

LES SPINGE



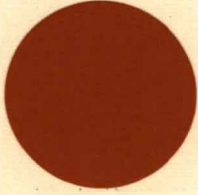
RECIPE FOR LES SPINGE THE TWENTY-THIRD

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SPINGE

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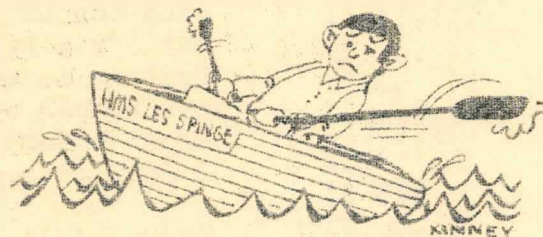
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Welcome once more to LES SPINGE. This time around I'm going to grumble about the BSFA, of which institution I am a member, though only I fear out of loyalty. For nearly ten years I've been a member, but lately I've become more and more disenchanted with the whole set-up. The annual subscription is thirty shillings. Let's examine where that money goes to. There's the library, but that can be left out of consideration: it just about runs off its own income. Then we get a Bulletin every month or so, which is well worth having, but which I estimate costs no more than five shillings per year per member to put out. The fanzine distribution service and the 'Blue Pages' are also useful activities, but these also cost little to run. Let's say generously ten shillings a year for the lot. This leaves a pound a year for VECTOR. Now this is the main gripe. For that pound we have had in the last year just two issues of VECTOR. At that rate each issue has cost the individual member ten shillings, and it's just plain not worth it. Why, even the issues of LS I had printed cost me only 60¢ per copy, and that in America.

THE WATERS OF BABYLON



About conventions. The BSFA likes to think that it runs the annual British SF Convention. I notice that the 1971 con is as usual advertised as a BSFA one. But is this really so? There were conventions long before the BSFA appeared on the scene, and if the BSFA should disappear, there would still be conventions held. Thus, in real terms, the annual convention is not dependent on the BSFA. But the BSFA has delusions of grandeur. It likes to think that it runs the conventions, and probably British fandom as a whole too. In the PERTINENCE that Archie Mercer conjured up a while back some people suggested that the BSFA should keep a tight control on the running of conventions, even to the extent of not allowing non-BSFA people to bid for a con. This is ridiculous. The logical extension of this would be to exclude non-members of the BSFA from cons altogether, which would be ridiculous, and destructive. No, the BSFA should withdraw entirely from the convention scene and let the con committees get on with the job. The BSFA would stick to its proper objectives - whatever they might be. I'm no longer certain though that there are any. The BSFA does seem very confused as to its reasons for existence. And as a paying member I'm getting all too little return on my annual subscription.

As Archie Mercer said, the tragedy of the BSFA is that it divides us into two camps, of members and non-members. But we are all SF fans, and if the BSFA is not careful it will find that it has become irrelevant. It is, after all, an extra.

That's all for now. See you again round about July, and in the meantime, have a good con.

-- Darroll Pardoe

As an introduction I might mention that I never really expected anyone to invite me to write an article on this, my driving passion, but to my surprise and his readership's undoubted horror Darroll, having sunk one coke too many, did just that. I have tried to show why after nine years' hard labour Drag Racing in Britain is coming to the fore. You see, when I hear the BLAAAT of naked power in my head and see the smoke before my eyes, and smell the fuel on the wind, I sort of get carried away...

DRAG, BABY! by John Hall

In 1961 traditional 'British Motor Sport' was given the biggest shaking up since the advent of Stock Cars six years before. It was in Brighton at the annual Madiera Drive Sprints. An American, Dean Moon, and British racing driver Sydney Allord, brought something to the start line that set the European racing world on its ear. Putting up better speeds and times, with a smaller engine, than Vanwalls and BRMs, this machine was a dragster.

This import from the USA was the first manifestation in this country of a sport which was already sweeping the States like the plague, after a slow beginning there in 1948. Though already antiquated by US standards, the 'Mooneyes' dragster's Brighton showing sparked off a craze in this country of unprecedented size. In 1963 Sydney Allord's newly formed club, 'British Drag Racing Association' (BDRA) held its first meeting at Blackbushe in Surrey. The total entry was 25, seven of the machines pure dragsters. Drag Racing UK was born.

Drag Racing is racing over a quarter-mile straight line course against both time and a competitor. In the days of 1963 all that was necessary was to pair the cars up and run them off against each other until only one was left. But in these days of 200 mph speeds the cars have to 'qualify' in their classes by covering the quarter mile under a set elapsed time (ET). 1964 saw the Anglo-US Dragfest when all the top American drivers came to demonstrate the power of Uncle Sam's Drag Racing Might with machines which by 1970 standards were quite pitiful, but went faster and better than anything else on four wheels.

With that team came Don Garlits, the man who only a year before had been first over 200 miles an hour. His was a name that has ever since dominated Drag Racing all over the world.

Drag Racing caught on in Australia, West Germany, Sweden, South Africa, New Zealand and Brazil, in that order, between 1964 and 1966. In Britain the BDRA went bankrupt from competition with its rival British Hot Rod Association (BHRA) but local clubs all over Britain sponsored and encouraged by BHRA flourished and grew. Sydney Allord had died in 1964 but his son Allan now carried the Drag Racing banner and joined the Executive Board of BHRA in 1967 when BHRA changed its name to BDR&HRA, nicknamed 'DRAGROD'.

Drag racing has classes for all manner of vehicles, from Minis to the epitome of Drag Racing, the AA/Fueller. Naturally in the early years it was the classes containing the Minis, Ford Pops, Jags and Yankee Heaps that flourished, and these classes still have large entries today though they are much more professional in turnout. Also, Drag Bikes appeared, a class in which Britain leads the world, but which all other countries except the USA and Sweden regard as high speed suicide and are poorly entered for.

1967 was a great leap forward in British Drag Racing. The first AA/Fuellers appeared and cracked the 8-second E.T. bracket. Drag Bikes cracked the 10-second E.T. bracket and only America's car-engined bikes could match them. 1967 in the USA saw Don Garlits win the Nationals, the USA top meet, for the second time, and to celebrate his first six-second E.T. run to win it, he shaved off the beard he'd been growing till he went that fast. E.T.s don't represent very much to the novice in Drag Racing until he compares the speeds necessary to attain them. Between 160 and 170 mph will see a machine in the 10-second bracket; between 180 and 190 mph will put it in the 8-second bracket. Today's top British AA/Fuellers travel between 190 and 210 mph, while the USA's six-second monsters travel at an average of 230 mph; Don Garlits has pushed his machine to 253 mph, an E.T. of 5.97 seconds. All this, remember, from a standing start over 1320 feet.

The AA/Fueller's main features are its wide rear tyres, called 'Slicks', which are treadless with an inner liner of rubber which holds the low air pressure (around 10-15 psi) in at high speeds; its huge supercharged and injected V-8 engine; and its overall length (about 150 to 200 inches, or $12\frac{1}{2}$ to $16\frac{1}{2}$ feet). Driving one is a task only for the brave. The engine, of about 410 cubic inches or 9 litres average overall supercharged capacity, is strained to the limits of its endurance, and can blow up at any time during the race. At the start, when the green light comes on, the tyres burn and distort, the crushing $\frac{1}{2}g$ to $\frac{3}{4}g$ force pushes you back into the tight cockpit, and you are lucky if you can see further than a yard in front of you for the thick smoke and Nitro-vapour. ("Nitro" is the name for the fuel, a blend of nitrogen and methanol, or sometimes pure alcohol. Some classes use high-octane aero-fuel called "Av-Gas")

A "Funny Car" is an AA/Fueller that bears some resemblance to a motor car. It has a fibreglass replica body over a wider but shorter chassis. "Funny Cars" have curious reputations. Their names are often better known than their drivers. Some of the top US cars are called "COLOR ME GONE" "HAWAIIAN" and "LIME FIRE". About the greatest British "Funny Cars" that ever lived were "MEGALOMANIA" and "WHISTLER".

"MEGALOMANIA" was a beast, a monstrous animal that frightened every one but its driver. If it were not for the huge injection pipes protruding up through the bonnet and the wild rear wheels, you might think it to be a large sort of MGB. No MGB ever went like that monster. It could be heard half way across Bedfordshire when it revved up. To this day it is still talked about in Drag Racing circles.

In the early days of Santa Pod Raceway, Britain's only permanent strip for Drag Racing, aficionados of other Motor Sports used to come to gaze and wonder in awe. Crowds rarely came above 2000 in 1967 but now that figure is an average attendance.

"Super Stock" is the class for the large American and European Sports Cars. In America, the class is heavily sponsored by the motor manufacturers (GM, Ford, Chrysler and AM) themselves, sometimes turning out special engines to compete. The emphasis is that these cars are what the average American buys off the showroom floor, with just a 'little additional tuning'. That depends on your definition of those last three words, of course. Having both heads rebuilt and the firing chambers altered to take two spark plugs to a cylinder, adding giant four barrel 1400 CFM (= cubic feet per minute) carburetors that cost upwards of £120 each, and the whole exhaust system rebuilt and the chassis dipped in acid to lighten it, can hardly be classed as additional tuning, but the USA is the USA.

British "Super Stocks" bear no resemblance to their Stock Car racing namesakes, and are nearer the ideal envisaged originally in the USA. Though they travel at 120 mph to the US Super Stockers' 170 mph they are well within the reach of the average enthusiast, since American cars come second hand mostly under £500 and require little or no modification to race in "Super Stock."



Bikes - the fastest growing arm of British Drag Racing - are incredible. If it has two wheels, there's a class for it. There have been bikes with V-8 and V-6 car engines in them, Bikes with Jaguar 6-cylinder engines mounted crosswise in them, Bikes with four bike engines in one frame, bikes with two bike engines running as one, and bikes with rockets in them.

Some of you may be wondering in fact why rockets and jets aren't used more often. Basically it's because of their high cost, the lack of people in the sport who know anything about them, and the fact that they may not run in competition against each other or other vehicles here or in the USA, for safety reasons.

There are other classes and types of vehicle; I could go on for ages. Now in 1970 Drag Racing is becoming big money,

despite the situation arising once more of two clubs competing with each other for too few competitors and race dates, and also the high cost of racing in the "Funny Car" and AA/Fueller classes - nearly £80 for each pass up the quarter mile in terms of fuel, tyres, wear and tear. The best way to see what it's all about is to go and see it.

"OK now here it is coming to the line the match-bash between two 'funny' Ford Capris; this is the 'Glo-Worm' Holmon-Moody 428 with GMC Blower, John Dodds Rolls-Royce Racing Automatic Slush-box- "VAROOOMER-AAAAAAAAATTVAROOOM" - and here's the flying Swede Nigell Fromm in the Injected 427 Chevrolet powered Capri - ooh that do sound nice; and they're staged "ERAAAAAAP BRAAAAAP WOMP BRAAAAAP BRAAAAAAROOOM..."

...BRAAAAATT VROOM BRAAAAAAAAAAAAAVVVVVVVAAAAAAZEEEEEEANNEEOWVVVVVAAAA-
ZEEEBRAAAWOMPNEOWWWW...
...WWW...

Drag Baby..

- John Hall

+++++

BLUES GUITAR

Raw curtains of sound descend
Opening on complexities, as a flower does:
A white passion-flower.
Echoing in the darkness, curling past me,
Like cigarette-smoke; unveiling stones.

Night screams in the music;
Midnight's in my bones. Strip away your flesh;
Reveal your soul.
And still the screaming...
An Odyssey through downtown bars,
White cold faces; cold, white stars.
Weeping for my woman...

Riding, man: rhythms, strings of fire,
Are shifting in the midnight hour
Are turning to that spirit-power.
Every kick. Every whisper. Every tear. Every scar.
Listen, play on, I can hear it weep, your guitar.

Somewhere with us in this darkness...

- Ritchie Smith



REPRISE

LADIES OF THE CANYON

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LADIES OF THE CANYON by Joni Mitchell (Reprise RSLP 6376)

Joni Mitchell seems to be continually improving. Her first two albums, 'Song to a Seagull' and 'Clouds' were superb, but her latest one, 'Ladies of the Canyon' is even better. One reason is that her very beautiful voice has improved somewhat, and another is that her poetry is perhaps a little more mature (although still bearing the typical Joni mark). Some of you already know that I very much prefer a folk singer to sing his or her own songs. Thus Joni's LP is very pleasing to me because all but one of the songs she sings are her own. What's more, no-one, in my opinion - not even Judy Collins - can sing Joni's songs as well as she herself can. Briefly, here are the tracks on the LP:

SIDE ONE

'Morning Morgantown' (3'12")

One of the earliest songs on the LP (copyrighted 1967); the words on this track are certainly not as good as those on most of the others. Nevertheless, the words are a lot more original than those in a lot of poems written about 'morning in a town'. The tune is pretty, but not particularly good for Joni.

