

THE . R U N N I N G J U M P I N G AND S T A N D I N G S T I L L

MAGAZINE

Number One

THE RUNNING, JUMPING AND STANDING STILL MAGAZINE has a title which is, frankly, borrowed, filched, stolen, swiped, whipped, pinched, half-inched, lifted, plagiarised and, all-in-all, taken-over, from a very clever little Spike Milligan/Peter Sellers film called (appropriately enough) 'The Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film'. The reason I have so shamelessly swup this title is because it seemed to fit exactly the kind of magazine I had in mind (a Running Jumping and Standing Still sort of magazine it was, as a matter of fact. Would you have guessed?) and also because it seemed a dreadful shame to let such a very fine title go to waste after gracing only one very short - if equally brilliant - film. But don't let the magazine put you off going to see the film; there is really no resemblance.

The brazen-faced fellow who (brazen-facedly) stole this title and published this (brazen-faced) magazine, - in case you haven't already recognised him by his brazen face - is (brazen-faced) Mal Ashworth, 14, Westgate, Eccleshill, Bradford.2., England. This is the (brazen-faced) first issue of this (b-f) magazine, and had better be out during May, 1961 if it is going to achieve one of its objectives and save my tottering OMPA membership. Later issues will come out, if ever, sometime.

The policy of the magazine is to contain words. Some, any, or all of these may even be strung together into sentences - if things work out well, that is. Given the most incredible sort of luck, and oodles and oodles of time to plan it all out in, the sentences might just be put together to form paragraphs, and the paragraphs to form articles! Ah, yes; I can just hear you saying now 'Good Old Mal Ashworth, you never know what he'll come out with next'. (Fortunately, I can't hear the bit that comes after that and goes 'Why does he bother?') These articles will be presented in what I venture to suggest may be a radically new formula and will probably influence the make-up of fanzines for generations to come - that is, they will be presented one after another. Why, I'm surprised no one ever thought of this before!

Then after all that, (and here I have really been straining my inventive powers and taxing my ingenuity to the limit) will come one of two sections entitled (Ah, with what gay panache!) either ROMPING THROUGH OMPA or FLIPPING THROUGH FAPA; they will be entitled this mainly because I can't think of anything brighter right now. As the more astute of our readers will already have guessed, one of these will appear in the OMPA edition and one in the FAPA edition, and they will consist mainly of comments on the respective mailings. Oh, and I am also likely to make full-scale articles out of anything else in the mailings which might take my fancy, and stick these in the front section of the magazine; if the wild fit takes me. Pause now for six days festivities by way of celebration, consisting of mad Bacchanalian revelries and the uninhibited consumption of jellied eels. I hope to get this in the June OMPA mailing and probably the August FAPA mailing. The few copies that may be left over will go to anyone who cares to ask for ^{them}, unless I get ridiculously generous and give any away without being asked.

Life is so uncertain.

WINDOWS

IN

HEAVEN

by ARTHUR R. WEIR

"If the Lord would make windows in Heaven, might this thing be?"
II Kings, VII, 2.

Some people, in these days, have much to say about what they call the "Mission" of Science Fiction; I must confess that I find it hard to see why. Among the most of the reading public it is generally accepted (thank God!) that the primary mission of fiction of any kind is to amuse and entertain. H.G. Wells regarded himself as a man with a mission, and the more his mission crept into his works the less readable they became; it was truthfully, though cruelly, said of him that his most useful function was as an irritant, not to those who did not want to think, but rather to those who bitterly objected to having their thinking done for them!

It was Wells, however, who found one of the best descriptions ever composed for the Science Fiction tales that delight us all; he called them "Fantasias of Possibility" - tales that dealt with what might happen, "just supposing -". Now if we subscribe to this definition, one of the possible developments of Science Fiction is, surely, prophecy - indeed there are some critics (non-Science-Fiction!) who make this ^{the} criterion by which they judge it, so we may well consider how far prophecy has actually been achieved. There are, in fact, some cases in which prophecy has not only been almost literally correct, but in which the accomplished fact has even outdone the fictional prophecy. Curiously enough, one of the most striking of these cases is by an author who is not usually reckoned in the Science Fiction ranks at all, being Max Pemberton's wildly exciting tale THE IRON PIRATE, which was, I think, published in 1903.

An able brilliant man finds himself compelled to live in grinding poverty, his every effort to better himself being frustrated by a richer adversary who has a grudge against him; eventually his dearly-loved wife dies of hardship and over-work, leaving him bereft and hopeless. However a combination of a brilliantly successful invention and a legacy from a distant relative bring him considerable wealth, but his mind has been permanently twisted by his bereavement, and his one aim in life is now to avenge upon society the death of his wife. Accordingly, he turns pirate, with all the modern improvements that his brilliant,

warped brain can think up.

His ship, like Captain Nemo's "Nautilus," he has built in secret; she is a modern battleship, as it was understood in those days — her main armament four ten-inch guns firing 700-pound shells, complemented by heavy armour and a large assortment of lighter weapons. She includes, however, two improvements that leave her immeasurably in advance of any ship then existing: her whole underwater hull is of the fantastically expensive phosphor-bronze alloy, so that she can spend years, if necessary, in tropical waters without her hull being fouled by adhering growths; also, while her fuel is coal, she does not use it for firing boilers — she gasifies it, and uses it in gas-engines. Fore and aft she has large high-pressure gas-holders and she can store enormous quantities of fuel therein, while the coke remaining from the gasification can be used either to make producer-gas for heating her gas-making retorts or to make water-gas that can be added to her fuel supplies.

