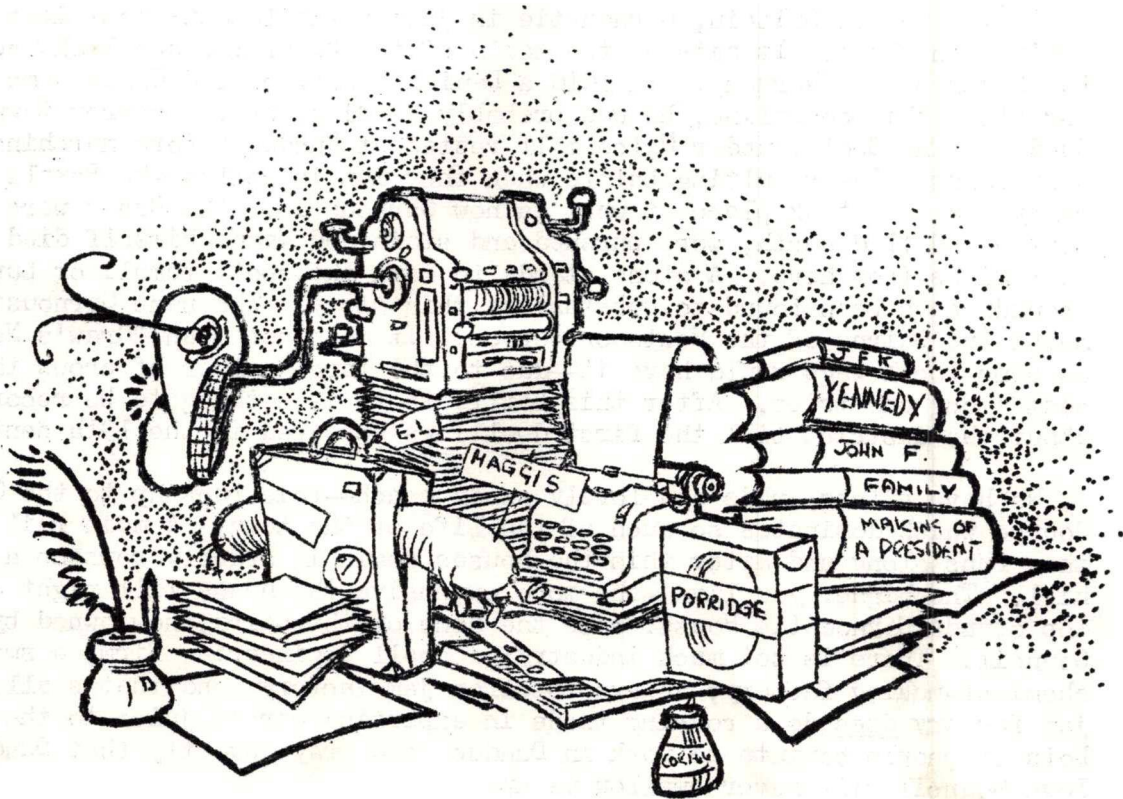


Boathooks



BLEATHERINGS, No 1

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For the 125th Mailing of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association.

I always like to avoid confusion - so let me start with an explanation of my title. I started my fanzine career with an OMPazine called SCOTTISHE which contained a column called NATTERINGS. SCOT later acquired another column called NIBBLINGS. Then I started another fanzine called HAVERINGS. I withdrew SCOTTISHE from OMPA and it became a genzine. The title of BLEATHERINGS was introduced as a title for OMPA--but saw only one issue there before OMPA faded into limbo. Not wanting to waste the title I am now using it for my FAPazine.

In NATTERINGS - I natter; in NIBBLINGS - I nibble at a subject; in HAVERINGS - I haver....and in BLEATHERINGS - I blether.

I trust this is now crystal-clear to you all.

