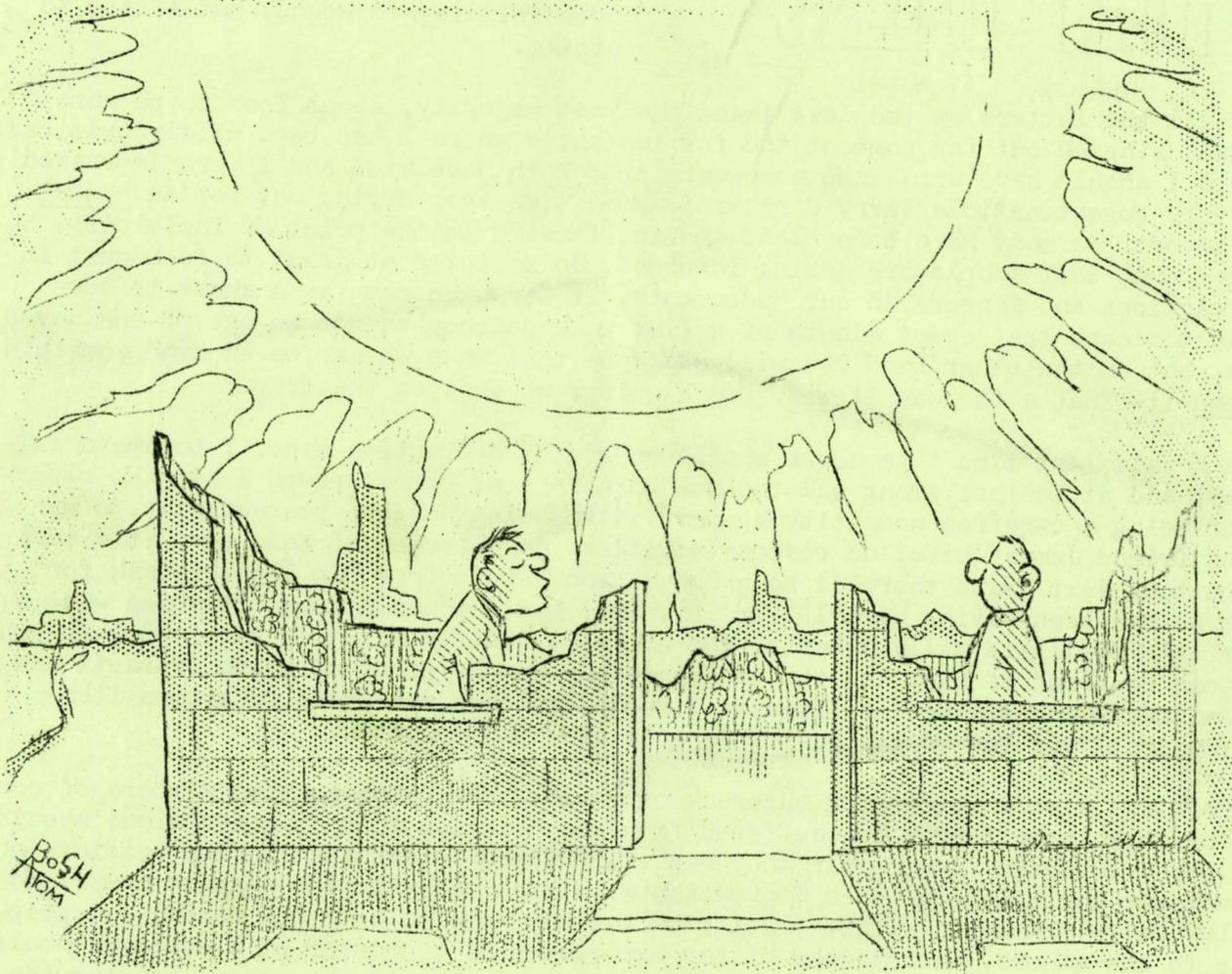


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"Well, if it keeps up it'll certainly shorten the Winter."

Inside Coverage

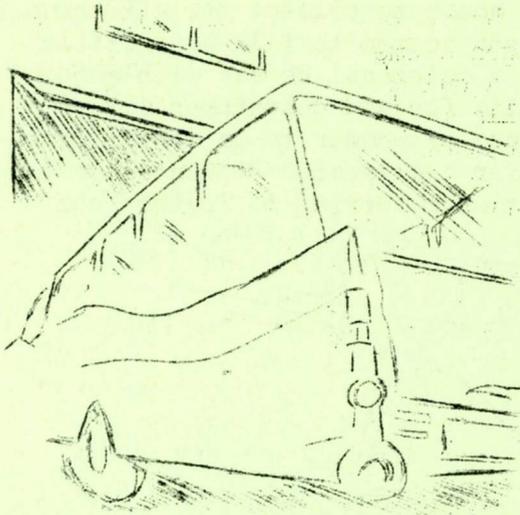
WALT WILLIS

Madeleine accents responsibility for the letter section this time, except for the foot of p.22 which I found caught in the typewriter and put out of its misery. There aren't many letters on the last issue, partly because you didn't write many (sniff) and partly because my Joint Editor and I have been busy refurbishing our joint. Any piece of keen wallpaper, hibernating woodworm (that's one in Celtic twilight sleep) or plastic furbish you may find enclosed is a Genuine Free Souvenir of Oblique House. Now we're getting this issue out rather hurriedly in case the postmen carry out their threat to stop work. Though so far the motto of the Civil Service unions seems to have been "Willing to wound, but afraid to strike."

Of all the letters on the last issue the vast majority, about four to be more precise, singled out for comment the few instances where I had been mildly critical. Perhaps I should have explained somewhere that both Madeleine and I were impressed by a very cogent article Terry Carr wrote some time ago, crying out for an honest trip report: so many have been bland and inoffensive to the point of insipidity, he pointed out, that people are losing interest. So we tried at least to be honest in our reactions and sincere in our judgements. It may have come as a shock to some people to learn that every minute of a five week journey cannot be one of unalloyed bliss, but on the other hand you will all know that when we say we enjoyed something we mean it. That's the way it was. Don't worry, we enjoyed the trip.

As I said last time I've never wholly enjoyed a convention since I became a celebrity; and at Easter, among all the new BSFA fans at Peterborough I had the pleasure of being a carefree nonentity again...introducing neofans respectfully to my famous friend James White, no responsibilities, no speeches. I tell you, it's soft at the bottom. Next issue there'll be a Convention Report from Bob Shaw, a task for which he has been saving himself for 14 years, but meanwhile I must mention what a superb TAFF delegate Wally Weber proved himself. Seattle and American fandom in general can be proud of him. And the professionals can be proud of Leigh Brackett and Ed Hamilton who registered an immense personal success and whose programme item (their first) was one of the best I've seen at any Convention.

There was also a refreshing outbreak of sanity. For 25 years some members of convention organising fandom has suffered from the delusion that sf conventions should have press coverage. Apparently they have this fixed belief that anyone reading in a newspaper any reference to a Convention will dash madly to the nearest newsstand and buy every promag in sight, pausing on the way home to take out postal subscriptions to the others. Whereas the bitter experience of a quarter of a century should have convinced them that the only purchase likely to be made by anyone reading the average newspaper report of a convention would be a bargepole for not touching fans with. Well at last it has. On the second day of the Convention word went round that there was a Reporter present, but that it was all right, nobody was talking to him. Sure enough, everyone he approached told him politely but firmly that this was a private function. Not only that but at the next Convention session Chairman Tony Walsh, a young fan who seems to have been born with mutant sensibilities, issued a Public Warning. So the reporter sat alone in the bar writing his piece out of his head. No doubt it was just as accurate as any other newspaper report but it did no harm because it didn't get published. Which just proves what I've always claimed, that what Convention Committees need is not a Publicity Officer but a Security Officer. Never, apparently, more so than at present....



About five o'clock, after a few farewell photographs, the Grennells and Willises strolled along to the garage where Dean had stored his car. All our baggage had, by some strange and magical means, been already transported there and put in the car. This was a possibility which would not have occurred to me, because in my case it is never possible to store baggage for a trip in the car without deep thought and employing my esoteric knowledge of the more intimate recesses of the Morris Minor. However when I saw Dean's station wagon glide out of the garage like a great glassed-in aircraft carrier I realised the problem had been no more difficult than that of getting a pint into a quart pot. Where the ordinary huge American car finally gave up and dwindled away into fins, this one continued steadfastly on into the distance.

Jean & Madeleine & I had been waiting on the narrow sidewalk of the garage entrance while Dean completed his negotiations, and piled hastily in so as not to interrupt the urgent commerce of Chicago. I examined the interior, awestruck. I had never thought it was possible to feel agoraphobia inside a car. "Anyone for tennis?" I thought wildly. In a car this size, I realised, one really needed that power-operated rear window. It saved quite a long walk. Naturally I am a sports car fan myself, having been brainwashed by Boyd Raeburn for one thing, and for another being unable to afford anything more like a Detroit barge than a Morris Minor, a car to which the sports car fraternity accord a patronising approval. But the wealth of gadgetry which Dean demonstrated to our unsophisticated astonishment was as irresistible to a science fiction fan as the interior of a spaceship. It had power-assisted everything, the only such mechanism not strange to us being the power-operated rain for cleaning the windscreen.

To be specific, it was a 1962 blue Oldsmobile estate car and, if you promise not to tell Boyd Raeburn, I would rather have had it than a sports car, providing of course a small oil well came with it. To use it in Ireland I would probably have had to have it drawn by a team of bullocks, as in "Things To Come".

Dean threaded his way knowledgeably northwards through a web of freeways and turnpikes (is there not a generic American term for what we call motorways?) and briefly reached 100 mph on the Tri-State for our benefit. Here, I noticed, the minimum speed limit was 40mph. If it hadn't been for the evidence of the speedometer I'd never have known we were doing the ton: on this road in this car the experience was less impressive than doing the 12 cwt's in my Minor on an Irish road. It was all rather like that famous opening scene in "The Marching Morons".

