove you wrong and of course he'll fail – if you have any sort of sense of humour, that is. When you get to know him he bubbles all over inside which always seems to surprise him so that you catch him trying to tell himself and you that he's not that kind of a person at all but a real rotter – really he is!

Yes, I'm glad I came across fandom so young in life, if only because I met Chuch Harris. He's the kind of guy who will help out if it's within his means because I think he probably prizes his friends as amongst his highest possessions.

– *Femizine* #6 (April 1955, ed. "Joan Carr")

# 2. A[nother] Call to Arms!

Women of fandom unite!

Too long have we taken a back seat. Too long have we been the mainstay of the BNFs. It is high time we showed ourselves in our true colours. Now the full story should be told: how our menfolk have grudgingly allowed us the honour to scrape their sacred duplicating ink off the carpet – but no more. We are not allowed access to their precious duplicators, for somehow in their egotism they imagine we will harm them, that we will throw their dens into conventional organisation. All we are allowed to do is to supply their lordships tirelessly with ever-pouring teapots, the contents of which they foolishly believe will inspire them to the heights of Trufandom. We may throw the whole house open for a fannish gathering as a special treat; but of course they are the star attraction and we are there merely to serve tea and hand round cakes and of course, replenish ever-empty glasses with bheer.

When will they wake up! When will they realise that it is we women who are their inspiration – pick a random zine cover to prove it – that we are the ones who give them ideas, but we may not refresh ourselves with Egg-o-bu*. Without us they would be as the void that clothes the stars. They must learn to think for themselves. Men are the jet black velvet upon which we scintillate as a double handful of diamonds scattered by a careless jeweller.

* *That is, egoboo – a reference to* The Enchanted Duplicator *(see free TAFF ebook). [Ed.]*

An end to all this. We must never be silent again. Every fanzine must ring with the name of at least one fam, for fen have basked too long in our inspiration. We must wake them up. We must start a campaign. No fanzine shall escape our magic touch; in each letter column we will stir up a controversy. Every fanzine gasps and struggles, vainly trying to achieve something – they know not what – but they are old fen and tired and we are young and must unleash the full blast of our genius.

Fams!! Expose the fen for what they are – mere robots waiting breathlessly, listening to our every word, trying vainly to learn the secret of that effortless quote, the scintillating wit, the graceful charm and understanding. But they are spellbound; they are too busy hanging on our every word like the o's in a badly cut stencil.

We will stop at nothing. We must stand together. Have no pity,

women of famdom. You must be ruthless and our menfolk must henceforth look to their laurels. It is time a woman wore the beanie in fan households. We will fight for our rights! We demand the right to be recognised as the brilliant species we are; the right to be admired, not just for our beauty – though we must never allow that to be forgotten – but for our intelligence, our wit, our unfailing patience and ungrudging silent aid. We must claim our rightful place at the core of fandom.

Now we cry out against their unjustness, we will fight to the bitter end. Break down the doors of their dens, snatch the duplicators, seize the ink, the stencils and all the paraphernalia of fanac that we have guarded so faithfully and so thanklessly.

We will chain ourselves to the lamp-posts outside the Globe and every fannish club or meeting place and we will not go until we are acclaimed with due respect. We will go on hunger strike, and if any of us die in such a brave cause our deaths will lie like an inky black smudge on every fanzine and on a sudden, there will no longer be witty quotes alive on the bacover. *Nirvana* will publish a black border edition. No more will we stand like guardian angels ready with the life-giving tea or bheer at their beck and call like slaves to do the bidding of serious and constructive Dan Dares seeking the enchantment of Trufandom.

There will be no lack of volunteers to be the first martyr crushed beneath the wheels of the bearded motor-bike and the stain of her militant blood will turn in the wheels of the rider's mind so that the pages of *Authentic* are stained for ever and the beard is clogged into a mere shadow of its once beauteous self. She will go down into history as the first martyr of famdom and we shall see that her sacrifice is not in vain.

To arms, you shackled slaves of marriage! You who economise with the housekeeping, going short yourselves, nay all but starving so that they might buy their duplicators, their ink and paper, their stencils and their infamous magazines. An end to all this. United we are strong. Let *them* brew the tea whilst *we* besmear ourselves with ink and swear-words, producing the gems of wisdom for which we are justly famed. Women for fams! Fams for women!

Women of fandom – the path is plain before you. The fen circle aimlessly and do nothing but yak. Let us take over fandom and show them how to do something and still yak.

Famdom expects this day that every fam will do her duty.

– GLORIA FAMHURST

– *Femizine* #3/4 (December 1954, ed. "Joan Carr")

# 3. Hello America, Goodbye *Femizine*

*In 1955, Ken Bulmer won that year's TAFF race and attended the Clevention, that year's Worldcon held in Cleveland, Ohio. Pam accompanied him, having also just taken over as editor of* Femizine. *His report on their trip* – TAFF Tales – *is available as an Ansible Editions free ebook.*

This editorial came to you on an airmail letter – one of the 10¢ variety – and stencils were cut by Joy Goodwin on whom all blame for mistranscription and rude comments must be laid.

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In true fannish tradition, we sailed from Ireland – Dublin to be exact. Walter and Madeleine together with Chuck came to see us off so we had to give up our plan to abscond for a dirty weekend with the money. Right from the start things seemed to be happening to us and, with all the accidents I've had to my clothes, it's a marvel we have any left. We sailed on the *Inishowen Head*, belonging to the Head Line and Lord Line, the Ulster Steamship Co. Of course, it had to be a Motor Vessel... but as consolation prize, she was fixed with steam* winches for hauling the cargo aboard. Not for nothing did Walter affectionately refer to her as a "Tramp Steamer". When we were a convenient distance from land, we were told that the ship had been built with the expectation that she would be sunk the first voyage. The fact that she had cheated fate 67 times did little to reassure us!

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* *By courtesy B.A.V.C. [Footnote in the original.] This was the Bulmer Aqueous Vapour Company, part of a running fannish joke about Ken Bulmer having first discovered steam –* Steam *also being the title of his 1950s fanzine. [Ed.]*

The food was excellent, and we finally arrived in Baltimore more than a little nervous but otherwise all in one piece. It's a most peculiar feeling to be arriving in a foreign country without the faintest notion if anyone... and if so, whom... will meet you and where you will sleep that night.

However, we stopped worrying when the mail was brought in. We had eight letters. We were literally bowled over 'cos in eight different

ways they all said: “You will come and visit us, won’t you?”

We were met by John Hitchcock, John Magnus and Bob Pavlat with two TWO! cars. I chose the racy li’l red model with Bob Pavlat as chaperone (?) – you’d start feeling crowded after eight people or so were in. As we moved off from the ship a message was called out that Dick Ellington was driving down from New York.

We went out to John Hitchcock’s house, a Colonial type mansion, which was a delightful refuge from the sticky 100° heat outside. We had lunch and then sat around yakking over fanzines – John edits *Umbra*. We then got in touch with Don Ford – and began to feel we really had arrived. We had left a message at the docks to be taken to the ship for Dick Ellington to contact us but, to be on the safe side, we decided to drive down and make sure the message had been delivered.

Baltimore is notoriously difficult to find your way around in, and the two Johns kept the air lively since one thought we should be going back the way we’d come and Magnus said no, his way was quicker. (Magnus had only been in Baltimore three weeks and John lives there!) We finally arrived and Ken went on the boat to see the Chief Steward.

As we were walking back along the dock, who should we meet but Larry Shaw, Dick Ellington, and Phyllis Scott. Introductions were rather complicated since a minor dust storm blew up (we were walking by a couple of grain elevators), but we finally found out who was who and proceeded to fortify ourselves at a place called Jimmy Wu’s New Chinese Restaurant.*

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** (You mean Americans like crottled greeps, too?) [Footnote by Joy Goodwin in the original.]*

We now found ourselves in an awkward predicament – John Hitchcock had very kindly offered us hospitality and wanted us to stay with him a while, but Dick, Larry, and Phyllis had driven 200 miles just to pick us up and take us back to New York. Since it had originally been arranged that we should make straight for New York, we thought we had better stick to the itinerary although we didn’t like to leave John so hurriedly. We did the 200 miles in approximately four hours.

We drove on the Jersey Turnpike which is mile after mile of beyootiful wide roads – a large size edition of our Dual Carriageways – about twice the width and with very gentle curves occurring very rarely and no cross-roads. They build bridges to take the minor roads over the Turnpike and turn-offs are slanted at about 30° so that you literally just drive off without danger. If you want to get on to the minor road crossing

the Turnpike this is joined in a wide loop – from the air some of these would look like a clover leaf. The speed limit is 60 m.p.h. and speed is checked by radar at certain points.

We got to New York about 3:00 a.m. and Larry drove us around. I wondered why he was bothering but I soon found out. Nothing seems to shut down in New York and the streets were as crowded then as some of ours are in London in the early evening. Cafés and theatres and cinemas and heaven knows what were all open until 4:00 a.m. and then folks just drive to Brooklyn where everything opens at 5:00 a.m. so they can just keep going all night long.

The streets are teeming with cars – big ones of every imaginable colour. We were told that New York has less cars per head than most places 'cos of the parking problem.

Dave Kyle has very kindly let us have the use of his apartment on 67th Street. Just about everyone who is anyone has stayed here at some time or other, so I guess that makes us someone.

Actually the place is a sort of baby Epicentre *[the London flat shared by Ken Bulmer and Vince Clarke in their bachelor days]*, only the ceilings stay up (I hope) and the floors stay down.

There are books, books, and more books, and for some weird reason, now that we are here, neither the wireless, television, nor refrigerator works. To us, it's heaven and already we are in the habit of saying, "Time we were going home."

We've been pretty much occupied non-stop since we arrived in New York. Jean Carrol threw a party for us last Saturday – we went on to about 3:00 a.m., then went out for something to eat and then on to Harlan Ellison's place – we finally got to bed around 7:30 next morning and then had to be out by around 2:00 p.m.

Needless to say, we were somewhat late and bleary eyed on arrival at the New York Circle meeting. Space is running out right now, so if you want to read more of this pulsating, gripping, spine-chilling drama of British fans in America – Sub to *Fez* right now, if you haven't already done so. Just 1/- or 20¢ will secure the next issue right on your doorstep – the only Femmefanzine – don't delay, post today! Bye for now. [1]

*This was not Pam's only report on their trip. The following appeared in a one-shot produced with Lee Hoffman and local fans while the Bulmers were visiting her in Savannah, Georgia:*

Do something, they say, do something – anything – write your impressions or something. They want me to write my impressions and all I can think

about is people and cars and places – lots of people and lots of cars and lots of places. Nothing is real, nothing is stationary and we are just transient beings in suspended animation.

My fleeting thoughts fly on and there's no time to stop and catch them – catch them, wrap them up neatly in little parcels and file them away in their little cubby hole and stand back and say "This is what I think."

But the people are permanent, they exist and are real and I can stop and catch a little of each one and fold it into my memory because there is a basic similarity manifesting subtle hues in each new personality. It isn't just fandom – it maybe has something to do with the gregarious nature of mankind, perhaps it has something to do with a mutual feeling that we are passing this way once with a purpose and shall pass this way again.

There is a feeling that every tiny thing is important, like the way the trees grow, the way the birds sing, the way the roads sweep and curve. The things that are the same and the things that are so different. We feel removed but at the same time caught up in something awe-inspiring, perhaps because situations and places to everyone else seem to be so mundane but to us they are exciting and strange but they are still the same places and situations.

No – it is impossible to give one's impressions of a country or a situation so vast in unreality to us. We cannot just yet stand off and appraise our feelings because we are feeling too much in too short a time. We are living a dream which is life and to bring it down to materialistic terms of words whilst it is in the present would seem to put it into the past and to us at the moment time seems timeless. So that is why I can say nothing at the moment but that life is good, people are good and we are happy and those around us seem to be happy and nothing else matters. [2]

When I took on the Editorship of *Femizine* I had planned to work as a temp on our return from the States. However, things turned out differently and I found myself working full time once more. Leaving home at 8:15 a.m. and returning at 6:45 p.m. and running a house and garden does not leave one much spare time. As an Editor of *Femizine* I must confess that the sheer mechanics of duplicating a fanzine meant work to me. After all, as a secretary I had a large amount of typing too (although in my present job this is not so), and I began to feel that what little spare time I had could be more usefully employed in creative writing. This is not to say that I did not enjoy turning out *Femizine* Nos. 8 and 9 in March and May 1956. No. 9 was of course the Hoax issue and some measure of my own eventual lack of enthusiasm for the zine was generated by the general feeling in

fandom to the hoax insofar as a number of fans did not consider it funny. This reaction was not of course entirely responsible for the temporary suspension of *Femizine*, but added to my changed domestic circumstances my desire to do more creative writing – both professional and fannish – and my feeling that I was publishing an existing fanzine representing a group of Femmes instead of my own fanzine as an expression of my own individuality (such as it is), it was to my subconscious probably the last straw. So when Ethel offered to take over the Editorship I felt that this really was the best solution for myself and the zine. You will all have read the Editorial by now and I cannot do better than endorse Frances's sketch of Ethel with the warning that what she says is not a pack of lies! *[See "Femmefan Faces"]* [3]

[1] *Femizine* #7 (July 1955, ed. "Joan Carr" & Pam Bulmer)
[2] *CHOOOG One-Shot* (November 1955, ed. many fans)
[3] *Femizine* #10/*Distaff* #1 (September 1958, ed. Ethel Lindsay)

# 4. The London Circle

In the last "Wigwam" *[Pam's regular column in* Femizine*]* I said I would give news of anything of interest that happened in London Fandom. I must confess that at that time I didn't think there would be much to report, but since then great things have been happening.

The London Circle must be the only group of SF enthusiasts which has been in existence for 12 years before officially coming into being. Not only that but it has performed a fannish Phoenix act, for the end of the last year saw the London Circle quite literally in ashes. A few old stalwarts hung about rather pointlessly, and newcomers plodded hopefully on refusing to admit that they had in fact joined something which did not exist, and yet loath to start something alive themselves.

It is odd to reflect that the medicine needed for the cure has been avoided like the plague by the London Circle, that our proud boast that we were unorganised should boomerang on us and give us renewed vitality. Yes we're organised. In the past it has only been at Convention time that the London Circle has had a committee, and that merely to run the Convention itself. It is perhaps significant that the gradual decline has set in since we ceased to hold and be responsible for our own conventions. There have been conventions at Kettering of course, but they were different. What we have never realised is that we have in fact always had a sort of loose organisation because our yearly committee did perform much the same function by acting as a binding force and giving us a substantial reason for being.

The 1957 Worldcon was not, of course, a London Convention. The London Circle acted as the pivot of the madly gyrating wheel which graced itself with the name of Committee, but the Convention itself was very much a joint effort – it was in fact run by British Fandom. It was not our baby. In particular the programme, which can be said to be the facet of a convention which gives the most satisfaction for the hard work involved, was virtually a closed book to us. Liverpool of course are well known for their skill in putting on programme items of a very high standard, and it is only right that all credit should go to them for the job they did. At the same time, we of the London Circle, whilst putting in a great deal of hard work, could not take the same parochial pride in a job well done.

The last convention to be held under the auspices of the London Circle proper was at the Bonnington in 1953. At the time it was, like so

many conventions, bitterly criticised, but in retrospect, again in common with many others, it has been hailed as a first class convention. It paved the way for Manchester, whose success was due in no small way to the spirit of conventioneering which the experienced London Circle took with them to that Convention.

The truth is that the London Circle occupies an unusual position in Fandom in that unlike most groups, which are frequently shattered into splinter groups after conventions, it thrives on them, using them almost as a blood transfusion. Looking back we realise that we recruited quite a few members at our conventions. The London Circle has a great deal in common with many groups in the States in that it is large and unwieldy and needs the driving force of a sort of group loyalty and pride to keep it alive and kicking. Many large groups in the States hold their own conventions independently of the Worldcons and I think it would be a good plan if in future London were to do likewise. This does not mean that no other British group should hold a convention. Far from it: they should hold this convention which will be supported, provided the London Circle is in a healthy group state, by us. But in those years we should hold a one day Conversazione, which would have the character of the London Circle itself. We are in fact planning one such in September and we hope that as many of you as possible will join us, if not in body at least in spirit. It will be held for the best of all reasons – because the London Circle wants to entertain and wants to see as large a group as possible of SF fans gathered together to enjoy themselves.

Yes, we are beginning to get back some of the sense of unity, albeit loosely controlled, which has been the essence of the Circle without our knowing it. We hope that the rest of British fandom will look forward to their next visit to London, and that they may enjoy lively and stimulating company. In this context, may I express a personal hope that the members of the London Circle will check a certain laxity of language which has been in evidence lately and which will not be appreciated by the more mature types of newcomer we hope to attract.

We have formed a Committee without really needing one, except for any eventuality. It consists of Ted Tubb, Chairman; Charlie Duncombe, Treasurer; Sandra Hall, Secretary; Pete Taylor, Publicity Office; Vin¢ Clarke, Ella Parker, and Ken Bulmer. It was decided by vote that married couples should not sit on the Committee, and the reasons for this are obvious. With a small compact Committee (which is best for getting things done) a couple of husband and wife teams would form the Committee and no one else would get a look in. In any event at least two of the members

have a say through their husbands. The Committee is very well balanced. There are three newcomers, or young members, and four are old hands at the game.

The first project which the rejuvenated LC has in mind is a pilgrimage to the shrine of the Knights of St. Fantony at Cheltenham. Many of us have long wanted to visit the Cheltenham group, having admired their enthusiasm from afar for some time past. They have built themselves a reputation out of all proportion to their numbers. Now we are all eagerly looking forward to Whitsuntide and the spirit in the LC is very much akin to that at the time of the glorious *[Super]*Mancon. This is a good omen – the Dark Ages of the LC are over. [1]

> *Bobbie Wild's account of the Cheltenham visit appears in this volume titled "Tourney Journey". Unfortunately, Pam's hopes for the apparently revitalised London Circle would be dashed, and after the "Conversazione" the Circle would schism, with the dissidents forming their own "Science Fiction Club of London" (see* 1965: The Second UK Worldcon*). Which is a great shame, particularly as it appears the Symposium (as the "Conversazione" came to be called) may have been intended as the first in a series of London "regional" conventions, possibly pointing to a different timeline than the one we find ourselves in.*

Since the last Wigwam a great deal has happened here in London. I was somewhat over hopeful about the future of the revived London Circle which in its revitalised form can be said to have scarcely survived its own birth pangs. I'm not going to go into detail about this here since I regard it as an internal matter far too complicated for the space at my disposal. However we are now back to our unorganised organisation of the revived LC, as suggested by Ken and Ted at Christmas 1958, with a meeting on the first Thursday of the month but with the cash side on the basis of subs being collected only when a project is in the air. At present the Globe is being refurbished and I hope that this will either precipitate a change of meeting place or at least serve to relieve the gloomy atmosphere which the decorations of the Globe seem to cast on the surroundings before we even start.

The site and time for next year's convention has now been settled as London at Easter, with the difference that it will be run by the BSFA. From the accounts we have had of the Birmingham con – BSFA sponsored and run – which almost invariably sing the praises of the gathering, it seems that the BSFA should do right by the Old Smoke. This is a welcome

sign in fandom – the growth of a body willing to take on conventions as part and parcel of its fanning and to provide an association that, although the members may change from year to year, will have the traditions of successful cons behind it. This tradition we here in London have had since the early days just after the war – and before, of course – and I am very happy that the BSFA is now going to have a crack of the whip. Another good facet of this is that they will have the advantage of calling on people outside London as well as the stalwarts of the BSFA in London. One last word – owing to maternal commitments there is a possibility that I shan't be there to meet all our friends. However, I shall do my best to pop in for an hour or so, at least. [2]

[1] *Femizine* #11 (May 1959, ed. Ethel Lindsay)
[2] *Femizine* #12 (Autumn 1959, ed. Ethel Lindsay)

# Joy Goodwin/Clarke

A divorcée who first met other fans at 1954's MEDCON, Joy soon got together with Vin¢ Clarke. Though she would take his name, be referred to by everyone as his wife, and have a daughter with him, they never actually married. Photo with Sandy Sanderson.

# 1. Around the Bend in Four Days

*In 1955, Ken Bulmer won TAFF (the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund) and he and Pamela attended the Clevention, that year's Worldcon held in Cleveland, Ohio. Today one would buy any additional clothing required for such a trip, but back in those less prosperous days this wasn't an option.*

It was early in July when Pamela Bulmer, the beautiful editor of *Ugh!*, and her husband really settled down to getting ready to go to America. They had received a letter from Ghod *[aka Walt Willis]* which told them that they had just scraped through in the TAFF vote, one vote for them and none for anyone else – can't think why Vin¢ bothered to vote for Ken, but I suppose that since he proposed them for the trip he'd better show willing and vote, too. Pamela nearly collapsed from shock and though I pulled the rug out from under her, she still didn't fall down the stairs. Ken sucked his pipe and muttered, "I suppose I'd better get a job to pay for this woman's trip." After Pamela recovered she opened the wardrobe door and shuddered. ((You mean *Ken* was in the wardrobe? – ed))

"Joy, I'm going to need some help."

I shuddered. I knew Pamela's ideas of helping... we'll just alter this neckline here and take out these pleats and add a little bit on the hip and alter the waist, oh and this blouse wants to be altered and I've a number of nightdresses and underclothes to make. If I just tell you what I want doing you can do it can't you...? Numbly, I nodded. After all, if I did alter them and they didn't come out right, I'd always be able to say, "Well, I didn't understand how you meant."

Gradually, she got her lists of clothes ready – hers taking up three foolscap pages and Ken's written on the back of an envelope. Ken was having trouble with shirts – he had about a couple of dozen but Pamela appropriated three quarters of those out of which to make blouses. We started sewing, Daphne came up and started sewing, even Audrey-across-the-road came in and started sewing.