'For Free' (4'31")

This is lovely. Joni compares a street musician who plays for free to herself, who plays for 'fortunes, and those velvet curtain calls.' The music in this one is an absolutely essential part of it and includes some very nice piano playing by Joni herself.

'Conversation' (4'21")

One of her many 'love songs.' This one to a married man. There's a cliché-ridden situation if ever I heard one, but not the way Joni writes it. I've heard this before, but can't think where. Anybody know?

'Ladies of the Canyon' (3'32")

About three ladies, Trina the oldest one, Annie the mother, and Estrella the 'circus girl'. Another very nice tune.

'Willy' (3'00")

The second 'love song' on the LP. Kind of unusual, perhaps because Joni sings it slightly lower than the rest, in a rather sad voice. Obviously a lot of emotion in this one.

'The Arrangement' (3'32")

The tune here is perhaps a bit more striking than the words. Right in the middle of each verse Joni jumps what must be almost an octave, and on the high notes Joni's voice is very, very pretty. The words are



about a man who has given himself completely over to the rat race. Someone who is absolutely opposite to Joni's way of thinking.

## SIDE TWO

### 'Rainy Night House' (3'22")

Another 'love song' (as are the next two also). This one about a man who - I suppose - doesn't know who he is. Some very nice piano on this one also.

### 'The Priest' (3'39")

For some reason I'm not overkeen on this track. I prefer it to 'Morning Morgantown' but not to any of the other tracks on the LP. I think that perhaps it's the tune that isn't so strong, because the words are really good. About a priest (of what, I'm not sure), and certainly a very nice love poem.

### 'Blue Boy' (2'53")

'Lady called the blue boy, love, she took him home; made himself an idol, yes, so he turned to stone'. The story of a girl who loves a man but is only used by him. One of my favourites on the LP; lovely words, lovely tune, and it rings so true.

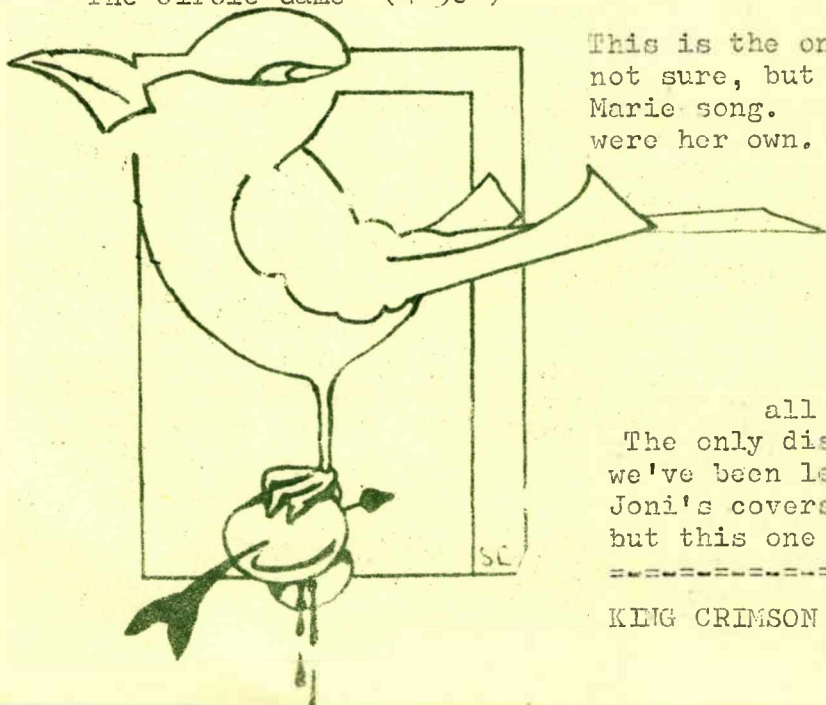
### 'Big Yellow Taxi' (2'16")

I should think that everyone has heard this one, since it was released as a single and did very well. A happy protest song... against pollution. Happy tune, but when you think about it the theme isn't so happy.

### 'Woodstock' (5'25")

Again, I should think that everyone has heard this song sung by someone. Crosby, Stills and Nash do a nice version, but not as nice as this one. By far my favourite song on the LP. Absolutely beautiful. The words are simply about youth, and hope, and of course the Woodstock festival. The music is the most emotional on the LP.

### 'The Circle Game' (4'50")



This is the one not written by Joni. I'm not sure, but I think it's a Buffy Saint Marie song. Joni sings it as if it were her own. Very nice.

So there it is. A record I can recommend to anyone who likes modern folk music. Joni sings from the heart and one gets the impression she really has experienced all the things she sings about.

The only disappointment is the cover; we've been led to expect so much from Joni's covers (which she designs herself) but this one is very plain.

=====

KING CRIMSON Review...

... on next page

IN THE WAKE OF POSEIDON by King Crimson (Island ILPS 9427)

This is, I believe, King Crimson's second LP. I'm afraid I haven't heard the first one, but I do recall some disc jockey comparing the early King Crimson to the Beatles and then grumbling because they've now moved away from that sound. Well, if they did sound like the Beatles then they certainly don't now. The only track bearing any similarity to the Beatles' songs is 'Cat Food' on side two. I'm glad they no longer sound like the Beatles, because geniuses though the Beatles are in their own type of music, they just wouldn't be capable of some of the excellent instrumental tracks on this album.

SIDE ONE

'Peace: A Beginning'

An introductory track, very gentle and quiet, and thus it comes as something of a surprise when this track finishes and the very loud and exciting

'Pictures of a City' (including 42nd at Treadmill)

starts. Strong impressive words ("Concrete cold face cased in steel/ Stark sharp glass-eyed crack and peel") and incredibly good instrumental parts. Very good saxophone played by Mel Collins.

'Cadence and Cascade'

A very atmospheric song. Quiet compared with the previous track, with very little instrumental. Cadence and Cascade would appear to be two women who make an idol of a man, and then find he is just a man. Very nice words.

'In the Wake of Poseidon' (including Libra's Theme)

This is interesting, and perhaps I should at this point say a word or two about the cover of the LP. It is 'Twelve Archetypes' of Tanno de Jongh. This song is a description of those twelve archetypes. The tune is not as strong as most on the LP, but the words are exceptional. ("Bishop's kings spin judgement's blade/ scratch 'Faith' on nameless graves").

SIDE TWO

'Cat Food'

Lots of words crammed into this track. I suppose one could describe it as a protest against mundanity. They can see the funny side of it, though. Another very loud, impressive song.

'The Devil's Triangle' 'Merday Morn' 'Hand of Sceiron' 'Garden of Worm'

These are four movements of an incredible instrumental which is by far the best thing on the LP, and one of the best pieces of music I've heard in ages. All 'movements' are based on Holst's 'Mars' and for once I'd say they've improved upon it; a very rare thing for a group to do with a classical tune. Now I've always liked the 'Planets Suite' so perhaps I'm biased, but still King Crimson really excel themselves. The movements build up to a terrific climax in 'Garden of Worm' which is a very apt title since the track has something which I can only describe as a 'crawling horror' running through it. It's the sort of track which leaves you worn out at the end of it, and yet wanting more. And finally



'Peace: An End'

which is simply what it says it is. A repeat of the original theme, with very gentle words.

There seem to be many groups around at the moment who are excellent instrumentalists. King Crimson must rate high amongst these. A marvelous LP.

... Ro Pardoe

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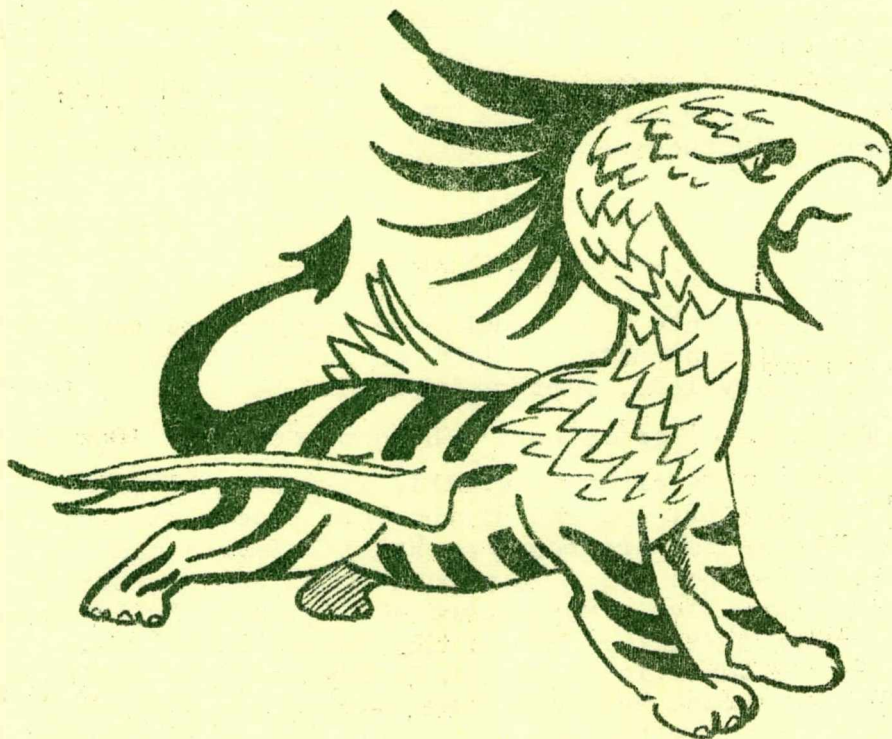
Some colliers going off their shift at the coal face with a long jaunt in front of them to the shaft, discovered some tools that badly needed sharpening. Being loath to undertake the job of carrying them to the mouth of the shaft, they piled them up and chalked a board on the top of them addressed to the next shift, with the words: "Overlooked these tools when we was comin' off, bring 'em along when yo come."

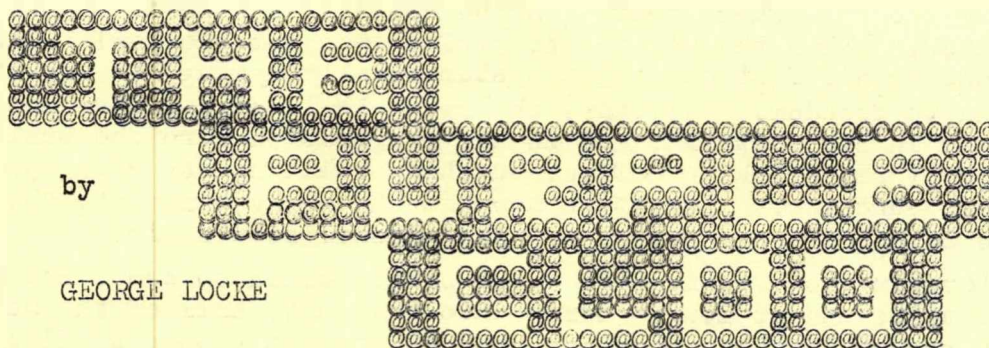
The first notice was replaced by the following: "We dey see these tools when we knocked off, so 'ave left 'em for yo after all."

... T.H.Gough

('Black Country Stories')

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by

GEORGE LOCKE

Reluctantly he regained consciousness, to find the edge of a fallen table pressing on his chest. With an effort he managed to wriggle out from underneath and rose unsteadily to his feet. His head began to pound, but doggedly he remained erect. All around him was a scene of terrible desolation; tables and chairs were scattered about, some broken, all damaged, as though while he slept Armageddon had struck. Broken glass was everywhere and from the cracks in the floor rose the stinking vapours of alcohol.

Bob Lichtman grunted. "Thus, the London Circle Symposium" he said with an English accent, obviously derived from ORION. He staggered towards the flight of steps leading out of the basement only to find it almost impassable with rubble - beer bottles, corks, glasses, the slightly damaged remnants of cold potatoes. A couple of tomato seeds had come to life amid the slime of a spilled punch. Bob grinned sourly, the hangover pounding monotonously. "At least this particular jungle won't have any coffee plants."

Then it hit him. "Where is everybody? The Cheltenham Circle, Bennett, Mercer, the Dietzs, the London mob?... I, I...remember...there was a stormy London Circle committee meeting, a most disgusting exhibition; thank ghod it was none of my business. I'm surprised there wasn't a murder committed. Perhaps there was." He looked round uncomfortably; the basement looked like a battlefield. "Nonsense, Bob," he went on, optimistically, "You're worrying too much."

"They just got tired of alcohol and cold potatoes, said 'Armageddon out of here,' and went off in search of coffee and rolls: they'll be back soon" but somehow it didn't sound very convincing.