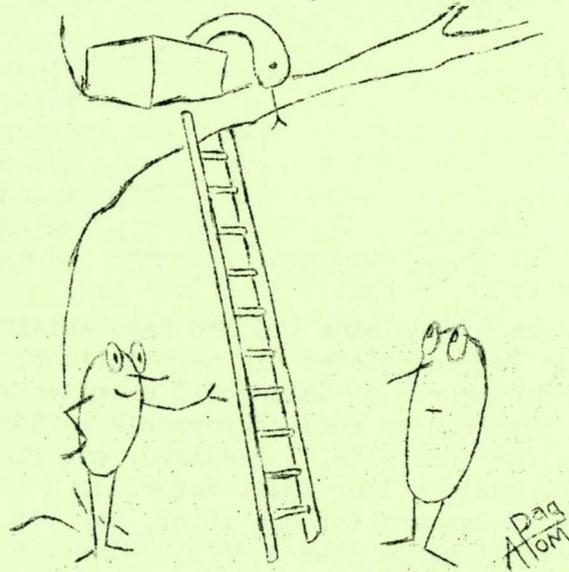
After an hour or so we stopped for a meal at a service area called The Lake Forest Oasis, where the restaurant was built on the bridge over the road. It was impressively vast and modern, but it reminded me unexpectedly of the Middle Ages. It hasn't been since then that people habitually built shops and inns on bridges, and it's a style that has been absent far too long. There is something essentially relaxing in the contemplation of activity for which one has no responsibility, whether it be the sea or a river, or merely watching men dig a hole in the road. It doesn't do to underrate the Middle Ages, even in their urban traffic schemes. In towns like Chester, for instance, with their second floor level pedestrian sidewalks and shopping arcades, they attained complete pedestrian/vehicle segregation, a concept originated by Leonardo da Vinci and on to which we are only now haltingly trying to return.

Somewhere near Milwaukee we entered the ordinary road system for the first time This

was more the America I remembered....a bewildering complexity of traffic signs in a conflagration of neon. We called at Dean's brother's house to collect the six Grennell children, after which even the Oldsmobile station wagon seemed to fill up a little, and eventually arrived at Maple Avenue, Fond du Lac, a quiet cul de sac with wooden houses. Ten people got out of the car and the Grennells fed and despatched six of them to bed with a kindly efficiency which was a source of wonder to us mere dilettante parents. It proved that even a man who could offer a suggested Hyphen cover cartoon involving a snake in a cage up a tree and a caption referring to "python pen ladders" could still be a good husband and father.

Tuesday 4th September

In the Willis family I am the early riser, and at the crack of 10am I stole downstairs to prowls about the silent house. Only to find that everyone had been tiptoeing around for hours except Dean, who had been processing Convention photographs in the basement since 7am. He had so many, as he pointed out, that all he needed was to string them together to get a silent movie of the entire convention. In the intervals of giving unskilled help and eating a light but protracted breakfast I roamed the fabulous basement, "OPEN," as a notice proclaimed, "TO THE PUBLIC ONLY". It was the room of a man who does everything well. It was thronged with the apourtenances of three separate interests..."hobbies" seems too dilettante a word...at all of which Dean was better than a professional, and it contained no junk. Even the four refrigerators were in use, if only as storage cabinets, and everything was in shipshape order without being obsessively neat. This was just as well, because the combination of fandom, firearms and photography seemed an explosive one. Fortunately perhaps fireworks are banned in Wisconsin. A propos of which, Dean told me that once when he was blasting away at beer cans in the city dump, a police car drew up and two cops raced up to him. Dean showed him his smoking .45 and they said, "Oh all right. We thought you were letting off fireworks."



While the mysterious alchemy of photography was proceeding Dean and I wrote a long joint letter to Chuck Harris, filling him in on the Chicon and reassuring him that the world would probably continue to exist... "Well, here we are freeloading with the Gunsport BNF. As you will have noticed, the world did not come to an end on Saturday. No blinding flash, except from Dean's electronic nova-producer, followed the historic meeting---just a sort of warm glow."

Some time during that long quiet morning I went out for a little walk by myself. The air was cool and the grass green and moist, like Ireland. But at the next house, the road and the resemblance ended. There was no fencing between the houses, and no fences between them and the stream which separated them from a playing field. Why, here was valuable land lying around loose, with no indication as to whom it belonged to. It was a sight that was almost shocking to one from a country where every square inch of land has been fought over for hundreds of years and is accounted for meticulously on centuries of musty documents, and where no man can rest easy unless the exact extent of his holding is circumscribed for all to see.

Back at the house for lunch, and for photographs in the garden including one of Madeleine and me reading the Flying Saucer Review with contemptuous expressions while a Grennell-manufactured flying saucer, formerly a Ford hubcap, hovered over our heads. ...and later as that long lazy morning-after extended imperceptibly into the afternoon, a leisurely visit to a supermarket. This was the first average suburban American supermarket Madeleine had seen and she walked along the endless aisles in a sort of trance. I remember reading that psychiatrists have found that women do in fact sometimes fall into a slight hypnotic daze in these places: maybe they should be called stupormarkets.

Madeleine and I meant to pay the check as a slight gesture of our appreciation to the Grennell hospitality, so we included some ice cream and sherbet for the children. But then we found that Dean was buying the whole month's groceries so we didn't, and felt a little guilty about having been so generous with his money. However it was now on to the Post Office. I had called in the Fond du Lac Post Office in 1952 to mail a parcel, and when Dean entered fandom he was thrilled to hear of this and created the legend that glowing footprints would appear on the Post Office floor to presage my return. But it was five past five and the Post Office was closed, and when Dean returned from parking the car I had to break the news to him. "They said," I told him gravely, "that I was ten years and five minutes late." There may or may not have been a phosphorescent glow visible beneath the door of the Post Office, but to tell the truth nothing about the facade of the building was in any way familiar to me, and it may be that the place I called at in 1952 was some sub-office else where in the town.

Back home we found Madeleine had taken over cooking dinner, to give Jean a rest. Not just that, but she was making a steak and kidney pie. Now Madeleine is good at steak and kidney pies, in fact she is a steak and kidney pie maker by appointment to no less a gourmet than Boyd Raeburn, but I viewed with awed admiration her courage in trying this exotic dish on an American family not accustomed to snails and kiwi eggs and such. The Grennell parents would I knew eat the pie if it killed them, and being the sort of people they are it would be impossible to distinguish their dying agonies from cries of delight, but the children... However we left Madeleine hectically assembling familiar ingredients from unfamiliar containers and retired to the living room to make the great Gesundheit picture.

The inspiration for this was an exploded beercan from one of Dean's target practices. This one had exploded in such a weird and spectacular fashion that Dean had brought it home as a curio, and it was now his intention to take a photograph of himself bending over this disintegrated can as if he had been drinking from it, with a handkerchief in the other hand, while I with an aloof and faintly disgusted expression said "Gesundheit." This word Dean had carefully lettered on a cardboard caption-balloon which he now suspended in mid-air. The job of arranging ourselves and the beercan between this and the camera took quite a while because we kept collapsing in hysterical laughter as our simple minds visualised the picture that would result, but we had several takes made in time for the steak and kidney pie.

This, to Madeleine's intense relief and pleasure, was very well received, even receiving an unsolicited accolade from Patsy Grennell, an outspoken teenager. Afterwards, to return the compliment, we tried an exotic Grennell sweetmeat called "Halvas". They were delicious. Dean admitted modestly that he had made them himself, being an expert in this field. "I'm a rambling wreck from Georgia Tech," was the way he expressed it, "and a Halva Engineer."

Having stuffed ourselves we spent the rest of the evening in a contented torpor, talking desultorily with half an eye on the tv the children were watching, and still unwinding from the convention. It was, it occurred to me, just what we would have been

doing at home. In fact we were at home. The Grennell hospitality, like a perfect prose style, was unnoticeable except in its effects: which were that we felt we were with old friends. It seemed impossible that we had met them only a few days ago. It also seemed incredible that Dean and I had ever been worried about not being able to understand one another: why already we intuitively understood one another without speaking. We had the same empathy with Jean and even the children, who were not only the best behaved we had met but individually likeable as people. Altogether our two families seemed such natural neighbours that the distance of 4000 miles between our homes suddenly seemed intolerable. Our mood that evening was such that when we found that the Grennells and ourselves had been married within a day of one another seventeen years ago the coincidence seemed to have some deep significance.

Wednesday 5th September

After our being up so late I didn't for a moment believe Madeleine when she said she'd get up at seven to see Dean off. She does like a nice lie in. But to my utter astonishment she was out of bed before me, at 6.45. This is the most extravagant compliment anyone has ever paid Dean Grennell, though he would have to be married to Madeleine for seventeen years to appreciate it fully.

We sat in the kitchen while Dean finished his breakfast and other preparations, helping by keeping out of the way of the highly efficient progress. Then Dean got into the car and Madeleine went out in her nightie and dressing gown to see him off, and I took a photograph of the scene for DNQAC. With a last wave Dean was gone leaving the house and ourselves suddenly quiet and empty. I don't think I've ever missed so much someone I've known for such a short time.

We did our own packing and said an affectionate goodbye to the children as they left for school---Chuck gave me his favourite conjuring trick for Bryan, another thing Greyhound lost---and then we phoned for a cab to take us to the bus station for the 9.30am bus to Chicago. While we were waiting our next hostess, Rosemary Hickey, called all the way from Chicago to warn us that there was no such bus. She had checked our ETA with Greyhound in Chicago and they'd told her it was no longer running. Having checked in Fond du Lac myself the previous evening, where there was a little notice to the effect that this bus was being kept on because of the rail strike, I told her it was leaving Fond du Lac whether Chicago was ready for it or not. Then the cab came, and we were off again on our travels.

