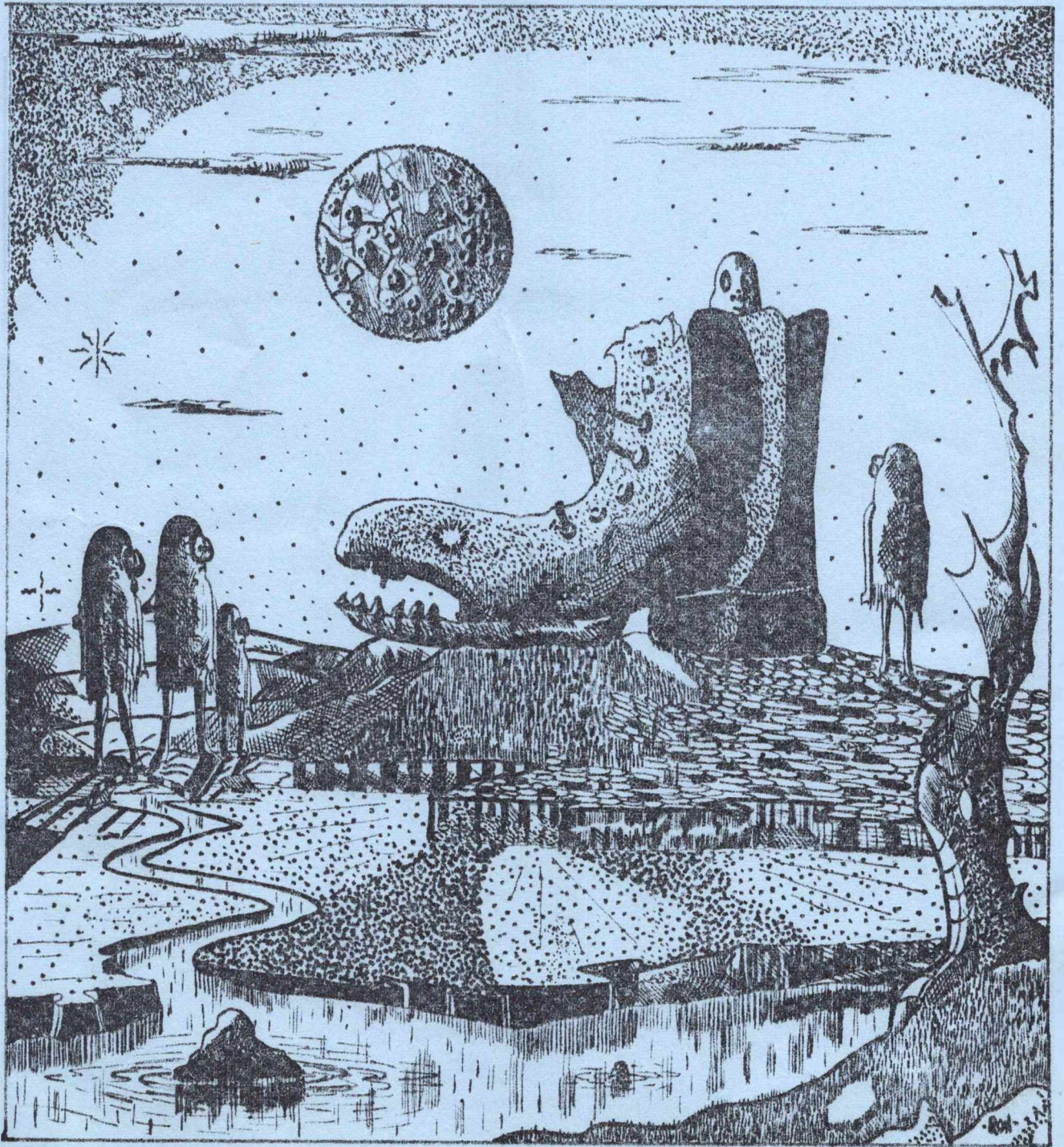
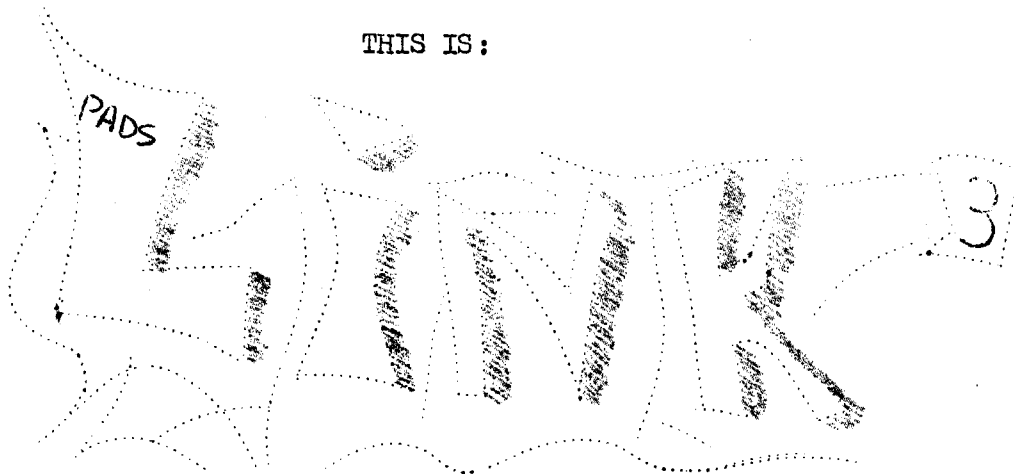


19 May

# LINK 3



THIS IS:



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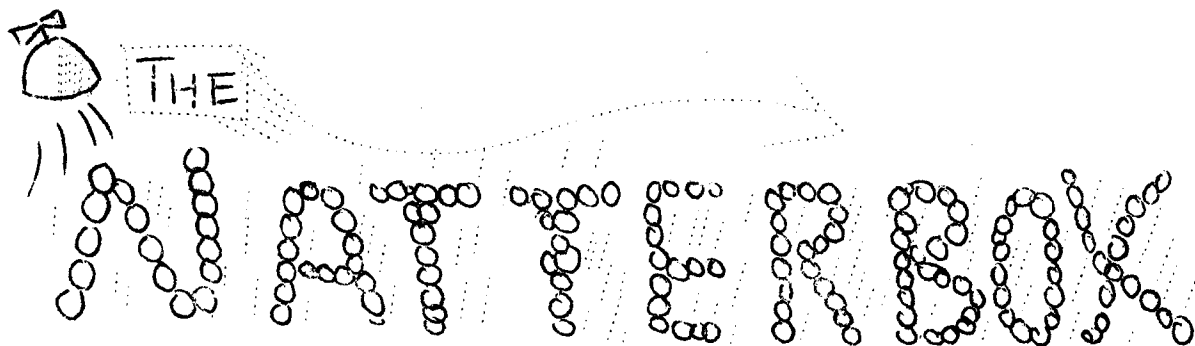
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All artwork in thish by RON McGUINNESS with the following exceptions:  
 Heading, p. 12 - done by an anon. friend; illo, p.23 by Philk Harbottle, via Charles Platt; and illo, p.26 by Moira Read - much appreciated, thanks.

Bacover dedicated to Ron Bennett, who says LINK is a "way-out" fanzine ...



GUEST EDITORIAL

..... Doreen Parker.

Dictionary definition of LINK : "To join; to become joined; a ring in a chain; a part of a connected series."

"A ring in a chain; a part of a connected series." These definitions appealed to me strongly when I looked up LINK in my dictionary. This is what fandom means to me - a series of rings, widening to envelop and enfold others, but allowing and being allowed to develop your own views, and considering those of others.

It is nearly two years since I joined the BSEA and thereby became involved in fandom. My first letter was a "Welcome to the Association" from Archie Mercer (who else?), who recommended books and fanzines to me; through reading these, I began desultory correspondence with one or two other fans. They in turn recommended other fans with whom to discuss the ideas and suggestions which had arisen in our correspondence. (A good example of this was when Ken Cheslin sent me Beryl's address. I wrote to her, and then met her, along with the rest of the Brummies. I wonder if Ken ever regrets that introduction, in view of what happened on my first visit?). Each time, the circle widened, another link was formed, and the chain became bigger.

It is truly amazing to me how many different viewpoints there can be among fans who have the same basic interests. Among my correspondents are fans with whom I swap jokes (for the most part unprintable!), discuss right and left wing politics, consider whether God exists as a superior being (that's a three-way argument with Archie and Beryl; my back is against the wall and I am fighting for my life!), discuss modern poetry (as compared with traditional poetry), classical music, opera, history, etc. Occasionally, even science fiction creeps in ....

I like the link that is formed through belonging to the BSEA, and I think it is good for me. It has taught me to think more deeply, and to consider other points of view. It has taught me to be more tolerant because (naturally) among people of different ages, temperament, interests and upbringing there is bound to be occasional conflict. And I have now learned that other people are entitled to their own views, even if they differ widely from mine (which they often do), and no matter what happens in the future, I believe that Fandom came to me (or I went to it), at the right time. It is an experience I would not have missed for anything.

PEBBLE IN THE POOL.

Ray Allen, the ventriloquist, was on TV last night, with his inebriated dummy, Lord Jim. At one point, the "Rolling Stones" group was the subject under discussion, and Lord Jim announced, "... and I wouldn't allow such goings-on if they were my daughters." "They're boys," said Ray in his own voice. "Do they know?" asked Lord Jim.

There are ~~always~~ all the cracks about, "you can tell which is which - the ones with short hair are the girls." And, "the topless dress had to come - it'll soon be the only way you can tell girls from boys."

I recently passed on to Mary some remarks made by a mutual acquaintance about long-haired boys. Mary went up the curtains - she was so mad that her writing went all sprawly! "I could swear this paper to bits - what in God's name has a haircut got to do with the way blokes act? Most of the long-haired chaps I know are more decent (to me, at any rate) than a few-score short-haired bods I know. Honestly, it makes me sick to my stomach when this sort of argument is used." And more of the same.

It's easy to say, fashions change - what is more to the point is the other cliché - history repeats itself. A hundred or so years ago, a short-haired man would have been an object of derision and ridicule. Men who could afford it spent hours with their tailors, and emerged in dazzling, lace-edged finery. And I doubt if there was more effeminacy around in those days than there is now.

I must be honest and admit that I wouldn't like to see my own boys with their hair hanging on their shoulders and into their eyes. But when they are old enough to please themselves about such things - that's exactly what they will be allowed to do - please themselves. Any attempt to force them to do otherwise would be a curtailment of personal liberty.

What does annoy me about the long-haired brigade is that so many of them have latched on to the fashion because they are lazy, and it's less of an effort to let it grow long than to pay regular visits to the barber. And this type is usually basically scruffy and none too meticulous about personal cleanliness. I don't mind how long a guy's hair is as long as it's clean and tidy. I don't mind what kind of clothes he wears, as long as they, too, show some evidence of care and attention. Soap and water are cheap enough, and dry-cleaning doesn't cost the earth, either.

I suppose I shall be told that people should also be allowed to be scruffy and dirty if they want to. Fair enough - but it applies both ways, in that I don't have to like it!

However, if one can be dispassionate about these trends, they have a strange kind of fascination. For instance: are they regressive? Do they portend a return to the fashions and manners of first-Elizabethan times? And if so - may we expect the same type of achievements as happened then? (I doubt it, somehow ... there are so few frontiers left!). Also, one must remember that in the animal world - especially among the birds (feathered variety!), it is, more often than not, the male who is gorgeously plumaged. In comparison, the female is quite drab.

And I can't help wondering just how much of this trend is purely instinctive. After all, the boys, it is said, now outnumber the girls .....

++ BH

# THE MAN WHO

BY IGNATIUS P. POMPERNICKLE

# THOUGHT PAINT...

I came shivering into the waiting room out of the cold night wind that was blowing down the station platform. There were two men sitting on adjacent sides of the room. One of them looked up at me malevolently as I entered, as if he resented the noise of my entrance intruding on the peace of the little room. I moved quickly to a chair near the other man, and sat down. This man had a pewter pot on the floor between his wide-spaced feet. His elbows were resting on his knees and he looked with quiet intensity at this little pot.

