

# AMBLE 3

25th OMPA MAILING

Perpetrated by ARCHIE MERCER of 434/4 Newark Road, North Hykeham, Lincoln, England. (E&OE) Emanating from within the Caravan in the Shadow of the Malleable Ironworks. A MERCATORIAL PUBLICATION

So with a brilliantly unoriginal layout that's entirely undistinguishable from that of the previous issue, I launch again into

## THE SHAMBLES

which is a review of the 24th OMPA Mailing

OFF TRAILS v6:4 (Ron Bennett completing his year of office)

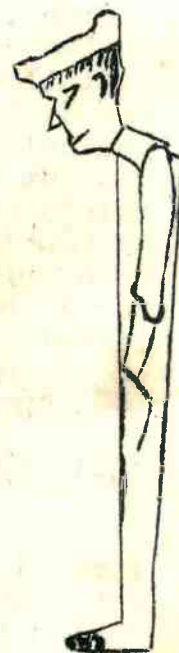
Which reminds me - I haven't completed the voting form yet. Have to. Whilst the By-laws on the whole seem to be a Good Thing, I have a few comments on their wording which may as well go in here.

(8) "When one member of a joint membership resigns" - according to By-law 5, "joint memberships may be accepted only from married couples or like that" - but the reference to "senior member" that follows (we're back to By-law 8 again now) is irrelevant to married-couple joint-memberships, and seems to refer to the following By-law (No 6, re associate memberships). In which case I'm agin' it - it's patently unfair in that it can lead to "bequeathed" memberships by-passing the waiting-list altogether. I suggest that at some suitable time By-law 8 should be amended to read that junior "associate" members may only succeed to the membership on resignation of their seniors if it is apparent that, had the associate gone to the bottom of the waiting-list when he first became involved, he would now be a member in his own right. Otherwise he takes approximately the place on the waiting-list where he would have been.

(11) - I think the appropriate word meant is "alternately" rather than "alternatively" - but in any case, although I remember mentioning this point in one of my editorials in the days when I was OE, I think it's too trivial to actually LEGISLATE about.

(14) "Three spare copies of each spare postmailing" - isn't there a spare "spare" in there somewhere?

Otherwise I think the proposed By-laws are a very capably-done bit of verbal organising.



Fabulous Fred  
Eats briskets  
in bread

SKIMMERS' GUIDE (Belle Dietz) Chris Moskowitz strikes a chord of sympathy with her description of her first Con - mine was much like that, too. And, Belle, what about Galluses?

GROUND ZERO 5 (Dietzes & Raybin) I'm not really sorry to see this give place to a widened PEALS, it's too snippety to really satisfy. And the continual page-jumping to justify the layout is irksome, too - I think even those who normally use it would tend to agree that it's overdone here.

PEALS 4 (Belle Dietz) The reason (P.22) that salt-shakers have only one hole rather than a lot of little ones (I've always supposed) is to distinguish them from the pepper-shakers, which have lots of little holes. Anyway, they're usually called salt cellars if anything, whether shaker-type or open-with-a-little-spoon-to-spoon-the-salt-out-with. And the pepper-shakers are called pepper-pots. Then over to P.23, and British bus tickets - you call your own destination and pay to there, fair enough. Then you get off several stops further on, maybe - if you can. But two things militate against this (besides any innate honesty one may just happen to have, that is). One is the fact that bus conductors have pretty good memories. The other is that every so often the bus is boarded by a travelling inspector, who looks at everybody's ticket to see if anybody's overstayed their welcome, then drops off at the next stop and boards somebody else's bus.

"Demobbed" (P.36) - discharged, yes. Short for "demobilised".

JD-A 52/53 (Lynn Hickman) More postmailings that are now so old that the Will To Comment has gone, most JD-As seem to go this way which is a shame. Incidentally I think I've filed the issue with the end of the Madle London Worldconrep, but I must just mention that I consider the running of JD-A through OMPA until it was complete to be a gesture well worth thanking Lynn for.

A L'ABANDON 7 (Jim Caughran) Interesting and good reading Jim, but it's Bill Donaho who sparks me to specific reply this time. I too thought the Lehrer Mozart parody was first-class, also the "modern jazz" one - neither type of music attracts me overmuch. The mock-Cole Porter I found as tedious as I find the real thing, and the mock-Gilbert&Sullivan I found to be divertingly musical in its own right. What does this all prove? And my proposition is that a good many Moondog tunes and arrangements (such as I have heard) are NOT crud, whatever the pretentiousness of the man himself.