Bob began to fight his way up the staircase; he could only make slow progress. Half way up he found a little alcove, and there, dangling from its rest, was a telephone. Eagerly he grabbed it, thought for a moment, and then dialled a number. Before he had finished he realised that the phone was dead.

Panic unconquerable assailed him. He clawed madly at the bottles, the plates, the cold harsh metal of a record player, an abandoned machine he recognized as belonging to Archie Mercer. A cold hand stole round the place his heart used to be before he started to edit fanzines; he subsided, sobbing "The bastards, they've deserted me, left me because I'm different - because I'm Purple..."

His brain seemed to burst in a ball of darkness and he fell, and fell, and fell, and was asleep again.

When he awoke the darkness was tempered with a little grey light.



seeping from somewhere above, and he could feel a faint breeze fanning his cheek. Then the way to the surface was not blocked! Encouraged, Bob rose to his feet and began systematically making his way to the upper air and to freedom. Already, the sweet smell of a Sunday morning in May-fair was in his nostrils, and in his imagination were the bustling voices of happy fans, drinking coffee, munching rolls and cracking puns in the glorious sunshine. Forgotten now was the murky basement, the savage gall of the LC committee meeting, and the alcohol sodden air.

Laughing now, anticipating the exhilaration to come, Bob flung the debris aside and at length burst into the empty hall of the main restaurant at ground level. Bounding over chairs and tables he flung the glass doors wide open and inhaled vast quantities of the good air.

South Audley Street stretched away to the north, a steady wind was blowing up the street carrying with it dead leaves and scraps of paper. A large black car which looked vaguely familiar was parked close by. Strangely the door was flung right open as though the occupant had left in a hurry.

Uneasily he came to realize that there was not a soul on the streets. "It's early yet. Who but a fan is around at this time on a Sunday morning?" A small cloud passed across the sun. He shivered uncomfortably; shadows swept rapidly up the street.

Somewhere the wind found a crevice, and whined painfully. Leaves scuttled in little whorls, and a piece of paper with what looked like typescript on it was blown against his foot and trapped. He caught sight of the handwritten title, SKYRACK, and bent down to pick it up. His jaw line became grim as he read...



"LONDON CIRCLE BLOWS UP! VAST QUANTITIES OF POISON RELEASED AFFECTING THE WHOLE WORLD IN HOURS. SoFa EXPERTS SAY THERE IS NO HOPE. ALL LIFE, ALL FANDOM, IS DOOMED. WE MUST FLEE. FLEE TO THE COUNTRY, BECOME R..... PROVINCIALS. AWAY FROM THE CITY..."

the bottom of the sheet was ragged and torn, as though an expiring grasp had ripped it while trying to add 'and Cecil' to the signature.

The thought of the noble Bennett striving to maintain the fannish tradition even while fandom was breathing its last saved him from going insane at that moment. "I'm alive" he said finally, "and where one survived there may be others. I must find them."

The car with the open door caught his eye again. It was an enormous tinny vehicle of some fifteen years' vintage and not from a good year. He remembered who it had belonged to, one E.C.Tubb, a non-fan. He grunted, and kicked a detached hub-cap into the gutter. Down the road he found a

Jaguar XK140. The ignition key had been left in its place, and when he had slipped behind the wheel he found a loaded revolver in the dashboard pocket. He eased her into first gear and the great car moved forwards and, he hoped, fanwards.

But before he had gone half a mile he ran into a pileup of cars, blocking Piccadilly. Backing out he was stopped in Park Lane and Oxford Street too. He had to abandon the car and continue on foot. For hours he tramped, from Mayfair to Piccadilly, to Trafalgar Square, to Farringdon Road, and out east. On a clear road he travelled by car to Plumstead but found no Carnell. South of the river, the Bulmers had gone, so had Inchmery, and the Dietzs were nowhere to be found. Up north to Kilburn he struggled - but no Parker. Nothing moved save for an occasional dog and the wheeling flocks of pigeons.

Eventually he found himself near the one-time Mecca of London fandom - The Globe. Just inside the door, rooting among a pile of bones and torn, rotting flesh, he discovered a beagle, an ugly looking thing with a raucous bark. To Bob's ears it sounded very like the phrase 'Songs from Space.' Bob Lichtman looked at the miserable creature, part of his mind urging him to bring up his food. In the end he shot the poor brute - it was the only thing to do. He wandered off then and with the dusk bedded himself down in a hotel in the Victoria area.

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For several days he continued to search for signs of fandom, at the same time developing his new home. He took over a couple of floors and, raiding the furniture shops, bookshops and the larger stationers', quickly accumulated enough gear to make the LASFS fans and the Seattle-ites green with envy. He had three of the latest models of ditto machines, and the masters he helped himself to were capable of producing more than four hundred copies. He also ventured to obtain a small Gestetner, but never did he gain any satisfaction from it. Once, he was tempted to hurl the thing out of the window. The mineo, and mineography, was a part of fandom to which he could never aspire. He looked at his purple stained 'hekto hands'. Never would they be 'mineo black'. At this time he began a sort of diary, an 'end of fandom' history, typing it directly on to the master in the afternoon and running it off in the evenings. Every fifty pages he stapled together, slipped into envelopes, and addressed. When addressed he took them to the homes of the addressees and shoved them through the appropriate letter boxes. At each he waited a few minutes, and when no rushing footsteps came to collect the 'zines, which he made sure fell with the distinctive thud of PLOY, he knew that that fan was dead... and he crossed the name off the mailing list. Very soon there were no names left on the list, but he continued to produce the diary.

Time passed. One month, two... and the city remained silent. Three times he had made a complete circuit of England by car; the roads in the country were relatively clear, so long as he avoided market towns. The only trunk road that was jammed, ironically enough, was the M.1. Nowhere did he find another living human or fan.

One day, soon after returning from his third trip, as he was walking down Victoria Street, he felt he was being watched. "Nonsense" he muttered "it's my imagination. London's dead." But try as he would he couldn't shake off the feeling of a hidden watcher. He searched the



dark alleys and cul-de-sacs, but found nothing. "Imagination" he reproved himself, as he went to bed that night, but for the first time in months he dreamed that there were others.

The days went by and the feeling grew stronger. Once again, he tried to operate his mimeo, but without success. Turning the crank, his mind went back to wondering... he KNEW there was somebody lurking there, but never could he find a trace of him, or her. He had noticed too that there were what looked like black ink marks on one or two of the walls of the hotel, where someone might have been cringing; he was sure that they hadn't been there a few weeks ago.

Something jerked his head towards the mimeo; he felt as if he were choking, his hand stopped turning the handle, and he disengaged his tie from the interior of the thing. With careful deliberation, he picked the machine up and walked over to the window. He quite calmly thrust it through and watched contentedly as it fell four stories and landed with a sickening jangle-thunk at the feet of a girl...

A faan!

"Wait there! I'm alive! I'm alive!" he shouted, and raced down the stairs. He dashed out of the entrance, glad words of welcome on his lips - to find the girl gone. He searched around frantically and found her cowering in abject terror in a doorway. She was very young, still clinging to those years - the teens - left behind barely months ago. She blinked at him through distinctive spectacles which seemed somehow familiar. "Hello" he smiled; "Hello" she returned hesitantly, in a faint Scots accent. "I'm Bob Lichtman"-he extended his hand. She looked at him, frowning slightly. "Ella Parker" she said slowly, "Orion."

For a long while they just looked at each other; gradually, as she drank in the sight of a sensitive fannish face, her demeanour relaxed. At length Bob said "How did you escape 'The Death'?" She looked up. "At the beginning of the War..." she stopped, and buried her face in her hands, leaned against the wall, and sobbed. Too young for the brutalities of truncated fanac. Presently she recovered somewhat, and dried her eyes on a tiny handkerchief which would have had a tough time drying a dessicated grain of sand. "At the beginning, I ran away from the centre of the battle and hid myself at home. I curled up in the cupboard under my duplicator and managed to escape it." She burst into tears again.

Bob said gently "It's cold here. Come up to my flat."

She looked doubtful. "It's a very fannish place. I built it up after The Death. I have three dupers, and now there are the two of us we can put out our fanzines again. Maybe we'll even form an APA. Very select - invitation by survival only."

She smiled. "My, you must have a fabulous place, when you can afford to throw away any machine which goes wrong."

"Machine- THAT thing? Trash! I don't know why I ever wasted any time with it, wait until you see the real gear..."

He paused, suddenly conscious of his purple hands, and the finely-moulded swallow-blackened ones of his companion. "Follow me" he said, feeling embarrassed.

She was impressed, he could see, but only at first. She leafed

through the piles of completed diaries. "What d'you think of it?" the writer in Bob leaping to the surface with the question all writers have asked since the beginning of time. "Very interesting" she said. "And the repro - isn't it marvellous?" "It is quite good" she said; "And the colour effects - I'm not much of an artist, but I'm rather proud of this one." "It appears to have come out quite well" she said. "It beats me why you anglofans always stick to the same old black mimeo - purple is a much nicer colour."

She said nothing, her eyes rivetted at his hands. He felt himself blushing. Dammit, the old prejudices were here, in a country where he thought they never existed. Probably because there weren't any others like him in England. His visit would make him the first. But was she prejudiced? Really? It was the first time she'd ever visited a ditto fan's place, and the transition of ideas involved, along with the all too noticeable shock of The Death, had upset her for the moment. "Here, I'll make a cuppa tea. Charge around as you like. This place is yours as well as mine."

He disappeared into the kitchen. Ella meandered around the room, carefully avoiding the littered crudsheets and discarded masters. When Bob returned he found her sitting in a corner staring gloomily into space. He handed her a cup. She raised it to face height and blew daintily.

"Have you a saucer, please?"

Ghu! He'd been living so long without domestic assistance that he'd forgotten the things existed... and this girl, finely cultured... He blushed, returned to the kitchen and hunted around, tipping the used dishes on the floor, until he found one. Eventually he did find one, turfed the cigarette ends out and rejoined Ella. "Here you are" he said, almost in triumph, "Sorry it's a bit grubby." a little sadly.

She sniffed. "How" she said coldly, "do you expect me to drink from an ash tray?" He fumbled with it, glaring, and started to wipe it clean with a bit of purple smeared cloth.

Why the hell had he ever taken up smoking? This wouldn't have happened otherwise. "Oh, don't worry about it" said Ella, "I'll use the cup." Then, a moment later, "You've drunk from it" It wasn't a question or a statement, it was an accusation. He noticed some purple smears on the side of the cup. Bob controlled himself, biting back words which threatened to burst forth in a flood of ire. "I get it. I'm not good enough for you. No dittographer is good enough for you. I am what I am, and if you don't like it, you can get out right now."

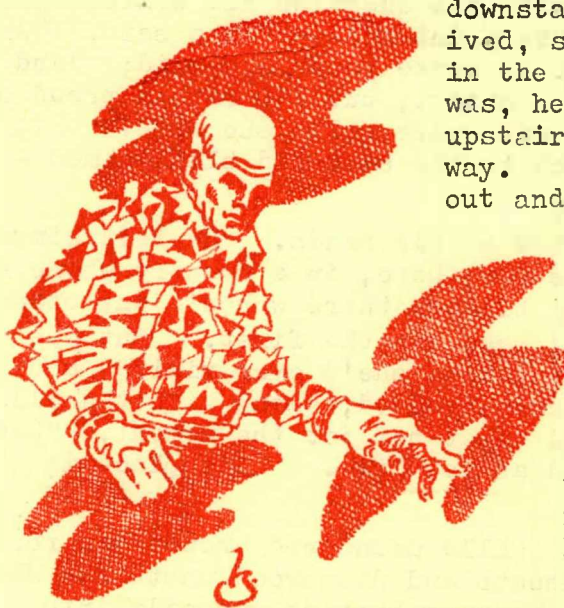
"No, no, I didn't mean anything like that. I..."

"Get out!"

The next few days were filled with retrospective misery for Bob. Try as he would to get that opinionated female out of his mind, he just couldn't. After all, colour aside, she was a faan, and a darned good publisher too. Every day he hoped to hear the thud of an ORION through his letterbox - if she was bringing the 'zine out, and doing what he had been







with his diary. One day, it came. He hurtled downstairs, hoping to catch her, but when he arrived, she had vanished. The fanzine was sitting in the middle of the floor looking at him. It was, he noticed, a dittoed effort. He took it upstairs. So, she was prepared to meet him half way. Well, that was something. He opened it out and began to read it through - what he could, that is. It was appallingly badly done, the work of a rank neo. Before he had gone half way he had a letter of comment worked out in his mind. Encouraging criticism, gentle praise, the occasional pun. As he progressed through, he began to change the wording a little. It was becoming increasingly apparent that she was making fun of him, and had chosen his own medium in which to make the acid stronger. Everywhere there were nasty remarks, 'jokes' which were aimed at him rather than for him... he hacked out a furious letter,

and using the address given on the 'zine's contents page, located her residence, a mere quarter of a mile away. But as he neared the comfortable block of flats she'd chosen as her domicile he swallowed the pill of his bitterness and shoved the missive in his pocket.