I looked round at the dinginess of this dim little room. The chairs were old and scratched, and were upholstered with dirty red leather. The walls were cream, and had cracks running all over them, like some vertical crazy paving. The ceiling was once white, now brownish grey. In each corner of the ceiling were repulsive-looking brown stains. My eyes were irresistibly drawn, however, to the man who sat, elbows on knees, staring fixedly at the pewter pot.

"Er - excuse me -" I began, "but if you feel ill, there's a toilet just round the cor-"

"Shhhhhhhh!" he hissed violently, whipping his head round to face me, fingers pressed to his exposed teeth. He then turned his head back and continued his intense examination of the pot.

I looked away in embarrassment, and continued my examination of the room. The windows were grey, encrusted with grime and laced with cobwebs. In the corner of the room a black-tunnied stove squatted smugly, and above it the crazy chimney zig-zagged its way upward, surrounded by an aura of black soot.

Suddenly the man next to me heaved a long sigh, and leaned back in his chair. The other man relaxed, too, and smiled a little. The first man looked back at me, and I felt compelled to speak.

"Judging by the satisfaction which is evidenced by your actions," I began, "you seem to have achieved something. What it is, though, I have no idea. Would you be so kind as to enlighten me?"

An expression of sheer smugness appeared on the man's face.

"I have just thought some paint," he answered.

There was a brief silence.

"Oh - oh, yes - er - very interesting," I said.

"You don't seem to be very impressed."

"Oh - er - yes, yes I am," I replied, "er - very impressed."

"It's very good paint," insisted the other.

"Yes," said the first, "they just don't make it like that, do they, Fred?"

He looked at the empty pot.

"Just look at that colour. Have you ever seen a green like that before?"

"No," replied Fred. "Such delicacy! Such subtlety!"

"Look at that texture; oh, this is really fine paint! Do you see the way the little wrinkles appear on the surface? It always seems to do that when it's exposed to air."

"Yes," agreed Fred, "It could do with being a little less quick-drying."

"Still, you must admit, it's not bad for a beginner."

I cleared my throat. "Tell me," I said, "how do you manage to do that?"

"What, think paint?"

"Yes."

"Well, it requires great intelligence, much skill, and a great amount of practice, doesn't it, Fred?"

"Yes," Fred concurred, nodding his head slowly and wisely. "Yes, it certainly does."

"Tell me," I said, "can you think anything else other than paint?"

The two men burst into loud laughter.

"Can I think anything else -!" roared the man next to me. "Oh, that's a good one! I can think anything! Anything you like!"

"Hey, Joe," called the other man, "can't you get rid of that stuff? The smell's getting up my nose. You know I can't stand the smell of paint."

"O.K.," agreed Joe. He gave me a cocky glance and began to concentrate again. After a few moments he relaxed.

"Thank goodness for that," sighed Fred.

"You see?" said Joe to me. "I can unthink it, too."

By now I was beginning to get a little annoyed at his faintly superior air. "All right," I said, "let's see you think some beer."

They burst out laughing again.

"Oh, yes," said Joe, "very good. Very good," and he wiped the corners of his eyes.

Now I began to get really angry.

"No, come on," I shouted. "If you're so damn clever, let's see you think some beer. Come on! You're supposed to be so damn good with your blasted superior attitude, let's see if you can think some goddam beer!"

He blanched a little, and peered closely at me.

"Are you serious? You want me to think some beer?"

"Yes, go on; think some beer."

He glanced wildly at the other man, who was staring at me with his mouth open.

"Are you some kind of a nut or something?" he asked. Then he rushed ~~my~~ over to the other man, and they started whispering and pointing at me, now and again glancing in my direction.

Suddenly Fred stood up; then Joe sidled across the room, never taking his eyes off me. He picked up the pot, still looking warily at me, then backed across the room to the door. He held the door open for Fred to scuttle through, then with one last backward glance, he hurried out, slamming the door behind him.

The last I heard of them was their hurried steps, clattering down the platform into the distance.

++ Ignatius P. Pumpernickle.

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ESCAPE FROM WINTER

Gray sent me the record.  
Sweeping strings, and a change of key  
that sends phantom fingers skittering  
down my back.  
"Thanks," I wrote. How inadequate ...

I stumbled from my bed one morning,  
one raw January morning,  
and eyed with mute distaste the cold ashes  
in the grate.  
Looked through the window  
into the darkness of pre-dawn,  
at the sprinkling of new snow on the lawn.  
I sighed for Spring.

Everything  
was so cold - plates, cutlery,  
the sheets on the beds,  
even the record itself, as I placed it  
on the turntable.

But when the needle dropped  
into the spinning groove,  
the room was flooded with July.  
Music - slow, warm, lazy ...  
dappled sunlight falling through thick leaves ...  
I could almost feel it on my face.

Thanks again, Gray, for  
Percy Faith's recording of  
"A Summer Place" ....

++ BH

THE NIGHT - BUMPERS

.... by Beryl Henley

In LINK-1, Doreen Parker wrote an article called "A Psionic Defence." I intended this follow-up article to appear in L-2, but space did not permit.

Several of the loc's we received in response to L-1 mentioned the possibility of a connection between ESP and the occult. Here I must say that I have never attended a seance, nor have I ever, to my knowledge, seen a ghost. I may have heard one once, although even that experience could have had some quite simple, material explanation. However, like Doreen I keep an open mind on this subject.

One aspect of the occult which has intrigued me for years is the activity of poltergeists - mischievous "spirits" which throw things about, disturb furniture, and even cause accidents to people - though never, as far as I know, with fatal results.

I have a vague recollection of one such case, pre-war, which was carefully and thoroughly investigated by a national newspaper. A room in which inexplicable events were taking place after the residents had gone to bed, was photographed, examined for possible secret passages, panels, etc., and then sealed up tight. During the night, bumps and crashes were heard, and when the room was unsealed next morning, furniture had been moved, pictures and ornaments broken, and there was soot on the hearthrug.

This happened many years ago, and I can't recall details, but I don't think any rational explanation was ever given for these strange happenings.

A play called "The Poltergeist," (later produced as a film which featured - I think - Gordon Harker), dealt with the same theme. In this instance, it was discovered that a member of the "plagued" family - a girl in her early teens - was responsible for the damage and accidents which had been happening with frightening frequency. But she had not done these things deliberately; in fact, she hadn't really done them at all. She had wished for the events to happen, and they had happened. If I remember correctly, she didn't want her older sister to marry a certain young man. The latter was due to take part in a horse-jumping contest, and the night before this event, the young girl lay in her bed and muttered vindictively, "I hope he falls and breaks his leg." Needless to say, he did.

I have since learned that, in many houses which are subjected to the activities of poltergeists, there is often a teenager - usually female, though not always. On this basis I offer, for what it is worth, a theory which might account for these strange goings-on. At puberty, the body undergoes great glandular changes, as the child enters into young adulthood. There are physical, mental and emotional upheavals; the temperament may become quite mercurial for a time, alternating between a sudden fit of gloomy depression, and an equally sudden access of wild, infectious gaiety.

I am fairly well-informed about the human endocrine system, and it is a fact that some of the glands are still very much of a mystery, even to the medical profession. The pituitary gland has been called "the leader of the endocrine



orchestra," and it consists of three parts. The anterior part controls the growth of bones; the posterior part produces a secretion which is still being investigated; while the functions of the intermediate part are "not clear."

The thymus gland increases in size until birth, when it slowly shrivels up - and "its uses are quite unknown." The functions of the coccygeal gland are also "still unknown." The same comment applies to the pineal gland, which is sometimes called "the third eye."

(The above information was culled from a medical dictionary published in 1949, and is probably somewhat out-of-date by now. If anyone has any recent information about new discoveries in the endocrine field, I'll be glad to hear about them. However, I have reason to believe that the functions of the pineal-gland - if any - are still unknown).

It is the pineal gland which intrigues me, since it is situated in the brain. Some endocrine authorities believe that it is atrophied; a few disagree. But in view of the tremendous glandular changes which occur at puberty, could it not be that the pineal - or perhaps another gland whose function is still not understood - may suddenly flare into transient, energetic activity, thus stimulating a temporary and uncontrolled psi power? The adolescent would be quite unaware that he or she was the cause of all the disturbance - in fact, he/she would probably be as mystified, and even frightened, as the rest of the family.

But this business of overturned furniture and smashed ornaments, and objects being thrown at people - doesn't that sound like uncontrolled telekinesis? And the "mischievous" element which seems to be a basic feature of poltergeist activity - an adolescent is still at least half-child, after all.

As the teenager progresses towards full maturity, the endocrine system gradually settles down, and (if my theory has any foundation in fact at all), the temporary "power" is lost.

So - if you know of an unfortunate family which is being plagued and potted at by poltergeists - find out if there is an adolescent in that family. If there is, haul him/her off to the Society for Psychical Research to be examined and investigated! You never know - it might be productive of some very interesting results!

("Eight Glands Control Your Destiny ....")

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(see page 22).

"Public schools, like public conveniences, are very private." -- Humphrey Lyttelton, on TV, Dec. 15th 1964.

+ + + + +

Economy : how to spend your money without getting any fun out of it.

+ + + + +

T H E

S L U G G

A F F A I R

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(or, the Real Story behind the writing of the Slough Adelphi Memorial Waltz).

... by Mushvita II, the Gt. O'Reed.

Just after Hagg's 20th Haggday in 1964, Mushling went down to Banbury to open up the Tribal mansion, air the beds, get in the supplies, visit the local copshop and so forth. A few days later, Haggis arrived with all the pomp and ceremony of a 20-year-old Co-Leader - in a wheelbarrow pushed by Ricardo and Norm. Mushling received them at the gate, and Haggis entered the house through the front door - a great honour !

The reason for the visit was that Mushy had agreed to let Crum do a one-niter tour and was taking Hagg to the first night at Slough, for a Haggday treat.

That night was spent in putting up provisions for the next day, and measuting Michael for a new pair of white yukkins. This took some time as Michael is ticklish. However, on Saturday morning they were up early, and sat listening to the ham (which was tuned to Radio Free Tribe), and eating winkles and budgie-on-toast. At 10.23 $\frac{1}{2}$ , Jongear announced that Crumford was going to sing. Immediately Mushling's Mum was almost crushed to a pulp in the rush to get to the ham, and they stood with their ears pressed to it, reefers forgotten, as the Curtis sang "I (who know Haggling)." Haggis choked on her potted kipper 35 times, and was so affected that she agreed to walk downtown to do the shopping with Mushling.

They set off with bag, camera, and CMD lollipop, and arrived at the Church. Here Mushling squatted in the gutter with the "lollipop" and Haggis took a photo of Mushy's left ear. They proceeded to the butcher's and asked for a Flying Haggis, and on being informed that they had none left, they wrecked the joint (!) and moved on, receiving homage and protection money as they went.

Back at the Fairway, Mushling produced a rabbit (not Fred) which she had whipped from a sale-of-work at Chipping Norton Town Hall a few weeks earlier. It was greecen with outstretched arms, rather in the shape of a 'T'. Naturally the only person who could possibly have it was Crumford, and Mushling promptly christened it Soft Sid /Shifty Sam (Haggling insisting that she had it all wrong - she had, too !), and they parcelled it up with a letter to Crum. They also enclosed the shopping list so that he could pick up the groceries on the way home, and then they had dimer.

As the camels were all, at the time, in Bootle having a well-earned rest (slogging up and down the M.1 tires them so), they hadd twisted the arm of Mush's sister's fiance to take them the 60 or so miles to Sluff. He had arranged to come just after dimer, and they went to the gate in their best finery and waited. He arrived two hours late, by which time Mushling had chewed the gate-post to a stump, and Haggis had invented 568 new curses. Little Gerard had been run over a number of times trying to stop the buses which pass No. 71 - he had failed because the drivers were daft and didn't know that when Gerard waves his wooden pin, EVERYTHING stops ! Coff !