ATOZ 2 (Arthur Thomson) As a matter of fact, the Malleable Ironworks was never nationalised. We're not producers of raw material, only of custom-designed castings. We don't MAKE iron pigs, we melt them down into other shapes.

I particularly liked Ethel's "Don Ford" writeup, and I'll just remind you that the reason I haven't commanded an "Illo Idea" so far is simply that I haven't been able to think of one worthy.

ESPRIT 12 (Daphne Buckmaster) One of my favourites back again, and chock-full of check-marks. For a start, the second paragraph of the Editorial contains a reference "See P.18". The Editorial para mentions that you're thinking of keeping comments short in the future, and writing to anybody who "merits more than half a page". Turning to P.18, I find near the top I've marked the place where you say "After all, we all like to read the comments on all the others". To which I can only say that I do, for one, and hope that all OMPazines will continue to be dealt with at whatever length seems called for, in OMPublic. Taking up your specific question in the second Editorial para once again, I can't say I have any hard and fast opinion on how much space should be devoted to mailing comments, but I certainly shouldn't object to a half-and-half ratio. But then, inasmuch as mailing comments often come in the guise of articles-in-their-own-right, and also, on somewhat the opposite hand, extraneous matter can get mixed up with the mailing comments and frequently does, it's often hard to determine just which is and/or isn't.

While I'm at it, I may say that I have no complaints as to the balance in this issue.

The Birchcraft essay was as interesting as its predecessor, but has no Mercatorial marginal annotations so I'll let it otherwise pass. I hope that the last has far from been heard on this subject, though. I have a checkmark on P.9 though, where you suggest that Conreporters are inveterate note-takers. Not THIS Conreporter, mate. At one of the Ketterings I did try - but gave it up after a page or so, I'm too lazy and things can be happening while you're busy trying to record what already has. I just trust to the Mercatorial memory - which is largely the explanation, no doubt, as to why Mercatorial conreps are usually riddled with minor inaccuracies. (If not major ones).

Then P.12 - yes, the FANCY's for reading. I read it from cover to cover, as I would a novel. And it proved considerably more absorbing reading than most novels I find myself reading tend to, too.

On P.13 I've marked opposite your Campaign for Clarity - but I'm damned if I can remember precisely why now. Clarity and Ellis Mills don't sit well together - in fact it's the confusion that's a great part of his fannish charm. A Clarified Ellis Mills would not be the Ellis Mills we know and appreciate, that is. Like Sneary and his spelling, like.

Finally, back to P.18 again, and "The Establishment". Surely you've heard this phrase used in its wider sense Daphne, haven't you? It denotes everything that's "acceptable", "respected", part of the officially-approved structure of society with a capital s. Religiously it includes not only the Church of England, but the so-called "Nonconformist" churches such as Methodist, Baptist, etc. ("Ecclesiastically" would have been a better word than "religiously", but I'm not obliterating all that lot now). The term also covers, for example, the Labour Liberal and Conservative parties, Trade Unions (at any rate if affiliated to the T.U.C.), all forms of capitalist enterprise including the Co-op movement, societies such as the RSPCA, NSPCC etc (but not, of course, bodies such as the League Against Cruel Sports, which isn't "respectable",) the Red Cross

and St John's Ambulance, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, symphony orchestras (but not jazz bands, even when the latter happen to be patronised by royalty) and so on.

Anyway, it's such a well-known use for the word that I'm really surprised it doesn't seem to ring a bell.

ERG-O (Terry Jeeves) Congratulations, anyway. Naturally I don't expect you to divulge your honeymoon location, Terry - after all, Discretion IS the better part of Valerie.

SATAN'S CHILD 8 (Dorothy Ratigan) Glad to see this popping up again, too - whilst it's never been one of my top favourites, it's improved considerably in interest recently as it drifts away from the semi-precious little-magazine sort of atmosphere into something more typically apan. The individual member's thoughts on topics controversial or trivial, especially when developed at some length rather than just slung in in snippets, usually seem to be of much interest to fellow-members, and yours are no exception, Dorothy. I like a lot of your views, too. As for the South African situation, if I may coin an obvious epigram, it strikes me that every successive step taken by the South African authorities "to preserve white civilisation in South Africa" seems designed deliberately to prove once again that white civilisation in South Africa doesn't DESERVE to be preserved.

VERT 1 (Ivor Mayne) Coo, mate, where did you spring from - I thought we'd lost you. I refuse to try and derive anything from the Half-eaten Heart, but your personal remarks at the beginning were of considerable interest, and could well be expanded on. I've never read any Kerouac, despite Jhim's enthusiastic recommendation, so I can't very well compare your opinions of him with mine or anything - but it's still highly readable.