Then at the end of June, they heard they would have a ship in the last two weeks of August – at the beginning of July they heard the ship had been moved forward to between the 6th and 10th of August. On the 20th or so of July they heard it would be the last week in July – PANIC! Sewing till midnight oil was gone and morning oil was going, too. Two

days later Pamela realised that the last week in July was – oh horrors, next week! Then on the Thursday they heard that they were to leave on Sunday, 24th July. When Ken got the tickets, he found no steamer reservation tickets inside. Friday he rings up Euston to sort it out and couldn't get any satisfaction but muggins here says, "Well, I've got to go to work tomorrow. I'll drop in and sort it out. It won't take a minute." That's what I thought!

Saturday I roll in to work, on time for a change, and very sweetly explain to the boss just what's happened and could I take half-an-hour off to go to Euston and sort it out. Well, an hour later I'm standing in a queue with about a dozen people in front of me, trying to get seat reservations for them on a train on *Saturday* night – there were no steamer reservation tickets in London for the Sunday train, in fact there probably wouldn't be any in Holyhead either when they got there. I started to sweat. By dint of smiling rather sweetly and looking pitiful I managed to wangle two tickets for a train leaving on Saturday. When I got back to work the boss was less a lot more hair than usual, but anyway we finished on time and I got back to Tresco *[the Bulmer abode]*. Pamela then lost some hair when I told her that instead of a day, she had a minimum of six hours in which to get ready.

She was still sewing, Ken was still finishing off promised articles, and Vin¢ was there tearing round collecting laundry, handing in medical cards and buying ear-rings to Pamela's order, etc. We all swallowed some dinner at double-quick time and Audrey-across-the-road came in and Sid her husband promised to take the luggage down to the station when we were ready. Come four o'clock and the sewing's finished and Vin¢ and Ken are tearing the cases to pieces believing that they have elastic sides. I shove them out of the way and pack one with toilet essentials, and permanent wave lotion and so forth – even the box camera contained toilet gear. ("Hand me my camera, Ken. I want to spend a penny." – Pamela.)

By five o'clock we had managed to bully Pamela into the bath and by six she was actually drinking tea and swallowing sandwiches feeling nervous and seasick at the thought of being seasick. Dorothy and Jimmy Ratigan had dropped in to say goodbye and wish them all the best. Audrey and Sid collected the cases and – phew! – it was time to leave. Vin¢ and I stayed behind to clear up – clear up... hah.... knee-deep in remnants and wreckage, empty boxes and tissue paper, dirty clothes that hadn't had five minutes to be washed in. I filled the sink with water and dumped into it all the dirty crockery. The dirty clothes got pushed into the washing machine and the wreckage into a corner.

Monday I get a card – safely aboard ship, sailing 5-6 Monday evening. Last night Pamela laid her best suit on the bed and during the night it fell into a pool of water on the cabin floor. Oh, well, at least if the ship sinks they'll drown quickly. And there we leave our intrepid fans, sailing across a heaving sea, heaving, heaving, heaving....

*Pam Bulmer picks up the tale earlier in this volume.*

– *Ploy* #4 (September 1955, ed. Ron Bennett)

# 2. Beneath the British Museum

A day is not long enough but, in a sense, even a couple of hours is too long. The mind reels at the beauty of workmanship, the magnificence of the collections, and eventually, surfeited, one gazes on each new item with a muttered “Huh!” of disinterest. If you have enough time in England, visit the British Museum often and for short intervals: if you haven’t much time, just pick the items you particularly long to see, look at them, then go. And carry slippers with you and change into them on arrival at the Museum.... believe me, it’s worth it.

What you won’t be able to see at the Museum will be the Reading Room for this can only be visited by ticket... with certain very notable exceptions, such as me! It was about the time that fanzine publishers first discovered that the British Museum was, by law, entitled to copies of their magazines. A new issue of *Eye* had just been published, the Museum had written asking for a copy, so Vin¢ and I, thinking to save some postage, decided to drop in on the Museum on Saturday afternoon, after work.

Explaining to janitor after janitor that we had a copy of a magazine the Museum had asked for – see, no flimsy excuses for us – we were passed along from hand to hand, up to the portals of the circular reading room. The janitor here was a little bit more cautious – no crazy publishers were going to put anything over on him! Once more we told our story, then he went over to the man who hides in the central enclosure to see the students don’t pinch the books, and told him all about it.

With an awed expression in his eyes, he returned to tell us we might enter and explain to the man in the cage. Gleeing within, we trod the hallowed floor and told our story – for at least the sixth time – and, respectfully, the man took up a bunch of keys and escorted us over to the further door, unlocked it, showed us through and followed, locking it behind him. This procedure took us through numerous doors, down into the cellars of the Museum.

Down here, a faint twilight filtered through the curtained windows, falling in pale patches on cupboard and bench, all cluttered with rare objects for which there was no room in the show cases in the public part of the museum. Silently they awaited their turn for public adulation, and the rooms looked like a bankrupt antique shop of best quality before the auctioneer had found time to list the items. The steady plodding beside us of the librarian prevented our loitering to feast our eyes, though. A final

unlocking, passing through and re-locking led us into the Holy of Holies, the offices of the Keeper of the Printed Books.

From floor to ceiling – a *high* ceiling, too – were partitioned shelves, all the way round the room. In front, laden with papers, ran a shelf. Around the corner was Himself, with assistant. I don't quite know what I expected – a little gnome of a man, perhaps, with long white beard and balding head, gold-rimmed spectacles on the tip of his nose and a habit of glancing at one above them. He wasn't there, though. Instead, two very ordinary looking gentlemen, who would have been at home in a City office, worked at a large wooden bench. The librarian-conductor had left us, so for the last time we told our story, handed over the copy of *Eye* and watched as our addition to the history of Man was entered in a – there is *no* other word for it – a TOME. About a couple of feet high and a foot-and-a-half across and six inches thick, bound in calf leather, the Book was taken down from a shelf and opened on the bench. Herein, *Eye* was solemnly entered and a receipt made out and handed to us.

We stopped to talk and found that the papers on the bench were merely those that had been published that day. In the shelves were the accumulation of that particular month. When a month's collection had been made, they were packed, sent away to be bound, then placed in the Keeper's Archives, ready for examination on request in the reading room. With a mere couple of hundred or so papers published every day – and that excludes all magazines – they had enough to keep them busy for ages. Meanwhile they were changing from the old tome to modern looseleaf books, in which everything, magazines included, was entered from the time books were first collected by the Museum.

What was fascinating was the way these men spoke, not of the present, but of the future. As we would talk of what we would be doing in a couple of hours' time, they spoke of the next ten or twenty years, when the Museum would have to be enlarged. Already the future was too late, and time leaving the Museum overcrowded.

It would have been pleasant to have stayed to talk longer, but every minute meant another magazine unentered in the book, and we left, no longer wondering if the Keeper ever read our precious gems... we knew darn well he didn't have time.

– excerpted from *This Sceptred Isle* pt.1
(June 1956, ed. Joy Clarke for OMPA)

*This was originally intended to be a part-work that would eventually be assembled and made available to overseas fans*

*attending the 1957 Worldcon in London, but no further parts were produced.*

# 3. Ad Feminem

I'm a member of the advertising copy staff of a publisher. The books published are *Housing and Estates*, *Scooter and Three Wheeler*, *Motoring Weekly Advertiser* and (my own baby) *National Weekly*, a sort of three-colour *Exchange and Mart*. Although *E&M* have been going 89 years, they have never had any competition at all and apparently we, with our considerably cheaper ad-rates and with reportedly swifter, service are making them look to their... the heck with it, let's use a cliché... laurels.

For the benefit of the foreigners in OMPA, especially the Americans who I believe have no similar publication, I should perhaps explain that the *E&M* is a magazine composed solely of advertisements, the majority of which are the small ad or classified type. It is on a rough newsprint paper and sells at 4d each week to a very large public. *National Weekly* is a similar publication although at the moment we have a larger proportion of display ads.

The staff consists of the usual rather weird collection of ad men – the Advertisement Director, Phil Turner, who is over the ad section of all four zines, is a pleasant faced, pleasant natured man with bright red hair. Under him in our magazine comes the Ad Manager, one of the crawlers, who ignores your suggestions then turns up with them to the directors a few days later as his own bright ideas. The Make-up Man is an anarchist of, I should say, 24 or 25 with a small Henry VIII type beard. The Small Ad Manager is a pleasant woman whose husband is works director at a plastic bottle manufacturer in Kingston and who has no need to work but is one of those people who read very little and who are thus bored if they stay at home because they have no interests other than the "telly" (ugly word!). Her assistant is a young boy named Harry. Then there is me who gets in copy, helps compose direct mail shots and is general assistant to everybody who needs help, and finally Pete Taylor, another British fan.

Life here is quite fun. I've had lunch with one of the clients whose copy I take, and numerous arguments, enjoyable in the fact that he has the sparkle of a fan and who, strangely enough, knows Helen Winnick slightly, with Don. (Hell, my grammar went to pot there!) I can meet Ted Carnell for lunch quite easily – he's only at the other end of Fleet Street (until he moves next week that is). People talk about the romance of Fleet Street, and it is quite a tangible thing for those who work there. There seems a minor frenzy, a hurry about everything, as if the presses mark off

the seconds as they roll. The feeling of being “in” on everything, on news, on rumours, on who did what when to whom, is everywhere. A tingle of excitement seems to be in the air and whether it is felt by those who visit the place for a short while, or only by those who work there, I don’t know. It’s a fascinating sensation.

And, of course, I’m within five minutes’ walk from the Globe.

– adapted from *The Lesser Flea* #7 (June 1956, ed. Joy Clarke for OMPA)

*At a guess, the congenial “Don” in the fourth paragraph is the Make-up Man – the only male in the earlier staff round-up who’s neither named nor disparaged. [Ed.]*

# 4. Finding Fandom

*In 1958, in response to declining convention attendances and the lack of channels of recruitment since the demise of* Operation Fantast, *Vin¢ Clarke called for the creation of a new national fan organisation, one that would present a sercon front but was intended to bring people into fandom proper. This would eventually result in the creation of the British Science Fiction Association, but in the meantime it provoked a lot of discussion.*

Why should an SF society act as the spearhead for the development of good SF in "the legitimate arts", hmm? Remember Ken Slater did a damned good job on organising so that neofans could contact those already in fandom? Should he have used such an organisation to develop SF in the leg. arts? After all, what I consider as literary SF – *Day of the Triffids, 1984,* for example – are of course in the legitimate arts NOT considered as SF. Once anything gets really well done the critics deprive it of the name of SF. Surely, anyway, it's up to the artists and authors themselves to improve the quality, not the readers, who can only act as a spur.

Ted Tubb, of course, does his usual stirring. Pity he didn't make some useful constructive criticisms. What, for instance, did he ever do in group activities, except participate in a ballet? *[At the 1953 Eastercon – seriously!]* It's all right by Ted if organisation is undertaken, provided of course it's undertaken by someone else, probably Vin¢. It's odd how everyone always turns round with the idea of an organisation in which Vin ¢ will do the work.

I'll tell Ted too why there are so few subscribers to fanzines. Because most of the editors are now limiting their circulation (due to the expense of paper and stencils) and are therefore using them for exchanges with fanzines they would like to read, instead of sending them to people who might pay and might not, and who can't even be bothered to drop a note to the editor when they receive a copy. Of course, it's easy to suggest that Vin¢'s idea entailed a phony organisation, which it didn't, but that's typical of Ted's "stirring proclivities". What Vin¢ suggested was that perhaps the usual business subterfuges might be used to gain prestige. If that's phony, then will Ted state honestly, hand on heart, and mean it that he or his *[distribution]* manager never misquoted the circulation of *Authentic*? I've never yet known any prozine that didn't exaggerate its

circulation, so as to obtain ads, and if Panthers didn't then I'll want to know how come. This sort of destructive and twisted criticism tends to get a little boring.

Sandy stated last issue in *Blunt* that, if the neofan is not met on his own level first, he will be lost to us. Speaking personally, I like to consider myself a trufan – in fact, I believe other people often consider me as a seventh fandomer (which I don't mind) in spite of the fact that the first contact I had with fandom was the Medcon in 1953. I first noticed a mention of fandom in, I believe, *Nebula*, where *Operation Fantast* was mentioned. Eventually I joined this and Ken Slater introduced me to many of his contacts. I then saw a note somewhere, either through Ken or the prozines, of the Medcon and, knowing nothing about fandom, wrote to Tony Thorne asking him to book me a room at a hotel so I could go.

I believe that this caused considerable consternation – an unknown fan writing out of the blue, asking for a hotel room. But he did book me a room, I attended – and was completely confused, and desperately shy. Not knowing what to do, I asked Win Thorne (no relation, was she? *[no]*) if there was anything I could do to help. There was collating and stapling the *Medway Journal*. In the midst of this, I met MachiaVarley, Dave Newman, Stuart and Connie Mackenzie, and Eric Bentcliffe. Furthermore, there was a gang of crazy people running around squirting water pistols. I was mystified. One was an eminent author, another a now bearded trufan, known to Bob Madle as sercon. Gawd, what an odd crew! But nobody, I repeat NOBODY, met me on my level and I still wasn't lost to fandom... though perhaps you wish I were. I had no more contact although I tried (didn't I, *dear*?)... I tried to find out about Operation Splash for the SuperManCon (remember, dear?) but was unsuccessful. I had to go up by train, didn't I, *dear*? Chuck Harris, Fred Smith took me under their fannish wings – Chuck introduced me to *Hyphen* and Pogo. Now, I ask you, what sort of treatment is this for a poor mystified neofan? Yet, I figured the slang out, I laughed at Pogo and I've been a fan ever since.

My attitude then is that, if the trufan is a possible, he or she'll join fandom whatever the difficulties. I did; others can. It's the fan who'll develop only to fringefandom who needs encouragement and gentle persuasion, not the trufan.

– *The Lesser Flea* #10 (June 1958, ed. Joy Clarke for OMPA)

# 5. A Tale of Two Inchmerys

*Their flat at 7 Inchmery Rd, Catford, London, SE6 gave the Inchmery trio of Sandy Sanderson, Vin¢ Clarke, and Joy Clarke the group name they were known by, but it was not ideal.*

We are looking for a new flat. Our present one is all right but it has some drawbacks. Our landlord (over 70) has Parkinson's disease which is incurable and goes to bed at the latest at 10:30 while his wife who is over 60 more often than not goes to bed before 10 p.m. Their bedroom is under our living room and with the floor of one room being the ceiling of another, we can't type, play music or have a party with any ease of conscience. The telephone, which is the landlord's, is right outside their bedroom too, so naturally after they've gone to bed we don't use it. At least not unless someone rings us up at 11:45 p.m. we don't.

So now we're looking for a new flat, preferably in the SE London area. It has to have two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and bathroom, be for preference over business or shop premises and be less than £5.5.-d a week furnished. We've looked at a number but so far no dice.

*Eventually they found one.*

We'd been looking for a new flat for some time, but it was the end of October when I spotted an ad in the local paper for two, both over shops. I rang the advertiser – a sort of unbusinesslike but kind woman – and she sadly informed me that someone had already taken one flat and the other was being inspected. When Vin¢ rang later to check, it had gone. He was about to ring off when the woman said that there was a third flat which had not yet been advertised... it was in very poor condition, the furniture having suffered from the antics of the children of the former occupier. Vin ¢ told her that it was all right – we would take that into account when we looked at it, and could we see it that evening? Somewhat reluctantly, and with further demurrals about its condition, she agreed and told us to ring the next door neighbour's bell for the key. Hastily we assembled at New Cross at ten-to-six and hurried to the address which we discovered was over a good quality second-hand furniture shop that had a shelf of books outside. Score one in our favour.

Vin¢, with newly-bought-for-the-occasion torch, led the way. There were two floors, one with a living room fronting the main road, facing due north, and behind that a dining room and an extension wing further back

with an all-electric kitchen and a bathroom. Above the living and dining rooms were the two bedrooms. The all-electric aspect was terrific; the shambles the landlady had predicted puzzled us as to her standards. We weren't used to seeing places in such *good* condition for it was a king in comparison to most others we had examined. The three of us looked at each other and just said, "Yes!"

> *Sanderson: "The new address, as from 8th November, 1958 is given below. (Rather than establish a new group name we decided to take the old one with us and made it the name of the house.)" The new address was: "Inchmery", 236 Queens Road, London SE14.*

A few further notes on this district might be of interest for future visitors. Apart from the historical connections – Pepys for instance (who is commemorated all over the district), Haberdasher Aske, founder of several public schools (there is one in this area) and various other notables – we have a Chinese restaurant about a mile and a half away in the centre of Deptford, which is the borough to which we belong (New Cross is only the postal district and name of the main railway station... although Queens Road Station is the nearest). Come to think of it, the situation is even more confusing. Inchmery is in "Hatcham" which I believe was once the grounds of one of the big houses in about the 17th and 18th centuries. Of course you've heard about the post office next door but one, the laundrette on the corner about six shops away, the odd government-surplus stores scattered through the area and the branch of the library about four minutes walk away. Yeah, we've got all the amenities laid on. So if we say "Nip downstairs and post this letter" we are not guilty of hyperbole – that's just *exactly* what we mean.

> *Then the trio became four.*

At least Nicola will not stop our fanac altogether. Sandy and Vin¢ type, the hi-fi equipment plays at its usual volume and she seems to like the music. If only Vin¢ could find a way to couple her legs to the duper handle she could even earn her living. We'll think of a way yet.

I kept hounding certain stingy males for a refrigerator. Last week or at least it was last week when I wrote this – the milk went "off" for the umpteenth time. Vin¢ said – inspiration having struck – "We must have a fridge." "Right," I replied; "*Which* advocates the Lec, the others are too small or else something is wrong, so that's the one for us. I'll ring the London Electricity Board tomorrow." I did, too. They hadn't got any. And

it was going to take a fortnight to find out if they could get any.

So, deciding to make hay and all that before Vin¢ forgot we really needed one, I phoned another local firm that specialises in refrigerators and washing machines. “Yes madam... we’ve got them in stock. When would you like it delivered? We also give you a plastic mat... what colour would you like it? And a set of plastic boxes....” They took down the details over the phone. Three days later (payday, natch) they were on the doorstep with the fridge. I was in bed with food poisoning, contracted we suspect from firm’s canteen.

Never was a refrigerator welcomed with such open arms. The thought of Nicki having food that could be kept in good condition after the tins had been opened, the certainty that no meat was going to go bad in our house, the luxury of ice-cubes, jellies on the spot... We opened the door for the pleasure of seeing the light come on. We stuck water in the freezer and promptly made ourselves cold drinks just for the sheer pleasure of drinking them. The salads, formerly so limp and depressing, crackled in the dew-bin. The jellies set as we watched.

*To us a fridge is commonplace and unremarkable so their sense of wonder here might seem strange, yet it becomes understandable when you realise that in 1959 only 13% of UK households had one, nor were washing machines yet common. Sputnik may have launched the year before, but the future promised by SF belonged as much in the home as it did in space. Inchmery were ahead of my own family which didn’t acquire one of these wondrous appliances until the 1960s. If memory serves, 1959 is when we got our first TV, its many glass valves and tiny black and white cathode ray screen encased in a polished wooden housing that matched the polished walnut cabinet that housed our formidable radiogram. Only the bakelite plugs on these devices (bought separately back then) hinted at the plastic wave that was to come.*

– condensed from Joy’s columns in *Apporheta* #4-#11 (September 1958 to May 1959, ed. Sanderson)

# 6. The Con That Nearly Wasn't

*The 1960 UK national convention was held in London over the Easter weekend. It was the first to be run by an all-female committee, but through no fault of their own it almost didn't happen at all.*

Walt Willis probably expressed the feelings of British fen most succinctly with the cartoon on the bacover of the last *Hyphen*. It showed a search party in a boat setting out past the *Hyphen* lighthouse, bearing a banner reading "Britcon Search Party". Little did he know the final blow that fate would deal. Just as everyone was preparing to call it the Sandycon, the Sandringham Hotel cancelled our bookings, two days before the con was due to start. Outraged, Ella Parker set off for an all-day trip, finally ending up being assisted by the Paddington Chamber of Commerce who, disgusted at the hotel's behaviour, found us a haven at the Kingsley Hotel in Bloomsbury. These were no "little back rooms" – these were fully-fledged expensive rooms but the manager reduced the prices in order to help us in our difficulty. We were, I must admit, luckier than we should have been at the Sandringham. There was a far better hall, a bar, night porters and lounges, none of which would have been obtainable at the Sandringham. So the Sandycon become the Kingcon to our rather relieved hotel-hunter's delight. A hasty newsletter was sent out: instructions were left at the other hotel to forward callers on to the Kingsley – which a rather shamefaced man did. The manageress who pulled the boom on us, is, I understand, being tackled by the Chamber of Commerce.

We arrived at the hotel Friday night in Ron and Daphne Buckmaster's company and car. Ina Shorrock and John Roles were doing the registration and we gleefully renewed old acquaintance. It was a quiet evening at first but later, in one of the lounges, Don Ford, Ted Carnell, Brian Aldiss, Sandy, Ron Buckmaster and I had a wonderful reminiscing conversation on the old days – SF, *War Aces*, the lot. Figures drifted in and out, enjoying this as much as we did. SF is SO discussed these days.

About two in the morning Ron and Daphne, who were staying at Inchmery, drove me home. Sandy had registered in the hotel for two nights, so we left him to go to bed – which he did. But then, so had most of the others as they all wanted to get their strength up for the next day. We had received the programme booklets that evening, but it wasn't due to

start till 2:30 pm on Saturday, so we had plenty of time.

Saturday was the day I was going to book in, while Vin¢ decided to stay home and look after Nicki *[their baby daughter]*. He came up in the car however with Nicki, who was going to stay in the nursery overnight. Things got very complicated with movements to and from the hotel and Inchmery, with Nicki present and Nicki not present, Vin¢ present and not present, Nicki needing feeding and nappy-changing, and Ron providing car service to and from Inchmery, so you can guess that we might have missed a few items.

However, we saw the main part of the programme and we did manage to meet fans we see only at cons, so in all, from our point of view, it was successful.