However, the minivan eventually rolled up, and Richard and Brenda (the engaged pair) got out, unloaded three tons of apples and an ironing board, and disappeared into the house. Mushling and Haggis decorated the van by drawing various Tribal signs in the dust, tying dustbins to the back, removing doors, etc., until Richard and Brenda re-appeared. They all piled in, leaving Gerard and the rest to hold the fort and wash up the dinner-plates.

The journey was quite long, but Haggis enlivened it by taking photos of everyone in sight, tying Richard's hair in knots (Knotty girl!) and shouting, "Help, I'm being kidnapped!" out of the window. Mushling contented herself with eating apples, making eyes at blokes outside, and occasionally singing with Haggis, "Hi-ho! Hi-ho! It's off to Sluff we go!" until they came into Slough, and got lost. However, they reversed in a courtyard of the Slough Conservative Association and went back to the town centre.

They asked a peasant the way, thanked her, and raced up the main road, to arrive at the Slough Adelphi, a large cinema standing on its own in a square of land right on the main road. The co-leaders got out, and arranged for the other two to meet them later. They then pushed their way through a crowd of folk to the front of the cinema. Here Mushling observed that the doors were all locked, except one. After scouting around the place for exits/entrances, they took up a position by this unlocked door, Haggis directing the flow of traffic in and out.

Suddenly, an uncouth peasant remarked, "Hey! there's Tony Jackson!" Mushling spun round on her boot-heel. "I distinctly told him to stay and peel apples with Darkspex! What's he at??" she remarked to Haggis, shaking her bazooka at him. He lit a fag with trembling hands and Haggis relented. "Let him off," she pleaded. "All right, then," replied Mushling, "but not again!"

They resumed their vigil, and a crowd of men in blue descended on the forecourt. Haggis nudged Mushling, who stifled a cry of "It's the scuffers!" when she saw that they were Air Force Cadets.

Through the glass they could see the Curtis and Jon coming towards them. Mushling kicked the door in and cheered, Haggis peering over her shoulder. Crumford cheered back, rubbing his hands together, did a few steps of the Tribal dance and came out, pushing Jon in front of him. "Here y'are, Crum, it's for you!" yelled Mushling, poking the box into his eye.

"For me?" he answered, booting Jon one for laughing.

"Yes - it's your turn to do the shopping!" shouted Haggis.

Jon had been picked up by a couple of fans and was busily signing autographs, cheques and so forth. Haggis spoke to Crum, who said he had to go get his teeeea. He bade them goodbye, kissing Mush's paw. Haggis demanded, "What about ME?" So he kissed her; this excited him so much that he then autographed Mush's paw, tucked the parcel under his arm, and trotted off to the nearest eatery.

Haggis remarked, "We'll have to get some new sabres for the lads to shave with - I felt two bristles." They walked into the theatre and climbed the stairs to the balcony, to see the performance.

Also on the one-niter were Dusty Springfield, who sang Hagg's favourites, "On Broadway," thus saving herself from later interrogation, and Bobby Vee. He looked rather frightened when someone informed him that Mushling was in the audience and was a Buddy Holly fan - after he'd sung a few of Buddy's songs.

Mushling and Haggis were so annoyed at waiting to see the Curtis that they swore like Queen Hagg's at the delays. The girl in front eventually could stand no more of cries of "Bovril!" or "Brather!" and covered up her ears. Mush took no notice, as Crum was belting his way through fastish songs at the time. Hagg fused the lights at the mains, and she and Mush jumped over the balcony, and sat on the left-hand cymbal, cheering at Crumford when he sang "I" again. They returned to their seats after promising to call in backstage if they had time.

Halfway through the last number, which was "That'd I say?", Mushling grabbed Hagg's arm and yelled, "That girl's after Crum!" Sure enough, one of the girls from down front had clambered on to the stage, and was heading for the Curtis, arms outstretched. However, a few rounds from their sub-machine-gun and a crack of the whip made her veer towards Jon, who was about two inches shorter and a stone lighter than his attacker. She picked him up and ran towards the back of the stage with him. He played on, a ghastly grin on his face. Crumford thought it was funny - he would! However, Mushling relayed orders via her walkie-talkie, and three burly blokes rushed on stage and dragged the Judy off.

The show ended with a near-riot in the lower part of the theatre, while Mush and Haggling cheered Crum from the balcony, making their throats sore.

They rushed downstairs and out of the theatre after the show, and round the corner to where a few cars were parked. Here their flashbulb startled a few girls clustered around the Tribal minivan, and the co-Leaders announced that they were reporters, and would the girls kindly put that axe down? They prowled round the back, and Mushling showed great skill in picking a lock. Unfortunately, it turned out that the door thus opened was an exit ...

A little discouraged, the co-Leaders wandered round the side where a mob was gathered, gazing at a window and screaming their heads off. Fully expecting to see Crumford pushing Jon out of the window, or something equally Tribal, they looked up and saw Bobby Vee's head. Then Crum's. Then Jon's. And so on.

"Where's Dusty Springfield then?" Mush wondered.

"Dunno," replied Hagg, chewing on her boots in her excitement.

Just then a portly gent came along and, not recognising the co-Leaders, told them to belt up and move on. Cries from the crowd of "Get lost!" and "Silly old git!" greeted this command. He drew himself up and, looking straight at the co-Leaders, delivered a crushing retort:

"Do you realise that you're screaming at the Gentlemen's Lavatories ??"

Hagg and Mush cracked up .....

+ + + + +

The Co-Leaders of Tribe X, and the Midlands Area Chieftain, hope that you will all grace the elegant city of Brum with your honourable presences at Easter. We take this opportunity to wish you all A Very Happy Brumcon. (And to fill up this space because we've run out of quotes and things ....)

+ + + + +

# RED KITCHEN.

.... KING OF THE DELTA BLUES VIOLIN PLUCKERS.

.... by Gray Hall & Dave Wood.

Of all the great Blues artists the steamy heat of the Mississippi Delta country has produced, perhaps the most disregarded and legendary is RED KITCHEN. This is the man of whom Big Bill Broonzy said, "Who?"

Born Redgate Kitchen in Glenora, Mississippi, on or about April 1st 1916, he was the youngest of 19 children born to Mr. and Mrs. Jethro Kitchen, cotton pickers on the estate of Mr. Hiram B. das Keppel von Gott.

Realising at the early age of ten, almost before he could walk, that he was not going to inherit anything from his parents, he began experimenting with a violin which had been discarded by a local Philharmonic orchestra because it had a string missing. Proof of the young Red's love for music was the fact that he killed his pet cat, and used part of its intestines to make another string for his beloved violin. Red soon discovered that he could produce a sound that was completely unique by holding the bottom of the instrument in a bowl of cold water, and plucking the strings with a chicken bone. On some memorable occasions, he would hold the bottom of his instrument in a sugar basin, thus giving his music added beat, and possibly inventing Rhythm and Blues in the process.

However, tragedy was soon to strike the Kitchen family. In a drunken rage, Red's father, Jethro Kitchen, foully beat his wife to death with a blunt instrument ... though luckily, the violin was unharmed.

Jethro was taken off to prison, and Red placed in the care of a local Children's Home. Kitchen escaped the electric chair because of a last-minute reprieve, but spent more than 40 years in jail.

Red hated his life at the Home, and so, late one night, his violin slung nonchalantly over his shoulder, a bowl under his arm, and a chicken bone protruding from his pocket, he ran away to seek fame and fortune in the big city.

In his first year as a professional performer, he was thrown out of no less than 47 clubs in the New Orleans postal district. With that peculiar intuition found within this great artist above all others, he realised his mistake.

In his second professional year - 1929 - he began to sing along to his incomparable violin plucking; in that year, he was thrown out of no less than 237 clubs, setting up a record which has remained unbroken to this day.

Still searching for fame, Red (known to his friends as Kitch), began building up a Blues group unrivalled in the annals of this most authentic music.

First to join was Fallin' Timber, whose virtuoso twelve-string tambourine playing brought about a new conception of the word 'tuneless.' Then came Henry Green, perhaps better-known as Green Henry, who, after a short time with the group, was tragically killed by being run over by a runaway milk float whilst in a drunken stupor. Bo Diddley's father then joined, under the name of Little Wink, though he was usually referred to as Diddley Wink. His harmonica renditions are believed to have caused a greater exodus from music halls than has been seen at any time since Goshen.

Anyone who has heard those early 'race' recordings will remember the heavy-handed guitar work of Strongarm Samson, the off-beat bass thumping of Big Albert Hall, and above all, the overloud drumming of Gene Crapper.

The Red Kitchen Ensemble, as it became known, made many fine recordings, including the now classic "Hard Life Blues," which sold several copies, and "Don't Play, Son" which spent many months in the Japanese hit parade.

Those of us lucky enough to possess copies of these discs will remember with respect the vast amount of work done by Red Kitchen in stemming the increase of Blues music ... for had all those old Blues greats never been sung and played by the Red Kitchen Ensemble, such groups as the Rolling Stones might never have had any material to steal.

However, like all bad things, Red Kitchen had to come to an end. After all the years of wild string plucking, and those great discs he recorded for TYKO, he disappeared.

Many Blues enthusiasts may have wondered how "Kitch" died. Like John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson, foully murdered with an ice-axe? Like Robert Johnson, poisoned in a fifth of rye whisky by a jealous girl-friend? Like Bix Beiderbecke, who died young, but I'm damned if I remember how? Or perhaps, ironically, like his mother?

No.

We can now reveal that Red Kitchen, undisputed King of the Delta Blues Violin Pluckers, is still alive! We have talked with him! Actually and literally talked with him!

During a recent tour of the Deep South, in a search for clues as to how this Blues giant met his end, we visited his home town of Glenora, Mi., and spoke with his last remaining 16 brothers and sisters. We talked with 92-year-old Jethro Kitchen, now out of jail, and still hale and possibly hearty. We chatted with Glenora's Mayor, Fred Smith, and the tragic trail finally led to the Glenora Home for Those in Need of Peace, Quiet and Restraint. Here, in nothing more than a small-town loony bin, we finally met Red Kitchen, still fiddling away and mumbling Blues refrains. As he crooned to his badly warped and rotted violin, Gray dared to speak: "Red," he said, "Mr. Kitchen, suh?"

"Ah loves my baby, twang," was the reply.

Realising that no sense was all we would get from this wreck of a great man, we turned to the warder, and asked for the facts about Red's breakdown.

"Waal," he began, "he picked up this vahlin, bummed around for a few years, ruining it in the process, an' then found it wuz Stradinvirious, valued at \$100,000." With these few well-chosen words, Fallin' Timber, who has taken the job of warder to be near his old boss, eloquently summed up the life of the greatest Violin Plucker the world has known.

But that isn't the end of the story. In many ways, it is the beginning. Dave Wood Enterprises are planning to bring the complete Red Kitchen Ensemble to England for a series of concerts, and to re-release many of the great records they made. Once again, audiences will thrill to the wild singing and plucking of Red Kitchen, truly the King.

++ G.H. & D.W.

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When I was demobbed from the W.R.N.S. at the end of 1945, I took a job in the Sales office of a local firm of cycle manufacturers. The following was created (?) by one of the men with whom I worked. It is offered here in the hope that it might appeal to any ex-matlows among the readership ....