ZOUNDS! 2 (Bob Lichtman) Another one full of check-marks - P.5, and the question of matching one's ' with one's . to produce a ! That one was done with the "lower-case" full stop, and matched. But if I use my capital full stop I get ! which doesn't. But the ramifications go beyond that - for my two full stops aren't even on the same key. My lower-case full stop is on the key to the immediate left of the Z key, partnered with a capital & and the figure . Whereas my CAPITAL full stop's on the key to the immediate right of the M key, partnered with (or possibly by) a lower-case comma and the figure -. (I have two shift keys, I'd better explain).

P.8, but I've already explained why I had those two blank pages Bob, you'll maybe have seen the explanation by now. To recap, I ran down too far on one stencil, and didn't notice this until the one that was supposed to back it (in fact, ALL the back sides) had been run off. So in the circumstances, unless I was to either let several lines of my sweated prose be left by the wayside (or re-cut the entire issue) I did the only thing possible. Yes, it broke MY heart to see those two wasted sides, too.

Then there's P.10, and your emphatic hope that John will never finish his "Roles's Rollings". Which way of putting things is decidedly ambiguous, but presumably you mean you hope they'll go on for ever, and I tend to be with you there! (Matched exclamation-marks by special request).

GRIST v2:3 (Ellis Mills) No check-marks, in the zine that needs them most if one is to find ANYTHING. So I'll content myself with mentioning the matter in its own right, adding a word or two by way of expression of appreciation of the whole shebang (including the note on birds - see below under Eney) and passing on to the next item, which is - Eney. Performing a major surgical job on the item in question (not EXACTLY Eney, like - just one of his publications equally like) one comes up with:

PHENOTYPE Op Crif CLXIX (Dick Eney) This item is being liberated from THE REJECTED CANON in pursuance of the dictates of my filing system, which besides abhorring anything that doesn't come in strictly watertight compartments, now has a separate section for works of reference. Anyway, re the above-mentioned birds (see under Ellis Mills if you're lost again), your interesting information (not to mention Ellis's) is noted with thanks. However, unfortunately you happen to be wrong. I've listened to the record since and made a point of paying strict attention to the passage in question - and the man definitely says AUTOBAHN. Dammit, the record-player cannot lie.

Now. This vexed question as to whether or not beliefs can be changed by force. Beliefs come in two distinct varieties - innate and acquired. Any sort of specific religious faith is necessarily (the sincerely religious may differ here, from the best of motives) of the second type - acquired. When the Moslems conquered the various unbelieving types en umerated, they were merely substituting one religion for another, and in all probability (though I don't have the intimate knowledge of these matters that I ought) one variety of more-or-less despotism for another. However, the difference between Soviet communism on the one hand, and Western democracy on the other, though admittedly not one hundred per cent accurate, is between a system that on the whole believes that people should do what they are told and a system that on the whole believes that people should be able to do what they like. Of course, at bottom both systems hold that people should be able to do what they like in reason, but the difference of threshold between the two "in-reasons" is the heart of the matter. They, who believe in relatively less freedom, stand opposed to us, who believe in relatively more. And belief in freedom is basically innate, not acquired. And, though it is possible to impose during childhood an ethical code that runs counter to any instinctive belief in freedom, it's impossible (barring the use of such things as medicine and surgery all round) to suppress altogether - and even given med&surg all round, would recur with each fresh generation.

THE REJECTED CANON (Dick Eney) Keeps pupping, the FANCY 2, doesn't it. First the style sheet, now this,

and the promised amendment listing to follow. At this rate, you'll soon find you've created a Complete Fannish Reference Library, Dick. Go ahead, it's a magnificent piece of work.

As for THE REJECTED CANON specifically, my main crit on the whole is that I don't see why most of it had to be rejected. Sundry items here and there I can appreciate are best reserved for more deliberately limited circulations than the FANCY 2 herself, but all the various nicknames, initialese, and like that, are matters that one could legitimately search the larger volume in search of enlightenment concerning. Anyway, in the larger volume or any other, it's information I'm glad to have in classified form.

THE ASCENT OF NEXT TO NOTHING (Mal Ashworth) Hillarious.

paraFANalia 5 (Bruce Burn) I'm not all that sold on this issue, I'm afraid. The trouble is mainly that it's overloaded with not-up-to-all-that-much fannish fiction. Fannish fiction (I mean like fan-fiction or fa<sup>n</sup>-fiction), to be really worth reading, should either be set up basically for humour, loaded with cracks throughout, or set up basically for a Purpose, towards which the whole story should be directed. Baldwin's piece is on the whole more meaty than Horrocks's - though it just peters out (down its own throat) without getting anywhere (except down its own aforementioned throat).