The bus was the familiar unpretentious kind I'd known in 1952, almost like one at home. It was strange to be taking such a short journey, a mere four hours, and somehow we felt almost absorbed, integrated in the American scene; just two normal Americans taking the bus into Chicago like everyone else. We even took the normal road system this time, through Milwaukee. Nothing about the town was recognisable to me from 1952: strange, because the town had character, a sort of semi-rustic Bavarian look to it. Between there and Chicago there was a lot of housing development and I noticed an advertisement "If you lived here you'd just be starting for work now." Untrue, but striking.



We were about fifteen minutes late arriving in Chicago. I looked carefully round the subterranean concourse for Rosemary and then lugged the cases up to street level. She wasn't there either. After a while I called her apartment, but there was no answer. We reasoned she must still be on her way, so Madeleine had a cup of coffee while I visited the travel agency in the building to enquire about routes to Seattle. We had wanted to visit Yellowstone Park so we could wave to the children from the Yogi Bear cartoons, but they told me Yellowstone was closed now that summer was officially over. I got a timetable for the shortest route to the northwest and went back to Madeleine. Rosemary still hadn't arrived, so I called her again. She was there now; in fact she had just got back from the bus station. She had been there punctually to meet us and, being unable to find our bus listed on the arrivals board, had enquired after it at the information desk. There she had been positively assured there was no such bus. After hanging about for some ten minutes she had gone helplessly home, at just about the same moment as our ghost bus was drawing up below.

Rosemary said she'd pick us up at the Randolph St. entrance, so after venturing out to look at the street names on the lamp posts we waited there another while, numbly resentful at Greyhound for wasting all this precious time. Then Rosemary tore up in a black Volkswagen, stopped in a no-parking area while we piled hurriedly in and took us to a place called Marshall Fields for lunch. It seemed to be a sort of department store. I'd heard the name before, but if I'd been asked what it was I'd have guessed an army training area. However Madeleine seemed to know all about it and was impressed. All I noticed was that the restaurant had some unusual customs, such as a menu designed like an examination paper. Instead of telling the waitress what you wanted, you just checked squares and after a while an invigilator came by and silently collected your work. The concept was sound, but set the restaurant rather uncompromisingly at the middle class level in the social structure. For on the one hand one cannot imagine a millionaire checking squares unless he happens to have his secretary with him, and on the other what about people who cannot read? How terrible it would be to be flunked from Marshall Fields, having failed your entrance examination. Another slight defect was that they didn't provide erasers for the irresolute. I was quite ashamed of my paper when I handed it in, all blotches, and half afraid it would be refused, or that the culinary computer into which they presumably fed the data would be thrown into a nervous breakdown or serve me a messy mixture of several meals. However, computer processed or not, the food was quite good, and my only regret was that I hadn't realised there was a fixed charge or I'd have been even greedier. Thanks to Greyhound it had been a long time since breakfast in Fond du Lac. On the way out Rosemary produced a credit card, the first I had seen, and I gazed awestruck at this modern power symbol.

With what I later appreciated as a fine sense of priorities, Rosemary now took us straight to the Prudential Building. Even on the sidewalk below it, I was impressed. More than that, I was humbled. There, standing on the sidewalk of East Randolph, I received a shock to my native self esteem comparable only to the one I had received nearly thirty years ago when I had found out that W.F.W. Woolworth was not a Belfast business man. Not only was it obvious that this was no branch office of a British firm: I even began to have disloyal doubts about the Rock of Gibraltar itself.

I was literally staggered too, for craning my neck to look at the summit I fell back with a sort of vertigo. "The building's falling!" I cried.

"Never mind," said Madeleine kindly, "It's probably insured."

Who with, I wondered, as I followed the ladies into the vast entrance hall and over to a bank of elevators. A smooth surge upwards, two unexpected flights of escalators, like a sort of American equivalent of taking off one's shoes, and we were on the Observation floor. It was full of light, flooding in through great windows looking into space. There were also a souvenir shop, a commentary on the public address system and a turnstile. On the other side, we made straight for the nearest window.

I have climbed quite a few mountains in my time, or what passes for mountains in Ireland, and I know what it's like to be on high places. Or even on steep places, like the 2000 feet cliffs of Slieve League in County Donegal. But none of them was like this. It was more like ascending on a rocket out of Chicago, poised halfway to space, but with every detail still clear on the Earth below. We were looking out over Lake Michigan, blue in the afternoon sun, stretching out to infinity...or at least Canada. On either side the coasts of Illinois and Indiana disappeared into the distance over the curvature of the Earth. On the horizon at the right was a long white line like foam on a distant reef. And straight below Chicago sprang up all around in a bewildering confusion of detail. Ships on the river---I'd forgotten there was a Chicago River---piers, low buildings, high buildings, higher buildings, streets, railways, advertisements, and immediately below a fantastically huge car park in which thousands of coloured cars glittered like beads in a box. Through them threaded a tiny bus: could this be, a bus to take people out of a car park? We roamed round the other sides of the Observation Floor, but inland the air was smoky. The Lake drew us back. I invested a dime in one of the automatic telescopes and identified the white line on the horizon as a low sandy shore. Taking bearings on a map, I figured it to be the coast of Michigan, some sixty miles away.

One can only absorb and remember so much, and I hated to think I would forget any of it, so I went to the souvenir shop and bought a set of transparencies of the view. I hadn't a viewer, but I would buy one later. Then we left. But two floors below, just as I was about to step into the elevator, a little old lady caught my arm and offered me a handful of money. It was the clerk from the souvenir shop. She was quite out of breath, and it took me a moment or two to gather that I had given her a twenty-dollar bill and this was my change. I thanked her and tried to give her a bill, but she just smiled and ran back to the escalators without a reward...except, I hope, the knowledge that someone in Ireland thinks well of Chicagoans.

Back at ground level we ran the Volkswagen to earth in the huge car park and made for the Hickey's flat. It was in an area slightly reminiscent of Dublin, where the same Georgian houses may be either filthy tenements or elegant dwellings. It was interesting to see the process of reclamation that was taking place, as well-to-do families moved into poor areas. The first thing they did, evidently, was to paint the front door blue. We came to the Hickey house from the back, down a narrow alley with garages along it. Rosemary screwed the car forcefully into one of these and we went up some steps past boxed plants and gaily painted garbage cans into the apartment. It was all in a straight line, rather like a very wide railway carriage, and a fascinating place



to browse along. The Convention had obviously passed over it like a huge glacier, suspending all normal household life and leaving moraines of fascinating detritus ---unread books, unsorted magazines and unassembled equipment of various kinds. I enjoy this sort of decor immensely, as long as I don't have any responsibility for it, and peered about quite happily until Dick came home and I had someone to talk to while the womenfolk were preparing dinner.

Soon after the host the other guests arrived, a couple called Jay and Irene Smith who had just returned from camping in the wilds. There was some playful badinage about this because it turned out their idea of camping was not the same as ours, its most primitive aspect apparently being that the water closets were not in the same building as the "Camp". They were a nicely contrasting couple, Irene an attractive blonde and Jay very dark. That was all I would have had to say about their appearance, except that just now Madeleine has told me that Jay was a Negro and it seems strange this never occurred to me at the time. I wonder if this does not show that Americans are more foreign to Europeans than either of us realise: that the average European is so bemused by the strange customs and variety of racial types that variations in comparative pigmentation pass unnoticed unless forcibly brought to his attention.

The dinner, which consisted surprisingly of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, was excellent despite the fact that the beef had been cooked in Chablis instead of the sherry suggested by the recipe. I don't know what wine they use in Yorkshire but Rosemary seemed worried and asked us if it was all right. I said that personally I felt we had been Chablis treated, and again felt the need for a little flag to wave with "Pun" on it. Then after dinner the Smiths produced a record they had brought specially for me, made by a very successful folksinging group called the Clancy Brothers.

I listened to it with mingled pleasure and frustration, rather like a oyster-lover finding that people attach value to the little stones he has been spitting out for years. These songs were as familiar to me as nursery rhymes, utterly commonplace. Or were they. Hearing them unexpectedly in a Chicago apartment they sounded strangely different.

After the record we went to visit The Rising Moon, one of the little Bohemian nightclubs that had sprung up in Wells St., the sort of thing that Paris calls a "boite", I think. It was apparently just entering the tourist class, because there was a one-dollar cover charge and it was still crowded. The decor was all hard chairs and huge bizarre antiques, including a deer's head, an improbable leopard skin and a reredos. The act, two men and a pretty girl, sang a wide variety of songs including one of my old Belfast ballads which I'd just heard from the Clancy Brothers and a number which Lonnie Donegan had had on the British hit parade six months ago. However any patronising complacency I felt about being more hip than these Chicago cognoscenti was swept away by a flood of allusions to local politics which went right over my head. The evening finished with a good old-fashioned sing-song, showing that an intellectual audience can be as corny as any provided there are no Philistines about.

Before going to bed that night I finally got around to checking the new Greyhound timetable for Seattle, and found that the express bus now left at 7am and took two whole days for the journey. But it seemed unthinkable to leave Chicago again so soon, and Rosemary was very pressing in her hospitality, so we decided to defy Greyhound and stay until Friday morning. It was now well into Thursday and, this decided, we made plans to start for Lake Michigan early in the morning. As a necessary first step we went to bed.

Thursday 6th September

I stumbled blearily about the apartment collecting my bathing trunks, camera and senses, and then found myself being driven through Chicago in search of breakfast. Any sort of reality is hard for me to face before coffee and Chicago made me cringe all the way to a place called The Jewel, whether other grimfaced silent people were nerving themselves to face the day. I felt better after breakfast, but I was still reminded of the saying that Americans prefer luxury to comfort: to go out and have other people make your breakfast and wash up afterwards is merely a luxurious form of the chuckwagon. The proper approach, it seems to me, is indicated by a sort of alarm clock made in a factory in Belfast: before it wakes you up it makes a cup of tea.



Having left Dick off for his work we set off along Lake Shore Drive and the Skyway, admiring en route in the 8-lane highway the power-operated kerbs which rise and set like tides according to the time of day and the exigencies of traffic, and subsequently entered a turnpike system which bra only recognised the dullness of this form of travel. They let you into the system free, but you had to pay to get out again. In this it resembled no other human institution I can think of, except perhaps marriage.

