



Whatsit  
23



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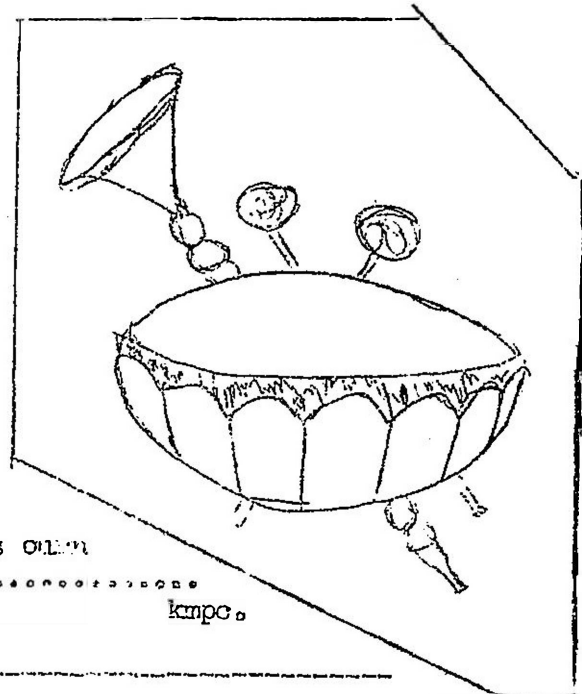
WHATSIT 23 for the

65th OMPA Mailing

April 1st 1972

from

Ken Cheslin, 36 Chapel Street,  
Wordsley, Stourbridge,  
DY8 5 QP,  
Worcestershire,  
Merrie Ergoloand.



and ye bestis of British to alles omm  
raeaders.....

kmpc.

.....00000000  
=====00000000  
.....00000000

HAVE AT YOU!

.....m.a.i.l.i.n.g.....c.o.m.m.e.n.t.s.

THE 64th mailing has been mailed out less than a week but I'm making a start on this zine for the 65th. This is partly because I don't want to have to do another rush jon, this will give me some small chance of including things other than mailing comments. Partly it is because the deadline is near to the convention; and partly I want to be free to deal with anything that comes up with regard to the combozine..which at this moment is only an appeal in OF 64.

the AE says "a plauge on those who have long OMPazine titles"

UL 26. I had to dig out a copy of Whatsit 13 to find out what you were talking about, re Holmsian backgrounds in stories. I cannot say how many I have seen or heard about, but was under the impression that there were a few more, not counting several which have appeared in fanzines, and imitators (?) like Solar Pons. The one I recall most easilly, SFLy, is not actually about Holmes. (I thi nk it was in a Galaxy 5/6 years back, but couldn't swear to it..I've an idea that I have it somewhere around) anyway, the plot concerned a post atomic war America, two men in a helicopter who are scouting for remnants, and a remnant of a platoon, or rather their descendants whose holy books were the Holmes stories, and who go around in a very

UL 26 cont... Holmsian way, observing minutely and deducing...etc., much to the surprise of the two scouts. The only real plot complication is that the Sherlockians aren't sure whether our heroes are Holmes and Watson come to test them, or Dr. Moriarty.

THE GERBISH CHRISTMAS COMBO 1972....I remember coming into New Street on my way home on leave, the train had been very crowded and a lot of people, including me, had had to stand in the corridors..some clot having the window open. Well, off I went to get a bus, and seeing it waiting at the terminal I clambered on, groaning aloud with me kit. The crew were on board having a smoke, or something, and leaping up, looking I thought more than a bit .. apprehensive, assisted on my getting off and waiting by the bus stop just across the road. Well, this I obediently did. Eventually the queue formed, the bus started up, and picked us up. I noticed that the conductor still looked at me a little strangely as he took my fare. Arriving at my gran's, I'd decided to stop off in Birmingham to see her as we didn't visit her very often; one of my relatives, gran or aunt or something opened the door, and giving a sort of gasp retreated into the house. I followed. "What wrong with you eyes" a voice quavered out of the depths of the front room....so I went and had a look in the mirror. My eyes must have been watering, or something, and this, combined with the smoke of the train entering the window when we passed through tunnels, had resulted in me having two large black areas around my eyes..rather like a racoon (is that right)...this must have been seen by the bus people and the passengers..but of course even though they stared they were too polite to mention my appearance to me.....

If I remember rightly the muckiest part of Sheffield is called...Brightside.

On "saga of the Gerbish" I remark that one advantage of fanfiction is the fun of writing in fact. It is possible to write in fans in a nasty way, which I do to a large extent forbore, but perhaps greater fun to depict kindly fans on know. There is a certain thrill in reading about oneself in this sort of thing, a nice sort of "tickled" thrill, even if the writer is not particularly adept. I rather think that this is part of the attraction of things like THE WALL and lately THE POSTAL MENACE, and has something to do with the popularity of the Goon Stories; etc. I don't think there is enough of this pally, kindly, fan fiction around.

Hope you do read "the second bit", it is not much, but one likes to think that when one has tried to write something it will at least get read. Perhaps fandom, OMPA, has got away from liking COVENTRY type, (similar in idea) stories...oh well, not to worry.

Anyhow, best at Leeds U, struggle through, more to the grindstone etc.,

...

2





WHATSIT 22, sorry it was all M/Cs but

Christmas interfered with my time a lot and after doing the M/Cs, which I felt necessary as it is the dialogue part of OMPA, I didn't have enough time to write anything else.

CAPTAIN KANGAROOS FLYING CIRCUS...1...

In some ways I agree with those people who say that we should be spending (we, ha hah, I mean the US) money on space flight when we have a lot of things that that money could be spent on to improve the lot of man on earth. That is, I see to a certain extent their point of view. But, apart from the fact that the space programme has a lot of useful side effects it would be a pity to improve the earth only to be subject to the power of another ideology which had pursued the way of space flight. Maybe space flight will bring about some situation similar to that caused by the Spanish conquest of the Americas...(merely musing, not really comments). I wonder if we'll ever get round to one of my simple minded day dreams, towing Venus and Mars to the orbit of Earth, at a suitable distance, and terraforming them?.



OSTEEN UNIVERSITY REVIEW 5. re the Hero Ompa. I was under the impression, Sam, that you would be writing more of these, so I thought I'd better do my bit to help, ala my remembrance of some casual conversation at Worcester. Mayhap if you like to outline your thoughts on how he should be developed I would happily try to slant my stories in that direction. After all, you invented him. I still intend to plug on with the planetary epic, perhaps some day it might improve, thanks for mentioning, and reading it. Repro...I'll try to improve it, I really do try, but apart from not being very good at layout etc., the roneo I have to use is a pig of a machine, compared say to the old Cringebinder machine.

I remember back in the old Spinge Dave Hale and I wrote a few faanish type songs, to go with well known tunes, Christmas Carols and so on, there doesn't seem to be much of it about now.

UL 37. I once ventured the opinion that the philosophies depicted in SF stories did not necessarily reflect the actual philosophy of the author...but the only comment/reply I recall, put in a somewhat blunt and positive manner, was that I was talking a load of rubbish, therefore it is encouraging to see you expressing more or less the same opinion and my bruised ego may now recover a little. ta.

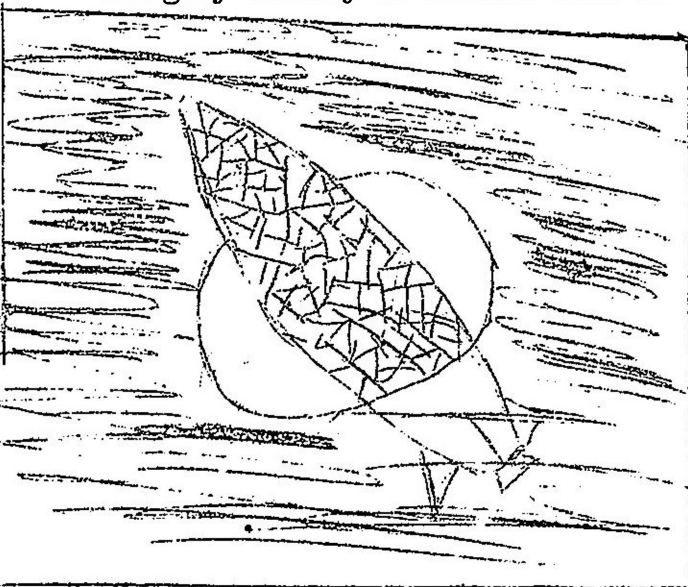
not enough room to start another comment....