I must commend the whatsitcolo(u)r illoes though - and I look forward to seeing you in the Isles, Bruce. (These here Isles, I mean, not your far-flung archipelago.) (Not that I'd object to seeing you THERE, understand, but as neither of us looks like being in New Zealand at the time there wouldn't really be all that much point to it).

MAILING COMMENTS 5 (Dick Ellington) Oh hooray - an Ellingtonzine from California. This means that at long last I'm justified under the rules of my filing system in removing Ellingtoniana from the overcramped "East Coast Miscellaneous" box and stowing it in the "West Coast Northern California (and Nevada)" box where it now belongs. Except that - oh like hell, could Contra Costa County possibly be in SOUTHERN California? This means I can remove the stuff from New York, but can't accurately locate it elsewhere. (Out with the maps) - - - (later) found it! I was right first time. I wish you wouldn't DO these things, Dick - you nearly upset my filing system.

(May I at this point hark back to my ESPRIT review and point out that the above paragraph, although arising naturally out of having the item here beside me, is not precisely comment on MAILING COMMENTS. Nevertheless it occurs amongst MY mailing comments, as does plenty of similar.)

Another one who tries to put me right over the Audubon/Autobahn business (for trying which, tower though) I see. But the man definitely SAYS autobahn, and that's that. Pity - that was quite an ingenious solution to the problem. Tower also for the Moondog details. I'm sorry my sense of humour's lacking, though. Mozart - or one of that crowd. Ellington - or one of that crowd. Bickerstaff - or one of that crowd. Smith, for pete's sake - or one

of that crowd. Sorry, no reaction. Yes, I agree the laughter is legitimate from one point of view - but it has its nuisance-value, too, and looking at from another angle, the laughter should be the gramophone-listener's own, rather than recorded as part of the performance.

Far prefer a shower to a bath myself - and so long as baths continue to be designed for people of five foot and under and with no girth to speak of, no doubt I shall continue to do so.

OFF TRAILS v6:5 (Ron Bennett signing off after a creditable year's OEhood) I'm extremely sorry to see Raybin go - his personality was one of our best acquisitions of late. Otherwise noted.

Which is that. Except that according to OFF TRAILS, sundry items that I'd received and filed at various times under the impression that they were ordinary fanzines-in-the-mail seem to have been actually OMPA postmailings. I suppose really I ought to investigate and dig 'em out or something. But then, SOME of us have got to be lazy, so why shouldn't it be me?

\*\*\*\*\*IS\*A\*\*\*\*\*  
I HAVE HEARD it said that there are three grades of people who go for walks in the countryside, namely Amblers, Ramblers and Scramblers. For the purposes of what follows, one can modify this in order to categorise something-or-other into Ambles, Rambles, and Trimble. Which is all strictly relevant inasmuch as the latter has (so he gives me to understand) relinquished title in the second part, so that the former (ie, AMBLE, ie, this) can legitimately roll an occasional "R" in front of itself, to produce once again that well-known Mercatorial (not to mention Trimboldical) column where Anything can happen but seldom if ever does entitled

# OH DIDN'T HE RAMBLE

NO STONE LEFT  
UNHENGED

The other week I read one of the most interesting books I remember coming across in a long time - "Stonehenge" by R.J.C. Atkinson (Pelican 1960, 5/-) - about which I feel the urge to say something. Some ten or a dozen years ago, I remember, I happened one day to be travelling - as some Gilbertian character or other has it I believe - across Salisbury Plain on a bicycle, and coming upon the fabled ruins I dismounted, paid my sixpence or whatever it was, and went in for a look. There were a lot of old stones, some standing and others lying down and arranged in no apparent order with barbed wire inartistically intruding far too near in any case. So this is Stonehenge, I thought. Nice to have been, but otherwise so what? Upon which most thoroughly unromantic reflection I remounted my steed and continued on my way.

Mr Atkinson soon (well, ten or a dozen years later as the crow flies) put me right. "The outermost feature of Stonehenge," he says on P.21, "which forms the boundary of the site, is one which is frequently overlooked by the visitor, who having paid his sixpence walks eagerly across it with his eyes fixed on the stones in the

centre. This feature is a circular earthwork..." Very much touched indeed, particularly when one subsequently reads that the earthwork (ramparts and ditch) represents the oldest period of the site - dating from about as far B.C. as this is A.D.