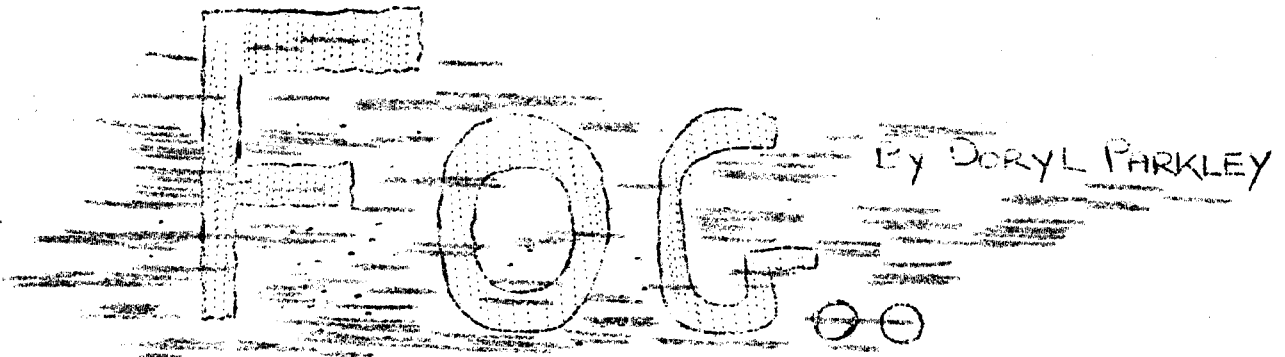
Wren Beryl was a sailor of very high degree,  
In an ancient greasy whaler she sailed the stormy sea.  
Her forecastle was shapely, and you'll be pleased to learn  
That her lines were very snappy as they swept towards her stern.  
She could splice a pretty mainbrace in the Captain's brand of grog,  
(That's the stuff they used in "Pluto" to clear away the fog).  
And one day when the bos'un, getting fresh, called her "my dear,"  
She just unshipped the mainsail boom and hit him on the ear!  
She'd tease the tiny tiffy-boy and make him want his mother,  
Pour treacle in the binnacle and make the Q.M. splother,  
Draw "Mr. Chad" on ward-room walls, beneath him: "Wot, no water?"  
And heaps and heaps of other things you know she didn't oughter.  
And when the war was over and they had a shore-leave spell,  
They paid her off with three half-crowns, a ten-bob note as well;  
She came right home to Redditch, with many oaths and cusses,  
And went to see her fiance wot worked nights on the busses.  
She pulled him out of bed and while he straightened up his nightie,  
Said, "Nah, you lug, you'll marry me, now I've come home to Blighty!"  
And so at number twenty-three there's very much Wren-pecking,  
For Beryl drinks her grog in bed while Albert scrubs the decking!

++ E. Cozzens.

+ + + + +

"I laughed till the tears ran down me leg ...." "Byron," "Not So Much  
A Programme ..."

"It's no good trying to argue with me - I'm always right." -- My  
boss - whose name is ... Dennis Wright.



The Fog was dense and white; it swirled in little eddies around the woman's feet, and bedewed her dark hair and her clothes with tiny droplets. Somewhere above the impalpable blanket, she thought, was the sun, and the clean, blue sky ... how long was it since she had seen the sky? She couldn't remember ... there were so many things she couldn't remember ... why was she standing here, at the side of this deserted road? Waiting, she told herself ... I'm waiting for - for - a bus. That's it, a bus. I wish it would come ... I suppose it's late because of the fog.

Suddenly she was startled by a soft touch against her ankle. Looking down, she saw a black and white cat. She bent and picked it up, cherishing its warmth and softness as she wandered away along the narrow grass verge bordering the country road. The cat purred gratefully.

Something at the back of her mind was causing her vague unease, but she couldn't pin it down. Still caressing the cat, she walked on, whispering to herself.

"Where did all those people come from? What were they doing?" In her mind's eye she saw again the large, underground cavern, and the hundreds of people milling about, some seeming panic-stricken, others sunk in staring apathy. She remembered how she had wandered helplessly from group to group. "Why wouldn't they tell me anything?"

Her feet had now carried her to the top of a small hillock; she paused there and made a further effort to peer through the swirling fog. It was hopeless; she could see nothing ahead of her at all. And it was utterly silent; looking down, she noticed, too, with faint surprise, that the grass was brown and shrivelled. Odd ...

Suddenly the cat jumped from her arms with a raucous screech, and fled down the hill in front of her. Within seconds, the fog had swallowed it up. "How strange!" she thought, but almost at once the incident faded from her mind. It was as if the fog had seeped into her very brain, dulling her thoughts and recollections.

She moved on again slowly, her mind reverting to the cavern and the people in it. Events rose to the surface of her consciousness. She remembered a Casualty Station, staffed by harassed doctors and nurses. She recalled looking up into the unsmiling face of a young doctor as he examined her hastily, his hands robbed of tenderness by fatigue. He had turned to a nurse, remarking brusquely, "Shock and amnesia. Give her a sedative, let her have a few hours' sleep, and then find her some work to do here. Nothing complicated - she's strong, but her mind has lost its powers of retention, at least for the time being."



The sequence of events unreeled for her as she stumbled on unseeingly. Then she tripped over something, and almost fell. Stooping, she saw to her amazement that it was the cat. She put out a hesitant hand; the animal was still warm, but she had seen too much of death while helping the nurses not to know that here was yet another corpse.

Shuddering in revulsion, she straightened up and hurried away. Death ... could she never escape from it? People dying ... she had worked to save them, prayed for them, but they died. The little boy with the battered teddy-bear. The elderly woman who had given some of her own indomitable courage to all who came into contact with her. The young, pretty coloured girl ... what was her name? Queenie, that was it. Queenie, who had been brought to them because of a threatened miscarriage - how they had worked to save that baby, the baby Queenie wanted so much, the baby who represented hope to so many despairing hearts. And they had saved it ... to no avail, for one morning Queenie lay dead like all the others.

"Impossible!" the doctor had insisted angrily to the distressed nurses. "As impossible as the others. Why, WHY? None of them had been exposed recently. I just don't understand it!"

The woman walked on, trying to remember more, striving to recall just what it was the the doctor did not understand, what it was that he had so vehemently decreed impossible. The fog had thinned a little, and ahead of her she could dimly see the outlines of houses. At first she quickened her footsteps, hoping that someone would give her shelter and perhaps a hot drink, for she was now conscious of being chilled. Approaching the first of the houses, she stopped, some instinct warning her that all was not well here. Nerves tingling and senses alert, she moved again towards the house cautiously.

In the distance she could hear a dog barking. Through the fog the sound was disembodied and eerie. She reached a low gate and swung it open; it creaked back into position as she walked up the short path to the door of the cottage. She knocked firmly and waited, but no-one came. Moving to the small, diamond-paned window, she tried to peer inside, but it was too dark and she could see nothing.

The next house provided the same negative result. Again the fog lifted slightly, showing the narrow, winding street of a village. The silence oppressed her like a physical weight; even the dog had stopped barking. Panic suddenly rose in her and threatened to choke her. Where was everybody? Why were the houses seemingly abandoned, empty? Why was she standing here alone?

Alone! The word seemed to trigger off another wave of memory. She had been alone in the house when the siren shrieked its ghastly warning of world's end. Her heart began to thud with remembered terror. The warning system! THEY had dropped it! There would be deadly radiation!

As that word hit her mind, everything came flooding back to her. She had been exposed to the radiation, but, while others sickened and died around her, she had remained alive. Not only alive, but healthy.

She cried out in terror and desolation, remembering the little boy, the old woman, Queenie and her unborn child - even the cat which now lay silent on the hillside. She knew now why she was standing in this fogbound village; she had

fled from self-knowledge; from her judges and her would-be executioners.

She was a freak. A nuclear Typhoid Mary. Immune to radiation herself, she "infected" others. No-one knew how, or why. And when They had found out, They had wanted to kill her. They wanted to kill her, not, They had carefully explained, in anger, or for revenge - but to try to find out just why she was immune, and also to save the lives of others with whom she might inadvertently come into contact.

Fear and anger rose up in her again as a result of her remembering. She hadn't wanted to die, she had screamed at Them. It wasn't her fault; she hadn't dropped the Bombs, she wanted to live. "Please, please, I'll do anything - I'll go away, far away and live alone on the surface where I can't make anybody else die, oh, please ..."

But They had been adamant; They had to know what made her different from everybody else. And under Their scientific curiosity, she had sensed, with heightened intuition, Their envy, resentment and fear.

Sobbing, she broke into a stumbling run, crying her husband's name. By now the fog had lifted almost completely, revealing to her shocked, uncomprehending eyes a group of silent men, white-coated and masked, moving towards her. She stopped, and they stopped. She stared at them in terror, searching their eyes for a trace of pity or understanding, and finding neither.

Then she saw that they were armed. Her mind screamed, "Run, run!" but she stood transfixed by fear, as one of the men walked towards her. She put out her hands to him beseechingly, as he lifted his gun. Still walking, and almost without taking aim, he fired. She crumpled like ~~at~~ a tired child and lay still. The man stopped, looked at the body for a few seconds, then turned and walked away.

Another man came forward and poured petrol over the pathetic heap. He struck a match and tossed it down. For a few minutes he watched the crude cremation, remembering how the Emergency Council had vetoed the proposal of dissection. Doctors were already too scarce, they said; they could not risk losing any more in what might well prove to be fruitless research.

The man threw the empty petrol can into an overgrown garden as he hurried to rejoin the group at the far end of the street. His friend fell into step beside him as they all moved away.

"Lousy job," he commented tentatively. The other nodded, grimacing under his mask. He replied, "Better than the shooting part, though."

"I never did hear the details of that," his friend remarked. "Did you draw lots, or what?"

"No. It had to be him" - nodding towards the man who had fired, and who was now walking a little apart from the rest, his shoulders slumped in tired defeat.

"She was a danger to us all, and he had to do it. She was his wife."

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E N G A R D E !

..... being comments on the 2nd PaDS Mailing.

The PaDS INFORMATION CIRCULAR.

I am personally in favour of 3 mailings per year - especially if they could be "staggered" with the OMPA mailings. However, I am willing to go along with the majority on this matter. // I've no objection to Peto's putting NEXUS in both PaDS and OMPA - although it means that Charlie and I, and any other PaDners who may decide to join OMPA later - will have to think up two lots of mc's ! // I note that the "Printer" of PaDS-1 has become the "Publisher" of PaDS-2 - is this promotion ?? // A very small niggle, Charles - not big enough to be classed as a complaint: I understand your motives for not including L-2 in my mailing, but the parcel of 50 zines for general distribution didn't arrive till two days after the mailing. This meant that (a) all the other PaDners saw the completed L-2 before I did, and (b) I even had one loc before I'd seen L-2 !

NOTES ON THE 1st PaDS MAILING.

Ta for comments on L-1. Another serious poem due in L-3. But I'm not the only person who ~~considers~~ considers "Koan Answered" the best thing I've ever written. Perhaps I should have saved it for a later issue ! // Charlie has probably already protested (mildly - vehemence is not Charlie's way) - that his PaDSzine is WHIM - not NADIR.

BUMBLE-2. John Barfoot.

