

# THE GREAT IRISH RIFT VALLEY EXPEDITION

## THE SEARCH FOR ENEY'S FAULT

I TOLD Mr Bennett he shouldn't have roped Mr Cecil to the rest of the party, but it's just like talking to a brick wall. And a very high-class brick wall too, with plenty of straw - most of it in his hair. Anyway, the inevitable happened - when Mr Cecil slipped, we all slipped - and went plunging down the emerald-green hillside to land with a dull plop at the bottom. Mr Cecil and Mr Bennett, who were on the two ends of the rope, got the worst of it, and were practically smothered in the stuff.

Mr Bennett, however, rose to the occasion magnificently. Clawing the stuff out of his eyes, he called his pupils around him. "Now look, boys," he told us, "we have here an object-lesson in Irish geology. We are in a Peat Bog, and Peat is a very important factor in the Irish economy. Observe, if you please, the different varieties of Peat. For instance, the thick clinging gocey stuff in which our feet are now embedded" - Mr Cecil obligingly lifted one forefoot out of the mire with an eminently satisfying squelch, so that we could inspect the stuff at close quarters - "this is what's known as Rainy, or Reaney, Peat. You'll notice its extremely viscous qualities - you'll find it extremely persistent stuff to handle. And the supply seems to be inexhaustible - its deepest layers have never been plumbed."

"Sir," piped up Filthy. (His name was Philip Theobald, but we all called him Filthy. I'm not quite sure why - as a matter of fact, for a boy from our school, he was unusually clean.) "Sir - if this is Reaney Peat, does that mean we're getting near Reaney's Fault now?"

"Imbecile child," retorted Mr Bennett smugly. "It's ENEY'S Fault, not Reaney's. Come to that, I rather doubt if ANYTHING could strictly be said to be Reaney's Fault - and Reaney Peat is certainly NOT Eney's Fault. Enough of that - this firmer layer of Peat above it is called Rigby Peat. In general it's a pretty good-quality fuel, and is very popular for burning all over Ireland. Its quality does vary somewhat, I know - sometimes it's light and flaky, at other times it's real solid. But it's basically good stuff. Now, over there" - he pointed with a muddy finger - "can be seen some of the so-called Tailor's Peat - I think there's a tailor tatched, but I'm not sure what. And beside it, a patch of Royal Peat. Both these varieties are rather rare at present, but it is hoped that they will be found in greater quantities before long.

"And finally, here we see just a trace of Hamilton Peat. This is found mainly in Scotland, and is of a somewhat different order to these other Peats - it is systematically dug and sold commercially on a fairly important scale. And now - for Peat's sake get me out of here, before I go right under."

Eventually we got both Mr Bennett and Mr Cecil back to dry land, and the Expedition continued on its way. About half-past three in the afternoon, Sid Crockett took a pot-shot at a small bird that was flying towards us. Sid's a pretty good shot, the cork hit the bird head-on, and it fell unconscious at our feet. We crowded round it.

"Hey, get back" ordered Mr Bennett suddenly. "It's a budgie - it's probably carrying a message from Mr Berry." He picked the bird up, and was intently examining its legs for the capsule when it woke up.

"Tweet," chirruped the bird indignantly. "You get your paws off my lower regions, you big stupid-looking monkey." Now this was more than Mr Bennett deserved - he's certainly no monkey. Why, he can't even swing by his tail. Anyway, he was somewhat taken aback.

"I'm looking for the message," he faltered.

"You dumb clot," chirped the bird - a far more apt description, I thought. "The message is verbal." It stood upright on his palm. "Message follows. Time Handed In - 7.35 am. Belfast. Text reads: RETURN IMMEDIATELY. PERMISSION TO EXPLORE GREAT IRISH RIFT VALLEY WITHDRAWN. GREAT IRISH RIFT VALLEY DOES NOT REPEAT NOT EXIST. J. BERRY, CHIEF CONSTABLE, IRISH FANDOM. End of message."

This came as a shock, and we pondered deeply. "H'm - Great Irish Rift Valley doesn't exist, eh?" Mr Bennett mused. "Which reminds me - I have good reason for believing that Mr Berry doesn't exist, either."

The budgerigar got exceedingly annoyed at this, and jumped up and down on his palm. "He DOES exist too," it chirped angrily. "He DOES. He DOES. I suppose you'll be saying next that budgerigars can't talk, either."

At this, Mr Cecil sneezed violently, and kicked Mr Bennett gently on the shin. A beatific smile suddenly spread over Mr Bennett's countenance. "That's right," he said. "They can't, can they. I never heard a word - did you, boys?"