We arrived in the middle of Doc Weir's opening speech on the Saturday. Owing to a little confusion we didn't catch what he was saying, but it must somehow have been derogatory to London because afterwards the then editor of *Vector* came up and apologised to Vin¢ for what Doc Weir had said. I'm dying with curiosity to read other people's conreps to find out what it was. He then introduced the two Guests of Honour, Ted (E.J.) Carnell of Nova Publications and Don Ford, the American TAFF Delegate. Don, with brilliant foresight, brought with him a present from the Cincinnati Group. Knowing that Ted was a "person who had everything" they decided to get him the one thing he didn't have – a bellybutton brush. This was received with delight by Ted and rapturous acclaim by the audience.

The presentation was followed by a short break, after which everyone re-assembled for Ted's speech. Before he began, however, the doors to the hall were flung wide and – surprise! surprise! – who should be introduced but Dave Kyle. A few short words from Dave were received with puzzlement. He claimed he had already given his speech and received no applause. "At the Sandringham," he explained to laughter. Ted's speech was on what seems to be developing into a regular con-item – "Whither SF?" The speech was good, the questions pertinent, but not nearly enough time had been set aside for what could have developed into an excellent debate. It is time programme organisers realise that people are really troubled by the SF slump and give attendees time to discuss this in debate instead of cutting down on the time-allowance.

After the tea-break, the TAFF Candidates Panel was presented. This fell down badly. Doc Weir had prepared a long screed of questions more suited to those who specialise in answering straight SF questions, instead of fan questions. The audience suffered for about 15 minutes before Atom

had the sense to send a demand to the M.C. that he change to fan questions. Eric Jones, who acted as question master on this panel, presented his back to Sandy during almost the whole of this panel. It would have been far better had he been at the end of the table, with the three candidates in front of him. Marks were being counted during the Doc Weir questions but the results were not announced. However, I was keeping score at the same time and these came out approximately as follows: Sandy 3¾, Eric 2½, Mal 1½. With the fan questions – such as "What do you think is the most outstanding contribution to fandom by the other two candidates?" – these three came into their own. They kept their end up much more happily and the audience at last was being entertained. Even counting for my own bias in Sandy's favour, I must say that I believe Sandy was the most fluent in replies, with Eric the more humorous. Mal had been thrown off-balance by the earlier questions and was only just recovering when, once again, time was called and the audience felt the let-down.

The next item however was everything a con item should be. It was colourful, interesting, dealt with fan personalities and places, and kept the attention of the fans for – heavens, I've no idea how long but it just wasn't long enough – probably an hour and a half. It was the best item in the whole weekend and it was entirely due to Don Ford that we were able to enjoy it. It was the presentation of Don's colour slides. From the very first slide shown, the attention of the audience was riveted on the screen. Those who knew anything about photography were stunned. It is my own opinion, as an ex-exhibition photographer, that no professional in Britain could touch Don for brilliance of composition, reproduction of colour, and general artistry throughout. His night shots were wonderful; his commentary just right. With a delightful touch he had taken photos of his trip starting in Ohio and ending in London. This called from the audience the comment: "Don, have you got a shot of yourself standing by the screen telling us about these?" Only one question was in poor taste and that was put by the local troublemaker and is best forgotten.

Finally, when we had all recovered from the overwhelming effect of these slides, the fancy dress ball went on. Unfortunately, there were less than a dozen costumes. Almost from the start the obvious winners were two of the Witches of Karres – Ethel Lindsay and Ina Shorrock. Over here we have a milk advertisement which reads "DRINKA PINTA MILKA DAY", and no, that is not irrelevant. On the back of Ethel's cloak was embroidered "DRINKA PINTA BLOODA DAY". The high crowned hats and, in Ina's case, the fake lank locks depending from it, were the perfect

touch. They deserved their first prize – books from Ken Slater's stand.

Sunday's programme started in the morning with the BSFA business meeting. Skilfully chairwomaned by Bobbie Gray, this went through without over-much unnecessary chatter and the important decisions taken at that meeting were as follows:

a) A solicitor's letter should be sent to the Sandringham.

b) Fees, from 1st January 1961, for the BSFA should be reduced to 15/- a year with a 5/- entrance fee payable on joining.

c) The new officials – Ella Parker as Secretary, Archie still Treasurer though refusing to carry on a further year, James Groves as Editor of *Vector*, and Ina Shorrock as Chairman. It was decided to elect a President and Brian Aldiss was chosen.

A short note to Ina from us brought forth the expected response. "How do you like being 'taken over' by Inchmery?" it read. With a broad grin, she replied, "That'll Be the Day!" (Special in-group joke for those who realise that Inchmery took over the London Circle by forming the SFCoL of which Ella is Chairman and Jim Groves Secretary.)*

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** Also, Ina's response is the name of a Buddy Holly song then being played at gigs by any number of bands on the burgeoning Liverpool music scene – including the Quarrymen, who later became the Beatles. [Ed.]*

After lunch *This Is Your Fan Life* was produced. Although it was only a very short item, it was excellently done. The protagonists had been told it was Terry Jeeves. Unfortunately for Norman Shorrock's happy faith in fan nature, it wasn't. The expression on Norman's face as the truth came out was bliss to see. Norman's life was built up in true TV style – with Doc Weir as his old schoolmaster, John Roles and Ina, and others, acting out other parts of his life, and Eric Jones masterminding the superb tape-recording. One item on this tape was so brilliant that all the recording fans swarmed to Eric on completion of the show – "How did you do it?" they wanted to know. "It" was a recording of a 1,000 strong choir chanting a paean of praise to Harrison against swelling organ music in a cathedral. "Harrison, O Harrison" is probably the fan music of today.

*The fictional adventures of Sir William Makepeace Harrison have since been collected in the free TAFF ebook* The Harrison Saga.

Unfortunately, I missed most of Doc Weir's talk on Karel Čapek as Nicki had to be changed. The start was excellent; I can only assume it would not have got poorer as it went along. I returned in time for the TAFF Auction

with Ron Bennett whipping up enthusiasm. The highest price paid for any item was 70/- (about $10) for a Brian Lewis *New Worlds* cover painting which Gunther Loth, a young fan from Germany, acquired. In all, TAFF made £15 – but it was tragic to see some of the old (sorry, ooooold) prozines going for a mere bob or two each.

In the evening, we started off with *The Day the Earth Stood Still* – the film version of "Farewell to the Master". Two amusing episodes broke up the back rows. At one instance a man dashes across the street frantically waving his arms and screaming, "The spaceship's landed... the spaceship's landed!" Vin¢ murmured, "He's found his sense of wonder." Later one of the characters says, "Good night." Her Royal Highness Nicki the First promptly gets into the game... "Ta-ta, ta-ta, ta-ta," she chanted for the next minute.

After this, amateur films were shown. I was embarrassed for Dave Kyle. His films were not up to the amateur standard we in Britain are used to, and the films jumped the sprocket continually, mainly I think because of bad splicing. He had guts though – he stood up there and took it; me, I'd have died.

This really ended the con. People drifted off: there was no official closing down. Room parties were going on and rapturously we received a BSS ticket for Don's party which was a very good one with hundreds crammed into one small room. We had a small OMPA meeting beforehand, but nothing of importance came up and really all we did was to welcome Don and have a small drink.

On Saturday, Sandy and I attended Ken Slater's room party – really a half-dozen conversationalists batting the ball around while sipping drinks – not what one would term an orgy but essentially pleasant and very stimulating. Phil Rogers, Jill Adams, Ken, we two, and Ron Buckmaster were there and we even received a phone call from a fake Don Ford. Later, however, we contacted the real one and he joined us too. Don had gone out at the end of the Saturday programme to take London night shots, so Americans are in for some fascinating pictures at the next con.

On Monday, we had threatened to take Don to Trafalgar Square to meet the Aldermaston "Ban-the Bomb" Marchers. A new con started: without those already in the march – Paul Hammett, Shivaji Lal (both doctors), and the Brunners – there were a total of 20 fans on the steps of St. Martins-in-the-Fields and half of them arrived back at Inchmery, along with Don. Don's tale of woe caused great delight. He had been moved on by police and protected by the public; lost his place and had it restored to him by the public pushing his usurper out; wandered around feeling he

should have worn a “press” badge.

Later we showed a film made by Ted Carnell of the 1957 London Worldcon, and a film made by Les Croutch of some early 1950s Cons with Don pointing out the various names. It was a good evening and made up the slight sense of “loss” at the indefinite programme arrangements.

I have several strong criticisms of the con organisation. The TAFF panel was scheduled for early afternoon. Anyone could have told Sandra – and probably did – that Eric Bentcliffe is seldom able to get away in time for such an item, as he has to work Saturday mornings. The programme was not circulated early enough – you had to wait until you got to the con hall before you received it. Consequently no possible arrangements could be worked out in advance. Insufficient time was allowed for many of the items, and this in spite of continuous advice by Bobbie who had learnt all the necessary lessons when working on the Worldcon. Sandra received praise for work she hadn’t done; Ella Parker didn’t receive enough for the work she had done. Finally, I cannot understand the howl to change the Con from Whitsun to Easter. There was a programme for only two days and most fans could have reached the hotel in time for the opening item had it been held at Whitsun, and still have been able to get home on the Monday. After all the fuss that was kicked up when it was first decided to hold the Con at Whitsun, I cannot see why more was not made of the opportunity when it was finally held at Easter. I think for the benefit of those who simply cannot get to a con at Easter for religious or other reasons, it would be politic to hold one at Whitsun once more. They were always successful when they were held at Whitsun in other years.

I have strong praise for some, though. Bobbie Gray did a most excellent job at the Business Meeting – halfway through she was forced into pulling the discussion together and acting as chairman, although previously someone else was supposed to be doing that. She did it with skill and grace and prevented many protracted discussions of unnecessary stuff. I also must praise Don Ford for saving the show with his slides.

There was not nearly enough time for anyone to really get to know Don. About all there was time for was the exchange of a few polite phrases. Even at his party he had to circulate amongst us and, though we probably were with Don more than many of the out-of-town fans, we found the time factor extremely limiting.

On the whole the con was a vague affair. As with the 1954 *[Super]*Mancon, fans made their own amusement most of the time, visiting with other fans and generally chewing the fat. Sandra should have taken more notice of advice given her by those who’d run earlier cons – Bobbie,

Ella, Ethel, the Liverpool Group, Eric Bentcliffe and so on. But she didn't, and the programme fell down because she wouldn't take advice. However, the BSFA is already planning next year's convention; they have a programme sub-committee already meeting and I am sure that it will be a 100% improvement over this one.

No one should blame the BSFA for any faults of this con: too much was handed over at too late a date too often for them to carry the can back. I think they deserve praise for having done so well under such difficult circumstances. Here's to the next one.

– *Cry* #140 (July 1960, ed. F.M. Busby)

# Bobbie Wild/Gray

An ex-WAAF, Roberta Wild found fandom in 1955, quickly moving to London from Slough and becoming part of the London Circle. In 1957 she was on the con committee for the Worldcon, held that year in London:

“Bobbie Wild, the Convention Secretary, an efficient, overworked and slightly harassed girl... said she had insured herself so that she could wrap a certain person’s blank guitar round his blank-blank neck with impunity. I

wished her luck.”

– James White, *Hyphen* #19 (January 1958, ed. Walt Willis & Chuck Harris)

# 1. RAF Memories

Mention of a Black Market in cigarettes reminded me of the time I was first posted to Germany. At that time, the Germans were still struggling to pick themselves up and to help them the currency had been changed from Reichmarks to Deutschmarks. We were paid in vouchers that had no value whatsoever off camp, so there was a great deal of black marketing going on in cigarettes, coffee and chocolate. I had been in Germany just over a week when I went to Dusseldorf with a number of airmen and Waafs. I had no intention of bartering cigarettes for five Deutschmarks per twenty as I smoked myself and we were rationed in an effort to stamp out the black market. I did have a couple of bars of chocolate (two and a half Deutschmarks per bar was the exchange rate).

When we arrived in Dusseldorf the men and girls with suspiciously bulging haversacks tapped them casually and the next moment they were surrounded by the German equivalent of “wide boys”, who were obviously going to sell the loot at an even higher price to their fellow countrymen. As I moved away, a woman with two small boys came up to me and asked in broken English if I had any sugar. My German was very uncertain, but I managed to make her understand that although I had no sugar I had a couple of bars of chocolate. As she took out her purse I noticed her clothing and that of her two small sons was patched, repatched and patched again but, by gosh, they were scrupulously clean and as neat as they could make themselves. Then the woman discovered she had only four marks and asked if I would take them instead of the usual five.

It was then I noticed how worn she looked and the desperation in her eyes. As I stood there with the marks in one hand and the chocolate in the other I remembered my own father had eventually died through wounds received in the first world war and how my mother was left a widow with five children to bring up. I remembered the struggle she had and how magnificently she overcame obstacles to bring us up decently; and I knew then that I couldn’t take money from this German widow. A mother is a mother the wide world over and they go through enough hell during a war without forcing more on them during war’s aftermath. I gave her back the marks and said she could have the chocolate, and the look on her face was worth more to me than any amount of currency.

Then I was afraid she was going to cry, so I muttered the only German I could think of “Gehen Sie mit Gott” and bolted. After that

incident I never attempted to play the black market because I would have always wondered what heartbreak and despair was behind every mark that changed hands. So they had been our enemies. Were those two small boys responsible for starting the war? No – I refuse to subscribe to the creed that "the sins of the fathers shall be visited unto the children even until the third and fourth generation".

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I see there is still an occasional mention of "supreme moments" in the mailing and I can recall three myself – one in the air, one on sea, one on land.

The first occurred when I went up on a test flight in a Beaufighter. At the time I was stationed at a RAF camp in East Yorkshire. When we went up I stood on the escape hatch behind the pilot and for the first few minutes he flung that aircraft about the sky as though it were a bird of paradise showing off during the mating season. Then he levelled out and, in spite of the roar of the engines, I suddenly became aware of the vastness and silence of space outside our tiny world.

It was breathtaking and our camp below could have been five million miles away instead of a mere six thousand feet below. When one is a mile high and tries to comprehend space in its entirety, it does not take long to feel small and insignificant beside the wonder of it all. A Halifax bomber appeared near us and the Beaufighter swooped towards it "shooting it up". But up in that vast emptiness it wasn't a fighter pilot "attacking a bomber", but a sparrow teasing an eagle. And then we came down to earth – faster than we expected because the port engine cut out. (Nice landing the pilot made, too, considering the speed with which we dropped.)

One of the other moments occurred when I was stationed in Oban in Argyllshire. Our section worked up at Ganavan Sands and directly opposite us was the Isle of Mull. The moment I recall occurred on a cold clear day after much snow had at last ceased to fall. At the time I was standing on the mainplane of the Sunderland flying boat and I happened to glance across the water to the Isles. What I saw impressed me so much that it is as clear now as it was then. The sea was very calm and reflected the light sparkling blue of the clear winter sky. And the island itself, streaming with purple, green and white, reared proudly out of the still blue waters. The snowcapped purple peaks flung themselves at the beaming sky in a wonderful soundless symphony of wild beauty – a beauty so awe-inspiring that you felt your heart give a tug and a lump come into your throat, then you realised that the sudden mist that obscured the loveliness was in your own eyes.

The other moment I described in another issue, but I'll describe it again. I'd gone moonlight fishing with an airman and we had rowed out into the Solent, but not too far from the shore. "It was a glorious night, too. A light, warm breeze came from the shore, bringing with it the heady scent of the wisteria with which the tired old castle clothed its ancient ruins. Across the Solent the lights of Cowes reflected in the water, and far away could be heard the faint chug-chug of a launch. The incoming tide whispered gently on the shore and the moonlight came down, and met the sea, shattering soundlessly into a pathway of a million gold coins."

Nature is sometimes very generous.

– *Vagary* #7 (March 1958, ed. Roberta Grey for OMPA)

# 2. Cytricon IV

I know it's usual for most fen to be exhausted at the end of a Con, but this year I reversed the process and was exhausted before I even arrived at Kettering. Ella (who has the makings of a Trufan except for one thing – you have to stand over her with a blunt instrument before she will put pen to paper) told me that she would be catching the 12:30 train from St. Pancras.

It was twenty to four when I left Tresco, and I honestly didn't expect to arrive at Kettering until some ungodly hour as, with my usual foresight, I hadn't looked up the timetables. I was lucky as I didn't have to wait anywhere and much to my surprise (and Ella's) I walked into the George Hotel at six-thirty. Ina Shorrock saw me at the desk and immediately breezed over to bid me welcome. You know, if ever I throw a really big party, to ensure its success I shall ask Ina to be hostess. She has the most wonderful knack of putting the shyest persons at their ease and making them feel welcome and thoroughly at home, which must help to bring them out of their shells.

Friday night, of course, was the gathering of the fans, many of whom hadn't seen each other since the last Con. I was sorry to see that none of the Belfast contingent were present, and very, very few of the London Circle. Brian and Barry *[Welham and Hall]* from Clacton were there and a couple of very pleasant and intelligent chaps they are, too! However, the rest of British fandom was well represented. For someone who was dog tired I managed fairly well as I seem to recall it was half-past one in the morning when I suddenly realised that by some oversight I hadn't had a cup of tea since before I left Tresco. Ella hadn't had one either, and Bill, that wonderfully kind night porter, said he would bring some to my room. He did too, and after that it was easy to tumble into bed and drop straight off to sleep.

Saturday, after breakfast, Ella wanted to see the town and it wasn't until we were halfway up the street that I blithely informed her that this was only my second time in Kettering and that I hadn't the slightest idea of the geography of the place. After that, she looked round rather grimly for likely places for tea. So intent was she on this search that she absent-mindedly stepped in front of a vehicle that came out of a side road. Fortunately, I saw it and hauled her back to the kerb – she'd said that she'd pay for the tea and I wasn't going to let her take such drastic steps to get

out of her promise. The vehicle turned out to be a hearse, of all things! – but although it was empty of cadavers, the driver looked so mournful you'd have thought there were half a dozen bodies in the back. Maybe he was just driving round practising – or maybe some peace-loving citizen had heard about the Con and had hired him to winnow the ranks of fandom.

On our return to the hotel who should be sitting on a chair outside the main lounge but Harris himself! He had already written to say that it was unlikely he would be at the Con, but when he found out that Vin¢ Clarke would not be there, he had come up so that he could write the Conrep for *Hyphen* himself.

"Come and eat" were his first words and Ella withdrew before I could tell her it was customary for fans to form up in crowds and take eateries by storm. A dozen of us set forth eventually, including Paul Hammett and his wife – and I must say that Paul talked far more sensibly about the horrors of the H-bomb than did the pugnacious pacifists who marched to Aldermaston and tried to overturn a car (with the occupants inside) because the people in it disagreed with their views.

Back to the hotel and the peripatetic way that is so much a part of a Con. I recall being in some room for a while – I think it was Ted Tubb's – with some fen. John Roles and I discussed OMPA while absent-mindedly drinking from the glasses that were thrust into our hands. Ted Tubb was trying to persuade Norman Wansborough that he had started a marriage bureau and was offering to find Norman a wife for a small fee. "You know the sort of thing, Norman. Young country gentleman seeks wife with similar tastes." He also offered NGW a drink which he assured him was quite innocuous, but had all sorts of mysterious ingredients in it with the result that Norman, who doesn't drink anything stronger than cider, was quite ill later on.

Eventually most of the fans gathered in the main lounge, prior to adjourning to tho Basket Lounge, where the party was to be held. Throughout the day John Roles and Ina Shorrock had been collecting money from the sale of raffle tickets for TAFF I had brought with me and they were still doing a brisk sale with them. It was originally intended that the draw for the *[book]* cover paintings should be held at the Saturday night party, but those fans who were there will no doubt realise why it slipped my mind.

There were several tapes to be played – mainly jazz and much too much of Elvis Presley. I was sitting with Harris (he had a bottle of Scotch. As it was getting low, we were getting high). Paul offered his last cigar to

Phil Rogers, who had already appropriated Joan Hammett. “You’ve taken my wife, you’ve taken my last cigar – there’s a bottle of liquor in my room. Would you like that, too?” asked Paul. “What’s the number of your room?” asked Phil, immediately losing interest in Joan and the cigar.

In the meantime Harris was pondering on the mating habits of snakes. I don’t know what put the idea into his head unless it was the fact that I’d wrapped myself round him in a half-nelson so he couldn’t get away (there was still some Scotch in the bottle). “Perhaps they lay out flat – or maybe they coil up together.” Since I had never thought about it I couldn’t tell him. Besides, I was too occupied in trying to tell him that blasted chairback was digging into me every time we went into a clinch. We solved that problem by only using one chair, though at one point I had to shove Ina off his other knee. Just as the last of the Scotch, which Chuck assured everyone was made out of old space socks, disappeared, Ina and Dave Newman appeared with the punch. It looked and tasted quite mild, but Ina told me that the base was 140 proof Polish white spirit. She forgot to tell me that the other ingredients included rocket fuel and a dash of Brasso. I came out of another clinch to find Ron Bennett regarding us in rather a bewildered way. “But, Bobbie, you’re really puzzling the OMPAns,” he said, bemusedly. For those who don’t know Chuck and I tore each other to pieces in the last OMPA mailing and no doubt a few thought battle would be joined when we both turned up at the con. Well, you saw a wrestling match, didn’t you?

Suddenly all I wanted to do was go to sleep. Maybe it was the punch or maybe it was the fact that I’d felt tired even at the beginning of the con. Harris was bidding me farewell in the approved manner when his mind suddenly reverted to the problem of snakes. “Maybe they tie themselves in reef knots,” he said into my ear. That did it! I suddenly had a mental picture of two unhappy and puzzled snakes trying to untangle themselves, and sitting on the ground I burst into a fit of the giggles. “This isn’t the sort of moment to get the giggles,” he said indignantly. But I couldn’t stop and it was his fault, anyway, for bringing the subject up again. In the end, he stalked away muttering, “I’m going to get you some coffee.” This was a mistake as by the time I got to bed after drinking it I couldn’t sleep.

