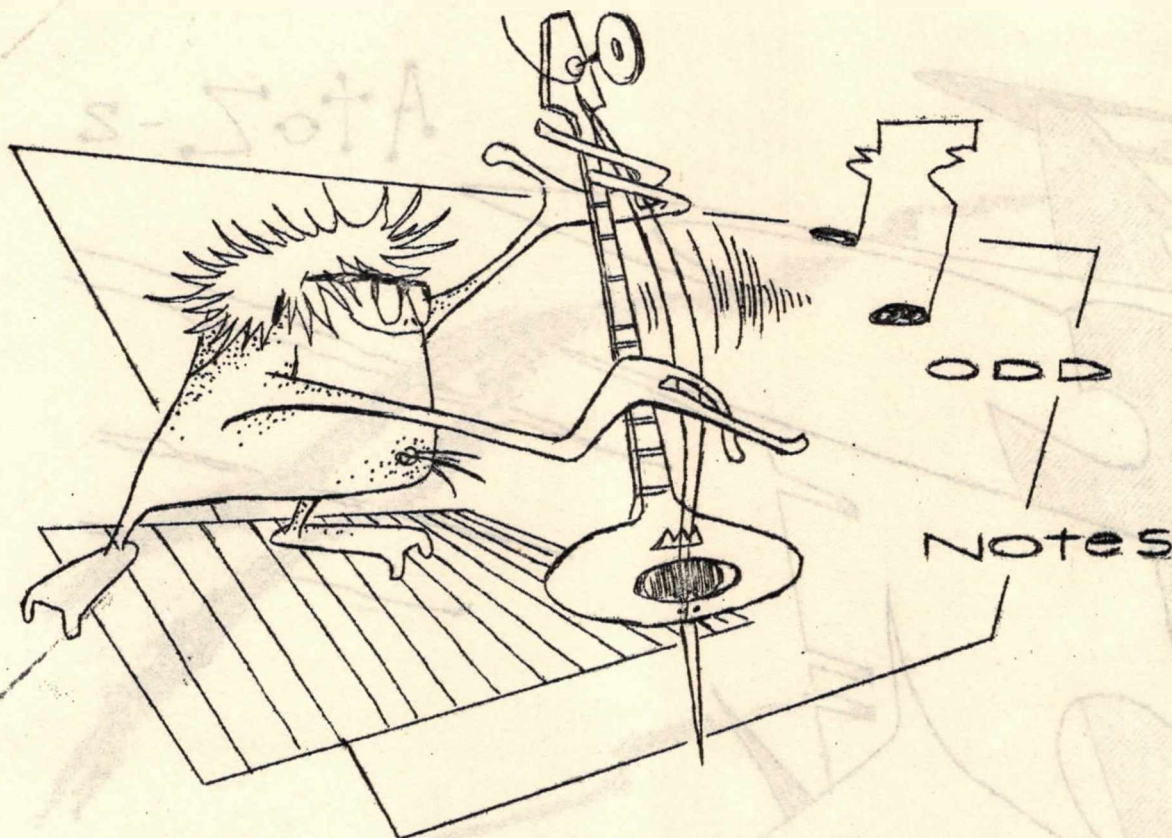


AtoZ-z





Fings Aint Wot They Used To Be. Atleast, not around AtoZ they aint. I trust that you have all noticed the impeccable duplicating and production of this issue. Go on, take another look. Smashing, isn't it. Of course it has nothing to do with me, but is the work of the AtoZ publishing company, namely, Ella Parker....may her staples never fall out. Somewhat grunchy at the rather poor quality of duplicating turned out by her secondhand Gestetner Ella went out into the Edgware Road and stopping the first Gestetner salesman that just happened to be staggering up the road with a large covered parcel she forced him to sell her a BEAUTIFUL All Walking, All Talking, All Colour, ELECTRIC duplicator - in gleaming Chrome and Bronze. Complete with its own electric lights and gleaming bank of control buttons in four different languages. On 'Power' it needs a gang of neofen feeding paper into to it as fast as they can to keep up with the output of printed matter from the other end. The only thing it doesn't do is switch itself on and give answers like ENIAC. Though I bet with a few minor adjustments from Vince Clarke it could be made to do even that.