"Not a word, sir," we chorused.

"All right then - what are we waiting for? Forward, pioneers - we have work to do. Eney's Fault MUST be found." And with Mr Cecil in the lead the Expedition continued on its way, while the bird flew off on an arc of the Great Circle, muttering to itself - "I CAN talk. Mr Berry DOES exist. I DO believe in Santa Claws. There IS a Birdland." And was soon lost to sight amongst the rolling Irish hills.

By now, of course, you'll have seen the bottom of the page, and realised that this is only by way of a sort of extended introduction to

Archive  
 A B M  
 Between  
 meals

A pre-supplement to ARCHIVE 10

Postmailing to OMPA 9

October 1956 (woll, then, September)

THE WORLD'S FIRST WEEKLY OMPAZINE



# OMPARADE

## OFF TRAILS 9.

Passed without comment.

## CONTOUR 10.

I like this very much,  
and even without

HOW. the Berry's remarkable commentary on Paul is one of the American Shaws Member I'm (Shaws of Tripoli) certainly glad I STILL like we contrived not to lose - and here's proof. Throughout, in fact. No, these

## STELLAR 8 (1).

I've already commented at some length (at least two paragraphs) in a letter, I don't want to repeat myself so I'll merely go on public record as saying that here's a good idea handled the wrong way. Orson Wells? From what I've seen of him on films, he's only capable of playing one role - and he overacts that.

ter long since, so beyond registering Approval I'll let it rest there.

## MORPH 9.

Again most enjoyable, though, John, you should NEVER continue lines of print either side of an illo - as I've done over on the right here. If you want to use a mid-page illo, then you want to have the print in double-columns the whole way down. Otherwise the eye can't follow properly. By the way, surely it's sospan fach, not bach.

BUT FIRST, A word of warning. This is being mailed so very close on the heels of the Mailing proper that it may well be that one or two Transatlantic OMPANS actually receive this BEFORE the Mailing. So if you do, don't worry - yet.

## GALLERY 3.

When you say you "loathe my letters," I presume you're referring to my lettered headings, as "OMPARADE" above? Because I don't remember actually CORRESPONDING with you as yet. Anyway, if that IS what you mean, you'll just have to lump it. I don't use a lettering-guide by deliberate policy, because they make all zines look alike. This way, at least you do KNOW it's

comments aren't pre-drafted nowadays - no time. Though I do try to estimate how much space I'll need for each zine as I start on it. That "b,,er" word - well the ORIGINAL word of course is "butcher" but if you want to fill in a word of your own, such as "banger" or "bulmer", it's quite OK by me.

## NOW & THEN 7.

Fabulously fannish as ever, but it's another one I've already dealt with by let-

ARCHIVE. Anyway, I like what there is of this - particularly the "steamy" illos.

## BURP! 10 & 11.

Mainly serious, and to the point. As far as giving copies of one's

zine to Waiters goes, there's a lot to be said for it - but quite frankly, I'm not prepared to carry a FAPA-sized waiting-list on my shoulders. Flesh and blood and the home-made Mercatorial flat-bed will only stand so much. Of course, some Waiters are personal friends of mine, and get ARCHIVE in any case. But I tell you what I will do - apart from said friends, I will from now on reserve 5 copies of ARCHIVE for the five top Waiters.

ESPRIT 5 & 6.

DUPLICATING WITHOUT TEARS.

If these aren't QUITE the first of the first, they are certainly the first of the first in the second degree. The main thing wrong with No 5 is that I can't understand the technical bits - which is my fault anyway I suppose. The main thing wrong with No 6 is the duplicating.

Another really USEFUL publication from the Clarke household. Roll on the rest of it. Hey, Vinç - while I think of it, whatever's become of that "Esoterics of Fandom" series of yours that started off so well a couple of years back?

THE LESSER FLEA.

But still, there's plenty that's Right with both. Tower for the Shakesperean elucidation - seems that everybody barring myself understands him first try - or is this a Conspiracy?

And the MESSIEST flea you ever did see. And I kept one of the better copies for myself, at that. Never mind - it does what it sets out to do, and more than adequately, at that. This review seems somewhat overloaded with "at thats", at that.

STEAM 3/1.

Funnily enough, the only grammatical misuse that I can think of that really annoys me is the practice of using an apostrophe-s for plural - including in abbreviations, where its usage may for all I know be quite legitimate.