Hiya, Pubtoo. "End" was very well-written, and, unfortunately, more than probably likely - I have often said that if Christ returned to Earth today, he would probably be martyred all over again. But the story is in your usual, downbeat, morbid style and therefore didn't really appeal to me. You don't like the human race much, do you ? // Miss Bryco: the key to the character of Gully Foyle lies in a few sentences which are spoken by him near the end of the book: "I believe in them." (the common people). "I was one of them before I turned tiger. They can all turn uncommon if they're kicked awake like I was." And his definition of faith deserves, in my opinion, some kind of immortality. "I believe. I have faith. Faith in what ? Faith in faith. It isn't necessary to have something to believe in. It's only necessary to believe that somewhere there's something worthy of belief." // "Nutcass." I'd like to deal with this at some length, because it refers back to a discussion I had with a friend some years ago, about Stapledon's "Odd John." If you've read this, you'll probably remember that John sometimes referred to the human race as "cattle." ("Oh, how they stink !"). I queried this attitude, thinking - perhaps naively - that a highly-developed super-intellect would surely exhibit an equally high degree of emotional understanding, tolerance and compassion. My friend disagreed, contending that super-intelligence and emotional maturity were not necessarily concomitant. Now, I have a tremendous respect for my friend's opinions, but I find this theory depressing. It seems to me that, having created us - or at least been responsible for our existence - the "Intellects" of "Nutcass" ought to accept that responsibility in loco parentis. After all, most parents are the intellectual superiors of their children - for a few years, anyway ! And when the children fight among themselves, quarrel, cheat, tell lies - their parents don't wipe 'em out, do they ? (However much they may be tempted to do so at times !). Impatience, yes, even anger at times - but that the children will eventually develop and mature is a fact never questioned. Would anybody be interested in an argument on this subject ? // Oddly enough, I liked "The Battle." I agree that if men are still busily slaughtering each other that far in the future, when they ought to have grown out of such savagery, they'll deserve to be wiped off the slate. But I don't believe in an anthropomorphic God. // I also liked your PaDSzine reviews. You're a little cautious, but that's a good fault, I

think. You praised what you liked, and tactfully skated around anything you didn't like - of which, apparently, there wasn't much. I Approve of a person who tried to avoid hurting other people's feelings ! // And so to me darlin' Doreen - one of my Very Favourite People. The guy who loaned me "I Am Legend" warned me: "Don't read it last thing at night !" So I did. (Well, natch !). I didn't have nightmares - but neither did I fall asleep at once. It wasn't the vampires which bothered me so much - it was the ghastly loneliness - and alone-ness - of the last normal man in the world. // "With a Strange Device" - yeh, bit odd, wasn't it ? // Counting two points for each answer to the quiz-questions - 1 for title and 1 for author - I scored 10/20 on the first quiz, and 2/16 on the second ! Which proves that my memory for titles and authors is as hopeless as it ever was. I shall have to demote my personal file clerk or something. // A very nicely presented zine, John - easy to read.

FUSION. Jim Grant. Welcome to Jim, and another well-presented zine. I found Chris's article quite absorbing - so good, in fact, that I can't possibly carp about its having been written by a non-professional author. More like this please, Chris. // The Berry-Silverberg hassle seems to be a private fight. With my above-mentioned bad memory for titles and authors, I'm afraid I can't, off-hand, think of any of Bob Silverberg's stories that I've read - though I know I have read some. // "Gabriel" - h'mm, here we have Christ being reborn, apparently, and in BUMBLIE he was being crucified all over again. (And I wouldn't be a bit surprised to hear that both you and John are atheists !). Still - there's a lot more hope implied in "Gabriel" than there was in "End." // Doreen again - y'know, I've an idea that Gray Hall will back you up on this matter. My own agreement is qualified. At school I built up a reputation for asking damfool questions. (I didn't consider them damfool, of course !). And I want to ask one now. How do you know an embryo is an ego from the moment of conception ? Did you simply accept it because the Sister told you it was so ? You see, I think that people who accept more-or-less everything that they're told, and everything they read, are influenced by outside stimuli all their lives. But there is another type of person, and I think that possibly your correspondent falls into this group. These are the ones who seek or demand confirmation of facts that are not immediately obvious. The ones who constantly ask "Why ?" and "How do you know this or that is so ?" The ones who analyse data they receive, and compare it with knowledge they already possess. Ever heard the rather cynical advice: "Believe nothing that you hear and only half of what you see." ? // I used to write for the local weekly newspaper, and once I had a six-week running "fight" with a correspondent. (All in fun, mind !). I ended one of my broadsides thus: "I remain, Sir, yours - undominated and independent - 'Femina.'" Back he came to the attack: "Most astonishingly, 'Femina' signs herself: 'Yours, undominated and independent.' Mark you, Mr. Editor, not independent here or there, or of this and that, but independent all the way ! Never have I known a more blatant, sweeping and inaccurate generalisation ! I challenge her to explain just how she is so independent." (He later said - in private correspondence - almost exactly what you've said in your article. He claimed that all my opinions, ideas, theories, etc., had resulted from things somebody else had said or written). However, my reply to this challenge was: "Independent ? I used the word, you remember, in conjunction with "undominated," and referred, of course, to independence of spirit. Anyone possessing this quality is independent in every direction !" And I still adhere to that. I don't mean that I take nothing on faith. For instance, I have never visited China. I know no-one who lives there, and I never have. Yet I believe that China and her people exist. Books, newspapers, ~~teax~~ teachers, radio and television frequently have told me that China exists. In more controversial matters, like religion or politics, one can only consider all the differing viewpoints and then make up one's own mind. This is, I think, what your correspondent meant. If, for instance, he votes Labour, it's because he wants to - not, as is the case with so many people, because his father always votes Labour.

Similarly, if he goes to church every Sunday, it's because he wants to and not because he feels he ought to, or because his parents always took him there on the Sundays of his childhood. He has exercised his right to examine all facets of these matters, and to make up his own mind on the basis of the evidence so examined. // Excuse the long pontification, Jim. I don't know what you've got planned for FUSION -2, but I'd like to see more of your own work in it. All we have here are a brief editorial and a short story, neither of which tells us anything about you. We PADners are a nose lot (in the friendliest possible way, of course). Or should I confine that admission to us LINK-ers? Anyway, c'm'on, laaad - doan be shy ... why, we don't even know how many heads you've got ... // and it's a good job Brian McCabe signs his illoes, or I'd have been driven mad with frustration by the blank space alongside: "All artwork in this issue by: .... "

GARBISTAN-1. Charles Platt. The trouble I've had over that name! At Rog Poyton's party, Chris Priest said that the word was in Webster's dictionary. Well, I consulted the Webster's in our local library, and called Chris a fibber in my next letter to him, because it wasn't. He referred me to the quote on the first page of the zine. (Incidentally, that's a point. Charles chastises those of us who don't number our pages, and then neglects to number his own. Cheek ...). I retorted that this still didn't define the damn word. Chris then decided to get cryptic, and wrote back: "Ask Archie wot's in his wardrobe!". This seemed a very rude thing to do - after all, who knows what Mr. Mercer might or might not have in his wardrobe? - but I risked it. Archie said that he hasn't got a wardrobe. Sobbing with despair, I explained the reason for my query, and at last I got some sense out of somebody: "Garb = clothing. -istan = 'the place of' in western Asia (Afghanistan = the place of the Afghans, etc.). Therefore Garbistan = the place of the clothing, i.e., a wardrobe." Then he went and spoilt it all by adding: "And at last we have the answer to the riddle: what is a wardrobe in peace time?". A peacedrobe? Paliddrobe? Hippodrobe? Post-Hiroshiba Syddrobe? Somebody's got a cold around here! // Anyway - back to the Plattzine. The cover-giggle - my husband said, "What a tatty-looking Union Jack." I replied, "What else do you expect of goods made in Hong Kong?" // The editorial - co-er. Did you send copies to all the people mentioned in it? If so, I'll bet you are popular! However, I must admit I was disappointed when the project fell through. And I hope the Brummies have more luck with their search for a club-room. // R&B and SF - typical Dead-Pan Dave stuff, and delightfully silly. Clanger, though, Dave - I can't see 'em letting Red out on his own! Not even for a Con! // Didn't manage to identify a single one of those quotes! Not even my own! When did I say THAT? And, since I didn't score between 21 & 30, please tell me quick: WHY THE HELL AM I?? // Ivor, you're daft, and I loved the whole silly, gorgeous thing! // John Wilson's style is strangely familiar ... I pspy pseudonyms! I tend to agree anyway. Like, lots of people rave about Ray Charles, but to me he sounds like a dispirited tomcat who's been rejected by the female next door, robbed of his dinner by the dog, and had his tail crushed in the door every day of the week except Thursday. If that's greatness, I'm Kathy Kirby. // "Tale from the Moebius Strip" - sorry, didn't get it. Thoroughly obscure. What's it supposed to mean, Brian? // As for Dick Sharrel's Einsteinian piece - strowth, I couldn't even pronounce that title, let alone understand it! Boggle, boggle ... // "A Place to Die" - very neat! I don't believe in hell, mind, but if I did, I'd concede that it could well be like this! // Same verdict on "The Soulful Man." See my final comment on "Nutcase" (BUMBLIE). // There's a magnificent example of unconscious Dick's review of VECTOR. (Or was it unconscious, Dick?). Made me roar, anyway. See if anybody else latches on to it. // This is a big improvement on INSOMNIA, Charles.

NEXUS-2. Pete Weston. "I'm just a soul whose intentions are good ..." I promised you an loc, Pete, and I'm sorry that the paving promise became just one more paving stone on the road to hell! Anyway, I think I can find a point or two that I didn't cover in my OMBazine. Lessee, now ... oh, yes, on p.2 you say: "The story is still nonsense .... On the whole, the modern idea seems to be that the less understandable a story is, the better it must be. Mustn't it!" I am in complete agreement. I can't understand why anyone should be afraid to admit that he doesn't understand a story. It may demonstrate that he's a bit of an unperceptive fool - but at least he's an honest fool. Also that he's willing to learn if somebody who genuinely does understand it will take the trouble to enlighten him. Reminds me of when I went to see "The Bed-Sitting Room" (Spike Milligan) in London, coupla years back. Dead goonish, it was; no use trying to understand it, you just went along for the (hilarious) ride. I mentioned this in a letter to Charles, and he replied that he'd seen it, too, and had been highly amused, during the interval, to hear the intelligentsia discussing the "deep significance" of the piece, its "symbolism," and its "commentary on current social problems," etc. As Charles said - there wasn't any symbolism or significance. It was just a crazy romp, a vehicle for Spike Milligan to be gloriously daft in. // On the other hand - if I do understand something that seems to puzzle others, my understanding is so subjective that I find it difficult to explain. You can't win, can you? I remember once reviewing a collection of stories for ZENITH-5. (The Furious Future, by Algis Budrys). One of them was "The Skirmisher," which had me baffled, so you did the review of that one yourself, and tried to explain it to me privately. But there was another story in the same collection - "The Man who Tasted Ashes" - and I had to explain that one to you! But, I wonder - to what extent did we enlighten each other? // Liked N-2, anyway, Pete - nice 'n' lively!

PADLOCK-2. Dick Howett. (I enjoyed meeting you and Chris in Brum last December, Dick). // Mister Tubb! Really! I hope this "Gold Standard" article was written either tongue-in-cheek, or in a transient period of depression. As I have often told my sons when they were on an "I-want" kick: there is more than one way of being rich. All this talk (I nearly said cant) about wealth and success, and not a word about happiness. Why are there so many famous and wealthy people in exclusive places like the London Clinic, having nervous breakdowns and things? // Sure, I'd like more money. Certainly, poverty is a terrible thing. (I'm old enough to remember the "hungry thirties."). There are so many wonderful things money can buy. There are also many wonderful things it can't buy. Now you'll probably throw that old saw at me: "Money may not buy happiness, but at least it enables you to be miserable in comfort." So who wants to be miserable, even in comfort? Who wants to be intrinsically lonely, always wondering if your friends really like you for yourself, and not for what can get out of you? Who wants to be driven by the need to make money and more money? Who wants to be a prisoner of obsessions about wealth? **THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY OF BEING RICH!** // Dick: today (it being a Saturday) - I've drafted notes for mc's on the most recent OMB mailing, and this lot on PADS, and the TV has been on without a break since 12.45.p.m. It's now nearly midnight, and "Sports Special" is on; football commentators screaming their fool heads off, "It's in the NET!" I could go raving mad ... and it's too cold to go and sit in the kitchen!

VEGA-1. Steve Moore. Hi, Steve. What a gorgeous address! Nearly as daft as mine. If Archie writes and asks, did the Hill meet its End at the hands of the Shooter from Woolwich Arsenal - PLEASE TELL HIM I SAID **EE IT FIRST!** // Sorry, didn't like the story - I don't care much for horrors. Anyway, why wore the human savages stealing worlds, and how? // Please tell us a little more about yourself in your next ish.