Duly abashed, I read on. Certainly, it would be of considerable interest to be able to revisit the site armed with Mr Atkinson's Pelican in order to browse over it at one's leisure. Maybe someday I will. In the mean time, I have the book - and it's made me really think. It isn't far from the truth to say that everything I know about Stonehenge I know because of what Mr Atkinson has written.

However, probably inevitably, there are certain points here and there that the author glosses rapidly over, or apparently ignores altogether. Quite possibly this may be simply because he considers them so obviously false trails that no further elaboration is required. However, for the record, my observations follow.

To start with, there's the name of the place itself - Stonehenge. The author gives no etymology for Stonehenge itself, but does mention that "henge monuments" - the accepted name for the class of ancient monument of which Stonehenge is one outstanding example - derive their name FROM Stonehenge, not t'other way about. Mention is several times made of nearby Woodhenge, a somewhat similar sort of place only without the stone circles, from which I infer that Woodhenge must have been named in comparatively recent times, by analogy with Stonehenge.

Which doesn't account for "Stonehenge". The "Stone" part is obvious of course, and can hardly have been other than bestowed on the place by the Anglo-Saxons or their descendants. The "henge" part is the trouble. It sounds vaguely Welsh, but not knowing Welsh that's only a guess. A lot of English place-names ARE of Welsh (ie, Ancient British) origin, though that doesn't necessarily mean that THIS one is. Even more confusing is the antique spelling quoted at one point as "Stoneheng" - this may possibly be just one man's variant, or it may denote that the word was at one time pronounced with a hard "g" - in which case it could conceivably have reference to one Hengist (not necessarily THE Hengist of course) and thus also derive from the Anglo-Saxon. Meanwhile, the question remains aggravatingly open.

Then there's the question of the Druids. Popular ascription of Stonehenge to the Druids is dismissed by the author somewhat summarily, on the grounds that the place was apparently built considerably prior to the advent of the Celtic peoples amongst whom Druidism flourished. As against this, he admits that it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that Druidism might have made use of the place when it arrived there, and even proceeds to give a piece of evidence for this point of view, namely that there are grounds (no more than that) for supposing that the Romans deliberately reduced one of the stones to chips and strewed them all over the site as symbolic of their superseding the old order of things. And the only religious cult that the Romans are known to have taken the

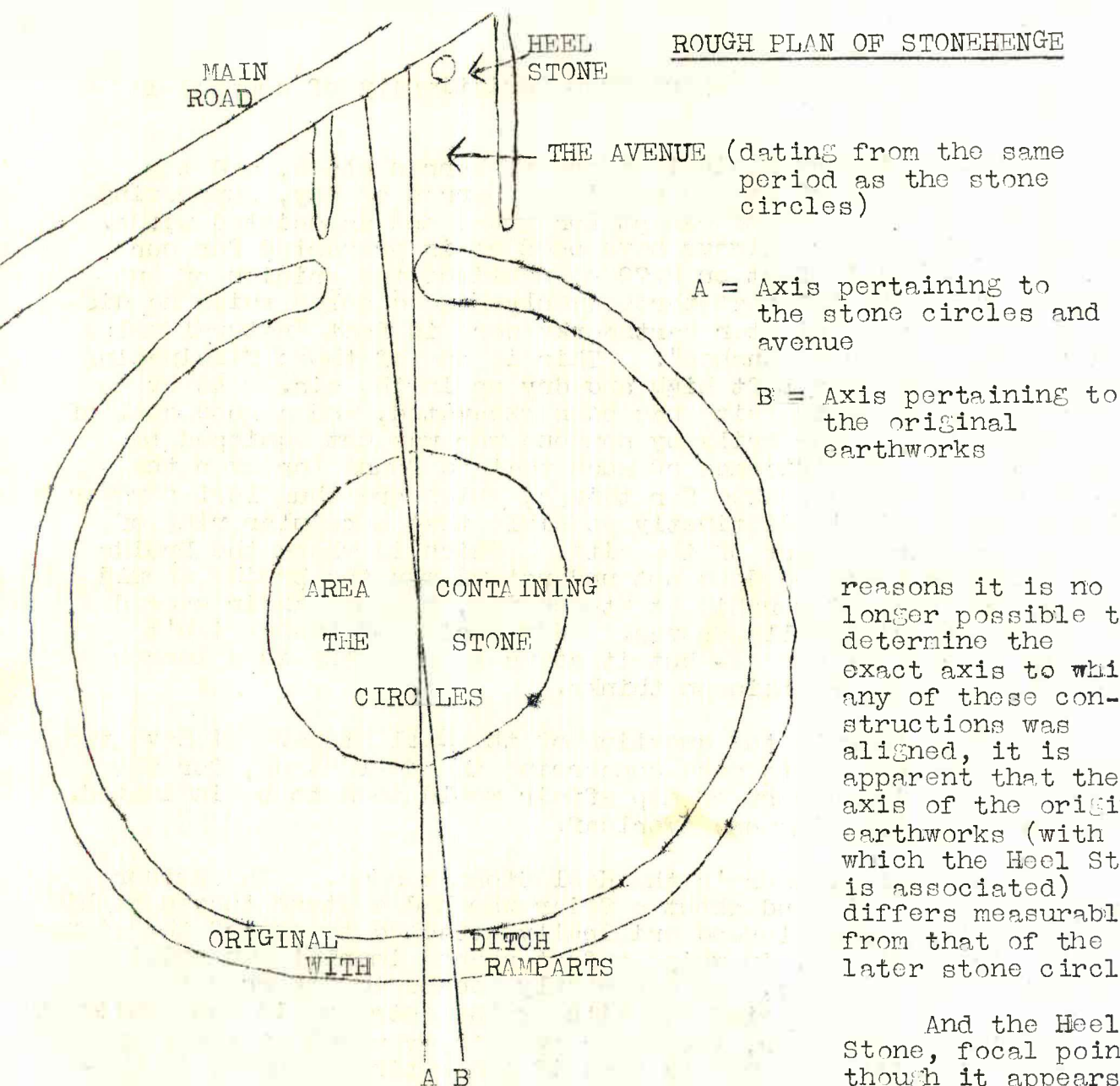
trouble of stamping out (apart from Christianity of course) is Druidism.

