

LINK-4



PaDS

DAVE BALDOCK -65-

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Cover drawing by Dave Baldock of London. Backcover by Ron McGuinness, also of London. Illos for "The Camels" saga by Mik. (Mike Higgs of Birmingham). Illo-heading for "I'm Home Again, But ..." by Phil Harbottle. Illos for "How to get Thrown Out of Hotels" by Dick Howett. Illo for "O'Rafferty's BEM" by Martin Pitt. Illo-heading for "Linklox" by Moira Read. Thanks to all contributors.

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This is LINK-4, produced for the 4th PaDS Mailing and due to appear early in November 1965. Price 1/6d. per single copy (no running subs.) Free for trade, loc or contribution.

duplicate d by
ARCHIE MERCER
~~thanks Mate~~

P E B B L E

in the

P O O L

Quote: "The highspot of LINK is the lettercol ... fandom's zaniest. Strange, even the most serious people are there, and there isn't a straight letter amongst them. I draw one of two conclusions from this; either everyone in fandom has a latent streak of madness ... or else Beryl writes all the letters herself. Can't help thinking it's the latter."

So wrote Chris Priest in PADDOCK-3's feature, "The Padded Cell." Disregarding his second conclusion (like, I've got nowt else to do but write barmy letters to meself??), let's examine the first. Chris has an enviable gift of being able to sum up a situation in a few perceptive words - I think he's well on the way to becoming a first-rate epigrammatist. "A latent streak of madness ..." This is what I have suspected - hopefully - for a very long time, and it is this very quality which LINK tries to evoke.

Some people's "funny-bones" are more deeply buried than those of others, and a few people rarely, if ever, reveal that they possess one at all. This type usually needs to be thoroughly inebriated before they can shed their inhibitions (often a result of strict childhood "conditioning" - a kind of cruelty, in my opinion). Such "lapses" are afterwards regarded as a cause for deep shame, and if pressed to explain why he feels ashamed, such a man will probably mutter that he "made a damn fool of himself." He'll "never be able to look the neighbours in the face again," etc.

But why is it considered so terrible to make a fool of oneself occasionally? If it causes genuine amusement to others, surely it can't be dubbed a heinous and unforgivable crime? (By "genuine amusement", I do not mean sneering ridicule, or a condescending grin faintly tinged with contempt or disgust). The fools, the clowns, the jesters - what would life be without them? A grim and joyless grind. Exhibitionists? Of course they are! Or perhaps I should say, of course we are. Because I'm one of 'em, and by damn, I'm proud of it.

Some of our loc-writers have expressed the opinion that L-3 leaned more towards the serious than did its two predecessors. Others have said that they would like to see even more serious subjects tackled in future issues. I agree with the former, and must, reluctantly, disappoint the latter. (Sorry, Harry, Seth and Co. - any future serious material will go to other zines, or will be used to "build" a new zine of my own; LINK is going to stay wacky and way-out!).

This doesn't, of course, mean that we won't welcome serious material from future contributors; both Mary and I are now members of OMPA, and can doubtless use any such material in OZ or CRABAPPLE. But (and this is addressed to Dave Wood in particular): please do write and tell us about anything that has given you a laugh. I know perfectly well that such anecdotes will not amuse everybody, but if they prove giggeworthy to just one reader, we'll be satisfied.

Humorous poetry, silly limericks (clean ones, please!), cartoons, puns, funny fan-fiction, the-day-I-laughed-in-church, the-night-the-floor-fell-in, or a-funny-thing-happened-to-me-on-my-way-to-the-Worldcon - anything with a titter, a

snigger or a chortle in it somewhere, will be welcomed with what Archie calls "little glad cries." We'll even guarantee to bend a favourable optic on articles about humour itself, such as why I can't laugh at Charlie Drake when everybody else is having hysterics. (Because somebody's pinched me National Health teeth ...).

IMOH *****

The funniest man I know isn't a TV, radio or theatre star. His name is Donald Hughes, he's about thirty years old, married, with two small children. He's of average height, dark-haired, and half-blind without his glasses. An ordinary-looking guy, but he's a born clown who never stops clowning.

He was the activating spirit of the "Redditch Revollers" (now, I'm sad to say, a defunct group), though he'd probably tell me not to talk like a wet nelly if he heard me say so.

You'd arrive at the rather grimy little Palace Theatre on a miserable winter evening for a rehearsal. Somehow, things never got going properly until Don breezed in with his penguin-type gait. Then you began to grin - you just couldn't help it. Never mind if you had a headache, or domestic worries, or if you'd had a row with your boss. Don would make you forget it all, simply by being himself.

He once fell out with his neighbour (though how anybody could manage to fall out with that guy, I'll never know). The bone of contention was the position of a fence between the back gardens. Hard words were exchanged, solicitors were consulted, a court case seemed imminent - yet the way Don related it had everybody rolling. "He put his fists up to me, and I said, 'Here, you wouldn't hit a man in glasses, would you?' 'Oh yes I would,' he said - so I picked our Ian up and said, 'What about a man with a baby-in-arms?'"

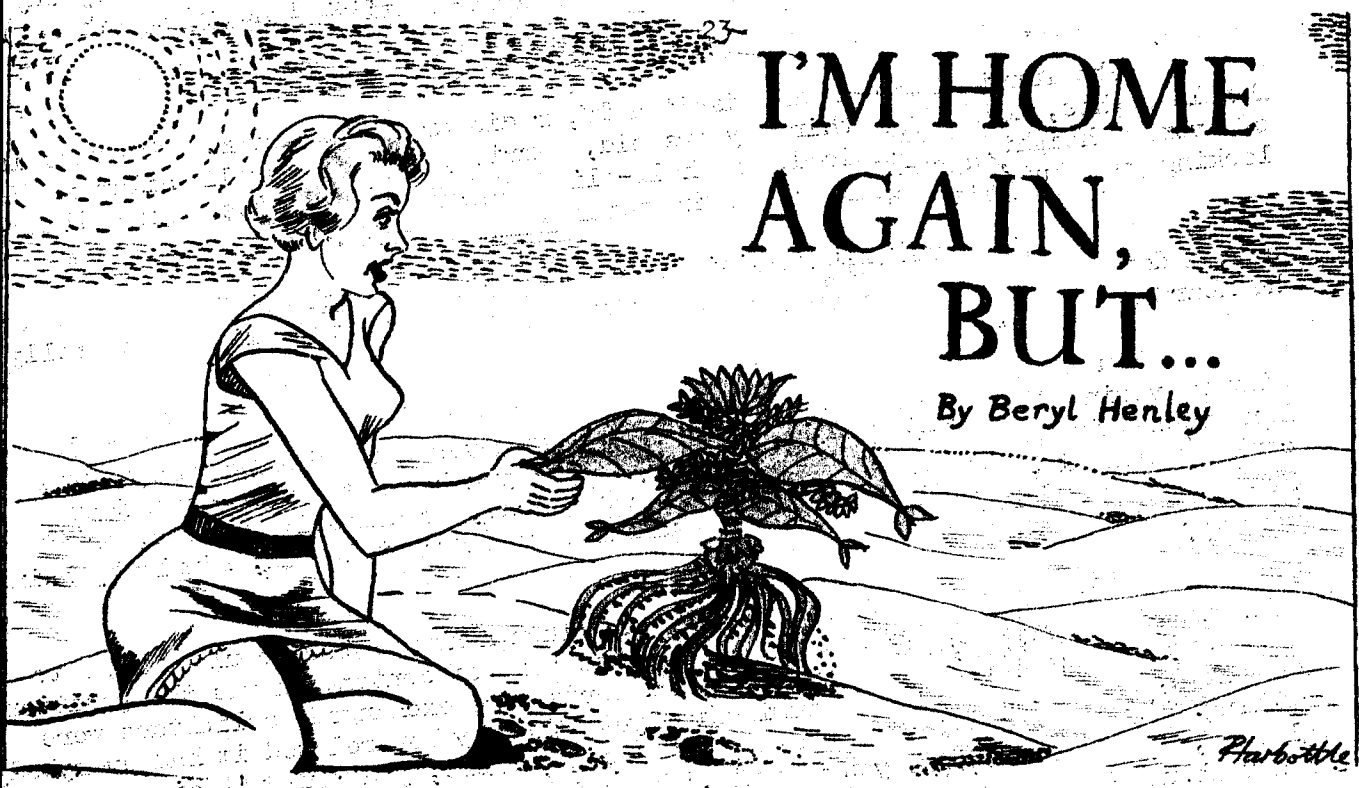
No, I guess it doesn't sound all that funny - but the way Don told it, with his exaggerated, Old-Mother-Riley-type gestures, it was excruciatingly funny. He would do anything for a laugh on stage - fall flat on his face, have buckets of water tipped over him, dress up in a ballet skirt, football socks and Army boots, or accept a faceful of "custard pie" with the best of 'em. (I once wrote to the BBC to ask what they made their custard-pies of. The formula is, as far as I can remember, shaving soap, water and gelatine. We couldn't afford that much shaving soap - or was it cream, I forget - so I filled a biscuit-tin with a revoltingly bland blancmange mixture. Don tore me off a strip because I hadn't put any sugar in it, and, referring to the small amount of soap-mixture we did use, complained that it "got up me snout and I sneezed all over the Fairy Queen ...").

I've seen him (stone cold sober) down on his hands and knees on the front lawn at midnight, searching for a fictitious tortoise, the rest of us clinging to each other in helpless mirth. I've opened the back door to find him deep in conversation with somebody round the corner of the house, only when I looked there was nobody there. On the telephone he's brazenly announced himself as everything and everybody from Doctor Beeching to the Queen Victoria Home for Unmarried Mothers.

It doesn't matter that he isn't famous, and probably never will be. Neither does it matter that he drops his aitches, swears like a three-striped stoker, and forgets his lines occasionally. (He should worry - he's a master of ad-lib). So he's inclined to be temperamental, the despair of the make-up girls, and he's a bag of nerves on opening night. So what? In his own way, he's a genius. He carries the gift of laughter. He's the funniest man I know. ++ BH.

I'M HOME AGAIN, BUT...

By Beryl Henley



(This is a slightly revised version of a story which first appeared in the "Redditch Indicator," Dec. '61).

PART II

To recap briefly: Ix was in the back garden one September evening, fetching in the washing because a thunderstorm was about to break. There was a flash of lightning, a peal of thunder - and abruptly I found myself standing in a g desert of green sand, under a blue sun. I made the acquaintance of a telepathic bush/shrub, named Koirshan. On discovering that he was just a youngster, I asked him to take me to his home, so that I could ask his parents (all three of them) what the hell was going on. I followed him across the hot green sand

We paused on top of a sand-dune, and there, about half an Earth-mile ahead, lay Koirshan's 'village.'

X X X X X X

Obviously I can't relate everything that happened to me there, it would take too long. In the first place, though, Koirshan's three parents and his 'teacher' pitched into him like nobody's business. I diverted their attention from him by diving in and out of their minds with 'pictures' of Earthly doings. They became so interested that they forgot all about Koirshan's misdeeds, and he nipped off to tell his pals what a clever little bush he'd been.

His parents took me into their home, a circle formed by a group of trees which kept off the worst of the sun, and also provided their sustenance. The trees

dropped an abundance of pods twice a day, at dawn and sundown. These were food and drink for the bush-people. Their day was a bit shorter than ours, as far as I could judge.

I ate the pods as well, all the time I stayed with them. Well, there wasn't anything else. Seems they did me no harm, though of course, there were times when I longed for a chop, or a dollop of ice-cream.

My main concern was - what was going on at home? Who was looking after my kids, and had Bob got a posse out looking for me? On my first evening on Shoroon, I tried to communicate this to Ruishan, the eldest of Koirshan's parents. He sent for his 'son.'

"Since you have disobeyed the law which forbids indiscriminate snatching" - (yes, that's the impression I got - 'snatching,' Sounded like an American Kidnap movie ...) - "and have abstracted this creature from its home world, one hopes that you at least had the sense to leave a replacement?"

"Of course I did!" - indignantly - "I'm not a baby - I don't go in for vacuum snatching!" (Don't ask me what it means, I'm only telling you what they 'said.' I wish you wouldn't keep interrupting).

"Replacement?" I didn't care for the sound of that. "What does that mean, Ruishan?"

"It is not easy to explain, but your ... ~~man~~ man?" (I nodded) - "your man does not know that you are with us. Another 'you' has taken your place for the time being."

Another me? Now I was really confused.

"But won't he know the difference? We've been together now for fifteen years --" I stopped, feeling like Albert Chevalier rendering "My Old Dutch."

"I do not know this 'Dutch,' but I assure you, your man suspects nothing."

I got a headache trying to figure it out, so I gave it up in favour of my knitting. You know, it was really thoughtful of Koirshan to 'snatch' my knitting as well; I'd have been lost without it.

We used to sit around in the tree circle, 'talking' about everything under the sun, I mean, under both suns. I became quite proud of my telepathic ability; after a couple of months I could communicate without speaking at all. Other members of the clan would often drop in for a chat, and it was all very friendly.

At least, it was until they discovered my crime. Well, how was I to know?

That first night, as I lay under the blaze of unfamiliar stars, my knitting bag under my head for a pillow, I thought busily about small, silly things to keep from going mad. This is September 21st, I told myself, and somehow it seemed important to remember that, and to keep track of time. Next day, as I was mooching around being nosey, I noticed a circle of trees that were smaller than all the others, and obviously not in use. "House to let," sort of thing. With one of my knitting needles, I scratched "S. 21, 61" on one of the trees. That night I scratched a mark under the figures, to denote the passing of a day, and every night

I scratched another mark. It became a kind of ritual. I didn't sleep much on the night of my birthday; earlier I had tried to explain to the bush-people what a birthday was, but it seemed that the concept meant nothing to them.

I don't know why Ruishan and the others didn't find out about my 'calendar' sooner. Perhaps they sensed when I was thinking private thoughts, and politely 'kept out.' Anyway, nearly three Earth-months had passed before the evening Ruishan came to me as I was gathering my supper of pods.

"No." came his firm thought. "You will not eat."

"Oh ? Is it a fast day or something ?"

"No. You have transgressed against our laws."

Well, you could have knocked me down with my knitting. I couldn't think what I'd done, so I reached for Ruishan's mind. It was like trying to walk through a door without opening it first. My mind reeled with the shock, and all the strength drained out of me.

To cut a long story down to size, the tree on which I'd scratched my calendar was one of a circle destined to be the new home of a young trio who had intended setting up house together as soon as the trees reached their regulation height, and began to shed pods. The trees grew from seeds produced by the bush-creatures themselves. I had scarred what was to have been a happy home, and this was as dreadful as if I'd scarred a human baby. All the minds around me, formerly open and friendly, were now cold and locked. I felt about as welcome as a St. Bernard in a telephone box.

I was sent to sit on a rock in the desert while the ~~XXX~~ Shoroonians debated my fate. I sat there as the blue sun disappeared and the stars began to wink. If I'd had a boomerang and a couple of kangaroos, I could have played at being Charlie Drake. I might even have found out ~~a~~ just why his boomerang never came back. Since I didn't have one, I took out my knitting - only to find I had about two yards of wool left. This was the last straw, to say nothing of the last stitch. I'd been cast off from the tribe, and now I'd have to cast off my knitting as well. It must have been a Tuesday; horrible things always happen to me on a Tuesday.

A rustling shadow crept towards me. Believe me, I wouldn't have cared if it had been the nasty something out of the woodshed, come to gobble me up, I felt so miserable. But it was Koirshan. He opened up two of his folded leaves, and a shower of pods fell on the sand.

"Ruishan says you are to eat. They have not yet decided what is to be done with you, and meanwhile you must not be allowed to die."

"Thanks, pal." I ate the pods without tasting them. Koirshan hung around indecisively; I think he felt sorry for me. I hoped he'd remember that I had once saved him from a bottom-leaf smacking. He picked up the piece of completed knitting. I watched him, glooming with self-pity. Then I took a closer look at that knitting. What on earth - or rather, what on Shoroon - had I made ? It was like nothing I'd ever seen before. If Picasso ever knitted, he might have produced an article exactly like that. It was all my own work, but it gave me the willies to look at it.

