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Official Secrets Act!

BIG DEAL 3

from Dave Hale, 12 Belmont Rd., Wollescote, Stourbridge,
Worce., Eng., for OMPA 36 June 1963



'there come's a time, Mr. Makepeace,
when a girl has to abandon a policy
of passive resistance....'

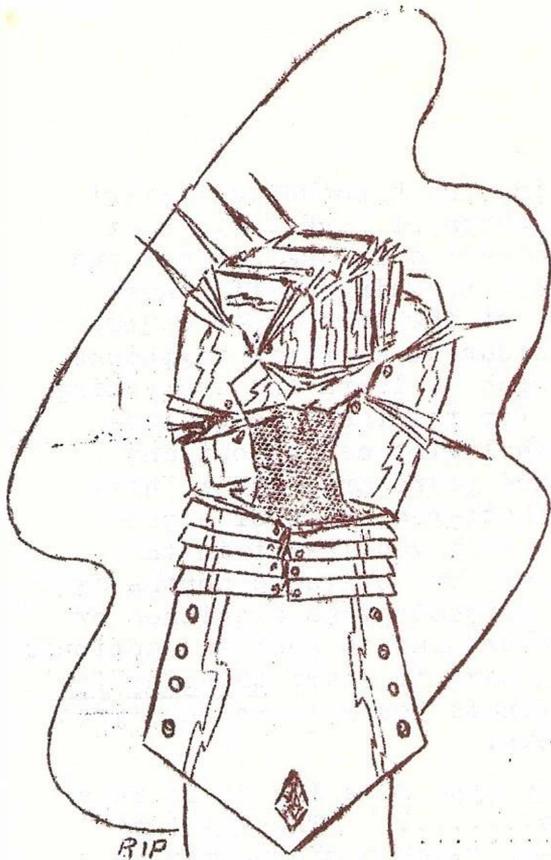
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PHENOTYPE-Dick Eney

Tut Mr. Eney, another postmailed. Phenotype, and coming so soon behind the last one as well. Your previous magazine arrove after the deadline, even after that worthy. institution had been considerably extended for your benefit. So, in a mad flurry we decided to rid ourselves of all the accumulated ~~publs~~ fnz at one foul swoop. Brian had been having a little trouble with the page order in his Kobold (I'd advised him to follow the "to hell with the readers" policy and send the original thru' the mailing - but these postgrads have to keep up appearances) so his mag missed the mailing as well. There were my two things and the spinges which could be sent via the (MPA bundles so they all got sent together. You, I believe, provided the envelopes (you know now anyway), Yourd and myself shared the postage costs. Blame it all on National Productivity Year.

To our surprise people do seem to have made the assumption that we knew what we were doing with that little experiment thing. It was more a compromise than anything else, we had to agree to do something, and that seemed the most innocuous. Ian Logan had wrked out something complicated with little plastic balls, but the rest of us thought this a little too Freudian. I wanted a social survey among the landladies to investigate predudice, but the others poo-poced this as being too ambitious. Maybe it was, but it would have had quite useful side effects. Such as being able to use the department duper (a Gestatner 360) and their supplies of paper and ink. It's a crying shame seeing the secretaries mangle things out on such a marvelous piece of machinery. Honestly, they have no idea what good mimeo can be. To them it's just a method of producing vaguely legible marks on paper. And anyway, I could have put it to better use than exam papers and term sylabuses. Eventually Jane suggested this ping pong ball game, we booked the psychological lab and had a merry afternoons fun. It's fantastic how tiring 500 throws of a table tennis ball can be, I was stiff for days afterwards.

For some reason when you mention stating the hypothesis I start pondering the whole problem of just how our department works. A great many somewhat "queer" people are definitely attracted by the subject and you expect unusual behaviour, but when the whole teaching staff starts going nuts as well...well? For the first year of the three year course we are fed "facts", usually from pretty and colourful American textbooks published almost invariably by McGraw-Hill, which we learn and everything seems simple. It is just a matter of waiting for the facts to coalesce into an integrated whole, then the embryo psychologist can go out and solve the world's problems. The second and third years are, and we have this an indisputable authority - namely the shattered hulks of second and third year students, spent in knocking all that you learnt in the first year to pieces. By the time the finals are two or three months away you are like an empty barrel with no faith in psychology as a science or even as a way of wasting three years. You are brought to such an emotional state that as a last recourse from insanity you have to start thinging for yourself! And in the short time before the finals you relearn the first year course and get a 2-2 or 2-3 if you're lucky.