Her gas-engines deliver, weight for weight, nearly ten times the power of the conventional reciprocating steam-engine that was the only marine drive then known, and so we have a ship with the hitting-power and heavy armour of a battleship with more than the speed of a racing destroyer; moreover her gas-engines can get up full speed in the time it takes to rev them up — say forty seconds, compared with the half hour required to raise the necessary pressure in steam boilers. So long as she can rob colliers in mid-ocean she need never lack for fuel, and, in those days, when both aircraft and "wireless" were alike unknown (it was at about this time that Gordon, the brilliant Englishman, took out the patents that Marconi afterwards cynically infringed, well knowing that Gordon lacked the money to defend them in court) such a ship could appear and disappear like a ghost on the great shipping routes.

For some time the "Iron Pirate" is unconquerable and unstoppable — faced with a cruiser or destroyer escort, she sinks them at ranges to which their light guns will not carry; faced with heavy battleships of her own fighting weight, she flees like a hare. Moreover the pirate is working with a cunningly organized intelligence system behind her, and is so successful in raiding and stealing international gold shipments that the banking systems of the world begin to be affected.

The hero of the book is on one of the transatlantic liners stopped by the raider, and is recognised by her captain as one of the few people who, in the days of his poverty, ever did him a disinterested kindness; since he, in his turn, has also recognised the captain, and could betray his identity, he is removed from the liner, and actually lives for some time on board the raider and at her secret base, a lonely fjord on the Greenland coast. He manages to escape, and bears to the outer world the secret of the invulnerable pirate's one weakness — "lubricating-oil — you need gallons of it with gas-engines!"

Stung into action by the threat to international finance, the naval powers unite to take the one precaution that must certainly immobilize the raider in the long run; all oil-tankers sail in convoy under the protection of heavy battleships. The pirate, her vital oil-supplies running lower and lower, is reduced to lurking along the shipping lanes, and stopping all passing ships to raid their engine-room stores for the lubricating-oil she uses in such profusion. Eventually, a single apparently unescorted oil-tanker is despatched as bait, and the news thereof allowed to leak through to a man whom the hero knows to be one of the raider's

intelligence agents.

The pirate stops the tanker, but, before her hoses can be got aboard and coupled up to get the precious liquid, a squadron of battleships appears on the horizon; the raider flees, but is barely out of their sight when she runs into a second battleship squadron. Heavily hit in her armour, but still essentially undamaged, she tries to get out from between the jaws that are closing upon her, only to run into yet a third instalment of the scientifically planted ambush. Zig-zagging and dodging like a hare, under a hail of heavy shell, the pirate tries to get clear before she is vitally hit; but, lubricated as they are with poor-quality oil scavenged from the engine-rooms of half a dozen assorted tramp steamers, her engines will not stand up to the terrific strain, and, with a final screech and grind, they seize up, hopelessly. But before she can be either sunk or captured, her designer touches off the fuel supplies in her gas-holders, and, in an enormous fountain of flame, the "Iron Pirate" sinks beneath the sea.

Now the whole of this story is based upon sound engineering theory — a ~~phosphor~~ phosphor-bronze bottom would keep a ship entirely free from fouling (though, owing to the enormous cost, this alloy is used only for such vital parts as propellers), while it may be remembered that the German "Pocket Battleships" of the 1930's, such as the celebrated "Graf Spee" were designed with internal-combustion (Diesel) engines simply for the sake of the speed, flexibility and enormous fuel endurance they gave. It was wireless communication, with the possibility that it gave of an attacked ship's immediately giving the alarm, that enabled the superior forces to be concentrated that eventually brought her to book.

Almost simultaneously with the publication of Max Pemberton's tale, a monthly magazine (I think it was Pearson's) printed a "long-short" story by H.G. Wells that is also a magnificent example of prophecy — THE LAND IRONCLADS. It was evident to anyone who had followed the course of the Boer War that modern firepower, as achieved by the magazine rifle, the machine-gun and the light, quick-firing "galloper" field-gun, could put up a defence that no attack could break through except at astronomical cost in casualties, while the smashing power of heavy artillery against such a defence was not yet realised; indeed, it was believed that heavy artillery could not possibly be mobile enough for such work in the field, since at that time only horse-transport was envisaged.

In Wells' tale two armies are facing one another in a stalemate blockade that seems likely to last for ever, when the whole of the defending side's elaborate trench system is broken through by a tank attack, delivered in the small hours of the morning, and the greater part of his army captured,

Wells' "Land Ironclads" were larger than any tank we know, since they were some hundred feet long, with a crew of forty to fifty men. Their armament was rifles only, but with ^{loading} automatic loading from a very large ammunition supply, and telescopic auto-range/sights that made their fire deadly accurate even at long range. They were sufficiently armoured to be proof against rifle fire and shrapnel bullets (in those days the field-gun commonly used shrapnel only, — H.E. shell was regarded as ammunition for the siege-gun against fortress works) and they could do up to fifteen miles an hour over flat country, and could cross trenches without trouble. For this last purpose, Wells described them as fitted with the "Pedrail" wheel, recently patented by George Diplock, and the accuracy of his vision is attested by the fact that the Krupp and Skoda heavy guns that smashed their way through the French and Belgian forts in 1914, actually were fitted with

pedrail wheels, to avoid sinking in soft ground! The "paper" design of the first experimental tank also included pedrail wheels, but it rapidly became apparent that this would not work against modern trenches and in the Flanders mud, so the recently-invented and more efficient "caterpillar" mechanism was substituted for it.