Koirshan's curiosity was riding him again.

"What's this?"

"Blowed if I know." Something was niggling at the back of my mind, but it wouldn't come out and let me take a look at it.

"But you must know what it is - you created it."

"Wait a minute, let me think." Something to do with the date ... let's see, there were ninety-four slashes on the tree ... nine to the end of September, thirty-one for October ... thirty for November ... that made ...

I'd got it.

"It's Christmas Eve," I breathed, and I began to cry. It wasn't fair. I hadn't asked to be whisked away to this horrid world, where I couldn't even get a decent meal. I'd missed my own birthday, and my elder son's - his 11th - and now I was going to miss all the Christmas fun.

Koirshan shuffled his roots uneasily. He didn't know what crying was, but I felt him at sort of dabbing at my mind, and realised that he was sensitive to my distress. I made myself stop crying.

He had caught some of my thoughts about Christmas, and off he went again - questions by the score.

"What's Christmas?"

"It's a festival - a happy time - for many of the children on my world."

"Why?"

"Because it celebrates an event which happened a very long time ago."

"What event?" And I found myself showing him the Christmas story - a little tentatively, because I wasn't sure that he'd understand it. But family affections were strong among the bush-creatures, so I stressed the love and goodwill of Christmas. His absorbed attention throbbed in my brain.

I concluded my explanation, and awaited further questions. They didn't come. Without a mental word, Koirshan shot back to the village as fast as his roots would carry him. And I sat on my rock, knowing suddenly just what it was I had knitted. That strange, woollen cylinder, with its oddly-shaped appendages, was a Christmas present for Koirshan.

Presently they came to fetch me; I stood up, and eyed them uncertainly. Waves of curiosity surged into my mind. Koirshan had relayed a confused tale to them - would I please clarify it? Was it true that the people of my world still honoured the arrival of one child nearly two thousand years earlier?

Their minds were open to me once more, and into those minds I again pictured the child-magic of Christmas. As the sun climbed over the horizon, I said, "So, on Christmas Day, people give each other presents - but particularly to the children. Like this." And I handed the piece of knitting to Koirshan. I think he would have blushed if he could have. The gift lay across two of his leaves, as his thoughts stammered, "But what - I mean, thank you - how do I ...?"

I helped him into it. It wasn't a very good fit, but he was highly delighted. The others crowded round him, their admiration and pleasure untinged with envy. I walked slowly to my calendar-tree. I looked at the scars I had

made, and the tears welled up again. I put my arms round the scratched trunk, and leaned my wet face against it. It was warm under my cheek.

I was being a lot of people that day. First I'd felt like Charlie Drake; now, I felt like Gracie Fields when she sang, "Oh, I never cried so much in all me life!" I'm not a weepy person by nature, but I certainly irrigated the desert that day.

I did more than that, actually. I healed the tree. When I finally stopped crying, I couldn't believe my eyes. The tree-trunk was smooth and unmarked. I tore back to the group, yelling incoherently.

Well, that's about it. Within a week, it was time for me to leave. No, I don't know why then and not earlier or later - that's only one of the things I never grasped.

The whole community escorted me back to the spot where Koirshan and I had met in September. I wanted to go and I didn't, if you know what I mean. I clutched my knitting bag as Koirshan, still wearing his present, stationed himself importantly in front of me. The final farewells were brief, yet sincere - and then Koirshan performed some unknowable mental gymnastics which wrenched my mind and dropped it into brief darkness ...

I found myself outside the back door, knitting bag in one hand, and a bucket of coal in the other. Couldn't understand that at first - then I realised that it would have looked odd if I'd had no reason for being outside, without a coat, on such a cold night. I hurried into the kitchen, and hid the knitting bag in the broom cupboard. Then I took a deep breath and went into the living room.

There was Bob, sitting in his usual chair and looking just the same. I waited for him to say something, on the lines of "Where the hell have you BEEN ?" But he didn't. That 'replacement' Koirshan left behind must have been a wonderful job.

And I had my Christmas, after all. I'd forgotten that Shoroon's days were a bit shorter than ours. I arrived home on December 22nd. I had a few dicey moments - for one thing, I had to hunt through the wardrobe and the bedroom cupboard to find out what we were giving the kids for Christmas ...

It isn't amnesia, is it? I haven't got a gap in my memory - just a lot of memories that don't belong in a human mind. Like I said, I don't understand it.

I get to feeling pretty lonely sometimes, not being telepathic any more. However, I expect it was all for the best. If I was still able to read minds, it would only cause a heap of trouble. The Russians wouldn't like it, for a start!

The nights are the worst. I lie awake, staring into the darkness, chasing that one question round and round ...

WHO walked around for three months wearing my body, while I sat knitting in the green desert of Shoroon?

U T T E R L Y

L O N G R I G G

by ... ARCHIE MERCER.

There is a well-known epigram (made originally by I know not whom) in which a novel in the abstract is compared to a mirror walking along a street. If this comparison is generally valid, then I think that the novels of Mr. Roger Longrigg are a special case, more strictly comparable to a tape-recorder standing at a street-corner.

Now this is not an article about the novels of Mr. Roger Longrigg - it's an article about me. But I'll get round to that in due course. Mr. Longrigg's novels have an upper-middle-class setting, with a strong element of more or less illicit sex running through them. But what happens, and to whom, is really not important. What is important is the things that people say. And the dialogue in a Longrigg novel has a flavour all of its own - a flavour not merely of authenticity, but of incredible authenticity.

His system is essentially simple. The reader simply follows the protagonist of the moment into a crowded bar or on to a railway station, sits behind him on the top deck of a bus, stands at his elbow at a cocktail party, or even remains concealed in the recesses of a tool-shed occupied otherwise by two pairs of lovers, the second pair to arrive knowing nothing of the first pair. And after that, the reader simply listens to what is variously said around him. Sometimes a coherent - well, reasonably coherent - conversation emerges, sometimes simply disjointed chatter from divers voices, sometimes a combination of the two. But the impression one receives is not that of a contrived comic script, but, goonish or not, of the real thing. One could swear that if Mr. Longrigg has not at some time or another heard that identical dialogue himself, then he's certainly heard its brother.

And to prove it (now this is where I come in), every now and again I find myself overhearing a conversation that is utterly Longrigg.

I'll try to give some examples. They can only be pale shadows of the real thing, of course, because I have an atrocious memory for details.

Last year, I attended a performance of La Belle Helene at the Bristol Hippodrome. The touring company of the Sadler's Wells Opera were responsible, and one of the characters was sung by one John Heddle Nash, the son (I gather) of the Heddle Nash. Heavily plugged in the programme and generally around the theatre was the forthcoming attraction - Lilac Time, featuring singer John Hanson. Now there was a party of middle-aged ignoramuses in the row immediately behind me, and one of the women had somehow got her wires crossed and kept asking what part "John Hanson Junior" was singing in the opera. Eventually somebody got her straightened out as to that, whereupon an argument developed as to who had written Lilac Time, and what was in it. None of the participants had the remotest idea of what they were talking about, and the resultant display of communal ignorance was utterly Longrigg. The

only line I can remember, unfortunately, is to the effect of: "But aren't you thinking of that other thing - We'll Gather Lilacs ?" When the curtain rose for the next act, they still hadn't got around to Schubert.

Then there were the two women on a bus, only a few months back, talking about a small boy. Apparently he'd sat astride a set of railings and got one of his feet caught between them so that he was unable to get down again. No - it wasn't the same foot, that was the time before. It was the other foot this time. It's a wonder he doesn't get his head caught in them. Oh, he's done that too before now.

Perhaps the most utterly Longrigg conversation I ever remember encountering was a few years ago at the Four Seasons Chinese Restaurant in Gloucester. I had gone in by myself, sat at a table near the window, and ordered some food appropriate to the occasion. Shortly afterwards, a dowdy, depressing middle-aged woman came in with two small boys, one considerably smaller than the other. They hovered about for a short while, then went over to the table in the darkest corner of the room. The boys sat down, but the woman continued to hover. It seemed that they were expecting reinforcements, and she hoped (in a depressing-sounding but carrying voice) that said reinforcements would bring her white case with them - because she did want to change into a pair of trousers as they would be much warmer.

She continued to hover - and to anticipate the arrival of her missing luggage - until the reinforcements showed up. These consisted of two or three men and another, younger woman. The elder woman greeted them with little glad cries, and with a demand to know what they'd done with her white case, because she did want to change into a pair of trousers - they'd be so much warmer. Unfortunately, her wants had not been foreseen - the case in question had been left in the other car, which was some distance away. However, appreciating the force of her argument that a pair of trousers would be much warmer, one of the men volunteered to go and fetch the case. The senior man then shepherded the party over to the window side of the room, near me. The larger of the two small boys dashed across with a whoop and grabbed the seat at the head of the table, with his back to the window. The younger boy immediately complained that he wanted to sit there. "Love over and let him have it," the older boy was told by the senior man - I got the impression that he was an uncle. No, said the boy - I got here first. Go on, said the man - move over. It isn't fair, said the boy - I was here first. Do what I tell you, said the man. The boy complied, but with a bad grace - it wasn't fair, he repeated, he had got there first.

I entirely agreed with him. It wasn't fair. Whether it was fair in the circumstances not to apply the "first come, first served" rule, of course, I am not competent to judge. But it was certainly not fair to leave the kid with a grievance a mile wide like that. He kept up his complaint, on and off, the whole time I was there, interspersed with hoping aloud on the part of the woman (his mother ?) that whoever it was would be able to find her white case, because she did want to change into a pair of trousers - they would be so much warmer.

Case and case eventually showed up. The woman hailed their advent with little glad cries as before, then sat down and started opening the case. For one delirious moment I thought she was going to change into a pair of trousers there and then - after all, as she said, they would be so much warmer. But she was only reassuring herself that they were there to change into at some less inappropriate time. Satisfied, she shut the case again, repeating that she did want to change

into a pair of trousers - they'd be so much warmer. It isn't fair, said the boy - I was there first. And about that time I finished my meal and left them. I was frankly glad to get away from them. A more unappealing family I have seldom encountered.

Roger Longrigg would have loved them, though.

... AM

+ + + + +

DEPT. of UNASHAMED SPACE-FILLERS.

"Mummy, Mummy, the beds in this hotel are damp - I shall have rheumatism in the morning!"

"No you won't, my girl - you'll have cornflakes like everybody else!"

.....

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Jones, but Maria Callas hasn't made a recording of 'I Can't Do My Bally Bottom Button Up.'" - Ken Dodd, compering the "Housewives' Choice" radio programme, August 1965.

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The battle of the sexes will never be won by either side - there's too much fraternisation with the enemy.

.....

Early to bed, early to rise,
And the girls go out
With the other guys.

.....

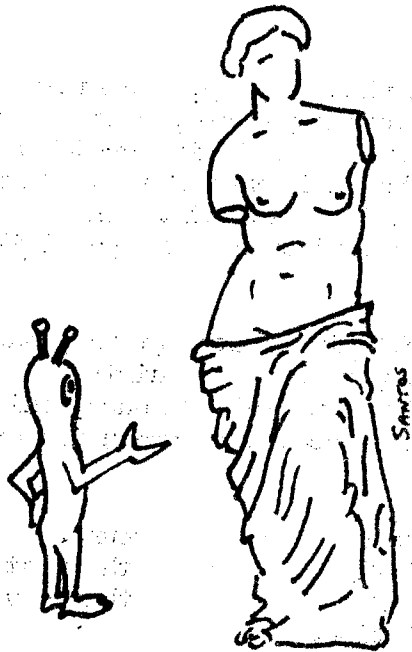
Seen on the windscreen of a car:
"Come back, Harples, all is forgiven!"

.....

A new product, called SHIFT, has recently appeared in TV commercials. It's for cleaning grease, etc., from the inside of ovens (and it's selling like a bomb, too - I've been unable to buy it anywhere). Last week I was told that it is made by the manufacturers of Andrews' Liver Salts. What I want to know is, will they now re-name the liver salts, MOVE ??

.....

"I hate Mercer - he lumbered me with VECTOR." - RGP.



Habla usted español?
Sprechen Sie Deutsch?
Parla lei italiano?
Parlez-vous français?

BUILD

WITH

GUM!

... by SHEILA BARNES

Now, at last, we are permitted to reveal what has been going on in a quiet English town, the name of which must unfortunately remain secret for now. Men of power and vision have been at work, testing out the great new building material of the age - Chewing Gum. A derivative of the common gum that may be bought for a penny or two is the new marvel material, rivalling concrete for strength and durability, yet it is much lighter, and is easily moulded. Yes, the twentieth century is one that will be remembered in aeons to come as the one in which man perfected the all-purpose material.

To begin at the beginning, which is as good a place as any, a certain botanist, on expedition to Central America for quite another purpose, came across an aberrant strain of the chicle tree, which yields chewing gum in its crude form. Intrigued, he took a sample of this chicle home, and showed it to a friend of his who was engaged on research into the properties of building materials. And it was this friend who, in a moment of blinding inspiration, first saw the possibilities of gum for building.

Inflamed, the two friends decided to collaborate in an attempt to produce a buildable gum. Years later, a reasonable strain was produced. Requiring a minimum of mastication, yet retaining its elasticity for a period of hours, this gum sets into a hard, but not brittle mass. Work still proceeds on producing an even better type of gum.

There are now observable and practical results of these endeavours. Three families have occupied small bungalows built chiefly of gum, for the past five years, and these dwellings have shown less signs of wear and tear than have conventional buildings occupied for the same length of time.

Gum has many advantages over conventional building materials. It can be chewed and moulded on the site; it is light and easily transported; plumbing, electricity, etc., can be incorporated into the walls while they are still malleable; it is absolutely fireproof; and repairs are easily effected.

The possibilities are endless - the use of gum need not be confined to private homes, even on housing estates. With improvements and refinements, it may be used for blocks of flats and offices, where its lightness combined with strength will prove a great advantage, especially as it can be reinforced with a steel framework, as are the skyscrapers now in existence. The construction of roads and pavements is already feasible, and with further developments, it may be possible to build bridges of gum. I can see it now - an airy framework of steel paved with gum, spanning the stormy grey waters that separate us from Europe.

Whole cities may be built of gum! Hitherto impossible feats of architecture will be performed in this new medium. Gravity-defying towers will point the way to the stars, homes will have built-in furniture sculpted from the walls and floors, thus answering the old song, "Do you stick your chewing-gum on the bedpost overnight?", for the chewing-gum will be the bedpost.

Jewel-bright colours will be everywhere, as the coloured strains of gum come to the fore. Brilliant mosaics will decorate every building, and beauty will be freely available to all who desire it. The cities will be surrounded by green groves of the beneficent chicle trees, that will have made all this peace and plenty possible.

Just one problem remains for solution. Since all this gum must be chewed - who is going to chew it ?

++ Sheila Barnes.

As I said to Sheila when I acknowledged the above offering : the subject presents almost endless possibilities for extrapolation. For instance, in reply to her final question, my first thought was "Eskimos." Those hardy eaters of whale-blubber, in whose language there was, until quite recently, no word for "toothache," because it was unknown among them.

Then I thought, perhaps it would be compulsory for children to chew gum in school, thus becoming wage-earners as soon as they had a full set of teeth. The dentists would gradually find themselves with less work and fewer patients, and would organise protest marches, and make sabotage raids on the new-style building sites. The newsagents, finding themselves with no paper-boys, would also protest.

The ideas grew madder. Why stop at buildings and moulded furniture ? "Beatles Change to Gum-Guitars !" "Ringo says gumskins are hell on the stix !"

From cars to cutlery, from planes to plates, a whole vista of exciting new possibilities opens up. Watch future issues of LINK for further news !

(I've heard of gumshoes ... gumboots ... gumption ... not to mention gumboils ... but this is)

Been up any good gum-trees lately ?