I've met Cecil - I look forward to meeting Anjou. Dunno about "sci-fic" but what in the name of the Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf is wrong with "telly" ? It's a perfectly straightforward example of the British (in the widest sense) habit of adapting words of foreign derivation to sound for all the world like genuine Anglo-Saxonisms.

SCOTTISHE Sept.

I like your covers as always Daphne, but I've suddenly started to Worry about them. Thing is - do these so-happy-looking wenches of yours have any MENFOLK? And if so, what sort? Tarzan types? Greek shepherds with Panpipes? Chuck Harris?

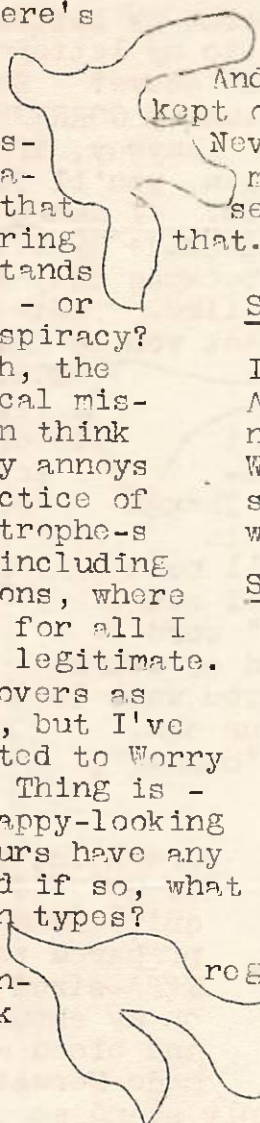
If Brian Varley writes like that ALL the time, you'd think he'd be considerably married by now. His column's the best thing in a good guest-issue. But Ethel - WHY don't you run a regular column of your OWN? Apart from the reviews, there's hardly a word of your own in the entire issue.

Anyway, what are the alternatives? "Tee-vee" is clumsy, having as it does an equal accent on both syllables - though it might have survived if it had contracted to "Teeve" or "Tev." "Video" is based on a false analogy with "Radio" - and sounds horrible, anyway. And besides - whenever I hear the word "Telly" pronounced, I never hear it as "Telly" - but as "Tele." So what?

And - I bet you never coloured all THOSE pages by hand! I can just see you with your little paintbox, though - - -

SNOOZE 5.

And WHAT, pray, is wrong with red ink on yellow paper? I like it. Like the contents, too. By the way, Geoff, I DEFY you to beat me to the post-mailing THIS time. Even if the Mailing arrives tomorrow (monday), you've got to read it, digest it, consider your verdict, put typewriter to





stencil, run off the result and collate, mail me the sample copy for Official Approval. wait till you get said Approval - and only then can you dump the zines in the pillar-box. I tell you, it's Impossible!

VAGARY 1.

Vagareets and Whusky and a Wild, Wild Whim. Adding up, one presumes, to the first-ever Wild fanzine. Reminds me in some ways of MY first-ever fanzine - ARCHIVE No 1. The duplicating - although a different method - is strictly comparable in the result - but this one has an unfair advantage that I didn't have, ie, being in a position to call on the services of such people as Roberta Wild, William Shakespeare, etc, to write it. Of course, I've made use of the latter writer on occasion since - but it's the START I'm talking about. Anyway, it's a very nice colour paper, and full of interest as well. Funnily enough, though poetry itself usually leaves me cold, I can always read ABOUT it with interest. (Which leads me to suppose that some non-jazzfans might possibly react the same way about jazz - but I wouldn't know.) As for what I presume to be the Point of "The Lost Singers" - that they were battle casualties - what about Masfield? I wouldn't go so far as to claim to ENJOY his stuff, but it's pleasant reading compared to the general run - and is VERY musical. If I HAD to read poetry for some reason, Masfield's one of the poets I'd choose. Stuff of his I had to learn at school always seemed to fit itself to a tune. For instance, take "Spanish Waters" - which always accompanied itself to the tune of "Clementine." Or "Tewkesbury Road" - "It's good to be out on the road, and going one knows not where. Going through meadow and village, one knows not whither nor why, Through the gay white lilt of the dust, and the clean cool rush of the air, Under the flying white clouds, and the broad blue lift of the sky." (E&OE) As poetry goes, that's Good. And the tune it goes with? Surely the world's best marching-tune of all time - "With a Hundred Pipers An' A'". The match of scansions isn't exact - but the rhythm is, and the ESSENCE is. Anyway, this is an OMPA first I was very glad to see. Incidentally, the cover's also good, Bobbie. I have a weakness for sailing-ships.