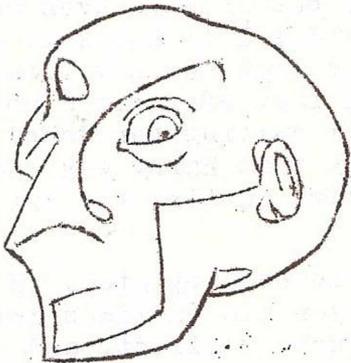
Youth Hostels eh? If these were Jeeves type MC's I'd do it in a couple of lines, but as they're Hale type MC's..... The YHA (YH Association) is a non-profit making type set-up which performs a very worthwhile dual function. It buys, rents, leases etc. old buildings, farmhouses, disused hotels, mountain huts, often in cooperation with the National Trust, and converts them into hostels where members can spend the night. As a lot of the buildings are scheduled as historic monuments it gives them a new lease of life and helps preserve them as a going concern. There are a lot of rules, some of them troublesome like separate male and female dormitories, but most sensible. For your 3/6 (50c) a night you get a bunk type bed and blankets, washing and toilet facilities, also the opportunity to buy cheap meals or the things needed to cook your own food. They open at five in the afternoon and everyone (except the warden) gets thrown out at ten in the morning. The system is supposed to prevent the hostels being used as cheap hotels, and it does work because motorists cannot use the hostels except under special circumstances. In this country there are lots of hostels in the National Trust areas and other beauty spots, such as the Lake District, the West Country and Snowdonia. Our hostels are usually very good compared to other countries, superb when you look at France with hardly any but somewhat poorer by the side of the superb German system. Their hostels are often converted castles and tend to be very luxurious. When the German network is complete they intend to provide hostels every ten miles, easy walking distance. From what I've heard of the US I don't think it has anything comparable to Europe and the Commonwealth, but maybe someone has better information.

Takes me a fantastic three hours from the moment of shutting the gate at my Fallowfield flat to reach my parents house in the village. Mind you, this is on a 1951 Villiers 197, so it's not so slow. I reckon that I can do the 79 miles in under two hours if I get the bike I'd like to have, a BSA 350 Gold Star.

What do you, or any other quasi-warmonger types, think of the book by C. Wright Mills "The Causes of World War III"? Here is someone who has come up with virtually identical conclusions to the CMD, yet who can't be slanged because of associations with peace marches and the like because he hasn't had any connections with suchlike.

AMBLE-Archie Mercer

Lucky you, not bothering to read the constitution, this is being written on a train, so I can't even find a copy to read. Whether I should put forward any thoughts on the subject is something to ponder over. Probably it's all been covered before, as everything in fandom seems to have been, but, publish and be damned. It seems to me that the only function the constitution really performs is to make it clear to anyone who likes practicing brinksmanship just when he gets thrown out, and just how close he can come to this deplorable state. I make this maybe obvious conclusion from the facts that surely anyone joining will have the requisite savvy to participate and above all will want to support the APA. Yes, this does imply a certain obligation to his fellow members to produce "activity", and thus I feel that anyone who knows he cannot fulfill this obligation should resign in preference to being DROPPED owing to lack of activity or non payment of dues. This resignation rule could be enforced by charging two years dues in advance. If a member resigned he would be recouped his next years due - if he was DROPPED his due would be forfeit to the treasury. Obviously there are loopholes, such as the question of whether LoC's could count as activity, through which the fortunately errant few could squirm, but these could be dealt with by the final decision of the three officers. Or if they disagreed or a sufficient proportion of the membership challenged their decision by a wholesale vote.



For collating I now use two large double beds (sort of a double role) and a wallpapering tressel table. Maggie has been helping with the last few mags so it's not the hellish grind it usually is. Never will I forget the time I was collating up and down the Cheslin stairs on a windy day, and someone opened the front door.....

Eventually, when we realised that the board fronted shop opposite the University was in fact the Wardens Office and not a betting shop, we did report her. We were lucky in not seeing the Warden who actually inspected and passed her place as fit for student habitation. Some folk think students are pretty low forms of life, but that bloke was a sheer sadist.