WHIM-2. Charlie. I expect you'll hear from somebody (Archie, probably, or Ken) that Yngvi was a name mentioned in "The Incomplete Enchanter," by (I think) L. Sprague de Camp. Not having read this story yet, I'll confine myself to referring you to my comments on p.25 of L-2. // Oh, Charlie - more death and murder ?? Mind you, it's a good story of its kind. At least you didn't leave it as a mystery! // I think you pulled a fast one on your back page! The four of us studied it until we all went cross-eyed, but none of us could find two faces that were exactly alike. I couldn't find the star, either - although I think that one was a genuine puzzle. Very fru-star-tin'.

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POSTSCRIPT TO "THE NIGHT-BUMPERS."

A few weeks ago I reviewed (for ZENITH) the no. 3 issue of John Carnell's "New Writings in S-F." One of the stories is "Boulter's Canaries," by Keith Roberts. There's a very good example of "link" in this story. Quote:

"Boulter snorted. 'To my way of thinking, a poltergeist isn't a ghost at all. Not in the classic sense of the term. It's a sort of energy-projection. In every well-documented haunting you'll find that there's a child or an adolescent concerned somewhere. The thing follows them around from place to place. Eventually the manifestations just fade away. There's never any purposive quality about them. I don't think a poltergeist has an existence apart from the mind that creates it. They say it feeds, taps off energy. I don't go along with that. I think it's telekinesis, tarted up with a new name.'"

And I give everybody my word that I wrote "The Night-Bumpers," and stencilled it, some time before I read Keith Roberts' story. And, no - I am not Keith Roberts!

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If anyone has an unwanted copy of LINK-1, will he/she please send it to me, as (believe it or not) I have requests for it that I'm unable to meet. Come to think of it, the same applies to LINK-2.

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Me: I'm a devil for wanting to find out what makes people tick.  
AM: If you want to know what makes me tick, it's having tugar on me tsausages.

+ + + + +

"Our story is called: 'Happiness is None of Your Business.'" -- Danny Kaye, BBC TV, 16/2/65.

+ + + + +

When I was at my sister's last summer, we were watching TV one night, and Alfred Hinds, the well-known jail-escaper, was being interviewed. The interviewer turned to Mrs. Hinds, and asked her what she thought, the first time she saw her husband after his release. "My first thought was that he seemed to be taller," she replied. "Naturally," my sister remarked. "He'd been doing a long stretch."

# I'M HOME AGAIN, BUT...

By Beryl Henley



This story first appeared in the Redditch Indicator, December 1961.

I don't understand it. I don't suppose I ever will. WHO was it who walked around wearing my body while I...?

Oh well. Better start at the beginning. You won't believe a word of it, anyway. It was late September. It had been a hot day, but at dusk a breeze had sprung up and brought clouds which made a glory of the sunset. My husband and I were watching tv, and I was knitting. Not very energetically, mind you; I hate doing knit one, purl one rib, don't you? Suddenly the picture on the screen exploded momentarily into a thousand tiny particles of light.

"See that?" said Bob. "Must be a thunderstorm about." Sure enough, his words were followed by a rumble, and the picture splintered again.

"Better switch it off and disconnect the aerial," said Bob. (He's a bit funny about electricity, see.) He stood up from his chair; I shot out of mine with a squeal, dropping my knitting.

"What's up?" enquired Bob, as I deprived him of the pleasure of my company. "I've left some washing on the line," I called, skidding through the kitchen and out of the back door.

As far as I remember there were still a few stars visible, though most of the sky was obscured by cloud. A flash of lightning showed stark white shapes hanging motionless on the line. I reached up for the first peg as thunder beat at my eardrums, and then...

And then I wasn't there any more. What do you mean, what do I mean? I mean I was somewhere else. And it was a desert. The sand was greenish, and there were a few stunted bushes scattered about.

Well, that's odd, I thought. A second later, I decided it was very odd indeed-- the sun was distinctly blue. A blue sun....?

My scalp crawled, and in spite of the heat I shivered. Then I told myself I was dreaming. Or I'd been struck by lightning and was delirious or dead or something.

I didn't fancy the idea of being dead, so I took a deep breath to prove that I



wasn't. Only I didn't let it out. Not then.

"Hello," said a voice, companionably. I released my pent-up breath in a gasp and stared around wildly. I couldn't see anybody.

"Er -- hello," I responded, feeling that it wouldn't hurt to reply.

"Welcome to Shoroon," said the voice. It was a nice, masculine voice with a hint of friendly laughter in it. But my scalp crawled again, and I dug my fingernails into my palms. That's when I discovered I was carrying my knitting bag, of all things, in one hand.

"Thanks," I grated, wanting to scream and keep on screaming.

Who's a hysterical female? You'd have felt the same, I can tell you, if you'd been standing there in a green desert, under a blue sun, talking to a voice with no body attached, and knowing that you weren't dreaming. It's all right for you to take the mickey. You weren't there.

"Please," I blurted deserately, "where are you?"

"Right in front of you." Now, the chuckle was unmistakable. The only thing right on the ground in front of me was one of those stunted shrubs, with shriveled blue leaves, so I stepped forward to have a closer look. I bent over it, and one of the leaves shot towards me, making me jump.

"My name's Koirshan," said the voice. Believe it or not, I took hold of the leaf and shook it.

"Please to meet you," I said. "I'm Beryl Henley from Earth," and I started to laugh.

Well, honestly, what could I do, apart from screaming my head off? Faint? I can tell you, I was wishing I could; but I'm not the fainting type.

"I'm glad to find that you have a sense of humour," said Koirshan. I squatted down on the hot sand beside him. (You could call him 'it' if you like, but with a masculine voice like that it seemed impolite even to think of him as an 'it'.)

"Koirshan," I said, still giggling like a fool, "would you mind telling me what's going on? Five minutes ago, I was in my own back garden, getting the washing in -- I'll bet it's soaked by now. And now I'm on Shar ... Sher...

"Shoroon," the plant supplied.

"Yes, I'm on what-you-said. And my knitting was in the house, and now it's here, with me."

"On Shoroon," added Koirshan, just so there'd be no doubt.

"Oh, shut up!" I shouted, in a burst of irritation. "I don't give a hoot about the name of your silly planet. Tell me what happened and why I'm here, and when I'll be going home." A nasty thought struck me, sneaky-like. "I presume I am going home sometime?"

"Don't be like that," pleaded Koirshan, in an injured tone. "Think of the stories you'll be able to tell when you get back."

I summoned an enormous reserve of patience which I never knew I'd had before.

"Look," I said, and then stopped, feeling a bit daft, because Koirshan hadn't any eyes as far as I could ascertain, and so there wasn't much point in telling him to look. Oh, let it go, I thought, and pressed on regardless.

"My husband is going to want to know where I've been. If you think I'm going to tell him I've been sitting in a green desert, talking to a ... to a ..."

I stopped again. I didn't want to offend him. He might go off and leave me to die of thirst under that horrid blue sun. He might refuse to send me home. He might ... he might ... oh, heavens, there was no end to the things he might!

"It's all right," he informed me in a detached sort of voice. "I wouldn't dream of doing any of those things. You can call me a bush or a shrub, or whatever you like. I don't mind."

Suddenly I was so interested that I forgot to be scared. Or mad. I felt like a bug-hunter who has just collared a couple of perfect specimens of the bug which everybody said became extinct circa 1647. Telepathy is my pet hobby-horse.

"I thought that would get you interested," said Koirshan in a satisfied tone.

"I get it," I said, delighted with my own perspicacity, "you aren't talking at all."

"How could I?" he agreed, reasonably. "I haven't got the equipment."

"And that's how I can understand you," I went on, excitedly. "Your mind transmits symbols and concepts, and my mind translates them into English!"

"Very good!" cried the voice-that-wasn't-a-voice, and two of the blue leaves slapped themselves together. He was clapping! I had to restrain myself from getting up and taking a bow. You aren't at the New Palace now, I told myself sternly.

"What's the New Palace?" asked Koirshan.

"It's a little theatre in the town where I come from," I began, "and --"

"What's a theatre?" interrupted my friend the shrub. All these questions suddenly took on an ominously familiar tone.

"How old are you?" I demanded. There was a silence, and the leaves drooped. One of them turned itself inwards, and curled itself around a tiny tendril on the stem. The gesture was unmistakable, and my suspicion became a certainty.

"Stop sucking your thumb!" I ordered, and the leaf whipped away from the tendril. For an incredible moment, that strange alien shrub had actually looked like my younger son. I had the feeling that at any moment he would perform the ~~whitish~~ equivalent of bursting into tears of childish rage because he'd been 'found out.'

"Do you have parents?" I asked. No answer. He was sulking. The Henley brain, firing on all cylinders, produced an Idea. A beauty. Was this telepathy lark a two-way transmission?

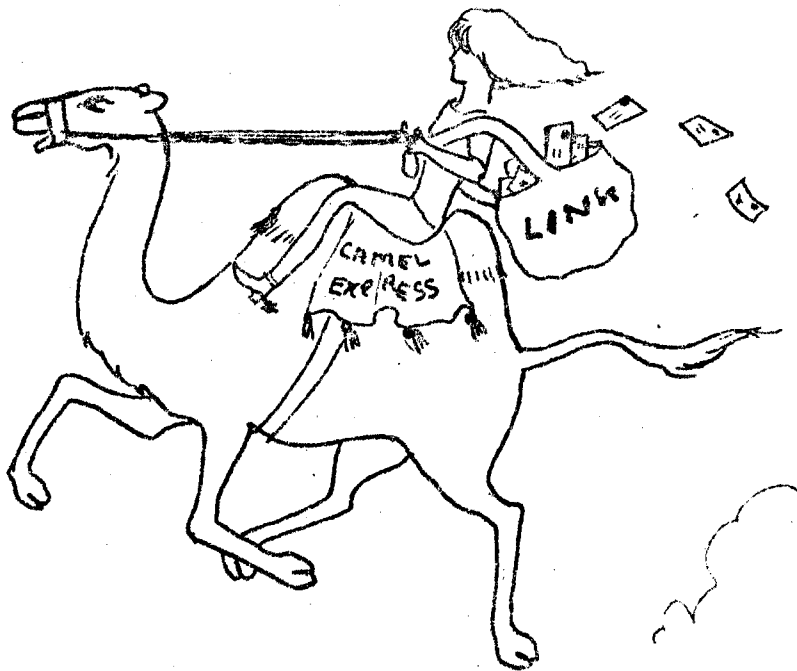
I 'reached.' And I made it. It was a funny sensation, being inside an alien mind. I took a cautious look round; didn't want to do any damage. After all, he was only a kid. He tried to shove me out - I felt mental nudges. I thought it better not to resist too hard, so after finding out what I wanted to know, I made a graceful exit.

Yes, he had parents - three of them. There was a group of the creatures not far away. And Koirshan was playing truant from 'school,' and would probably get his bottom leaves smacked when he got back.

I had a go at mental communication. No, it isn't easy - you try it sometime. Oh, I forgot; you can't.

"Take me to your home, Koirshan," I thought. (Well, it makes a change from take-me-to-your-leader, doesn't it?). "I won't let your - er - teacher smack you." He sort of lifted himself up, and his frail roots moved like the scurrying legs of a centipede. I followed him, perspiration trickling down my back, and my slippers quickly filling with green sand. We climbed a high sand dune, I slithering about and cussing wildly under my breath. I stopped cussing when it occurred to me that one shouldn't use bad language in front of children. We paused on the top of the dune, and there, about half an Earth-mile ahead, lay Koirshan's 'village.'

To be continued in our next ....



Chris Priest, Brentwood. S'funny, you know. Here's Weston asking for meaty loc's in NEXUS, and here's you cornering the market in NITTY ones. "You don't have to be stoopid to work here, but it helps !" is an old saying. Switching words slightly, we get: "You don't have to be mad to write LoC's to LINK, but if you're not, you can't !" Despite meself, I'm writing a LoC. Must be a moral somewhere.