3

PSYWAR 5. very professional looking cover...I know at least one Irish person who is convinced of the existence of the Banshee and knew a few people who view the entry of any wild bird into a house as a sign of a death in the family. Superstition is very tenacious. On the other hand I believe that some case might be made for some seemingly senseless superstitions if investigated, I'm thinking of the "its bad luck to light three cigarettes from one match" which I've read originated in the 1914-18 war, supposedly a sniper noted the first light, took aim on the second, and shot by the time the third was lit. Not all will be this young, or old, of course, and some may even be reactions to some real, perhaps rare, "unearthly event". I'm thinking here that some people might be more sensitive to things outside normal human perception. Ghosts, by the way, I find it fairly easy to "believe in", the "marks indicating that the term "ghosts" is used to cover something which I believe might have some rational explanation unconnected with superstition or religion.

As you will have seen from OT 64 the results of the poll (to see if we should have a poll) were too inconclusive to warrant taking it further, because presidential decrees more or less adequately cover the situation anyway.

The AE will have to judge the acceptability of reprint material on each item's own merits. On the whole recent reprints might be allowed some credit, if it seems likely that the material will be welcomed by members, though of course using all reprint material will be frowned upon. Older, let us say, classic, reprints come into another category and may be allowed more or less credit. They would probably be welcomed.



In my opinion a true fan is serious and fanatical, depending on the situation. It is the extremes of both attitudes; having no time for the other side; that I find irritating. In my opinion a true fan is an all rounder.

Pity about the repro. Hope you succeed in doing something about it.

ERG 37. Hello Terry. What a swashbuckling cover illo...shades of Hawk Carse..

I've been making things with balloons at school. You know, inflate them, cover them with a few layers of paper and polycel,

then adapt them to amusing shapes, pigs, penguins, vikings (also Goblin masks...a la witch doctor things.) and while looking at a batch of peculiarly elongated ones the other day a thought struck me that with the tiniest adaptations they could be made into model Soggies...so if I have time I'll try one as an experiment...

Agree about MSs, which is one reason that I concentrated on them in last WHATSIT and also a prime reason for doing them this time. Though I feel that other material is necessary too. Sympathise with your yo-yo like activities.....

ERG 37 contd., re your bump with the Cortina, a similar thing happened to me a few years ago. I had been halted at some traffic lights for a good minute when, bump, this twit comes up and bumps into my rear.... if foolish or careless drivers were all detected and banned, say after their 4th foolishness....well,well, wouldn't there be a lot of room on the roads...

tut tut, fancy taking such an attitude to the Irish Freedom Fighters. hmmm...freedom fighters..fighters against freedom?. I can't help feeling that blowing people up is rather an extreme way of getting your opinions over. Those who do the blowing up, and shooting, bottle bomb throwing, and general rioting must expect to run some sort of risk, so I'm not averse to shooting back. Bombing pubs, shops, cars etc., is a much better way to fight for freedom...so much less risk to the bomber.....yechh.etc.,

A civil right worth defending is the one which protects people from having bombs planted on them. Load of ruddy murderers.

Enjoyed Rons article..there must be a lot of stuff lying around in odd corners of the world.

And your MEM BANK LANE was good too....I found the AUTHENTIC science, (and one or two others) articles, information dept., were not always very reliable.

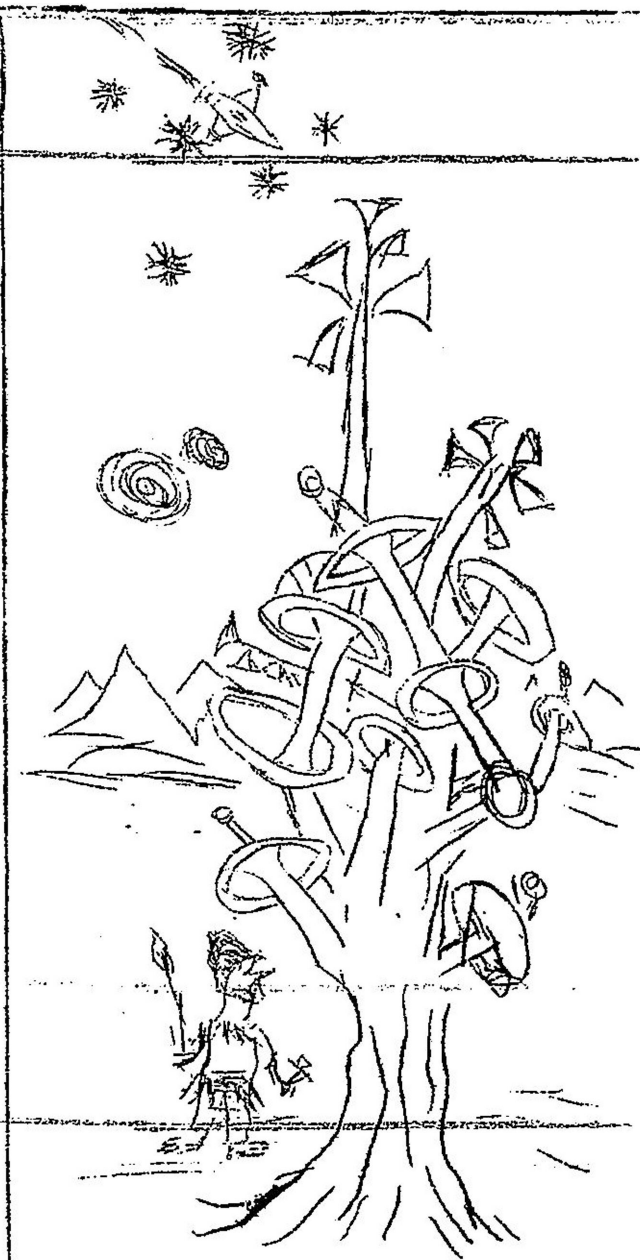
Lisa Conesa's letter reminded me of sticky quarters, I wonder how many people are familiar with that term?.

The voting...a member here and there mentioned something about the ideas, so I/we thought it worth while at least putting out feelers, though the vote was actually on whether to have a vote.....

As the present measures seem to suffice we'll let it ride.

er..er.."what a cover!" er..well, dintya like it..huh..? As for lots of type, I hope my illos will break it up a bit. Hmm. but I'm not sure that I can draw illos to go with stories..but I'll try. I've always thought of Qwertyuiop as sounding rather like kver-type, or quertoipe...queertype?...(meaning strange of course Samuel).

The last mailing was quite encouraging..er, the 64th, nearly 300 pages. The best I recall was 440ish some years ago...I hope that this is not just a flash in the pan. ABurns quite interesting.., there seems to be little "proud and lonely" in today's fandom...



SPECULUM 7....I can't agree with you that conscription is a wholly bad thing, I doubt that I would have volunteered to go in the forces, but on the whole I can't say that I regret my service. It may be that there are more opportunities in 1971 for young people to get around and meet people from different part of the world/country and classes, but when I was in, in ~~1957/8~~ 1954, I met people I'd never otherwise have met. Also it got a lot of young men away from home for the first time in their lives, and though they might have suffered some grief, I think it certainly did something towards widening their horizons.

Also..the phrase about "dererve to survive" ie; a country that survives by turning its people into slaves;;conscripts...well, it may well be true that it doesn't deserve to survive. But in reality such nations do, have, survived. Eg; Soviet Russia throwinging its hordes of illtrained,underarmed men against the Germans. Conscripts. And it and China, I believe, still survive because their systems are not very far from slavery.. OK, so they don't deserve to, but the acid test is survival, like the engineers "well, it works, wether your beliefs/theories say so or not"..."nevertheless, it still moves". Facts do not take account of "deserving" or otherwise.

I think you will be a useful addition to OMPA, fraternal greetings etc.,

THE NEW MILLENNIAL HARBINGER Oct 68.....Lovet the cover....