The Wells' tale came almost literally true in the great Amiens attack of 8th August, 1918, which, launched entirely without artillery preparation, caught the Germans utterly by surprise; 456 tanks, assembled by night, and with the most elaborate precautions to prevent fresh tracks being left that might be seen by scouting aircraft, drove through the enemy lines, leaving gaps in his wire through which the infantry followed, and penetrated, in some cases, as much as seven miles. One tank even captured a German Divisional General with his staff, who were breakfasting peacefully at what they had thought to be a completely safe distance behind the fighting front!

Another notable prophecy was brought off by the man who is, in a sense, the father of Science Fiction as we know it, Hugo Gernsback, who, in 1926, founded the magazine AMAZING STORIES. In his story RALPH 124C41+, published as a serial in 1912 in his magazine MODERN ELECTRICS, he produced an almost startlingly accurate forecast of modern radar, even to the requirement that polarized radio waves should be used. His only error was the suggestion that the reflected waves could be made to detect the nature of the substance from which they had been reflected. Influenced by the researches of Nikola Tesla, he prophesied, in the same story, the distribution of electric power by broadcasting (now known to be impossible with our present technical attainments), while his further suggestions of the use of electric discharge and of artificial light to stimulate plant growth are both far too expensive with the cost of electric power at its present level.

The greatest of all writers of the short story, Rudyard Kipling, was all his life a close observer of the ways in which advances in technology and engineering were bringing about changes in the old ways of life and he was the first author to observe and deliberately to use the increasing vocabulary of the working man as he brought the technicalities of his new skilled job into the ordinary conversation of his own daily life.

His story WITH THE NIGHT MAIL → a futuristic account of a journalist's night flight across the Atlantic from London to Quebec with the routine Post Office airship — reads fantastically truthfully in some respects to-day, and as fantastically unlikely in others. The continual location-checking by navigational beacons (light beacons here, since "beam wireless" was not even dreamed of), the weather reports coming in by wireless, the decision to change the route part-way to avoid a storm over the Atlantic — all this might be 1960, instead of 1910. On the other hand, the decision to turn into the heart of the storm to rescue the crew of an airship with broken-down engines and leaking gasbags, and, after the rescue, the "pithing" (i.e. ripping up of the gasbags) of the deserted ship, so that she shall not drift around the air-lanes as a derelict danger to navigation, or the meeting, over the tip of Greenland, with the great hospital airship, with her hundreds of tuberculous patients lifted into the pure upper air — these have no modern parallel in actuality. As always, in any Kipling story, the centre of interest is the people, who live in every action and every word.

Perhaps the most notable feature about this story is that it was the ancestor of his other, and far better Science Fiction tale — AS EASY AS A.B.C. — with its fantastic picture of a furious local revolt neatly put down by hideously

efficient methods of "bloodless warfare" that are as completely convincing as they are extraordinary. In this future period "wireless" has come into its own, as witness the masterly picture, sketched in a few lines, of a girl sitting sewing on the veranda of a house on a fine Summer evening, pausing every now and then to pull over the reversing switch of a controller on a table at her elbow, in obedience to which a cultivator, in a field half a mile away, obediently starts back along the next furrow!

We, living, as we do, in a world full of the din of jet aircraft, helicopters and high-powered motor cycles, of compulsory purchase orders, the Town and Country Planning Act, and innumerable restrictive regulations, may well regard with envy Kipling's peaceful future world, in which the primary law is: "EVERY ADULT MAN OR WOMAN HAS THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY, AND ALL THAT THAT IMPLIES."

It will be interesting to see in a generation's time, how many of the prophecies of our present-day Science Fiction will have proved to be either as feasible or as accurate as these have been.

e n d

I'M A STRANGER HERE MYSELF

Mal Ashworth

It seems to me that recently, and, moreover, for quite a long time past, there has been a lot of controversy and argument about things. Not only do some people say all sorts of things about various subjects, but other people say a great deal more, and some say even less. And sometimes about altogether different subjects too! Then there are those people - fortunately few - who actually go so far as to say nothing at all. This is all very confusing to a large number of people, and it is made no less so by the fact that many of them have no way of being certain just who has said or not said what. Or even when. This, as I say, leads to a great deal of controversy and argument and it is my contention that the time has come when a clarification and simplification of the whole matter is almost a necessity. More than that, in fact - it is desirable.

As a starting point then, we must have classifications into which things can be classified and, secondly, we must have complicated things, not to mention things of all kinds (as well as any others that may be left over), which can be classified. And simplified. (Or, if you prefer it, simplified. And classified.) So far so good. For a start, then, we find that there are things which people do and things which people say; then there are things which people don't do and things which people don't say. There are also things which people think and feel and things which people don't think and don't feel; but we won't concern ourselves with those for the moment.

Also, of course, there are things which people sometimes say and do and things which people sometimes don't say and sometimes don't do; except occasionally. (As a corollary to this there are things which people sometimes think and feel and things which people sometimes don't think and don't feel, but we decided not to bother about these at the moment.)

Then there are people. There are people who say things and people who do things and people who don't say things as well as people who don't do things. There are, moreover, people who think and feel, or, as the case may be, don't think and don't feel things. To further complicate it there are people who do some of these things, none of these things, all of these things, a few of these things, or several of these things. And some other things too. It is all very trying.