What she may have done is to borrow some of her sisters furniture for his visit, then moved it back after he'd gone....spot checks are the only answer because it's impossible to rely on students reporting bad conditions. Whether she still has students I don't know. The few times I've been past on Bertha (my motor bike) have revealed little signs of life apart from the three plastic Daffs in the bedroom window. Maybe you can tell me if her Northern status is affected by the fact that she was arthritic, suffered from hormone diseases and had a father that died a raving maniac?

What happened to your praiseworthy idea for a fannish get-together under canvas Archie?

You can lug a tent about any day, plus the cooking gear and all the other little things that you have to take to be completely independent. I was put of tents when my ruck sack broke while carrying onesuch, plus all the other little things.

OUTPOST-Fred Hunter

The perfectionist fanzine layout wise, and good reading as well. Ask Colin Freeman whether he thinks that layout or contents are the most important factors in a good fanzine. If you get the same response I did when I posed that question you should be in for quite a time, oh yes. Justified margins are a challenge, if you are going to dummy up the mag beforehand it's very little extra effort to justify the margins. You do miss something though Fred. After typing twenty or so pages with lovely straight margins you've no idea the mental and physical relief that comes from stenciling normal scraggy margins. Big Deal is better than a tranquilizer in this respect, except that it's rather habit forming.

Have a heart Fred. Please no volume numbering system, everytime you see the magazine you have to do a mental calculation which gets more and more complicated as the zine builds up issues.

I know very little about artwork, but this knowledge of my ignorance will not prevent me giving vent to a few thoughts. You're right in saying that now John Curtis isn't much influenced by Atom's style, but even if he was this wouldn't be too great a criticism. Most artists have periods when they are strongly under the influence of so called "masters" (and who is going to dispute the master bit is Arthur's case?). In the past few OUTPOSTS his style has been rather Atomish, though his Bems did have a very discernibly different personality. It says a great deal for his artistic ability that he can utilise so successful a style, but it says even more now that he has developed a style of his own. One day I'll use some of Harry Douthwaite's work I've got stashed away under lock and key...and then I defy you to detect it from Adkins work. In fact often it's more Adkins than Adkins himself! Are you still stencil cutting for John? If you are he's labouring under the same difficulty that Harry was, namely that of not knowing his medium perfectly. If you are cutting the art onto stencil you're doing a hell of a good job of it.

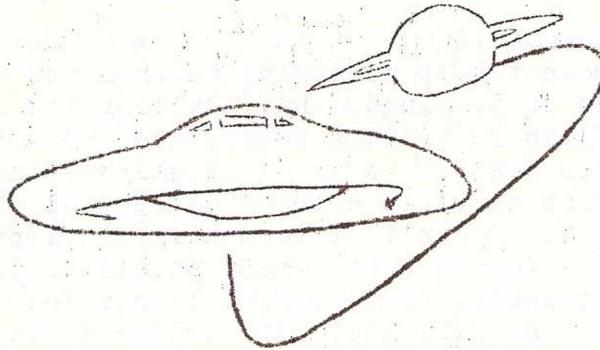
John Has been around long enough to be influenced by Atom. He went to the LXICon two years back and I've certainly given him fanzines which must have contained Atom's work. His technique is now excellent, and sets your magazine off a treat. It is an advantage to have a tame artist to illustrate specific articles. I particulaly like the heading for Output.

Unlike your comment about Big Deal being free from CMD musings, I wish I could say the same for OUTPOST. Maybe I should adopt a policy of passive resistance and smile over your little barbs, but that would probably make you think that I'd not got the courage of my convictions, to use a hackneyed phrase, or that I'd changed my mind. I can gain a little comfort from the fact that there is an explanation for your (and my) vehement attitude...it springs from ignorance and interest. It appears that interest in science (this is political science) runs inversely to the precision of the science. From say utter boredom with maths, to passionate dogma over social and political science. And as the interest grows so will the number of people who concern themselves over the subject. And a little knowledge (lack of precision) is a dangerous thing. You end up with ill informed people shouting at the top of their heads about something they know very little about. You can criticise the CMD itself by using the same argument, but don't forget that the CMD has specific aims and these aims give the movement a purpose which the anti-anti-bomb group lack. You

people often seem more concerned that someone does protest about something than the thing they are protesting about. At the power elite level, the high ups, CND aims are much clearer than anti-CND "policy". The CND tries to suggest a solution which is logically correct, namely the abandonment of weapons which can destroy us, while "you" try to suggest a solution which puts forward that the only way to world safety is by increasing the power and number of these weapons. Even the rank and file CND member has a much clearer picture of what he thinks is best than the average person who thinks "the Government knows best!".