"that Stephen fella,unreliable, got hisself stoned..." "I'm all hung up"... er..the unkindest cut af all,Anne Bogdyn.... lost her head....deported to Siberia..making things go a long way... on the rack, in for a long stretch...(oldie) "No,I did not order steak" Count Dracula....his name is ..damn..forgot his name...hunch-back of Notre Dame.."that rings a bell", (Ah, Quaismodo!!) Peter,..Quo Vadis..trans; Who,me?.

Interesting..aside, I'm struggling through THE BOOK OF MORMON, I like to know whats being talkd about if those missionary Americans ever come back to this area...(opinion so far...piffle, Smith was a con-man).

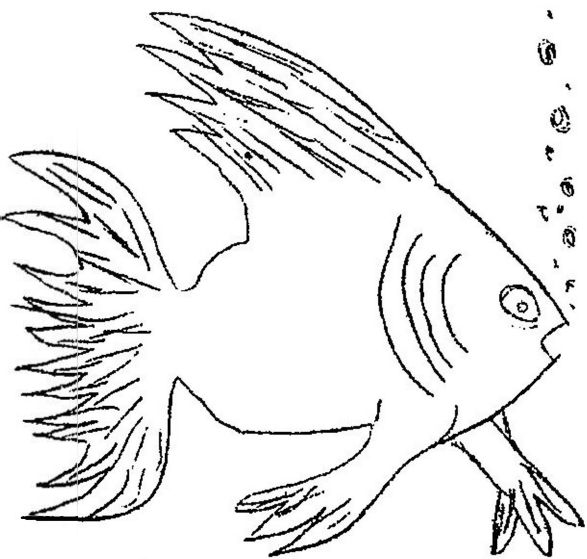
Mr Keuner...liked.

Flash Gordon, only ever come across one story..suppose this was the first, from the context. I rather liked it. Power to ye, etc with the film-group.

Mark Twain,I understand,also remarked words to the effect that a man who could think of only one way to spell a word lacked imagination.

The comment about lack of openings for new writers is about the only decent argument I've seen for regretting the demise of the magazines NEW WORLDSand IMPULSE.

any chance that we might see any articles,stories etc., relating to the Aboriginales?



L



TNMH Bangsund contd., any idea of any books, cartoons, stories, articles that might be available in this country on the same subject? I'd be willing to accept any, say pbs, on this subject in exchange for me paying your dues..or some other arrangement. Same for other Asustralian fans.  
enjoyed the zine.ta.

MOTH 8...sympathy re duper, but the banda might be ok, anyway, its something.

GAMBIT...1... welcome. pleasant zine. Spenser, noted..Freedom, well, OK. not enough for a large article, a simple enough point to be made in a couple of sentences, but OK. Visit..? also !

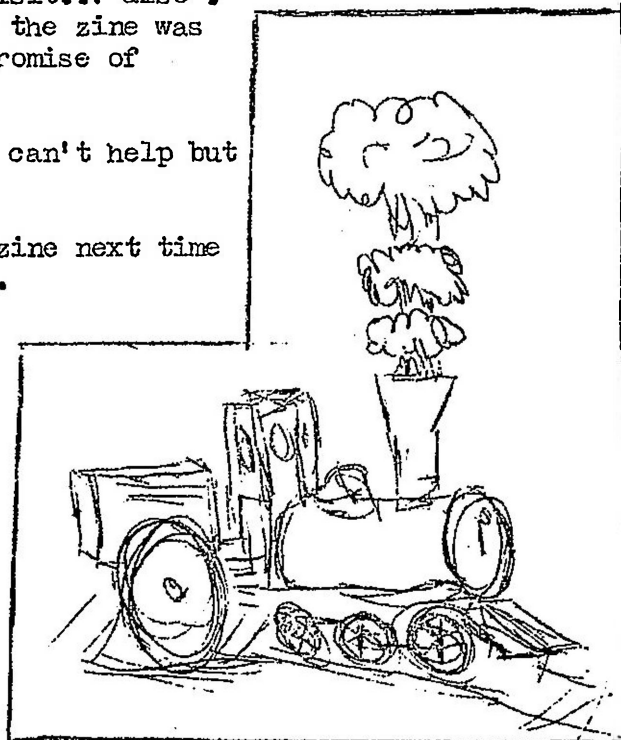
I can't find much to comment on, but the zine was a fair firstish, and seems to hold the promise of better things to come.

HHTV 5....your artist is as bad as I am, can't help but improve...Ah, young love...

...  
E=MC2....1...wellll, if you do a longer zine next time with repro as nice I won't complain.

YSELF 2... for instance....re subs....  
in the case of overseas members I find it hard to use an airmail letter to remind/ask overseas people about their subs..perhaps I'm a bit pinchpenny but its a lot to pay to remind someone who may have the money in the mails anyhow. The last mailing will have, I hope, clarified your status.

Though the motorbike odjasey was ~~fine~~ it seems, quite an..er..event somehow it doesn't come across very well..pity.



FOR FUN AND PROPHET....I haven't read all the way though..yet. I will, but its a bit much to take at one sitting and I'm finding that I'm having to read it really slowly to understand it.

I wonder if it would be possible or desirable to try something like this on the Members, scaled down to fewer questions, perhaps slanted SFly...I rather like the idea..wonder if enough people would be interested. What do you think?

HELL 3....I don't care for the cover very much (thats what I like, get off to a good friendly start..)..I don't think its jolly enough for Hell. I envisage HELL as a hell-raising fanzine rather than a horror fanzine..prefere something more amusing, if you insist on hell ish subjects. another fine fat, putting Ken to shame, issue. Oh for another half-a-dozen more memberships like yours.

Me, I'm agin mood pices in SFm by all means use a SF setting if its necessary, but its not SF in my opinion. (I hate Bradbury too)

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HELL 3 continued....my favourite SF..oh.well, some of it, includes  
 WHAT MAD UNIVERSE, O'Shea,Vance,most of the old  
 ASF tem...Cold Equations, Wasp, Plus X, Retief, Clement...etc., etc.,  
 sorry, maybe I shouldn't have started that..I'd have to give a long  
 list of things I've liked to do it justice. But I can't really make a  
 good definition of what I like about SF; I think part of it might be  
 future,or sideways in time stories, those which are amusing, those  
 which try to show,at least as background, a future...man among the  
 stars...striving...er., well, some thought, some action, some different  
 viewpoint, of a story angle, of man from an aliens viewpoint...hmmm.

trying to class "folk" as music is to my mind rather like trying  
 to class SF as literature. My favourite type of music,understanding  
 how I'm using the word music, is folk. A bent towards the traditional  
 side, but with a large interest in modern. I used to run a folk club  
 in college, even formed a (ha hah) group once..WEE THREE (which I see  
 someone is using now. What I like, I think, is the directness of much  
 of folk. Message or no message. Besides, you can join in..thats a  
 good thing I think. I used to go to the Campbell meet a long time  
 ago, when they had a room over a pub at the back of New Street Station  
 in Brum. Went to a concert in the Town Hall there once, Peggy Seegar  
 I think..thought she was a sight too "protesty".. went to see the  
 Incredible String Band once, in Manchester, but think, while they  
 might be good instrumentalist,entertainers, they are not (or at least  
 were not on that evening) folk. Went to the local clubs round  
 Doncaster..The Foggy Duo...ever hear Tony Capstick sing his cowboy  
 song? or his Dublin canal song? There are quite a few groups located  
 in pubs round here, but I don't get much chance to go out nowadays,  
 wiv me wife and two kids. I wrote some songs too, no good at music,  
 but set words to tunes I knew...like about the college..."If you're  
 tired and feeling low, Scawsby College's the place to go"...."in all  
 of England, east or west, our bath chairs they are the best" and  
 similar inanities.. still got the words lying around somewheres.

I'd like to hear more classical music, but somehow I've never  
 gotten round to it...

space article...same comment as last time...

Since I asked the members what they thought of doing  
 something about the membership etc., and got not a very clear result  
 how about you two guys framing your ideas, as set out, and putting the  
 question to the members. Frankly I am pessimistic about the number of  
 replies you'd get..hope to be wrong of course.