Furthermore, when you get to a very advanced level you will find that in addition to all the above, there are people who do some of these things sometimes, and people who do none of these things any of the time, as well as people who do a few of these things or several of these things - and, in rare cases, all of these things - sometimes and even, occasionally, never. You may find it hard to believe at first. In fact, one competent authority was moved to remark: "Some people do things when you don't say anything". (In all fairness, however, it should be added that there are also some people who say things when you don't do anything.)

Of all the above classes of people perhaps those who say, do, think and feel things, and, almost simultaneously, don't say, don't do, don't think and don't feel things are the most difficult to deal with. You can never really tell what they are going to say or do or think or feel or not say, not do, not think or not feel. Which is a hell of a thing. They might say one thing one minute (or even one second) and do something entirely different the next; and to make it even worse, immediately after that they might think or feel something different again, and perhaps even irrelevant. And you will readily realise that this doesn't take into account all the things they might not say, not do, or perhaps even not think or not feel, in the meantime.

Quite apart from the confusion which all this causes there is the personal element too. It is a sad fact that you are likely to find yourself caught up in such a welter of things being done, said, thought and felt, and not done, not said, not thought and not felt that you are quite likely to start doing, saying, thinking and feeling things yourself; or even not doing, not saying, not thinking and not feeling things, which is probably worse and may be even better - all this, of course, quite before you realise what is happening (or not happening), as well as afterwards; and even this leaves out in between times. When this happens (or even does not happen), or possibly before or after, you may shake your head in bewilderment, wonder what is to be done, and ask yourself what it is all about. This, of course, only shows to what an extent you have become entangled in the mesh of doing, saying, thinking and

feeling things. Or it may be that you take no notice whatever of the whole business, and thus confess yourself hopelessly addicted to not doing, not saying, not thinking and not feelings things. It is difficult to know what to do or say or think or feel (or not do, not say, not think or not feel) for the best. Or even, for that matter, for the worst.

Undeterred by these considerations, however, we must press on to note that in addition to everything previously mentioned, we also have to take account of all the things which people do, say, think and feel (I am referring to the things themselves, of course) and it would be sheer idiocy to leave out of reckoning those things which people don't do, don't say, don't think or don't feel. And then there is why.

I think it is as well to admit to ourselves right here and now that while some people do or say things, or even don't do or don't say things, for one, or even more, reasons, there are probably just as many people who don't think or don't feel things, or even think or feel things, for just as many reasons, only different. And maybe less. You will, of course, be bearing constantly in mind the fact that any or all of these people, or even some different people altogether, may, at the same time, or, if not, certainly the minute after, be doing, saying, thinking or feeling, or not doing, not saying, not thinking or not feeling something quite unlike any of the previous things we have mentioned (and not in any way related to any of the things we may yet mention) for completely unconnected reasons, which we couldn't even begin to think of. Even if we tried.

I imagine, too, that no one will be so foolhardy as to suggest that we should neglect the actual doing, saying, thinking and feeling, and, perhaps particularly, the not doing, not saying, not thinking and not feeling, which constitutes, of course, the really vital link between these people who are doing things, saying things, thinking things and feeling ^{things} or not doing, not saying, not thinking, and not feeling exactly the same things, or even some different things, and the things which are being done, said, thought and felt, or, on the other hand, not done, not said, not thought and not felt.

Then, too, it would be unfair if we did not consider not only all the people who have at some time done, said, thought or felt things, and will never do so again, as well as those who may have done and said or thought and felt (or even done and felt or thought and said) some of these things, if not more, more than once or even seldom, and may, or possibly never will, think or say or do or feel even more than previously, perhaps occasionally, but also all those people (and there must be many) who will, or may, never before have felt or done or thought or said something (or even - and this may be important - half) and are only just about to start.

This, of course, is only the beginning.

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T H E

W A Y W A R D

W I T C H

by Sheila Ashworth

Have you ever stopped to consider the pros and cons of being a witch? No, I didn't think you had. It's not really the kind of thing you think about everyday. But I suppose that when you do think about it you think it's just a case of waving a wand or muttering something or even cooking something, after which there's a crash of thunder or an enormous gust of wind and the thing is done. Well, it isn't. I know. I am in the unfortunate stage of being a witch in the making. A sort of Neo-Witch in fact. I don't even look the part, either. True I have long hair, but it's always plaited into as small a thing as possible, and if it wasn't for the National Health Service I should be toothless. If I walked bent forwards with a cushion on my back I might look stooped, and there the resemblance would end. No, I'm just unlucky. If I had a teacher witch things would be a lot better, although its not the kind of thing you could ask anybody about. I might pick the wrong person and finish up being put in a chair and ducked in the nearest pond, or even burnt at the stake. You see, I can witch people. It hardly ever works out just right, but things happen to them. That's why I need a teacher - to help me get the thing under control. I suppose I could put an advert in the "Times":

Wanted. Experienced Witch to help person with a natural bent in that direction.

Apply Box No.....

Still I should have to specify the kind of witch I wanted. I just dont want any old out of work witch turning up. And then again, I don't want the cauldron and frogs legs type either. I can't bear cut-up creatures and nasty things like that. On the other hand I might get investigated by Scotland Yard or M.I.5. Or I might even get a job with the government, witching the General Election and atom secrets from Russia. There are a hundred and one things the government might want me to do. No, I don't think an advert is the right answer. I shall just have to go on witching things on my own. It may just be lack of practice or something like that. Mind you I have had successes.