She answered the bell. "You got the ORION?" "It was a smashing issue. One of the best yet - I wish I had a backlog of material like that. But all my stuff is back Stateside." "Which 'zine was yours, TWIG?" "No, PSI-PHI." "It was a very good fanzine. Come on upstairs, I'll give you something decent to eat, you must be starving..."

--

For a couple of weeks, everything seemed to be all right; their past differences never came up. Part of the time Bob lived at Ella's place and helped to fix up some electric nineo equipment, and part of the time - a large part - Ella was tidying up after Bob had completed some strenuous fanac. Once though, the old feelings proved themselves not entirely gafiated.

Bob was typing out a master when he suddenly decided he couldn't approve of a fan sitting on a sofa, just watching. "Here, come and have a go at this" he said. She came over. "What, me type out on one of those those things? I wouldn't touch a ditto master with a barge pole." Bob grabbed her arm and sat her down in his chair. "Go on, it's in a good cause. You want to be able to read it, don't you? There won't be any spelling mistakes that way." "Don't touch me! Your hands are... don't touch me!" she screamed. Bob couldn't have been hurt more if he'd been voted fugghead of the year in a FANAC poll. The barrier was still there, after all this time? He remembered the letter of comment he'd written on the first post-death ORION, now lying crumpled among all the rest of the junk in his pocket. "About ORION" he said "I never wrote, did I? At least, you didn't get the letter. I'm AWFULLY sorry, I should have given it to you weeks ago. I APOLOGISE." and with that he threw the crumpled remains on the floor and stalked out of the room and out of the block of flats.

Down on the embankment he stood and watched the tide coming in on a dead empty river. He remembered the time when there were barges moving up and down, remembered the cargoes they used to carry, remembered the tale of the time Great Britain was nearly ruined by a group of fans. Remembered a description of a busy, bustling river; now there were only seagulls wheeling around him, hoping to be fed. He smiled. Suddenly he wanted to feed the gulls more than anything in the world, to forget, for the time being, fandom. To immerse himself in a mundane activity. "Wait a tick, I'll rustle up something." He found some wrapped bread in a bakery which was still fairly fresh, and broke it up and began to throw it among the birds. He luxuriated in the sensation brought on by their incessant cryings and their graceful flight.

After a while he noticed that their numbers were becoming less. They were winging their way, one by one, downstream towards Lambeth Bridge. There was a small boat there, slowly moving towards him. It was a dilapidated vessel, hardly bigger than a rowboat, but it seemed to be powered by a large black object at its rear, some sort of outboard motor. There was no sign of anybody in it, but it was undeniably being steered, for it saw him and changed course towards a nearby flight of steps.

As it came closer he could see a man slumped on a seat, one hand holding a crank which operated the contraption. As it eased against the steps, wavelets lapping against its hull, the man rose unsteadily to his feet. "Good morning" he said, in a decidedly non-Irish accent.

Bob helped him ashore. He looked very tired and it was obvious he needed a long rest, and very probably medical treatment. "My home's not far away" said Bob kindly, "We'll have to get you to bed right away." "In a moment; first you must help me with The Boat." "Leave it here, there are plenty of other boats around. Pick yourself a new one when you've recovered a bit." The man drew himself up. "There is only one Courtney's Boat." He slumped a little. "It brought me here, all the way from Belfast. It saved my life on many occasions... you see, I found out who sawed it, and the mighty \*\*\*ROSCOE\*\*\* himself was grateful and endowed it with His powers."

Bob examined the legendary craft closely. It was larger than he had at first thought, about twenty feet long and eight or nine in the beam. In the centre were signs of an enormous saw-mark, which had been repaired with gigantic staples forged in the fires of Vhulcan and driven into the sturdy oak with the hammer of Thor. The oars, shipped aboard, were as black as pitch, and graven with the names of many old and never to be forgotten hero of fandom. Nary a woman to be seen though. Walt Willis, for it was he, seemed to read his mind: "Heroines are a drug on the market" he commented.

Heading the list was the name of the noblest fan of then all... the engine at the rear was nothing more than an ancient mineograph, forged in those same fires of Vhulcan, whose twin rollers dipped in the water. When the crank was turned, water was drawn in like paper at one end and shot out at a high velocity from the other, acting like a jet engine. Around it glimmered strange and powerful lights, significant of forces long dreaded by all the fuggheads of the world.

Walt grasped one side of the boat with his good hand, motioned Bob to lift the other, and said "We must take it to a place of holy fanish-



ness, and there bury it. It has done its work well." "We may need it to take us to the Easter Convention." "There will be no Convention" reminded Walt solemnly. Bob nodded. "Then we must take it to the White Horse, the most hallowed spot in London Faandon." "Would that I were Godiva" murnered Walt, looking extremely ill that moment. Bob guessed why but accommodatigly said "All violence is ended, Godiva? Walt grinned. "Then we'd have a white hearse." "Ghod...I've a pain. Evens?" He lifted his end; the boat was surprisingly light. As Walt had said, the Ghods were grateful. But even the feather lightness of Courtney's Boat was too much for the poor, weary editor of HYPHEN, and he collapsed. At that moment Bob noticed Ella standing a short distance away; she had obviously become curious to see a different faanish face after all these months, and he called out to her, "Help me with him, it's Walt and he's sick."

Walt smiled up at them. "Leave me, Bob" he said, "You must bury The Boat." "It's OK, Bob" said Ella then, "You go ahead, and I'll look after Walt." So Bob Lichtman hefted The Boat on to his shoulder and strode away down Fetter Lane. Arrived, he looked around for a suitable site, but before he had made any decision he felt an invisible force leading him to the road outside the White Horse. As he approached, the real empty world of The Death began to fade, and in its place he gradually became aware of a new one. A bold rugged world, where lightning was turned to fannish use by the flick of a helicopter beanie, and iron was the plasticine of Foo-Foo and Ghu, from which they made images of each other to stick staples into. Above it all he could feel a calm, benevolent presence that pervaded everything, and he knew he was in the presence of He of the strong white teeth. Himself.

With a mighty shovel which he obtained somehow, he never could remember how, he dug a great hole in the road, and after reverently placing The Boat in it he filled it in. But that wasn't the end of his task. There was still a fitting monument to be constructed.

With the power of his hands, in this wonderful magical world, and blocks of the finest marble, he built a mighty fountain, bubbling with the crystal-clear Spirit of Fandom, which is to all fen what they deem it to be. A delicately carved replica of Courtney's Boat lay in the centre of the pool, and the noble words "Blessed are they who forbear to use cliches" were inscribed above it.

He finished, and stood for a while with bowed head. Then, feeling himself gently dismissed, he made his way back to Ella's. The old, old world where fan was fan, and Ghod was Ghod, faded slowly away, the fountain now standing in memorian outside the White Horse drawing its spirit from deep within the hallowed pub itself. The Song of the Vhallyries still echoed in his mind as he ran with an easy pace well suited to his lanky figure. Worrying slightly about Walt, he thought "Ella must have taken him to her place. Guess maybe he'd have a chance of survival there." He had a darned good chance, Bob saw as he entered. Walt was sitting up in bed reading through a stencil, with Ella sitting beside him taking down puns as he uttered them. "And not a single typo" he was saying. "But if you left a little less margin you'd be able to get more on a page, making it look better proportioned as well." "Of course you're right, Walt... hello Bob. Honestly, I thought Mercer was bad, but some of the ones he comes out with...Ugh! We're thinking of bringing out another anthology of puns and things, like that first FILLER."

She appeared to have forgotten about The Boat and what he had done."And Walt's surprisingly fit considering what he's been through. He spent a couple of hours giving an absolutely fascinating account of how he survived the Death and afterwards discovered The Boat. He tracked down the fiend who destroyed it and from him learned the History of it, dating way back to the first days of fandom."

Bob thought "People of her colour regard such little things as building a monument quite normal for the underdogs..."

She went on. "A wonderful history. It should be written up someday. But not just now, we're beginning work on this oneshot right away. Walt's been too inactive in fandom lately, I must get him on his feet. This oneshot will do that; it's going to be terrific." Bob ruminated. "Guess I won't be included in this project. Natural though - what would two mimeo fans want with a dittographer messing things up and staining everything purple?" He spoke aloud. "I must leave you two alone to get on with it then." and he left.

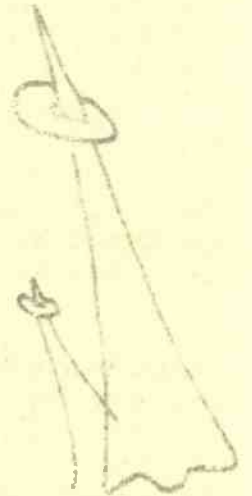
Walt looked after the departing fan. "Has he got a chip on his shoulder, or something?" he asked. "All the time I've known him he has - it's his colour. He's always flying off the handle about it, but at heart he's a trufan." Walt mused, and said "Hmm, he must be, otherwise he would never have been able to carry The Boat."

They saw nothing of each other again until one evening when Bob was walking through Battersea Park. It was getting dark, the last bird had long since gone to roost, and in the distance he heard voices. Curious in spite of his determination never to see them again, he crept through the bushes towards them. Behind a row of privet bushes Ella and Walt had rigged up a little cinema screen, and Walt was working the projector. Bob crouched there looking at it for several seconds before he realised that it was a film of the London Symposium; a record of fandom's last and greatest battle, through which he had slept, dead to everything. Ghu! How long ago it seemed, and so near at hand too. He knew he would never rest until he saw that film all the way through, and though he had a sneaking suspicion that he was acting as inconsistently as the most idiotic fan who ever lived, he nevertheless stepped out into the clearing and revealed himself.

"Where did you dig that film up?" He asked, almost pleaded. "Bob! What on earth have you been doing with yourself lately? We were worried about you, you never answered the door when we came calling on you, though we made enough noise, Ghod knows."

Bob remembered the knocking sure enough, and remembered too his efforts to make no sound whilst they were in earshot. He was glad it was dark; they wouldn't be able to see him blushing. Walt said "Hi; long time no sec. The film I dug up among the ruins of the basement, and developed it myself. After seeing this all I can say is I'm glad I wasn't there."

"Yeah" he said, looking hungrily at the projector, "it was pretty much of a shambles." "Only goes to prove that fandom is no different to the rest of the world" rejoined Ella. He did so want to see that





film; damned if he'd beg, though. "How did the oneshot come out?" he enquired. "Not so bad, not so bad at all. We extended it and included some longer material. Here, I've got a copy with me you can have." Walt handed Bob a thirty page mimeo'd zine, "We decided to feature you in it. Bit of a satire, y'know, pointless feuding and such like. After all, that's what caused the blowup. Ella's quite a writer; she did most of it." Bob rippled the pages. He caught his name on page two, read more closely. Ella, watching him, said "You like that bit? One of the best, I thought." Bob read aloud... "And Bob Lichtman of the purple hands, scarcely worth feeding to the pigeons, opened his big mouth as he is often wont to do. A fan often in want ((Hah, Willis, one up on you at last))"

"Magnificent writing" Walt breathed admiringly. Bob carried on. "... and the noble mimeos, trufans all.' ... All about a feud, you say?" this last directed at Walt. Walt nodded, pleased. "A fake feud?" Bob prodded. "Yep." Bob put the magazine down gently. "We survived Fan War One," he said quietly, "Consider Fan War Two started as of now." With that he turned on his heel and faded rapidly into the undergrowth.

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There was a big gunshop in Battersea. Bob selected his weapons with care; a heavy rifle capable of holding twelve rounds of ammunition and a couple of revolvers. Filling his pockets with spare cartridges and sticking the pistols in his belt he picked up the rifle and went looking for Willis. It was against him that his rage was directed for he could not believe that Ella would stoop as low as Willis had pretended she had. He scouted Battersea Park, but the projector and screen was gone, and there was no indication as to which way Willis had departed. Fled, Bob thought to himself.

He made his way to Ella's place, as being the most likely hideout. He doubted though that Willis would actually hide in her flat. He would be more subtle than that. Her flat was in the centre of a well built up area with many places ideal for a man to wait in ambush. He deliberately skirted the area and approached from the opposite direction he normally would, taking care not to silhouette himself against the horizon. There was a full moon in the sky by this time, and it was almost as bright as day.