To be quite honest with you, I hate to admit this, I never thought I'd tell you this, I wasn't going to say ... but I thought LINK was great ! The best bit was "101 Unicorns." Despite a certain amount of audience-participation, which had me biased, even if I did end up in a snuff of poke, I couldn't stop laughing. Not that it was funny, if you see what I mean, but it was funny. It's so esoteric as to be almost ridiculous, but I still get it. Can't understand it. And I wish LINK came out more often, I just can't have enough of it.

(+( You get it, but you can't understand it ? H'm, yes, I see what you mean about you can't write letters to LINK if you're not mad .... BH)+)

Charles Platt, London N.W.3. It is early morning of Christmas Eve, 1964. The traffic of Fitzjohns Avenue is subdued to the murmur of an occasional ~~car~~ (what's happening to me ?) car; the duplicator is steaming quietly; the rubber collating finger lies discarded on the floor, having lost most of its little bobbles in the endless rasping contact with duplicating paper; the staple gun lies overturned amidst a pile of ruptured staples. There is nothing but the steady thump-thump, as incensed residents below our flat bang on the ceiling, and the strangled buzz of a burnt-out tape recorder, to distract me from my letter of comment on LINK-2, the magazine that, unwittingly, I have with my own two hands and two feet produced on what was once a duplicator.

Peering at the hieroglyphic under-inking of the parchment-coloured

pages, I see a legend -- a legend that a thousand Rosetta Stones would leave undeciphered. One can find a few basic meanings that common words take on in these aged pages; for example, Maryk explains that LINK means, in fact, coincidence; we see, with a brilliant flash of intuition, that LINKLOX refers, not to a door fastening, but to letters of comment; that the title HAGGIS refers not to a revolting dish of the barbaric Scots, but to a person ... but, alas, the majority of the -- magazine ? -- is left clothed in a - er - cloke of obscurity that remains as impenetrable to me as it will to any future historian unfortunate enough to excavate in the Crabbs Cross or Banbury area.

From the cave painting on the front cover, to the explosion of the sun on the back, we have an undateable, archaeological mystery. I'm afraid I view LINK as very wasted talent. In-group, fanzines are great fun, but let's not go to extremes, and let's keep the ingroup bigger than, say, ten people? Admittedly, most fanac is a complete waste of time, but some complete wastes of time are more complete than others.

With regard to the artwork: MiK is, as usual, eminently competent, and Ron McGuinness looks rather forced and clumsy in comparison. Pages 12 and 37 weren't at all bad, though; good visualisation, suffering from lack of technique, and fussiness over details without taking into account their effect upon the picture as a whole.

(+( Well - after duplicating and collating 50 copies of a 40-page LINK, I guess you were entitled to a good wallow in exhausted depression! Ron himself is not entirely happy about his stencilled work in L-2, and the two you mention were electro-stencilled from his own designs, rather than to my instructions. Cf. with what Archie says, below). BH)+)

Archie Mercer, Bristol 8. Consider yourself or -selves suitably and befittingly addressed, for this is a Mercatorial loc on LINK the Second. The front cover is decidedly toothsome. The bacover is decidedly dental. (+( You mean a decayed Ivory Castle ??)+) The interior illoes are not quite up to the standard that Ron sets for the bacover, though - probably because he's having to illustrate set subjects, rather than being able to give free rein to his imagination.

Re "Stone in the 'Pool" - I entirely agree. The school-leaving age should be reduced, not raised. Any child who genuinely wants to stay on at school should be given every encouragement - but if a 14- or 15-year-old would rather go and work for a living, it's better all round that he should be able to.

"Pilgrimage to the North" constitutes a valid piece of two-levelled writing, and makes for amusing reading. "A Tale of Two Worlds" flounders along in a welter of technicalese gobbledygook that succeeds in almost causing to be overlooked the point that it has a point - (+( wait a minute, let me read that bit again .... "succeeds in almost ...." oh yeh, I see what you ...)+) - even though not quite as fresh and new a point as Tony hoped. Cf. "The Man Who Made Friends With Electricity" - or something like that - in F&SF maybe a couple of years back. The names "Gyran" and "Gyrade", however, are in themselves superb, and deserve to be enshrined in more fitting surroundings. Pity.

You've certainly had some first-class letters of comment on No.1. The column might have been edited a bit more drastically, though.

Ethel - but what else can one call a bloke except a bloke? "Chap" sounds horribly effete, somehow, and to a lesser extent so do such words as "lad," whilst "guy" sounds self-consciously Americanese. Seth - Stonehenge dates ~~it~~ from a good many ~~years~~ centuries before the Druids. Of course, they might have made

use of it when their turn came - but the best expert opinion on the matter tends to doubt this. And liquid haggis I'd like to taste! Might even rival Oxo. Dave Baldock - there is indeed a Tower in Brum - cunningly disguised as a Rotunda. Lang - O.K., then, what was your recent telepathic-type experience? (+ (Yes, Lang - do tell! We're all broad-minded here ...)+). And on p.32, does Dave B. really mean "Keep up the good worm," or does he mean "work," "form," or what? (+ ("Worm" he typed, and "worm" I faithfully reproduced! )+).

Introvert that I am, I don't think I'll speak to "Stranger." It's hard to say whether this issue is better than the previous one or not. It contains a considerable proportion of comment on said previous one, and on other PADSzines, which L-1 did not, of course, carry. To that extent the two are not entirely comparable. I certainly enjoyed this'n, though. And it looks pleasant, too.

(+ (Opinion is divided on this question. Some think L-2 is disappointing as compared with L-1, while others think it's much better. And, yes, I know I've written "opinion" back there; ever tried 'em? If you've never eaten opionions with Limpopo cheese, you haven't lived! BH)+)

Graham Hall, Towkesbury, Glos. It's still not my cuppa char, but you seem to be ~~ch(r)aining~~ ch(r)aining LINK into a first-rate zine, and I commend you for't. Let's hope that when you forge another LINK (or will it be genuine?), the contents will be more interesting for me. As you know, all finz must interest me over and above any other Joe Soap. (Who the hell is Joa Soap ??? There's Jeeves raving over him in NEXUS and one thing and another). Ron McGuinness represents summat of a find and should go far.

Thanks for saying DOUBT best in PADS-1. I can't return the compliment, so I'll say that ... er ... LINK is perhaps potentially the greatest fanzine in production in ~~Worcestershire~~ Redditch at present.

Tony Walsh is a bright spark, isn't he ?? Thank Ghod "101 Unicorns" is over. Poor NIK can't seem to do anything right. I thought the cover to LINK-1 was good, but no-one else seems to have done. I think the cover to LINK-2 is crap. Yes.

(+ (You mean you prefer to be the hunter rather than the hunted? BH)+)

Harry McGannity, Poynton, Cheshire. The rip-roaring success of LINK-1 must have been the source of great satisfaction to the Henley Circus (if you girls will pardon the expression). You lot really enjoy yourselves, don't you? Such was the impact of LINK-1, however, the pure novelty of the thing, the sudden departure from serious sf, that LINK-2 could hardly have been expected to emulate it. But take heart, my daughters of mirth - I enjoyed it immensely just the same.

LINK, one feels, should not be sullied by male intrusions. Tony Walsh's story was admirably written; he is, in fact, quite gifted, but this story would have looked more at home in DOUBT, that very enterprising zine of Gray Hall's. A.M., of course, is different - he's part of the structure of this 'ere - er - fraternity. (+ (??)+). But LINK should be exclusively femme, and it seems to me you have an inexhaustibly supply of material from your own band of warriors.

Our American cousin Seth Johnson is quite correct. You can be deeply philosophical. (The Henley influence knows no bounds, does it, Seth?). LINK-3, therefore, should bear witness to this schizophrenic attitude. It should contain a measure of both tomfoolery and serious-mindedness. Doreen's article, "Psionic Defence," for instance, aroused most comment. I have a feeling this was a crafty

move. She must be as aware as the rest of us that the subject does not need a defence.

The bacover was most interesting. My own impressions were that it very cleverly illustrated the paradox of time, and symbolised completely SF&F. We see here an enigma of a huge sun, expanding and therefore old, against what could be a primordial sea of slime from which spring edifices of man's handiwork of entirely different periods, merging one into the other. The foam at the base of the rock upon which the mediaeval castle stands gives one the impression of a countdown on a launching pad.

But perhaps it is meant to be no such thing. How does one determine what is in the artist's mind? There are people who claim to interpret surrealism and modern art correctly. I haven't this gift myself, but were sf addicts required to wear some badge of identity, I figure this bacover would be a good design. So perhaps this boy Ron is the only indispensable male on your staff. Hang on to him at all costs! Nurse him - he's good.

(+ (That's a very interesting analysis. Comments, Ron? Let's make it a kind of Rorschach test - what do other people see in it? Or in any other of Ron's abstract drawings? BH)+)

Daphne Sewell, Peterborough. I think the cover is the funniest I have ever seen - are you the one with the weapon? I liked Chris Allerton's poem in L-1; I also liked "Stranger," by Mary Reed. I found "101 Unicorns" very funny. Of course, I didn't understand one word of it - was I supposed to?

(+ (Not particularly; as long as it gave you a laff or three, that's the main thing. BH)+)

Moira Read, Chulmleigh, N. Devon. Stone in the 'Pool? - get him out quick, poor ix lad, before some mermaid gets him! No, I don't agree with you, Beryl. The leaving age should be raised if possible. I do agree about the expense - and it's worse for girls than for boys. There's nothing worse than watching my friends that are earning money, casually buying clothes, records, make-up, etc. etc. when I can't afford a new pair of shoes. You say that people waste that last year at school. (+ (No - I said that some people do) +). If they stay on an extra two years surely this will encourage them to work more - and probably get further education in a subject they are interested in. And the longer education will probably get them a chance of a better job with more pay and prospects.

More work for over-worked etc. teachers, bigger classes, less individual attention - yes - how about building more schools for another thing? I'd like to know Ron Bennett's views too (+ (read on, Road) +). And what can you do when there are still misguided dears who say it's a waste of time and money for women to go to Teachers' Training College because most of them get married. HAH!

In short - keep people on at skool so they kin lern to spel. I'm sure you could have said an awful lot more on the subject - are you going to?

"101 Uniyounknowwhats" solution to me problem accepted - how could I know that Fred would be turned into a unicorn? I liked that bit about, "I wish Ted Sturgeon could be here." Oh dear - still not a mention of me darlin' George ... you've really upset him now - he won't even speak to Paul.

OK - OK - who produced Them at the bottom of p.24 .... auld Lang ...  
aaaggghhh ... (+ (Er ... )+)

Please, please beg Mushy to do some more poems - that one was lovely. I hope Ron will improve with practice, as you say. I didn't like his interior headings much, but the bacover and the p.37 illo were much, much better. Mik's cover was gorgeous - so funny! More, she screams!

Here - I must go an' wash me locks (they get so keyed-up if I'm not careful!) Where's that shampoo? Ah - in the tea-caddy .... Lookin' forward to LINK-3.

(+( Next time you hear that malarkey about its being a waste of time to educate girls, there's a famous saying you can throw at 'em: When you educate a man, you educate an individual. When you educate a woman, you educate a family. In this household, it's not Dad who helps the kids with their plurry-perishin' homework! And that's another thing - when is somebody going to have the courage to get up on his hind legs in Parliament or wherever, and abolish homework? Yes - I guess there is more to be said on the whole subject, Moira. Think I'll wait a bit, though, and see what rumblings emerge from the readership. BH)+) (P.S. Like the heading for this feature?)

Peter Singleton, Preston, Lancs.

The Brand X Tribe gets around quite a lot, I observe. I didn't think this sort of thing would be allowed in our sedate and civilised land. Fancy having a crazy rabble like that roaming around loose, with not even a medium-sized set of balls and chains to keep them in check. No visual advance warning for the poor helpless masses of mundane citizens .... Wake up, Britain! Act now before it is too late! The general style of Tony Walsh's story is straight out of the early ASF era, and the plot leaves me with a similar impression. I'm not complaining, just pointing out the more than slightly old-fashioned atmosphere that pervades this item of fan-fiction. It was well-written, though the complete lack of dialogue could be a significant indication of the author's capabilities of incorporating it into a story if he felt called upon to do so.