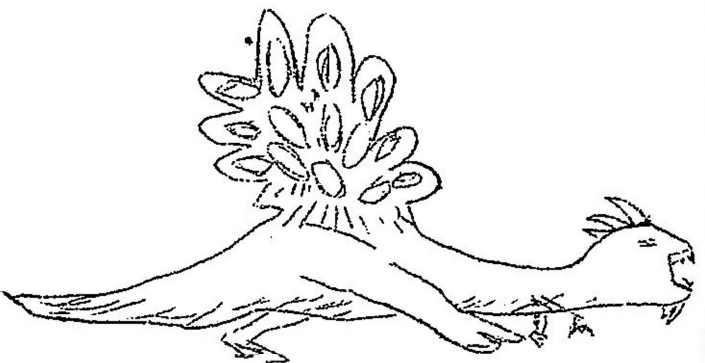
Will take you up on any offers of help if we get the con..  
 meanwhile I hope the combazine gets some response from members, and  
 wonder if we could run some sort of  
 a party at Chester.

ta for at least reading the  
 planet thing...

THE RECKONG, I had to deduce  
 the editor. (hmmm...from one  
 fact you can daduce the universe?)

like the snailugs.

Lady referee at a cricket match  
 who sports large pot."Foundation  
 and UMPIRE" squeak squaek,  
 (stifeld tararr tararr....)



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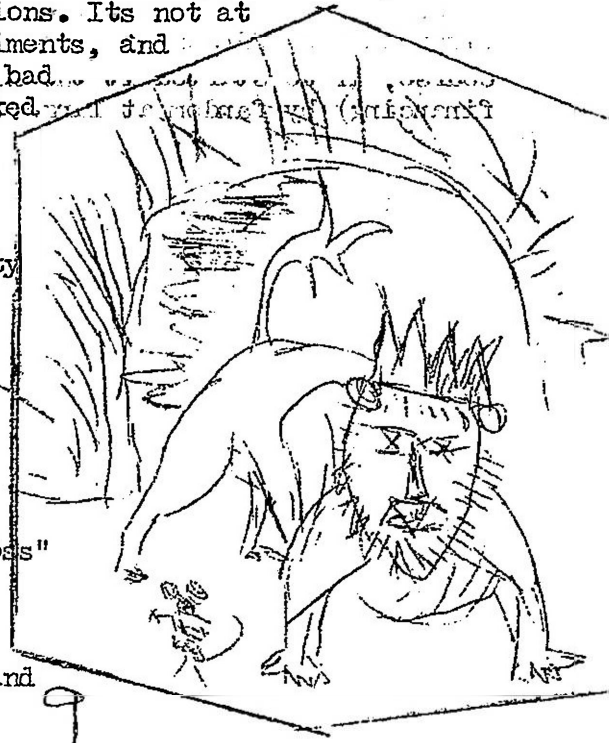
more than 3. ... should be burdened with quite so much of the blame -responsibility for Ulster situation. I remember reading somewhere that the old IRA were anti Roman church to a large extent.

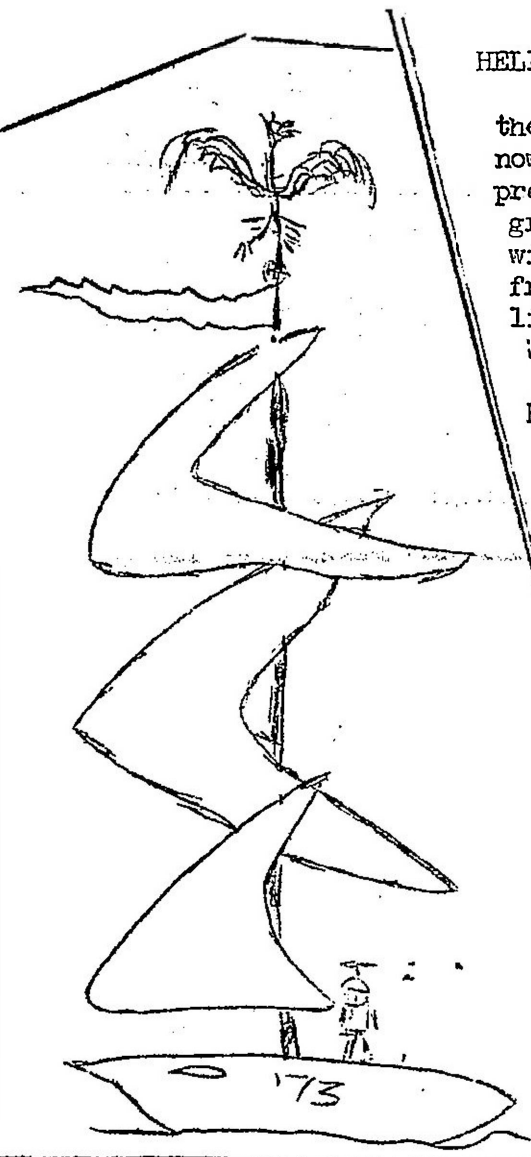
Peter Linnett, "I can't see how he can justify the opinion that old themes "regardless of the worth of the story are worth the, no excuse for dragging any one of those themes in" he says. also closely related is his "hardly deserves to be called a creative artist" One of the hidden assumptions here seems to be that SF is literature, and that the true SF writer should have a sort of obsessive desire to express himself, communicate or what have you. Most mainstream writers who have written "literature" have not created something new, but merely (used in the sense of pointing out the smallness of the real departure in terms of theme,) written more effectively on common themes. Most SF cannot help but being largely entertainment; the interest in it depending on action. The 'better' SF treats common themes in a way which gives a new insight, or is developed or expressed better. The first person to use a new idea is not necessarily going to be the one who writes the best story. And many good stories may be developed from one theme. In the main I think SF must be speculation on the development of man, even though in most cases the speculation is merely background. The fact that a story is written in flowery, expressive, involved, simple, style; that is in possibly interesting, stimulating, poetic; etc., style, does not make it a good story. Wonderful writing may make up for a lot; in a few cases maybe for all; but mostly it cannot make up for plotlessness, pointlessness, introspective meanderings, its not the creation of needs, pictures etc that are important in their own right, but whether they communicate anything of interest to the readers. A writer who communicates common or trivial things, unless he is a very good writer who can really create an effect, is useless. And, in my opinion, most of the New Wave writers are second raters who substitute words for emotion, fireworks for artistry, and swamp the very few effective writers by poor imitations. Its not at all a bad idea that there should be experiments, and that there should be a New Wave, its just bad that their shortcomings should be overlooked because they belong to a "school"....

I don't know what the New Wave accomplished in Britain, and its a shame that the NW and IMPULSE folded. But it seems to me that some of the responsibility for their demise must be placed on the New Wave who alienated a good many fans, and presumably readers.

As for spacesuited figures on the front of magazines..well, its a symbol, if some people are put off by it, what the hell, they haven't the sense to have a closer look before condemning it so why should we bemoan the fact of their "loss"

Maybe fans still have something to be "proud and lonely" about; the space programme etc., has made some people think that they now know what SF is all about, and





HELL 3...part 3.....that because "its all  
come true" which it damn well hasn't,  
there is nothing for SF writers to write about  
now. It might not be a bad thing that some  
professional zines have folded; though its a  
great pity it had to be both British zines;  
with a smaller readership maybe a lot of the  
fringe-people whould wander off for new fields,  
like the "mainstream" equivalents of the New  
Wave zines.

KING KONG DIED FOR OUR SINS is a lovely line.  
I can't get hold of a chimp easillym but  
our senior cat (shes only stupid, not  
stupid stupid like the other one) takes  
a great interest in my typer..mayhap one  
day she'll write an epic....

well, press on.

MESCIFIC 30 and 31....makes a good  
impression,1, of yr person, and  
repro is a very good basis on which  
a fine zine to grow...as you say,  
what you really need to allow the  
magazine to improve is more con-  
tributions. ..if you were willing  
to take a long interval between  
sending out the zine and getting  
a reply then it might be worth  
you trying to expand in the States.  
The fandaom is bigger there and  
you may be able to garner  
more contributions. While you no  
doubt have good reasons for  
keeping a monthly sceudal...I can

think of a few myself, reliability and regularity for instance, yet it  
may be that if you went by-monthly you would be able to produce a zine  
of higher quality; this would also have an effect on the US "market"  
in that there would be more time to get response. Anyhow, I make these  
comments in an effort to be helpful, not to criticise your zine, which  
is sound and readable as it is. Oh besides writers the US might well be  
a source of art work.