Today, Salisbury Plain is a pretty barren place, and the immediate vicinity of Stonehenge is as barren as any, supporting no vegetation to speak of except for grass and associated weeds. But that this may not always have been so is presented for our inspection - and in fact on P.79 he mentions the opinion of one eminent archaeologist that three evenly-spaced holes which he discovered near the perimeter earthworks were in fact "natural holes made by the growth of bushes". This is one of those fascinating angles that just got loft high and dry up in the air. As by no means the whole of the site has been excavated, and a good deal of what has was done cursorily by someone who was not equipped to understand the significance of much that he found (or even the EXISTENCE of some unlooked for things, which are thus lost forever without trace) it is distinctly possible that a regular ring of bushes once formed part of the site. Which is where the Druids come in. Mr Atkinson does not understand why the Druids should have had a place of worship at Stonehenge, because their sacred places are traditionally groves. Now a ring of bushes isn't exactly a grove, I agree - but it seems to make the idea less far-fetched than Mr Atkinson thinks.

Finally, there's the question of the Heel Stone. I have two lines of observation to make concerning the Heel Stone, for the purposes of which a sort of map affair would seem to be indicated. With luck, you'll find one overleaf.

For one thing, there's the Heel Stone's name. The author traces this to a legend about a friar who had a stone thrown at him by the Devil. This legend originally attached to one of the stones in the circle itself, in which a foot-shaped imprint can still be recognised to this day, and apparently became transferred to the more obviously outstanding monolith by the entrance in comparatively recent times. However, I can see two (to my mind) at least equally valid possibilities. One is that if the entire monument is considered to represent a gigantic footprint, the Heel Stone is sited precisely where the heel might be expected to fall. The other is that the stone, although (apparently) originally upright, is now and has been for centuries inclined at a fairish angle. Heeled over, in fact. And, furthermore, either of these explanations for the association of the word "heel" with the stone would provide a further explanation of how the footprint legend got shifted to this particular stone from the original one to which it pertained.

And apart from the matter of its name, the Heel Stone itself - taken in conjunction with the rest of the site - provides considerable food for thought. It is evident that the ditch-and-earthworks were built first, then (some centuries later, though not all at once) the various stone circles and things. The Heel Stone, however, has been dated as belonging to the period when the earthworks were constructed rather than that of the stone circles. Now although for various



reasons it is no longer possible to determine the exact axis to which any of these constructions was aligned, it is apparent that the axis of the original earthworks (with which the Heel Stone is associated) differs measurably from that of the later stone circles.

And the Heel Stone, focal point though it appears to be, lies distinctly off-centre to BOTH

these axes, particularly to the earlier one.