This year the fans had a new idea, not room parties but corridor parties, and I lost count of the number of times they marched up and down. It sounded like the Afrika Korps and the Montgomery lot fighting to get the front row at the Folies Bergère. I recall that round about six o’clock I bellowed “Shut up!” to some fans near my room. Sorry, Archie, but I was so tired I was on the point of screaming with fatigue.

I could have sworn I hadn't been asleep for more than five minutes when I was awakened by a knock on the door – and there was Harris with a tea-tray in his hands. I dived back into bed: just as well I wasn't sleeping raw, he might have had some breakages to pay for. "What's the time?" I asked. "Half-past six," he grinned, then took a look at my face and said hastily, "No – half-past eight – don't throw the tea at me." Then he poured his own, tossed me the uninteresting part of the *Sunday Pictorial*, and sat down with his feet on the window sill. I wondered if this taking tea off the maids and bringing it in to other fans was an old Con custom that I'd missed out on until now, and since Harris was ignoring me I was also wondering if I should be relieved or insulted.

Later Sunday morning we held the traditional OMPA meeting and listened to a tape from Vin¢ Clarke anent waking up British fandom, which was the subject of discussion later in the day. The meeting concerned the state of British fandom, and it was finally decided that a Science Fiction Association should be formed. Dave Newman was voted in as Chairman, two members of the Cheltenham group as librarians, Ted Tubb as editor of the OO *[Official Organ]*, Archie Mercer as Treasurer, and Eric Bentcliffe and Terry Jeeves as joint secretaries. At the annual membership fee debate, Tubb surprised some of us by being against having the youngsters in at a reduced fee. If we don't encourage them who is going to take over when we are old and tired? Next came the discussion for the venue for the annual meetings and a seaside resort was voted for.

That evening we once again clustered into groups. Towards five in the morning, Barry decided he wanted to go to bed, so we all decided to take him. He was sharing a room with Bryan Welham, but for some reason or other when Jill sang out that we wanted to put Barry to bed, Bryan wouldn't unlock the door. We all pretended to go away, but Bryan refused to be fooled. Five minutes later, when we were momentarily off our guard, the door was suddenly opened, Barry was yanked in, and the door locked again before we had a chance to get a foothold. Those boys have makings of true fans.

Monday, of course, was farewell day and Ella, Jill, Ina and Norman, self, Jean *[Valis]*, and Peter *[West]* piled onto the train, calling out to Archie on the platform and asking him to send on the various things we had left at the hotel. I hadn't made a really outrageous remark for the whole of the con so at the very last moment I bawled one to Archie, then turned round and found a parson staring at me in horror... Thank Ghod I'd had the sense to ask for Tuesday morning off from the office.

– *Femizine* #10/*Distaff* #1 (September 1958,

ed. Ethel Lindsay)

# 3. Tourney Journey

*There are a couple of short sections in this where creased stencils and the like resulted in missing fanzine text and I had to infer the sort of thing this might have been from surrounding context. Where I've done so this appears in the usual square brackets.*

**Sandra Hall:**

It all began with Ted Tubb. He thought some of the London Circle would enjoy a submicrocon in Cheltenham at Whitsun. In a moment of madness he proposed a pilgrimage to the Shrine of St. Fantony, culminating in a tournament between the guardians of the Shrine and the Champions of the LC.

The enthusiasm in the atmosphere was unbelievable. It was stipulated that we should all wear fancy dress. I volunteered to be wardrobe mistress to sixteen assorted pilgrims. Wow, bearing in mind that (a) I was hoping to redecorate our new flat and (b) there were only twenty days to Whitsun anyway, I *should* have known better. I shall, next time. Armed with a lethal weapon heavily disguised as an umbrella and a fixed look of pleading agony, I descended on the bargain basements in Soho. Relentlessly I nagged their respective owners into a coma and emerged with armsful of remnants galore.

For days our new flat was strewn with quasi-medieval costumes, assorted semi-Arthurian headwear, vari-coloured materials and some tiaras (all fakes). My Grandmother left *[us to it]* and my sixteen-year-old *[sister]* Tikwis wrote home asking if she could be costumed as a Balinese dancing girl. She was effectively silenced by sending her a photograph of how little a dancing girl would wear. It was agreed that she would go as "the spoils of war", or "what the Crusaders brought back with them".

The flat was exceptionally full of all sorts of people at all times of the day and night. There was a continuous accompaniment of music. Bobbie Wild insisted on coming dressed as the Amazon Queen Hippolyta complete with golden armour and vivid red tunic. Pamela Bulmer was Morgan le Fay, the witch sister of Merlin the magician. This last was Mike Moorcock, changed by a long black robe, a golden wand, and an impressive line in spells designed expressly for the purpose of keeping the planet Earth in its present orbit. Cloaks of assorted colours and white

tunics were provided for the Knights of the London Circle, even a standard bearer and a page; though the costumes for these last two nearly drove me mad.

As it was arranged to take the food and drink with us, I offered to take care of the ordering. I contacted Quality Inns and asked them to provide a feast for thirty people. This they did. To them go our thanks.

I could have fitted all this activity in quite comfortably but for one thing. George Adamski of UFO fame was in town for a brief visit. It was essential that Bobbie and I got an interview with him for *Vector [the BSFA journal]*. Desmond Leslie, whom I know, promised he would arrange it but the only possible time would be the Friday evening before the con. We caught up with Adamski an hour before he was due to leave for his continental tour. The interview was given in the car on the way to the air terminus. Bobbie and I hardly had time to wave farewell to him before we tore home to change and pack. We then hared across London in time for the 1 a.m. train from Paddington.

We arrived in Cheltenham about 5 a.m. on the Saturday, just in time for our breakfast date with Bob Richardson. Even at that hour he looked quite pleased to see us! The two of us cleaned up and breakfasted before going into the town around 10 a.m. All this was in aid of the BSFA committee meeting which was being held at the Belle Vue hotel. This meeting lasted up to the time when the contingent of pilgrims who travelled by train from London walked into the hotel. This is where the fun really starts!

**Roberta Wild:**

Once the train party had arrived that was the end of the BSFA meeting. While they wandered off to got some lunch Sandra and I began preparations for the ceremony. Those who were available dressed in their costumes and wore make-up. The procession left the hotel on time and the people of Cheltenham were somewhat startled to see Merlin and Guinevere strolling along together followed by Hippolyta the Amazon Queen, and a knight in chain mail, Genghis Khan, a Balinese princess, a bowman, troubadour, a train-bearer and a herald. Unfortunately, the train-bearer had no train to hold as the Queen of Scotland was in Ted Tubb's car, which still hadn't arrived. As I said to Sandra, "It's no good worrying about them now – there are fans in that car – so it's sure to have at least three breakdowns."

A little way down from the hotel a woman said something I didn't catch, but it must have been a bit crotchety as a rather motherly looking woman said defensively, "But they aren't asking for anything". Pity I

hadn't thought of it; we could have taken a collection for the TAFF funds. No doubt some people would have cheerfully dropped a few coppers in the box without even bothering to ask what TAFF was. Some urchins were very much interested when Pete Taylor (the one in chain mail) paused by a cigarette machine and bawled, "Merlin, magic me up a doubloon so I may try this strange device." The Cheltenham fen had asked us to be at the clubrooms by 3 p.m., thus ensuring we would make it by 3:30, as fen never arrive anywhere on time. We arrived at 3 p.m. and almost gave them a nervous breakdown. As I was already a member of the Order of St. Fantony I went in first and asked permission for the others to enter.

The ceremony proceeded without delay. I sat there and let the others go ahead. Halfway through I "came to" and realised that this was not part of the initiation ceremony at all and hastily joined in. The London fen entered the Shrine one at a time, but I won't say what happened – after all, some of you may be going through it one day. Somewhere along the line I met a man dressed in royal Plantagenet costume who was standing so still I began to wonder if the Cheltenham fen had craftily whipped a dummy from the local museum with which to bemuse us. This was my introduction to Bill Gray.

Right in the middle of the ceremony there came a thunderous knocking at the door. Sir Lancelot (Ted Tubb) had arrived with his retinue. As I had surmised the car – oops, sorry, the chariot – had broken down several times. They were shown into a couple of rooms where they could change into their costumes. When they were ready Ted and Sandra were inducted into the Order as Knight and Lady respectively. Again I won't describe the procedure because there are sure to be fen yet to be dubbed; I will say Ted proved himself an expert in giving indirect answers to direct questions. Ken Bulmer, dressed as a Crusader, kept well in the rear insisting he was the dust cart in the Lord Mayor's procession.

After the induction ceremony the punch was served and both groups settled down to the serious business of making rapid inroads on it. The Plantagenet "dummy" was sitting near me and I turned and said to him, "But Richard III didn't have a beard." "I always wear a beard when playing him," was the reply. It was some time before it occurred to either of us he hadn't told me whom he was representing.

Someone realised that the evening was wearing on and the Knights had not yet met in combat. Archie Mercer, dressed as a Saxon serf, George Locke as bowman, and Ken helped Ted and Pete into the armour. Now the local inhabitants did take an interest. The combatants crossed their swords, I knocked them up with mine, and battle was joined. And a ding-dong

battle it was! The headpieces they were wearing somewhat obscured their vision so every now and again we had to dodge quickly and point them in the right direction. What they lacked in skill was more than compensated for by their enthusiasm. Broken swords and battle axes kept flying through the air, a shield cracked, and at one point so fast and furious was the tourney I got quite alarmed. There was no decision as most of the swords had been broken, and besides the knights needed a drink.

Jimmy Ratigan, another Crusader, pointed out to me that as an Amazon I should be fighting too. So he obligingly let me stab him to death. I heard the comment made that as an Amazon I hadn't entered into the spirit of things, but as I pointed out the Amazons didn't chop anything off themselves – that is a fallacy. As a matter of fact I was being dead cunning. The other girls were wearing long dresses (Tikwis looked cute as a Balinese princess) but I suspected that if I wore long robes I would only trip over them so I wore a knee-length red tunic with a heavy cloak, not too much armour, and leg greaves.

Most of the time I was deep in conversation with Richard III and disposing of most of his vodka, but suddenly decided it was time I went to the hotel to change. Several of us had the same idea but on the way we met Ted Tubb who said, "Don't change yet – I'm going into combat with the Cheltenham Champion." So back we all went and once more Ted climbed into his combat armour with Bob Richardson replacing Pete in the other set. This was battle royal! More broken swords and battle axes flying through the air. Bob at one time was left with only his shield for a weapon and this too suffered damage, going right through to make a nasty bruise on his arm. However, the wounds could not stop the party which followed. This went on 'til midnight.

On the following day – Sunday – we all met at the clubrooms at 3 p.m. Eric Jones, President of the Cheltenham club, had arranged a coach trip for us to Bourton-on-the-Water, sometimes known as the Venice of the Cotswolds. Although commercialised now, it is still a beautiful spot. Our first call was at the Witchcraft Exhibition. Very interesting, but something was slightly off-key about it. Halfway round I realised what it was and on checking with Sandra and Arthur (Doc) Weir found they had, noticed it too. Some of the spells and other stuff on display were inaccurate. I suspected this might be deliberate. Bill, who knew the man running the exhibition, admitted this was so – just in case people got ideas – and if anyone thinks they wouldn't in these modern times, take note; the latest spell on display was dated as having been used in the autumn of *1958*. It was found not in the depths of the country, but in Birmingham, one of

England's largest cities. There was also a room showing instruments of torture but I couldn't say what they were because I only saw a chair and when I read how it was used I suddenly felt my stomach heave and my face went green. I shall never understand how people could do such wicked things in the name of God.

On the return trip to Cheltenham we stopped at the Frognal. This is a charming little place, if anyone wants to visit a reasonable pub while in that district. Back at the clubrooms a few of us stayed behind to get the food ready for the others who had gone to the hotel or home to freshen. After the meal another party got under way. As the clubrooms had to be closed at midnight, Bill Gray suggested we go to his flat to continue the party; he was a bit dubious about it though. As he put it, his "sitting room was on the small side". Here was a man who had obviously never been to a room party. Without more ado we accepted the offer just to show him that over twenty people *could* get into his sitting room and still leave room for more. *[Sandra and I volunteered]* to help him in getting glasses and bottles out. *[Just then we saw a]* small something running frantically up *[the street. It]* was a hamster. Bill picked it up *[and it bit him. Then a man came running over. This was]* its owner; it was so *[happy to see him.]*

When we arrived at his *[flat, Bill cleaned the bite and bandaged his finger. The others got there soon after and there was much mockery of him drawing blood]* before we had got a glass out. By way of explanation I told them Bill had been bitten in the High Street by a hamster. This was greeted in astonished silence. I suppose it must have sounded rather odd.

Neither Sandra nor I had had much sleep because of travelling overnight on Friday, so about 1 a.m. we went back to the hotel to go to bed. Some time later I came out of a coma to hear Tikwis saying, "I think the boys are up to something. Perhaps you had better bolt your door." I fastened the silly little bolt after she had gone. Just as I dropped off to sleep again there came a knocking at the window. The Witchcraft Exhibition had given some of the boys ideas and they were trying to kid us a body was swinging outside our window. Then came a thunderous battering at the door.

Now, half-an-hour of this I wouldn't have minded so much, but it went on and on – mewlings, wolf howls and scrabblings at the door. I can go without sleep just so long, then my head starts splitting. Suddenly, I remembered my armour. I was out of bed, grabbed my sword and shield and was behind the door in a second. By this time the bolt had broken and the boys persuaded Pete to crawl into the room on hands and knees to grab my foot. I was waiting behind the door with upraised sword, determined

that someone was going to share my headache. However, Pete saw my shadow on the wall and retreated so fast that even his fellow plotters never saw the going of him. There was silence for a while, then they came back again. This time I decided I *was* going to lay about me with the sword and shield. Just as I was about to open the door the noise ceased and voices started speaking very quietly.

It transpired that in the melée Mike Moorcock had dislodged the handset off the telephone on the landing and it was plugged through to the manager's room. The ringing had wakened him and he'd come out to investigate and found Mike, Ted, Barry Bayley, and Pete on the landing. They left for their rooms somewhat chastened.

On the Monday morning Mike came to our room with Tikwis and received the first blast of our ire. Pete knocked on the door about five minutes later; I grabbed the sword and bawled, "OUT!" Once more he disappeared so fast no one saw the going of him. Wonder how he does that?

The weekend had come to an end and all we could do now was say goodbye to Cheltenham and its fen and tell each other what a wonderful time it had been. I may be a little biased, of course, but the weekend seemed to be wrapped in a sort of golden haze of enchantment. Whether it was the sunny weather and the fact that the fannish get-together went with a swing from the beginning, I don't know. There did seem to do a slight air of unreality overhanging everything. Perhaps it was because for a brief time we had all experienced a "joy in living". I can't explain it any better than that. For me it wasn't goodbye to Cheltenham; only a brief *au revoir*. I'm going to marry Bill Gray alias the Plantagenet king whom Hippolyta thought was a dummy. I am rather glad he was real, you know....

– *Orion* #23 (October 1959, ed. Ella Parker)

# 4. Fade to Gray

There were several reasons for my *[long]* silence in fandom. One was partly disgust *[presumably at the London Circle schism]*, another was that I seemed to be doing an awful lot of official stuff in fandom. Now I did this because I was asked by fans to do so, but it meant that I had to take fandom more seriously than it should be taken. It also meant that nearly every minute of my spare time was taken with fannish activities. I tried to cram more mundane activities in the time as well and one night I was taken completely by surprise by an attack of tachycardia. This annoyed me considerably as I knew very well that I had a good sound heart. I ignored the attack – and had another a week later. This time I thought I'd better ask a doctor what the hell was happening and he told me in no uncertain terms. My heart was quite sound, but it wouldn't be if I didn't slow up a bit. "Pack up or crack up" was the doc's verdict. It seemed that although I was feeling perfectly all right and knew what I was doing (at no time was I so sick or in so much pain that I "didn't know what I was saying" as was remarked when I disagreed – with good reason – about something that was said at a meeting) what I was actually doing was living on physical and nervous reserves and the day came when I used up all my physical reserves.

This was all very aggravating, especially as I was going to be married in September, so something had to be cut and my fannish activity was it. I remained editor of the BSFA and although I gave the names of those who helped me on this at the Easter Con, a number of fans weren't present, so I don't think my thanks to the following would come amiss here: Ella Parker (lang may her lum reek), Sandra Hall, Tikki Hall, Honey Keith-Elliot, Mike Moorcock, John Phillifent, Doc Weir, Ken and Pam Bulmer, Peter MacIntyre and Dick Ellingsworth. Tikki and Peter volunteered for the most mundane jobs of all – stapling and enveloping – and Honey assisted by her unfailing humour and wonderful fund of stories. I swear she would have made even Buster Keaton laugh his head off.

This house was all right for a bachelor, but I cast a very unfavourable eye on the bath and the room it was in. It was a very old-fashioned high-sided bath that had been fitted in the room that should have been a kitchen by the previous tenant, who had moments of mad enthusiasm when he built walls of cardboard and fitted ends to drains that consisted of old tobacco tins and insulating tape. But the bath – it reminded me too much

of George Joseph Smith and his unfortunate brides. In fact, I wouldn't have been surprised if this had not been one of the baths he used; so Bill got a more up to date bath and built a nice little room in the basement for it. He had already fixed up the "bog" (powder room is its euphemism).

Then he asked if there would be room for my things in his study. I looked at his small study, smiled sweetly, and told him I had a typewriter and a duplicator, plus stencils and stacks of paper.

"I think I can fit them in," said Bill.

"Can you fit in six hundred books as well?" I asked.

When he picked himself up off the floor he suggested that he could turn the end room past the bathroom into a study. This was before he had managed to get the new bath for the proper room. The room he suggested had been used by the last tenant for odds and ends – I think it had been added to the house as an afterthought – and Bill had not used it at all. We got busy at the weekends, papered the walls, did some painting and Bill built a desk for me that an executive would not be ashamed to have. He also built bookcases, but since then he has gone out with a desperate look in his eye and bought another bookcase for me. (I wonder when I am going to find time to read them all?)

When he had completed the desk I said it was too nice to do duplicating on, so the next time I arrived home I found a duplicating bench fitted up in the study. It was a very solid piece of wood and I wondered where he had managed to get it from. It was the old door that he had taken from the bog, planed down, varnished and fitted with drawers. So now I am wondering if I am the only fan who does the duplicating on a lavatory door. Modern novelists would love a situation like that, of course, as that's as far as their imaginations seem to go these days.

He has also built a porch downstairs and at the moment is busy converting the large ex-bathroom into a reasonably sized kitchen. The present kitchen is too small for Bill, me and Selina the Cat who, incidentally, decided that my study is her boudoir. One day I said to Bill that either he and Selinacat would have to go on a diet or we would have to have a bigger kitchen. This remark brought an outraged screech from the cat, who let it be known that she was not going to diet for any damned human and if the subject were mentioned again she would pack her bags and leave. So, Bill started building a better kitchen.

Since I drafted the above the work has been completed and Selinacat is now the proud possessor of a nice, new kitchen. We are allowed to use it on sufferance.

I see Bill is getting the paintbrushes out and this time I hope the cat

stays out of the way. The last time she plonked her tail against a newly painted door and I had to get it off with detergent before she licked it and poisoned herself. Unfortunately, she bolted before I could rinse it off and as the night was wet, I had a horrible vision of Selina leaping on to the bed in the middle of the night, frothing at the tail. Those of you have wondered who the boss is in this house since I've been married can be answered in one word: Selina.

As a matter of fact, Selina is a very intelligent cat, but as I am pushed for time, I cannot say much about her. Besides, it will have to be in fulsome praise of her as I am sure the damned cat can read (we daren't talk about Samuel Johnson's cat in front of her in case she insists on oysters, too) and my life won't be worth living if I don't say something nice about her. Mind you, she hasn't found out yet that I allow her to creep under the coverlet because she makes a useful hot water bottle.

– *Vagary* #12 (Winter 1960, ed. Roberta Gray for OMPA)

# 5. The Bomb

*Fans having worried about nuclear annihilation for longer than most people due to its prevalence in SF, it's not too surprising they would become heavily involved in CND, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. To give a few examples, John Brunner's Hampstead CND group ran an exhibition in Kingsway Hall in July 1958 and John wrote the CND marching song; Joan Hammett was the Chair of the Midland Region CND group, she and husband Paul departing the 1959 Eastercon midway through to join that year's Aldermaston march; and Jim Linwood was secretary of Nottingham Youth CND – "...most of our fannish circle (Hale, Jordan, Rispin, Miller, Kearney, Mayne) were all active in CND..."*

*Being ex-military, Bobbie Gray was more conservative than many UK fans of the period. She did not support the nuclear disarmament sentiment of the time and got into arguments over this in the pages of their OMPAzines with Daphne Buckmaster and Joy Clarke, who did.*

*The 1960 Eastercon – the first to have an all-female committee – was held about a ten-minute walk away from Trafalgar Square, so on Sunday a bunch of fans went over there to see the arrival of the Aldermaston marchers. Some fans couldn't attend the convention because they were* on *the march. Her views are her own, but here's Bobbie's account of that very specific cultural moment.*

The CND held its usual Easter rally, marching from *[the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at]* Aldermaston to Trafalgar Square. Being curious I went along with Bill to see this – he had already suggested to Don Ford *[the 1960 TAFF winner]* a day or two before that he might like to go along and get a few photographs. Don went on ahead of us and Bill and I arrived in the Square a few minutes before two o'clock. Bill nearly had a fit when I saw Don almost immediately over by the National Gallery, but heck! how could one miss seeing the Cincinnati Giant?

It was a mixed crowd who were there before the marchers arrived and to give the CND credit, it was extremely well organised. The crowds consisted of supporters, those like myself who wanted to see just what sort

of people belong to the CND, and holiday makers who had no views either way, but being in London were curious to have a look. Before the marchers arrived there were 55,000 people in the Square and then 45,000 marched in. They were from all over the country, although I believe about 15,000 had actually marched all the way from Aldermaston, the rest joining in when the march neared its end – a great many in Whitehall, only a stone's throw away from the Square.