Disagree that Campbell was a rebel, as suggested by the editorial  
sub-title. Pioneer would be more like it. Frontiersman, would also fit.

I'd like to see a longer, more detailed biography of Campbell,  
perhaps an up-to-date of Requiem for Astounding. Few editors today, if any,  
are as good at recruiting good new writers as He was. But then, it may  
be that fandom, from which a lot came, isn't bringing forward the same  
number of quality writers as it did in his earlier years. Hmmm. have you  
seen the suggestion that a new award be started, a Campbell? I wonder  
what the costs would be, then theres the organisation....I wonder if  
OMPA could afford to start one?....but maybe it needs more fans..but of  
course if it was funded by the science-fiction community it could be carried on (or not)



MESCIFIC contd... Full circle, mildly interesting but inconclusive, it seemed to end in the air..

Convention reports are good bad and indifferent. I wouldn't let comments on this one put you off from printing a good one..maybe next time you could set one(or more) of "your" better writers, a raconteur, to do a report, letting him, setting him, on in good time.

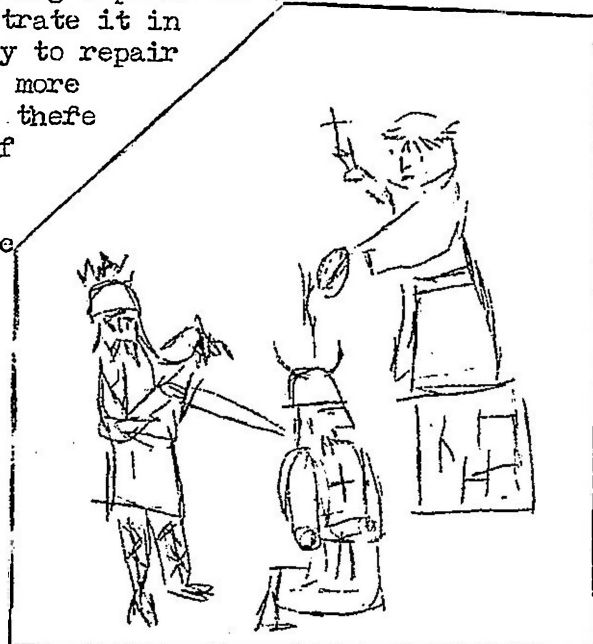
CHILDHOODsEND I disliked...too, metaphisical.....  
like your look illos...apt.

'Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent' is one of those themes that can be answered positively only by the sort of person who can see only one side of a question at a time. Its airy-fairy and any intelligent attempt to assess it breaks down when it is realised that when it is applied to the real world everything depends on the situation to which it is applied. To illustrate it in two limited ways; it is more sensible to try to repair a broken machine than to kick it; but it is more sensible, when driven into a position where there is no escape, (by outside factors, in spite of the protagonists attempts to solve things peaceably) to counter attack. ie; war, if the other side insists on it, and the choice is between submitting or fighting back.

Roger Baker...I recall that the HOTSPUR, WIZARD, ROVER and ADVENTURE published stories that were SF....apart from Wilson the stories and characters names evade me. There were also SF stories in SCRAMBLE, notably Ozzy the Whizz..then the local Library had SFish thungs..of which I'll count Dr.Dolittle. But my real introduction to SF was after school when I started work at the local newspaper office. There was a chap there who lent me some US prozines, which he got from a second-hand stall at a nearby market. I soon started visiting the market and buying my own. They had a system of allowing so much for returned copies, so at that stage I accumulated few but read quite a lot. There inevitably came a time when I had read everything, (apart from the odd one) they had, and tried other markets. This resulted in a dribble of stuff, supplemented by the very rare SF books obtainable at the local library. While I was in the RAF I used to get my supplies from the market in Workson...and managed to get enough unread items to last mt. A lot of these I took home. So I must have started reading SF at eightish..(younger if you'll allow Enid Blyton fairy stories as Fantas -y...I recall that I really thought I was getting older when I gave up Enid Blyton for the HOTSPUR etc...less pictures you see) Counting the SF reading time from my intro to magazines it was...hmm..about 12 years oops...about 9 years before finding fandom. I still read what I can get.

The earliest story to stick in my mind was the FANTASTIC printing of THE DREAMING JEWELS, which had no cover.

the plane problem was more a problem in logistics, but there are simpler methods than your solution..oh well. Your name, zine, depends on what you want to convey..if you want to convey anything, maybe you should first explain what sort of things you want the title to say...





MESCIFIC...even more.....

re Novacon....and Brum being the centre of the universe, perhaps you might be interested in the True, Authentic, From the Horses Mouth origin of that..phrase or claim.

Back in 1964/5 some of the Birmingham, and district (ie; me ) people were not on very good terms with on Charles Platt. (he, in my opinion, being a brabh sort of person, extolling controvosy in its own right as desirable..hmmm..and havang a definition of controvosy which seemed to some people to be more like mudslinging or argument for arguments sake ), well amongst other things Charles Platt said, (he didn't like being called Charlie, or Twisher) was that (or words to the effect) Birmingham fans had big heads and thought of Brum as the centre of the universe. Well then, responding to this rather in the way that the British

army is supposed to have responded to certain remarks of the Kaisers, and calling themselves The Old Contempibles, some of us at the 1965 Brumcon sported badges bearing some such inscription as "Birmingham is the Centre of the Universe".....hmm. I suppose there might be some connection here; or perhaps the Aston group has just rediscovered or recoined the term...

Globe artical makes me nostalgic...whoever did..ah, Dave Rowes illo on p.15 must be good, I recognise people!

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the raid on St.Nazaire when the HMS Campbelltown was to ram the dry dock gates. Shortly before the raid four more German destroyers were reported entering harbour. The OC informed the officer in charge of the landing force of this and the following conversation, (as near as dammit) occured. "Hmm, four destroyers, What's your reserve?" "twelve men sir".. "Hmm, then I suggest you'll probably have to use them".....

I recently had occasion to send my hand away, (er..to the Artificial Limb Centre) because a finger was broken...and it came back after a week or so..lovely and new. But..only one drawback, I'D sent a RIGHT hand, and got in return a LEFT hand....ho hum. They were very nice about it though.

my kids had to do a little play at shool...involved lots of monstering and ripping out throats (kids are so loveably er, close to nature...) after slaughtering, with great gusto, five or six men (boys) the 'monster' cornered the last one. Who says, "I suppose youm after my blood an all' (dialect yet) to which monster, ((Punchline)) replies "No, I'm only ere for the becr".....

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES  
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My apologies! This was  
written as a college task at  
the tender age of 18, and  
reads like it!

by Jean Cheslin.

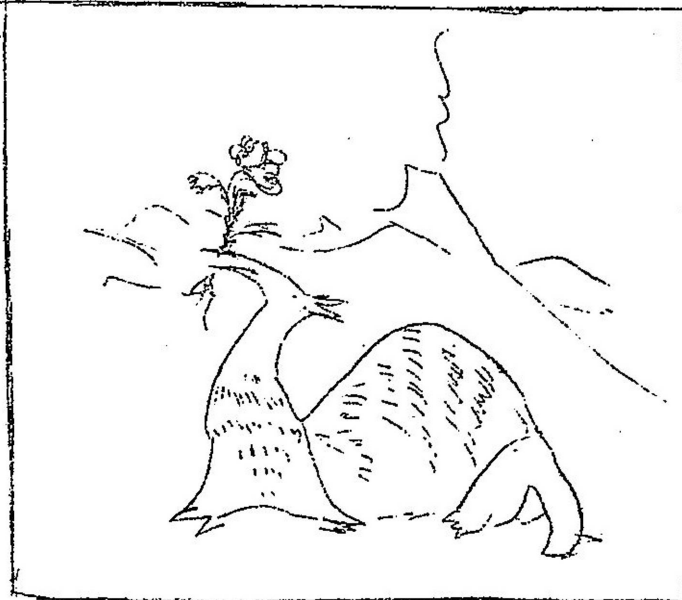
My very earliest memories are tied up with the sound of air-raid sirens and bombs. My father was away in the army and my mother was alone in the house with a small child, me. I have vague recollections of being grabbed by my mother and rushed into out next door neighbours house when the air-raid siren went. All through those nights there were distant explosions and the low voices of sleepless people. Then I had no conception of my father. He was just an often-mentioned name to me, and the vague memory of a tall brown man who came in to kiss me one night and was gone the next day. He was in Egypt (to me a place where eggs grew!) at this time, in the REME. My first shoe went out to him there, and an almost-white curl, unbelievably mine.