It all started when Mal complained of a printer's representative who made a nuisance of himself. Just in fun I offered to see what I could do about making the said rep scarce. Mind you I'd never done anything like it before and for the life of me I can't think what made me offer my services. However, that night as I was scrubbing the hall floor, I remembered my offer and I scrubbed as hard as I could and wished 'as hard as I could that the wheels would drop off the car of the Rep. I wished it a couple of times and waited and nothing happened, no thunder, no lightning, no wind, so I just went on scrubbing. Next day Mal told

me that the Rep had come in and related how his brakes had failed and nasty black oil had squirted all over his shoes and socks and trousers. To put it mildly, I was surprised. Mal was delighted. There it was, I was something. To find a better word for it, I was a witch. There was a little sequel to the episode. About a fortnight later, the rep broke his leg when his car crashed. It must have been a bad break because he was out of commission for about 9 months. I don't really know if he guessed, but he always calls Mal "Sir" now and somehow he doesn't call so often or stay so long. Naturally I was a little loth to take the credit for all this so I thought the best thing was to experiment a bit more. I decided to wish that the office manager would lose his pen. It seemed a pretty harmless enough thing to wish, I thought, and sat and wished hard, as hard as I could. I wasn't too sure if it would work the same owing to the fact that I could hardly get down and scrub the office floor. I waited and nothing happened; his pen was still there and didn't seem likely to get lost. In fact it was the most unlost-looking pen I have ever seen. I felt a bit let down; maybe that one had been the only wish I had in me and I had spent it on a printer's rep. About 10 minutes later the office manager went out and fell down the three steps leading to the despatch department. I was rather happy about it all, though I felt a bit concerned as to the trend my wishes seemed to take. I hadn't wished the poor man any harm, yet there he was hopping round the office, holding his ankle and chanting Did you see that? What did I fall over?. Naturally I didn't say anything. I couldn't say I wished you'd lose your pen and you fell down the steps instead. It puzzled me though. It still puzzles me. Only the other day I wished for a cat to play with, and I got a horse with a policeman sitting on it. You see you just can't tell how it's going to come. After this I thought that it would maybe be better if I just forgot the whole thing and ignored it. But I couldn't resist having another go. One of the typists had been going to the dentist for treatment for about three months, and was expecting to go for another three months. Here was a chance to test my powers once again, I thought. She was going to the dentist that same night so I wished she wouldn't have to go anymore. Now I think about it, it was rather a risk to take, because she was my friend and it would have grieved me if she had had an "accident". However, not thinking of that at the time I wished hard. I was really happy and my confidence was once more restored when she arrived all smiles (and all in one piece) next morning and said she had finished her treatment. It had worked.

I have toyed with the idea of wishing people - everybody that is - to stop going to the dentist, but I think that the Dental Association would take rather a dim view. I can just see the boss of the Dental Association looking at all his starving members and saying: "It has come to my notice that a certain person is wishing all people not to have teeth troubles". Then I should get a nasty letter telling me to stop and all the dentists would hate me and hiss at me when I went past, The Daily Mirror would expose me and then lots of funny little men would come and test me and it would all be a nasty mess. I don't think I shall. It's very difficult really. Mal wants me to wish and cut the population down by half. He says it's my duty to do so as wife of the President and founder of the National Society for the Abolition of Life but I'm squeamish. I don't like hurting people really. If I got a teacher witch she might be the hurting kind and then I would be unhappy. Anyway cutting down the population is a mighty big job. It might take weeks of wishing and it mightn't work properly and all the nice people might be cut and all the wrong people get left all right. Oh dear.

I have had one big success with my witching. This was the case of Buzzerlugs (pronounced Boozhaireloogs). You see, we travel on the same bus every morning and we have always sat on the front seat. We had been doing this for about 18 months when Buzzerlugs appeared. He was tall, dark and wore thick glasses

and a silly Swiss type hat (the kind Burgess wears). One morning we got on the bus and there was this Buggerlugs sitting on our seat. We were a bit chuggalugged about it. After all, when you have been sitting on the same seat for 18 months (on and off, that is) and a Buggerlugs turns up and takes it over, something is wrong somewhere. He got on the bus at the stop before ours and every morning we would see him in the distance, walking up to the bus stop and every morning he would be sitting on our seat. We tried to get rid of him peacefully, honest we did. We tried sitting next to him and squashing him. Every time the bus went round a corner we leaned on him enough to push him out of the window; we muttered and chuntered. We called him names and hated him, and he just sat and never seemed any the worse for it. In fact, he didn't even seem to know. After some weeks of this, the Student turned up. He must have got on the bus before Buggerlugs because all of a sudden, one morning, there he was, sitting on the front seat. On the days the Student didn't come, Buggerlugs got the front seat. It was all a bit too much. So one day as we watched Buggerlugs walking up as usual, Mal said: "You'll have to do for Buggerlugs". I agreed, a little reluctantly, because I didn't feel very sure just who would be done for. Or how. Anyway, just before I wished, it suddenly occurred to me that whilst I was "doing for" Buggerlugs I might as well "do for" the Student too. So I did. I wished very hard and hoped like mad to get some kind of sign that things were happening, but, of course, I didn't.