I would have thought a little Volkswagon to be out of its element in this world of high speeds and long distances, but in fact it buzzed along efficiently like a very determined wasp, and eventually we came out onto an ordinary road heading north west along the shore of Lake Michigan. Rosemary thought we would like to see some of the lakeshore homes, and we plunged into a maze of little winding roads, all pleasant bungalows, post boxes and stop signs. Rosemary eventually lost her way, which didn't surprise me at all---I had lost my own sense of direction about 16 turns ago---but at last we emerged onto the main road again and celebrated with a cup of coffee in a little diner so quiet and refined it might almost have been an English tearoom. I think it actually had table cloths. Then we set off again along a road so close to the shore that we caught occasional tantalising glimpses of white sand and blue water. Rosemary told us this was all private and there was no public access to the beach for miles yet. This was strange to us, for back home a private beach is such a rare phenomenon that people think it is not only immoral but illegal. Actually it isn't the latter anyway, merely impracticable for the reason that land between high tide and low tide belongs to the Crown and nobody can fence it off. I could see the situation would be different though in the case of a lake. I had to keep reminding myself this was just a lake.

We stopped at one of the roadside stalls with displays of large and colourful--- and in many cases quite unfamiliar---fruit and vegetables, and bought a bag of peaches. Madeleine was so impressed she had me take several colour photographs, and I think all that wonderful, and cheap, fruit impressed her as much as the Grand Canyon. I must say it was a lot easier to photograph.

Then we entered Warren Dunes State Park and drew up at a deserted wooden building. All I remember about it were notices to the effect that it was against the law to change your clothes in the lavatories, which seemed to me at the time an unwarranted and unAmerican interference with the rights of the individual. The right to change your clothes in the lavatory is the right to be free. Then through some stunted trees and bent grass to the shore.

It was immense...white sand and blue water as far as the eye could see. Nothing else but a few litter baskets and about the same number of people. Apart from the litter baskets the beach population seemed quite normal to me and I didn't appreciate until Rosemary sent us at home a picture postcard of the place in its normal summer state, that it had been by local standards utterly deserted. I found it hard to understand this American convention that summer ends at 12pm on Labour Day. National Parks close, tourist facilities are withdrawn and people stay away from the beaches in droves, while still the sun shines obstinately in a clear sky. I can only imagine that in the States the seasons are so thorough that people get tired of them. After months of unremitting sunshine they positively look forward to fall and as it were meet it half way. Whereas in Ireland, if we did happen to have a warm day in October the entire population would stampede for the shore like lemmings, tearing off their clothes en route.

Compared to Irish strands Michigan was not sensationally beautiful. I would have given it about six out of ten, ten being to me Tramore Strand in County Donegal, which has firm golden sand, dunes, grass, wild flowers, cliffs, caves, a fantastic island right in the middle of the horizon, and so little frequented we were shattered one year to find another human footprint. The sand here was soft and coarse, with no shells, and dipped steeply into rather opaque water. I walked quite a distance along and there was no change: obviously it went on like this for dozens of miles. However it was very pleasant, the air being warmer than one ever finds it in Ireland more than once in five years, and the water slightly warmer than I'm accustomed to if not as warm as I had hoped. We splashed about happily for a while and then lay and sunbathed and ate peaches and relaxed. After the artificiality of our environment this last while it felt good to get back to nature. Yes, we liked Lake Michigan. It might not be as beautiful as some Irish strands, but to enjoy the latter like this you would have to be staked out beside it for months waiting for a sunny day, and spring on it from ambush. Ireland is a wonderful country to live in, but I'd hate to come here for a visit.

We were a long way from Chicago, somewhere behind that haze to the South west, and Rosemary had to register at the University that evening. So we tore ourselves reluctantly away from Lake Michigan and sped straight back, in and out the turnpike system and over the Skyway for the third and last time, into Chicago. We left Madeleine at a hairdressers and I went with Rosemary to the University, a big modern building all big windows and quiet classical music over the public address system, a sort of intellectual Musak. While I was waiting for Rosemary I met George Price, Convention Treasurer, who seemed none the worse for it. We talked mostly about the Convention, but he did mention a propos of something else that he had been one of the recipients of the 12-page cri de coeur Vince Clarke had published when Joy left him: since he had never been a correspondent of Vince's it seemed that this intimate human document had had a wider circulation than realised at the time.

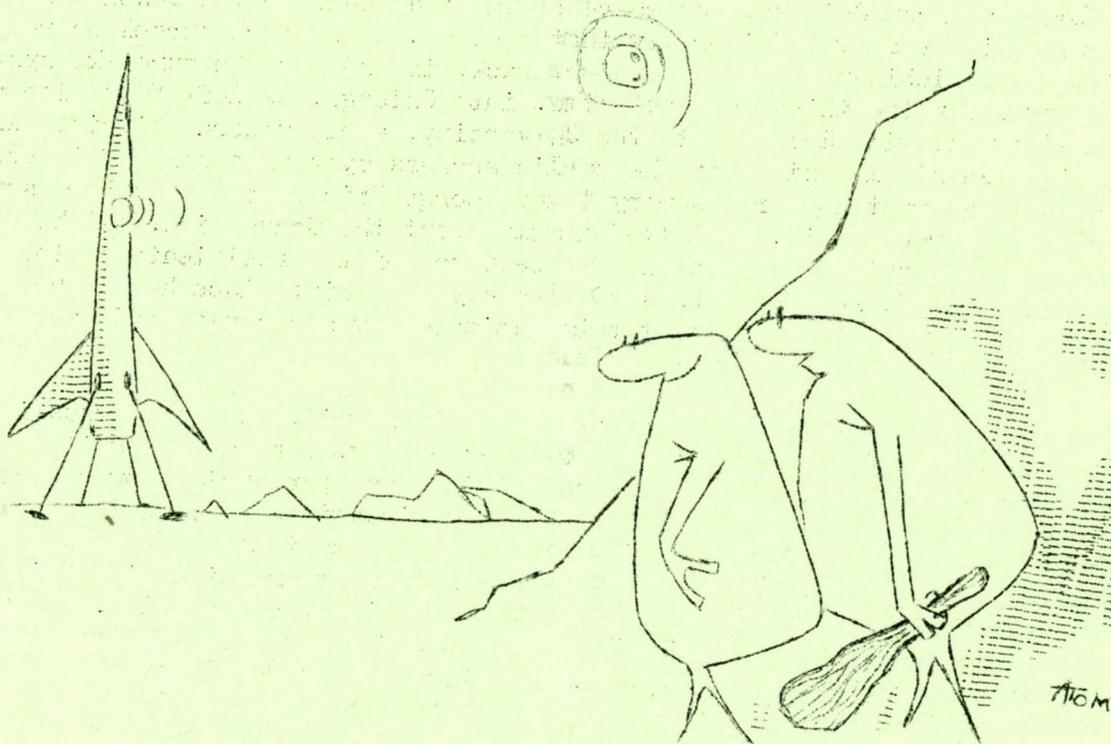
Apart from this interlude it was a long and uneventful wait, suspended thus in an unfamiliar locale, but boring only in a rather pleasant way. For one thing it was a comfortable place, all deep sofas and air-conditioning, and for another my recent life had been so hectic that boredom was a rare and almost piquant sensation. Before it palled Rosemary appeared, we had a snack in the University canteen and then went to collect Madeleine and her new hair. Then we went back to another University building where Dick was supposed to be registering. We waited outside for some time, Rosemary getting increasingly impatient and beginning to wonder if we had missed him: traffic out of the building was definitely dwindling. Finding myself suddenly in charge of two dependant females, I went into the building to look for him. I nodded in an offhand way at the guardians of the door and strode briskly for several hundreds of yards through a maze of registration tables manned by curious officials. None of them challenged me, proving my theory that you can go anywhere as long as you look as if you knew where you were going, but I didn't find Dick. I reported back to Rosemary, who then rang the apartment and found he had gone home not realising we were meeting him.

Silently we got into the car and made for home, by way of the Prudential Building. Rosemary tucked the car into a corner of the huge carpark we had seen from above yesterday afternoon and at the exit I made a detour to the Greyhound depot to validate our tickets for tomorrow's journey to Seattle. This was the very first time I had ever been on the streets of Chicago by myself and I felt my sense of wonder renewed, with the addition of that sense of power which complete anonymity gives. Why I could get a bus to anywhere and never be heard of again. The feeling made even more enjoyable the experience of not doing so, but of finding my way back to the Prudential Building, and up the lift and escalators back to the Observation Floor, to join Rosemary and Madeleine quietly at the same window we had looked out of before.

It was, I thought to myself, hard to sterilise beauty out of the world. Crush together a million soul-less tons of concrete and steel, light them with garish tungsten and neon, cram the interstices with automobiles and, incredibly, the result is even more beautiful than the daytime landscape it dispossesses. Chicago by night is as breath-taking as the stars, but where in the inanimate universe is a colour like the strange luminescent green of Michigan Boulevard, alive with the light of humanity? While the stars are cold and mysterious, this night city was somehow poignant. While it was vast the lake was vaster, and beside that great darkness, like the edge of space, the lights were brave and human...pulsing through the night creating their accidental by-product of unforgettable beauty.

"Man," said Pascal, "is but a reed, the feeblest thing in nature. But he is a thinking reed. The universe need not exert itself to crush him: a whiff of vapour, a drop of liquid will suffice. But even should the universe crush him, man will still be nobler than his executioner, for he knows that he dies. The universe knows nothing." Here by this lake was Pascal's reed.