++ BH

It's hard to stand upon one's head
When one is lying in one's bed,
Because one tends to get one's feet
Entangled in the upper sheet.

- Yilbert McUdder

Boo !

- Mrs. McUdder

by ... GRAHAM M. HALL.

As I sit here, trying, a 25-year-old American folk singer, Bob Dylan, is touring England, and presenting a total of eight concerts. Dylan has been singing for some 10 years - professionally for some few less.

At the same time, an 18-year-old British folk singer, Donovan, is also touring the country. He has been singing for some four years, professionally for some six months at most.

apart from the similarity in their music, that they both have records in the top twenty, they both wear denim clothing, they both play guitars with harmonicas strapped to them, they both sing nasally with a blues husk, they both write their own songs on philosophical and similar themes, with great dollops of pathos and wistful romanticism, they both wear caps, and both deny being influenced by anyone else, they have one thing in common - they are both copyists.

Donovan quite patently copies Dylan. Dylan's influences are more obscure. But he spent much of his early life with Ramblin' Jack Elliott, and met Woody Guthrie. Elliott himself is extremely influenced by a folk-singer/guitarist with whom he spent his early life - one Woody Guthrie. Dylan even talks with the same intonations as Guthrie.

Unfortunately Guthrie has spent the last 14 years in hospital suffering from a nervous disease, Huntington's Chorea. He can't walk, write or sing. He can hardly talk.

But pick up any "pop" music paper and this argument will be carried on with much greater fervour, and at greater length, than I have the patience to give it.

That isn't the topic of this article.

Now I tell you.

Bob Dylan does have a certain amount of talent. If one can make out the lyrics that he sings in his whining nasal twang, they form a kind of poetry. But this is not surprising in itself. Dylan writes poetry and has, in fact, received some attention. His poetry is good and worth reading. Go into a record shop and read some of that published on the sleeves of his LPs. It'll repay your trouble.

Now I don't have the same facility with words as Dylan, and haven't any of his poetry to hand, but if Donovan wrote any in the same way, it'd go something like this:

I first remember
 livin
 in a street in Battersea.
 Crawl in Brick and creep in grass.
 a dead place,
 a red place.
 The first thing
 I remember
 people doin
 was runnin
 runnin from themselves
 runnin from others
 runnin from the crawl in brick
 and the creep in grass.
 folks runnin from folks.
 runnin from dirt and filth
 to they-know-not what
 runnin

thinkin that
 it can't be worse.
 + + + +
 can it ?
 + + + +
 The ace of spades
 is a hard card t play.
 harder t play
 than the jack of hearts.
 + + + +
 I don't believe
 in the devil.
 I believe in people.
 the devil is a
 person
 who can't believe in
 people.

Now before all you Dylan fen, if there are any, go pick up your pens and acid bottles, I know it ain't much like Dylan poetry. I stretch in a point a little to prove my argument.

That's politics.

Now I don't wish to take up more than two pages of this magazine. Soooo. I'll leave you with a poem by e.e. cummings. Born 1894 in the U.S., educated at Harvard, died 1962. A bit before Dylan.

FROM TULIPS AND CHIMNEYS.

the bigness of cannon
 is skilful,

but i have seen
 death's clever enormous voice
 which hides in a fragility
 of poppies ...

i say that sometimes
 on these long talkative animals
 are laid fists of huger silence

i have seen all the silence
 filled with vivid noiseless boys

at Roupay
 i have seen
 between barrages

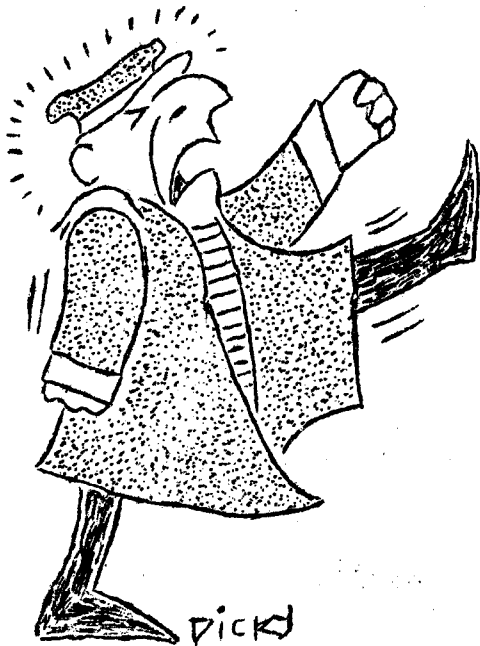
the night utter ripe unspeaking girls.

HOW TO GET THROWN OUT OF HOTELS



by ...

CHRIS PRIEST



DICKS

HOW TO GET THROWN OUT OF HOTELS

... by CHRIS PRIEST

It's a definite art. To do it properly, that is. After all, there's throwing out and throwing out; the crude way and the proper way. Anybody can do it the ordinary way, simply by refusing to pay the bill. But this isn't satisfactory, to leave a debt hanging is aesthetically displeasing and shows a distinct lack of craftsmanship. To be a master at the game one needs style and competence, subtlety and skill. Like all crafts it requires an inborn talent, yet needs the embellishment of practice and tuition, and the advice of an old regular throwee.

That's me. I can speak with the authority of experience. I may appear to brag, but it is with utmost modesty that I present my references before going on to pass a few hints. I work on the basis of the bigger they are, the harder they fall for the ejection routine. I started with the small fry, of course ... the private inns and boarding houses; but this isn't really fair. Such establishments are often run on a personal basis, and they take it so hard. They seem to feel that the hotel is disliked, or that there's something wrong with the service. They miss the point entirely, that's why I soon graduated to the big time. Here, with the impersonal obsequy and servility that is unique in British hotels, I began to find my attacks were hitting home. In short time I was hitting pavements all over the country; in Park Lane and Mayfair, in Glasgow and in Manchester. Neither revolving door nor swing door could hold me; every commissionaire was my match. The porters and the pages, the receptionists and the managements, the chambermaids and the waitresses ... they all hated me.

My collection is not yet complete, I still have several hotels to conquer. There are those that present a problem even to me. Some, the more ostentatious, are practically impossible to offend. With every added indignity the bowing and scraping grows, the manager's smile grows more forced, the head-waiter's service more correct. Behind the scenes you become an Awkward Customer; to your face you're as welcome as ever. These are the hard nuts to crack, and for this very reason I leave them to the end. The culmination of my efforts will be reached with my ejection from the largest and most expensive hotel in London. When this has been accomplished I shall retire, and live forever in past glories. But enough of this, a few words on technique are required.

There are three unbreakable rules. The first is basic: always offer to pay the bill. This way, you have the defence of being able to say you did show willing. More important, your offer is often turned down. Secondly, never ever complain. Once you make disparaging comments you've had it - you might just as well pay your bill and find another hotel; that one will never kick you out. And finally, at all times be your own natural, charming, friendly, irritating self.

Any hotel worth the name attempts to present to its clientele a veneer of quiet, calm efficiency and servile politeness. At all events, any contact between hotel staff and guests must be as impersonal and brief as possible. No glimpse of warm humanity must break through the glossy finish of servitude. Consequently, a trouble-shooting guest must try to penetrate this barrier - he must attempt to find the weaknesses of the structure.

Every hotel has two particular points where applied stress brings the greatest reward: the Reception Desk and the Dining Room. It is in these places

that the guest has most of his contact with the staff, and it is here that he should concentrate his greatest efforts.

The Reception-Desk-Attack has two advantages. Firstly, it brings you into very close contact with the management - a valuable point to bear in mind; and secondly, you acquire the opportunity to get a little of your own back on the sexless, deodorised female who welcomed you to the hotel with such disarming coldness. Used properly, the Reception Desk can become the clearing-house for all your little foibles and favours, your awkward arrangements and requests. Most Desks carry a stock of postage stamps; buy up the lot. Clear the lounges of all the printed notepaper, then ask for more. Ask for an extra pillow, or order early-morning coffee instead of tea. Refuse a national daily paper, and insist on the Liverpool Echo, or the Aberdeen Times. Lose your bedroom key, or alternatively lock yourself out of your room.

Be as awkward and as cussed as you can; but be friendly. Even apologise for the inconvenience; they'll get fed up with you all the quicker that way. As a supplementary to this Attack, a few sorties against the Bedroom Staff are often irreplaceable. Try leaving three or four different kinds of shoes for cleaning outside your bedroom each night. Or systematically fold your bedclothes and leave them on top of your wardrobe when you go down to breakfast. Or burst your hot-water bottle late at night. Or leave shaving-cream in liberal quantities all over the hand-basin.

The Dining-Room-Attack needs care. It is here that a merely awkward and unpleasant guest can quickly acquire a reputation for being a complainer. This is obviously something that needs no emphasis. The aspiring throwee should never complain - he should make requests. He never returns food as being badly-cooked - he calls the head-waiter and asks that it be cooked a little more, whatever its condition. He never complains about the wine - he merely assures the waiter that he likes his sauterne served warm. His most powerful weapons can be numbered as two: the Difficult Request, and the Loud Comment.

To be difficult is easy: dishes that aren't on the menu, or combinations of dishes. Or calling for the à la carte during a busy time. But to make an apt comment in a sufficiently-carrying voice needs a ready sense of humour and a penchant for the more cutting form of sarcasm. Practice is invaluable, but seeming spontaneity equally so. Two old stand-bys of mine have seen me through many a hotel door in the past, though word is beginning to spread and they are now losing some of their impact. The first opportunity avails itself when the main course is poultry or pork. There always comes a time when the waitress looks you straight in the eye and asks, "Do you want stuffing?" The answer is obvious and highly indelicate. A similar position can arise one course earlier, on the arrival of the fish dish. The waiter comes up to the table bearing a plate of steamed sole, served in meuniere sauce. As he places it before you, take a deep and exaggerated sniff at the aroma. Sit back, beam up at him, and say with loud-voiced relish, "Ah, sole!"

It never fails.

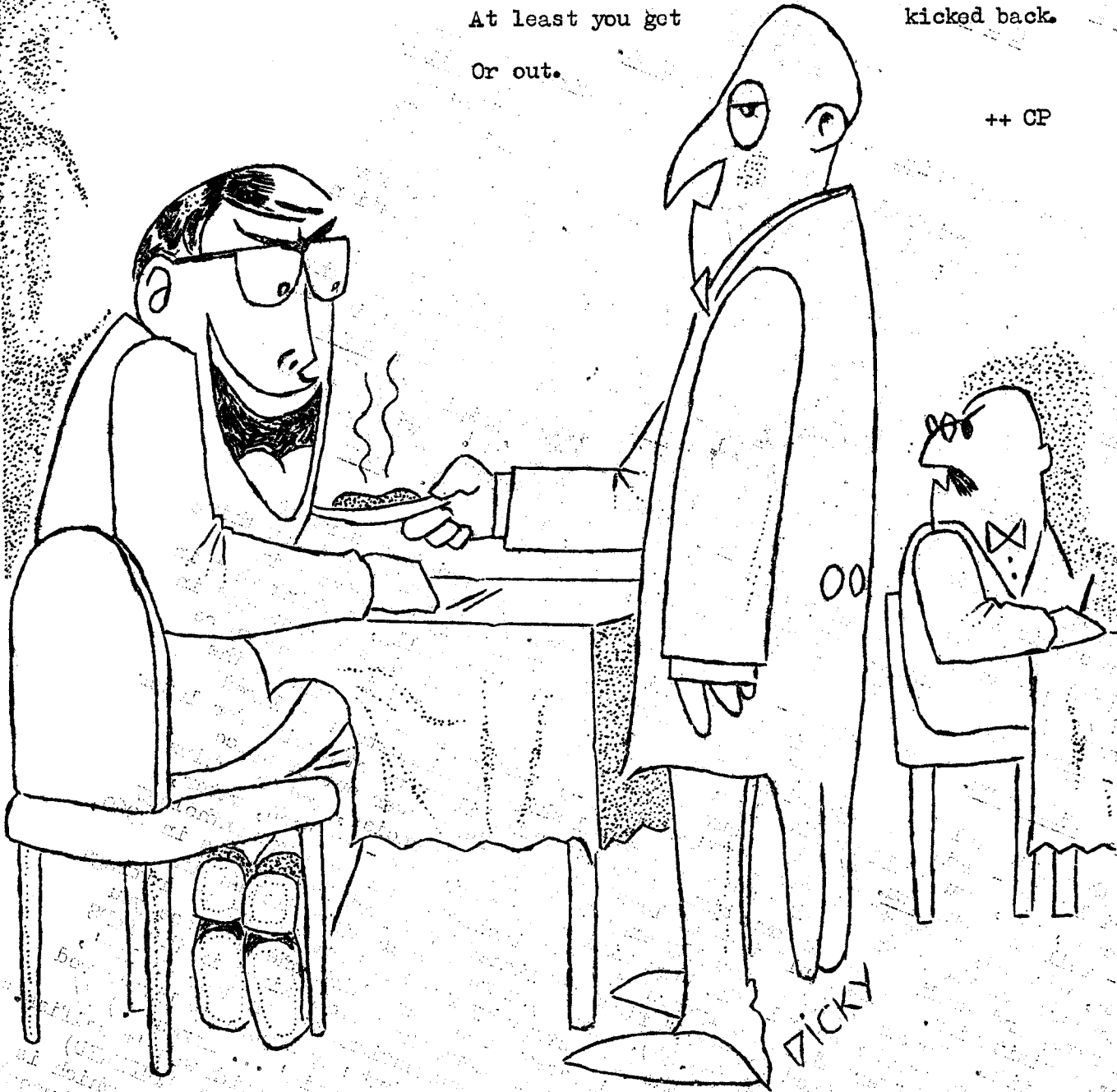
These days, hotels are losing the slightly-passe olde worldie hospitality, and are replacing it with a sort of cardboard servility. The service is still there, but the courtesy vanished with the demise of the cash tip. In a world of travelling representatives and expense-account dimmers, ten-percent service-charges and diners'-club cards, the need for personal and attentive service has

gone. People who complain are now truly satisfied only rarely. That is why I advocate these slightly irresponsible kicking tactics.

At least you get
Or out.

kicked back.

++ CP



... mailing comments on the 3rd PaDS
conglomeration.

G A R D E !

... mailing comments on the 3rd PaDS
conglomeration.

BUMBLIE-3. ("The one that's not very bright ..."). John Barfoot.

Gray's story was quite original - I don't remember reading anything quite like it before. Now then Gray, ole mate: how's about writing a similar one in which the aesthetic streak triumphs over the bestial, h'mmm? // "Second Contact" - Barfoot, you're awful! I hated this! // Some of the sf quotes were vaguely familiar, but my normally excellent memory has a large blank spot wherein most titles and authors' names fall and are never heard of again. I did manage to put writers' names to a couple of the titles, though. // Welcome to the Club for the appreciation of Cordwainer Smith! // I'd say that the answer to the question at the end of the zine-reviews is: Stalin's dead. // Couldn't agree more about "Green Millemium." Delightful. // I'd have bet anything that "Spring" was by Dave Wood, even if you hadn't said so. It's Dead-Woodish! // I wonder if I ought to tell Archie who Richard Mayall is ... // How do you know that your pessimism is nowt to do with the Post-Hiroshima Syndrome? Huh? You mean you've got worse things to be pessimistic about? If so - what? // THANKS for joining in my campaign to prove that the Gt. O'Reed does not write mad letters! She don't, do she, John?? // That cover exactly represents what I was trying to say in an article I wrote in my OMEPazine. (I did send you a copy, I think?). Very effective - who's Harry Bell? Tell us about him, please?