From ahead, a sudden flash of fire, and a second later the crash of a rifle became the background to an unpleasant smack, as a bullet flattened itself on the wall scarcely two feet above his head. Bob dived into the shadows, found a narrow lane and ran as silently down it as he could. That shot had come from high up a building on the far side of a little square, and, being nowhere near Ella's, had caught him by surprise. He reckoned that if he could encircle the square without being seen, he could gain the cover of a wall from which he could keep watch on the building until Willis showed himself. He achieved this without drawing any more shots and, rifle at the ready, began his vigil. It was a long wait. Several times, he thought he saw something, but he held his fire to make certain. Each time it was a false alarm, a cat, or a sheet of paper fluttering in a sudden breeze, or a restless shadow. He found his head beginning to nod forward... when he dozed off he couldn't say, but the next thing he knew the morning sun was shining in his eyes, and a few birds were singing. There was no sign of Willis. He studied the building carefully for a few minutes, finally deciding that he'd left hours ago. It was quite possible that

he had moved his position after he had fired that first shot, knowing that Bob was too busy looking for cover to notice a discreet retreat. Cautiously, he continued towards Ella's flat. Nothing happened. The flat seemed deserted. Then, a hundred yards up the street, he saw a man walking slowly across the road. He raised his rifle, slowly squeezed the trigger.

"No, Bob, no! There's been too much killing already." Ella shouted from a window. Bob completed his action and felt a satisfying shock lose itself against his shoulder. Willis stopped dead, then frantically took to his heels, rounding a corner and disappearing from sight. Bob followed, ejecting the spent cartridge as he ran, keeping close to the wall. At the corner he stopped, edged the barrel forward and was rewarded by the sound of two shots and then a scampering of running feet. Bob swiftly rounded the corner, saw Willis's back receding. He seemed to be having trouble with his gun. Triumphantly, Bob knelt on one knee and loosed off three rounds in quick succession. Willis dived on to his face, alive still. He wriggled behind a lamppost, still struggling with his rifle. Bob fired again; the bullet screamed as it ricocheted off the steel.

But then Willis had overcome the trouble with his rifle and lost no time in returning the fire; the street echoed and reechoed with the song of Fan War Two. Eventually, the dozen rounds in Bob's rifle were spent and he was forced to pause and reload. That was what Willis had been waiting for; he took the opportunity of running for cover.

For hours the running battle continued, but without either of them suffering anything more serious than a few scratches from flying splinters of stone. Gradually they were moving eastwards. In the late afternoon, just after a brisk chase as Willis had to reload his gun, Bob found himself suddenly alone. There was a familiar feeling in the air, and as he stared around him he realised that he was standing quite near to the White Horse and Courtney's Boat. As he looked at the wonderful monument he had built he felt the hatred drawn from him by the forces still playing around that holy place. It was almost a shrine. Contritely he slowly approached it, hardly noticing when he dropped his rifle.

"I'm a fuggheaded idiot" he said and impulsively jerked his revolvers from his belt and flung them from him. From his bulging pockets he emptied his store of ammunition.

The sparkling Spirit of Fandom seemed to ripple in pleased little waves, and he dipped his hands into it and sprinkled some of its wonderfully cool life on his face. Raising his arms towards the setting sun he called out "I'm here, Willis. Let us end all this foolish fighting."

Silence. "There is no need for fear. See, I am weaponless."

Silence. Then, in the distance it seemed, he heard the pattering of feet. Closer they came. Yet closer. "Bob." A girl's voice. Ella's.

"Away from here. You must hide." She panted to a halt. "Where are your weapons? You won't stand







TWENTIETH CENTURY FAIRYLIGHTS

Drive along the motorway - any night -  
and you'll see them reflected in  
the beams from your headlights.

They flutter past like fairies dancing  
or like pieces of glittering diamond.

But they are neither of these:

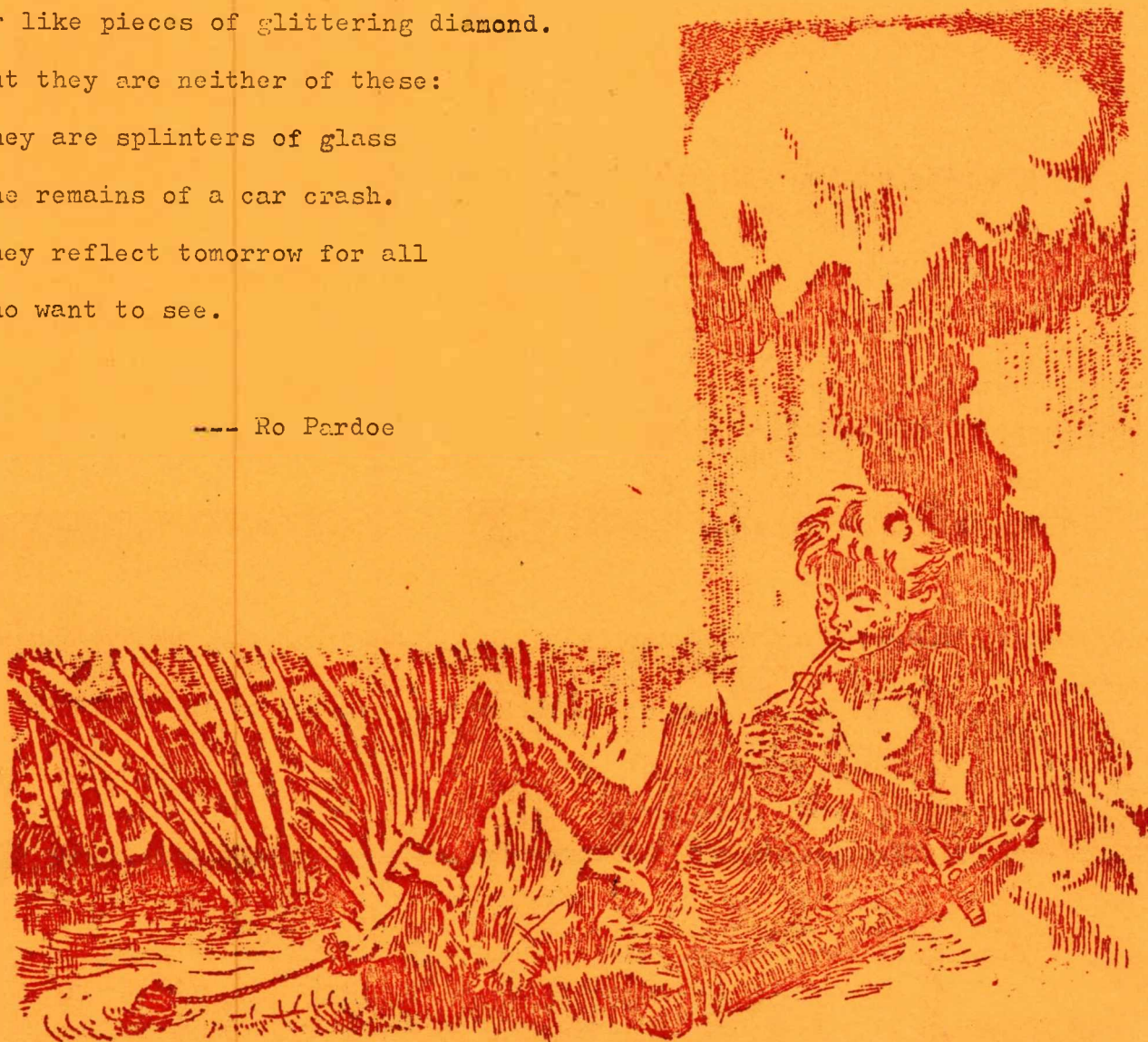
They are splinters of glass

The remains of a car crash.

They reflect tomorrow for all

Who want to see.

--- Ro Pardoe





# THE ORIGINAL SHAGGY DOG STORY

Once upon a yonk or two ago, their, or perhaps there lived, or perhaps existed (for they had no goggle-boxes) a goodly Kingy by the name of Art. He was the king who ate, slept, and was drunk, artily, hence the name.

He was also the owner of a fantastic gert big wound table, on which he ate his square nosh, and wrote his round robbings &c apart from which, once a decimal month, he gave his wages and orders to his fort Knights. He wasn't silly; he made them earn their keep.

"Yugabugadoo" he exclaimed, as he dished out his requirements. "Has every Knight now got a dragon to slay, a dam cell to rescue or summat? ??  
??? ?? ?????? ?? ??????"

The question marks flew thick and fast, but no one was injured until a squeek crept across the table and hit the king in the lug hole. "No Sire" it went, throwing back a few question marks for fun.

"Ooooh spoke or spake?" bawled the king, for although it was the KING'S English, Art weren't no cop at it.

"I did, your kingship" replied the squeek from t'other side of the table. "Then stand up and be recognized" for the king was not artful enough to stand on his throne to peep at the squeeker. "I am standing, kingy" the squeek peeped. "Then pop round here, so as I can peep at your knightly personage, you micro bod. I have but one last order before the Queen calls 'Time', the old..."

"And what is that" the microknight asked before Jake could close his punctuation marks.

"Map the other side of the mountain, it says on this card from box umpteen". "BUT I HAVE NO HORSE, YER SIRESHIP" muttered the mite, in block capitals, for tiz an important line of text in this saga.

"Don't flap" (preview of line after next)

At this juncture in lolloped the ORIGINAL shaggy dog.

"Don't flap" (told you!) cried the king, on account of having sampled some Vurguzz a passing Gurfan had him hooked on. So with that, the hound tippytoed to the saddlemaker's, for he knew what his kingship had in mind.

Hee haa... the following morn, the unlikely pair set off, but as it was summer in England, the weather was inclement. "I think we will take a slight pause" he said shortly to Henry, his @4ped companion. (Note! @4ped = kerwodroped, but Jake couldn't spell it.) "Fer my armour is fast becoming rusty."

So with that the soggy pair sought the shelter of an inn. out there. But alas and alack they were thINN on the ground INN this neck (Tar) of the woods.

THE LAST (and perhaps the most gruelling) part of the Testament According to Saint Jake, fondly known as THE ORIGINAL SHAGGY DOG STORY.....

EEEEEEEVENTUALLY a Watney's sign came into view, but the knocker was too  
EEEEEE high for our micro mate, so they plodded their weary wet way to  
EE EEEE the next, but meanwhile the rain got worse, and the wind howled  
EE EEEE wilder &c.  
EEEEEE -----oOo-----

"Oh pish tish, my four footed friend, at this inn I must stand on your saddle to enable me to wring yon knocker," which he did.

"I be rotten 'orrible sorry lad, but I be right flippin' chock full at the moment, a bunch of fen 'ave me right full up with a con, but a mere 'andful (rigged to read binary, of course) of leagues up the road lies yet another 'umble pad, with a possibility of a kip, so why doant 'ee 'ave a bash there, me (ole darlin'"

His accent was so thick, it was inx keeping with the rest of this saga. On they staggered, with the thunder and lightning worse than ever. At the next inn, their luck changed; it got worse. "Oh dear, no roomes" bawled the gaffer, "Try the farm down the path a micro light year yonder, if you can find it in the rain, mist, better luck next time, lightning, hail, thunder, &c."

So on they staggered, finally arriving at the farm, whereupon the door was flung open wide and a friendly voice boomed out "Do come in, I couldn't leave a knight out on a dog like this.....

- perpetrated by Ramblin' Jake

.....







"You realize of course that when word of this  
gets around we'll be the laughing stock of  
all Melanesia."



Cry  
of the  
Wild  
ghus



ARCHIE MERCER: 10 Lower Church Lane, St Michaels, Bristol BS2 8BA

A point which I fail quite to see is that of crediting artwork by page numbers and then not numbering the pages, not even indicating for certain whether the cover counts as page one or not. The bit about interurban American railways was interesting. They have similar things on the continent, of course which still linger in places.

The only occasions I can recall having sat at the 'taps' end of the bath were when, now and again, my brother and myself were doubled-up for maximum productivity or something. As the elder, I had to tolerate the awkward end.

ROGER WADDINGTON: 4 Commercial Street, Norton, Malton, Yorks.

It was fascinating to read of your American experiences; a year seems almost too long to wait for the next instalment. I was wondering where you stood, though, on the proposal to have a national Railway Museum at York instead of at Clapham (or vice versa if you take the other view). Speaking as a stout Yorkshireman, I'd favour York; but as you're living in London, it throws the question wide open! And it would be better if you could find somewhere to run the exhibits as they once were, and not leave them standing as museum pieces... as they did in America, of course! And there's the local Railway Preservation Society which I really must join, running both steam and diesel along one of the most scenic lines in Yorkshire, (I don't dare say anything more!) though not along the whole length of it, more's the pity.