One of my most vivid memories springs from that all-too-brief leave of my father's. Early in the morning he set off. With our only door key in his pocket! Because of this (we couldn't force the door or anything) we were treated to the startling Sunday afternoon view of Great Aunt Emily's pink winceyette bloomers as she was hauled through the window. It was not until a fortnight later, when the key arrived in a letter, that we were able to open the door.

Those early days with my mother were happy ones. On a Monday morning I sat in my cot until my mother came back from her shopping in the town. There was always a picture book for me on those mornings. My maternal grandmother took me into the nearby park every Sunday afternoon while my grandfather drove his train. He was a giant of a man, with a deep voice and a large nose. His grey hair stood on end and he would let me blow his whistle with the lively pea and wear his cap. One morning I went to see him after he had been involved in a train crash and had broken his nose. To my great surprise his nose looked the same as usual, even after many surreptitious peeps in his direction. I had a small, green, tin train and carriage which hung on my Christmas tree; it was, and still is "grandads train".

I have no picture at all of my other grandfather, he died while I was still a baby. My grandmother had two unmarried sons living at home. I almost burst with pride when my sailor uncle, Harry, with his curly hair came home. He had a kitbag full of marvellous sweets. Kitbags played an important part in those days, when sweets were rationed. A pitailed friend stood on our table to show us all the doll which her father had brought back from Italy in his kitbag.

The most marvelous kit bag was my uncle Alec's. It arrived with him from Cyprus when my sisters and I were staying at grandma's because our mother was in hospital.



We went mumming on New Years Eve. For this we dressed up in old clothes, which might faintly resemble a pirate or a soldier, and went round from house to house wishing the occupants a Happy New Year. One glorious year I wore a red raincoat, wellingtons and a cottonwool beard, I was Santa Claus. My cousin wore a duck mask and a long dress. We collected 3/4 and an oragne. The next day we went to the roller skating rink and nearly battered ourselves to death.

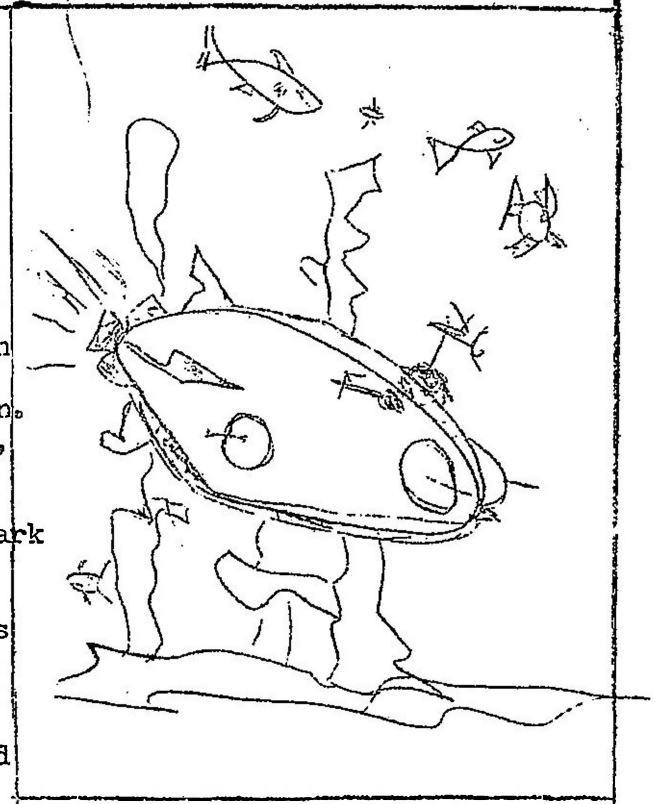
In their seasons marbles (or tors, as we called them) conkers, stilts and skipping ropes appeared in our road. In winter we did our best to sledge in the bumpy, cobbled roadways. With frozen hands, for we invariably lost our gloves, we would rub snow on the rusty sledge runners to make them go faster. One glorious sloping ice-covered yard was our own Cresta run, until a policeman slipped on it, then it became just another patch of ashes, put down by mean old women who wanted to spoil our fun.

The night before Plot Night, (November 5th) was Mischief Night in our area. We would go out in gangs as soon as it was dark carrying turnip lanterns and pieces of burning millband. (this was rope thrown away by the mills which was by this stage of its life impregnated with grease so that it smouldered for hours. Useful for lighting fireworks and swinging round ones head to make exciting patterns). We tied doors together, put dustbins in the middle of the road, tied the lids to doors. Funny faces were drawn on scraps of paper and pushed through letter boxes bearing such delightful messages as THIS IS YOU.

Plot Night was a wonderful affair at our end of the street. For weeks we had gone out in gangs "chumping" (fuel gathering) We went out raiding and set guards round our own pile. Every mother complained because the cellar was full of trees and old boxes. The shopkeepers were pestered to death, and spent half their day doling out boxes to queues of noisy children.

Rag bags were raided for old clothes for the Guy. We went to a nearby undertaker for stuffing, little dreaming that it was the remains of coffins. My father always made a comical mask for the Guy. The boys tried to load all the sewing onto the girls, but we made them do their share. Before the fire was built up we wheeled the Guy round in an old pram, chanting "Penny for the Guy, penny for the Guy, if you don't give a penny we'll hit you in the eye".

We always had the biggest fire at our end of the road. My friends father drove a lorry for a fruit firm and always brought the lorry piled high with boxes for the fire. The fire was built up in the middle





of the road. All the children had to stand on the pavement until the Father's had applied paraffin and the fire was blazing. We always had lots of old chairs and tables for the fire, which were used as seats until needed. We never had much money for fireworks but there was always plenty to eat. Potatoes were roasted in the fire, peas and hot chestnuts circulated, and my mother always brought out a large tin of gingerbread and parkin pigs (like gingerbread men, only pig shaped) for one each. My maternal grandmother always bought my sisters and me a parking pig on Plot Day.

The next morning we raced out to see if our fire had beaten the others and was still alight. Remains of potatoes were carefully salvaged for morning playtime and we dashed off to school.

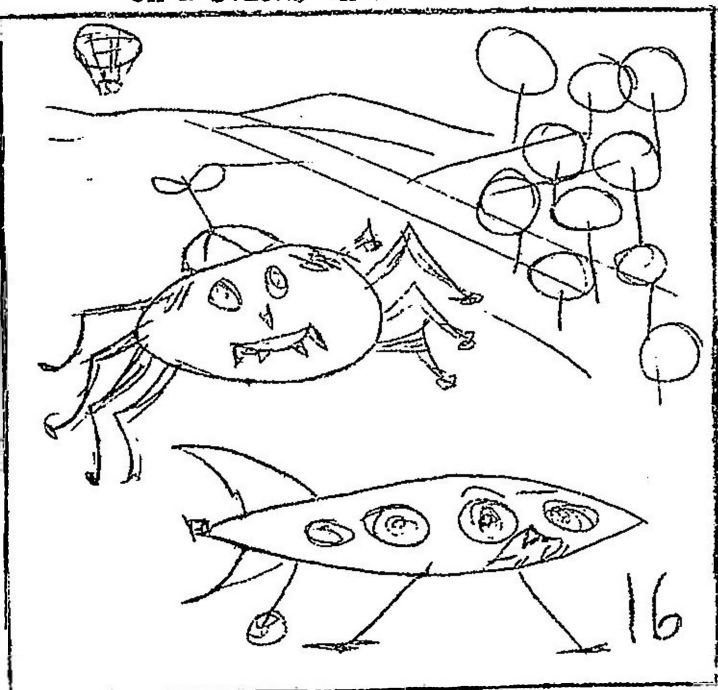
Christmas was a jolly affair in our house. It was a tradition that we trimmed the tree on my birthday, because it was near Christmas. We all decorated the house, even the smallest one sticking something somewhere. We were never told what presents we were having, and on the afternoon of Christmas Eve, when my parents went shopping, we searched the whole house for our presents. We never found them, and were kept in agonising suspense until the next day. We went to bed early, after leaving some christmas cake and wine for Santa Claus. These were always gone in the morning so we were quite sure that Santa had been. A boy who told me that there was no Santa Claus ended up flat on his back with a black eye. Later my mother explained that there is no Santa Claus now. She told me about St. Nicholas and how his spirit of giving still lives on in the world. She said that children liked to think there was still a jolly old St. Nicholas giving presents.

