

the ball rolling in 1926 with his *Amazing Stories* magazine, and inaugurated the Science Fiction League in 1934 officially "to enhance the popularity of science fiction".

The Science Fiction League, which existed for nearly three years, cemented the bonds of friendship between the many unco-ordinated groups of young men (and some women) who felt that science fiction held something more for them than just another form of literature. The League endeavoured to form local Chapters, bringing together local members who forwarded their suggestions for improving and spreading science fiction in general. Several Chapters were formed in England—in Leeds and Nuneaton, Warwickshire, and there were other active groups in London and Liverpool.

By the time the S.F.L. ceased to function in 1935, the groups of enthusiastic amateurs were sufficiently organised no longer to require a parent body to direct their activities. It is directly from these old groups that the present-day fan clubs have evolved—many of their members to-day were the young pioneers of seventeen years ago. *Many of them are to-day's leading authors and editors, artists, agents and publishers.* Authors such as Ray Bradbury and Arthur C. Clarke wrote for amateur magazines with a circulation of less than 100 copies!

Everywhere you go . . .

To-day there are innumerable fan groups in America (where each year a World Convention of professionals and amateurs is staged in a major city—this year it is Philadelphia), in Canada, Australia and South Africa, and in Great Britain there are active groups in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow, Bradford, Pontypridd, Gillingham, Cheltenham and Windermere.

In the main members of these groups meet regularly to discuss the currently published literature, both magazines and books, meet visiting celebrities and see the latest science fiction films, encourage discussion of the themes propounded by current stories, produce regular printed or duplicated magazines containing articles, short fiction items, book reviews, and advance publishing news. Individually

sensitivity that is full of subtle shades, and his writing catches all the colours and fire that lie in the magic of words. That is why *The Martian Chronicles* is so important a book. I know of no more exciting and beautiful piece of current writing than the episode "There will come Soft Rains".

Bradbury's contribution to Science Fiction, let it be said, lies not so much in his scientific invention as in his passionate horror at what Man has done with Civilization and in his even greater belief in Man's ultimate nobility. *The Martian Chronicles* first excites and then purges our terror, that little hard knot of fear that lies somewhere in every one of us to-day.

SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

A report of this Convention, held in London on Saturday and Sunday, May 23rd and 24th, will appear in the next issue of *Science Fiction News*.