And harking back to Johnny Berry, I think that there'll be as much to look back on in this age of fandom as there was in the earlier ones; it's just that we're not recognizing it as such now. And despite the rumours I hear of our decline, I'm sure we haven't fallen yet, or ever will. Not until the last fan on earth sits in his lonely room, &c &c. Fandom, like the world, has always been going to the dogs; only we never quite get there.

I thought the illos were particularly good; but when and where did you get that Gaughan illustration - I think that should make a tale worth the telling. (++) at the Ozarcon in Saint Louis, 1968 ++)

TERRY JEEVES: 230 Bannerdale Road, Sheffield S11 9FE

I enjoyed the bit on the private railway system. It sounds like a much elaborated version of a local tramway museum which has trams from all over Europe (it is at Crich in Derbyshire). They have a short length of track which formerly belonged to a quarry, and you can have rides up and down on all sorts of vehicles. I plan to do some filming there this holiday when my new Quarz 5 arrives.

The colour work... this sort of thing is what British fandom needs more of, and is not only afraid to experiment with, but never appreciates the work involved in producing. I have made numerous experiments with this in both TRIODE and ERG, and would make more, except that the only response is a long, loud silence. It really adds distinction to a fanzine.

ED REED: 668 Westover Road,  
Stamford, Connecticut 06902

Ken Cheslin's story was very, very good. Perhaps the best piece of fan fiction I've read in a year. It was, how you say it, masterfully succinct.

TOM PENMAN: 14 Winterbottom St.  
South Shields, County Durham

Speaking of illos, wh. didn't you use that one on page 15 of (Spinge) 21 as a cover, if you haven't in the past, that is. Strangely enough, it reminds me of an illustration for a Walter de la Mere poem in a childrens' book I used to have. A young girl sat on a white charger pausing and pawing the air before a similar Bifrost type bridge leading over to the same castle-in-the-air thing, done in the style of (well, I've forgotten his name, but he was French and did posters).



I didn't know Geordies have more red heads (the same goes for blondes and blonds, I suppose?). And I, a member of that noble race, too. Hadawaywithya, Tom! Tut!

What's a BNF? Why Worthington Tower?

And now to Les Spinge 21. The Santos was a minor masterpiece. If the home-brew wine was the equivalent of home-brew beer you have my I'm not sure what, condolences, maybe? I don't think fanzines have often much to do with SF, just SF fandom. Publish and be damned, as they say. Provided you don't use microscopic print, that is. Overall 21 was very good, once my eyes had adjusted; why, even the back cover illustrates the superiority of the Blue Star. Ed Cox's LoC: People read SF for entertainment, sure, but I for one would like to see some good writing in the field. Now I know SF is a branch of engineering; John W. Campbell states that it is definitely not literature, but maybe that's due to his kind of influence and mentalities anyway. So 'Call me Conrad' or 'This Immortal' had none of the easy grace of any good first-person mystery story which it attempted" (and was being a mystery story its intention anyway?) - honestly, did it matter that much? I'd rather read a story by Zelazny than a mystery in say Asimov's competent vein. After all, 'Star Trek' is highly entertaining - you get a laugh if nothing else - but it's not exactly the image of SF I'd like to see being put around. I'm getting tired of childrens' programmes being called SF. I don't think merely entertainment should be all one looks for. Don't get me wrong, I don't particularly like most of the New Thing and most of New Worlds is ridiculous now, but at least it's trying to put over another image, called Literate. It's stuff like 'The Drowned World' and 'Call me Conrad' that



are going to take SF out of the 'kiddies' corner, not entertaining but very mediocre stuff by Leinster, Asinof, Simak, and (Ghod help me) J.R.Fearn.

(++ the Bifrost type cover you mention was used as the cover of LES SPINGE 11. ++ A BNF is a Big Nosed Fan, or possibly Big Noisy Fan. On occasion it is used in the sense Big Name Fan, mostly by people who apply it to themselves when they are making out that they are big fish in our rather small pond. ++ Worthington Tower was the interlocking plant situated at the flat crossing of the N&W (mile 8.6) and Penn Central (mile 130.0) tracks north of Columbus. Originally it had control of the crossing, but latterly served only as a train order station. It was closed in November 1968. The crossing is now controlled by the N&W Dispatcher at Portsmouth, Ohio. The Worthington Tower building was a familiar landmark to ORM motormen at the south end of the ORM's track, which ran here alongside the N&W. ++)

JAN DUNLOP: Gloucester House, Broadmoor Hospital, Crowthorne,  
Berks. RG11 7EG

The Question: there lies a person full of a soft intimacy, harbouring tranquil desires to be pleasing to another, yet this need is of a special kind, delicate and all-embracing; full of a sweetness that is perceived as a quality which can and will absorb and smother the knowledge of an inner power; which if in turn it was allowed to erupt, could and would ruin your own life... it is a subjective philosophical duality in a way, for answers and recognized and immediately glimpsed.

John Hall's honest self-expressions are of a forthright nature. He is very much an open guy yet has quiet thoughts with regard to his own inner emotions. He makes an amusing contribution about life in its basic tense, while at the same time shows the apathy that comes when people hide behind facades built up from the result of the pressures in society. He is, I think, somebody worth taking apart and putting back together again... he can interpret that what ever way he likes, though I guess he'd really like another person to know him as he wishes to be known; simple in tastes and likeable if given the chance.

Ken Cheslin's stuff is good; he ought to do a lot more. It is very difficult to write a three minute fiction, yet he appears to have accomplished this in an easy style. Good for him.

JTGrant: drifter of the mind, wallower of intrinsic values and cosmic drifts in his inner sanctum, a close fellow and a silent observer of the hidden meanings in life. Borders on psychic-phenomena interests.

Pablo? Is this another fanzine that you run?

(++ Pablo is an OMPazine which lately has become the vehicle for my more informal OMPA comments, such as n/cs, accounts of our travels, and so on. Pablo rarely runs to more than four or five pages, and is probably of no interest outside OMPA ++

(++ I have a few lines left on this page; no room to start a new letter here, so I'll just plug a Worthy Cause instead: JEEVESFORTAFFJEEVESFOR  
TUFFJEEVESFORTAFFJEEVESFORTAFFJEEVESFORTAFFJEEVESFORTAFFJEEVESFORTAFFJ  
EEVESFORTAFFJEEVESFORTAFFJEEVESFORTAFFJEEVESFORTAFFWOMBATJEEVESFORTAFF

The editorial nattering about trolley cars was very welcome, because I've recently been experiencing an upsurge of interest in this lost cause. You know my fannish reputation for staying at home, and when I tell you that I went fifty miles just to look at some stationary streetcars parked in the terminal of the East Broad Top Railroad, you'll comprehend how greatly I've been moved by this recent notion. (The East Broad Top is a narrow-gauge railroad which continues in operation as a tourist attraction in Pennsylvania, but the operators have collected a batch of motionless trolley cars as a side attraction. I rode the steam cars, too).

You see, Hagerstown was one of the key towns in the last surviving interurban streetcar system east of Chicago. This was the Hagerstown and Frederick Railway, which began before the turn of the century and didn't carry its last passenger until 1954, although by then it was no longer serving Hagerstown itself. It was the interurban system you'd least expect to last so long because it had done everything wrong almost from the start. It never had adequate financing. It didn't hook into the unbroken network of trolley rails that had been spun over much of the East so you couldn't get much more than 25 miles from Hagerstown without stopping or waiting for a train or hiring a horse. Worst of all, its management laid down its tracks along the most improbable routes, as if they were deliberately avoiding the most heavily populated areas and the towns where they would be most likely to get passengers. I suppose that this last phenomenon might be related to the financial problems, since it must have been cheaper to avoid the right of way expenses along travelled roads where houses had naturally been built. Trolley tracks ran right out Summit Avenue past my house, and the car barn was originally only a block and a half south of my home, until it burned down and they used another building two blocks north of here. If London's libraries obtain all the exotic American books, you might like to hunt for Blue Ridge Trolley, a biography of this interurban that was published this year by Golden West Books, written by Herbert H. Harwood Jr. Most of the pictures in it that were taken in Hagerstown show the city pretty much as it is today.

I haven't read 'The Passover Plot'. But I can recommend to sceptics and to broadminded believers alike a fictional treatment of the same basic theme the 1915 novel by George Moore, 'The Brook Kerith.' My copy is a British Penguin edition, but I acquired it a long time ago and don't know if you can still get it over there in a cheap edition. Moore portrays Jesus as a non-divine human but a good, wise one who lets himself be stampeded in a weak moment into claiming divinity. After he is removed living from the cross, he decides to retreat into obscurity, and the book's climax comes when years later Saint Paul accidentally encounters him and decides that he must continue to proclaim the divine Christ despite the evidence of his own eyes.

It's a strange thing about 'Things to Come'; the part that rings false to me now is something that has never bothered anyone else in my experience. I find the scientists who piece together the shattered world of the future utterly repulsive and I keep wishing that

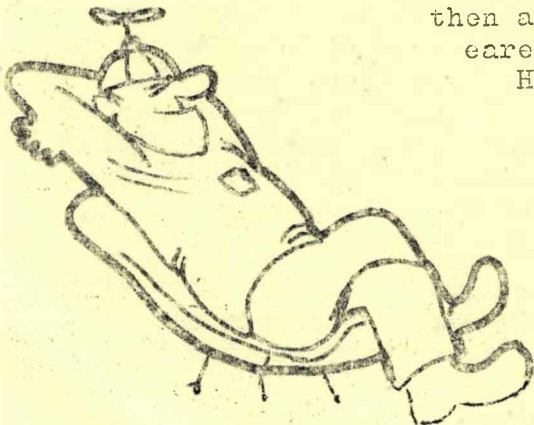


ARTHUR CRUTTENDEN: Idiocy Couchant, 11 Heath Lodge Site, Welwyn,  
Herts.

Ken's story is a nicely written little piece of nothing.

.....

Who says there's no publishing activity in the UK these days? And if Ian Williams can really bring back Harry Bell into the fold as he says he hopes to do, he'll have done all fandom a great service. Come back, Harry....please?