(To be continued)

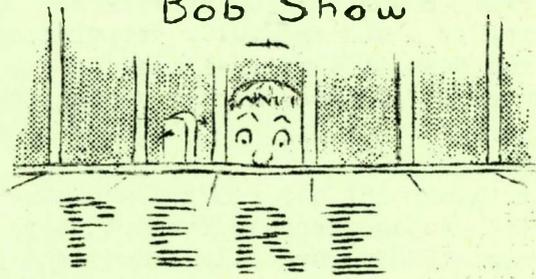


"Right, you've got it straight. When he gets out you go up and give him the big hello while creep round and clobber him from behind"

Nowadays everybody is an amateur psychiatrist. I even tried for a while myself but got terribly fed up with it - a case of Freud going before a fall - and have sold my couch and notebook. But if any HYPHEN readers would like to have a little practice on a good meaty father and son relationship, then read on

The Glass Bushel

Bob Show



A FINE PÈRE

The Father

In all probability there are quite a few people throughout the world who have been clawed by lions, but I am reasonably certain that only one man has ever suffered this particular indignity at midnight in a village street in central Ireland. Many years later the same man got married and his firstborn, out of all the things he might have been, grew up to be Bob Shaw the science fiction fan. A run of bad luck like that is enough to daunt any man that ever lived - which is why my father was able to look the world straight in the eye when he took to the bottle.

But that's jumping ahead. Anyone who is familiar with my aristocratic physog would naturally expect the Shaws to have an illustrious line of ancestors stretching back many hundreds of years, but this is not the case. In fact the Shaws seem to have spontaneously appeared in 19th century Ireland in much the same way that cheese mites are generated in cheese. They lived in a tiny village called Mountmellick and my father, through his intense interest in animals, was the first to achieve any kind of distinction. A circus was visiting Mountmellick and Robert William, then a boy of ten, was bitterly disappointed when the show's one and only lion turned out to be a dimly-seen shape which lay motionless all day in the corner of its cage. After shouting at it till they were hoarse my father and several other small boys decided that the beast was either dead or too weak from hunger to move. Had Ian MacAulay been on the scene he would have nodded his approval of their next move, for the boys decided to test their theory by practical experiment. The experimental apparatus they devised consisted of a plank with a rusty nail projecting at one end, and it was arranged that a small expedition would sneak out late that night with the gadget - the terms of its mandate were "to hit the baste a good skelp up the backside."

My father was the one who actually wielded the plank and the experimental conclusion was that the lion was neither dead nor weak but merely sleeping off the effects of the last small boy it had eaten. One of its paws (fortunately well manicured) connected with my father's face and sent him somersaulting back into the others, who promptly fled screaming with terror. Their lack of scientific detachment was balanced by my father's abundance of it, in fact he was completely detached from everything for about ten minutes before he recovered and went home. He accounts for his lack of facial scars by explaining that he was most fortunately kicked on exactly the same spot by a donkey some time later and the marks were ironed out.

At the age of fourteen he put childish things behind him, got into the Army at the beginning of World War 1 by lying about his age, was wounded almost right away during the retreat from Mons - and found himself back in civvy street without a job. He then joined a small drapery business in Drogheda but found himself out of sympathy with the petty money grubbing of the retail trade. This high minded attitude found full expression one year when the proprietor decided to deviate from pure drapery

and cash in on the Christmas trade by buying in a supply of Christmas stockings. My father struck back against this crass commercialism by opening all the stockings and eating the little bags of sweets out of them - an action for which he was instantly dismissed. When he asked for a reference they just laughed.

He next joined the Royal Irish Constabulary, but that organisation was disbanded shortly afterwards and he transferred to the Royal Ulster Constabulary. While acting as escort to a senior R.U.C. official he got mixed up in an I.R.A. ambush, was wounded, spent two days in a water-filled ditch, got away, received a huge compensation, squandered it in three hectic years, and got married - thus setting the stage for --

The Scn

At this point any readers who have not studied previous Busheis closely will be at a disadvantage because I'm not going over all that stuff again. You should always read your HYPHENS carefully - we might ask questions afterwards.

The Relationship

First of all there was the question of hobbies. I went in for solitary reflective pursuits like stamp collecting and astronomy, and I was content to keep them to myself. My father went in for hearty open air activities and he was always trying to get me to join in the fun. If he was going fishing I was allowed to dig for grubs: when he was raising a new lot of dogs I was allowed to clean the kennel every day: when he went shooting I was allowed to clean his gun afterwards, and if he bagged any small game I got cleaning that out as well. You might say my father worked harder towards a good relationship than I did because he always insisted that I partake in his recreations in this way.

I feel a bit guilty about this when I think of the pains he took over me. Another of his interests was wildlife and nature, and he used to bring me for walks in the country every week so that he could pass on his knowledge. The following is a typical scene: a very large red-faced man and a very small boy are strolling through a country lane. The man's eyes are bright and quick - he is taking in every detail of the rustic scene. The boy's eyes are dull and vacant - he is wondering when he will get back home to finish reading 'Full Speed Ahead to the Worlds of Fear' in this week's LEARD. Suddenly the man stops walking and the boy wanders on a few paces before he senses something is afoot. He halts too and his eyes frantically scan the hedges and nearest trees.

A pitying, and yet contemptuous, look spreads over the man's red face. "Did you not see it?" he asks.

The boy gives up his belated study of the hedgerows in defeat - he never sees anything but twigs. "My eyes are sore," he lies. "I think there's dust in them. I can hardly see at all."

The man shakes his head in disbelief then he points down the lane in the direction from which they have just come. "Go back to that last bend and walk it again". The boy obediently, but unenthusiastically, trudges back a hundred yards and returns, his eyes rollin' frantically as he tried to watch both hedges at once.

"Well?"

The boy shifts his feet unhappily. "Was it a cuckoo snittle?" Cuckoo snittles are the only thing in the nature line he is good at. They are cool to stick your fingers into on a hot day.

A lengthy silence ensues, finally broken by a scandalised whisper from the man. "D'ye mean you walked past a chaffinch's nest with two eggs in it - and didn't see a thing?"

The boy nods. The man turns round and walks away quickly, blaspheming as he goes. The boy hurries after him and by the time they get home his feet are throbbing because there were a lot of nests and he ended up by walking about three times as far as his father.

Our senses of humour were vastly different too---so different that neither of us ever really knew when the other was trying to be funny. I went in for puns, but my father cared only for the occasional practical joke, or dialect stories featuring arguments between Englishmen and Irishmen. The snag was that he was no good at dialect and you could only tell the English bits by the fact that his voice went a couple of octaves higher. Even this wasn't a reliable guide because he sometimes forgot to change gear after an English bit and finished the whole story in a squeaky voice. His favourite yarn was about an Englishman who hired an Irish guide to show him the best fishing spots in a lake. While they were out in their boat there was a distant crash from the shore. The Englishmen said, "What was that?" and the guide said casually, "That was a wall." Here my father always stopped and glanced round his audience, tantalising them with the imminence of the brilliant punch line. Then, almost bursting with suppressed mirth, he slowly enunciated---"A minute later a big dog came running along the shore!" Having got it all out he would explode with laughter, only coming down when he realised that nobody else was joining in. When pressed to explain the joke he said petulantly, "Ach, d'ye not get it? The dog knocked the wall down!"

My own theory is that this was the remains of a really good, subtle story he had heard once and had gradually forgotten, only remembering that he had laughed at it at the time. I spent many a boyhood hour trying to work back to the original but the significance of the boat and the lake setting, the Anglo-Irish cast, and the strange entrance of the dog in the final act always escaped me.

The practical jokes weren't much better. Once he shot a rabbit during an early morning hunt and instead of bringing it home propped it up against a tuft of grass in a field. A couple of hours later he insisted on the whole family going that way for a walk, then he pointed the rabbit out to us, leaped over the gate into the field, crawled the whole way across as though stalking the crittur, and finally sprang on it with a ferocious cry and great swings of his walking stick. When he brought the rabbit back by the ears I was sure he had outsmarted a wild creature in its own element, and I didn't find out the truth for ages.

Religion was another sore point. My father was basically an orthodox Methodist but he had this theory that he could attend church by proxy, ie by sending me in his stead. When I was five he brought me up to the back of the Sunday school, opened a likely looking door, and thrust me inside. Unfortunately he picked the wrong place and I stood meekly in a sort of ante-room and was discovered by a passing teacher only a few minutes before the Sunday school closed for the week. Years later I would be forced to go to church in almost the same way, always about the deadline for the annual blackmail magazine which made public the amount of each family's contributions. For the money to count in your name it had to go in special envelopes with your code number on them, but my father thought it looked bad if his whole year's donations were put in just one packet. So I was issued with about two dozen envelopes which made such a bulky wad that I had to ask people sitting near me to take a few each and drop them into the tray. I'm almost sure it caused talk.

The Problem If any of you takes my case on, will you please let me know why it is that, after these things and a hundred others my father has done, I still like him.

Post Scripts

MADELEINE
WILLIS

Betty Kujawa, 2819 Caroline, South Bend, Indiana 46617
: : I'm sure both you and Walt will be pleased as all get out to hear that on the Greyhound tv adverts they now say they are also in the house-moving business.... yeh, they will transport your belongings for you... can't you see an entire household vanishing into the 4th dimension? (I only hope that when interplanetary travel does arrive Greyhound doesn't get into that.)
John Baxter, Box 39, King Street PO, Sydney, NSW, Aust.
So yet another HYPHEN rolls on and I am faced with the necessity of producing another sparkling and scintillating letter in return for it. I would offer you money if this were not the coward's way out. (No.)
I would offer to trade you for Australian curiosa, aboriginal implements and that sort of thing, but the image of you and your fellow intellectuals flinging boomerangs around the Mountains of Mourn or tramping through the bogs in war-paint and grass g-strings is somehow not as harmonious as it should be, especially when visualised in conjunction with the inevitable cloth cap and leprechaun pipe. Take pity on me; shove an "x" in the little box and put me out of my misery. Needless to say, I am joking. I value my HYPHENS over everything. It is a faultless magazine, and its staff is as fine a body of men as one will find outside the British Parliament. Though perhaps this is a rash claim: one should never put the cadre before the House.