The next morning the Student was missing and he has never been seen since; not by us anyway. (You know, this might be what happened to Benjamin Bathurst. He took to sitting on somebody's front seat in the stage-coach, they wished him away just as he was walking round the horses and - poof.) Buggerlugs, however, was there, sitting on the front seat. Mal was a little disappointed, but as I pointed out I was only a newcomer to the game and one had gone. It was quite obvious the morning after that, that something was happening, although Buggerlugs was putting up a brave fight. When we first saw him he was walking up the road quite normally towards his usual stop, and then, the next minute, he was pounding down the road towards our stop, with the bus only a few feet behind him. We sat smugly on the front seat, settled down comfortably, and listened to Buggerlugs panting and wheezing a few seats behind. The next morning he had gone too, and we have never seen him since. His wife occasionally passes by and looks at me in a rather reproachful way, but as for what happened to Buggerlugs, I fear we shall never know.

There are other aspects of this witching business, too - but all just as chaotic. For instance there was the time we went to visit some friends and our host asked his wife the result of the Oxford v Cambridge Rugby match. Before she could reply, I said that Oxford had won by 9 points to 6. Mal asked me how I knew and I told them I had heard it on the radio the night before and how glad I was because Oxford never win the Boat Race. They all looked at me rather queerly for a moment and then Stanley pointed out that I couldn't have heard it on the radio the night before because the match had only been played that afternoon.

So, as you can see, the whole thing is a very haphazard and risky business at the moment, and as I said earlier I really need some older, more experienced witch to guide me. I suppose I could always wish for one; but then there's no telling what I might get.

THE END.

R O M P I N G

T H R O U G H

O M P A

(T R O M P T R O M P T R O M P)

For sure and begorrah but poor old OMPA certainly is only a shadow of its former self these days, is it not? I haven't been active enough in it myself recently to dare to venture any opinions about 'what is wrong' with it and what to do to put it right, but I take some comfort from the fact that a nucleus of Old Stalwarts such as Ethel Lindsay, Daphne Buckmaster, Bobbie Gray and Archie Mercer are still bravely holding up the pillars whilst a most worthy crowd of 'newcomers' such as George Locke (a pox upon the pesky army!), Bob Lichtman, Bill Donaho, Dick Ellington etc., valiantly strive to shore up the roof. I don't always approve of the methods they suggest (like increasing the membership to 55; 'well, first tear down this thatched cottage and then we can build up a brand new block of flats') (or like 'screening the waiting list'; 'make sure only those whose faces we like at the moment get inside to help us with the work') but the main thing is that the enthusiasm is there and enthusiasm, right now, is what OMPA needs somewhat like a vampire needs a blood transfusion. My own feeling is that no kind of legislation and constitutional reform will 'save' OMPA; we need a Billy Graham not a Solon.

And as the last wisps of hot air drift out the window, we turn tentatively to

THE TWENTY SEVENTH MAILING

ERG ----- Good Grief, Man - fan publishing, tape-recording, marriage, cine-filming - how on earth do you do it? I always meant to look into cine-filming but never got around to it. As a matter of fact I haven't even done any still photography for so long that I still have a film to develop which I exposed at the Brussels Exhibition in 1958. Tell me, though, Terry, can one develop one's own cine films? I mean, is it a feasible proposition? I used to do all my own still photography stuff and have such an enormous distrust of all professional processing - having had so many otherwise good films ruined in the past - that I will have nothing to do with anything I can't handle all the way myself; this is one reason I never got around to doing any colour work. (Yes, I know you can develop some of the colour films yourself but it seems, at best, an involved, sloshy and rather risky business.)

Your fine bit on Segregation just set me to looking through 210 pages of what I consider one of the brilliant books of this century, S.I. Hayakawa's LANGUAGE IN THOUGHT & ACTION for the masterly analysis Hayakawa has of the 'Negro Question'. I quote:

" By the definition accepted in the United States, any person with even a small amount of 'Negro blood' - that is, whose parents or ancestors were classified as 'Negroes' - is a 'Negro'. IT WOULD BE EXACTLY AS JUSTIFIABLE TO SAY THAT ANY PERSON WITH EVEN A SMALL AMOUNT OF 'WHITE BLOOD' IS 'WHITE'. Why do they say one rather than the other? Because the former system of classification SUITS THE CONVENIENCE OF THOSE MAKING THE CLASSIFICATION. "

And you have some more excellent comments on the 'Ban The Bomb' business; that kind of thing certainly does bring out the Crackpot Fringe. I hope Ivor Mayne won't hold it against me if I set down a couple of little items in this connection which amused me no end. On our recent visit to London we went along with Ken and Irene Potter to visit Ivor at his community home in Balham ('Gateway to the South') where he lives with, as near as I can understand it, a fluctuating crowd of Ban-The-Bombsters, Anarchists and other people with ideas slightly out of the usual run. Conversation turned to the Holy Loch anti-Polaris demonstrators who had been arrested; and just then the telephone rang and who should it be but the anti-Polaris demonstrators phoning from Scotland. They had just been released after three weeks custody; the police had not preferred any charges against them. Everyone was quite livid - 'But they can't do that' - 'Well, make them prosecute you' - 'God, what a dirty trick' - etc. We split our sides.

Among the gathering were some representatives of the 'Committee of a Hundred'. We inquired about the nature and reason of this organisation. Once again the idea, it seemed, was to organise demonstrations, passive resistance, etc. on a Ban-The-Bomb theme, the idea being that 'the police can't arrest a hundred people all at once'. I see from 'The Daily Telegraph' two days ago that the police arrested 826 demonstrators in Whitehall. Now I have two split sides.