I have started to write this whilst I am at home in Carnoustie, Scotland where my widowed Father lives. I get home for about four weeks out of the fifty two per year; the remainder being spent in Surbiton. Recently I have noted a rather odd phenomena. It is that whilst in Surbiton I can clearly visualise myself in Carnoustie - when I am here the whole of Surbiton, the Royal Eye Hospital, Courage House seems like a dream. I cannot visualise myself there and the 'Ethel' of Surbiton seems like a sort of ghost to the 'Ethel' of Carnoustie. It really ought to be the other way round.

On the map of Britain, Carnoustie is just a little dot; sometimes it isn't even shown. It sits at the mouth of the River Tay and looks across the North Sea to Germany. In 1010 a Danish leader called Camus came raiding along this coastline; he was probably heading for the nearby town of Dundee. The Scots, under Malcolm 11 rested at Dundee before marching to meet Camus. The resulting battle when they met is called the Battle of Barry and this took place at what is now Carnoustie. The Danes were beaten and fled North, were pursued and slain and Camus himself died only four miles from here. A stone stands to mark the spot; tumuli or burial grounds have been found to substantiate this story. The name Carnoustie means the Cairns of the Hosts or Heroes. It does not mean "Craw's Nestie" as some local wags would have it--due to the large number of crows that nest among our trees. After this battle there is nothing to be recorded about the district till the first dwellings appeared in the 13th century.

We have a long, wide and lovely sandy beach--this runs up to the Golf Course which dominates so much of the life of the town. A main rail line then runs along and after this the houses begin in orderly rows up a slight hill. The higher you live -the more expensive the house till right at the top stands Carnoustie House, once the home of the Laird, now owned by the Council. There is not much industry; a small engineering firm, a small chemical-making factory; an even smaller jam factory; and that's all. The jam factory does do a roaring trade in exporting carrot juice to the USA. Lots of people commute to work in Dundee; and pray devoutly that Dundee Town Council will never swallow us up!

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Carnoustie has been in the news this year because it hosted the Open Golf Championship. It was won by a South African golfer. Since then the local paper has been full of heated discussion arising out of complaints from the American competitors. As I see it - our course is one of the authentic ones..built to use the terrain..and not sculptured out as (I gather), American courses are. This course is right on the North Sea; golfers can never be sure how the fierce winds that sweep in will affect their play; it can rain too..and the bunkers are fiendish. The rough is really rough. As if that were not enough; there is the Barry Burn which ambles backwards and forwards across the course and is a constant hazard. As Carnoustie sees it---complaints only come from pampered Americans! The town itself is golf daft; boys go out to learn the game as soon as they can hold a club. This does not mean that you will see Carnoustie names among big golf winners. Any boy who is good at the game at all goes on to become a golf coach; they are scattered up and down the globe showing other people how to play.

Time in Carnoustie is a vastly different commodity to that found in the London area. It usually takes me a couple of days to remember to slow down. I have to accustom myself to the fact that noone is in a hurry. In the shops one must patiently wait till the customer ahead is practically bowed out the door. Noone would dream of shortening a conversation because another customer was waiting. As I walk along the High Street I become aware that I am walking twice as fast as anyone else; and that I had better slow down before someone asks me where the fire is at. The normal gait is that of a stroll with many stops on the way for a chat. It isn't polite to just pass with a mere 'Hello'. Were you following behind me as I go; you might wonder why I seem to have so many acquaintances so much older than myself. (I should take it most unkind of you if you did not wonder). Well- the ladies I meet are all my Mother's old cronies---for years now I spent all my time at home with her. I come home and tell my Father that I've met all the "old wifies" in Carnoustie. He grins at that..when he is on his own he shops at the nearest store..and goes in early just to avoid these "wifies".