After a sleepless night we would creep downstairs at about five o'clock. Our stockings, hanging by the fire, were filled with fruit, nuts, and shiny new coins, which grandad personally delivered on Christmas Eve. We each had a pillow case with our names embroidered upon them.

My earliest recollection of a Christmas present was a wooden duck on a stick, when I was seven I found "Alice in Wonderland" in my pillowcase and read it before breakfast.

One Christmas was very miserable for me. I had been to my uncles wedding a few days before and the icing on the cake had started a tooth aching. After a painful Christmas Eve I was forbidden to eat any sweets or nuts. The only consolation was that when my sisters had eaten all theirs my sweets were still intact.

We always ate a huge Christmas dinner, for which we almost flew home from Sunday School. Then, replete and drowsy, we would play with our presents until tea time. Our Christmas cakes were always made in November. We all queued up for a stir and a wish and a piece of tasting cake.



My father would have tasted until there was none left if my mother had not hidden them away. Mince pies were always my favourite Christmas food and I literally gorged on them. One year at the Sunday School party I ate fourteen! My mother, scandalised, gave me a good dose of salts when I got home.

We always took our largest presents to show to our grandparents, who lived in the next road. One year I went with my father, toiling through the snow on a shining red scooter. I could never have enough books, but my aunts always gave me something to wear or something to make. I developed an aversion to gloves and jigsaws. On Boxing Day we would all spend the day with our other grandma. All the family would gather together for a huge tea. One year after we had had a magnificent tea my absent minded grandmother suddenly gave a shriek, "I've forgotten to serve the jelly!" My cousin and I sat down and ate six jellies.

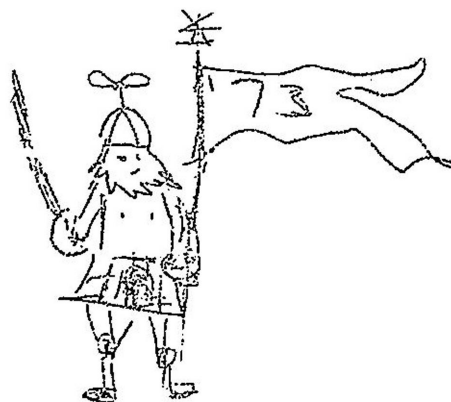
Every child in our street went to Sunday School. I started going to the Methodist Sunday School at the bottom of the road when I was three. Most of my friends went there and we had a jolly time. I developed a sort of hero-worship for my first teacher, and practically hung around her neck while she was telling the story. We crayoned pictures and stuck coloured paper onto cardboard to make Christmas cards and calenders.

We had a Christmas party every year. We trooped across to Sunday School with a bag of buns or a jelly and played games like "Farmer wants a wife" and "Kneel on the carpet". There was always a huge real Christmas tree glistening with tinsel and shiny balls. The same fairy doll stood on the topmost branch year after year, and the same beard appeared on Santa Claus. At the end of the party Santa Claus presented us with an apple or an orange, never both. There was bitter rivalry between our chapel and the one at the top of the road. We boasted about them at school. Ours was always the best. We had the nicest teachers, the biggest Christmas tree, and more green jellies.

Every year we had our Anniversary. The scholars demonstration took place in the afternoon. The hall was crowded with proud parents and harassed teachers. Each child, scrubbed and smart, had to recite a verse. I was so shy that I gabbled mine and sat down, while my mother clapped heartily.

We had our Harvest Festival too. On the Sunday afternoon the children would bring their gifts to the chapel and "help" the teachers to set up the display. I could never understand why a lump of coal was placed on the table. A great loaf, shaped like a sheaf of golden brown corn, stood in the place of honour under the pulpit. The local baker made one every year, but we never tasted it. We thought that the Minister took it into the vestry, and peeped through the keyhole to see if he was eating it.

We had a concert every year. All the little girls had to learn dances. The organist took my friend and I on one side and kindly asked



us not to come to rehearsals any more. We just could not dance. We went the wrong way, set off on the wrong foot, and got everyone else into a muddle.

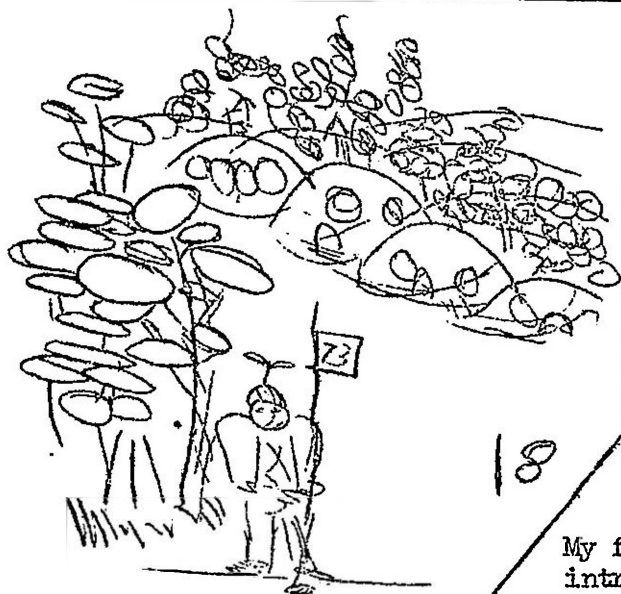
We had flourishing Guide and Scout movements in our chapel. My friend and I joined the Brownies. We went for Brownie rambles in the summer. On one of these I dropped a bottle of pop and saturated Brown Owl. We went on to the moor and picked bilberries, disturbed some ants, and hastily came home. Weary and grubby there was the glory of playing out until eight o'clock because my parents were decorating and too busy to chase me off to bed. We had our district Brownie revels every summer. One year all our pack were goblins in a pageant and we fought over the red noses until they were squashed and we all appeared with hastily lipsticked noses instead. Once we gave a Brownie concert. We did a play called the "Dolls house tea party" in which I played an old woman. I wore a red spotted dress, miles too long, and had a pair of glasses perched on the end of my nose. I tripped over the dress and knocked down a piece of scenery, which nearly crushed Brown Owl.

Every summer we had our Sunday School treat. We all climbed into a lorry and set off up the road. We always held our treat in a field belonging to a farmer friend of the organist. We had tea and a long sticky buttered bun. From this we called the site of the treat the bun-field. We played rounders and cricket, and chasing games, while our mothers talked and our fathers held skipping ropes and rescued small boys from large trees. The girls gathered buttercups and other flowers which, clutched in hot hands, withered long before we got home.

The day ended with races, for which we had lovely prizes. It was funny seeing people trying to run over a bumpy field. The teachers invariably fell down and Brown Owl, who had the longest legs, was invariably the winner. After a hilarious journey in the lorry we all arrived back at the Sunday School.

For over a year my friend and I hated going to Sunday School. We had to wear hideous navy velvour hats which came nearly to our chins. My hat ended up on the Guy. My friend and I developed a craze for going for walks after Sunday School. We always went the same way, through the cemetery, with our dolls prams. We also formed a childrens choir; tuneless but hearty. We sang at the Anniversary and at Christmas. We giggled most of the time during rehearsals. The boys were very haughty and scornful because the girls sang so earnestly. They would sit behind us and nip and kick. The choir closed down after six months.

My father is a great reader and he introduced me to many good childrens books. When I first joined the Public library I read the "Childrens Encycopaedia" from end to end.



My father sent to Leeds library for "Wind in the Willows" and the encycopaedia returned to its shelf.

The house we lived in then was small and when my two sisters were born we were rather crowded. I shared a room with the eldest of the four, who was born when I was five. We made tents with the bedclothes and practised acrobatics until my father inflicted a good wallop and bundled us back to bed. One Sunday morning we were sitting round the fire having our "elevenses". Father had gone to the barbers. The door opened and he came in. He was completely bald! My mother fainted. The barber had cut too much off one side so my father had casually told him to finish the job! He wore a beret for months afterwards, until his hair had grown again. My mother would not go out with him all this time.