Norm Clarke, Box 911, Aylmer E., Que., Canada: : A fan called "Bill Morse" from "England" or someplace like that has taken up residence in Ottawa, just across the river from us. We asked him all about people (fans) from Over There; we asked, for example, "What is John Berry Really Like?" And he said, "Isn't he that fellow with a moustache or something?" We're looking forward to getting the Inside Dope on Fans Over There.

Madeleine Willis: : You should sack your typist. She obviously doesn't know anything about the lay-out of a magazine.

Gina Clarke: : We like George Charters, (Sorry Gina, I automatically found myself leaving out the comma after we) have a friend who mangles metaphors. Last visit he confided that he had "big plans underfoot". Visit-before-last he said something about the "unchuck of the whole thing".

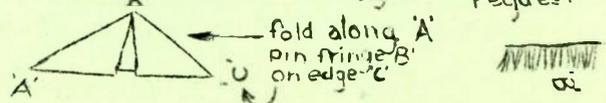
Inspired by these mutations, I thought up in cold blood the following (for possible use someday by a fictional character - whose resemblance to any actual person living or dead would be, of course, coincidental):- "...no skin off my teeth." "...sticks out like a green thumb." "...can't change a leper's spots."

Speaking of word-manglers, I was reading an article about Life On the Oxford Campus the other day, and was astounded to see that Spooner, the Spooner, is a don at Oxford. I used to think he was a semi-legendary person out of the last century, long since dead. But he is quoted as recently declaring to a wild young student, "Sir, you have just tasted a worm."

Sid Birchby: : Now I really am a fringe fan.
I don't see the point of the cover on No. 33.

I wasn't feeling too well that weekend (Peterborough con.) and spent quite a lot of

Actual photo of point of cover on No.33.
detailed instructions (with figs.) sent on
request



time either in my room or tottering around Peterborough trying the fresh-air cure. From time to time, while in my room, I became mildly aware that the next room seemed to have permanent occupants. At night, as far as I could tell, the room was empty, yet next morning someone was using an electric shaver. This particularly annoyed me, because the power and light sockets in my room, which were backing onto theirs, were out of action. Who were they, I still wonder? What makes me curious is that, although I never saw any of them, I did see one of their trays of tea-things which had been put out for removal after use. It contained the debris of three morning teas, and also a half-used can of lubricating oil.

Brian W. Aldiss: 24 Marston Street, Iffley Road, Oxford. : : Much appreciate extra copies of HYPHEN 33. Delighted to read my con report there. "This is the climax of my career!", he ejaculated..... Next week, Trieste! Yippee! Regards.

Leslie Gerber, 201 Linden Boulevard, Brooklyn 26, New York: ; Of course I realise it wasn't your fault that Ted didn't get nominated. In fact, both you and ATom (who couldn't nominate Ted) tried more than I could have expected to help. It was partially my own fault for waiting so long, and partially bad luck that too many of the people I'd asked were already committed to another candidate. You see, I was stupid enough to presume that if someone hadn't nominated another candidate, he was free to nominate mine. I don't believe TAFF should be a place for power politics, and I never thought that people would have asked anyone other than the nominators to commit themselves to a candidate before the nominations were all in. I still think it's ridiculous, and if I can work a little more of the disgust out of my system I may get around to writing an article decrying all this jockeying for position. (But Les, has it not occurred to you that maybe the people who said that they were already committed to another candidate said so, not because of "power politics", but because they preferred to vote for a candidate other than yours?)

As usual, I don't have any particular comments about HYPHEN, only this time I won't make them. Alas, with my almost total withdrawal from fan activity I have lost my ability to write letters of comment. There was a time when I could pick up a fanzine filled with nothing but prattle and fill pages and pages with more prattle, with no more effort than it takes me now to write my return address at the top of a letter. It seems that I may have retreated forever into the world of High Culture, no that I've gotten to the point where I'd rather read Turgeneff than Terry Carr. Strange that there continues to be so much in HYPHEN that rewards my reading. Maybe that's why I can't comment on any of it. I can't comment on Turgeneff either.

Ron Bennett, 17 Newcastle Rd: Penny Lane, Liverpool 15.: : I be in to wonder which sf novels Ward did take to jail with him. My, how that man could have brightened a convention with his two way mirrors.

Elizabeth enjoyed Brian's con report as much as I did and said that it brought it all back to her. Of course, Brian can jibe at minor inaccuracies in the SKYRACK version. I don't suppose he wrote his report in an afternoon the same week as the con. (You may be right, but I think we received the report about three days after the con.) Still, he's right, I think, about the slogans on Tony Walsh's sandwich board, though wildly inaccurate about seeing me in my braces. I realised that I looked a sight with cocktail stains all over my supposedly stainless shirt (I bought it in Sheffield) (no I won't say anything about stealing myself), but I must state that I never wear braces. With a certain 44" measurement I don't even need a belt. (No?)

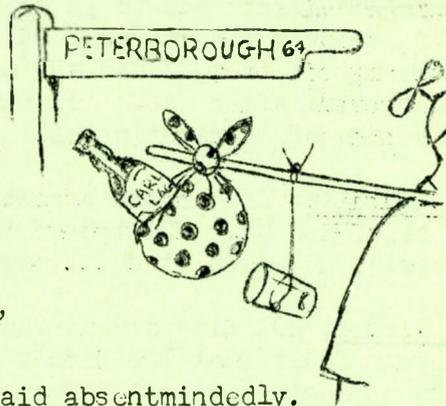
I'm running a series of fan portraits in Sky, a who's who in British fandom. Would either you or Madeleine like to contribute? (Gosh, after all those issues of the Fan Directory with no mention of me, recognition at last!)

Archie Mercer: : TWO HARPS IN WALT'S TIME? THE GREYHOUND OF ULSTER?

Ian Macaulay, Illyria, Sandyford, Co.Dublin.: : I'm glad to see HYPHEN is rolling right along and enjoyed the last issues a lot. Aldiss' con report was great, but I was hurt by the news that fans have apparently taken to calling any old lager by my surname. CARLSBERG is the only true lager. Besides the only reason I drink it is because the profits go to scientific research. What other reason could there be?

Also nice to see the old maestro himself, Chuck Harris, back in the letter column.

Still, next year at Peterborough for Irish Fandom en masse? We aren't getting any holidays this year, but I hope to take a day off here and there in August.
⌋ We tried to talk George Charters into coming to Peterborough but he has already booked his trip to the States, again. He could do both, as ~~Walt~~ pointed out, by taking a day here and a day over there.⌋



"I've just lost a game of Russian roulette," he said absentmindedly.

Eric Frank Russell; : I enjoyed the March Issue considerably, perhaps because the long interval made it resemble a voice from the past. Ted White's Farewell To The Village made a decided hit with me and I hereby award him the gold-plated dog-biscuit for the fan piece of the year (so far). The inimitable Atom was on top, as ever - it's got so it isn't just Hyphen without him.

The highlight of the T.V. this year was during the Wimbledon Tennis Championships when a player displayed a couple of new tennis balls to the ref. and the commentator absentmindedly said "Soandso is now showing his ⌋ first word on page 28⌋

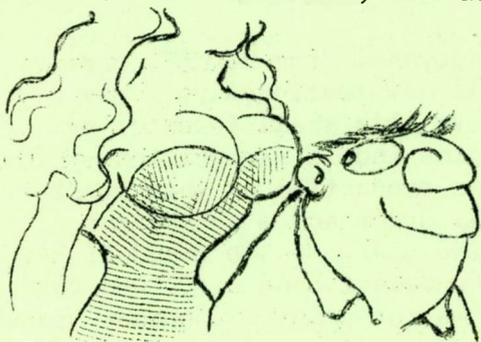
Marion Zimmer Bradley, 1674 Simmons Ave, Abilene, Texas.: : The thing that has finally stirred me to comment on HYPHEN, instead of simply reading the issues and tucking them away, was Bob Shaw's bit of autobiography called Tommy Johnston Vs. Science Fiction. I suppose every goshwow young fan can tell some story about the stages he went through in discovering science fiction and then the process of slow unwinding which gradually convinces him that there are more important things in life than the Sense of Wonder. But there was something about this little piece which made it not just a bit of autobiography - but something like an essay in growing up. There's been a lot of idle chatter, over here, about a couple of novels by "sensitive adolescents facing a hard world." I think there is more self-realization in this piece by Bob Shaw than in all the neurotic maunderings of J.D. Salinger and his mishmash novel The Catcher In The Rye. As you might realize - I liked it!

Ted White's piece on "Farewell to the Village" was fun too, if only because it rouses a sort of envy about people who can be collectors. I started saving all my science-fiction magazines, while I was living with my parents in our big old farmhouse. When I moved to a room in Albany to work, and go to college, I kept on accumulating junk until one would have thought that my books and magazines lived there, rather than I. However, when I married and moved to Texas, I had to weed out and dispose of all but the most cherished of my books and magazines, and get rid of all my fanzines, most of which I simply tossed into trash cans. I croggle to think of the fanzines I've thrown away in the past - QUANDRY, SLANT, THE FANTASY COMMENTATOR, THE NEKROMANTIKON, etc. ⌋ Me, too.⌋ ⌋ Croggle, I mean, silly.⌋

Mike Deckinger, 14 Salem Court, Metuchen, New Jersey. ; ; I see that the "Tom Swifties" have even reached as far as untarnished Ireland. Fannish possibilities to them might be: "I'm going to publish another HABBAKKUK real soon now," he declared biliously. And: "But Mr. Busby..." she cried. Anyone else care to tackle this hitherto unopened realm for witty rejoinders? . ⌋ he asked hocusly⌋

Voting Chuck Harris' letter about the lavatory maker, reminds me of a funeral home I saw in New York called Hellman Brothers. Talk about appropriate names. Hmm, I wonder if the Lavatory Makers have a union. Perhaps I'll john up. (And go on a sit-in-strike?)