People here are naturally very conservative, politically and in every other way. Should anyone be 'Labour'; they keep very quiet about it. The old snobbish idea that 'Labour' is only for the 'working classes' lingers on; but as Dundee advances inexorably to meet us, this should change. Another thing about which everyone is conservative is the weather. Scottish people are accustomed to cold weather; they dress for it in winter, and face the summer with the notion that 68F is a hot day. In London a blink of sun brings all the girls out in their summer dresses. In Carnoustie we are having an unprecedented heat-wave, but the ladies are still wearing their tweed coats and I am the only one prancing along in summer style.

The town seems to drowse in the sun, time slows and days are long. Things I would ordinarily do in half an hour now take hours; and I have almost slowed to a stop. I walk out the road to buy a half a pound of butter (just an excuse to go out) and retrace my steps as my Mother did. I sit in the sun and read another book, Dad comes home from the bowling green, we eat and sit before the tv. I'd better leave the rest of this till I return to a brisker atmosphere!

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I've just been reading the Hugo winner--LORD OF LIGHT by Roger Zelazny. I did not approach this book very enthusiastically as I had heard that it was fantasy not science fiction. Also, my knowledge of the Hindu gods is very slim; Kali being the one I know most about and that mainly due to my having read some of the books of John Masters. I have a pretty fair notion of the tenets of Buddhism; but it is a rather scrappy notion. I began to read because I was curious to see why LORD OF LIGHT had won the Hugo.

As is usual with Zelazny I found the writing good; and a few hints here and there as to the background kept me going in order to puzzle the whole thing out. Now, if I have got it right, the "First" were mutants who came to this planet from Earth. They then set up a 'heaven' and ruled over the lesser humans. Each of the First set themselves up as a god - one as Kali; one as Brahmin etc. Apart from their mutant powers, they also had great scientific knowledge to call upon; add the ability to reincarnate into a new body--and they really were gods! The story is concerned with Sam, one of the gods, who decided to fight the others and advance the humans. His struggle to do so is the main plot.

I can quite see how it won the Hugo; here is a science fiction base with all the flourishes of fantasy allowable. Being contrary, I would rather have read the story of how the mutants came to the planet and why; how they set up their heaven; how they conquered the natives. I should have liked to have known how the humans got there--perhaps they were to have been colonists and the mutants were the crew? In other words-- I would have liked the science fiction story and could well live without the clever weavings on the subjects of Hinduism and Buddhism.

It seems to me that, in the States, fantasy is really booming. On all sides one can see this--the success of Tolkien; the Society of Creative Anachronism; the costumes that are chosen for the Costume balls; the growing liking for the works of Georgette Heyer. A full-fledged Heyer fandom should burgeon any day now. It is no coincidence that there is a fanzine devoted to THE AVENGERS; I confidently predicted this some time ago. How many sf stories have I read lately that are mere cloakings for a tale of the middle ages? And, oh how many that have a slave or feudal structure to the society? Write a story about witches and warlocks and you are home and dry. Magic swords and Eldrics and Edwins and you've got a sure seller! What does it all mean?

In my last SCOT, Penelope Fandergast writes about "The American Dream" and bemoans its loss. I confess that I never felt like this myself. Before I encountered fandom I was, if anything, slightly anti-American. Only my widened reading of American history altered my views. My growing contacts with American fans helped to explain many things about Americans that had puzzled me. So, I lost the slight anti-Americanism but, I hope, never lost the ability to distinguish between the Americans I knew and "Americans" as a whole. Of course, having the chance to travel the breadth of the land was a great help. Most Europeans cannot conceive the vast distances involved and how, because of this, one part of the US can be so different from another.

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Lately it seems that Americans themselves have felt the way Penelope did about "The Dream". So many seem to look around and not like what they see. I could give you an argument about that if you were an anti-American..but that is not my point. My point is—if you feel like this it is so nice to dream of days gone by. So comes the interest in the middle ages. Naturally those dreams mean that the dreamer is either a prince or a princess—or a god! I have not yet heard of anyone going to a costume parade as a scullery maid or a pig-boy.