The organisers and those who had marched all the way were sincere, there was no doubt about that, but they were rather lost among the mob of exhibitionists who joined the march at the last moment and whose only aim was not to campaign against the H-bomb, but to display their nasty unwashed faces and loud mouths. Same of the beatniks I saw on that march (one of whom I saw later in Villiers Street still showing herself off and not caring a tuppenny damn about the rally) did not have the dust of the Aldermaston march on them, but the filth of months – possibly years. God knows, I'm an extremely casual dresser myself, but it defeats me how anyone can be proud of displaying him/herself in dirt-encrusted clothes and with filthy hands, faces and feet (and probably bodies under the greasy clothes). It was very unfortunate that it was these people who were the most noticeable and the onlookers were so busy making rude comments on this lot that it went almost unnoticed that the really sincere contingents from various parts of the country (including some trade unionists) were neatly and soberly dressed. I heard afterwards (but don't know if it is true or not) that this will be the last organised Easter March as too many people who are not really interested in the campaign are using it just to see and be seen.

Incidentally the crowd of 100,000 was the biggest ever seen in Trafalgar Square, bigger even than the two armistice nights, and it was very quiet. I suppose that was the most impressive thing about it – the attitude of many of the onlookers who, although they may not have agreed, felt that the other chap had a right to his opinion. There was an incident (coming to it later) but the person concerned was not interested in marching or watching. I can admire the sincerity of people who will march that distance for a belief, but I just cannot agree with them. After last year's march a very impartial newspaper (one of the few we have) ran a leader and comments that the march was a shifting of guilt. In other words, it was the West who used the first atom bomb and started stockpiling atomic weapons, and no matter how many protest marches there are by people who shout "Ban the Bomb" they cannot shift the guilt off their shoulders on to ours. We are all equally guilty and nothing will ever alter

the fact that we used atomic weapons first. The thing that seems to be overlooked those days is that the two atomic bombs brought the war to an abrupt end and saved our men and women in Japanese hands months, possibly years, of misery, starvation, torture and humiliation. Have a people who treat men and women as worse than beasts in the field the right to expect better treatment themselves? At least those bombs enabled the Japanese to “surrender honourably”.

To get back to the main subject, the newspaper had a point when it said we are all equally guilty and no amount of marching is going to shift the guilt or cure the increased cancer rate. That same newspaper had another leader this year and since it expressed views that I hold myself, in a far better way than I am able to, I am going to quote some of it. Here goes:

> ...shoulder to shoulder with the churchmen and the Quakers, the Tories and the Liberals, the earnest and the eccentric, they produce a vivid caricature of a pilgrimage. It merits our attention, if not our respect. The marchers agree only on one point: that Britain should get rid of its nuclear weapons.... But the marchers present no new argument; they merely make a demand. Their appeal is not to reason but to emotion; their behaviour is intended to move us by a mixture of the bizarre and the macabre. They spoil their cause by making it appear the persuasion of odd-looking and strange-sounding people. If the Christian-pacifist element could be seen alone in all its simplicity, the effect would be more impressive. Our own view in this argument is simply stated. The supreme purpose of policy should be to prevent war. If the possession of nuclear weapons can avert the devastation and cruelty caused by conventional weapons in the last war, its moral justification is obvious. There is just a chance that the balance of terror will kill the habit of war, or at least limit it. We accept the arguments for general disarmament, but we do not expect our enemies to disarm for a long time to come. If Britain ‘gave a lead’ in nuclear disarmament, we know of no reason to believe that others would follow. The control and inspection of arms towards which the great Powers are moving inch by inch offer, in our view, the best hope of progress and growing confidence. Those who say that Britain alone should take giant strides towards a bombless world are making something difficult and dangerous look easy and safe. That may be progressive, but it is blatantly dishonest.

And how many really believed in what they were marching for? How many of them could honestly say that they had the blazing sincerity of Paul Hammett? How many screeched their heads off not because they believed, but were merely saying, “Look, everybody, I’m well to the fore. Join me, but don’t forget I’m the one who first did it and appoint me your leader accordingly.” What did the Crusaders do but rampage all over Europe and Asia and fanatically kill many fellow Christians and show far more intolerance than those of the faith they were out to destroy? I know at least two people who firmly denied they were Communists, but ceased to take an interest in the CND when the Communists withdrew their support.

So nuclear disarmament is all very well, but what happens then? Will wars be fought with so-called conventional weapons? Wars that may drag on for years? The tests of the nuclear weapons have proved even to the fanatical leaders of nations that there are no victors in a nuclear war. Therefore it is not worth starting one. But there could be a victor in a “conventional” war. The question is – who would it be? Does it boil down to the possession of nuclear weapons and peace and freedom? Or will it be case of conventional weapons, a war and possible slavery? We have nuclear weapons and we know they work, so I think it would be much more sensible to get the tests banned. Why keep testing something that is known to work and needlessly throw more filth into the atmosphere?

Since I have been in Cheltenham, Bill has dragged me to the cinema more often than I used to go, and I am catching up on a lot of ancient history. (An Italian company is having a field day with it.) He has also taken me to the theatre since it reopened here. They have put on some good plays, as well as some very crummy ones, but they made a magnificent effort the other week with Flecker’s *Hassan*. Although I had read extracts I did not know the main plot, and when torture was discussed so much I began to get worried and at one point was on the verge of retiring to the bar as I thought they were going to show it on stage. It was “done” offstage fortunately, but I got the shock of my life when the woman behind me said indignantly to her friend, “Well! They might have shown us the torture.” She reminded me of the man on the CND day who, before the march started, deliberately shouldered people aside on the steps of the National Gallery although an aisle had been kept in the centre of the steps for visitors to the Gallery. That man would not have had the guts to shoulder anyone if he had not thought we were all pacifists who were willing to lay down and let him walk over us. I was quick to say that I wasn’t a goddam pacifist and others said so, too. By the time he reached the Gallery he was walking in the path that had been kept clear. Great

grief! If we have people like that man and the woman who wanted to see the torture, in this country, they must have them in other countries, and if we disarmed they would have a field day.

– *Vagary* #12 (Winter 1960, ed. Roberta Gray for OMPA)

# Ethel Lindsay

Entered fandom in 1951, although she had been reading SF since the age of ten. Became a member of the Newlands SF Club of Glasgow and helped with the production of their zine *Haemogoblin*. Remained with them until her work as a nurse took her to London in 1956. In 1955 was invited to assist with the preparations for the 1954 SuperManCon and became a member of the Committee as Assistant Secretary. Attended all subsequent cons with the exception of one, and served on the Committees of the Cytricon, the Worldcon in ’57, and also

helped in the behind-scenes, unpublicised graft at most conventions of the period.

– adapted from her 1962 TAFF platform

# 1. Femmefan Faces

I will tell you all about as many femmefans as I can.

Madeleine *[Willis]* got the nickname of “hostess with the mostest” because she went out and bought a teapot big enough to feed the hungry hordes that descend upon Oblique House. She has a lilting Irish accent, and easily the most beautiful complexion among the femmefans... on this side at least. She knows as much about fans and fandom as her husband Walt, and has as delightful a sense of humour. She is inured to puns.

Pamela Bulmer edited one issue of the old *Fez* before giving up because of lack of time. She made a trip to the US the year her husband Ken won TAFF. She was supposed to teach the men there what the British word “snog” meant. I dunno if she did or not...

Daphne Buckmaster is the only femme fan I met who can draw. She produced the cover, invented the new name *[of* Distaff*],* and helped out with illos. When I first met her at the Manchester Con I had great difficulty believing that she was really married; she looked about 14 years old. She still looks very young and ingenuous. I took a friend to the Globe one night, and when Daphne came in late she said that she had been to her nightclasses. “Oh yes,” said my friend, with a tolerant look, “and what are you studying?”. “Statistics,” said Daphne. I enjoyed the deflated air this answer produced.

Joy Clarke is a live-wire, at least that’s the best description I can think of. Her husband is Vin¢ Clarke, her lodger is Sandy Sanderson, and they all live together in what Walt Willis has once jokingly called Tammany Hall. They all produce an amazing amount of fanning. As they all commute daily to their work in London, I don’t quite know how they do it. They have been known to be responsible for duplicating two-thirds of the OMPA mailing! They don’t arrive home till at least 6 p.m. and then Joy has a meal to prepare. They go haring off at 7 a.m. to catch their train, and their breakfast consists of a *cup of coffee*! As I think the last bit quite barbarous maybe I shouldn’t have mentioned it. I once visited them to find Joy rapidly making a costume for the Loncon, Vin¢ running the duper, Sandy cutting stencils, and was given the job of stapling. Frankly, I was glad to get back to my work for a rest.

Bobbie Wild is a hard worker, too. She put in a prodigious amount as Secretary to the Loncon. She is an active member of OMPA and our history and Greek mythology expert. She became an expert rifle shooter

whilst in the Forces. So don't argue with her. This will be difficult as she argues all the time.

Dorothy Ratigan is very keen for this zine to start again, and has been very generous in her offers of help. Her visits to the Globe are rather infrequent, so I do not know her quite so well as the others. She is, I think, a person of decided opinions, and I am trying to coax an article out of her.

Frances Evans is one of the co-founders of *Fez*, and the one who thought up the idea in the first place. She gleefully aided and abetted "Joan". She has a good brain, an effervescent personality and is so inactive these days as to be practically moribund. It takes months of nagging from me to get an article out of her. Modestly I may say that I have, through practising upon her, developed a very formidable persuasive technique.

Ina Shorrock is the most active femme fan down Liverpool way. She is rather an incredible person. She has the build of a young girl, the legs of a chorus girl, a family of four, and a huge amount of energy for all-night parties, a houseful of visitors, hours of rehearsal for convention programmes, and in between whiles running a home. It is with surprise that I note there is something she doesn't do... and that's write! Perhaps she does not have time for it.

The other femme fan that I know from Liverpool is Pat Milnes *[formerly Doolan]*. She is a gorgeous blonde with a quick and devastating repartee. When the Liverpool mob put out an alcoholic one-shot, Pat is the only one who ever produces a witty remark. Could we lure her into writing some of it down?

These are the femme fans in Britain that I have met, and who have been more or less active at one time or another. There are lots more all round the world that I would like to introduce to one another. Next issue I will tell you about some more. Of course I have not told you anything about myself, beyond sending out an assurance that I *am* a female. I don't fancy writing about myself, but I'll tell you that Frances is staying with me this weekend. I'll get her to write a paragraph describing me. It will be a lot of lies, of course.

> I first made contact with Ethel about five years ago, via letter. I then lived at Manchester in the wild and barbarous north and she lived in the even wilder, more barbarous and northerly Scotland. We poured our hearts out on paper and finally saw each other in the flesh at the SuperManCon. We became friends then and have remained so ever since, though Ethel often wonders why – out loud.
>
> She became a member of Operation Fantast, bought a typer

to deal with her rapidly growing mail, became a member of the SuperManCon committee and eventually assistant editress of *Femizine*. Then she joined OMPA. In fact she has become so active in Fandom that personally I get tired just thinking about it.

She is a mixture of practical common sense and complete whackiness. She is a good friend, giggles a lot, and talks even more, but as I am very quiet we complement each other. She is also always punctual, but this is a bit of a nuisance as I am always late and she tends to natter on about it.

Anybody requiring any further references, just apply to me but remember that before I began this, Ethel said it would be all lies – need I say more?

The above was composed and typed by Frances herself, and is the usual mixture of truth and lies with which she beguiles the populace. Actually her most frequent observation about me is, “She’s my best friend, and I hate her....”

– *Femizine* #10/*Distaff* #1 (September 1958, ed. Ethel Lindsay)

# 2. Men and Me

It is about time that the idea – Sadie Shaw's – of asking femme fans the *real* lowdown on their actifan husbands came into force. In our next issue we shall commence. Fans who would rather *not* have their wives take part in this series, are informed that women are often open to bribes, providing they are lavish enough.

I have not got a husband to give the lowdown on, myself, but I can offer the experience of an unattached femme in fandom. My entry was via letter-writing. At 2 and 3 in the morning, whilst my patients slept *[Ethel was a nurse]*, I wrote and wrote, and started a formidable correspondence. Among them was John who lived in nearby Edinburgh. He suggested coming through to see me, and we arranged to meet. I found to my surprise that I was sitting an oral examination. Obviously he believed that I, as a woman, could not be seriously interested in SF. I managed to hold my own, but I did not think it could last for long, as I never had paid much attention to the technical details of space flight. What happened after they got there was what interested me. He suddenly said, "I must try to get a telescope before next year," and looked at me with a "that will stump you" expression. "Oh yes," I said casually, "when Mars is nearest to Earth". My, but the look of deep respect that I got, and that from the sole piece of information that I had retained from an Asimov article the previous day!

There was another John in County Durham who was so conceited he thought my only reason for corresponding with him was in search of a husband. This correspondence became very acrimonious once I realised this. I had to end it abruptly as I was in danger of bursting a blood vessel.

It is with a feeling of awe, however, that I start to tell you of my visit from Eric. Fortunately I had been forewarned that he was... rather an original. He arrived at 2 a.m., having driven to Glasgow by motorbike from down south. I managed to remain calm, reflecting with relief that the staff were all asleep. I fed him with tea, and set him off in the direction of the YMCA. I gave him the address of Brian, one of the SF club members. Brian later recounted this tale: Eric had arrived as Brian was setting off to visit Matt *[Elder]*, another club member, who was in hospital. So Eric accompanied him, still attired as for riding a motorbike. At the hospital, Matt's mother was also present, conversation was a *leetle* difficult; as neither Brian or Matt knew much about Eric. Suddenly, out of the blue, he said to Matt, "Have you any sex perverts in your club?". Taking a quick

look at his mother, Matt saw with gratitude that she could not understand Eric's accent and with superb aplomb replied, "No, not at the present."

That evening I went out with Eric. Once again I was put through a searching questionnaire: my likes, my dislikes, my taste in literature, in painting, what did I think of this subject, what did I think of that? My! I never had it so tough from Sister Tutor. My ability to remain unruffled was deliberately tested too. In a café he calmly put the sugar spoon in his pocket, in a pub a remark in a clear voice drew all eyes to us, from a book stall he walked away with a book under his arm. Mind you, I passed the examination, and I even, in a kind of way, have a certificate to prove it. Eric was an original all right, but I would not like to leave those memories of him without adding that he was, although erratic, the possessor of a formidable brain. He was very generous and kind to me.

Now shall I go on and tell you all about the London Circle? Och no, here discretion shall be the better part of valour! I have done, ladies, it is your turn now.

•

This following was originally written in December 1958 for one of John Berry's fanzines and was never used by him.

I had a letter from John, giving me a two week deadline and suggesting that I do an article on the topical and controversial subject of "Inchmery". So, I phoned Sandy to say I was coming to check up on them and see if they were still as I remembered them. As you can see, I gave them fair warning of my intentions and, after hearing my tale, you will surely admit that they will do anything to be original. Only what puzzles me is how Vin ¢ knew *over 9 months ago* that I would be arriving armed to Write An Article on Inchmery!

The morning of that day, Sandy's zine *Aporrheta* arrived, I skimmed through it hurriedly before rushing on duty and resolved to read it during my journey to them that night. My eye had caught these words – "Inchmery is 4" and as I hastily galloped downstairs I had a blurred memory of three names. Vaguely I thought – they must have got a cat – but what a high-falutin' name to give it!

As I chug-chugged my way all round the Southern Railway – four changes – I read *Aporrheta* whilst keeping my eye on the stations. It was a complicated journey with which I won't bore you. I had not got as far as the "Inchmery is 4" announcement before arriving at Peckham.

A long narrow door with a long inscription, to wit: "Joy and Vin¢ Clarke. Inchmery Fandom. H.P. Sanderson. Joan W. Carr. *Aporrheta*. *Eye*. Joy Goodwin. Triona Law." They told me that on Chuck Harris's first visit

he said, on entering the room, “Well, I’ve read your preamble!” A long narrow staircase up and then a view of Joy sitting at the fire, a string of what, at first glance, looked like diapers and at second glance still like diapers, and on the couch beside Joy... a baby.

Now I am very slow at putting two and two together. Whilst making the conventional greeting remarks, what was going through my mind thusly was: “They must be looking after it for someone.” I peered at the baby and said, “Where did this come from?” Sandy gave a little giggle and said, “In the usual way”. Joy crowed, “You haven’t read *Aporrheta* yet,” and I said, “But I thought it meant you had got a cat.” We all laughed heartily.

Whilst I sat down they asked about my journey, and then they started to recount a hazardous one they had undertaken lately. This was fine by me; I nodded, and said yes! and no!! and really!!! at appropriate intervals, but I couldn’t have told you a word of what was, no doubt, another of these damned fan travel stories. Behind my pleasant mask my brain was seething with scores of questions. Like so: (a) On the face of it, this lot were telling me that Joy had produced a baby and kept it a dark secret ’til the last. (b) Could this be true, or were they capable of borrowing a baby and trying to kid me? (c) There wasn’t anything they were not capable of! (d) But would they go to all that trouble? (e) What trouble? For a joke they would go to endless trouble. (f) That was five diapers hanging there, what could one deduce from that? (g) And at my left was a box filled with all a baby could need. Having got to (g) I made up my mind – they were on the level. I think it was the box that convinced me; I had looked at it thoughtfully and immediately got a mental picture of Joy writing out the list for it.

At that point I got up and grabbed my copy of *Aporrheta* and read the next line after “Inchmery is 4”. It said, “Her name is Nicola Belle Clarke. Mother, father and lodger...”

At last I capitulated and took a good look at the baby, mentally added Vin¢’s beard, hastily took it away again, and congratulated Nicola on choosing such a nice family to be born into. To produce Nicola as a surprise to me, they had never done any actual lying, but my! – the way they had been bending the truth around!

This was to be an article on Inchmery, so let’s start with Nicola. She is wee, cute, makes fascinating noises and faces and she smiled at me. Joy is letting her hair grow long; it is now past her shoulders, and she was bubbling over with the fun of my bewilderment.

Vin¢ and Sandy were a sight to behold. I should imagine they sit

looking at Nicola for hours on end. I said to Joy, “Boy, is your nose out of joint!” and she replied: “It’s a good job I can cook!”

So this is the picture of controversial Inchmery that I can give you: Joy giggling, Vin¢ looking so proud it’s a wonder he doesn’t burst, and Sandy saying, “There, darling, do you want to burp now?”

[1] *Femizine* #12 (Autumn 1959, ed. Ethel Lindsay)
[2] *Peals* #4 (February 1960, ed. Frank & Belle Deitz)

# 3. The End of *Femizine*

I have been earnestly advised to turn this into a general zine – to no longer confine myself to female contributors. The implication being that they cannot furnish enough first class material by themselves. I have been in fandom for quite a few years now, and it is true that I have many fan friends who I am sure would respond to an appeal for material – och yes: I could probably dazzle you all, if I had a mind to.

But oh! I don't want to. *Femizine* is not something I started three issues ago, but something to which I put my hand at the beginning of my fannish life. Most people tend to think of *Femizine* and Joan Carr as a whole. They forget that it was in its pages that Pamela Bulmer, Bobbie Gray, Joy Clarke, Daphne Buckmaster and Frances Evans first wrote. They forget "Francezka" whose writings were really good.

Joan Carr cut the stencils, produced the zine and filled it with "her" personality, but every contributor came as a result of my letters. Away back then I would write three or four letters for every item that I passed on to Joan, the bulk of "Francezka"'s writing came to me in letters.

*Fez* isn't something I've just started – to Joan it was a fine vehicle for a hoax, but to me it was a dream, thought of first by Frances, of making an all-femme zine which would draw us closer together, and also encourage out the talent I just *knew* was there.

Where most editors may pick and choose to a certain extent, I must be humbly grateful for every piece that comes my way. Material has *always* been slow coming, and usually after many pleading letters. Some letters are never answered at all. I know one reason is that many femme fans, particularly in the States, are already contributing to their husband's zines or have zines of their own. Yet one who has supported *Fez* the most is Juanita Coulson, who helps to produce a *monthly* zine. One of the first to respond was Elinor Busby who, by helping with *Cry*, cuts so many stencils it is a wonder she does not cut them in her sleep.

The slow response, the advice to give up, the thought of all the letters I would have to write to try to fill this issue, thoroughly depressed me; indeed I *did* consider giving up. I felt I was battering my head against a brick wall. The arrival of a good review by Terry Carr cheered me up, but then came *Orion* with two critical reviews which made me "mad". "I'll show 'em," I vowed, and this is the result.

Yet I am not the type to stay "mad"; that will wear off, it always does.

The only thing that will produce another issue of *Fez* is material and some show of interest from the femme fans. If you don't want *Fez* – right! I have lots of other things I can do with my time. I have repeatedly said that this is *your* zine; it is in *your* lap now what to do with it. Should *Fez* now reach its demise, I'll shed a tear, but damned if I'm going to worry myself grey-haired over it. [1]

*Things came to a head in the following issue:*

**Dorothy Ratigan:**

I seem to remember you, I and Bobbie and Daphne discussing the problems of producing *Fez* and several ideas were exchanged (although not necessarily agreed upon) but you preferred to go your own way – there's no harm in doing this of course – but now you come back onto the femmes and more or less blame us for the disinterest which appears manifest. No sour grapes this, Ethel, but I still think *Fez* could do with more than just one personality behind it – it wants people like Bobbie with her historical legends, it needs the Rabelaisian pen from Ella, it needs the argumentative pen from Daphne; it needs opposing factors to bring it to life. No hard feelings here, I know black and white sounds absolutely dashing, but it's not meant to be, truly; placidity is a dangerous level for any fanzine and unless you got opposition within your pages you will lose whatever interest is left. However, we must go down fighting if go down we must, Ethel.