FUSION-2. Jim Grant. Fine cover - I have, of course, a proprietary sort of interest in Ron and his artwork. // If you've got something to say that you feel is worth saying, and which can effectively be written in editorial vein - write an editorial. If not - don't! Personally, I think that in your case, Jim, you could profitably use your editorials to do what I requested in L-3 - tell us about you. // What about robots that could be sent into deep space (like, perhaps, "Robert" in the TV "Fireball XL-5" series)? They could be the "pioneers" of the future, being sent in special ships to hitherto unexplored planets, and sending back information as to its suitability or otherwise for later human visitation. This would take at least some of the danger out of space exploration. Robots would be totally expendable in emergencies, and the ships carrying them would need only the bare minimum of equipment - no food, water, oxygen, etc. // "Here There Be Tygers" is also included in a Bradbury anthology called "The Day It Rained Forever," first published by Rupert Hart Davies in 1960, and later issued by the SFBC (no. 44). Have you read Bradbury's "Asleep in Armageddon", Jim? // I thought the Kapp story by far the best in New SF Writings No. 2. Seen number 3 yet? I'll be interested to know which one of those you liked best. // Gray Hall says, "FUSION ranks among the better zines in the PaDS mailing, and could go far." And you ask, "any suggestions?" Oh dear oh lor', Jim ... I daren't think what Gray's reply might be, but may I poke my little red nose in and suggest Vladivostok, for a start? (Only furmin' ... honest!) // Ivor Latto says: "I've never heard any argument for abortion which wasn't selfish." That's a typical male reaction. I stand by what I've said (bawled, HOLLERED) several times before: men have no right to dictate to women on a matter which is exclusively a feminine concern. It's not male bodies which are used (and abused)

for procreational purposes. // Sheila - re "Thou shalt not kill." Are you going to tell me that you've never swatted a fly, or squashed an Yngvi, or "de-loused" a patient who had never heard of personal hygiene? And are you a vegetarian? The commandment doesn't specify what thou shalt not kill. It doesn't say "thou shalt not kill other human beings." And even if it did, could you honestly claim that you wouldn't shoot an enemy in time of war? Especially if it was a case of "him or you"? // Anyway, you'll have read my own comments to Doreen in L-3 by now. Add to those the fact that I'm a reincarnationist, and you'll realise that I'm arguing from totally different premises. (So why don't I just shut up? O.K., luy - I will!) // Jim - I'm still boggling at one phrase in "Probe into Darkness." "To meet the needs of both limited and nuclear war." Limited war - pardon me, but isn't this rather like saying that a woman is "a little bit pregnant" ?? // Fanzines wanted, he says ... "loc or sub guaranteed," he says. So where's your loc on L-2, then? There's yer bob? Nary a word in FUSION-2. Not a scream of agony, a moan of despair, or a whimper of feeble protest, even ... mutter, swear ...

GREEN ONIONS SHOW-Pt. II. Wacky Wood. Now we know why Charles packed up running PaDS! // Dammit, Dave, I know sex is good for me, but d'you have to tell everybody ??? Hell's teeth, yer can't keep nuthin' to yerself these days ... ruddy Radfordian stoolies ... // My tame hippo (named Hubert) says Barnett's mud is rotten. She much prefers Prendergast's - it contains WM-7. // No - to be quite honest, I was on a number 7 bus, and this woman in the red ski-pants and crash-helmet (nothing else) asked me for a bottle of cough-mixture to light her pipe with. So I said ... hell, Dave, you've got me as daft as you are. (Whatcha mean, I always was? Oooh, he's cocky with it!). Start again, Beryl. One-two-six, go. Dave: I think G.O. (no, G.O., not B.O.!) is great. Can we have one every week? No, perhaps that wouldn't be a good thing. Not if it's true, that saying about "laugh and grow fat." I've lost 16 lbs. in eight weeks, and I most emphatically don't want 'em back. So if you find 'em, kindly donate 'em to the Royal Lifeboat Institute or summat. // That tramp who had a pearl in his foot - I couldn't care less so long as it was a pearl and not a beryl. I've been trodden on too many times as it is ... // A bed acket is a garment a woman wears in bed when she's suffering from ailments such as aundice, lockaw, or dislocated oints ... // "The Green Onions Show, Pt. II" is easily the wackiest fanzine to reach me in hysterical condition. In thish, I particularly liked Dave Wood, and I wish he'd been at the Worldcon becoss I was dying to gerrat him!. The artwork was typical. (Never mind of what!). Among the famous names represented in the issue are Dave Wood, David Orme, Dave Wood, Gray Hall, Red Kitchen, Ack Bennett, Dave Wood, Ole Pubtoe, Dave Wood, Richard Mayall (alias heh-heh-heh!), Richard-the-Crate Catesby, Dave Wood and Dave Wood.

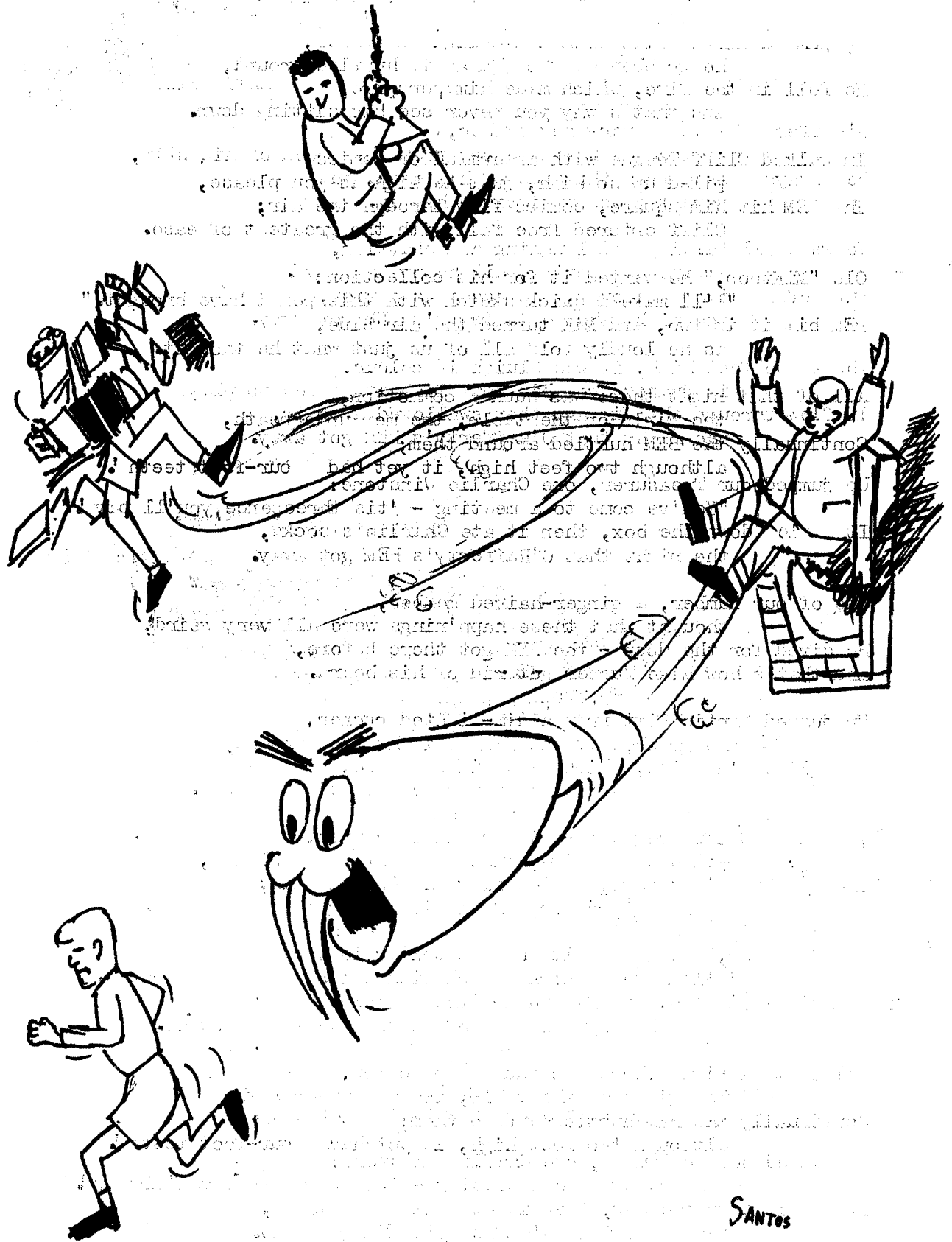
PAADLOCK-3. Dick Howett. Nicely produced zine, a pleasure to read. // Chris - tower (Blackpool) for them kind words re L-2. An even larger tower (Eiffel) for providing the subject for this issue's "Pebble in the Pool"! // My father has on several occasions mentioned an early horror film called "The Face at the Window." Pop says that members of St. John's or the Red Cross had to stand by every night to deal with cases of fainting and hysteria. ("They were passing out like flies"). Would David Cleveland know who starred in that one? Was it Lon Chaney junior? // The article - or rather, the unashamed advert. for unashamed nudity - was quite interesting, but I shiver in a normal British summer with clothes on! // "Fan Mail" - ta, Mush. This is a classic example of why I rarely bother to retaliate against my critics. There's always some dear soul like yourself who will leap to my defence!. However, it's only fair to say that Chris's remarks in P-2 were written before he and I had met. Since we did, I'm happy to report that we have become the best of friends. // I had some giggle-material from

the Aetherius lot once. George King had just returned from a kind of trip-in-the-
astral to Venus. However, I gather that they do no-one any harm, (and probably
consider Us Fans as utter mutters!), so let's not sneer. They have as much right
to enjoy their particular brand of maddery as we have to enjoy ours, i.e. Fandom!

STASIS. Pete Weston. This comment will be rather meagre, since STASIS itself was;
the only thing one can really comment on is the bit about
conventions. I mulled this over for some time before deciding that fandom does not,
(i.m.o. = in my opinion), need "recruits", in the accepted sense of the word. To me,
it always implies some sort of organised drive which puts a certain amount of
pressure on people. Certainly, many of these people would probably be more than
willing to join fandom, and/or the B.S.F.A., if more publicity was given to it, as
you suggest. I'll go along with that. But I am against too much formality and
organisation; as I said elsewhere, some time ago, fandom is, and should remain,
essentially a fluid entity. Every official rule that is made (and I concede that
there must be some rules), narrows the scope of the group. // As for SF Cons and
fannish Cons - why separate the two? When I drafted these mc's, I had attended
only one Convention (the Bruncon), so perhaps I shouldn't express an opinion on such
a slender basis - but it seemed to me that all types of fan were catered for. There
were speeches, lectures, quiz-panels, etc., as well as the strictly social activities
like room-parties and general gabfests. The sercon types didn't have to attend the
latter, any more than the fannish types had to be present at the former. In any case,
Pete - Cons have been held at least once a year for quite a while now, and I don't
think the basic programme has changed very much since the first one. (Or has it?
Archie? Ron B.? Anybody-of-veteran-status?). My point being that if the
generally-accepted Con-formula were not satisfactory to the majority, it would
surely have been changed by now?

VEGA-2. Steve Moore. Having spent some ~~time~~ valuable thinking-time on Pete's Con-
bit, I spent some more on your sense-of-wonder article. And
please note that I said "spent" and not "wasted"! I have come to the brilliant
conclusion that the only people who "mourn the decease of the sense of wonder" are
those who have lost it themselves. Or even mislaid it temporarily, as I do sometimes.
(But it can be rediscovered under the most unlikely circumstances, re-sparked by the
oddest things!) When a potential fan initially discovers sf, or fandom, or both,
the sense of wonder usually blazes forth in full glory. Over the years, it may
gradually dim, and even, perhaps, snuff right out. After all, such a discovery can
be made only once. Nevertheless, that same discovery is continually being made -
by newcomers, who shouldn't allow themselves to be depressed by the world-weary
cynicism of Those Who Should Know Better! // Anyway, Steve, I've been reading sf and
fantasy for around 25 years now, and I can still be emotionally "hit". I suggest you
try Cordwainer Smith, if you haven't already. Took me a while to "get with" his
writings, but once I did - wham, I was hit all over again. // Sorry, I have no spare
copies of any issue of LINK. I'm having about 120 copies of this run off, and hope
that this time I'll be able to meet all future requests for it.

YAWL-B. Chris Priest. Well, you told me the secret of the title, but I won't
give it away, mate. // Yes, everybody - please do stay
with PaDS, as Chris implores! And try to bully other fen into it, if you can.
(That's right - Archie and I are crackers, and yes, we do like work! This kind,
anyway). // Richard Gordon's article was interesting, but I wish he'd managed to
track down French/Belgian fandom as well - if it exists, of course. It always
surprises me that the Germans have a flourishing fandom of their own, and join
British and American apas, conventions, etc. - yet nary a peep out of other
Continental. Why not, I wonder? // Also enjoyed, and largely agreed with, Pete's
piece. // Loved the bacover sketch of Chris typing on a toilet roll ...



SANTOS

O'RAFFERTY'S BEM

by MARTIN PITT

O'Rafferty he was a very new member,
we thought he was queer from the green of his skin,
He always talked from the side of his head, but
nevertheless we invited him in.

We were all talking and laughing and chatting,
a fine SF meeting, all happy and gay!
But before night was over, the room was a riot,
the night that O'Rafferty's BEM got away.

About two feet high, it was bluish in colour,
it jumped from his coat like it wanted to play;
It flew through the air and then swallowed a chair,
the night that O'Rafferty's BEM got away.

Up jumped our Treasurer, one Charlie Winstone:
"You've come to a meeting - 'tis threepence you'll pay!"
It ~~gubbed~~ down the box, then it ate Charlie's socks,
the night that O'Rafferty's BEM got away.

One of our number, a ginger-haired member,
thought that these happ'nings were all very weird,
He dived for the door - the BEM got there before,
and that's how Mike Turner got rid of his beard.

Up jumped Martin Pitt from a dim-lighted corner,
he grabbed at the BEM as it hurtled around,
He fell in the fire, which made him perspire,
and that's why you never see him sitting down.

In walked Cliff Teague with an armful of comics,
piled up so high, just as high as you please,
The BEM hit him square, comics flew through the air;
Cliff entered free fall with the greatest of ease.

Ole "MiKtoon," he wanted it for his collection:
"I'll make a quick sketch with this pen I have brought."
BEM bit it in two, and MiK turned the air blue,
as he loudly told all of us just what he thought.

All of that night there was such a commotion,
the girls on the table, the men underneath,
Continually the BEM hurtled around them;
although two feet high, it yet had ~~four~~ four-foot teeth!

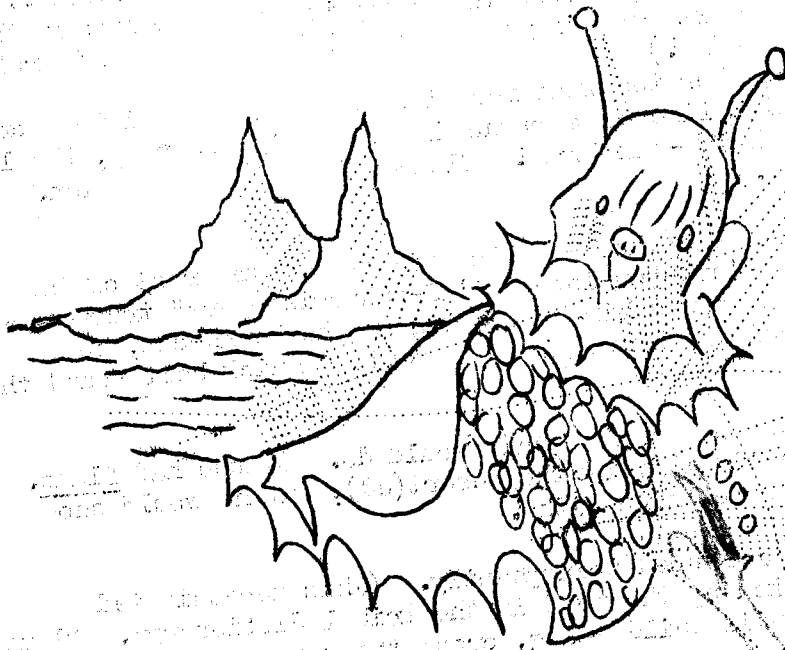
We hauled at the door-knob to make a fast exit,
we tugged and we heaved, but the lock wouldn't budge;
The BEM came our way, and emitted a ray,
and the lock got- red-hot till it melted to fudge.