I guess it all went to her head. For, power mad she went back out and dragging back an innocent typewriter salesman that just happened to be standing at her door ringing the bell, she forced him to sell her a DREAM of a typewriter which is a superhet model of a twentysecond century Wurlitzer with more gimmicky gadgets on it than an Early Warning System. There isn't a sound from it as you type, just a muted contented purr... something like a satisfied salesman. And the little bell doesn't just ring...brother, it plays 'In A Monastery Garden!' All this in Chrome and Cream, with 'Cumfy Touch' keys.

Fired with all this true stefnic dedication to mechanisation and better and better reproduction I too went out....and bought a brand new bottle of CorFlu. Just to show her that I was with her All The Way. Never spoil the ship for a hap'orth of tar say I.

I'll admit that all this mighty equipment has somewhat gone to this little magazines head - well could you blame us - Gone is the scruffy bem from the cover, ' gone is the tatty titling. Instead, we have Science Fiction type illustrations, and high class type titling. Yes, AtoZ has gotten respectable. But fear not gentle reader, AtoZ is still underneath all this finery the same scruffy tatty little magazine it has always been right from its first issue. We don't intend on running any fan written Science Fiction space stories...not even if they've been written by James Keeping, and we don't intend on discussing high class classical music, or even high class classical jazz, why, we don't even intend on giving our readers A Message Of Hope. This mainly because we hardly know any classical music - barring what we can hum, and we don't know much about jazz - barring that we like traditional, and we haven't gotten a message of hope because quite frankly the way the world is going we just don't think that it has a dogs chance of getting past the next hundred years.

No, instead, the mixture is as before, a little of me, nearly a piece about George (but it got squeeze out by our friend and yours..Ethel Lindsay ..bless her Tammy..sending in a topical little tale) Mailing comments and the illoidea.

I've had a couple of people ask me if that tale I told of George and the rockets was true. Well it was. Brushed up a little maybe, but the facts stand. Why I bet if I went up to George tomorrow and asked him what he thought about that American rocket that was eight million miles out and still going, he'd just say that the Americans were making it up. .or that they were doing it with mirrors. That's George, you just can't get round him. There's a new pension scheme starting up in work, and George wants to know why he can't get in to it ---you'll remember I told you that he was over sixty five! He also keeps in his forge a large blackboard on which he has for the past years written up in chalk all the names of people in the department who have died, retired through illness or just generally disappeared. It's a frightening thing..and I'll swear everybody who passes it casts a nervous eye down to the end name incase George has in some way anticipated things on their behalf. But it isn't really gloomy thinking on Georges part, he's only too willing to explain that these people haven't just Gone On, but have gone on and come right back again in a differnet body or thing...This is George's reincarnation kick, the only trouble is according to him you don't have to come back into another body ---you can start out again as a tree, or a piece of rock or iron. None of this.. "I was the Queen of Sheba once" with George, he'd just as soon convince you that you were a turnip last time round.

About the Illo Idea. It's remarkable, some of you actually did write to me asking for some scene or other. No, I wasn't swamped with requests, but I've gotten a couple. The best one will appear further on in.... I was wondering if I would get any response. For I'll admit, I'm a trifle cynical when it comes to expecting fen to participate in anything.

I remember a few years back, in the Globe, before Lou got all grunchy and people went round sticking daggers into each others backs, there used to be a tall good looking woman of about thirty eightish called Doris Harrison get up to the Globe. She was interested in science fiction, had a fannish outlook and was quite a good conversationalist. She was just starting to write in fmz, and had a column called 'In the Corner' running in Orion. Well she was interested in ESP, especially the telepathy angle. In one of her columns in Orion she ran a small esp experiment. To do with those Rhine cards, the ones with the wavy lines and squares and crosses. On a certain night at a certain time she turned up a series of these, and she asked if people would try and concentrate at the particular time and see what sort of guesses they could come up with on the way the cards came out. She asked if they'd send in and tell her. Well I guess it went out to around a hundred and fifty fen, and I suppose she'd have been satisfied with around forty or fifty replies. She got two or maybe four..... Maybe it broke her faith in fen, I don't know, but she drifted away from the fan scene, and I haven't heard of her for a good few years now. It made me say to myself that I wouldn't ever put myself in the position where I had to sit back and wait for fans to respond to something I'd put out to make the thing go along.

However some of you have taken an interest, and we'll go along with the idea a while more. Don't forget, write in to me if you'd really like to see an illo.