FANG een.

For your information, John, Norman Wansborough happens to be one of the most valued members both of OMPA and of Anglofandom. He frequently appears on the platform at Conventions - which he always attends -

DIMENSIONS 13  
- 1.

Another OMPAN whose work I was anxious to inspect was this ex-Hoff-woman type. I suspected, in my typically Mercatorial fashion, that it would prove to be much over-rated. Imagine my delight to find not only that EVERYTHING they'd said about her was absolutely true, but she'd found herself a husband who was (over) OMPazine. Incidentally, "RUNE" is the best zine title I've ever come across. If only I'd thought of it first, you'd be reading RUNE BETWEEN MEALS right now. I hope that's enough to be going on with.

and besides being an original member of OMPA is Vice President of SAPS, besides (last time I heard) being on the waiting lists for both FAPA and the Cult. He has put out OMPazines under three different titles, and is to date the only member to have an item by Robert Bloch in his OMPazine. Incidentally, "RUNE" is the best zine title I've ever come across. If only I'd thought of it first, you'd be reading RUNE BETWEEN MEALS right now. I hope that's enough to be going on with.

(DIMENSIONS 16 - 1 cont) every bit as enjoyable to read as she herself. DIM 16 is undoubtedly (and without a doubt, forsooth) the all-around best item this Mailing. Nigel - you'd better look to your laurels (they were growing in the front garden when you saw them last, if I remember) - because here is the first serious contender for top OMPA rating since Tom White fell out. Obviously, should have become a Trufan about five years sooner - to think what I must have missed.

### POOKA 3.

I liked the Midwestconrep, and although there isn't much else in it except for the conundrum-collection at the back, this is undoubtedly the Pooka most to the Mercatorial taste to date. For your information, Don, I've

now read LEER Feb 56.

that Jelly Roll Morton book - and found it absorbing throughout. Not so much for Jelly himself, but for the early New Orleans background. Methinks Lonax himself would have a life story well worth the telling, just reminiscing about all these characters he's collected material off.

### WAPPPOTED.

This miserable Worldcon-cable business overshadows the rest of the issue - if not the entire Mailing - which is a pity, because there's a lot of hard thinking gone into the main content of this - which main content I wish to commend to your urgent attention. Mainly because I'm now going to do my best to pull it to pieces. First of all, it is obvious that both Walt and Ken are arguing fanthropomorphically - ie, that they themselves typify the Fannish Ideal. Walt has, in the past, repeatedly defined the Trufan as one who aspires to put out a successful fanzine. He has himself put out not one but TWO fabulously successful fanzines - so his standing definition is clearly (continued top of next column)

(WAPPPOTED cont) on home ground. Ken, I would say, tends generally to give the impression that he's not maybe looking for new Bulmers so much as looking for new Willises - or of course new Pamelas. But on the second page of WAP, 12th line, he says: "so many of the newer fen coming along are not fans at

all as I know the term." Which places him unequivocally against wide-open Fandom as such.

(Of course, I'm taking it for granted

that the opinions printed in WAPPPOTED are actually held by the fen they're ascribed to, and not simply allocated for the sake of dramatic continuity.)

Anyway, in this discussion it seems, fanthropomorphism is the rule.

Right - then I'll start being fanthropomorphic, and see where it gets us.

Well, I'm a fan. I define myself as a Trufan, on the grounds that I'd sooner be in Fandom than out of it. But

I wouldn't call myself either a Willis or a Bulmer, by a long chalk. But I enjoy being in a position to read the fanwritings of both the above fen, and their ilk. Sometimes, admittedly, I fail to enthuse at what they write. Other times I am moved to argument



(WAPPPOTED cont again) by it - as now. Other times still, I find it almost beyond praise. Taken all in all, I'd sooner read it than not.

Though a Trufan, I'm not normally addicted to wild bursts of enthusiasm for things - enthusiasm comes slowly, if at all. I only joined OMPA more or less by accident - it just so happened that I was around when it started, and decided I might as well have a bash just for the hell of it. And discovered to my surprise that I liked it. But if it had been already an established concern when I first met it, with a nice little waiting-list to insulate it from the fan-in-the-street, I wouldn't have bothered. And thus would have found myself less of a Trufan, in all probability, than I actually am. It was OMPA, in fact, that first made me feel a Trufan - for Trufandom, when all is said and done, is only a state of mind.