The bacover, and the illoes on pp12 and 37 are superb - please tell Ron McGuinness so. He deserves all the encouragement he can get.

"101 Unicorns" - The main highlight of the entire issue. I found this to be hilariously entertaining, and cunningly devised. Not that this was any great surprise to me - it maintains the high standard of Part One, much to my delight. And I share the O'Reed's aversion to cracking toes; my reactions are similar to cracking fingers, among other extremities too numerous to mention.

The reference to catatonic schizophrenonia in a space filler on p.24 is misplaced. The death-like trance alluded to should read "cataleptic," so the author of this slip should be soundly spanked! (+( Just you try it, mate! Besides, I'm not one of Seth's 'curvaceous blondes' ... )+).

I'm pleased to see PADS doing so nicely, and I hope all concerned manage to keep active in this thriving new apa.

Simone Walsh, Brigwater, Som.

LINK is the only fanzine I can read from cover to cover without getting bored. There is one thing that jars, though, and that is the constant references to Ringo, George, Dave, and other pop-stars. In the Fakespeare episodes the mention of their names adds nothing to the wit of the verse. Surely the horrcould have been ten, or five Freds, anything? We get pop-star publicity thrust at us like an incessant indoctrination.

I like Mik's cover (or is it the idea it conveys?), and most of Ron's illoes. I'm not too keen on the semi-abstract ones; they are a bit like over-grown doodles, which is bad, I think.

(+(- Well ... so many of the pop-stars mentioned are fully-paid-up members of Tribe X, and if we didn't mention them, they'd complain to the Union ... BH)+)

Ron Bernett, Harrogate, Yorks. I was just draining my fifth glass of kipper juice when the postman arrived. He clumped in as he usually does and flopped down on the old overstuffed sofa, the one nearest the front door. "Mite," he said, "Yer gars bill ain't 'arf 'eavy this time. Wotcha bin doin', makin' some toast?" This refers of course to my internationally known habit of burning toast whenever I make it, so that I have to toast some more bread and thereby consume a further quantity of the old CO, or whatever it is they're using for household gas these days. Methane in all likelihood.

Anyway, having wiped his feet on the new Axminster, he departed, tripping gently over Cecil and Andrew who were playing rugby on the front lawn. "That'll lawn him," I thought brightly. You can see that I'm at my best the first thing in the morning. It's a family joke that I get up (when I've the option) when the sun's rays shine in at the window. No? Well, the room faces west. Anyway, I opened the gas bill and found to my horror that it wasn't a gas bill at all.

It was LINK-2.

I wouldn't actually really have preferred the gas bill, honestly.

It is impossible to generalise about educational problems, which is what you're doing about advocating that the school-leaving age is not raised to sixteen. Still, those in favour of the raise are of course also generalising and the problem, I feel, can only be considered in such general terms, which shows that it's a confusing issue in itself. So, generally speaking I don't think that there's any argument about it. I entirely agree with you. I think I'm right in saying that Charles Smith does also. I seem to remember discussing this with him at a time when I hold, for some odd reason, the opposite viewpoint. Which all goes to prove something. Probably that it should have been a gas bill after all.

(+( It's just that I think the authorities are wanting to put la carte before the horses doovers, that's all. First equip the educational system - schools and the teaching profession - to cope with an extra year, and then consider raising the school-~~age~~ leaving age. And if you're so antipathetic to gas bills, why not change to electricity? - it burns without smell ...)+)

Dave Baldock, London. Many thanks for the second issue of LINK, an improvement on the first. "Pilgrimage to the North" was very good, my type of humour to be sure. Tony Walsh's story was also very good. "101 Unicorns", part 2 was better than the previous episode; it had more in it and was highly amusing. LINKLOX was very long but well worth reading. STRANGER ... excellent, with a geer illo, best piece of artwork in the whole zine! Bcover impressive. Keep up the good work. P.S.: Have you got a spare copy of LINK-1, like a fool, I lent my copy to a bird .... WOMEN!!!!

E.C. Tubb, London. Well .... Once upon a time a wise old sage said that the way to walk through life without stepping on corns could be condensed into a simple rule. "If you can't find something nice to say - shut up!" The trouble is that, if the rule is followed, no-one learns anything, and endless praise can be a sickening diet. So -

I wondered what was so familiar about Link-2 and then it came to me. The general tone reflected the letter column run by good ol' Sergeant Saturn in the heyday of the letterax when English as she is spoke took a beating and the said letters contained more fiction than the stories. It can be expressed as Gosh! Wow! Oboyoboyoboyoboy!

Or: Goshwoboyoboyoboyoboyoboy!

Or: Let's be funny if it kills us!

The trouble is - it did!

(continued ...)



You've set a standard of humour which could be ragingly funny to some but those same some are feeding on the same bones and are getting wilder and wilder in the process. The result is that all the letters seem to have been written by the same person - with two exceptions. Ethel Lindsay hit the button with her comments. Lang Jones was too good to be a copy. But want to bet that you haven't had many missives on the same pattern?

As the tone of the mag was all the same it is hard to select various pieces and say, Lo! This was good! Or Ugh! That stank! The peregrinations of Tribe X failed because a node of fact was swathed in layer after layer of shriekingly obvious fiction. Things which are mundane can be made to appear full of fun but not by piling on the glaringly impossible: "... came running after them with sawn-off shotgun behind left ear .... and 813/14/7 $\frac{1}{2}$  in his mitt ..."

And those interlocutions!

Geshwovoboyoboyoboy!

Sorry. No like. Just me.

(+( Ouch .... but at least the man's honest!)+)

Ed Mackin, Liverpool. I am not really surprised that Ted Tubb doesn't think your mag is funny. It seems to me to be aimed at the younger ones among us. Humour and the appreciation of humour varies according to age. The ebullience of youth and its matey approach to humour has been known to make older people shudder. EFR probably is appalled. This doesn't mean to say that there is very much wrong with LINK. It means that its appeal is spread across a very narrow band of the humorous spectrum, certainly; but within those limits it seems to me to be okay for sound. What I could understand of the Tribe X epic was amusing enough, although it is, strictly speaking, "in" humour, and this can be irritating for those who are not, if you see what I mean.

The funniest thing for me, and everyone I have shown it to - young and old - agree with me that it is very funny indeed, is the cartoon on the cover page. There's no doubt about it, MiK is really good.

LINK, it seems to me, in common with some other fanzines, has practically nothing to say about science fiction. I find this extraordinary. I really do.

(+( Well, in LINK-1, there was a moan - from me - about the lack of humour in sf. This evoked some interesting opinions in the loc's. I'm trying to gather various theories and opinions about humour, with a view to integrating them into a SERIOUS article! As for humour, etc., varying according to age - that's a tricky one, Ed. I think one's sense of humour matures and "grows up" as one gets older, but I don't see why that should invalidate earlier types of humour altogether. Thanks for writing anyway. )+).

That empties the mailbag for this time, but Doreen would like to answer some points in a few letters:

To: Tony Walsh. Yes, I agree - it was a poor defensive item, and strictly out of character, as no doubt you have gathered, having heard me sound off at the Cheslin Meet last November! I wrote this article after attending the PeterCon in '63, which was my first experience of fandom. I wasn't a member of the BSFA at the time, and the only reason I went was because I was at a loose end, and it was in my home town. Now you must admit that meeting about 150 fans en masse is a traumatic experience, and whenever anyone talked to me about SF, and I said I liked psi-stories - well, I began to think it was a dirty word, from the reactions I got! The article stayed in my file until Roger asked for material for VECTOR (and subsequently turned it down!). Then Beryl wrote asking for material for LINK-1, and she accepted it. Of course, in view of what I'd learned in the year

after the PeterCon, I should have re-written it - but I didn't, and neither did I research it properly. The basic ~~xxxx~~ premise remains, though - that I enjoy SF with a psi slant. But I agree that the article was badly written.

To Moirá Read. Thanks, and no, I haven't read "Exploring the Occult." Can you please tell me who wrote it so that I can get it out of the library ?

To Sheila Barnes. No - none of my friends would read SF of any kind when I first started, but by devious means, emotional blackmail, and sheer bullying - "Just to please me." - and - "We'll use my car !" (to which their reaction is usually, "Anything but THAT !") - I have managed to interest about six friends in reading Sf (mostly psi-slanted). I've also persuaded two to join the BSFA, which isn't bad in a fannish wilderness. Try it some time !

To Ron McGuinness. I can't find my copy of "Astounding" in which I read about the mid-European girl. The position is that I started to read SF in 1956. In 1957 my daughter was born, and in '58 and '59 I waged an unceasing battle against her, to prevent her touching my magazines. Naturally, I lost the battle for the most part, and that must have been one of the books that fell by the wayside. I referred to the mid-European girl from memory, and my memory played me a false. As somebody quite rightly pointed out, she didn't teleport, she levitated. I do remember that she was examined by the foremost scientists of her day, and they refused to comment on her abilities. Anybody got time to wade through their collection of "Astounding" ?

(+( Beryl here - I think I may have unwittingly confused this particular issue. When you, Doreen, mentioned the girl in your article, I - big-'ed, as usual ! - inserted a bracket saying: "Palladino ?" However, I still think that was the name of the girl referred to in the "Astounding" article. Sorry I can't be of more help - I haven't got a collection to go through ! )+).

To Seth Johnson. What are you trying to do - put me off Beryl's poetry ? (which I think is fabulous). To you or any other fan who wants to prove that the sound of one hand clapping is by vigorously spanking this curvaceous blonde, let me state at once that he will hear the rough edge of my tongue, which will probably blast him straight into orbit ! (And I'm not kidding - when I really sound off, it's more than probable !). I, too, am a fan of Thorne Smith. Think he's terrific. Must re-read him.

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"He's losing a lot of weight trying to run a party on three floors." -- John Brunner, at Charles Platt's party, February 27th, 1965.

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"I've never met Peter White, what's he like ?"  
"Oh, he's young, and rather serious ... a bit like Charles Platt, I'd say."  
"No, he isn't - he's quite a nice bloke, really ..."

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"A fanzine without a lettercol hasn't got any people in it." ++ B&H

L I S T ...

Mist in rolling flight, quarry of solar hounds,  
pursuing in pale golden silence, reaching,  
putting forth nebulous grasp for evaporating prey.  
Mist: escaping into earth-dens,  
or devoured into oblivion? Who can say?

Stripped of the veil that softens ugliness,  
enhances loveliness, the sun-dried streets lie passive,  
submissive to Sol's triumph.  
(Or are they smiling with relief to lose  
the pearly, weightless burden of a summer dawn?)

But mist frustrates its daily conqueror,  
and, swift as russet streak across the pleated fields,  
goes to earth, and there waits, and waits ....  
for dusk, and sun's western droop,  
and Venus, rising in mysterious albedo glow;  
and while this iridescent pinpoint challenges  
the far-flung tapestry of fading flame,  
miasmatic mist, as if in answer to her tingling call,  
creeps from its lair of leaf and loam,  
leaps to ingest dewy reinforcements,  
gathers in stealthy, breathy valley pools,  
sweeps in mute moistness to bejewel lawns,  
smiles wetly in the warm darkness,  
cocks filmy, wary eye at the aching moon,  
knowing her cold fingers powerless to arrest  
the damp, slow, silent advance.

But are these smoke-hued, wisping scarves  
woven of the same tenuous stuff  
which earlier fled from sun's ascent?  
Or is this a new generation of nacreous nothingness,  
making bid for nocturnal supremacy?  
Earth knows not, moon cares not,  
and tomorrow's sun will see it only as yet one more cloud  
to be banished from temporary sovereignty.  
The early riser watches a dispersal that struggles not,  
a defeat that wounds not, a chase without cry of despair;  
and he wonders, he wonders ....

++ Beryl Henley.