Leslie Gerber, again. : : No sooner do I get around to commenting, late, on HYPHEN.. sorry, to not commenting on HYPHEN, than another one arrives, the very next day. I am confused. Now I can't even make the same not-comments I made last time; it isn't long enough since my last not-comments for me to be able to repeat them. I'm sorry you've taken up the Tom Swifties, because now you force me to feed you mine. "We're going to tear down all those houses to put up our highway," said the surveyor aggressively. That's almost as bad as your "inkredulously" one, which would have been much improved by retaining the correct spelling. (If you had, I might have missed the joke entirely. No such luck!) I'm glad you've gotten one of my favourite authors, Brian Aldiss. I've been a fan of his since I read his first book - the one about the library. My reading list goes back five years and the book's not on it, so I can't remember the title, but evidently I read it more than five years ago and yet I remember the book very well. I much enjoyed his report, even though I don't think Azimov jokes are funny any more. (Or was that an honest typo?) The following cartoon was a gem. Of the other things, I got a special charge out of Temple's letter and Walter's overkill of Toynbee and Durant. How large were the letters out of which these passages were extracted? I suspect that anything eliminated from the Temple letter - if any more of it was printable - should have been run. Such luscious fruit rarely comes from rotten bunches. Oh, yes, ATom's caricature of Breen as a beard stuck in a book was beautiful. Add an electric typewriter and a stereo system full blast, and that's it...printable, at least.



Edith Carr, 3 Orchard St., Cambridge, Mass. : :

One of the things I seem to notice and like about fandom is that women just about can have their cake and eat it too - they are treated as equals in many ways, but are not deprived of their femininity. You speak as ruthlessly of a woman as you do of a man, but women in general regarded as quite nice things to have around.

Which reminds me that now our super-parachutist, Bill and I think our next feature had better be a lady elevator operator.

Oh, well, happy vacation, with your two drunk cats. They'll be drunk if they react to drugs as our dog did to Nembutal, which he was given so the vet could de-quill him. You'd think four feet would be enough for anybody to stand on, but no. Then, some people stand on their rights. (Jackie wasn't too badly affected, but Nikki was very drunk. He wailed pitcously as he tried to balance himself on the sanitary box we brought along for them, and kept toppling over. I had to hold him upright. This much amused a passing motorist. On a wet day last week I was washing my hands in the bathroom when Nikki walked in. He walked around in the bath first, then jumped into the cupboard under the wash-basin where there was a relic of Bryan's infancy. He sat down in the chamber to relieve himself - definitely a cat with personality.)

John Foyster, PO Box 57, Drouin, Victoria. : : I will tell you one thing Mister Willis suh, and that is that it's about time you got off your (consored) with the editorial. As I recall (said he, stretching his memory back a full four years in secondhand copies) there have been many many of these 'crummy old fanzine' editorials. My scientific training has brought me to my knees at this point, for I thought I should check up before going on. This brief check reveals no such editorials. but what fan was ever halted by mere facts? Anyway I'm sure there was once a

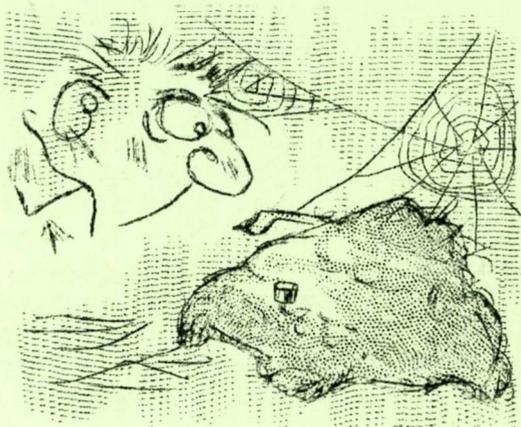
planned obsolescence editorial. Well, I don't like 'em, see.

The contents usually {censored} up most fanzines - you know, the fresh little fanzine creeps under your door and your reaction, if you are the optimistic type, is one of temporary pleasure, at least until you read the contents page or first item and say, "Ah, {censored}, not that again." Under this banner slides out most of the material in this issue. It's not bad; it may even be mediocre, but when one has read so much very-similar material.... On the other hand Ted White's piece interested me greatly. Just recently I've enjoyed very much Lichtman's writing about SF and LA and this similarly slanted thing, though not so descriptive, manages to evoke a mood which is pleasant - something which a schoolteacher treasures greatly. This is inconsistent.

John Baxter has an unfortunate turn of phrase on occasions. (! See above.) Imagine a supposed Writer coming out with something like "That's no way to run an artform". Shame. But I was interested to read John's reminiscences about old times in HYPHEN. You should get him to tell you how he and Bert Castellari organised the Sydney Futurian Society. That's one of his favourites.

Mal Ashworth, 14 Westgate, Eccleshill, Bradford 2.: : I am pleased - nay, amazed - that I continue to receive HYPHEN, which is, I fancy, very probably as good as ever. I, unfortunately, am not. I don't mean, of course, that I am suffering from any extreme state of moral degradation (at least, it doesn't seem extreme to me - what's so wrong about cutting the living hearts out of young virgins for use in orgiastic Black Magic rites anyway?) but simply that I merely read what fanzines I get and never do anything about them. Really, the only thing that has changed is that we have got that word 'never' in the last sentence instead of 'seldom'.

This doesn't mean that I get any the whit less enjoyment from HYPHEN, merely that I manage to conceal the fact from you better; all unintentionally, I may add. Therefore it would please me greatly if you would accept this small token of my gratitude for the great pleasure I get from your magazine and in recognition of the days and weeks of unending toil which you lavish on the production of this storehouse of fannish talent - namely a five shilling postal order and a nonchalant hysterical shriek to wit: DON'T CUT ME OFF YOUR MAILING LIST. (We wouldn't have cut you off, you know, not yet anyway. Welcome to the select band of 10 who cut down our loss on each issue to a mere £5. Of course we get a lot of "trades" as well. You know, fandom is just a damn good hobby.)



Tom Perry, P.O. Box 1284, Omaha, Nebraska : : Pleased to hear that my Oliver typer has fannish value as well as that fascination something attains for me simply by being very old. I found it in the crawl space above a downtown typewriter shop - the same one, by the way, that did the miserable mimeoing of Log no. 2 - and of course it was filthy dirty, having been there Ghod knows how long. After several layers of dirt were removed, I found this legend engraved on the carriage: "Keep machine cleaned and oiled".

At first I was skeptical about my Oliver being "the selfsame typer on which Irish Fandom wrote its first faltering words." But I went and looked and sure enough there on the front it says: "The Oliver Standard Visible Writer No. 3". I had thought it was one of many - merely, that is, AN Oliver Standard Visible Writer No. 3. I suppose the factory ground out the new model while the president of the Oliver Standard Visible Typewriter Co. stood at the end of the production line chatting with the foreman. Then the last man on the assembly line fastened the final screw and carried the Oliver Standard Visible Writer No. 3 out for inspection. "Is...is that the new model?" the president asked. "Yessir," said the foreman. "Very handsome, eh?"

The president swallowed. "Yes. Very. You men knock off work to celebrate. . . and you," motioning to the employee with the machine, "ah, bring that to my office Use the fire escape." The hands go home for the day and that night the Oliver board of directors is called into executive session. They sit in their plush board room with the shades drawn and stare at the machine in the middle of the table. "So that's our new model," they say at intervals, and sigh. One of the younger members says brightly, "Well...it certainly is visible, isn't it?" and looks about him with a chuckle. The other directors glare at him and he shuts up.

About midnight they come to a decision. To scrap the model would be to waste stockholders' money. To go on producing it would be disastrous. They vote to have it shipped, heavily crated, to someplace on the edge of civilization and sold at a pittance. Next morning the draftsmen are working on the design of the Oliver Standard Visible Writer No. 4. The factory hands are cut to an 11-hour day at the same pay they had been getting for 12 hours, and know enough to keep their mouths shut about No. 3. At the edge of town, a crate in an otherwise empty boxcar begins its long journey.

That fall at the stockholders' meeting the president announces, "Despite the demands of labor and the heavy burden of taxation, the Oliver Company has once again exceeded our highest hopes in terms of profit. Two new models were introduced this year. The No. 3 we are proud to announce, was a complete sell-out, sell-out, and the No. 4 has been well received." He sits down to thunderous applause.



Blown by the winds of supply and demand, the Oliver No. 3 has arrived in Ireland, where the typewriter famine is in full force. Even so it sits on the back shelf in a Dublin shop for years before it is purchased by a blooming young solicitor of advertising. "Blazes, boy, and where do you think you'll be keeping that?" asks his moll when he brings it home. "Why sure an' it's a treasure, m'love," he says. "In no time our capital will be doublin' when the advertisers see how neatly this types up their copy." "Begorra and ye think you've boldy fast one on me, do ye?" she replies. "Well, no devil's contraption shall be clutterin' up my house." The machine winds up in a small building behind the house, where the advertising solicitor often sits for long stretches pecking out a sort of diary of his day-to-day routine and whatever happens to pass through his mind. One day he happens to run in to a young man who comes home with him and daedalus with the machine, whereupon the solicitor sees his opportunity and sells it to him for hashilling fruppence. You can take that paper, too," he says, knowing the boy can't see well enough to know that it's been used on one side. "Fine," says the lad, "I've been trying to think of a way to buck Gogarty. I'll make him stew with a book."

The boy went on to become a famous author with a talent that made all artistic regimes rejoice. To this day, however, there is a dispute about which side of that paper was meant to be the manuscript of his best known book.

After hitting one artistic homer, the boy starts to work on his next book. The work goes slowly because no one has bothered to keep the machine clean; already the dictum on the carriage is covered over. Sometimes he types for hours before realizing the cover is still on the machine. In a hurry to finish his book, he finally gives up using the punctuation shift at all. Even the title has none.

The successful author palms the typewriter off on a solicitor for the Irish Republican Army who interrupts his work one afternoon. The I.R. A. attempts to use it as a secret weapon, smuggling it north and managing to sell it to a civil servant in the Northern Irish government; in no time it will clog the arteries of that administration, the IRA plotters figure. The civil servant is attracted to

the typewriter by one economical feature - it needs no ribbon, the keys being dirty enough to make an impression on the paper by themselves. But the plotters are foiled: rather than using the machine to catch up with his work at home, the civil servant uses it in his hobby, which involves playing with office equipment.