It gobbled the chairs and the books and the magazines,
sofa and records, to fill its inside;
It ate Beryl's John, but as soon as he'd gone,
it fell to the floor with a shudder, and died.

We stood round the body, all shocked; there was silence
till Beryl cried out, "Oh hell, what shall we DO ?"
We all heard a shout, and John came crawling out,
as the BEM stained our carpet a delicate blue.

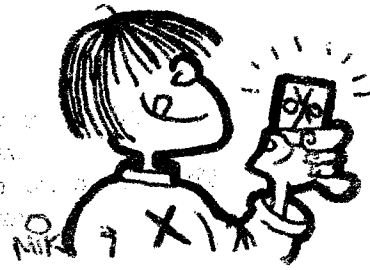
And when we were sure that the BEM was quite lifeless,
we all had a very fine supper that day,
On a sort of blue bacon, vindictively taken,
the night that O'Rafferty's BEM got away.

+ + + + +



Mainly to keep Archie Mercer quiet,
Lady Henley from crowing,
and to provide further

Education for you Peasants -
the following is an account
of what happened to:



THE CAMELS

THEY LEFT

BEHIND THEM

(At Blackpool, you fools! See LINK-1).

... by HAGGIS
(Co-Leader, TRIBE X).

Claude stretched, yawned, and kicked a crabb across the wet sand. He struggled to his feet and groaned. His hump was playing him up again. He really shouldn't sleep under piers, he told himself. Too flippin' damp!

It was strangely quiet, he realised. Where was everyone +? Ah, yes - there was his girl-friend, Claudette, paddling down by the water's edge. And a little further along the beach he could see four or five of the others. Hastily Claude consulted his pocket-watch.

"Hairy Towers!" he muttered, "it's almost 7.30 - we were due to leave at dawn - the mission will be a failure! I must find my co-Leaders ... tsk, tsk!"

He straightened his sun-glasses and galloped off down the beach to the camp-site. Oh, what a blow to our fearless lead-camel! The place was deserted. Just a few empty bottles, Oxo-wrappers, record sleeves ... a knitting needle ... The wind blew an empty beans-can (Heinz) across the sand; it struck Claude on the hoof. (All you clever people who are chanting summat about "the straw that broke the camel's back" can just PIPE DOWN!)

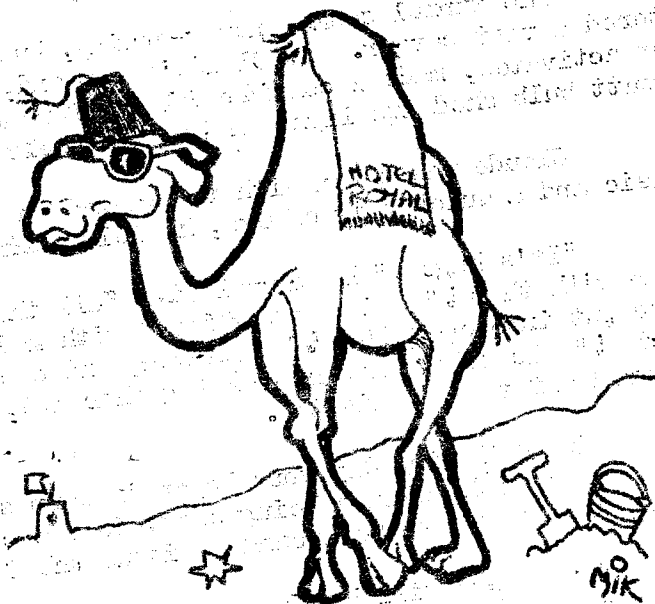
As it happens, it was rather too much for Claude. He humped into a creap and wept. They'd been left behind like so many surplus drumstix ... they, the loyal, the faithful, the uncomplaining Tribe-carriers! Claude sobbed in desolation. (A little-known Blackpool suburb ...)

Finally he pulled himself together and blew his nose. The rest of the mob, mistaking this for the "Come-ere-you-lot-or-I'll-pulverise-yers" trumpet-call, dashed up to Claude and assembled around him. Standing on the beans-can, he delivered the dreadful news (pausing only to give Claudette a quick belt round the dromedary for cheering).

By nine-o'clock they had decided what they would do. Claude had Plans. He may have been deserted, this noble ship of the desert(ed), but he would show everyone that he was a camel to be reckoned with!

"We will emigrate!" he announced triumphantly. (This necessitated another pause while Claudette looked up the word in the Tribal dictionary). Claude sniffed and continued: "Yes - we will build a log, cross the waters, and leave these shores for good!"

And so it came to pass (thank you, Vicar!) that on the first day of September, 1964, the merry band set sail from Coventry (ah?) for the Continent of Gibraltar ... YUK! Thanks to a last-minute raid on Blackpool stores, they had enough provisions with them to keep them from turning cannibal on the journey.



On the 29th day Claude released the budgée, which returned the same evening. This was fortunate because, due to Claudette's large appetite, they had run out of rations ... On the 30th day Claudette, who was up in the camel's nest, sighted land.

"Launch the Crabbs!" yelled Claude to his crew, in true Bristol-fashion. Off they paddled towards the unknown shore. They were a magnificent sight - a party of soggy, unshaven camels (except Claudette, of course - she'd had the foresight to pack her razor before they left). They dragged themselves out of the water on to the sand.

"By Harry!" cried Claude, wringing out his hump, "how fab ... it's wonderful ... marvellous!" There in front of him was the most beeyootiful rock he had ever seen. (Closer inspection revealed the word "Brighton" all the way through it, proving conclusively that it had been manufactured somewhere in Wales).

"Why - it's ... it's ... almost like ... home!" he breathed, wiping away a tear. By this time Claudette was becoming impatient to see inside the rock, so she kicked Claude's shins, pointed out that everyone else was already heading towards it, and left him to porter all their belongings by himself.

Finding a front-door almost at once, the party halted, a little afraid to go forward, but by this time a puffing Claude had caught up with them. Dropping the baggage (GERARD! gorrup offuv that floor!) he pushed his way to the front of the group.

"I am Leader!" he proclaimed, giving Claudette a Look. "We will - er - explore this magnificent cave. You will follow me in single file, obey my orders, and ... and ..." (he was becoming very agitated) - "oh yes - if anything falls in, cracks or explodes, I must be the first to be rescued!" He glared around, but there were no protests.

With Claudette by his side, holding a lighted rhubarb-stick, Claude led his mob down a long dark tunnel. The decor wasn't too bad, he thought - that green wallpaper on the west wall looked quite good with the water dripping down it...

The tunnel seemed never-ending, but they pressed on, and at last they entered a vast cavern. At Claude's command, someone discovered a light-switch which, when activated, made a considerable difference to the whole place, as a powerful 40-watt bulb shed its light on the mess below.

Claude was taken with the cavern at once. However, after a couple of Phensic and a quick swig of Oxo, he felt much better.

"It's huge !" he marvelled. "All these fantab rooms - just think what we can do with them !" His orbs glinted with mad ambition. "Ah yes - now my plans can be put into operation !" Heh-heh, and cackle, and other self-satisfied sound-effects !" He rubbed his hooves together and, still snorting to himself, he swaggered off to have his tea.

The following day work began in earnest. (Poor thing ...) The cavern was cleared of rubbish, Claude being swept into a corner until the job was finished. However, he managed to be around to issue the final directions.

"Over here will be the engineering room; here we will keep the tapes, etc.; this can be my office-cum-study-cum-~~snoggling~~-scoffing-room - and here" - he waved a hoof in a flourish of pride - "will be the actual recording studio !"

Gasps of admiration came from his faithful followers, and they murmured among themselves ... "Claude Bacharach, the A & R camel ..." "Claude the Recording Engineer ..." "Claude the Fantastic," etc.

At 3.37.a.m. on the Wednesday, just after kippers and crumpets, Claude called his band into his office. Ducking under the waterfall, and negotiating a dirty great hole in the floor, they gathered around his massive desk.

"We are going into production. Today we will record our first song." Claude rose from his large foam-plastic swivel chair and wandered thoughtfully amongst his merry mob, cleaning specks of crumpet from his glasses. His gaze rested on Rosemary, a shy demure young camel who was trying to hide behind a clump of Oxo-bushes in the corner of the room.

"You," he decreed triumphantly, "will be our lead-singer. You will, of course, course, be given full orchestral backing, etc. Yes ... h'mmm ... why not ? ... indeed ... It will be a hit record ... we'll be famous ... rich ... get our names in 'Who's Who' or the NME or something ... might even get an M.B.E. !"

Claude dismissed this last thought from his tiny brain as highly improbable, but he would be well satisfied with the rest. With that, he gave orders for everyone to reassemble in the recording studio.

Down in Studio 5 (well, it makes a change !), promptly at 10-o'clock, the line-up was as follows: Rosemary, shackled to the mike and rarin' to go ... somewhere ... ANYWHERE ! Claudette, singing baritone at the back, along with Ursula the swingin' soprano, and Rodney doing the falsetto bits. The orchestra consisted of all the usual instruments - bovril jars, nose-flutes, cymbals ... lots of Reed instruments, and an enormous Foot-drum.

Claude was up in the Control Room, supervising operations. (Two tonsillectomies and an ingrowing toe-nail ...) Finally he decided that all was ready, and gave the signal to begin. The group took a trial run-through of that

old Scottish folk-song, "Fetch me my knitting, McTavish, the nights are growing longer." No discernible wrong notes came through Claude's ex-W.D. headphones, so the second rendering was duly recorded. Now for the flip side!

This was a heart-rending ballad composed by Mushling one night after she had broken her sapphire stylus (however, it was heavily insured, so all was well eventually). Entitled "I-lost-my-love-on-a-Tuesday-afternoon-down-by-the-river-side-just-after-dinner-at-the-Savoy Blues", the group gave it all they had, Rodney's contribution being particularly soulful.

At last it was all over. KERPOW! Claude was chuffed. Their very first disc - in the can!

All that night, sitting round the log-fire, they worked feverishly, knitting record-sleeves. By the following morning, the first batch of discs was packed tightly inside a tea-chest addressed to: "Henley's Place of Work (Snigger!), Redditch, Worcs., Alice Springs."

Everyone gathered down at the bay for the send-off. At a signal from Claude, the chest was shoved into the sea by two junior camels. A mighty cheer broke forth as the tea-chest with its precious cargo zoomed over the waves. Claude was overcome with emotion and shouted "Fruit Gum!" as loudly as he dared. He blushed deep tartan when he realised that everybody was staring at him.

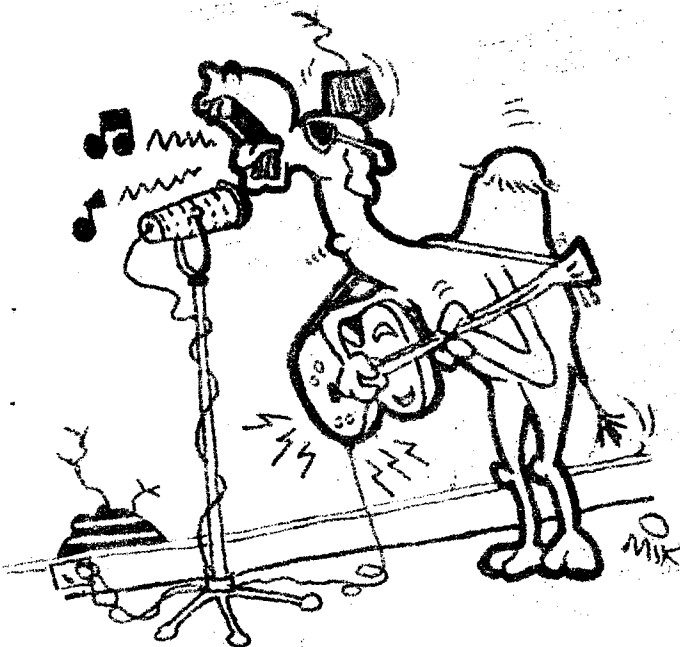
The next few days were sheer '7&+?!.!./ $\frac{1}{8}$ "%XX for our gallant sand-shifter! He spent all his time in the office, chewing up the furniture and pacing madly backwards and forwards. After four days, an excited young camel burst into the office. He had been down on the beach catching wurzels for supper, when he had spied an empty coke-bottle bobbing about in the waves. Bravely he had waded into the angry surf to retrieve the bottle, and inside it he had found ... the current copy of the "New Musical Express!". It didn't ask to be taken to the lad's leader, but he knew Claude would cut off his pocket-money if there was a second's delay, so with madly-beating heart he rushed to the office.

Claude snatched the paper from the trembling hoof, and spread it out on the desk. Quickly he turned to the chart-page and scanned it,

"MERCY!" he howled, "we're NUMBER ONE!". And with that he fainted.

.....

The following few months saw the consolidation of Claude's empire. They released disc after disc, and every one was a hit. The pop-market was saturated with stuff on the "Cleo" label. (Subsidiaries: "Buttie" and "Hornsey"). Everybody who was anybody chewed "Claude's Bub-bub-bubble Gum", and if you didn't spray your wig with "Madame Rosemary's Wig-Spray", you just weren't IN!



-32-

Ah yes ... life was very good over in Gibraltar, in the cave which was home to those deserted few.

However, Fate (or Mushling) decided that this new-found wealth could not last. In the middle of Oxfordshire one blowy morn, a certain co-Leader was scoffing banana-splits whilst reading a three-day-old copy of the "Banbury Guardian".

"Ye Gods!" she hollered, scooping her fair hair out of her tea-cup. "Listen to this, Haggling!" And she read out a report concerning a "Tycoon Camel" sitting in a cave in the Rock of Gibraltar, gerrin all fat and filthy rich! "It says he's a 'Record Wizard'!" she concluded indignantly. Haggis twisted at her sporrán in a fury and nodded significantly.

"Are you thinking what I'm thinking?" Mushvita demanded in a low, menacing voice. And: "CLAUDE!" they shrieked simultaneously.

They left for the Rock three hours later. It was nearing midnight when they floated up to the beach in a hover-barrel. Mushling marched bravely forward, leaving Hagg to drag up the cannon unaided. Once inside the cavern, they positioned their weapon just outside Claude's bedroom. (They knew it was his bedroom because he was the only Tribal camel who snored in A flat ...). Haggis could hardly wait to fire it, and after three incorrect count-downs (Mushvita never could count backwards), impatience got the better of her, and she lit the blue touch-paper. The resultant PING! upset all the Barbary apes upstairs on top of the Rock.

Claude, thinking that his alarm had gone off early, staggered into the main hall. A carefully-hung net dropped from the ceiling and engulfed him. He began to struggle with it, calling for help, but a whiff of neat Oxo put him out for the count. (Mushling is OK at doing it forwards ...)

Hagg bundled Claude into a polythene bag, while Mushvita rounded up the rest of the frightened camels, and marched them down to the beach.

Claude didn't recover consciousness until the barrel was well out to sea, and outside the international three-mile limit. Mushling assembled the mob on the quarter-deck and, ordering Claude to stand in front of the others, she addressed them sternly.

"You dirty dogs!" she cried. Rodney muttered that they were camels, not dogs, and he'd had a bath last Thursday anyway. Rosemary told him to belt up. "Mutineers! DESERTERS!" Mushling howled, working herself up into a fine old paddy. "You were left a message to return to base, but did you? Oh, NO! Off you go, over the waters, pursuing your own selfish pleasures, with never a thought for those who have fed you and cared for you all these years! SWINE!" Exhausted with rage, she dropped to the deck.

Realising that Rodney was about to protest again that he was a camel, Claudette swiftly muzzled him with a handy bovril jar. She knew that Mushling was in no mood to take any Camelip.

Claude twiddled his spex nervously. "We - we - never got any message ... gulp ... we thought you'd left us ... there was no message ..."
"It was in an empty beans-can; you fool!" screeched Hagg. "Don't you remember the plan? 'All messages to be put in empty beans-cans'!"