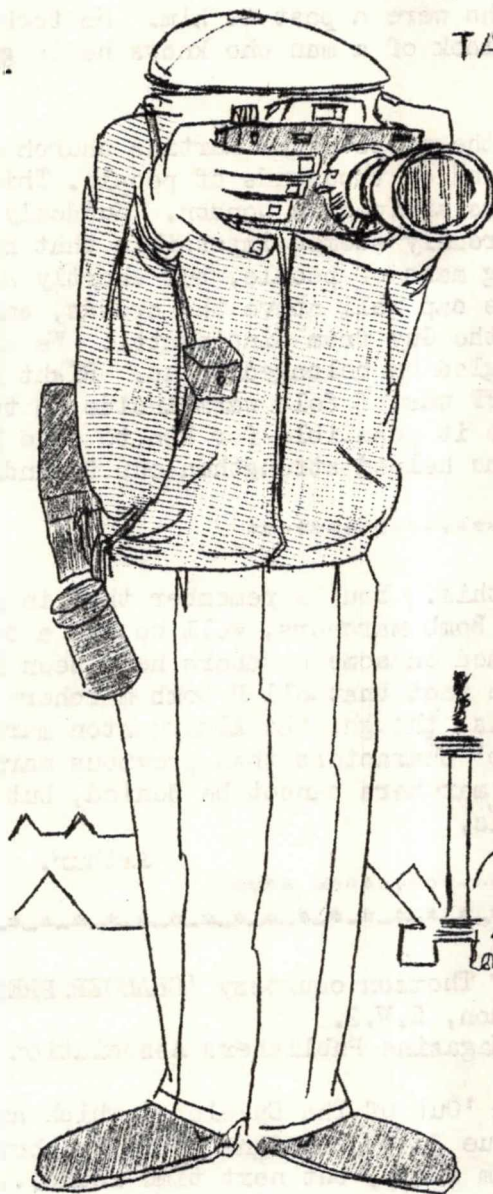
You'll have probably guessed from the construction of this that I'm typing straight on to stencil. I'm sorry if it's reading ragged, and I don't really approve of myself doing it, but the mailing deadline is fast approaching and this is about the only way to get this out in time. I had made some rough notes for Odd Notes, and I'm building all this up on these. Y'know, when I wasn't really participating in putting a magazine into the mailings it always seemed ages between mailings ----- now I have got to produce something the deadline has run right round me at FTL and jumped on my back. Though I guess the Easter convention and some heavy fanac have taken up more than a little time during the past couple of months.

There's one more thing in the rough notes that I might take up. That's this thing that's going round at present of comparing the different Apas. Well I don't really go on this. I can't see much point in it. What are these people trying to show? Holding one apa up against another and saying "See, look at all the pages in this one compared with the other" Phooey. Apas develop along their own lines and are different to each other because of the differing personalities in each apa. And a good thing too. I like Ompa, and to my mind a major point with it is that it hasn't gotten into the nasty habit of filling each mailing up with nothing but page after page of mailing comments and reviews. Ompa seems to be able to specialise in good, well written highly individual magazines without having to pad out each zine with pages of bumf or padding. I don't care how many pages a magazine has, as long as what there are is readable and entertaining. About the only thing I'd deplore in Ompa is a certain amount of laziness by some of us to skip mailings and only produce something when it is needed to save membership. I'll utter a small hoorah for the projected Ompa Anthology and shut down on Odd Notes for this mailing. 'Nuff.

Arthur

WHAT DID WE THINK OF THE TAFF MAN?

ETHEL
LINDSAY



Weeell, he was BIG - all of 6 feet 1½. He had an easy charm of manner that made everyone like him after five minutes conversation.. His American accent - that slow drawl - is one which we British find most fascinating. Not only do we listen with pleasure, but we find it insidious, and I swear it is the most infectious thing. I found myself trying to imitate it, and I judged by the sounds that I heard around me that others were affected in the same way.

He stood up when I came into the lounge of the Cen hotel, looked down at me, and said... "Now I know why they call you wee Ethel", but I was not the only one who looked wee beside him, in fact unless he sat down you got a crick in the neck.

He always seemed to be festooned with cameras, and his pockets bulged with the odd bits of them. He must have shot a million miles of film. He entertained us with a selection of his colour slides, and this was a great hit. We all enjoyed the fan faces, but our greatest admiration was for the wonderful shots he'd taken of Cincinnati. Particularly those taken at night, and some of sheer beauty showing the city lights reflected in the river. What we faunch for now, is to see the ones he took of us.. Let's bring him back next year.....