**Ethel Lindsay:**

At first I was deeply hurt by this letter, but then I decided not to be silly and childish but to think carefully over your criticism. I too remember that night at the Globe with Bobbie, Daphne, and yourself. Our main idea then was for Bobbie and I to edit *Fez* together, and there was also talk of help in cutting stencils. Well, I invited Bobbie down to see me with a view to deciding our policy. She sat the whole night telling me tales of her adventures in Military Hospitals. In vain I brought up *Fez*, in vain, until in the end I gave it up. Mistake me not, I was not bored; Bobbie tells an extremely amusing tale, as you know. Still, that was as far as I got with the co-editing idea. It would have been a little difficult too, we did not live near, and I rarely get up to town above once a week.

So I started cutting stencils, and had some help from Joy. This was one of the first things criticised: the different types did not improve the zine's appearance, and I came to feel that on these grounds, many stencil cutters is a bad idea! I did not realise that by taking on the whole production and editing myself, you might have felt I was intent on my own

way, nor wanting any helpful advice. Certainly you gave me none, for when I look up your card I find that three issues of *Fez* were sent to you without reply. In the May 1959 issue you had an article on "Women" which I obtained by ringing you upon the telephone... just as you had started to make a soufflé, for which you kindly forgave me.

In every issue I have asked for help. I did not think there was anyone who wished to help with production. In editing, no help was needed, for it consisted of publishing what little material I could obtain. I never had any choice in material. In every issue I have tried to emphasise that I was only the editress (I thought of myself thus) and that "the content matter was in the writer's hands". I tried supplying an idea – that of Sadie Shaw's – that the wives of actifen should give the "lowdown" on their husbands. I hoped this would turn out a humorous series. This seems, however, to have given the impression that it was the only type of material I was interested in, so no doubt I went about that the wrong way. Believe me, I now see many mistakes that I made, but they were not made through a sense of power in my editorship. I cannot think, though, how I can have given you such a wrong impression of me – at least as I think I am.

**Daphne Buckmaster:**

Review, of *Fez* in *Hobo* – hope you didn't mind my being outspoken. For those who have not seen it, the review went like this –

*Fez* 14 comes with a cri de coeur from Ethel who is still managing to gather material from reluctant fannes but seems to be getting near the end of her tether, so hard is the job. One thing she is determined on and that is that it would be better for *Fez* to fold altogether than to give in to pleas to become general i.e. include male contributors. I can't say I blame her for this view; *Fez*'s present policy of "females only" is and always has been unique in fanzines, and if it were to let in the males it would no longer be *Femizine*. If I might offer a word of advice, I would say that the trouble is that the field of subject matter is too narrow. Exposés of husbands, profiles of fannes, accounts of pets, etc., while each entertaining in themselves, are not enough to fill or sustain a fanzine continuously. There is nothing to inspire controversy. It may well be that Ethel does not and never has intended to restrict her contributors to the type of material that has been appearing lately – in fact I am sure she does not – but her editorials do, unwittingly perhaps, give this impression; also, of course, when anyone writes for an editor, he/she tends to write something that fits with what appears to be that editor's policy, namely with what already appears in the magazine, and so *Fez* has got itself into a vicious circle.

**Ethel Lindsay:**

Yes, I have undoubtedly given the wrong impression in my editorials. I must have, if someone like Daphne – a fanne I have been able to meet many times, and plead with personally for material on *any* subject – should write so. The infuriating part about this is that with the publication of *Hobo* and *Esprit* she shows herself a veritable well of thought-provoking articles. Yet never have I met Daphne without mentioning *Fez*, and my need for such material. Nor has she ever mentioned to me this feeling she had about my editorials. Now she tells me!

When I first entered fandom I was in it a long time before I contacted another fanne. This was Frances Evans and we corresponded mightily. Among the things we discussed was just how many women there were in fandom, and it was then that Frances suggested starting *Femizine* to find out and put us in touch with one another. That was when my dream of encouraging out the few we had and perhaps recruiting more first started. I was feeling mighty blue, I had made a failure of *Fez*, Dorothy and Daphne's criticism had hurt, and I was in the only too human state of looking round for someone else to blame. Then out of the blue came this....

## An Article for Ethel
## Joyce Slater

It all started a long time back – at least five years ago! – when Ken said, "Can you give me an article for Ethel?"

Casting a glance in his direction (he dodged) I remarked that he was in one of his light-hearted moods, and so I guessed that this was the opening gambit for one of his atrocious puns. Ken spends an unreasonable amount of time working out really horrible puns, which he then lets fly at harmless and unsuspecting humans. A good witty pun is something he has no use for; it must be a real stinker before he takes the least interest.

Anyway, I made the obvious reply to Ken's question – a counter question. "Definite or indefinite?"

After the flood of invective had been reduced, I gathered that what Ken wanted to know was would I write some sort of an essay for Ethel to publish in a fanzine. Naturally I declined. It was taking me all my time to compose notes to milkmen, coalmen and others of that ilk, and a weekly letter to my mother (mainly filled with comments on the inclemency of the weather)

really exhausted me. In any case I was in mourning for *Weird Tales*, just recently defunct and the only fantasy mag which really appealed to me, and during that period no public engagements could be considered.

Since that time this question has been raised in the house many times. Once or twice it has raised the house. It usually is dragged up by Ken shortly following the arrival of a letter from Ethel, a fanzine from Ethel, a postal order from Ethel, or on the other tack the despatch of a book/books to Ethel, a letter to Ethel, or a catalogue to Ethel. Now let it be clearly understood that the fact that it is Ethel has nothing to do with this. It might be Queen Anne, Bridie Murphy or Walt Willis for whom I was being pestered to put words to paper. My reaction would be just the same – a flat refusal. I just don't like writing. A study of my shopping lists would reveal this to anyone with a modicum of intelligence or sufficient interest. Anyone who abbreviates "biscuits" to "bis" (puzzle in the chemists – why the heck did I put "bismuth" on the shopping list?) and "sugar" to "sug" obviously is not the person who can be expected to essay an article for a fanzine. It stands to reason that such a person just doesn't like writing.

Ethel as an individual I quite admire (I've never actually met her) from what little I know of her – mainly from her letters, an odd photo or two that Ken has purchased after a convention, and from Ken's comments on people he has met. But anyone who can both engage in Ethel's occupation and take an active part in fandom is deserving of respect, for their stamina and strength of will if for nothing else.

Ethel as the editress of a fanmag is someone of whom I wish I (or Ken) had never heard. Or alternatively, if edit a fanzine she must, then it would be better for me (and possibly for her) if it were a fanmag for whom anyone can write. Ken himself rarely writes anything for anyone these days – on his working schedule this is not surprising; he doesn't take time off to eat half the week, and he has been to a cinema only twice since we returned from Germany. His idea of relaxation is to sit down for about ten minutes and read the review column in *Astounding* (pardon, I mean *Analog*, don't I?). But if he did – or even if he didn't – write anything, I'd much prefer that Ethel pestered him, instead of the present system where to my

knowledge Ethel hasn't asked Ken to ask me for over a year, but Ken automatically does ask me on almost any occasion that the name "Lindsay" crops up. I've even known him, in a discussion on the old time fans, turn to me and say, "Oh, Joyce, I really think you should..." when someone has mentioned NIGEL LINDSAY. It makes me wonder if at some convention or other Ethel has backed Ken into a corner, hypnotised him with the reflected highlights from a glass of Double Diamond, and set up a conditioned reflex or something....

In any case, why me? At the school where I was educated the only thing that prevented my English teacher from giving minus marks for composition was her own lack of education in higher mathematics. Ken is full of funny stories about my confused means of communication, such as the time when a gentleman, looking for the people next door, left a message with me but forgot to give me his name, and when I was asked to describe him, the best I could manage was "Well, he was riding a pink bicycle." You'll understand that the most well-intentioned of folk would hardly be doing any editor a favour by recommending me as a writer to be sought after.

But what prompted me to tell you all this was that Ken has just been making a more than usually eloquent plea, as he says that in the latest issue of *Fez* Ethel is bemoaning the lack of material from people. Ken makes it out that unless someone does something now, if not sooner, then the next issue of *Fez* will be all clean white paper.

Now, personally I've nothing against that. If Ethel were to send us some clean white paper it would prove very useful. As things are the children are always wanting some paper on which to draw or scribble, or do homework or such, and every time I pick up any of the odd bits that litter all over Ken's desk, chair, filing cabinets, index trays and floor, Ken shouts, "You can't have that, I've got some notes on the back." So if Ethel were to send out a copy of *Fez*, addressed to me, containing a dozen or so sheets of near virginally (a few fingerprints here and there wouldn't matter) clean paper, well, I'd be pleased anyway. And so would Michael and Susie. Ken has been reading this and has made some comments about man-handling virgins, and how a little fingering never spoiled a virgin yet, and so on, but I've told him I've no intention of discussing such matters as *Fez* is a clean

zine, and in any case what I mean to say is that I just don't have the time or the ability to do an article for Ethel.

**Ethel Lindsay:**

I read this at first with amazement, for I never knew that Ken had been agitating Joyce in this way. Gradually I began to chortle, and by the end I was laughing out loud. My, but it did cheer me up – and to think I had been feeling so sorry for myself, yet all the time when I never knew it, someone was thinking of me and trying to help. It cleared my eyes too, for I was able to then contemplate *Fez* calmly and realise that its failure was my own fault. Yet, still I did not feel depressed, for surely the scene had changed since *Fez* first was started. All the fannes who were likely to be active were so busy publishing their own zines. The others, like Joyce, found the keeping of their home a full enough life, and though I agree with Daphne as to the pleasant unconventionality of fans, I retain enough conventionality myself to respect a woman who puts her first job first, and treats fandom as a luxury. As much as possible I tuck fandom out of sight in my own room, retaining only its best aspects such as a framed Atomillo.

As to the recruitment of fannes, I doubt if I would ever be successful in this – how many years did I wait before meeting Frances and finding another woman like myself, and having found her, why should I want to find anyone else? Also, in all the years I have been nursing only once did I find someone who would have fitted in with fandom, and she vanished into the RAF!

Looking back over the stencils I think I have written all I meant to, except for two points. One concerns Bobbie; I wrote either too much or not enough here. I should have added that it was my fault really, in that I did not try again to interest her in the editing. She is a very helpful person really, has been a hard worker in fandom, and once personally helped me by duplicating a whole issue of *Scottishe*.

The other point is that, although this brings to an end my editorship, it need not be the end of *Fez*. There are many helpful suggestions throughout this, the best being that two fannes should work on it. From my own experience I feel that if only one fanne were to take over, I would suggest that, instead of a quarterly zine, the experiment be tried of an annual *Fez*. This could display the combined fanne talent. Should anyone wish to do either of these things, I will be very happy to hand on the files – which are in order – and give any other help that may be wanted. Failing this, perhaps in a few years' time I may try the annual idea myself. At the moment, though, I feel that one can put out a fanzine without many things, but never without enthusiasm, and I have, at this time, lost my enthusiasm.

There are a few people with outstanding subscriptions. This can be returned if they wish. Otherwise I will supply copies of my fanzine *Scottishe* in the place of *Fez*.

I would like to extend my thanks and good wishes to all the contributors to *Femizine*, and thanks also to the American Agent, Betty Kujawa. [2]

**Bobbie Gray:**

You all probably know by now that Ethel Lindsay has given up the editorship of *Femizine* and that I have fallen heir to it. It seemed a shame that all the work that Ethel, Frances Evans, Pam Bulmer, Joy Sanderson, Daphne Buckmaster, and many other femmes put into the zine should vanish into limbo, so I am going to have a try at keeping up the good work.

The mixture will be almost the same as before. Only femmes as contributors – no males masquerading under feminine pennames. The exception to this rule, of course, will be the one-time editor "Joan W. Carr". The males, of course, will be let loose in the letter column. Write, you crumbs!

One rule that I want to stick to is that the opinions of contributors and letter writers must be their own. If they state they are speaking for fans in general I reserve the right to edit the remark clean out. No politics, either! I think this subject belongs more to the personal type zine found in an APA than in a general zine. But any femmes who care to write of any offtrail incidents, scientific articles, humorous articles, thumbnail biographies of women who have made a mark on science (which covers a very wide ground), book or SF film reviews, will be more than welcome in the pages of *Fez*. Any femme who can draw will also be welcome. (Help! Bjo! Help!)

Will contributors please type articles, etc., in double spacing or write it legibly. Please don't stencil it, as this machine will only take one type of stencil (not the typewriter, the duplicator) and I shall go up the wall if I find I have to keep changing the headings.

I can't promise to stick to a regular schedule, but will try to publish *Femizine* at reasonable intervals. [3]

*Bobbie was never able to get an issue out, so Ethel's final issue was the last one of all.*

[1] *Femizine* #14 (Summer 1960, ed. Ethel Lindsay)
[2] *Femizine* #15 (September 1960, ed. Ethel Lindsay)

[3] *Vagary* #12 (Winter 1960, ed. Roberta Gray for OMPA)

*In the mid-1970s fans in the US created the female-centred amateur press association A Woman's Apa (a UK equivalent – The Women's Periodical – wouldn't appear until the early 1980s) and in 1979 they invited Ethel Lindsay to join. This was her response.*

# 4. Letter to A Woman's Apa

...and where were you all in December 1954 when I published my first fanzine? Today, March 23rd 1979, I am 58 years old and a little calculation tells me that I have been publishing for 25 years. Well, dear me, I *have* seen a lot of water roll under the bridge since then.

When I entered fandom, as you can calculate, I was in my thirties. That was an advantage in some ways for I was old enough to be more interested in SF and talking about books than I was in the fact that there were so many more male fans than female. Most of the femme fans were married and mainly there because of their husband's interest. No doubt an SF fan was vastly better than a football fan. That point struck me very forcibly as I was in Glasgow at the time and when I found that the few male fans there were more interested in books than football, I was delighted with them. I was older than them all so had no difficulty fixing on a sisterly/cum young aunt role with them. In those days young male fans were liable to be not only introspective but shy of girls and social gatherings. In my early years in fandom I think I was quite helpful about that to quite a few of them.

When I moved to work in England I had attended about four conventions and so had "quite a few" contacts. I attended the Globe meetings regularly and had a great time. What I enjoyed most was that, then, your age group was ignored. Fandom in Britain was small enough to make this an unimportant factor. I became quickly involved in convention work. I remember, in particular, a convention in Gloucester *[1961's LXICON]* where I was part of the committee. We wanted to have a dance but the big problem was the lack of females. I think it was Eric Jones who had the bright idea to invite nurses from the local hospital to the dance. I was told off to look after them and found, to my dismay, that they had all brought their boyfriends with them! They eyed all those queer folk askance and danced resolutely with their own boyfriends all night.

At my first convention there was a pretty, attractive young girl called Shirley *[Marriott]*. I was to see many more like her come and go. She was very interested to find this thing called fandom which was full of all those *men*. She was having a ball surrounded by them, flirting with them and (but I cannot be sure of this part), going to bed with them. I say I cannot be sure because you know how men can boastfully lie about this. I was enjoying myself too – but in meeting and talking to people who shared my

interest and who found it quite natural that I should be in love with books. I regarded Shirley as wasting precious time – my goodness – there was all the rest of the *year* for such activities. No doubt, today, such an attitude of mine will seem very weird to you all. However, bear in mind that the majority of fans were either too young for me or were married. I am enough of my generation to see every married man with a wide taboo circle around him.*

---

** Like her great friend Ella Parker, Ethel never married. [Ed.]*

I could tell you all lots more about women in fandom – *Femizine* and suchlike matters – but for the moment let me say thank you for letting me see your zines. I would find it quite impossible to be a regular contributor, I am sure. Once a year would be about my strength. Although in theory I should have plenty of time now I am retired, I have found myself kept busy at an amazing rate. Also I have to think of cost now that I live on a pension instead of a salary. I am, as usual, torn in two when it comes to publishing. I would dearly love to receive all your fanzines but know I should not be able to publish frequently enough to justify this. I guess you would consider a once a year offering like this not very fair to the rest of you. However, for what it is worth, here is a letter of thanks.

– Ethel Lindsay, Carnoustie, Scotland.


*At Supermancon 1954: Shirley Marriott, Frances Glynn, Frances Evans, Ethel Lindsay, unknown. Photo: Eric Bentcliffe.*

# After *Femizine*

> On some of the first few stories I sold people would write into the letter columns and say Brackett's story was terrible, women can't write science fiction. That was ridiculous, there were women scientists you know, there's no problem there. What they were complaining about was that I didn't know how to write a story (chuckling). When I learned a little better I stopped hearing this. What they were complaining about was the quality really, no... you know. The editors certainly, there was never any problem with them....
>
> It was just that not many women read it. Kate Wilhelm had an interesting answer to that. Somebody asked, at this seminar, why or how she came to get into SF, and she said when they put Sputnik up *[in 1957]* all of a sudden this became real and she realised this was affecting the world she lived in and the world her children lived in. I wonder if this was typical of a lot of women who were not interested in science fiction until it became something of a reality. You know, until it had a definite effect on themselves and on their futures, that they began to see it in a different light. I don't know if that would apply to any others or not, but certainly there weren't many women reading or writing it in the old days. In fact, this is why they said that the field would never be successful in a broad sense. You know, you didn't have the women readers.
>
> – Leigh Brackett, *Tangent* #5 (1976, ed. David Truesdale)

When OMPA appeared six months after the launch of *Femizine*, it contained fanzines edited by women from the very beginning. There were three in that first mailing, two of which were single-sheeters. Since single-sheet contributions are usually last-minute, just-in-under-the-wire affairs, I'm going to give the title of first UK fanzine edited solely by a woman to Pam Bulmer, whose 12-page *Ugh!* #1 would likely have been in preparation before either of the others. With the two running in tandem, any serious examination of *Femizine* also has to take OMPA into account. A listing of all the OMPAzines published by women during the life of *Femizine* can be found in Appendix 4.

In its first year – September 1954 to June 1955 – OMPA President was Ken Bulmer, Association Editor was Vin¢ Clarke, and Treasurer was Chuck Harris. In its second these positions were taken by Pam Bulmer, Joy Clarke, and Daphne Buckmaster respectively. Nor was a fannish institution being run by women to be a one-off novelty because the 1960 Eastercon would feature an all-female committee for the first time consisting of Sandra Hall, Bobbie Gray, and Ella Parker, and it was here that Ina Shorrock became chairman of the BSFA while Ella took over from Sandra Hall as association Secretary. Ella Parker, possibly the most important British fan of the 1960s (see *The Compact Ella Parker*), would go on to chair our second Worldcon in 1965. In 1961 she was the first female fan to visit US fandom as the result of a dedicated one-off fan fund, with Ethel Lindsay being the first female TAFF-winner to make that same trip the following year. Ella made only a single, slight contribution to *Femizine* and was otherwise not yet prominent enough for most of the period covered to appear in this volume.

APAs are somewhat akin to email discussion lists: they are cosy cocoons in which to dip a toe into fanzine publishing. The first female fan to publish outside the confines of OMPA was Daphne Buckmaster, who in August 1960 launched her new zine *Hobo* #1 and took her OMPAzine *Esprit* general circulation. As for her motivation in doing so:

> So far as I can see, there have been two main types of fanzine. The type that has been prevalent these last few years has been the "fannish" type. It contains items about individual fans, convention reports, fanzine reviews and accounts of meetings between fans. It uses as many names as possible and is, in fact, one vast gossip column. The other type is the "SF fanzine" and contains prozine reviews, criticisms of authors' styles and discussions of plots and of whether SF is literature, etc. These are the two extremes (there are others in between, of course); the one entertaining but non-sustaining; the other earnest and (except in small doses) somewhat indigestible – to me anyway.
>
> What I have wanted and am now, as a last resort, trying to produce myself, is something where one can read discussions, not of SF stories as such but of the ideas behind SF. To me the delight of SF has always lain in its presentation of completely new points of view: new ideas about the nature of the human race and of the universe; speculations about the results of present day trends in our way of life; anything, in fact, which lifts the mind out of the dull plane of accepted conventional thought. In

> the early London Circle days at the White Horse, we used to discuss such ideas and very stimulating it was, too. Today, ideas are still discussed in some fanzines but they usually appear haphazardly among the letter columns and are lost among the general chatter. I have yet to see a magazine which exists purely as a vehicle for the exchange of ideas (I use the word in its widest sense to mean thoughts of any sort) and that is what I would like *Esprit* to be.

By this point *Femizine* was on its last legs, its final issue appearing the following month, but it had done its job. The UK's female fans were finally a force to be reckoned with. After 1960 they never looked back. As for why it had taken them so long to reach this point en masse, I think Daphne Buckmaster had it right when she wrote in "Women in Fandom" that it all came down to having the spare time and the money. The second half of the 1950s was the first period during which significant numbers of women in the UK began to have enough of both to fully participate.

Increasing prosperity as we entered the 1960s would fuel the remarkable cultural revolution that made that decade what it was. Among the many things it gave us was *Star Trek*. In the early 1970s the first conventions devoted to the show (1972 in the US, 1974 in the UK) were also the first SF conventions where the majority of the attendees were female. Apparently the relationships between that TV show's main characters and what could be projected onto them were the sort of thing large numbers of women with *some* interest in SF were looking for. This almost certainly included none of those profiled herein – and definitely not Daphne – but one of those who appeared in the pages of *Femizine*, American fan Bjo Wells (later Trimble), would be foundational to the growth of *Star Trek* fandom.

But that's another story.