It is (yet again) apparent that the builders of the later structures venerated the Heel Stone in some way, and that could account for their toleration of its off-centre position. However, there seems to be no obvious reason why the people who originally put it there should locate it off-centre. My suggestion, for what it is worth (Mr Atkinson nowhere mentions the possibility) is that there were originally TWO Heel Stones, one located to either side of the axis. What happened to the postulated companion-stone between the time it was laid down and the time the main stone circles were started (at which time the evidence seems to point to the existence of only one Heel Stone, as now) I wouldn't know. But it is worth

pointing out, I think, that the traces of the hole where it once stood would logically be buried in just about the place that is least likely to be available to archaeologists - to wit, right under the main road that runs past the site.

Thus run my speculations on Stonehenge past. What about Stonehenge future? The book even sets me thinking in that direction as well. (Incidentally, it occurs to me in passing, the word "cromlech" does not occur once throughout the entire volume. But I digress, like). Through the ages, ever since it was built, Stonehenge has been deteriorating. Some of the deterioration was natural, some undoubtedly the work of man (such as the looting of the stones for building at various times). But it's only within the last hundred years that any attempt has been made not merely to resist further deterioration, but even to repair some of time's ravages. A few decades ago several dangerously leaning stones were shored up with scaffolding, and since the war several fallen stones and even complete trilithons have been restored to the upright position. And it occurs to me that in general, this applies throughout the world - only in very recent times indeed have ancient relics been deliberately restored, not for use in the ordinary sense, but simply BECAUSE they're ancient relics.

This is unprecedented - conceivably, it could be only a short-lived movement. Supposing - my thoughts ran - western civilisation were to be wiped out virtually without trace. Two or three or so millennia later, archaeologists of the future are investigating the past glories of Britain, including Stonehenge. Piece by piece they laboriously reconstruct its past history - each period in turn, earthwork followed by stone circle upon stone circle is assigned to its chronological place in the scheme of things. Stones that fell, and when they fell, are laboriously catalogued, and the archaeologists come up with the conclusion that Stonehenge was still a part of the religious life of the community around the 20th century AD.

They are able to prove this conclusively because several of the re-erected stones are set in concrete. And from their researches elsewhere they know perfectly well that neolithic man never used concrete. Late second millennium AD construction. QED. X

THE WORD IS	This is a sort of personal statement-type thing.
RETRENCHMENT	Don't be alarmed - I'm not getting married, or anything like that. I'm just - well, read the damn thing for yourself and find out the hard way.

I have always tended towards the opinion that Fandom's too big for me.

This is NOT, emphatically not, the same as saying that Fandom's too big. If there remains one potential fan in the mundane wilderness, then Fandom's still not big enough, let alone too big.

But it's too big for me.

As I say, I've always tended towards that impression, and in fact I have never attempted to keep abreast of the entire fan-pubbing field. Although I faunched mightily (and still do) for certain of the fabled FAPAZines, I have never tried to get into FAPA - nor yet have I even (despite open urging from a certain Berry- type quarter) tried to make SAPS. And in fact, to the best of my recollection, I have only deliberately initiated contact with Transatlantic zines/publishers in two cases - all other transatlantic fanac in which I'm involved has just sort of snuck up on me - and I had neither the heart nor the inclination to turn it away.

In general, 'twould appear, either a given fan manages quite comfortably to cope with the entire field sooner or later, or he goes slowly gafia under the weight of it all. I'm not one of those capable of coping with the field in its entirety, neither do I want to gafiate. I still maintain that Fandom should be a Way of Life, and fanzines are still my favourite reading matter taken by and large. But there comes a point when one gets so many of the things that if one reads all one gets, one can no longer derive the full quota of enjoyment from ANY of them. I happen to be a slow reader as readers go, and with the flood of zines that has been washing in from (mainly) the United States these last few months, my threshold has now been passed.

Therefore I have decided to be ruthless, and prune my coverage of the field drastically. This is no easy matter. However, I have devised a sort of working plan to work to. Dropping any of the local British publications would be rather harder than dropping the more distant ones, so I'm concentrating on pruning where they come thickest - that is to wit and ie, across the Atlantic.

I certainly don't want to drop all my transatlantic contacts, either, and in fact I've just agreed to take on a couple of extra British Agencies and have offered to agent for yet another zine. But several sample copies that arrived recently have been sent back unread, including one of the alleged leaders in the field, and I plan to let a number of subs lapse as soon as they run out - including again some of the leaders in the field. (I mean, what's the good of subbing to a fabulous zine if you're too hard-pressed to give it the appreciation it deserves?) And by direct action along those two lines I hope within a year to have reduced the flood to manageable proportions.