Amangst the various room parties there was one in Don's room. At this I saw the Shorrocks, the Eric Jones, Ron Bennett, the Buckmasters, Bobbie and Bill Gray, Atom, Jill Adams and many more. They kept coming in till you would have thought there was room for no more. At one point Dave Kyle came in and reared back affecting to be struck by the atmosphere. Don grinned over at him and said "It's all right up here Dave" He had a ready wit, and good sense of humour.

He was bent on a scheme to confound Bob Madle. He had a postcard which said.. "Thanks for the loan of your address book" and he was getting all the femme fans to sign notes on it. Typical was the one Ella Parker signed...

"I shall never forget it.." Real clever that was, as she had never met Bob! We discovered he could tell jokes by the hour. His description of his wanderings around London where all the touts could spot him for an American at half a mile, were hilarious, nothing dull ever seemed to happen to him. We were all slightly ashamed on behalf of London, to discover he could hardly move for these touts who were a pest to him. He took it all amiably, he had the continual amiable look of a man who knows he is going to win the argument anyway.

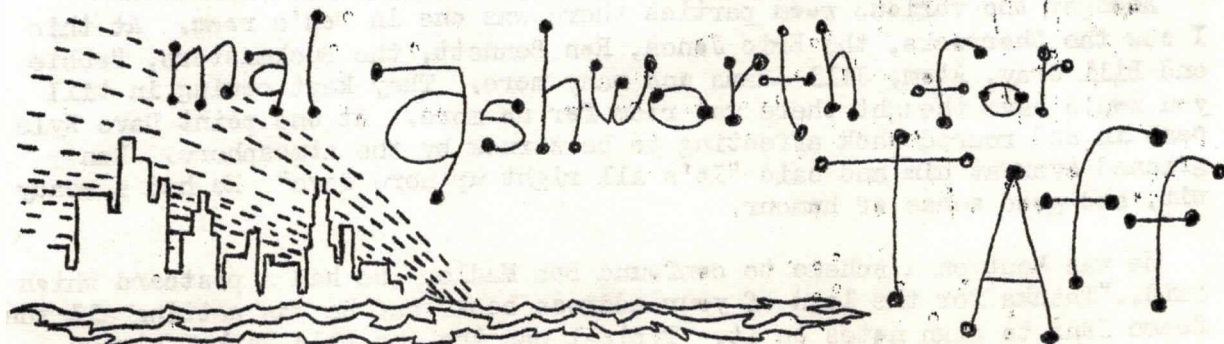
On Easter Monday I was standing on the steps of St Martins church in Trafalger Square looking out onto a crowd of thousands of people. This was the day that the Ban the H Bomb marchers arrived in London. Suddenly Ted Frotyth said "I can see Don Ford" It really seemed impossible that he could single out anyone amongst that seething mass of people, but shortly after I too spotted him. There he was, white cap well above the crowds, ambling over the road, and looking every inch the Guy from Cincinnati. We all waved madly, and I'm sure we all felt glad he belonged to us. Right at that moment I felt what a wonderful thing TAFF was, I felt warm inside to think of all the fans who contributed to make it possible for Don to come here. He was a good ambassador for America, he helped strengthen our friendship.

There's a point I'd like to add on this. You'll remember that in last issue I took Don somewhat to task on H Bomb marchers, well we had a chat on that, and Don said his opinion was formed on some marchers he'd seen in the States, but that he'd go along with the fact that all H Bomb marchers might not be of the type he had seen. On this, though, the Aldermaston march this year did seem to attract more 'Off type' characters than previous marches. The sincerity of the main body of the marchers cannot be denied, but these 'off types' do tend to detract from this.

Arthur.

AtoZ. number Two. Produced by Arthur Thomson courtesy 'CHAUCER PRESS'
17 Brockham House, Brockham Drive, London, S.W.2.
For the 24th mailing of the Off Trail Magazine Publishers Association.

CONTENTS ***** As they come, apart from 'Out Of The Envelope' which are mailing comments and aren't in this issue due to mundane activity above and beyond the call of Ompa. For which I am sorry, but next time round...Yes.