Claude trembled beneath Hagg's scornful gaze. The shame of it ! And he a Lead-Camel an' all ! Sadly he wondered how he might atone for his misdeed. He found out the following day ... Claude the Fab, Tycoon of the Rock, was put to work cleaning out the Tribal mansions. His associates were loaned out to the Fodwhacks, and to Oxfordshire County Council (for a small fee, of course), to perform menial tasks.

And the recording studios ? Well ... Mush and Haggis decided it would be a pity to waste all that space and equipment, so they converted it to a factory: Bagpipes and Associated Sundries Ltd.

Which is why they are now doing a roaring trade, flogging kilts to the Arabs in Morocco ...

END.

+ + + + +

"I keep telling my sister, 'Don't give me bread, I'm trying to lose weight.' She says 'All right' - and gives me toast ..." (KMPC)



(Contributed by "Larry" of the "Evening Mail", Birmingham).

+ + + + +

"Have you got any candles ? - I want to make a tank ..." (JH)

+ + + + +

Junk-dealer's love-song: "'Twas on the pile of debris that I found you ..."

+ + + + +

The travels of an Arabian train, or: Time and ride wait for nomad ...



Archie Mercer, Bristol 8. Doreen's editorial I found extremely heart-warming. For my part, I consider my life that much richer for knowing her, so let's call it quits, eh, Doreen? "Pebble in the Pool" - I'm sorry, but if you want to get me in an argumentative mood, you'd better say something with which I disagree. Personal freedom's always been something particularly dear to my heart - so long live true individualism!

"The Man Who Thought Paint" - h'm. In view of what you have to say in your mailing comments about non-understood stories, obviously this story has a point. After all, you of all people wouldn't run a story you didn't understand... would you. Then "Fog", which although it's well-enough written, describes the kind of things that oughtn't to be allowed to happen in fiction. Like, we need more bitterness, more grief?

Apart from which, the denouement-conversation of the story is artificially contrived. It would have been far more effective to cut out the talk, and simply have this man stalk off wherever he was going, having - we'd at last be told - just killed his wife.

Sticking to the stories while we're at it - must you serialise? Ruins the thread. "The Night-Bumpers" - well now. Is this theory of yours so original? There is a certain familiarity about it. It seems obvious when when looks at it, of course. I agree that it's highly unlikely that you should be Keith Roberts. He's not you, somehow.

"The Sluff Affair" seemed to be getting into something of a rut, when that hilarious denouement brought the house down. "Red Kitchen" defies comment except in the original dialect - and I can't speak Kitchenese. Messrs. Hall and Wood have obviously forgotten more about rhe Blues than either of them ever knew. (Which

means approval).

The lettercol's better handled this time. The interior artwork is acceptable, the exterior is easily overlooked.

(+(Re "I'm Home Again, But ..." - do you realise how bulky LINK-3 would have been if I'd run it complete ?)+)

Chris Priest, Brentwood, Essex. The lettercol is the best bit this time. It's getting smaller, Beryl. Now I know you write all the letters yourself - you're getting tired. "Pebble in the Pool" was obviously aimed at me. I'm a three-times-a-year visitor to the barber's. I'm not only lazy and hard-up - I'm vain, too. Most people have only seen me with short hair (I hibernate in North Wales during the coase season), but I usually let it curl behind my ears before I give in. Re "Dry-cleaning doesn't cost the earth" - which beach has your head been stuck in for the last 40 years, then ? Me, I usually arrange to go out in the rain about once a month. After six years I throw my clothes away, or give them to the budgie to grind his beak on. Scruffy ? Me ? On the contrary, I can't afford to be scruffy in my job. We Lyons table-wipers have a profession to uphold. I comb my hair regularly, and even wash my face sometimes. Always like staying in hotels, too because then you get your galoshes polished free. I'm quite a dandy on the quiet.

Pumpernickle's story was great, wonderful. I hooted, howled and hollered when I read it. (+(Well, will you please tell Archie that that's what he was supposed to do ? Some stories aren't meant to be understood - one just goes along for the hilarious ride, as you did !)+).

Your theory about ESP and poltergeistisms is OK I suppose, but hardly original. I haven't seen it quite tied up with these Unknown Glands before, but it seems only an embellishment on an old idea.

I shall ignore the Sluff Affair, in the hope that it might go away. And I'll cursorially dismiss "Fog" as being misplaced in LINK, good as it was. Too serious.

(+("Fog" was partly Harry Mac's fault - no, he didn't write it, but he said in his loc on L-2 that "LINK-3 should contain a measure of both tomfoolery and serious-mindedness." We Aim To Please, like. Hence - "Fog." See ?)+)

Dave Baldock, London S.W.6. Sorry, Ron, but I didn't dig the cover. The idea is OK, but the artwork is a bit skotchky. Yes, what is wrong with long hair on males ? It's only this century that blokes started having it short. I think the two wars had something to do with it - of course, having long hair in the trenches would be filthy and uncomfortable, but the war is OVER !

I like these weird stories like "The Man Who Thought Paint." Ignatius P. Pumpernickle must be a pen-name - who was it ? (+(Iggy - are you ready to unveil yourself ?)+). "The Night-Bumpers" was very interesting, but I can't say I believe in poltergeists or any other spiritual being. "The Sluff Affair" was my favourite bit - more of these episodes ! Gray and Dave gave a very informative article on Red Kitchen; why don't they do a blues-man per issue ? However, I must admit I've never heard of this guy before. (+(You cube, Dave !)+).

Your loc-writers seem a friendly lot. Mr. Mercer - indeed there is a tower in Brum - it is, as you say, disguised as the Rotunda, situated in the strangest of bull-rings. And yes, I did mean to put "worm." Thought it rather funny meself. Mumble, mumble ...

Ron McGuinness, S.W.17. An attack on people who crack 'cruddy jokes' on the length of boys' hair: a boy is a boy, no matter how long his hair is, and furthermore, he still looks like one end.

"The Man who Thought Paint" was great, the best piece in the ish. Enjoyed "The Sluff Affair", though I think that the impact of approach and action may be wearing off slightly.

About those glands - it's possible, who can tell? I found "The Night-Bumpers" very interesting. All I can add is that the thymus gland has something to do with sexual maturity, although biologists are still puzzled about whether its functions can still be called endocrine or not. Sorry I can't add more information.

"Red Kitchen" - thoroughly enjoyed this, too - talk about 'twist of fate'! "Fog" - brilliant! (+Thanks - "Doryl"?)

Liked Moira's heading to the "Linklox" column; simple but effective. But, what camel would allow LINK on its back, even if it does come with a Tribe X blonde? Also liked Phil Harbottle's illo - I first thought you were feeding fish to that plant, Beryl, but later found out that they were its own leaves, of course! It was a nice story; I look forward to part two.

"Mist" - beautifully written. More poems from that talented pen? I hope so.

Thank you to Harry McGannity for his remarks about my artwork. The only answer I can think of (I never really 'plan' my art deeply) is that I was so very impressed with the work of Brian McCabe - especially his "Towers" illo of the Vance profile - that I did something similar. (In my own style, of course). Archie: that bacover illo was drawn about three weeks after a visit to the dentist. Subconscious association? - of course, what else?

Lang Jones, W.5. Ah me! Let me rest my weary old bones on the chair, put my feet on the cat and insert my contact lenses.

The cover has a weird Yuletide flavour; why, I don't know. But it immediately takes me back to the happy days when I used to be young and carefree, smoking cigars and getting drunk, no bald patch on my head, or if there was I didn't know. When the women were willing and beautiful, when the trees cracked with snow; when I didn't have holes in my shoes. When the church bell chimed its Christmas greeting; when the air was fresh and so was I.

Ah! how happily I wander the catacombs of yesteryear! How dull the arid desert in which I now stand! How choking the dust of the present! That's better.

"Pebble in the Pool" - I'm with you all the way, mate. Us long-haired blokes don't get a chance. I even had a bloke propose to me yesterday. Nuffin' wrong with bein' scruffy and dirty neither. Summa me mates are the scruffiest dirtiest blokes you ever saw, but they can bash up an old lady like the best of 'em.

Pumpernickle is wonderful. Great! The most marvellous find for years. He combines the sensitivity of Proust with the power and dynamic of Dickens. This story (if one may insult it by such a common name) should be framed. (+And so should you, mate. Is anyone left in any doubt, now, of the true identity of Herr Pumpernickle ??)+

"Escape from Winter" was a little forced (+à la rhubarb ?)+, and the lightness of the idea jibed a little with the seriousness of the writing. However, it was still quite effective, and the last few lines were very good. I hope that the rhyme between the last line and the fourth line up was intentional (+it was+); it was certainly very effective.

Also I felt that "The Night-Bumpers", although it remained interesting, did not say anything new. It is generally considered that these strong emotional fluxes of an adolescent could be responsible for the effects, and the theory isn't really yours at all.

I hope, for your sake, that you're not like me. (+ (Well, in case you hadn't noticed, I'm female - even if I do wear my hair cut short !)+). I formulate theory after theory, idea after idea, only to find that they've all been done before. (+ (Oh, I see - yes, in that respect I'm with you all the way. Some rotten hound has always done it first !)+). I even went so far as to write a piece of music for metronome and piano, only to find that even this had been done before. Mind you, one can always have a quiet moment of narcissistic pleasure, and think something like, "If only Newton hadn't lived ... Jones' Second Law of Motion ... sounds good ...". (+ (Also, one can have a quiet, malicious chuckle about the folks who will get similarly frustrated in years to come; like, there'll be a guy who decides to write a daft yarn called "The Man Who Thought Paint," or "I'm Home Again, But ..." - and somebody else will gleefully produce a carefully-preserved copy of LINK-3 and cry: "You can't - it's been done before !")+).

"The Sluff Affair" was not first-rate Reed, although (if one may use a mechanical grab to trap a butterfly) the construction was good, and the last lines hilarious. Mary has the gift of being able to produce throw-away lines with a spontaneity that I'm sure would have a lot of writers of humour gnashing in their graves or something. Lines like 'cackling under the flatbed' or 'going down for the third time in a sea of raging paper', which, as far as I'm concerned, are goms.

"Red Kitchen" was very amusing too, but could have been much more so. The most parodyable (good word) aspect of this kind of thing, is the pretension of the pop pundits. The meaningless or inaccurate musical jargon that is bandied about on the backs of record covers and in musical journals. This sort of thing is just asking to be demolished.

"Fog" was quite nicely written, painted a very interesting and gripping picture, and was then ruined by the banal ending. If you re-wrote the last page-and-a-quarter, you might make quite a good story.

I was just getting into "I'm Home Again, But ..." when ... This sort of thing is sheer sadism. I dunno what gets into some of these editors; I think it is the feeling of power it gives them. They like to string along their readers and then keep them hanging (+ (strung up ?)+) for as long as possible.

I dunno why Charles Platt objects to small in-groups producing stuff comprehensible only to themselves (and anyway this isn't true of LINK). I may be naive, but surely the purpose of creating anything is to create it, and to have an audience is by no means essential. (+ (THANK YOU ! I've been thumping this particular tub for years, Lang - mainly about poetry, but it is generally applicable. Mind you, the creator of such material must be prepared to accept the other side of the coin, and not throw tantrums if his work is understood by only a few. The fact that he has created it should in itself be sufficient reward and satisfaction; any accrued praise and ogoboo must be regarded as a gratuitous bonus)+).

My recent telepathic-type experience? Well, you asked for it ...

When I was about fifteen, I used to knock about with this girl. She lived nearby, and we often used to see each other about the neighbourhood. Now I began to notice that by a strange coincidence, I would be walking down the road, and I'd suddenly begin to think of her; about a minute later she would appear. This got to be incredibly regular. Eventually we went our separate ways, and that was the last I saw of her. As the years went by, I generally forgot the whole thing. The girl went to Canada and got married or something, and that was the end of it.

About four months ago (+ (this letter is dated April 24th, '65)+) I was walking down the road. For some reason I began reminiscing about this period, and walked along in a dream, remembering the girl. Then as I passed the bus-stop, someone said "Hello." I looked up.

It wasn't her.

Sorry - I felt I had to put that last line in! No - actually it was her, eight years older. She had lost her teenage plumpness, and was now a very attractive woman. It wasn't until after I'd spoken to her that I remembered all those other times this had happened.

Coincidence? - it could be, but I think it's unlikely. She was just someone I used to know, and I never thought about her a lot. How far do you stretch a coincidence to accommodate the fact that I saw her at the exact moment when I happened to be thinking of her like that? It could, of course, be that I'm suffering from some weird neurosis which caused me, every time I saw her, to imagine that I had been thinking of her. However, neither of these explanations seems very likely. It was certainly unspectacular, but this is what I would expect. As far as I'm concerned, some kind of telepathy is the only explanation.

Re the school-leaving age: I think the ideal solution would be to let those who wish it, stay on for one or two years. The trouble is that this wouldn't work in conjunction with the present exam. system. Oh hell - let's face it, the whole system of education is shot to pot (and if anyone wants me to elaborate further, I shall be only too glad), (+well, go on, then!)+ - and the only way any progress will be made is to scrap the whole thing and start afresh.

Ed Mackin's letter I found rather amusing, if only because it demonstrated exactly how people's approach to humour may vary. I found LINK funny, and not at all juvenile. In fact, the only thing that made me wince when I saw it, and which I still consider rather childish, was the front cover by MiK. (+Huh? D'you mean the cover of L-2? Because L-3's cover was by Ron McG.)+). Beryl - one's sense of humour doesn't change all that much as one grows older.

Incidentally, Ed, I find it extraordinary that people still have something to say about science fiction.

The last pages of the lettercol were rather exciting, as I couldn't trace the comments that they answered. It was all rather mysterious - like the columns in women's magazines, which say things like: "Worried, Walsall - If it happens again, use Rawlplugs and phone your doctor."

Crumbs! I do go on, don't I? (+You sure do - but very entertainingly, as far as I'm concerned)+).

I guess it's about time to wind this up; I've noticed it's been running a bit slow lately. The cat seems to have gone, taking my feet with him; plaster is falling from the ceiling as the house subsides another six inches. Dust settles round me as I sit here in the crepuscular gloom; the rats gambol about my legs. There are sounds of creaking as joists and beams groan under strain, and the odour of mould and rotteness touches me with its warm and foetid breath.

It was never like this before LINK.

I hope you have hours of happy editing with this letter. If I were you, I'd take the coward's way out, and not publish the thing at all.

(+Do I qualify for the Pumpernickle Cross for outstanding courage, then? As I said at the end of your comment-screed in L-2 - I did edit it; the original ran to $3\frac{1}{2}$ quarto pages of single-space typing. Perhaps I would have chickened-out of publishing it, if my nagging you at the Worldcon for another helping of daftery had produced results ...)+)

Simone Walsh, Bristol. As the bandages disintegrate and the anointing fluids (née Bridgwater ...) evaporate, I come slowly back to life or something, and write this merree letter.

I loved that story by 'Doryl Parkley' - 'twas so sad I felt like crying. And your poem 'Mist' (or prose) was fabulous; how anyone can't like it beats me. So good that if I could write like that, I'd send it to the 'New Statesman' or somewhere like that. (+Blush ...)+)

Poor, simple creature that I am, I'm quite looking forward to the next instalment of "I'm Home Again, But..." It's got me all intrigued.

"Red Kitchen" - though I could see what was supposed to be funny, and some of the wit was clever, I found it rather boring. Maybe I have no sense of humour.

"The Man who Thought Paint" - a bit pointless, I thought. I also declare that Ignatius P. Pumpnickle is Dr. Peristyle!

Again I like the cover, it tastes better than last time ...

Harry McGannity, Poynton, Ches. Thank you for LINK-3. Doreen sounds a very interesting personality. Hope the chain-link-reaction will extend as far as Poynton some day.