Europeans are less likely to take up such enthusiams; there are always the traditional festival days in which one can cavort in costume. Though, I will admit we have our imbecilities too—there is that shop in Oxford St that sells "Western" clothes complete to the very chaps. Of course if you want to come back at me; you could always say that it was only with the loss of our "Empire" that our young folk began to indulge in such fancy dress for everyday wear.

Mmm...don't be thinking now that I dislike the works of Heyer. She is one of my favourite authors. Been re-reading her stories for ages; but it took an American femme-fan to go so far as to make 'Ratafia' and serve it at a con.

***** MAILING COMMENT *****

ON THE 124th FAPA MAILING.....

Null-F 45:White: I've been very amused at your remarks on the "back-scratching" between Aldiss and Harrison; and I do think you are quite right to point these things out. Have you ever noticed that you never see any British SF author criticise Mike Moorock? I see you have caught up on our THE PRISONER. I hope they find you a better ending than they did us...a very fascinating and frustrating experience.

Pong is a four-letter word 3:Tucker: I've just been re-reading THE LINCOLN HUNTERS. Must confess that at first reading (10 these many years ago), I did not value it much. I have read a lot of US history since then; so - second time round I was much more appreciative, and was very glad of this extra information.

Kim Chi 12:Ellington: How long is it since you promised to explain the sign of the pierced tammy to me? Did you know that the Smothers Bros show went down here like lead and was taken off hastily? General verdict was that it was very weak and not very funny. I wish you could see our Alf Garnett who says all the horrid things that people usually whisper. But we are all enjoying Rowan and Martin. I gather from your remarks on relief that you have never been in a place where there was literally no work. Can you conceive of such a thing? I grew up in a town like that.

Purple Haze:Lichtman: I don't follow the reasoning behind your objections to a "gun-registration law". We have this and what do we lose in the way of

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freedom that you have? Do you think if your police were unarmed(as is ours) that you would have less fear?

Moonshot:Moffatt: As one who never gets to vote on the next con site--yet who regularly joins the Worldcons, I am all in favour of your postal voting idea. The day is not yet in sight when other countries will want to take the world con away from the US entirely..but it will come. Having the con abroad every fourth year ought to accustom you all to the idea.

Omaha 2:Stiles: You know, I think I will get on a lot better and feel a lot better if I decide that your description of the interrogation over FAPA is only fiction!

Horib:Lupoff:My thanks for your welcome..and I liked the sf reviews.

Day Tripper:Main:I am fascinated by your idea that you are "freer" than such as I. I just don't buy that. We both have to work for a living; beyond the demands of that in what way have you more freedom? It is one of those abstract words, for one thing, that can mean anything. I take it that your idea of paradise is back to the land --oh poof! Don't you see anything odd in writing that "thousands of young Americans" go to Canada to "try and do their own thing" - along with the statement that the Government of Canada has "an air of rottenness about it"?

Loki 12:Hulan: As a almost non-stop smoker please convey my appreciation of his article to Dave Locke. So far in this mailing.. the funniest thing has been his tale of ^Fred.

Eney: Your questionnaire made my hair stand on end..but Mao's thoughts was very funnee.

Warhoon 24:Bergeron:This gives me two copies of your zine..but the other will not be wasted. I'll pass it onto Ella Parker who was lamenting not seeing it.

The Rambling FAP:43:Calkins. I get rather a queer feeling seeing you here. All these long years ago since I've last heard from you..and here you are rambling away in FAPA. It's really true then that FAPA is the elephants' graveyard of fandom!