ILLOIDEA



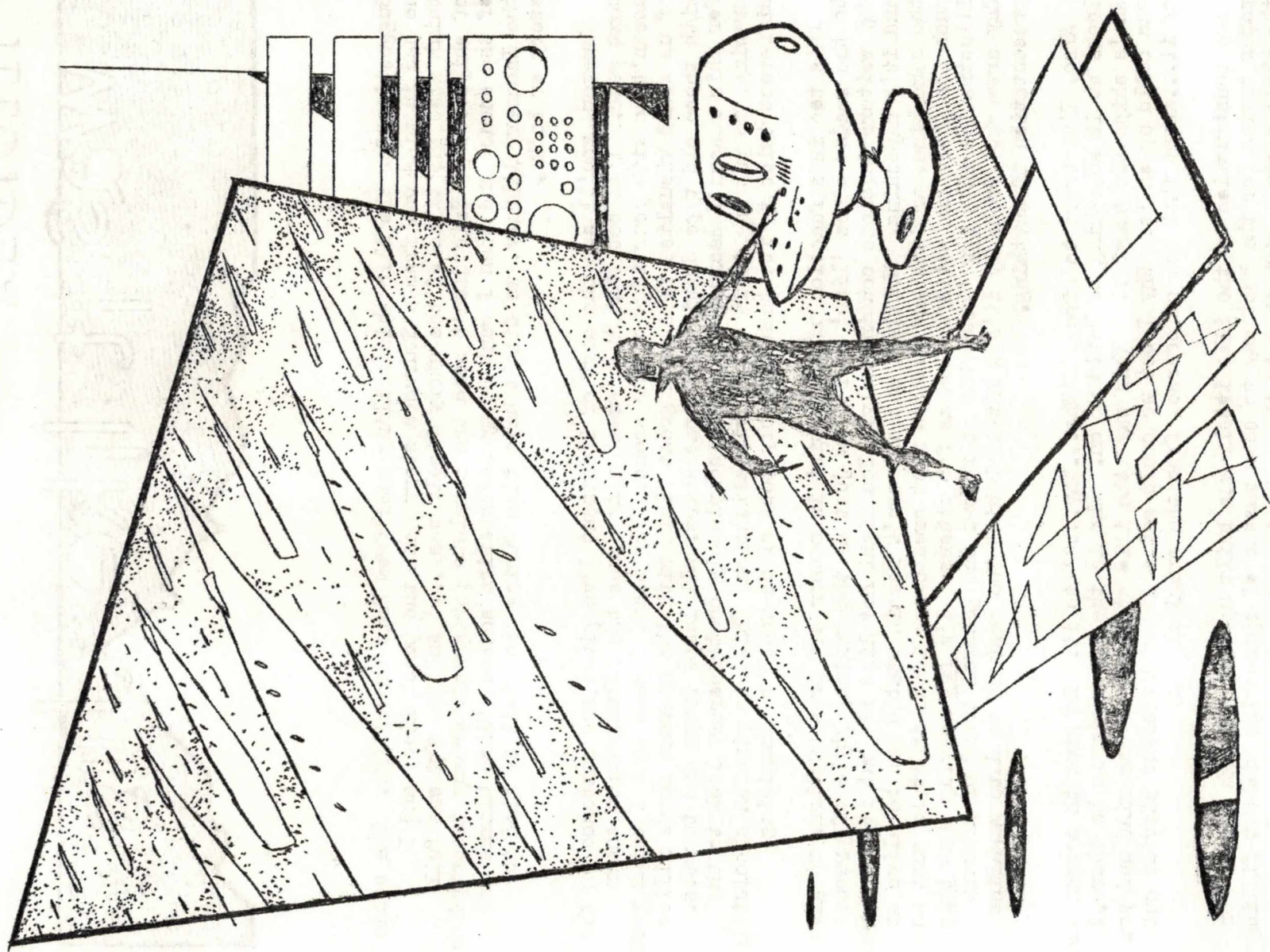
Suggestion for the illo this mailing came from Eric Bentcliffe. The scene he had in mind was from a Sturgeon story and the punch line, and I think also the title of the story itself was....' And the sky was full of ships....' Eric didn't send the complete paragraph, or any description of the scene, and when I went to my information source, Vince Clarke and the Inchmery library, we didn't have time during the visit to find the story or book..