How many other fans are there, I wonder, on the borderland, who find the fannish insulation too much for them and just drift off again into some more mundane but less inaccessible field of activity? Of course, I may be unique. But unique-feeling is said to be a sign of conceit (and I'm not going to argue on that point, either.) The thing is - it happened once, it can happen any number of times therefore. Also, there are the fans who DO have the enthusiasm to stand in a queue at the bottom of a long, cold waiting-list - and I understand that in FAPA at least they come near to outnumbering the Membership. All these - and Walt and Ken talk calmly of the long-term merger of FAPA and OMPA - "if not in theory, by the increase in the number of biapans." Thus all the best fannish blood - and that's another point I'm not going to argue over just now - happy together in its biapiary, with the lesser mortals graciously permitted to subscribe to such subzines as the fannish master-race may from time to time see fit to place on the general fannish market. That is NOT the Mercatorial Ideal for Fandom - and come to think of it, I'm bloody sure it isn't Walt's or Ken's, either. It's merely where I see their ideas leading to.

A general fandom of slightly superior peasants with an APA of high fannish overlords, then, is O-U-T. I most sincerely hope. Right - let's turn right around and go in the opposite direction. APAs are Good Things - right. More people would like to be in them than are in them - not only waiting-listers, but people who don't realise the delights of APAhood until personally sampled - same as me. Right. OK then - MY policy is - APAs for all. No deserving fan ever refused admission. We'd have to have more APAs, to prevent their getting unwieldy. In general, more and smaller APAs strikes me as a basically good idea.

What I actually visualise is an ultimate ideal setup something on the following lines. A central APA for fen of proven quality, surrounded by a whole family of satellite APAs of varying shape and size, but linked to them constitutionally. There'd always be room in one of the satellites for any newcomer who felt disposed to try his hand at the game. And from the satellite, after serving a specified period, he'd be eligible for election to the central APA. Each central APAN would be obliged, as a condition of annual renewal, to have retained his membership in at least one satellite - so there would be no hard-and-fast line, anywhere, betw the newcomer and the established inner-circle BNF. The number and size of the satellites could be adjusted with changes in the size of Fand

(WAPPPOTED concl) a whole.

Now look, Walt and Ken - what you've made me do.

And, purely as a point of interest, ARCHIVE - though its material is most certainly <sup>NOT</sup> of subzine-type variety - has an outside circulation almost as big as its OMPA circulation. And as yet, no fan who has ventured to express a desire to be on the receiving end has yet been refused. (Of course, this doesn't apply to ABM - no outsiders get them except for Needham and Higginbottom.)

Ladies and gentlefen - I have done.

And finally, just the merest touch of

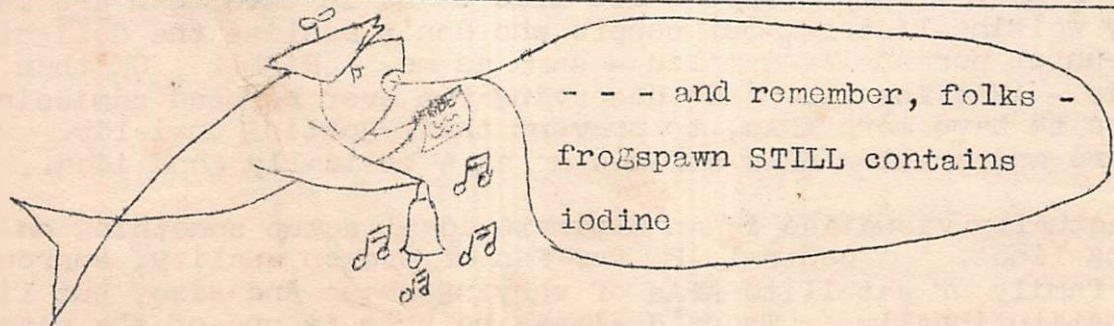
*sitting-in between meals*

the sitter in question being BOB PAVLAT who writes (1 Aug 1956): "Your dual editorship proposal (one on each side of

the Atlantic) might - seriously - well be cheaper - though didn't I answer this in another letter, and mention the "chore" of wrapping two packages for two OEs rather than one?" (Yes, I think you did. The idea, it may be recalled, was - by this time - to utilise the favourable rates of overseas postage by having the bundles from each side of the Atlantic mailed from the other.)

"Never forget....from now on it must be not "little Nurse Lindsay" but small Sister Lindsay." - Eric Needham.

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!!! OYEZ !!! OYEZ !!! OYEZ !!! OYEZ I'M THE GREAT PRETENDER

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