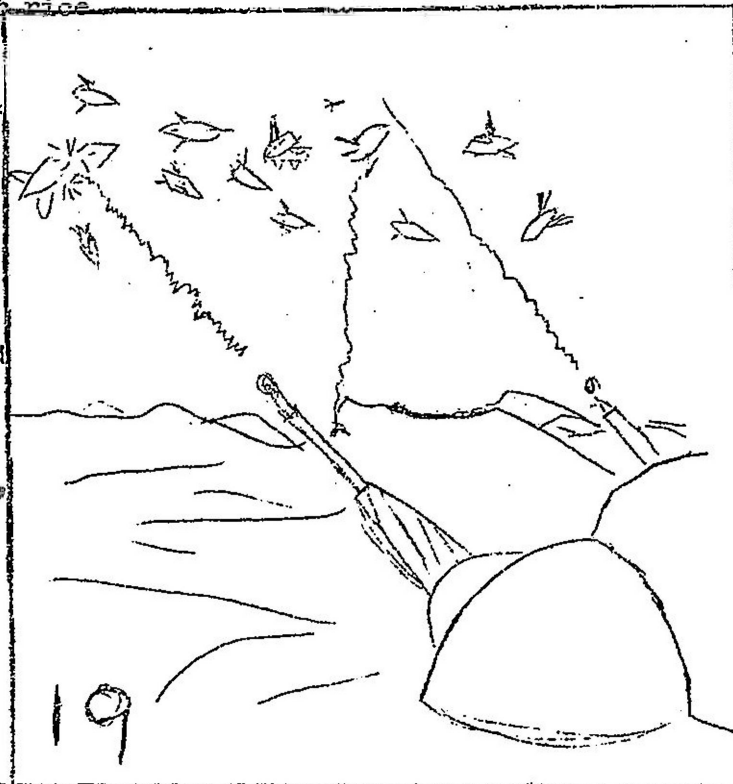
My mothers only sister bought me a black doll on my fourth birthday. Until I grew old enough to play with it it was kept in the display cabinet. This poor doll, called Sambo, suffered many calamities. It was rescued from drowning, choking, its limbs were amputated, it was swathed in bandages and daubed with make-up. I reluctantly gave it to my sister when I grew too old for dolls.

My friend and I were always dressing up. One day we played at hospitals and daubed ourselves with flour so that we would look ill. I went to the shop with this flour on and the grocer rudly told me that I looked like a ghost. I was furious until I got home and saw the flour. I longed and longed to have my hair in plaits, but my mother refused. I was so aggravated that I resolved to look different, and cut myself a fringe. I cut it too short, and my hair stood up on end. My mother was horrified and did her best to pin it back.

On one of my wanderings I fell into a tub of tar. My mother used all her weekend butter trying to clean me up. I had to save my pocket money to pay for some more butter.

We always had to eat everything that was put in front of us. I had a lengthy tussel with my parents over rice pudding. I hated and abhorred rice pudding, but I had to eat every scrap before I could leave the table. I have spent whole Saturday afternoons messing with a dish of rice pudding. I could never manage to swallow meat, and when I came home from Sunday School at three o'clock I would still be chewing my lunch-time meat.

Although we never got much pocket money we had many little treats. When the groceries came on a Friday evening we queued up for a knob of butter. We had sweets every Saturday, but not during the week. During the war when things were rationed we did not have many sweets. When rationing ended there was a queue six deep outside the newsagents as people bought sweets. For a half-penny we could get a bag of sherbet and a stick of liquorice. This lasted us until we got to school.





When my mother first taught me to pray I could not understand the term "for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory" I pictured a very old man wearing brown leather gaiters, like the ones in the photo of my granddad in army uniform. This picture remained with me until I went into the junior school.

A very cross old teacher taught us to knit. She terrified us so much that did not dare ask to leave the room, and there were several, "accidents". Every year we had the school sports at the Bradford football field. I hopefully entered the skipping race but never won a prize. During the summer my mother would meet us after school with a piono tea and we would go to the recreation ground and roll and tumble in the grass. My parents did not like us to be always playing in the streets and tried to take us into the country as often as possible. We would set off after Sunday School with my two sisters in the pram. On one walk in the woods a wheel came off it and my father had to wheel the pram on three wheels. My sisters cried all the way home.

My sister once went out to play with a friend and got lost. My mother was frantic and we eventually called the police. They found the pair of them not far away happily picking daisies. My sister was deposited in a hot bath, she was filthy. In that house we had no bathroom. The shiny aluminium bath was placed in front of the fire. The boiler was filled and soon there were gallons of boiling water. When my sisters were small they went in together. After their bath they sat side by side, shining pink and tidy, to have their bedtime cocoa. We always went to bed early, and I was wildly envious of my friends who went indoors when they felt like it.

On coronation day my sisters and I went to an aunt's to watch the ceremony. Every road in the district held a Coronation party on the following Saturday. Each road had a committee which collected a weekly subscription from each house. We chose a Queen, two attendants and a page-boy. ~~My~~ ~~and~~ booked the Sunday School hall. We had a fancy dress parade for all the children. I went as a scarecrow, and won a prize! We had a huge tea, and afterwards we had a fireworks display.

My cousin and I were almost inseparable. She was three months younger than I. We roamed all over the place during the holidays. Once we set off to walk to Leeds, and got lost. On the way back from our Grandmas we saw two dogs with their tails tied together. I went to tell a policeman but my cousin fled, being terrified of policemen. I wasn't afraid of policemen; I was afraid of mums! I would hide if I saw one approaching. There was a hen-run near our house and a girl once told me that mums lived there and came out to kidnap children. I became afraid of them and had frequent nightmares. Years later when I went posting at Christmas I was uneasy when I took the post to a convent.





We spent a good deal of our time in the local park. We always dropped our money in the lake and usually one of us fell in. My cousin once did a spectacular somersault, the only one of her life, into the lake. Helpfully I reached in to grab her, and fell in myself. A man came along and fished us both out. It was winter and our clothes froze to our bodies. We both got 'flu.

One Day, May 8th, was my father's birthday, all the streets were decorated with flags. I was so proud. I thought the neighbours were celebrating my father's birthday, and because he was coming home from the war.

My father was my hero then. He was a strange man at first, but I was proud because he was a big soldier with lots of medals. He had a fight with the man next door in our garden. This neighbour had been in a POW camp in Burma and his nerves were shattered. When a boy, taking a short cut over our wall fell over my father's bicycle this neighbour literally blew up. He charged into our garden and set about my father. They fought for hours, while my mother and the neighbour's wife stood crying on the doorstep. We spent many happy hours listening to my father's stories about the army. He spent over two years in Italy and grew to love the country. He keeps saying that some day we will all go to Italy, but we haven't got there yet.

In the summer when I was eleven I was preparing to go to grammar school. This momentous event was rather overshadowed by the birth of my third sister. At first it was thought that she wouldn't live, but she is a bouncing seven year old. (at the time this was written). As I saw her grow older I saw her do the same things as I did myself. She was always getting lost. Like me, she can never keep clean for more than five minutes. Her dolls are nervous wrecks, and she reads anything she can lay her hands on. In February she will become the fourth Hargreaves Brownie at our Chapel, and will have the same Brown Owl. The people I have known all my life have not changed much. When my sister and her friends play "goodies and baddies" or "fairies and witches" I sometimes wish I could join in. We had such fun when we were children.

the end.

The other day Jean went out of the front door to empty the rubbish, and Matthew shut the door behind her. She called to him, he laughed fit to burst. She ran round to the side door; locked! Matthew appeared, merrily chortling, this was a great game. Jean ran round to the back door, also locked. Matthew laughed. She scrabbled at the windows, he fell about, she tries to force a window, she wrung her hands, she asked Matthew (14 months) to get the keys...he ran and got them, stopped two yards short of the post box, and dropped them, deliberately, roaring with glee. After much hairpulling, visions of police and firemen, a neighbour came with a great bunch of keys....the first one opened the door. Things are always happening to Jean, she just can't go anywhere, ordinary like. (KMPC).