However, you'll see the sort of treatment I've given the sentence on the next page. I'll bet that in a great many cases the illustration shown doesn't go with your idea of the scene. By that, I mean that I think most of us would visualise this as a great plain with the heavens above filled with those old type drawings of spaceships, all lumps bumps and turrets. For this reason I decided to give a completely contemporary look to the drawing, to put in to it a 1960 visualisation. This, to give an absolutely different twist to it, than probably most of us would be imagining.

This too is a function of the artist in modern art presentation, to give to the reader a new 'line' to follow just as the writing style of present day writers develops continuously. You might not like it, but it's progress and it's happening. Writing, and art can't remain static and be alive at the same time, artists and authors must create new ideas in style just as much for their own satisfaction as for others. I'm not saying that this illustration is a new 'line' but it follows the general trend of present day artwork. Probably it's a little behind the most up to date magazine presentation if anything.

Also, I've tried to give a 'Who...Why...?' to it. To give the person who looks at it something to build up on. Who is the man...why is he there? Who's ships are they?... This way, the illo sticks into the mind and you can build up on it. Why I bet we could get a dozen different stories out of it...apart that is, of course, from the original one.

The construction of the illo itself was built up from a rough scrawl on paper trying for the best way to show masses of spaceships without filling the whole picture with them to the exclusion of anything else. The angle is such that it should give a feeling of looking out into the ships as they come up..nearer and nearer, the line work is for effect..thick and thin lines to form a balance.



Recommended Reading



It seems the done thing in Ompa to list a few of the books one has collected, read, or thought highly of. Below, is a small collection of Thomson tastes in the past few months.

I WAS MATRONS ENEMA.

A lively tale of life in one of
London's largest hospitals.

Ethel Lindsay.

AN INDEX OF EARLY AMERICAN INDEXES.

For those who like their facts in
figures.

OH JIM!

Bob Pawlat.

Marriage to an artist does not stop this
sparkling writer from losing her commonsense
outlook on life.

THAR SHE BLOWS.

Dorothy Rattigen.

A youngsters guide to the practical
application of Aqueous Vapour.

H. K. Bulmer.

BRAG YOUR WAY ABROAD.

Reared in the finest card schools in
England, this master of the game goes abroad
and teaches the colonials a thing or three.

R. M. Bennett.

SHAKE BEFORE TAKING.

Mr Locke writes of his experiences as
a lodger in a basement opium den.

George Locke.

GOING GREY IN CHELTENHAM.

The retirement to a famous English
spa does not affect this lively characters
output of words.

Roberta Wild/Grey.

THE IRON PIG.

Read this account of one mans fight against Nationalised Steel.

Archie Mercer.

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WOAD.

Strange habits and customs of natives in Olde Worlde Britain described in vivid prose by an American visitor.

Donald Ford.

HINDU HORRORS.

A fascinating tale of a black hole in Calcutta by a mush travailed Englishman.

John Roles.

POPSIES IN THE PARLOUR.

The author describes vividly the deeds and doings in a large country house on the edge of the Stockport moors.

Eric Bentaliffe.

ERIC THE BENT.

The lives and loves of this fabulous man, and the actual truth of how and where it was bent, as told by a close friend and compatriot.

Terry Jeeves.

I WAS A TEENAGE HORROR MOVIE.

In this book the reader is given an amazingly exciting account of life in a beat U.S.A. Mid-Western city.

George Spencer.

BANANAS UNDER THE BED.

For two year the author monkeyed around in the jungle with Tarzan and came out with some vivid experiences.

M.J.Moorcock.

RAY'S A LAUGH.

A rollicking tale from the Canadian Uranium mines.

Art Hayes.

THEY CALLED ME A FAKEFAN.

A book full of hysterical humour and witty bon mots.

Robert A. Madle.

HAGGIS ON THE HILLS.

An army wife, a border fort, and the natives restless, all combine to make this a tale well told.

Daphne Buckmaster.

COWDUNG ON THE CAMPUS.

A wild three day journey from Pakistan to college in California via most of the vice dens in Europe and the Middle East.

Jim Caughren..

ROCK ME BABY.

A starry eyed story of rock tapping in the northern states of America.

Jean Young.

SWEET SUE.

Legal phraseology tends to mar this attractive account of lives and loves in the shadow of New York skyscrapers.

Belle C. Diatz.

There's a few more books propping up some of the furniture, and, space permitting I'll probably list them next time round.

Arthur.