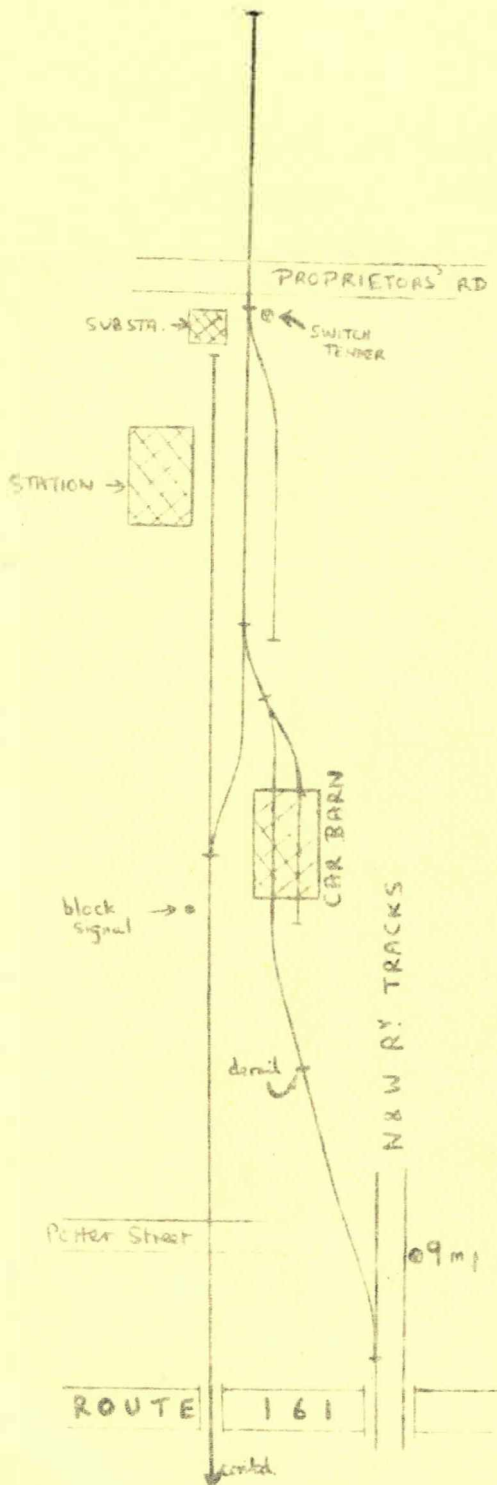




# WORTHINGTON TOWER---Part Two.

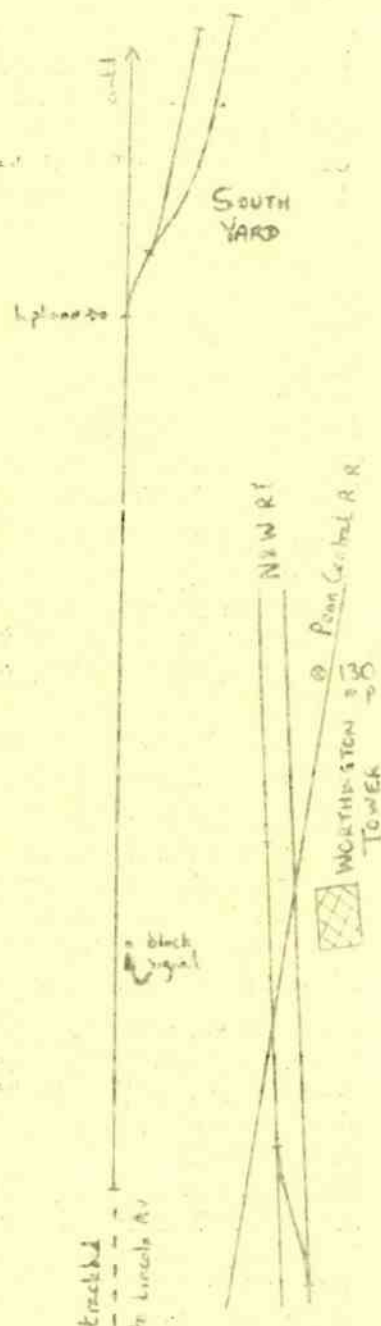
I said last time I'd write some more about the Ohio Railway Museum. The maps on this and the next page show the track layout of the museum, although they are diagrammatic, and not to scale. In particular, the line north of Proprietors' Road is about a half-mile long and curves round to the west through almost 90° immediately north of the crossing. When the line was laid, in 1950, the old CD&M trackbed was clear right up to Rt.23 but since then a house has been built across it just past the present end of track. Further extensions will thus have to be at the south end of the line (where the ORM owns a half mile of the old trackbed already.) The house was built in such a way that the bedroom window faced the ORM track. Thus, when running at night and approaching the end of the line the headlight (all American trains have headlights) shone right into the poor guy's bedroom window. That must have annoyed him quite a lot, but after all we were there first, and bad design on some architect's part couldn't be blamed on the ORM. He must have been woken up a few times when in bed, because he planted a tree between his window and the railway line. It's grown up big enough now that it forms an effective shield, and I suppose the person who lives in that house isn't disturbed in his slumber nowadays.

Trips on the ORM usually started from the main track outside the station. There was a dispatcher on duty in the station office who controlled the general running of the trains (especially necessary when we had two trains running at one time, as was customary on Sundays. Once or twice we even operated three at one time, which called for careful control and written train orders for all movements). The train crew consisted of a motorman and a conductor. When driving I would wait for the conductor's signal to move off; he had the responsibility of making sure that nobody was rushing to get on or off when the train started. There was a speed limit of 5 mph through the station yard area, with especial care over the double curve by the car barn. The bell



was rung continually through this area, for the benefit of people who might be on or about the tracks (especially stepping out from the far side of the car barn without looking). The end of the yard was marked by the block signal just south of the station siding. This signal worked in connection with the one at the south end of the track. Normally no aspect was shown, but as a train approached it a white aspect lit up, which indicated that the line was clear. Simultaneously the red aspect lit up at the far end of the block to prohibit entry from that end. A further car approaching the signal in the same direction would see the white aspect and thus be warned that the line ahead was occupied. The signal system was able to count the number of trains entering and leaving the block, and the signals didn't return to the **normal** unlit state until the block was completely unoccupied. Special arrangements had to be made for trips to the south yard (put in after the signals were installed) since a train pulling in at that switch would leave the block without passing the switch in the overhead at the far end. These 'special arrangements' usually involved someone opening the relay box for the signals and counting the train in question out on the relays; this was done under orders from the dispatcher, of course.

South of the block signal the **maximum** speed allowed was 30 mph, and the line ran between the Worthington Food Co. factory on the right and the premises of a dealer in second-hand railroad equipment on the left. Quite an industrial stretch of track. At Potter St. crossing a warning on the horn was obligatory; this was the traditional signal used on all US railroads for a long, long time. Two long, one short, one long. Beyond Potter Street a slowing down for the bridge over Rt. 161, a major road, was called for. This bridge had a limit of 10 mph, imposed by the highway authority when they gave us permission to rebuild it. Before the bridge was put in a few years ago, services terminated at the north side of the road, and a telephone was installed at this point for convenience in contacting the dispatcher for train orders and so on. Now however the 'phone has been moved to the South Yard, of which more anon, although the old box on the pole where it used to be is still there, and gives rise





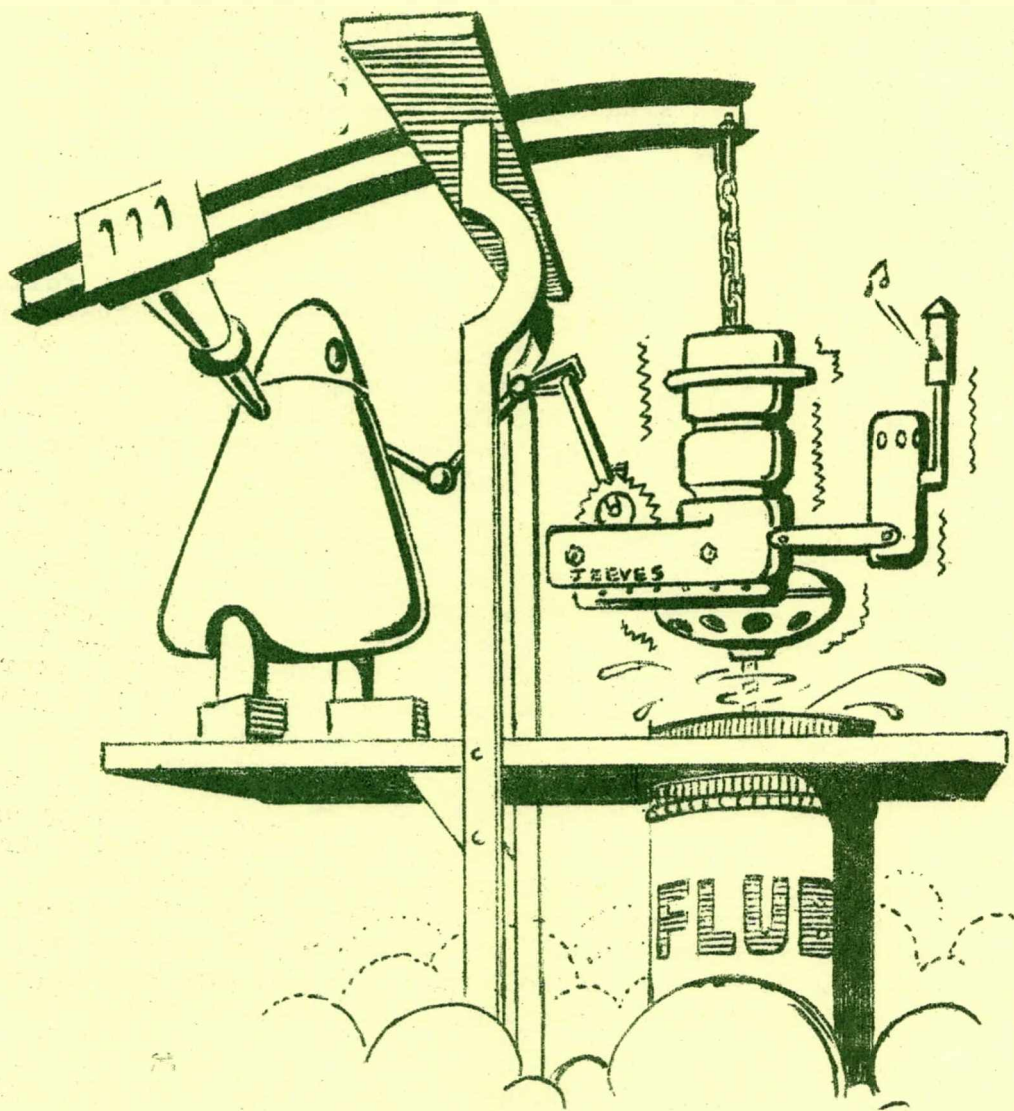
to some speculation on the part of passengers. There are in fact three bridges side by side over Route 161 at this point. On the west side is the ORM bridge, in the middle the bridge of the Norfolk & Western, and on the east the Penn Central (former New York Central System). And a little way down the road is the freeway bridge where I-71 crosses over Rt. 161. So the area is somewhat congested with bridges of one kind or another.

Beyond the road bridge one came to the South Yard. This was put in over the winter of 1967/68 and consisted of two sidings. Mostly it was used to store stock, relieving the sidings in the station area which were becoming overcrowded. On a few occasions when the traffic became intense, we ran three trains at once, and on these occasions trains crossed at the south yard. A switch tender was installed at the switch to the South Yard, armed with the regulation red, yellow and green flags, and fuses. He kept in touch with the dispatcher using the telephone installed here; when there were three trains on the line all movements were controlled by written train orders. This was an essential safety measure. But most of the time, as I said, the yard was used only for storage, and the switch was unlocked only at the start and end of the day's operations. We mostly used the sidings to keep the N&W passenger coach and the electric locomotive in

South of the South Yard the overhead was suspended for fast running on catenary, not on single poles. This enabled fairly high speeds to be achieved, in the region of 55-60mph in good conditions, though only briefly. Running off the end of the track was frowned upon. When the track is extended the extra half mile down to Lincoln Ave. more sustained high speed running will be possible. After all, the CHS&M car no. 154 was an interurban and regularly ran at 90-95mph.

All too soon we came to the block signal marking the end of the block. Approaching from this end a green aspect was shown by the signal, corresponding to the red shown to a train approaching in the opposite direction. As soon as the switch in the overhead was passed the signal returned to its normal darkened condition, unless a second train had entered the block at the far end, in which case it stayed as it was until the second train came through.

The end of the track was just that. The rails stopped, and the only barrier across them was a single tie placed crossways on top of the metals and roped to them. It was quite feasible to run past this barrier and off the end of the track, and in fact it happened once. Some repairs had been done to the FCC car, no. 450 from the Illinois Terminal RR. Now, this car is totally electric in its operation. The normal form of streetcar braking was air-brakes, mostly positive braking, not the negative (vacuum) brake so beloved of the British railway companies. However no. 450 had electrical brakes, and in order to provide for the possibility of the pole coming off the overhead and the braking function thereby being lost, the car also carried batteries which could be used to brake the car in an emergency. On the occasion under discussion, they took it out for a test run after some repairs, but forgot to put the batteries back in. A good speed was notched up on the south part of the line, but just as the motorman was about to slow down as he approached the end of the track, what should happen but the pole coming off the overhead.



There was a slight joggle in the track there which the p/way department hadn't yet got around to fixing. The brakes were applied, but of course with no power either from overhead or batteries available, nothing happened. The car ran right off the end of the track at about 35 mph and ground to a halt on the gravel surface beyond. It took two weeks work with jacks and crowbars by the museum members to get the car back on the line. Strict instructions were then issued that the final 200yd or so (past the block signal) of the line should always be



taken at no more than 20mph, and that a brake test should be made by all southward trains immediately after passing the South Yard. It never did happen again, fortunately.

Alongside the track was the parallel tracks of the N&W, and on the far side of them was the Worthington tower, approximately in the same location as the block signal on the ORM track. Here the N&W and the NYC lines crossed on the level. The Tower is probably demolished by now; it was put out of use in late 1968 after serving only as a train order office for some time.

Beyond the end of the ORM track the bed continued as a grass and shrub-grown gravelly path. Alongside it and about 5 yards distant was the route of a gas main or something similar. This was kept clear of vegetation and enabled the route of the CD&M trackbed to be followed without much difficulty. The Penn Central (NYC) track was also alongside, on the left on the far side of a drainage ditch, a distance of 10 yards or so. After half a mile was Lincoln Avenue, the limit of the land at the present owned by the ORM. The PC and N&W tracks here have a level crossing with the roadway, controlled by flashing red lights and lifting barriers. The lights are standard, the barriers somewhat unusual for the US. If the ORM track ever crossed over Lincoln Avenue here, I assume that lights and barriers would be required for its track also. The old CD&M trackbed continues beyond Lincoln Avenue as a wide grassy verge to Indianola Avenue, which runs parallel to it on the west side. It would be perfectly feasible to reinstate the track along this section if Lincoln Avenue could be crossed. The trackbed finally ends about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mls. further on, where the CD&M crossed Morse Road, now a busy thoroughfare. The bridge has gone here, and beyond Morse Road the trackbed is built over in places, though still there for the most part.