Rubber Frog:Eklund:I get a bit of a twinge reading of your eager desire to enter FAPA. I've been on the waiting list for five years; and I'm afraid I have not been looking forward to it very much at all. For one thing, I felt I had enough fanac on my plate already and was in no hurry to add to it. Way back when I went on the waiting list, I was assured it would take at least five years. I was quite pleased as I calculated that by that time I would be glad to retire into FAPA in the traditional manner. Only it hasn't worked out that way at all. I am still interested in putting out my genzine SCOTTISHE and the bimonthly HAVER. Every time I think of dropping the latter, a letter comes in from a neo fan which shows me how useful it still is to many of them. Of course there is another part to be thought on - I enjoy very much the letters and zines that come in as a

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result of this fanatic. I don't really fancy restricting my fanatical contacts to the FAPA membership. Some of them, of course, are very good friends already. Topping the list are Rick Sneary and Len Moffatt; of all the fans I met whilst over in the States they have been the most faithful correspondents.

When I visited Len Moffatt he gave me two books which led me onto new interests. They were "Advice and Consent" by Allen Drury; and "The Making of the President, 1960" by Theodore White. The first made me understand - for the first time - the workings of the American political system; and the second made me a deeply partisan follower of Kennedy.

There is a small number of British people who find the American political system a fascinating thing to follow; and I joined their ranks. Of course it was a bit simpler then; there were the Democrats and the Republicans and it was all rather like watching the progress of a favourite team. Now, things are much more difficult. I do hope the new realignment of the voters will not lead to a proliferation of parties as was the case in France. One can remember, before De Gaulle, the monotonous rise and fall of the various short-lived governments.

Maybe if I had known where the present of the White book would lead me; I would have drawn back! From that one book has grown my Kennedy collection that now comprises 30 hard-cover books and 44 paperbacks. Then there are the records and tape-recordings to say nothing of the magazine and newspaper cuttings. I have become a completist on this subject and am anxious to buy or exchange for anything I do not yet possess. So I have put my list of books on stencil and will enclose copies with this. Should you spot anything I do not have - let me know your price!

A favourite poem— Moody Reflections by Phyllis McGinley

"When blithe to argument I come,
Though armed with facts, and merry
May Providence protect me from
The fool as adversary,
Whose mind to him a kingdom is
Where reason lacks dominion,
Who calls conviction prejudice
And prejudice opinion.

Yes, when with dolts I disagree,
Both sic and also semper,
May my good angels succor me
And help me hold my temper.
But strength from what celestial store
Shall keep my head from bending
When I behold what I abhor—
The snob, the bigot, and the bore—
Wielding their witless cudgels for
The cause that I'm defending."

From The Love Letters of Phyllis McGinley.

Kennedy Collection, Ethel Lindsay, October, 1968

Hard cover

Abel Elie: The Missiles of October and Dear Senator Kennedy
Adler Bill: The Kennedy Wit also in PB
Assoc. Press: Triumph & Tragedy
Bishop Jim: A Day in the Life of Pres. Kennedy also in PB
Fay Paul: The Pleasure of his company
Gardner Gerald: Robert Kennedy in New York
Hilsman Roger: To Move a Nation
Kennedy John F.: A Nation of Immigrants.
Kennedy Edward: Decisions for a Decade
Kennedy Robert F.: Just Friends and Brave Enemies
To Seek a Newer World also in PB
Laing Margt.: Robert Kennedy
Lowe Jacques: Portrait, JFK
Manchester Wm.: Portrait of a President also in PB
Death of a President also in PB
McCarthy Joseph: The Remarkable Kennedys also in PB
Salinger Pierre: With Kennedy
Salinger & Vancour: A Tribute to John F. Kennedy
Saunders Doris: The Kennedy Years and the Negro
Schaap Dick: R.F.K.
Shaw Mark: The John F. Kennedys
Schlesinger Arthur: Kennedy or Nixon?
Schlesinger Arthur: A Thousand Days
Schwarz Urs: John F. Kennedy
Shaw Maud: White House Nanny
Shannon Wm. V.: The Heir Apparent
Sidey Hugh: John F. Kennedy
Sorenson Theodore: Kennedy
Thimmesch & Johnson: Robert Kennedy at 40
Toledano Ralph: RFK The Man who would be President also in PB