"Pebbles in the Pool" - fair comment, I suppose, but I'd be inclined to be a little more lenient with the kids. After all, they don't seem to resent my David Nixon-type appearance, and may even respect it. I believe they have been set a trend with which they identify themselves. I'm just wondering what the effect on that trend would be should their idols - the Beatles, perhaps? - decide to sport crew-cuts.

In this same article you commit a grave breach of SF philosophy. Why do you presume that there are no frontiers left to open? We haven't yet begun to scratch the crust of our own planet! (+Read it again, luv: I said that there are "so few frontiers left!" And I was making a comparison between the achievements of Elizabeth I's reign and those which have been, and remain to be made in our time and the future. There's a world of difference between the qualifications required to ship as a deck-hand with Drake, and those necessary to orbit the Earth in an instrument-packed nose-cone. Or to sit in a sphere on the sea-bed for a couple of weeks!)+)

I must be a bit dim. I suspect there is some subtle meaning hidden in "The Man Who Thought Paint", but the author has successfully disguised it from me. (+See my reply-comments to Chris Priest!)+).

"Escape from Winter." That's a right rpyal "thank-you", Gray. What would my Beethoven's Sixth have inspired? (+Dunno - I've never had sufficient time and peace to give it the attention it deserves. If I did - inarticulate ecstasy, perhaps?)+).

"The Night-Bumpers." Frankly, spiritualism gives me the willies, but it does raise a puzzling point. It has been said - authoritatively - that the evidence for the occult, ESP, etc., cannot be seriously doubted by science. If this is so, why do most scientists avoid it like the plague? And why do religious leaders of every denomination condemn spiritualism, when, as far as one can gather, it is the only concrete evidence of a life hereafter?

"The Sluff Affair." One must be prepared for anything. This sort of thing is by no means unusual in my home when my brace of teenagers and their confederates descend upon the place. This is the cross I have to bear. An additional one from Crabbs doesn't make much difference.

"Red Kitchen." I should have entitled this "The Pilgrimage." What a marvellous experience! I really enjoyed this.

Finally, I see that the ambiguous phraseology in my last lpc raises some doubts as to Archie's masculinity. A thousand pardons, Archie. (A bit damn sharpish with your interrogative marks, ain't ya, B.?).

Best wishes for a successful LINK-4.

P.S. I've forced myself to re-read "The Sluff Affair," and I've become curious. Supposing you ask this girl to write an additional story in a more sophisticated vein? The wit is certainly there, the humour must surely follow. It sounds like a contradiction, but I'm sure that if she were to get more serious, she would be really funny. (+Mush! Send the bloke a "Crabapple," then!)+)

Daphne Sewell, Bromley. After arguing and bargaining with Doreen Parker for (nee Peterborough). about an hour, I managed to see LINK-3, and I first must thank Archie for that 'sugar on me tsausages' joke. I'd been told about it, but I never thought it would be so funny in print; I had the best laugh I've had in a long time.

I agree with you, Beryl, regarding the long-haired brigade. I don't personally care whether a man has long hair, or no hair at all, as long as he is clean. But I fervently hope fashions don't return to first-Elizabethan times. I couldn't bear wearing stays, long skirts, or long hair. And if the boys are trying to attract the girls - who's complaining??

Who the heck is Ignatius Pumpernickle? Ah, it must be Beryl Henley - who else would name the central characters Joe and Fred? And do give over writing about ghosts and poltergeists! Or at least, believing in them - I tell myself that such things just can't be, but at the back of my mind I wonder, and that's when I have trouble sleeping... especially when my dresses start whispering, and my carpets tread.

I still can't remember who is in Tribe X, but at least I can understand every other word, which must prove something.

"Fog" - I read this some years ago when the original author first had a crack at it, and although I think it's rather dismal, it was a good try, and I'd like to see some more work by this author.

I enjoyed "I'm Home Again, But..." despite the fact that it turned out to be a serial. I'd better get a copy of the next LINK, Beryl Henley, or there'll be big trouble!

More poetry, please.

Graham M. Hall, Tewkesbury, Glos. I tried to write an loc before, but got sidetracked into a long and boring dissertation on why men should wear long hair if they feel like it. This time I'll just declare an interest and leave it at that. Perhaps "Pebble in the Pool" isn't such a good idea!

I wonder who Ignatius P. Pumpernickle is? This is among the better pieces of its ilk that I've seen. Not that that's saying much.

Ta for the poem tribute. I'm sure I got as much enjoyment out of the exchanged "A Clockwork Orange" as you did out of "A Summer Place."

Poltergeists are one of the many things in the realm of parapsychology that frankly bore me. It's all a bit like flying saucers - a load of bumph without data. One may just as well ponder and discourse on the existence of fairies. Wahay, here we are back to your Pebble ...

I've been told that "The Sluff Affair" didn't quite come off ... did it? I don't think I could really tell one way or the other.

Ah, Charlie me boys has summed up fandom in a sentence: "Admittedly, most fanac is a complete waste of time, but some complete wastes of time are more complete than others." Fandom is the most completest. And that's my loc.

Mary Hall, Peterborough. Doreen is writing this for me because I have a damaged hand. It's so nice to dictate to my bossy sister - I'm revelling in it! She lent me her copy of LINK-3 under protest: "Give it back to me in good condition, and don't let the kids get hold of it!"

Settling down, I started to read a nice story about you and some plant-fings, and blow me down! - you dirty wotten swinehunt, I got to the end of the thing and what did I see? "To be continued"! (I hate serials!). Well, don't bother, mate; I have made up my own ending, which is: they all gobble you up for dinner! And they get indigestion! If you lived nearby, and if I didn't have a bad hand, I'd slosh you!

I can't comment on the letters 'cos I don't know what's happening, but put me on your mailing list and I'll even pay (provided you don't print any more serials). In a month or two, I might even have something to say ... heh, heh! (+ (All right, all RIGHT! Mutter, swear ... people moaning about things they read in borrowed LINKs ... expecting a poverty-stricken genius like me to run 2700-word stories complete in one zine ... curse ... it's only a part-time job I've got, and I've already cut down on me rum-ration, fags, heroin and sherbet-dabs to finance this thing ... snarl ... but all right, you poor, frustrated lot - no more serials. FOR SALE: Two hundred and seventy-five second-hand packets of mouldy cornflakes ... any offers ?)+).

Richard Gordon, Buckie, Banffs. Thanks very much for the copy of LINK-3. Well ... er ... yes !!! Words have failed me.

After gawping in admiration at the carnivorous boot adorning the cover, doubtless full of Freudian mire and repression, etc., I attacked the contents, half-expecting to need a dictionary of Midland dialect to be able to understand even the first sentence. Instead, I was diving for my Webster's international ... what does "extemporaneously" mean, eh? (+("Without preparation." You meantersay that your Webster's international didn't know, either ??)+).

The two editorials or whatever they were at the beginning were both so sane that I thought I was reading the wrong fanzine, after all the peculiar reports that had reached me. However, I was reassured by the paint-thing, which was quite nuts enough to fit my conception of what it should be ... Same went for "The Sluff Affair", which shows definite signs of ... well, of something! Quite enjoyable, although of course quite incomprehensible.

"Red Kitchen" reads like one of the "Great Unknowns" series in one of the record papers ... I'm quite prepared to believe that such a virtuoso actually exists, after all the other completely untalented oiks we have thrown at us in the name of rhythm and blues and Ghod knows what else!

So you've been Elsewhere, have you !!!?

To be quite honest, the whole zine leaves me slightly dazed ... I enjoyed most of all the little snippets of useless information casually distributed around the place. The sort of thing you can produce if you want to be a nuisance ... eh?

As for the bacover - well, I reckon that it's necessary after half an hour with LINK. (+ (Yipe, Ron! Somebody actually latched on to the meaning of that bacover illo! Oh joy, oh success, oh pass-the-bottle-Paddy!)+). Which is presumably the purpose of the entire thing, to drive us all to drink. I'm already there, so I'll get hold of a copy of LINK-4 if I remember to do so.

Trouble is, you can't be expected to change gears quickly enough to appreciate nuttiness on one page and Deep Thoughts on the next ... I mean "Mist." Still in a dazed state from the letters, one flips the final page, giggling quietly, and finds "Mist" demanding to be read from the grave of T.S. Eliot & Co.

"101 Unicorns" ? What the hell are they? You don't happen to have any spare copies of the last issue with this thing in it, do you? I'm hooked! (Ghod forbid!). (+ (He didn't forbid loud enough, Rich. Four days ago, a friend of mine kindly returned her copies of L-1 and L-2 - the "Unicorns" appear in both. This was in response to my agonised appeals for copies to be returned. It was the only response, too. I'd like to think that this is because LINK-owners can't bear to part with them, but ...)+).

Of course, you understand, I don't know what the whole thing's about, but that's obviously not of the slightest importance. As long as you finish the thing with a wild look in the eyes, drooling madly, and muttering strange things, then it's achieved its purpose, right? (+ (Right!)+)

Your punning has put me off completely. I used to produce a steady five or ten before breakfast, but now I am a broken man. In more ways than one.

From the purely material viewpoint, it's very well produced, and the artwork is also highly competent. In short, I didn't understand half of it, but my insatiable curiosity makes me wish I did. Ah well, some day... (+("Words have failed me," he said in the second line of his letter ... sheesh! What kind of loc do you produce when you're feeling articulate, h'm ??)+).

Sheila Barnes, Manchester 8. Ta for LINK-3. Thought both cover illos were lovely. Who is Ignatius Pumpernickle? This little episode has a strong undercurrent of reality - it's just the sort of thing that would happen to me.

My impression of poltergeists agrees with that of Keith Roberts. Although I can't remember my sources, I have read/heard somewhere that there is an adolescent child connected with every example of poltergeistism. The thymus gland usually disappears at puberty and (according to my anatomy and physiology classes four years ago) is "thought to be connected with sexual development." In a book I was reading, it gave examples of people "controlled" by each of the important glands, and Oscar Wilde was a thymus-dominant type.

"Fog" and "I'm Home Again, But ..." are both very good - well above the average fan fiction.

Another Tribe X kerfuffle. The Co-Leaders are busy people indeed, for which we unliberated folk may be grateful - they won't forget us. Mundania may sneer, but the camels are coming! (three cheers and a surreptitious snivel). When Tribe X has taken over this island, the rest of the world will fall. It's just a matter of time.

I love your interlocutions and little poems. They make the zine so much more fun - one never knows what may lie just beyond the turn of the page.

I am working on the sequel to "Build With Gum." It is to be called (naturally) "Son of Gum," but that is as far as I've got. Every time I think of the diabolic cleverness of that title, I dissolve into demoniacal laughter ...

Gordon Smith, Birmingham. Wotcher, me old oppo! Ta muchly for the "Link" trainer. You don't know what you've started. My dearly beloved spouse has threatened divorce. Says she: "I dunno, what am I gonna do? Me old man's taken to LINK - bang goes the 'ouse-keepin'!" But since then we have both had a perfunctory butchers at the merchandise, and we are both slightly took.

"Dear Sir or Madam, we have the only known antidote to 'teaching sickness.' Roll one copy of LINK into a long cigar-shape, light the for'ard end, and push it gently under the headmaster's door. Guaranteed to behead schools, delouse Jaunties, polish brass-work 'Brighter than Bluebell', and to give you 'that sinking feeling.' Roll up, roll up, buy a copy now! Only one-and-fourpence (in Irish currency), or two 'tank-type tigers' per copy!"

The bit I liked best at first glance was the "Wren Beryl was a sailor" poem. Poor Albert, me 'eart fair bleeds for 'im.

So this is Phandom, is it? More knutty than fruit-an'-----! More fruity than pusser's duff! I like!
(+ (Cor chase my winger round the wash-house, and turn out the starboard watch! Ah, such lovely, innocent enthusiasm betokens one who has served in fandom for little more than a dog-watch ... Well, now that you've met LINK - and survived - how's about a contrib.? You must have a few barmy yarns salted away somewhere, concerning the Navy, or school-teaching, or both. And if they're daft enough, I promise 'em a good home in LINK-5, and/or its successors. Per-leez? Right then: two-six on the hangar doors, and swing them lamps ...)+)

Seth Johnson, Vaux Hall, (+(Loc on L-2 - received too late for inclusion in no.3)+)
N.J., U.S.A. About keeping kids in school: I don't know the economic situation in England, but if its anything like here

then the longer you keep them in school, the longer before they start competing for jobs. Ideal of course would be to educate them till they're 22 and then send them to military service for eight years, after which they could get married and start working till they are forty, and retire on pension or social security or something.

As for the clothing problem - it might be a good idea to just tattoo the clothes on the darlings, and then the suit would grow with the child. Sure would save clothing expenses.

I enjoyed the Tribe X diary - or at least all that I could understand of it. Though I wonder what would happen if they did all the things described in the article, story, fantasy or whatever it was. By the way - are the X Tribeswomen as slim and sylph-like as the illo on page 9? I had thought of them as more stocky, chunky and muscle-bound types. Would be nice if you could photograph them all and gestefax on stencil, so all your readers would have a vivid idea of what they really look like. (+ (What? - and lose 90% of my/our readership? And what the fred does "gestefax" mean, please?)+).

I just thought of a swell idea for further adventures of the Tribe. Send them through the same journey as Alice in Wonderland. Only of course with their own zany reactions and adventures. I can just imagine Haggis and Mush mixing it with The (Off with their heads!) Queen of Hearts, for instance. And what they would do with the Cheshire Cat is for the birds. In fact you could pretty near run them for a year on that one theme alone, and then another year going "Through the Looking Glass."

And if you can get hold of some Thorne Smith novels you'll have a lot of other wonderful paces to put your Tribe X through. (+ (Mushling? Hagg? How about it?)+).

Was there any reaction from Hagg to my last letter? Ask her to write to me - I promise to reply. And just what is an OXO wrapper? Something off a bouillon cube or something? (+ (Or something. Haggis will Tell All - well, perhaps not quite all - if she does write, I'm sure)+).

Lang Jones sounds like he lives in a most interesting environment - was he using Magic Pellets in his garden? (+ (No. Oxo, of course!)+).

If you really want humour in sf why not try some of the old TOFFEE stories, or the LEFTY FEET tales from "Fantastic" and "Unknown". Or even SPACE OPERA by Jack Vance.

Mary Reed writes lovely poetry indeed. (+ (You realise, Seth, that "Mary Reed" is just one of Mushvita's pseudonyms??)+). And the artwork by Ron was just as good. And that covers LUNK. (+ (sic)+). Have fun with it.

(+ (And here's Seth's loc on L-3)+). So you dare me to demonstrate the sound of one hand clapping! Well, I accept, for a mutual friend assures me you are curvaceous, although not quite blonde. Please send carfare. (+ (Who's bin TALKIN'?? "Not quite blonde", indeed... Doreen insists that my hair is black, which it isn't except when it wants washing after I've been practising on the bongoes in the coal-'ole. Archie, not wishing to offend either of us, says it's light black. Anyway, Seth, you're a bit mixed-up here: it was me darlin' Doreen who issued that challenge, not I. And she is blonde - or at least, she was, last time I saw her... no she wasn't, she was light brown... I think... Doreen, what colour is it now?)+).

Congratulations on L-3's cover. Real far-out and fannish, with the Tribe X gang posing for a photo. (+ (Ooooh! Cheek!)+). Backcover was also good.

Why should you impose your standards of cleanliness on those who don't share them? As long as they don't insist you go without a bath or washing, or

to have your clothes washed or dry-cleaned.

Dunno how the heck the boys outnumber the girls with two world wars in my lifetime slaughtering the boys off and leaving the girls.

Ignatius Pumpernickle wrote a nice famish story - or did you write it yourself? And that poem of yours sounds like a wonderful way to escape winter, only now (+June 14th+) I'd like to find some means of escaping summer, doggone it.