Returning to the present end of track. The conductor got out of the car here and reversed the trolley poles. The pole was always trailed by the car, so on reversal the one at the back was pulled down off the wire and the one at the front put up, ready for travel the other way. The ORM never had one of those triangular structures of trolley wire which enabled the car to reverse without going through the ritual of pole changing. Probably they required a special mounting on the car anyway.

The train now returned to the station by the same route. Beyond the station the substation was passed on the left, where the power for the running of the line came from. It was a motor-generator set which in its first incarnation ran the Columbus city trackless trolleys (in the terms of British nomenclature, trolley-buses). When they were withdrawn a few years back, the ORM bought the generating equipment. Power was taken from the public supply at 13,000 volts (3-phase AC) and converted by the motor-generator to 600v DC which supplied the overhead. It was capable of supplying power to two trains at once, just about. If three trains wanted to draw power at the same time, the cutouts would operate to prevent an overload on the system. Previous to purchasing the motor-generator set the ex-Erie RR Gas-Electric Rail Motor Car was hitched up to the overhead to provide power. It was still available as an emergency measure in case of failure in the substation or of the public supply.

Opposite the substation was the switch for the siding where trains were crossed when more than one was operated at a time. A switch tender was stationed here most Sundays and on Saturdays in mid-summer, and I

seemed to get the job quite often. It was fun though. Immediately west of the switch was the level crossing with Proprietors' Road. A dead stop was enforced on all trains proceeding over the crossing. This was a rule imposed by the City of Worthington when they gave us permission to reopen the track over the crossing, and caused some interest among visitors as it was so contrary to the usual rule in the USA, where trains normally just thunder right on through. Of course, motor traffic was also expected to stop, look and listen.

The half mile of track beyond the crossing was the first laid down by the ORM, and had deteriorated to the extent that a 10mph speed restriction was in operation. The line was downhill to the end of track, so mostly motormen would put on a short burst of power at the crossing end, and then coast down to the end on the gradient. From the end of track trains returned to the station area, and arrival there was the end of the normal trip.

I still have things I could talk about regarding the ORM... unusual happenings, for example. The time that I stood guard over the line all one Saturday night to protect it against malicious vandalism by a disgruntled member. The time that it rained 6" in a single hour and flooded out the west end of the track. The midnight raid on the Worthington Tower. And so on... Next issue, though, I shall change the subject. I may return to the ORM at a future date, but in LS24 the topic under discussion will be the Tramways a Vapeur d'Ille et Vilaine. I also have plans for future issues for such diverse things as mileposts, and the signal boxes at Annesley, though the TVd'I&V one is the only one I've really worked on yet.

(DP)

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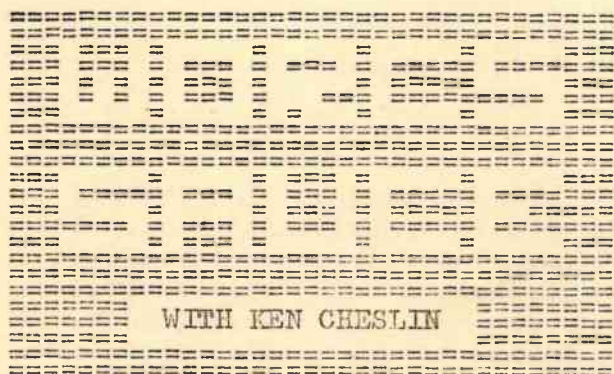
"I came down to breakfast the next morning to find my friend Holmes already up and about. Indeed, I doubt very much that he had been to bed, for the room reeked of tobacco, and dark shadows round his eyes bore witness to many hours of thought upon some deep problem. He looked at me quizzically for a moment, then removed his pipe. A hint of amusement seemed to dance in those dark eyes as he spoke.

'Why, Watson,' he said. 'I perceive that winter and old age have already forced you into donning your long woollen underwear.'

'Incredible, Holmes!' I cried. 'How on earth could you know that?'

'Elementary, my dear Watson,' replied the master. 'You have neglected to put on your trousers.' "





It's ten years since Spinge first saw the light of day, and a lot of metaphorical water has passed under the metaphorical bridge since then. Of the founder members, Mike Kilvert, Pete Davies and myself, there is only me left. Mike went into the army, came out, got married, and was never (figuratively speaking) seen again. Pete Davies went to

work for General Electric, then joined Post Office Telephones, and is beyond human ken (me) nowadays. Of the stage two fensmen, of the great Games Era, there survive myself and Tony Hill; Jack Raybould seems to have succumbed to a combination of wife and four kids, cameramania, model soldiermania and mundania. Each Monday evening, ghu willing, I go up to see Tony, and we fight the Battle of the Bulge, or Blitzkrieg, or Waterloo... we still have one game to try, but that is the complicated "1914". Of the third stage fensmen, Dave Hale, by way of Manchester, ended up in Brum and is now wandering in the valley of past fen; only myself and Darroll remain. Of course, there are the two honorary Stourbridgeites, Alan Rispin and Jhim Linwood, still existing somewhere. Somewhere. I feel like a thread of continuity.

Someone was saying in an earlier Spinge words to the effect that why do we not do such and such to resolve or get around a certain war games situation - something like an impregnable position. Well, there are several reasons why one does not just get around certain situations. In the first place, we in some games play with fixed positions and with fixed armaments. It would be rather silly to have our American Civil War troops come up with 1914-1918 weapons. Nor should we allow pre-1330 troops cannon. However, mining would be all right. The whole point about these games is to get as close to the real situation as possible. Without certain limitations there can be no game.

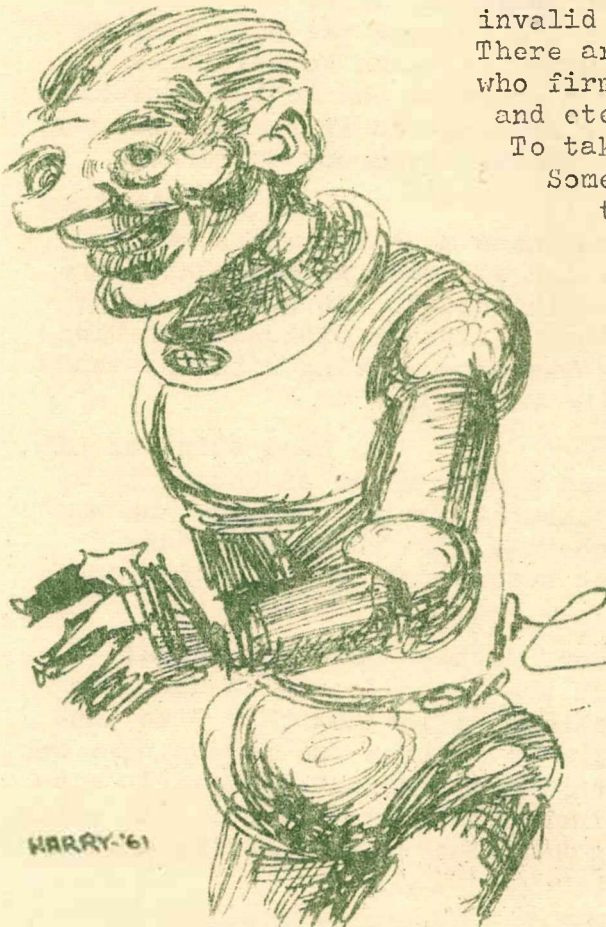
This applies to other things than games, of course; although it may be all very well in fiction to take liberties with fact, and sway whole nations for the sake of the plot, in reality the swaying of any body of opinion is very hard. I remember that when I was doing research for one of my studies in my last year at college I came across the perfectly obvious fact, presented at the end of a long piece of research in the States, that people tend to let facts which are contrary to their preconceived opinions go in one ear and out of the other. Even more obvious was the fact that people tended to change TV channels and so on when presented with a political broadcast favouring the opposing party. All this means, as we should know anyway, is that in spite of all the blather about making fair judgments, listening to the other fellow's view, trying to weigh a situ-

ation solely on its merits; when it comes right down to it we are ruled by our prejudices... which we tend to pick up early in life from our nearest and dearest. Politics is like religion, a matter of belief. One can convince oneself of the rightness of one's own views easily enough, by citing those in one's own party who are too Tory for oneself as extremists, and those too Labourish as too extremist the other way. Thus, one can always pride oneself on being a reasonable, fairminded, middle-of-the-road sort of bloke.

Unless one has received The Message, of course. This is merely an extreme sort of self opinionation where one has discovered what is wrong with the world, and how to put it right. The chief characteristic of this sort of person is the bulldozer approach and the deaf ear. Some grow out of it. It is people of this sort whom one finds in the ranks of the political parties, church movements... er, the Jesuits. It is futile to argue because reason has no effect on fanatics. If you reason against his beliefs - faith - you are making a personal attack on his ego, and everything you say is rejected, or remembered in a way that can be twisted into a weapon against yourself or as a support to his 'religion.' As with all religions, extreme political belief is based on a theoretical universe and not on the real one. One operates, lives and thinks within a frame of reference which one is convinced is the real world, but which in reality is only a facet or view of the real world. A similar person is the one who is constantly talking in terms of what 'ought' to be done, terms of what is 'right' or 'wrong'. These are value judgments, and as such are invalid in ascertaining the real world. There are millions upon millions of people who firmly believe that there are universal and eternal 'truths' in the realm of ideas. To take only two rather simple examples.

Some Greek mercenaries were asked if they would eat their fathers. They hotly rejected the idea as horrible. The king, Xerxes maybe, asked some other mercenaries, Scythians perhaps, if they would consent to burn their dead, like the Greeks. Of course, they recoiled in horror at the thought; 'Let us decently eat our dead' they replied. (This is a true tale, culled from Xenophon, I think).

See?



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The twenty-eighth world science fiction convention, held in Heidelberg last August, was the first ever to be held in a non-English speaking country. It can I think be accounted a success. I had no difficulties over language, but this may have been because much of the programme was in English anyway.

I have some criticisms, of course. The Stadthalle was a bad place to hold a convention. For one, it was not a hotel, and so the convention programme of the day was physically separated from the social contacts which make up an important part of the evening and night, as well as the day. And attendants were on hand to lock up the place at midnight and turf everyone out. As a result of this use of the Stadthalle, there was no single 'convention hotel'. Rather, all the hotels performed the function usually assigned to overflow hotels. The convention was fragmented.

Another criticism is the diffuseness of the programme. Worthy items were presented, but they seemed not to hang together into a coherent whole. Perhaps the size and acoustics of the hall were partly responsible, but I gained the impression that the programme was not viewed as a single entity but the various parts planned in isolation.

To counterbalance, there are things I must praise. It's a pity I and Ro had to miss the boat trip on the last day, but from hearsay evidence it seems to have been almost a stroke of genius and formed a splendid end to the convention. It's interesting to note that a similar end is planned for the next British convention. Today the Neckar, tomorrow Sabrina.

Another laurel wreath is awarded for the business meeting, which was a model of its kind. Phil Rogers ruled all with an iron hand, and the necessary motions were passed with enough, but not too much, discussion. And I welcome the return of the traditional rotation plan. I can't help comparing this business meeting with the shambles at the last one I attended (the Baycon).

The best thing of all was Ted Tubb's speech, which covered a wide range of topics in a way which had been most carefully thought out beforehand, and was marvellously delivered. Sad though that even Ted's legendary abilities as an auctioneer were not successful in the matter of tandem bicycles.

I enjoyed the Heicon, perhaps more than usual. I like the idea of the Eurocons which the Heicon seems to have inspired. I like Germany, and Heidelberg, a lot now that I've actually been there. Finally, I'd like to mention two happenings. One was Jake Grigg and Brian Burgess taking a rise out of Bavaria with an 'old English Folk Dance' - an incredibly funny sight. The other was driving up a one way street in Heidelberg, and meeting a tram COMING THE OTHER WAY. Wheee.

# LES SPINGE

|    |           |                |           |                       |
|----|-----------|----------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| 1  | - - - -   | Autumn 1959    | - -       | Editor <b>Cheslin</b> |
| 2  | - - - - - | April 1960     | - - - - - | Cheslin               |
| 3  | - - - - - | July 1960      | - - - - - | Cheslin               |
| 4  | - - - - - | Winter 1960    | - - - - - | Cheslin               |
| 5  | - - - - - | Spring 1961    | - - - - - | Cheslin               |
| 6  | - - - - - | August 1961    | - - - - - | Cheslin               |
| 7  | - - - - - | September 1961 | - - - - - | Hale                  |
| 8  | - - - - - | March 1962     | - - - - - | Hale                  |
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