However, then arises the problem of KEEPING it there. The fact is that egoboo in fanzines attracts more fanzines. To that end, I have ceased commenting on most of the ones I DO get, whether I plan to stay with them or not. I realise that my name-and-address are all too available nowadays, but once it becomes established that zines sent my way will not draw comment, I won't have so many of the things arriving unasked-for. A shabby trick to play on people, I know, but as I just said or (at any rate) tried to imply, I'd rather enjoy a limited quantity of zines to the full than try to surfeit myself with too many.

And as usual, to finish with here once again is:

## LAIR OF THE LEADEN-FOOTED FANCY

NIKLAUS, THELMA

Tamahine

Great fun. An "unspoiled" Polynesian girl comes to England, and using her as a "control", the author spotlights much of the phoniness in the British social scene. It needs bearing in mind, of course, that an equally valid book could doubtless be written on the opposite theme of a personable Western young woman or man and her/his reaction to the vaunted "unspoiled naturalness" of the Pacific isles. About the only flaw I could find in the book is an occasional doubt as to the authenticity of the heroine's "Polynesian" background, but the only place I could put my finger on anything specific was the continual reference to gods as "jujus" - juju is surely a West African word.

NOEL, STERLING

We Who Survived

Another "catastrophe" story and rather a good one, the action taking place to a great extent umpteen feet below the covering of ice that has overwhelmed most of the world. Basically it's the story of a small but growing group's battle to break through to where survival is possible on a more long-term basis.

NOURSE, ALAN E.

High Threshold/The Universe Between

A couple of connected stories from "Astounding" that have always seemed more SoW-stimulating than most.

PHILLIPS, A.M.

An Enemy of Knowledge

The Mislaid Charm

The former from "Astounding" presents a vivid picture of an after-catastrophe society living on among the ruins, the latter is one of the wackier of the "Unknown" longer stories.

PIPER, H. BEAM

Ullr Uprising

From "Space SF", being about the only Piper story I can remember in which the rapid jumps from character to character don't spoil the effect.

POHL, FREDERIK, & C.M. KORNBLUTH

Search the Sky

Gladiator at Law

A Town is Drowning

The first-named is a specimen of one of my favourite types of story, which type I dub the "Grand Tour" category, the plot involving the transportation of the hero(es) over quite a distance in the course of which the reader is given a sort of bird's-eye view of the various places visited as a whole. The second, from "Galaxy", I found stimulating enough to hang on to. The third is strictly a mundane adventure-story, but serves as a very good illustration of precisely how hard the borderline is at times to define - if the flood in the story had been world-wide instead of just local, the book would have qualified as another excellent "catastrophe" fantasy.

PRATT, FLETCHER

The Spiral of the Ages

(see also under DE CAMP, L. SPRAGUE)

A sort of temporal "Grand Tour", from "Startling".

RICE, JANE

The Elixir

Another "Unknown" story, novelette-length this time, though the wackiness is not so much in the story itself as in the way it's put across.

RUPERT, M.F.

Via the Hewitt Ray

I'm really in a zone of magazine-extracts now, aren't we. This one's one of the more readable of the reprints in "Fantastic Story".

SCHMITZ, JAMES H.

The Witches of Karres

From "Astounding".

SMITH, THORNE

The Stray Lamb

The Bishop's Jaegers

The Glorious Pool

The Night Life of the Gods

Rain in the Doorway

Topper

Topper Takes a Trip

Skin and Bones

This is one case in which I'm rather fortunate. Of the eleven Thorne Smith tales that are generally available, I have read all of them and have all the ones I want to keep in my collection. All these are humorous fantasies except for "The Bishop's Jaegers" which is an equally humorous non-fantasy.

STURGEON, THEODORE

The Wages of Synergy

The (Widget), the (Wadget), and Boff

...And My Fear is Great

More than Human

The Dreaming Jewels

E Pluribus Unicorn

I, Libertine (by "Frederick R. Ewing")

The first three are extracts from magazines. "E Pluribus Unicorn" is a collection of short stories and novelettes which I keep mainly for about three of them, including the exquisite "The Silken-Swift". And I don't think that this collection calls for any further specific comment.

TOLAND, JOHN

Water Cure

A thoroughly wacky novelette from the crud digest period of "Fantastic".

TUBB, E.C.

Freight

How did that get in here? (It's from "Nebula", by the way).

TUCKER, WILSON

The Long Loud Silence

Again no comment seems to be called for, except that this now brings this listing up to the letter "V".