This is a lot to ask Fred, but could you explain how you would set about tackling the international situation?

Your mention to Brian Jordan almost set me off about my impressions of U and the divergence between the popular conception of students and my conception after being one for two whole terms. But, hell, I've preached enough.



T.N.A.S. & S.C.F.- Ted Johnstone

Welcome and all that. This all sounds very fantastic to me, Mike Parry says he wants to study at the Institut des hautes Etudes Cinematographiques (+ a few acutes somewhere), now you say that you are getting a degree in TV and Radio Broadcasting. Is there no end to things you can get degrees for in the US and elsewhere?

Thanks for the comments on the movies, we always find it interesting to see what other people think of films we've been to. Dunno whether you find the same, but it seems very easy to approach saturation point with films, much the same as sf. For example, yesterday I asked Maggie how many films we'd seen in the past two or three months. Ten minutes later she'd come up with a list that literally shocked me. It ran to over 30 items and included such extremes as "Manook of the North" and "Les Quatre Cent Coups" to "Revenge of Frankenstein" and "Thousand Eyes of Dr. Mabuse". In between these were some superb films such as "Phaedra" and "Lolita" plus such light items as "The Devil's Eye", "Dr. No" and "Corridors of Blood". My biggest disappointment has been "Lonliness of the Long Distance Runner", the adaption of Sillitoe's short story, and my greatest surprise was to find that "Life of Adolf Hitler" both unsensational and factual but also most inspiring.

Yet while I like the cinema very much I can safely say that I'm not one of the pallid, rickety "cinema is a way of life" crowd. They seem to subsist on a diet of peanuts and orange squash and would be content if life itself could be a sequence of celluloid frames with themselves as the central characters. Shame.

This thing you mention, "The Day Mars Invaded the Earth" sounds much like a serial the BBC put out last year. The Big Haul, or such like it was called and concerned something from out there, outside the protecting belts of radiation. A something which manifested itself as a signal on radio receivers and had the disturbing habit of making people vanish and other people die. The tv broke down before the last episode and I was denied the pleasure of seeing the scriptwriter trying to talk his way out of the mess he'd gotten everyone into.

Didn't you know that teddy boys and students are the most irresponsible section of British Society? They're not a shade on the black magic crowd who've been opening graves in London cemeteries lately.

SIZAR-Bruce Burn

Your mailing comments are excellent by any standards, but I can't help wondering whether you have different standards to me in regards to 5, Kingdon Rd. Calling its inmates "conservative" is like saying that Alan Dodd likes Nazis, and anyway, I can imagine you mulling over a word to describe Nell and finally typing "companion" with a ruefull grin. At least there is nothing outlandish about you as there is in "The L-Shaped Room". Doesn't it seem a little improbable that among the quarter/third of a London house there should be prostitutes, both male and female homosexuals, nymphomaniac landladies and pregnant french girls?* *Jordan from the Midlands? If Burnley is in the Midlands then some of the current comments about Northerners are right round the geographical bend.

I know some people living in England's Lane N6 not far from you who don't do any bed swapping and are further distinguished by living in a room far larger than your old apartment at Warrington Crescent!

The explanation for your creative processes in "Coeur de Lion" is fascinating. It has been said by so called "literary people" that the deliberate decision to create an effect and then to do so is merely a subjective experience of the, actually, unconscious creative process. They said this about Poe, his tales and moreover his poems and the "Philosophy of Composition", and would probably say the same about you. That paragraph of yours reads very much like Poe trying to explain his methods.

Don't you think that if a disalignment nuclear policy were followed by an established political party people like Bobbie would shut up? Does she know that for some time it was official labour policy to abandon nuclear weapons and that it was only voted out of the constitution because of a trade union block vote?

You're right again regards Coventry Cathedral. It is magnificent, with a sense of life and humour all its own (the Sutherland tapestry is so grotesque and unrealistic that you have to smile to avoid being shocked). The Babbistry window is utterly fantastic when the sun shines through it.