I enjoyed your bit on "The Night Bumpers", and I only wish the Long John radio program reached England. He really had a flock of witnesses and occult students on his panel one night, talking about a house in Long Island haunted by poltergeists. As usual there was an adolescent child on the premises - male this time, though. Lids unscrewed off jars under their very eyes and went flying all over the place; heavy objects also moved where no-one could possibly have touched them. Reporters had books, ash-trays, ink-wells and other bits of furniture thrown at them. This was several years ago but it did make the papers and some of the occult magazines.

Doryl Parkley was terrific and she certainly ought to try her hand at the prozines. And "Fog" might be only too grimly prophetic of the immediate future at that.

Your adventures with Koirshan most interesting. I just hope you brought home a few seed pods. Second instalment most eagerly awaited.

Congratulations on having a letter from one of my favourite British authors, Mr. Tubb. (If it is the author who wrote). (+It was+).

Your "Mist" was terrific and I'm goshwow over your poetry. How about publishing some of your pop-songs some time, with music? (+Sorry - I can't write music except in very elementary form. But I guess I could use a lyric or two as "fillers" if necessary!)+).

Bob Little, London, N.4. I'm afraid I didn't like the covers - the drawings seemed to me rather crude and amateurish. "The Man Who Thought Paint" wasn't bad, but if it could have been cut down a bit I think it would have been better.

I liked "Escape from Winter." This is really greater praise than it sounds, since all the other poems I've read, including the W.R.N.S. bit, and "Mist", left me completely indifferent.

"The Night-Bumpers." A load of words around one small idea, and an idea that is based on damn-all at that. And I have no idea what "The Sluff Affair" was about.

"Red Kitchen" was good. And, thank ghod, it wasn't overdone. "Ah loves my baby, twang!" Yup!

"Fog" was just a story, neither good nor bad. Why did the husband have to do the killing, though.

Why the hell did you have to cut "I'm Home Again, But ..." into pieces? It was the best story you had in the issue and what was there wasn't very long.

Finally, two things: Eric Frank Russell did an article on Eusapia Palladino, a peasant girl who could move things, in the October 1957 issue of "Astounding", and gas is not, repeat not, CO. It's mostly hydrogen, and if people continue saying things like that in LINK I'm going to be shot for reading subversive literature! (+Oo-er - but thanks for the information. We're always willing to learn. I'm not entirely sure, Bob, but I think you took L-3 a leetle too seriously. Get yourself one of old Doddy's tickle-sticks before you tackle - tickle - this one!)+).

Stan Halliday, Hull. I had a damred good argument lined up for this letter until I read your Jimmy-the-One's editorial in L-3. Hell an' all, what can you do with a gal like that? She could flog sand to an Arab! It was such a powerful editorial that it kicked the skids away from my point and left me flat. If she's over 21 I'll stand booting. (+So boot him, somebody!)+). But

good for her, eh? I'm a loner myself - always have been - but it must be great to be as enthusiastic as that about anything.

Do I detect a lessening of humour twixt the fair pages of L-3? I'm hoping not. Yet I've dug out number 1 and compared, and though I can't put my finger on it there does seem to be a little more seriousness creeping in. You just keep the laffs flowing as in No. 1 and all Hull will be happy.

Nice little yarn from Doryl Parkley (? - a pen-name? Yours? Miss Parker's? Those, then?). (+Both; it was a collaboration, though Doreen wrote the original. S'funny, I thought that the package-name, "Doryl Parkley" wouldn't fool anybody for a minute. And it's Mrs. Parker.)+) Couldn't quite make up my mind whether or not it would have fitted into the old "Weird Tales." More to come?

Re these long-hairs. I just don't agree, B. I can just imagine my old pop sitting down to Sunday dinner, looking round at his five sons and seeing one with his hair in his eyes. I can assure you the resulting action would have been drastic. Very drastic... And what do I think? Proper thing too. No matter which way I look at it, I just cannot see any form of manhood in women's hair-styles.

Earl E. Evers, U.S. Army. Ron McGuinness's little creatures using a discarded old shoe as a shrine (?) natural curiosity (?) tourist attraction (?) or ... (?) brings to mind a story idea. There's this colony of tiny intelligent creatures on Earth, see, and they know nothing about human civilisation, but have all sorts of speculations about space travel. So one day this beer can comes hurtling out of the window of a passing car and lands right in the middle of the colony...

"Natterbox" - it's nice to find a segment of fandom where the fen simply enjoy themselves, and the only "unprintables" are confined to jokes in private letters, instead of being incorporated in character assassinations. For so many, fandom is formed of steel links to blat fellow fen, as with a bicycle chain!

"Pebble in the Pool" - personally, boys with shoulder-length hair strike me as effeminate. Custom, I guess, or maybe brainwashing. Question: how would we react to a culture of alien humans whose male and female hair styles were reversed? Answer: if there was going to be extensive contact with them, our own styles would change to meet theirs. (+I don't see why, Earl. If the aliens came here, wouldn't it be more a case of "when in Rome, do as the Romans do, and the hell with the Greeks!"? I mean, why shouldn't the aliens change their styles to conform with ours? In any case, I think there would be gradual "fraternisation," and in a generation or two, we wouldn't be able to distinguish between four groups (their males, their females, and our ditto), let alone the present two!)+).

Maybe that's what's happening already - we might be going back to the ancient universal hair-style - long hair for both sexes, with the men bearded to emphasize the difference. With present clothing styles, and the increasing trend towards nudity, we could forget the beards anyway, perhaps. (+Archie! Gordon! Alan! All beards on deck, and man the forward guns! There's a Gillette spy off the port bow!)+). With skin-tight tights, short shorts - to say nothing of the topless trend - it's not too hard to tell the difference!

"The Man Who Thought Paint" - it seems to be a fundamental trait of modern man to enjoy being mystified. A streak of masochism, no doubt. This was an excellent example - and I do hope no-one spoils the whole thing by engaging in a long lettercol debate, trying to dissect and analyse the symbolism! I'd like to suggest a slight improvement, though - have the narrator in on the joke, too, so he concludes: "Yes, of course - I never thought of it that way!" And interjecting his own incomprehensible comments about the subtleties of "thinking paint." It would, perhaps, be difficult to do this without giving the game away - or, worse yet, revealing that there is no sense to the story - but it would be much more frustrating and tantalising for the reader...

"Escape from Winter" was nice - it's good work when you can make an experience as personal as receiving and hearing a record, come alive to the reader, and beyond that, create a mood. Very good.

"The Night-Bumpers." It's too vague and sketchy for my taste - I'd rather see articles on psi and the occult limited to one incident, book review, specific segment of a theory, per article. But most fanzines won't even mention this subject and I'm interested in it, so please keep it up. If enough people show an interest maybe LINK can become a sort of forum for psi and occult subjects. I'd like to see it happen, and LINK is an apt title for such a zine. (+I'm interested in it too - but, as I've said in "Pebble" this time, I aim to keep LINK daft in future. However, if enough people write to me/us and thus provide sufficient material, I might consider producing a separate zine later, along the lines you suggest+).

I thought "Red Kitchen" was a little crude to be really funny.

"The Sluff Affair" was a little too much for me. This sort of thing is hard enough reading when I know the in-group involved - even in such a case, I'm usually almost too exhausted to laugh. In this case the story was almost as mystifying as "The Man Who Thought Paint". Only it was a much less satisfying sort of mystification, as I know the story does have a meaning, at least to insiders. And it gets cold way out here looking in ...

SO HELP ME, THE YOUNGER GENERATION HAS NO MODESTY...



Found the above cartoon among the "oddments" at Project Artshow. (Worldcon, London, August 1965). I have mild hysterics every time I look at it; this is definitely my kind of humour. It's by Gary Deindorfer (of whom I'd like to know more), and it first appeared in YANDRO-103.

"England expects ..." - that's why they call her the Mother Country ...

The

NATTERBOX.

It's rather fortuitous that it just happens to be my editorial turn this time, since I've apparently been promoted. (The next bit is for the benefit of non-PaDners who are regularly inflicted with copies of LINK).

I'm now co-administrator of PaDS with Archie Mercer. Charles Platt, it seems, suffered a fatal attack of Green Onions, and Archie immediately developed a case of "Let not poor PaDS depart ..."

To cut a short story even shorter (we are creatures of impulse), Archie and I have taken over PaDS. We feared that we had arrived too late at the scene of the accident; the PaDS-pulse was weak and thready, and those of its limbs which were still functioning pleaded inertia as regards a proposed 4th Mailing last July or August. We prescribed a long convalescence - three months, to be exact - and endeavoured during that period to keep the corporate entity alive. We administered (that's why we've dubbed ourselves Administrators, see ?) copious doses of things called Mercerculars, and even provided it with a new Constitution - and what that cost in letters and 'phone calls would make the National Debt look like the retail price of a used Oxo cube ...

Archie isn't a PaDS member, and doesn't intend becoming one. As a veteran OMPAn, he prizes his monapan status. However, if at any time he feels like injecting a modicum of Archimercatorial maddery into PaDS, it'll probably appear in LINK. And you all get regular loc's from him, too. So Shurrrup moanin' ...

You may have noted (on page 3) that we've had to increase the price of LINK to 1/6d, per copy. Sorry about this - but since this is a 50page issue, we hope you'll agree that the increase was justified. Reflect that, had there in fact been a July/August Mailing, you'd have had to pay 2/- !

However, to gild the whatsit a bit, we've decided to run a kind of competition. The writer of the daftest loc on this issue will receive a valuable prize which he/she will treasure all his/her life. The judges will be Mary, Hagg and myself, and anybody who gives us an argument about our decision will be subjected to the vengeance of the entire Tribe, so watch it !

+ + + + +

At the time of writing I'm no longer living in the Tin Shack, and it's unlikely I'll be returning there, for entirely personal reasons, I'm told that every zine must carry an address, though, so, since I have no settled one at present, please address all loc's, contributions, subs, etc., to me at:

c/o 46 Olive Road, Dogsthorpe, PETERBOROUGH. And in order to confuse everybody still further, I'll sign this editorial with my new name: Beryl Mercer. (By Deed Poll on this 11th day of November, 1965). Surely that's worth an loc ??

DEPARTMENT OF FREE ENLIGHTENMENT FOR THE HITHERTO UNINFORMED

I have received a number of queries along the lines of: "What does 'PaDS' stand for?" and "What does 'OMPA' mean?" Gather round, O ye of little learning, and hearken.

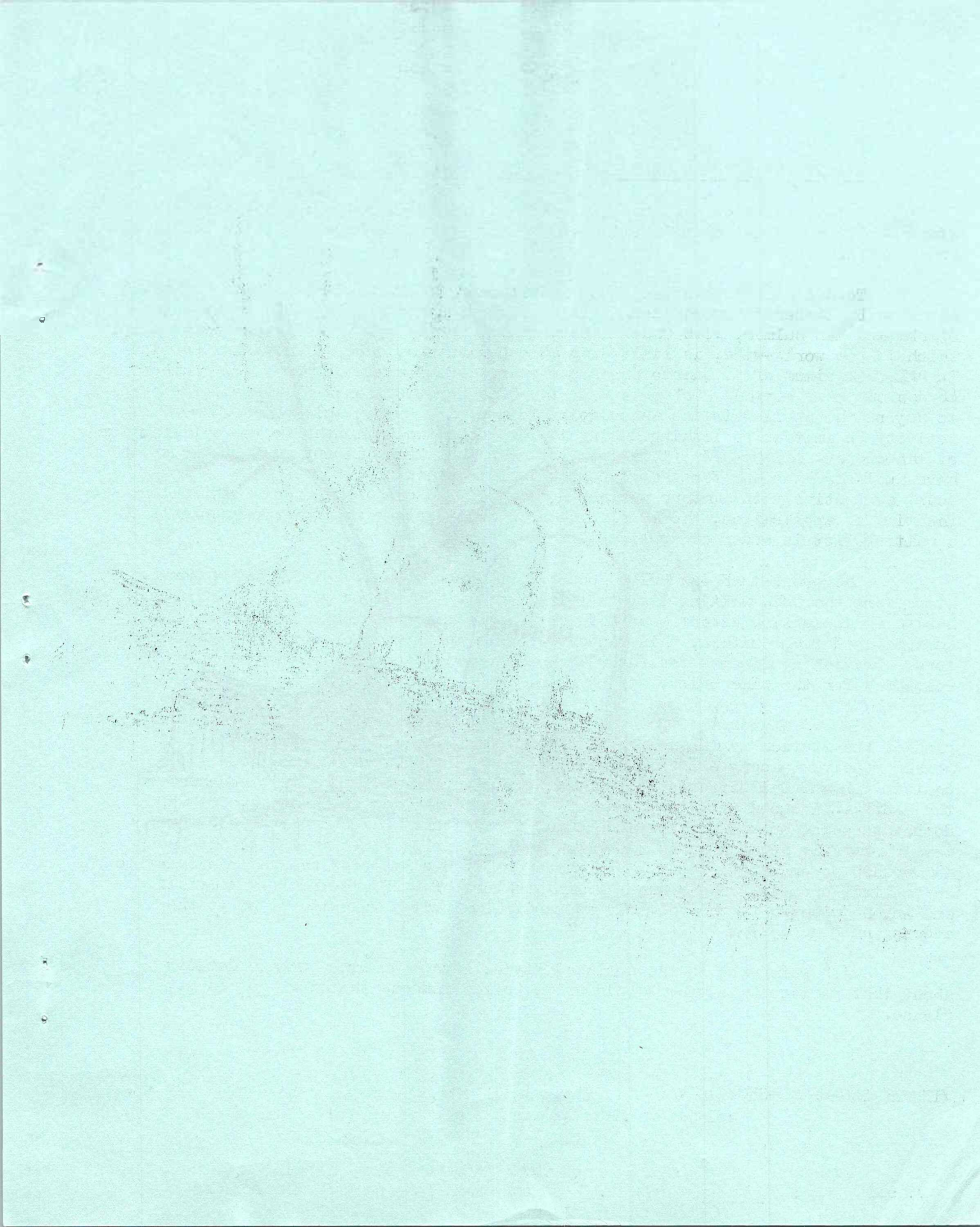
To deal first with the older institution: 'O.M.P.A.' stands for 'Offtrail Magazine Publishers' Association.' It was founded in September 1954 by Vincent Clarke and Ken Bulmer, with Chuck Harris making up the committee trio. Membership, which is now world-wide, is limited to 45 contributors, each of whom must publish in OMPA a minimum of 12 quarto pages per year. (Four mailings per year - number 46 due out next month). To quote from the OMPA Constitution: "Membership is open to anyone who applies to the Association Editor (AE) and is able to show proof of activity in amateur publishing during the previous twelve months to the satisfaction of the current officers." (This does not mean that an applicant must previously have published his own fanzine; contributions to other people's fanzines also count as 'activity in amateur publishing'). "If the membership roster isn't full at the time of application, the AE places those applicants with proper credentials on a waiting list in order of application."

The present AE is: Brian Jordan, 25c, Brocco Bank, SHEFFIELD 11, Yorks. At present the OMPA waiting list is fairly short. In recent years the membership has to an increasing extent been made up of American contributors. Since OMPA is administered from Britain, this tends to reduce the number of potential administrators. British applicants for future membership will therefore be especially welcome - for the time being, at any rate.

for
'PaDS' stands for the 'Printing and Distributing Service', and is the same kind of institution as OMPA, i.e. it produces four mailings per year, and each member receives a copy of every other member's fanzine. There are, however, certain fundamental differences, to wit: contributors to PaDS must be members of the B.S.F.A. in good standing, and PaDS offers facilities to those members who do not possess, or do not have access to, typewriters and/or duplicators. Being a comparatively young organisation (founded by Charles Platt in 1964), the PaDS membership is small at present, and therefore it has not been thought necessary to set a limit upon it. The present Administrators of PaDS are Archie and myself, and anyone wishing further details is cordially invited to write to us at the address on page 47.

With reference to the enclosed flyer: anyone wanting further details about that particular matter should write to the address therein. Not to us, please.

++ BM
WIEN IN SECHS-UND-SECHZIG! (translation) VIENNA IN '66!





SF
ARTWORK..

RON