

6961 for

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THE

DICK ENEY



This piece of paper happens to be THE MERCATORIAL ANNUAL, Volume 2, Number 4, Overall Number 13 already...

It emanates from Archie & Beryl Mercer who for the second time in succession are still inhabiting 10 Lower Church Lane, St. Michael's, Bristol BS2 8BA in the United Kingdom.

We won't guarantee either that it will or won't happen again though.

Yngvi is a louse. E&OE

HEIDELBERG IN 1970 !

Although a lot of recipients will be getting this with either a BSFA mailing or an OMPA mailing, there is strictly no connection except convenience.

HERE'S WISHING YOU (INDIVIDUALLY OR SEVERALLY AS THE CASE MAY BE) A VERY HAPPY 1969 AND THEREABOUTS...

To: DICK

From Archie & Beryl

THE HAIRS OF Anaximander Cottonscratcher's eyebrows used to stand on end whenever his mind was occupied by salacious thoughts. His colleagues at work soon realised what was doing it and bullied him unmercifully, telling dirty jokes and showing dirty pictures at every opportunity. Very soon it only needed somebody to say: "Have you heard this one?" or to show him a blank bit of paper in order to make him perform his embarrassing trick. His girl friend, Susan Guineafrock, was more understanding. When she found that she couldn't make his eyebrows react simply by stroking them, she didn't - as many girls would have done - take it as an insult, but set herself to learn more about the matter. In any case, she had a number of excellent ways of making them react when she wanted to - by kissing him, for instance. Without telling him, she devised a simple code: stroking his left eyebrow meant "yes", the right one "no". He didn't take long to catch on. "Darling," he said, "you understand me so well that I think we ought to get married - what d'you say?" Susan tenderly caressed his left eyebrow, both his eyebrows stood obediently on end, and they started planning for The Day.

One night, shortly before the date agreed on, he awoke to the sound of snapping rose-bushes, and looking out of his bedroom window he saw a flying saucer resting on the back lawn. At least he mentally categorised it as a flying saucer, though its top was convex and so highly-polished that no cup, whatever its size, could possibly stay there without sliding off. He thought of shouting to it to go away, but his landlady - who slept at the front of the house - hated being disturbed in the night, so he slipped on his dressing-gown, crept silently downstairs and out of the kitchen door to confront the intruders close-to. As he came up to the saucer, a door rolled quietly open and two people came out - humanoid, and very clearly one of each sex. "Greetings," he said, holding out his hand to the male. "Greetings," returned the male as he gravely shook it, while the female reached gracefully across and touched Anaximander on his left eyebrow. Both his eyebrows reacted automatically, and the female stepped hastily backward. "You'd better come inside for a minute," she told him in good English though with a charming trace of accent. "It's all right - we promise not to kidnap you or anything."

"Your name," she asked when they were seated comfortably within, "is Anaximander Cottonscratcher I believe?" He confirmed it. "Then you shouldn't have rikkled at me," she told him severely. "I'm your long-lost grandmother - why d'you think I touched your left eyebrow? Oh - and this is your equally long-lost grandfather." She glanced at the male, and two sets of eyebrows rikkled strongly at each other for a brief moment. Poor Anaximander felt somewhat out of his depth, but he explained about Susan and her arbitrary code as best he could. His long-lost grandmother remarked that that was rather a pity, because they'd hoped to take him home with them, but agreed that the young lady in the case should be taken into consideration. So they lifted across town to where Susan lodged, Anaximander managed to attract her attention at the window, she adjusted to the situation quicker than he'd dared hope and soon they were all four ensconced in the craft's interior.

"But," said the long-lost grandmother as she studied the tousled and sleepy-eyed girl - "you haven't got any eyebrows at all!" So Susan explained with a sigh that she'd known she'd have to reveal her dread secret some time: her eyebrows reacted in precisely the same fashion as did Anaximander's, so she kept them permanently shaved off and used eyebrow-pencil instead. At this the long-lost grandparents showed sudden interest and asked her when and where she was born. Susan told them all she knew about her origin, and the older couple nodded excitedly. "All right," Anaximander snapped. "Tell me the worst. Is she my long-lost sister, or my long-lost mother, or what?" "Neither," his long-lost grandmother told him. "She's the long-lost heir to the long-lost throne. But our country's been a republic since before either of you were born, so you can all live happily ever after if you want to." Which we're happy to be able to report that they did.