Eventually the civil servant reverts to type, slanting his amateur magazine to a semi-professional audience, and foists the typewriter off on a young man who had thought himself a friend. The young man starts producing stories on the machine, becoming a Dirty Pro. He has no trouble selling the stories. "Why look at this story - it's pure filth!" says one editor. "Let me see!" says his secretary. "Not that kind," says the editor. "Nevertheless, we'll buy it. When they finish setting the type we'll sod my front lawn with it. Cheapest dirt you could buy."

Meanwhile the IRA tries again, this time using a factory-reject No. 4 model. By a mistake it gets into the hands of a draughtsman, but the underground is successful in getting it to a Northern Ireland constable, thinking to clog the arteries of justice in N. Ireland. But this person too is an office-machines hobbyist, and the IRA scraps further plans along that line.

Well, Walt, I think Berry has documented pretty well the fate of the second machine. You might ask James White what he did with the original one: I'd be interested to know how it came to Nebraska.

Dr. Antonio Dupla, P^O. ca. Agustin 9, Zaragoza, Spain. : : HYPHEN has arrived at my home and the fattest lamb has been slaughtered. And more so when it was not the prodigal son that returned but the prodigious song that made its first entry.

About HYPHEN 33, I do like conreports and with a so little bit of literary quality I find myself satisfied. But when made by so good a writer as Aldiss, then my delight is immense. And, you have fame as the ace puncreator, and I have seen proves of it; but Aldiss seems to be your best disciple. Simply delightful.

Ken Potter was unknown directly but he is at HYPHEN level with a rare flair for toilets, God bless his soul. And Shaw too (HYPHEN, not toilet level). The letters are splendid but how came to your hands that of Walter Breen, undoubtedly intended for KIPPLE (at least)? There is too little of your own work and if this speaks very fine of you as a host, it leaves your readers, one for sure, with a sense of letdown. Remember that this is my first issue of HYPHEN, a Walt Willis zine. (You should have been pleased with HYPHEN 34 then, no?)

Richard H. Eney, 417 Fort Hunt Rd., Alexandria, Va.: : The convention apparently went very well, though you understand I didn't actually see more than about 40 minutes of the program, net total....At presentation time Sam Moskowitz nearly started a revolution with a long and tedious eulogy of Doc Smith, then gave him what was announced as "the First Fandom Award, a parallel to the Hugos". It was a desk pen-set, with a loop of chromium-plated computer tape on top and a clock in its ~~stomach~~ pedestal. I have a sinister suspicion that this was foisted on FF (Foist Fandom) by somebody with a low and evil sense of humor...you know what kind of symbols the Hugo rockets are, and if ever I saw a symbol paralleling them....

The usual stock of rumours went round, some of them even concerning people who were at the con. This year only three marriages are supposed to be breaking up, including Jack Harness's---a good trick, as Harness isn't married yet. There were seventeen fabulous fist fights, three of which corresponded to real arguments---verbal ones to be sure, but real nonetheless. Forty-seven or fifty-two (I lost count) femmefans of all degrees of comeliness and complaisance got tumbled according to report; about seven may not have been malicious/wishful thinking. (Ah well, as the French say, a myth is as good as a Mlle.)

Rick Sneary, 2962 Santa Ana St., South Gate, Calif.: Has anyone mentioned to you in the last ten minutes that you are the oldest currently publishing sub-zine, always edited by the same person? Only group efforts like Shaggy, have been around longer. And, F-Times, if still around, is a news-zine. (No, and we hadn't realised it ourselves. Thanks.)

Bosh in No. 32, writes one of his best columns. Not as funny as usual, but the writing more than equalled his best... Trouble is there isn't much one can say about it. The contrast with his work in No. 33 is great, though the quality is high... One filled with a good deal of self aprazel and critisim with a serious ending; the other in his usual light and care-free style with the oh-if-I'd-only-been-there feel to it. In your opinion, have you noticed that it takes some one who is basicly serious about life to be really funny?

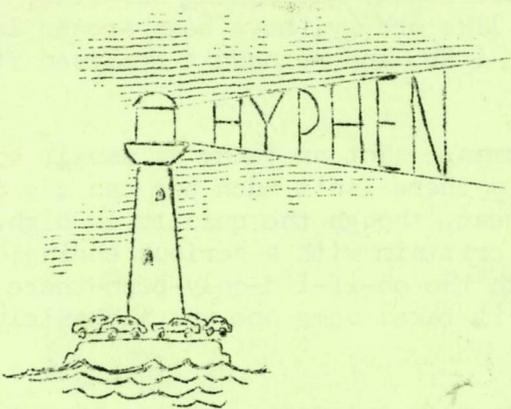
The two Con reports by White and Aldiss were much enjoyed.. Reading them almost together strengthens the feeling that the year passed rather quickly-- and that the most enjoyable Con reports are in "-". But why not when you have Pros writing them for you... Though in James' case, as with Marion Bradley, I have a very hard time in thinking of them as being real Dirty-Old-Pros. Having known them from early fannish days I still think of them as such, and that they appear in hard print only by some fluke.. I don't suppose I'll ever take them to seriously as writers because of this-- just as I'm not over-awed by Blackur, who I know before he's hit the clicks...



One point in Whites report brought back a lump of nostalgia and a feeling of "the old ways are not compleatly lost." I refer to his intalectual debate with Sir Ronald, on curved Space. To which Ron responded with the old GS line, "Define your terms!". My, I haven't heard that used in close to 15 years, but once when the GS Bhoys were so active in LASIS it would have been the lead of for a jolly few hours of debate while everyone forgot what had started the argument...It is good to see the young sprats still remember the old ways...

Another thing about the two reports that bothers me.. The reference to meat-pies.. Now I've defended "-" against charges of being to esoteric, but I'll not go the tab for the whole English language... I'd thought I'd a pretty good idea of what a Britisher and an American ment when they talked of "pies", "tarts", "biskits", and "cakes". But meat-pies are something new, in the way you use them.. To me a meat pie is a sort of a meat stew in a pie crust, usually served in a small 4" or a 7" pan. But this can't be what James and Brian were talking about.. The picture of a fan setting in a convention hall with a small pie tin in one hand and a fork in the other, eating a hot meat pie during a program is beyond the realm of my imagination.. Good St. Panthony, you people invented the sandwich, don't tell me you call it something else now? (These things are about three inches across, made of a pastry so greasy and stodgy that they can be turned out of the pans and eaten in the hand without a plate or fork. They contain a microscopic piece of meat, some vegetables and a jellied gravy and can be eaten either hot or cold. The only time I have ever eaten one was when visiting two London fans. The pies were served cold, along with salad. You can imagine Walter's feelings on this occasion. Of all things, salad! The two fans concerned have since left the country. I think it was the least they could do. When Wally Weber comes to visit us here in Belfast, which I hope he'll somehow manage to do, I promise to serve him only home-made meat pies.)

"What, why are we eating your home-baked bread at this time of night," he asked so disconsolately.



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Eavesdroppings

YOU TOO CAN FORGET HOW TO SPELL THROUGH
 EXCESSIVE READING OF FANZINES.....IT'S
 THE BILL DONAHO DOLL---YOU DON'T WIND IT
 UP, YOU BLOW IT UP.....NEXT TO BEETHOVEN
 I LIKE RAY CHARLES BEST.....GO TAKE A
 MILK OF AMNESIA AND FORGET IT
LARRY, YOUR HAIR IS GROW-
 ING OUT BETWEEN YOUR SOCKS. DO
 SOMETHING ABOUT THAT.....I AM
 WRITING THE GREAT AMERICAN NO-
 VEL AND I NEED ALL THE BUTCH-
 ER'S WRAPPING PAPER I CAN GET
YOU COULD FIRE A BLOWGUN BY SUCKING
 FROM THE FRONT END AND YANKING YOUR HEAD
 OUT OF THE WAY REAL FAST BUT THIS TECH-
 NIQUE IS NOT RECOMMENDED.....HIS NOMINAL
 SURS ARE NOMINAL IN NAME ONLY.....WHEN
 ASTOUNDING COST 9D IT WAS WORTH 5/-: NOW
 IT COSTS 5/- AND IT'S NOT WORTH 9D.....
 THIS IS THE COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE. YOUR
 THREE MINUTES ARE UP: KINDLY DEPOSIT EIGHT
 BILLION FORTY TWO MILLION NINE HUNDRED
 THOUSAND DOLLARS AND TWENTY CENTS.....I
 GOT SOME DANGLIES BUT THEY HADN'T ANY
 SCREWIES OR WHIRLIES.....FANDOM IS LIKE A
 SEWER, GEORGE WILKICK: YOU GET OUT OF IT
 JUST WHAT YOU PUT INTO IT.....DON'T PANIC
 HE SAID LAKONICALLY.....
 THE WORLD ISN'T READY YET
 FOR A DICTATOR WHO HAS
 LEARNED HOW TO SPELL....
 HECTOGRAPHY: BOY THERE
 WAS A PROCESS YOU COULD
 REALLY TELL YOUR PSYCH-
 IATRIST ABOUT....ACTUALLY
 IT SOUNDS SO COMPLICATED I PROBABLY HAD A
 CLEARER PICTURE OF WHAT IT WAS ABOUT BE-
 FORE YOU EXPLAINED IT ALL.....WHEN G.K.
 CHESTERTON FIRST SAW THE LIGHTS OF BROAD-
 WAY HE REMARKED THAT THE SPECTACLE WOULD
 BE MARVELLOUS IF ONLY ONE COULDN'T READ..
 ...I GOT AN E IN MUMBLING FROM MARLON
 BRANDO..... PEACE WITH SUSAN
 art wilson, archie mercer, ake hansson,
 ardis waters, jack leonard, dean grenn-
 ell 2, bob shaw 2, the realist 2, pat
 anderson, ted johnstone, waw, wally web-
 er 3, forry ackerman



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