But to even the score a little, let me add one final little piece in which the 'Crackpots' came out tops. A week or two ago Sheila and I noticed a couple of army lorries standing outside Leeds University; and there - boldly and unmistakably painted in white on their canvas sides - were large Ban-The-Bomb signs.

Crackpots? Yes, I think so. Their aims half-baked and ill thought-out, their methods ineffectual and often ludicrous, their attitude breathtakingly Earnest and Sincere (as of now they are marching up to Holy Loch 'carrying a Symbolic Canoe'. Now what, in God's name, I ask myself, does a 'Symbolic Canoe' look like? The mind boggles). Good for a laugh and little more? Yes, I think so. (And on the other hand I will laugh with them, and not against them, if they do something ingenious and Get One Up on the Other Side.) And yet - I am glad we have them. For I feel that Antiseptic Britain of the 1960s, Britain of sodium street lights and parking

meters, Britain of Graduated Compulsory pensions and massive estates of Corporation houses, Britain combining the worst features of a half-digested Socialism with those of a rampant Big Company Monopoly, Britain of British Railways and W. H. Smith's (and did two organisations ever go more beautifully hand-in-hand?) - this Britain, I believe, needs all the Crackpots she can possibly muster - crackpots, hermits, tramps, rebels, militant individualists and people who can be just Plain Nasty - Britain needs like perhaps never before. And if, in toto, the most that they can manage is a muted snarl, that will at least serve to show that the Antiseptic and Disinfectant hasn't quite reached every corner of our little island yet.

Thinking about your 'Candid Camera' remarks and the complacency of people in general put me in mind of a nice little item I read in a newspaper only a couple of days ago. After a series of breakings-in in a certain district, police interviewed a farmer who remembered having seen a man in a raincoat come out of a house at 5 a.m and stand looking around suspiciously. 'I didn't think anything about it at the time' said the farmer, or words to that effect, 'I just thought he was from the Milk Marketing Board'.

BURP --- Personally, I never bother with Post Office clerks, proceeding on the basis of my belief that 'People know less about things than anybody, particularly people who are supposed to know'. I just figure out postal rates for myself from those published, ignore other things, stuff the items in a mail box, and, usually, they get there. The point here, I think, is that once a thing is Actually In The System, it is far easier for them to forward it than to return it and quibble; and that which is 'far easier' is nearly always that which gets done.

BJOTTINGS --- Very nice magazine; that was a particularly lovely line about inviting the police back for your New Year party because you figured they would be there anyway. Lucky you, being at that Animals' Party with the cheetah and all. I had heard that they make good pets (and was also surprised to know that they are not true cats and, in fact, have more dog characteristics than cat) and Dan (MEMOIRS OF A SWORD SWALLOWER - read it!!) Mannix and his wife Jule (MARRIED TO ADVENTURE - read that, too; what a fascinating pair!) kept one as a pet. It used to allow the children to ride on its back and seems to have been a most gentle-natured critter. The children, apparently, took it completely for granted and when their friends used to come and goggle at it, would say impatiently 'Oh, that's only a cheetah. Come and see my dolls'.

Unlucky you, having a run of misfortune, illnesses, accidents and whatnot. Trust it is all over now.

THE WALL --- "I'm getting browned off with this hitch-hiking" is a thing I should very much like to hear Bill Donano saying. Yes, indeed.

AMBLE --- You're a 'topper' person than I am if you get much joy out of THE TIMES. THE DAILY TELEGRAPH is my meat, and highly satisfied I am with it too. Still, a tout son fout,

as the French would no doubt say if they had thought of it first.

I enjoyed your little mathematics bit and one day I may even understand it too. I have just started on 'Teach Yourself ALGEBRA' with the firm determination to see how far I get before I find that I am no longer understanding it. Then, as the book has roughly 300 pages, I shall divide the page number I have reached by three and take that as being an approximation of my I.Q. Things are in the Crucial Stage right now - I am on page 3.

paraFANalia - This is one of the magazines in this mailing about which it pains me most not to have any brilliant and worthwhile comments to make, as its entertainment value was just terrific. Keep 'em coming, Bruce; I'll think of something to say (other than just 'This was marvellous') sooner or later.

Another magazine which left me in exactly the same sad straits was:

ELLINGTON MAILING COMMENTS --- Ding Bing, Dag Nab it and Rowrbazzle!

ROMP --- In reply to your question as to whether British political conventions are interrupted for 'pop singers to entertain' the answer is no, I don't think so (yet). From what I can gather the politicians do all the entertaining themselves - and they seem to be pretty adept at it. From some of the reports one reads of these affairs it almost seems as though the introduction of a pop singer would bring a note of sombre solemnity into the proceedings.

ROMP contained some very nice bits of writing and I enjoyed quite a few of Crane's poems too.

VERT --- May I nominate for your 'Way of Life' quote competition - LIFE IS A WAY IF LIFE ?

Your quote from THE SUBTERRANEANS - 'Mardou goes to her analyst and we learn that she is pregnant'. Can't help thinking that that there scoundrelly lil ole analyst was kinda stepping over Union boundaries a mite.