# Appendices

*Alicia Feather, the first known female UK fan. See "Before Femizine".*

# Appendix 1: The Prozine Reviews

## *Authentic Science Fiction*

*The fanzine reviews in* Authentic SF *were written by the editor, H.J. "Bert" Campbell. This feature appeared for the last time in February 1955, so* Femizine *didn't get another chance. But the fanzine outlived the pro magazine, whose final issue was dated October 1957.*

**FEMIZINE.** Here come the ladies! *Femizine*, which is "edited and printed ... on behalf of all femme-fans," is meant to be "not too serious, but not frothy" (what about frilly?). Its aim is to unite the female minority groups in the UK. Good idea. With one exception (readers' letters) the contents will be wholly feminine in origin, but it is hoped that men will subscribe. Of course they will; try and stop them! The first issue is free, while copies last, to all who write for it, from Frances Evans, School House, Teignmouth Street, Collyhurst, Manchester, 9. Future issues will cost 9d. each or 2s. 6d. for four issues from the same source. Material for publication should be sent to Ethel Lindsay, 126 West Regent Street, Glasgow. Letters and fanzines (for review) should go to the Editor, Sgt. Joan W. Carr (W.R.A.C.), c/o R.A.P.C. Sgt's Mess, Maida Camp, M.E.C.F. 17. (Mail takes about three weeks to get to Joan.) This first issue has eighteen pages. It is said that the next will have at least thirty. It's good stuff all through. Buy it, please. [1]

•

The second issue of *Femizine* is to hand – and disappoints us. The first issue held a promise which has not been realised here. We thought that the girls of fandom would be able to turn out something that would at least rank equal with some of their male counterparts. Instead, maybe because mistakenly chivalrous comments on the first issue and the venture as a whole have gone to their heads, the editresses have turned out a thing which is so obviously trying hard to be intelligently witty and just hasn't got what it takes. Also there is an emphasis on the smutty side of things that may well be unhealthy. No doubt these women will one day stop trying to act a part and will be themselves. When they do we'll tell you

where to get this fanzine and how much it costs. Until then, chivalry is stone cold dead! [2]

## *Nebula Science Fiction*

> *The fanzine reviews in* Nebula SF *formed part of its long-running fandom column "The Electric Fan" (later "Fanorama") by Walt Willis. Again the fanzine outlived the pro magazine, whose final issue was dated February 1959.*

*Femizine* Nos. 3 and 4. Joan Carr, Ethel Lindsay and Frances Evans, School House, Teignmouth St., Collyhurst, Manchester, 9. 62 pages (double issue), 1/6. A very gay and charming magazine produced by that most opposite of sexes, men not even being allowed to contribute. Typical is Pamela Bulmer's quarter-serious exhortation to girl fans to revolt against the domination of the men. Among the deeds to which she urges them is to chain themselves to the lamp-posts outside the Globe Tavern, where the London Circle now meet. (Is this why they moved from Fetter Lane?) Personally I think they'd have a better chance of being noticed if they were chained to the bar inside, like some of the men. Pamela also has a very entertaining column called "Wigwam", which might have been sub-titled "Watch Out For Squaws" Frances Evans contributes a nice little vignette about a misogynist and Daphne Buckmaster writes futuristic nuclear-fashion notes on the design of female spacesuits. (I thought it was established that young females can endure the cold of interstellar space in a bikini, or nothing atoll.) I notice that the model illustrated has very narrow lapels, which bears out the male contention that when women usurp men's place they cease to be so widely revered. Another 2054 item is Ethel Lindsay's "Dear Diary", a sort of Pepys into the future. This magazine is actually published in Egypt, where one of the girls is stationed in the WRAC, which makes the nickname "Fez" very appropriate. I hope no one will try turban it. [3]

•

*Fez*, a lively and controversial fanmag mainly the work of young ladies. Formerly *Femizine*, it had a curious history, being started ostensibly to demonstrate the competence of female fans to produce an exclusively female fanmag, by a young lady who eventually turned out to be a male hoaxter. [4]

[1] *Authentic SF* #50 (October 1954)

[2] *Authentic SF* #51 (November 1954)
[3] *Nebula SF* #12 (April 1955)
[4] *Nebula SF* #18 (November 1956)

# Appendix 2
# The Joan Carr Hoax

**H.P. "Sandy" Sanderson:**

It's all Tucker's fault, of course –

I first became involved in fandom in May '52 when I wandered into the '52 Convention an innocent and came out a neofan. Shortly afterwards I joined the Manchester fanclub (the NSFC as it was then) and soon became one of the mainstays of the group. Needless to say this wasn't due to any fannish ability I had developed. It was just that there were only about six active members all told. Before I even knew what fandom was all about I found myself on the committee of the first Mancon, which took place in October '52 – and that brings me back to Tucker.

There was this stack of old fanzines to be auctioned, see? And I had to have a look through them and find out about the Tucker Death Hoax. That was the real beginning of the matter; but it wasn't until a month later that I put my thoughts into words. I was standing in front of the mirror at the time – my favourite position and one I invariably adopt whenever I wish to speak to myself:

"About this business of fannish hoaxes," I said. "They seem to be quite a normal part of fanning. If you want to get ahead get a hoax." "Who, me?" I said. "Don't be stupid. I don't know enough about fandom yet. Besides, take this business of Tucker. It can be awkward, to say the least." "But that's just the point!" I said. "I've been thinking about it. Now, a death hoax is easy to start but difficult to stop. And it's already been done a couple of times. You want something different. Something with a twist. Don't decrease fandom – increase it!" "If you think I'm going to desert bachelordom in the cause of fandom you can go –" "I don't mean that, you idiot. I mean invent a fan. Make one up!"

So I invented Joan W. Carr.

Joan was a peculiar mixture. A typewriter, paper and carbons, a bottle of green ink and a broad nibbed pen, an assortment of photographs borrowed from a young cousin, and my own mental agility. She had to be a woman rather than a man, partly because it was more difficult and would better show the extent of my success, and partly because in the beginning I only intended to hoax the NSFC, all of whom (with one exception) were men. For a long time I thought the name came to me in a flash of

inspiration, but now I'm not so certain. The initials were already familiar to fandom, and stuck down somewhere in my subconscious mind there must have been many references to Carr Biscuits, Carr Mill (my cousin's address in St. Helens) and a firm with Carr in its title having a block of offices next to a bus stop I frequented very often in Manchester. As for the things I was able to do with the name, CARRTOON, Trolley Carr Fandom, JoCa, etc., well, I just couldn't have been *that* inspired! The "W" was the queerest part of it. Only when I was asked what it stood for did I realise how few feminine names there are beginning with W. I never did decide which one of the few to use –

The background was all planned, and the future developments mapped out, when I hit the first snag. It couldn't be done in the UK. There were far too many groups in far too many towns, and even an accommodation address would soon have become suspect if Joan never turned up at any conventions or club meetings. Possibly some fan would make her a surprise visit – and be surprised himself. Because of this the whole idea was shelved.

And then a month or so before the '53 convention, as my first year in fandom was drawing to a close, the War Office informed me that I would shortly be taking up residence in the Middle East for three years. Immediately I saw my chance. If Joan couldn't be created – couldn't be made *real* – in those three years, she never would. And she had to become *real*. She had to live. Joan wasn't going to be just another pen-name, to be used alongside or in place of my own. She was going to be a definite separate entity.

In the short time left at my disposal the original plans were amended to cover the new situation, and one of the amendments brought a second person into the plot. As I would be away from fannish contacts I thought it best to have someone on the spot who could keep me informed of the progress I was, or was not, making. The choice wasn't a difficult one. The only people I knew really well were those in the NSFC. The hoax was aimed at the men so that ruled them out instantly. There was only one active femme, Frances Evans, and as I also considered her to be one of the few people I knew then with the mental approach necessary fully to appreciate the hoax, I told her all about it.

That I had made the correct choice was demonstrated immediately. The plot I outlined to Frances included the rather far-fetched idea of me meeting Joan, becoming engaged after six months, marrying her after eighteen, and returning to the UK with an addition to the family after three. Frances said one word: "Presents" – and I abandoned those ideas

straight away. I don't know how right Frances was in her suggestion that some fans would almost certainly buy presents for Joan and I, but even in those days I felt such a possibility would be well in keeping with the spirit of fandom. I rather liked the idea of fooling people – but not to that extent. It wouldn't have been very funny. The plans were changed again, and I had to be content with letting it be known that Joan and I would probably be married on our return to England.

Time passed quickly then – embarkation leave – the convention – and before I knew it I was into my second year in fandom and Joan was about to start her first. I said that Joan's development had been planned, and so it had, but you know what generally happens to plans in fandom. The first few months spent in Egypt went by steadily enough. In several letters I made references to another sergeant I had met, a girl in the WRAC who was interested in science fiction. Copies of fanzines arrived, *Space Times*, *Astroneer* and *Zenith*, and after commenting on them I remarked that I would pass them over to Joan. Joan wrote her first few letters and the fun began.

Those letters. They were all typed, of course, and the signature was done in a now familiar shade of green ink in a backhand slope. Joan never actually "wrote" anything, and yet only one fan ever remarked on this during the three years – and he only thought of it quite recently. I've always been thankful for the fannish habit of using a typewriter whenever possible! The style of those early letters was quite definitely neo-fannish, on the basis that few people ever come into fandom with a fully developed style. Remember, Joan was not merely an extension of me but a new person. At an early stage in her correspondence she was faced with a request for photographs and this was one of the items I hadn't planned for. The situation was quickly put right with the aid of a cousin of mine who answered my cry for help by giving me permission to use photos of her. At this time my cousin was only seventeen, but she was a pretty and well-developed girl and I had no difficulty in passing her off as Joan, age twenty-one. In fact, interest in Joan quickened because of the photographs. Which just goes to prove something or other.

In the short time I had been in fandom there had been no chance for anyone to discover my many interests outside of science fiction. Meetings held once a fortnight don't give a great deal of scope, even though several of us did become well-acquainted. As a result I was able to pass these interests to Joan and she became the one who quoted many authors, who talked about music and poetry and philosophy and semantics. It all helped to create the personality that was later to "shine through the pages of

*Femizine*".

After the first few months had passed I found I was playing the part of Joan "by ear", meeting each crisis as it occurred. The carefully thought out plans were abandoned altogether. There was, for instance, the Case of the Missing Letter. The mail for Joan was always taken across to the Mess and I collected it there when no one was looking. One day a letter arrived when I was on a twenty-four hour guard, and since I was not able to collect it someone returned it to the Post Room. Unfortunately the officer in charge of the Post Room happened to be a captain in the WRAC. She saw the letter and took it to Ladysmith Barracks, the camp in which all WRAC in the area were housed. Naturally an addressee couldn't be traced and from there the letter went to the WRAC Records Office in England. By this time I had discovered what had happened and I waited in dread for someone to write and say they'd had a letter back marked "No Such Person" or something like that. Fortune smiled on me, however, and Brian Varley (for it was one of his letters) wrote to Joan to say he'd had a letter returned with a note saying that Sgt. Carr couldn't be traced because her Army number wasn't quoted. Brian and Joan were able to laugh over the stupidity of the Army and all was well. It appears that Brian's letter had been opened, to find the address of the sender, and I often wonder about the effect it must have had on the WRAC Records Officer....

After this narrow escape I brought the Post Room staff into the plot and the mail came and went fairly smoothly. No doubt my actions caused quite a lot of comment amongst my companions. I'm certain they considered me to be mad – but to the best of my knowledge they didn't think me queer – for which I was very grateful. Joan was rather an expensive hoax, especially with regard to mail. When she was going strongly it only meant an addition of one to every other fan's list of correspondents, but it more than doubled mine. Believe me, it was well worth it.

As 1954 got under way the problem of leave in England occupied most of my mind. When I first went overseas I had not known about the leave scheme but once I did know it was unthinkable that I should not take advantage of it. And here is another funny thing. I flew home on leave three times. The third doesn't count; but on both of the other two occasions I was able to spend six to seven weeks in England without Joan and without anyone commenting on it. In 1954 the excuse was that Joan had been on leave to Cyprus for the previous Christmas and couldn't get leave again in time for the Convention. The arrangements for mail were quite simple – all Joan's incoming letters were re-directed to my house address

in Manchester and I then typed replies, signed them, placed them in stamped addressed envelopes (air mail, naturally) and sealed the envelopes. Several of these were then placed in a larger envelope which was sent to a friend in the Post Room at Merida Camp. He opened this as soon as it arrived and mailed the contents either back to England or to America etc. In this way several fans received letters from Joan in Egypt at a time when they knew I was in England.

Shortly before the ’54 Convention the question of an all-female fanzine had come up. Several letters had passed between Frances, Ethel Lindsay and Joan, and finally it was decided that something should be done. Without really thinking about the possible consequences I undertook to edit such a fanzine and *Femizine* was born. Ethel had been writing to Joan for some time and she had no idea then of the truth. The first issue of *Fez* appeared at the ’54 SuperManCon and though it wasn’t particularly good it caused quite a lot of comment.

My leave came to an end and I went back to Egypt and Joan. Joan’s second year in fandom (my third) was one of unchecked growth and it wasn’t long before I found myself well and truly out of my depth. I don’t know quite how it happened; but I suddenly found I had a Frankenstein monster on my hands. *Femizine* got into its stride and proved to be surprisingly popular. The number of letters received increased after each issue until a fifty percent return was achieved on a 200 copy issue. Fanzines came flooding in and the OMPA mailings also. *Omnibus* was born for OMPA – and while all this was going on I still had to keep my own activities going under my own name. Naturally, these were cut down as much as possible but I couldn’t drop them all. As a final twist, Joan began to receive requests for material for other fanzines, and some of these requests had to be filled. I don’t mind admitting that several times I felt like climbing up a wall; but Joan wouldn’t let me. This creature I had created was controlling my every move!

Ethel had proved to be so enthusiastic about *Fez* that Frances and I decided it was only fair to bring her into the plot, and shortly after my leave Frances told her the full story. I don’t think Ethel will object now if I underline the unexpected success I’d had in making Joan *live* by telling you that she was glad to hear about the hoax. Apparently she had grown to dislike Joan as a rather bossy young woman who was, in her opinion, quite the wrong person for me to become attached to. This reaction should have warned me of what was to come, but it didn’t. The next twelve months simply rushed past and my creation soon began to be too much for me. *Femizine* speeded up Joan’s development as a fan and brought her into

contact with many people who had never heard of Sanderson. The three-way correspondence between Ethel, Frances and I degenerated to a series of short notes scribbled out whenever something new occurred, and this was decidedly not a good thing. The development of Joan as a person in her own right, though, is best traced in the pages of *Femizine* itself.

There were many highlights during this period. Ron Bennett had a friend who had been stationed in Maida Camp and knew there were no WRAC living there. This necessitated hurried explanations about Joan travelling from Ladysmith Barracks and back each day to work in Maida, and Ron was satisfied. But I think the most memorable event of all, at least from my point of view, was the part Joan began to play in fannish epics, like Vin¢ Clarke's Pantomime Cinderella and the Liverpool tape productions. When the '55 convention came up Joan was unable to attend because she was in the process of moving to Cyprus with a part of the office. This time the mail became more involved – incoming from Egypt to England, outgoing from England to Cyprus to Egypt. However, the arrangements held well. While I was in England, Ethel, Frances and I spent quite a lot of time trying to decide what to do with this rather frightening creature who threatened us all, and in the end it was decided to make *Fez* a really all-female fanzine by having Joan withdraw from it completely and ask Pamela Bulmer to take over the reins. It was the best thing we could think of at the time. In any case it was definitely too much for one person to do and my spare time was rapidly disappearing.

I went back to Egypt for a week and then to Cyprus, and Joan's third and final year began. Things happened and for one reason or another, including downright laziness, I only completed the stencils for the seventh *Fez* and mailed them to Pamela (who had agreed to take over from Joan) as she was leaving for America *[with her husband Ken on his 1956 TAFF trip]*. Vin¢ and Joy Clarke produced the issue and then there was a halt in Joan's activities that has lasted until now. It wasn't long before I was blaming myself for this and suddenly the whole picture clicked into place. Joan had been too successful; she was too real. What had started three years ago as a funny hoax against a dozen people had now become something that might amuse a few people but might equally hurt others. It was now something that would affect all of fandom and not just a dozen people. There appeared to be only one solution to the problem – Joan had to go GAFIA before I returned to England again. She had to fade from the fannish scene and no one would ever know that she had never existed. The stage was re-set; Joan became more and more inactive, answered fewer letters, acknowledged receipt of fewer fanzines, even though they

continued to pour in. I became more active under my own name and argued with Joan about her attitude in OMPA etc. Two issues of *Omnibus* were prepared in which I announced that Joan and I were no longer on speaking terms and it looked as though she might easily slip into that limbo of all forgotten fans. True, I had increased the number of fans who knew the secret by telling Dean Grennell, but then he had been such a friend I felt it necessary for him to know the truth. Pamela had to be told, naturally, and at this point I must admit I've used Pamela pretty badly over this and her reaction to the hoax, amusement coupled with a certain amount of admiration at the completeness of it all, made me appreciate her more – she could easily have been terribly annoyed, and rightly so. But then, she has a sense of humour, thank heavens. I hope the rest of you have –

I intended further to increase the number in the secret to six by telling Brian Varley when I was back in England for good; but that was definitely the limit. Ah, the best laid schemes of mice and men!

Ron Bennett had thought up a hoax, something on the lines of inventing a wife for himself, and by one of those strange coincidences he'd chosen Joan as the name of this non-existent female. He happened to mention this at a gathering of fans in Manchester attended by Dave Cohen (who didn't know the secret) and Cyril Evans (who did). Cyril said something about this sort of hoax having been done before and apparently it wasn't long before Ron had the full story out of him. When I heard about this I didn't know what Ron would do with the information; but it seemed the truth couldn't be hidden after all.

The '56 Convention came along and the situation was, to say the least, somewhat fantastic. There were people who knew, though not very many, people who had heard rumours but refused to believe them because Joan was so real to them, and people who didn't know but must have felt that Something was Going On. Well, now you all know, and I wonder what the reaction will be.

It is possible that one or two fans might now turn round and say that they knew all the time, but don't you believe them! Apart from those I have mentioned who knew, plus Pamela's husband Ken, there is only one person who can say he knew, Harry Turner. Harry has never revealed his knowledge and it is possible that I'm mistaken; but he has always given me the impression of knowing. If he wants to make the claim, then I'll allow it. As for the rest, well, I still have complete files of the letters Joan received together with copies of her replies. They range from the early ones in which Joan was warned about me to the latest wherein it was said

that Joan must be a woman because she couldn't spell!! These letters, or parts thereof, will appear eventually in *Omnibus*, the SF clubzine, as part of a further detailed biography of the "girl" who has been described as "the most important femme-fan of this period".

Shucks, I blush.

Sandy.

**Ethel Lindsay:**

The first letter I ever had from Sandy was full of admonitory advice. I couldn't have guessed from that, though, what lay in the future. Still, it was a hint, now that I can look back on it. I was a neo-fan then, still thrilled at the sudden rush of mail; now, if at least one letter a day does not arrive, I begin to wonder if no one loves me any more. Then one day a letter arrived from Joan. At the time I was delighted at the appearance of another femme fan; the only other I knew was Frances Evans. Frances and I had been discussing trying to count us all, and putting each other in touch. She first proposed the idea of a fanzine of our own. I wrote off to Joan mentioning this. Back by return came a full-fledged scheme to produce one, with herself as editor and I as her assistant. I felt a bit miffed about this on Frances's behalf, as her idea had been more or less lifted from her. Especially as she admitted to some disappointment; still the sly witch did not tell me that she knew the truth about Joan.

The first issue of *Fez* appeared at the Mancon. I met Frances and Sandy there for the first time too. A firm friendship was struck up, which was just as well considering the following events. Sandy gravely produced a rather hazy looking photograph of Joan. This was duly admired by all and sundry, and sniffed at by me. Yes, I was already critical of Joan. Her letters were becoming more and more dictatorial. Shortly after Sandy returned to the Middle East I must have produced the first growl of "No wonder they made her a sergeant." I also wrote Joan a letter telling her what a nice guy I thought Sandy was and how lucky she was. Joan smugly wrote back to say she thought so too.... I might be tempted to hide these facts, only I know the cad will be publishing all Joan's correspondence some day.

While on my summer holidays that year I visited Paul Hammett and arranged to meet Frances there. Paul entertained us royally, but he had to leave for an hour to attend to his surgery. Leaving us to amuse ourselves in the usual way (the bottles were on the mantel shelf), he went. He was no sooner out the door than Frances said that she had something to tell me, but that I was not to be annoyed at her, as, honest, it wasn't her fault! Then quietly she said:

"There isn't any Joan, it's only Sandy."

After the first moment of shock, I began to laugh, ejaculating at intervals: "The fiend! The little brat! Oh, if I get my hands on him!" finishing up with: "It's a good job he's in the Middle East!"

I then began to have horrible thoughts of some of the letters I had written, and confessed I was glad there wasn't any Joan as I had begun to dislike her as a bossy type of female battle-axe. When Paul came back he must have thought us a more than ordinarily hilarious crew, as every time I looked at Frances I started to giggle. It seemed that Sandy had a conscience of sorts for he had wanted to tell me himself, but lacked the nerve and so got Frances to do it.

Among other things (such as threats of mayhem) that I wrote to him, were some hints on how to make Joan sound more feminine and neo-fannish. It was shortly after this that H.J.C. *[*Authentic *editor Bert Campbell]* produced his famous review of *Fez*. This had the effect of throwing me into a real panic; in my job I could not afford such publicity. The other femme fans rallied to our side, and defended us stoutly. They did all they could to help, and began to take a real pride in *Fez*. That was when my troubles really started. I had been thinking and talking of Joan as a separate personality. I always called her "darling Joan" in the way a woman does when she doesn't really mean it. I really had her disassociated in my own mind entirely from Sandy. However, I began to wake up to the fact that I could not expect the rest of fandom to feel the same way. I began to worry about what they would say when the news came out. At the same time so did Frances, who asked me if I ever woke up in a cold sweat thinking about it. Yes, I did. We communicated our fears to Sandy, who at first was inclined to pooh pooh them, on the grounds that all fans can laugh at a hoax. Then he too began to wonder just what the femme fans would say. We thought up all sorts of ideas. Eventually we came up with the bright one of throwing *Fez* open to males as well. I was deputed to put this idea up to them at the first Kettering convention *[in 1955]*. So Frances and I invited some of them along to our bedroom and brought the suggestion up. It was no good. They turned the idea down cold, wanted us to stick to women alone. After they had gone Frances and I sat and looked at each other in dismay.

"I feel sick," she said.