THE SPECTATOR a little while ago ran a rather pleasant article on The Olympia Press and its boss, M. Girodias, entitled I AM A PORNOGRAPHER. M. Girodias was most disarming about the whole matter. He published some 'dirty books', he said, to help finance the 'real literature' (Miller, Durrell etc.) He at one time tried to find a way of getting supplies of his books into England and managed to get as far as finding a sailor who would smuggle them in. The first trip the sailor was caught and all the books confiscated. The second trip the ship went down and sailor, books and all were lost. M. Girodias admitted that after that he lost heart with the venture a little. Another thing which caused him some distress was that at the time the article was written he hadn't been raided for six months or more and without all that noise and hullabaloo and stomping around and tearing open of his safe and scattering of his files and whatnot, where was he supposed to get any publicity? They were being very unfair about it.

RANDOM --- Your remarks about why you continue to publish an OMFA zine - so that you have somewhere to get in all the odds and ends which never seem properly at home in a 'genzine' - strike a very responsive chord here. I find that over the last few years I have had more and more 'odds and ends' which seemed worth putting down, and less and less of the narrower range which is acceptable in general fanzines.

Mention of that soapbox speaker near Foyles reminds me of the story a friend of mine told me about how he and his wife, on their honeymoon in London, saw a group of people gathered round an individual in Charing Cross Road, joined the crowd to see what was going on, and found that the attraction was a man selling instruments for procuring abortions.

I am a little diffident about getting embroiled in this fascinating symposium on the subject of 'women' as I feel that the few hasty lines I wrote you in a letter on the subject may have been the cause of the demise of our (to me) most interesting correspondence (I could be quite wrong, of course; there could be a hundred and one other reasons); but, as the old saying goes, 'who wants to live forever anyway?'

The whole big fight over the 'inferiority' of women has always been something of a mystery to me, and puts me in mind of something Ken Potter said to Sheila last time we stayed with him: "I've never trusted your judgement since you said you liked William Saroyan better than rice pudding". Without ever thinking much about it, I have always taken it for granted that men and women were 'different' and therefore had different predilections, talents, weaknesses, interests, etc., but it hadn't really occurred to me that one group must be 'inferior' and it still puzzles me. Anyone, I feel, who maintains that women are 'inferior' in a complete and general sense is going to have a hard time of it showing just how inferior they are at child-bearing, to take only the most obvious example. Perhaps, though, it is not too difficult to see how the confusion arises. Men, it is generally conceded (though not by you, I assume, Daphne?) are the 'dominant' sex in a biological and sexual sense; this is a pretty abstract sort of thing but it has had a very wide acceptance among the peoples of the world, and it seems to me fairly reasonable. Then, somehow, in some people's minds this idea of 'dominance' has got all churned up with the notion of 'superiority'. Strange. Then, of course, by way of reaction we get all the suffragette shrieks and the 'We're as good as you and can do anything you can' bit, and a general renunciation of femininity in a blaze of 'equality' (Two minutes silence, please, for 'Equality' - probably the most overworked and least understood word of the twentieth century.) Fortunately most of that worked itself out in one generation and today's women, generally, have managed to miss the militant crusaderism which wrecked so many of their parents' marriages.

If you really know many men who 'look down on women's company' they are an odd lot indeed; one possible reason occurs to me for their chariness of 'intelligent' women - a subconscious fear, perhaps, that they may be outwitted in the 'sex chase'? I personally

can see no reason why a woman should not follow up any subject that interests her, or any talents she may have, and have the same opportunity and regard in it as a man; I also can see no reason why she should choose to contort and distort her own nature, and throw her femininity overboard just to prove that she is 'as good' as a man. Wouldn't it be much more sensible to prove that, even if she is 'as good' as a man, she is much, much better as a woman? With regard to 'sex appeal', I find your recipe just a little unappetising. Being 'alive and healthy' and 'acting naturally' constitute 'sex appeal' about like a handful of raw potatoes constitutes a meal.

SCOTTISHE --- Where would OMPA be without SCOTTISHE, I sometimes ask myself? Then I shudder and hope that I won't ever have to find out. SCOTTISHE is consistently one of the very top magazines in every mailing and that is one reason I am sorry to find myself with so little space to comment on it this time.

I share your feelings for JURGEN, a brilliant book. I do hope you don't decide to drop out of OMPA, Ethel. Fings certainly 'aint what they used to be in the organisation and a lot of the original flavour has gone, and yet I for one still have a soft spot for it. And your own publications make up no small part of that spot.

A very fine issue, as ever; Willis, Varley and yourself in topnotch form. Sorry about this skimpy comment.

VIPER --- My above-mentioned sorrow also extends to include VIPER, which, as the Magazine That Saved The Mailing, deserves far better than I now have room left to allot it. Quite apart from size though, it was one of the most entertaining and all round best magazines in the mailing. The ASTOUNDING article was fine too; whatever did happen to ASTOUNDING? And its editor? Now what was his name? Seems to me I saw it glaring at me only the other day, rather blindingly, from the cover of some other magazine.

I presume that this John Myers Myers would be the same one who wrote a (reasonably) factual biography of Doc Holliday?

I had a B I G long paragraph here shrieking hysterical agreement with that wonderful paragraph you had about freedom being also the freedom to make mistakes, and how, in a Jolly Little Old Welfare State like ours, that is one of the first freedoms to go; not that any governments that I have heard of stand prezackle four-square to preserve it- but now, as I started out to say, that has got squeeze out too. Tush. However, for what it is worth, I do echo every syllable of what you had to say on the subject. Strange, when you come to think about it, that governments should care to take as their own sole prerogative such an apparently unattractive right as that of making mistakes. And my - do they exercise it!!

-----allforthistime-----