"I think we had better emigrate," I replied.

We got hold of Sandy as soon as we could and told him firmly that, in one way or another, this monster Joan was going to have to be killed off.

So it was planned. Sandy and Joan were to fall out, Joan was to go

gafia and disappear from fandom, *Fez* was to be handed over to the femme fans. It meant Sandy giving up all his egoboo until at least some time after. Still, all that went up the spout the day Cyril Evans let out the news to Ron Bennett. So then we wanted to get the news out in *Fez* first, and fully expected to see Ron beat us to it in his OMPAzine. Pamela and I watched the mailing with bated breath. The strangest thing had happened, though – nothing came out. Only rumours, no one seemed to know what to believe, and some evidently thought it was a double hoax! Amid all this confusion, we breathed a little easier and went ahead with our plans, which all the social activity surrounding the con and our overseas guests had thrown a little behind schedule.

This, though, is the truth and the whole truth. One day Sandy will publish all Joan's letters and further details will be revealed. I can no longer remember all I wrote to her, and await that publication with some trepidation. Do you?

**Frances Evans:**

So Joan is dead! Ghod rest her soul. I was in at her birth, a puling masculine-type girl sergeant. I watched her grow, with some little trepidation and a great deal of amusement, into a fully-fledged femme type. The trepidation was caused by the whole-hearted acceptance of *Fez* by the femmes, by their pride in this "all female" venture. I prefer to pass over that and dwell on the endless source of amusement I had listening to certain fans discussing Joan.

One night Dave Cohen forced me to accept a bet on the certainty of Sandy's marriage to Joan. I said that I didn't think it would come off. Dave assured me that he *knew* something I didn't and that really it was a shame to take my money from me. And that reminds me. He hasn't paid me yet. Another time MachiaVarley, on leave from London, sat in the Thatched House *[the pub where the NSFC met]* positively drooling in his beer at the thought of meeting Joan, as he put it – "in the FLESH".

"Joan," he gloated, "will be out before Sandy, and all's fair in love and war. And," he confided, "from certain recent correspondence I've had with her I feel sure that even though she is a sergeant she'll be a very 'amenable' type of girl. 'S'matter of fact, some of the sex and sadism she dishes out sounds quite shockin' coming from a woman."

"Well," I parried, "that's probably 'cos she's in the Army."

"Yeah!" he agreed.

The hoax grew and Sandy's parents had to know. They frequently entertained the Manchester fans and I must say they played their part magnificently. Sandy's mother was often told not to worry, that her future

daughter-in-law would make the ideal wife for her son. “It was inevitable,” she was assured. “They have so many tastes in common.”

And that’s how it went. It wasn’t hard for me to keep up the pretence; at times I believed in Joan’s existence myself. Sandy, too, came more and more under her influence, so that at one time he practically disappeared from my consciousness and occupied only a very small part of his own. And, now that Joan has gone and I’ve only Sandy left, I can’t help thinking he’s not half as clever or humorous as “she” was.

**Pam Bulmer:**

Keeping the hoax going presented interesting and sometimes chilling moments, too. As, for instance:

The time was Easter – Good Friday evening. The place Walter *[Willis]*’s room in the Royal Hotel, Kettering. I suppose there were about a dozen people in the room and there was a great deal of excitement as everyone was discussing the rumour of the Joan Carr hoax. The leak had originally come from Cyril Evans to Ron Bennett and we had been hoping desperately that he would keep his mouth shut and enjoy the joke as we were doing. “You’re going to look awfully silly, if it’s true, Pamela.” I heard Joy’s words above the hectic babble of voices. Odd incidences were being brought to mind. I daren’t look at anyone but at the same time I daren’t look away; it would be too obvious. I contrived to look interested without seeming perturbed. I wondered if I looked as hot and bothered as I felt. Somehow I had to stop the conversation. Looking at Ken was no good – he was himself endeavouring to strike up another conversation which would eclipse this one. Slowly a jumble of words edged their way into my mind and, studying the marble mantelpiece intently, I took a deep breath and looked round.

“I think it’s most unkind of you all.” I lowered my eyes and looked uneasy. “Sandy is obviously very cut up about Joan. Can’t you see he’s trying to cover up! I don’t think we should be discussing his private affairs.” There was one of those awkward little silences before Bobbie *[Wild]* laughed. “Obviously wearing his heart on his sleeve.”

I blessed her silently, and to my intense relief the chatter resumed on another topic. I felt very tired.... [1]

# Further Reflections

**Sandy Sanderson:**

It could be said that Joan came into fandom at the end of a short,

sharp, transitional period. Sixth Fandom had come to an end (as a sharply definable period, that is) and Seventh Fandom had rapidly killed itself off with its self proclamations – but not, thank God, before it had given us Dean Grennell.

Unfortunately for Seventh Fandom it was publicised too well in advance and the truth of the matter is that Fandoms, like Focal Points, can only be seen in retrospect. A gap was left, and although she never realised it in her short lifetime Joan W. Carr filled that gap, leaving another one herself on her demise.

Looking back, this period of just over a year or so was a Golden Age for femme-fans. People still talk of "Franceska's Column" and bemoan its loss. There was a petticoat rule in OMPA, with Pamela Bulmer, Daphne Buckmaster and Joy Clarke holding the three offices. More and more femme-fans appeared on the scene and joined clubs and began to appear in other fanzines. If *Femizine* had kept going it might easily have developed into a real focal point, but unfortunately it ended when the Joan Carr hoax ended – in 1956 – and although it has recently been revived it isn't the same because the conditions are no longer the same and the current editor, Ethel Lindsay, has ideas different from mine.

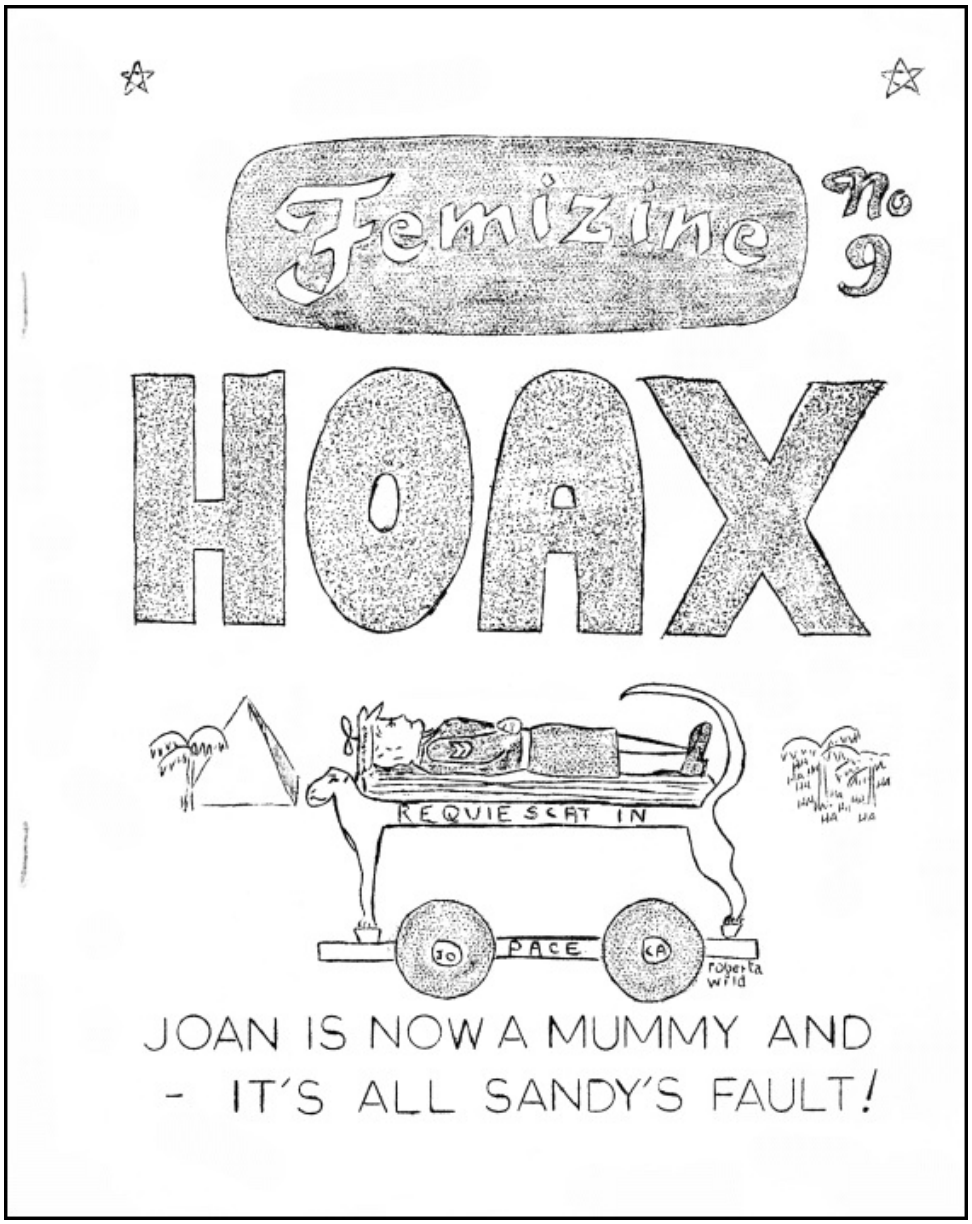
However, if fans are still numbering fannish eras I think that the Joan Carr period should be termed Eighth Fandom – Femme Fandom – and although it was relatively short-lived the influences are still felt today. Even when they lost their own fanzine, and thus their cohesiveness, the women clearly had no intention of relinquishing their new international status, and what was once exceptional is now accepted as commonplace.

Joan Carr came to an end in 1956. At this time I'd killed off one woman and lost another and I had nothing to hold me to a fandom that I had never really been a part of. Joan might have influenced fandom but she didn't grow out of it – she grew out of a desire to show off. For some obscure reason I hung onto my OMPA membership and all other fanac died away. At the same time, more for a matter of convenience than anything else, I took up residence with Joy and Vin¢ Clarke in Catford. Sometime in early 1957, in the bustle of preparing for the London Worldcon, Inchmery was born.

Now, let's face it, the birth of Inchmery is not, in itself, a matter of great importance in fannish history. But I do feel that a good case could be made out for the importance of the reasons for its birth, continued existence, and growth. It started as a friendly group drawn together against the natural adversities of being committee members of a Worldcon, and developed into the present gestalt personality where anything said by

Inchmery is the opinion of each of the individual parts, regardless of which part says it (personal reminiscences such as this current item excepted, of course). In a sense the whole is greater than the parts. [2]

[1] *Femizine* #9 (May 1956, ed. Pam Bulmer)
[2] *JD-Argassy* #55 (June 1960, ed. Lynn Hickman)




Femizine *#9 cover by Roberta Wild*

# Appendix 3
# *Femizine* Facts

This being its entry in the British Fanzine Bibliography, giving printing, paper size and page count details. Q = quarto (8" x 10"), F = foolscap (8" x 13"), m = mimeographed/duplicated (i.e. by a Roneo or Gestetner machine in the UK).

*Femizine*: "Joan Carr" (H.P. Sanderson), Pamela Bulmer, Ethel Lindsay.

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Sum/54 | m | 1/2 F | 22 | ed. JC |
| (-) | Jun/54 | m | Q | 2 | ed. JC * |
| 2 | Aug/54 | m | Q | 34 | ed. JC |
| 3 | Dec/54 | m | Q | 64 | ed. JC |
| 4 | - - - - c/w No 3. | | | | |
| (-) | Jan/55 | m | Q | 4 | ed. JC ** |
| 5 | Feb/55 | m | Q | 40 | ed. JC |
| 6 | Apr/55 | m | Q | 44 | ed. JC |
| 7 | Aut/55 | m | Q | 62 | ed. Joy Goodwin |
| 8 | Mar/56 | m | Q | 44 | ed. PB |
| 9 | May/56 | m | Q | 34 | ed. PB |
| (10) | Sep/58 | m | Q | 26 | ed. EL *** |
| 11 | May/59 | m | Q | 30 | ed. EL |
| 12 | Aut/59 | m | Q | 24 | ed. EL |
| (13) | Spr/60 | m | Q | 24 | ed. EL |
| 14 | Sum/60 | m | Q | 20 | ed. EL |
| 15 | Sep/60 | m | Q | 16 | ed. EL |

* bound with Supermancon Programme Book/Combozine
** bound with Cytricon Souvenir Combozine and called *Junior Fez*
*** called *Distaff*

Scanned copies of the original *Femizine* are archived at Fanac.org as below:

- https://fanac.org/fanzines/Femizine/

# Appendix 4
# The OMPAzines

This covers OMPA only during the years of *Femizine*'s existence. OMPA faded away in the late 1970s. Bobbie Wild – by then Bobbie Gray – was the last remnant from the days of *Femizine*, continuing to run *Vagary* through it until the bitter end. Ethel Lindsay's *Scottishe* outlasted OMPA, Ethel winding it up on her retirement with issue #82 in September 1981.

## A. Members

Daphne BUCKMASTER:
*Esprit* #1-11
*Random* #1

Pam BULMER:
*Chattahoochie Combozine* (co-edited)
*Ugh!* #1-3
*Ziz* (co-edited)

Joy CLARKE:
*Bran Tub* #1-2
*Comedy of Errors* (co-edited)
*Goontact* (co-edited)
*The Lesser Flea* #1-12
*National Weekly*
*Some Letters Concerning TAFF*
*This Sceptred Isle* part 1

Belle DIETZ (US):
*Nimbel* (co-edited)
*Peals* #1-2

Nan GERDIN (US):
*Ob*
*Nantz*

Lee HOFFMAN (Shaw) (US):
*Chattahoochie Combozine* (co-edited)
*Dimensions 16* #1-2 (co-edited)

*Ice Age* (co-edited)
*Science Fiction Five-Yearly* #1 (co-edited)

Ethel LINDSAY:
*Scottishe* #1-17

Dorothy RATTIGAN:
*Satan's Child* #1-6 + Special Edition

Marie-Louise SHARE (US):
*Caprice* #1-3

Anne STEUL (Germany):
*FanANNia* #1-4

Bobbie WILD:
*Sulphuryc* #1-2
*Vagary* #1-11

## B. Mailings:

1: Autumn 1954
*Bran Tub* #1
*Ugh!* #1
*Ziz*

2: December 1954
*Esprit* #1
*Scottishe* #1
*Some Letters Concerning TAFF*

3: March 1955
*The Lesser Flea* #1
*Scottishe* #2

4: June 1955
*Bran Tub* #2
*Esprit* #2
*Esprit* #3
*Scottishe* #3
*Ugh!* #2

5: October 1955
*FanANNia* #1
*The Lesser Flea* #2

*Satan's Child* #1

6: December 1955
*FanANNia* #2
*Chattahoochie Combozine*
*Scottishe* #5

7: March 1956
*Esprit* #4
*The Lesser Flea* #3
*Scottishe* #6

8: June 1956
*Esprit* #5
*The Lesser Flea* #4
*Satan's Child* #2
*Scottishe* #7
*This Sceptred Isle* part 1
*Ugh!* #3

9: September 1956
*Dimensions 16* #1
*Esprit* #6
*The Lesser Flea* #5
*Scottishe* #8
*Vagary* #1

10: December 1956
*Satan's Child* #3
*Science Fiction Five-Yearly* #1 (co-edit)
*Scottishe* #9
*Vagary* #2

11: March 1957
*Goontact* (a one-shot parody of *Contact*)
*The Lesser Flea* #6
*Scottishe* #10
*Vagary* #3

12: Spring 1957
*Dimensions 16* #2
*FanANNia* #3
*The Lesser Flea* #7
*Scottishe* #11

*Vagary* #4

13: September 1957
*The Lesser Flea* #8
*National Weekly*
*Scottishe* #12
*Vagary* #5

14: December 1957
*Esprit* #7
*Satan's Child* #4
*Scottishe* #13
*Vagary* #6

15: March 1958
*FanANNia* #4
*The Lesser Flea* #9
*Satan's Child*: Special Edition
*Scottishe* #14
*Sulphuryc* #1
*Vagary* #7

16: Summer 1958
*Comedy of Errors*
*Esprit* #8
*The Lesser Flea* #10
*Scottishe* #15

17: Autumn 1959
*The Lesser Flea* #11
*Ob*
*Sulphuryc* #2
*Vagary* #8

18: Winter 1959
*Esprit* #10
*Peals* #1
*Satan's Child* #5
*Scottishe* #16
*Vagary* #9

19: Spring 1959
*Esprit* #9
*Nimbel*

*Scottishe* #17
*Vagary* #10

20: June 1959
*Esprit* #11
*The Lesser Flea* #12
*Nantz*
*Peals* #2
*Satan's Child* #6
*Scottishe* #18
*Vagary* #11

21: September 1959
*APAthy*
*The Lesser Flea* #13
*Peals* #3

22: December 1959
*Satan's Child* #7
*Scottishe* #19

23: March 1960
*The Lesser Flea* #14
*Peals* #4
*Scottishe* #20

24: June 1960
*Ice Age*
*Esprit* #12
*Satan's Child* #8

25: September 1960
*Random* #1
*Scottishe* #21

Most of the above was taken from *APAthy* (September 1959, ed. Joy Clarke), an index to the first five years of OMPA mailings. This can be found at Fanac.org under "References".

# Appendix 5
# Female Fannish Firsts

## United Kingdom

**1. Amateur Publications**

National Organisation Journal

Marion Eadie: *Urania* #1 (April 1935 for the Junior Astronomical Association) – not strictly SF-related but worthy of note given Marion's later involvement with fans.

Roberta Gray: *Vector* #6 (January 1960, for BSFA) – previous issue co-edited with Mike Moorcock.

APAzine

Pamela Bulmer: *Ugh!* (1954, for OMPA)

All-Female Fanzine

"Joan Carr": *Femizine* #1 (Summer 1954)

Joy Goodwin: *Femizine* #7 (Autumn 1955) – first issue with actual female editor.

General Circulation Fanzine

Mavis Pickles: *Phantasmagoria* (November 1950, co-edited with Derek Pickles, first 3 issues)

Daphne Buckmaster: *Hobo* (August 1960) – first solo fanzine.

**2. Conventions**

Chair, National Convention

Ella Parker: 1960 Eastercon (also first all-female UK committee)

Chair, UK Worldcon

Ella Parker: 1965 Loncon II (23rd Worldcon, second in UK)

Fan Guest of Honour

Ethel Lindsay: 1971 Eastercon

**3. Fan Fund Winners**

Ethel Lindsay: 1962 TAFF (also first to stand)

Eve Harvey: 1985 GUFF

## North America

**1. Amateur Publications**

National Organisation Journal

Eva Firestone: *The National Fantasy Fan* (1955, for NFFF)

APAzine

Morojo: *Guteto* #1 (June 1941 for FAPA)

All-Female Fanzine

Pogo (Mary Corinne Grey): *STF-ETTE* (September 1940)

General Circulation Fanzine

Gertrude "Trudy" Kuslan: *Nucleus* #1 (April 1938, co-ed w/Louis Kuslan) *

Morojo: *Stephan the STFan* (1939) – first solo zine.

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* *Though T. Bruce Yerke and others were listed as editors on earlier issues of* Imagination!, *Forry Ackerman claimed that he and Morojo (Myrtle R. Douglas) were actually responsible for it from #2 (November 1937); however, they are credited only in* Imagination! *#13 (November 1938).*

**2. Conventions**

Chair, Regional Convention

Freddie Hershey: 1950 Westercon – earliest I have been able to determine.

Chair, Worldcon

Julian May: 1952 Chicon II (10th Worldcon)

Fan Guest of Honour

Juanita Coulson: 1972 L.A.Con (30th Worldcon) – earliest I have been able to determine.

3. **Fan Fund Winners**

Lee Hoffman: 1956 (TAFF; declined funds)

Lesleigh Luttrell: 1972 (DUFF) – first winner.

June Moffatt: 1973 (TAFF, with husband Len)

Avedon Carol: 1983 (TAFF) – first solo female winner to use TAFF funds.

## Australia

**1. Amateur Publications**

APAzine

Shayne McCormack: *Terran Times* #2 (June 1970 for ANZAPA)

General Circulation Fanzine

Rosemary G. Simmons: *Vertical Horizons* (April 1952)

**2. Conventions**

Chair, National Convention

Shayne McCormack: 1972 Syncon ’72 (co-convenor)

Julia Hilton (Curtis): 1980 Swancon 5 – first solo chair.

Chair, Worldcon

Rose Mitchell: 2010 (co-chair with Perry Middlemiss)

Fan Guest of Honour

Shayne McCormack: 1980 Swancon 5

**3. Fan Fund Winners**

Christine McGowan: 1976 (DUFF)

Karen Pender-Gunn: 1995 (GUFF, with Ian Gunn)

Kylie Ding: 2012 (GUFF) – first solo winner.

Karen Vaughn: 1988 (FFANZ, with Terry Frost)

Rose Mitchell: 2003 (FFANZ) – first solo winner.

## Germany

**1. Amateur Publications**

National Organisation Journal

unknown but assumed: *Andromeda* (? for SFCD)

APAzine

Anne Steul: *FanANNia* #1 (October 1955 for OMPA)

General Circulation Fanzine

Anne Steul: *Fantum* (Spring 1956)

**2. Conventions**

Chair, first German convention

Anne Steul: Wetzcon 1 (January 1956)

## Sweden

**1. Amateur Publications**

Fanzine

Gisela Molander: *Space Reporter* #1 (Summer 1956) – Club fanzine of the all-female Lund club, Nova; Molander was also club chair.

**2. Convention Chairs**

Chair

Cecilia Moberg: 1981 Regncon (May 1981) – that year’s largest Swedish convention (there was as yet no national con).

Fan Guest of Honour

Brita Planck: 2002 (con unspecified)

**3. Fan Fund winners**

Fia Karlsson: 2022 (TAFF)

My thanks to Perry Middlemiss and John-Henri Holmberg for Australian and Swedish info respectively.

# The End

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