



This is OZ-1, offered by BERYL HENLEY for inclusion in the 43rd OMEPA Mailing dated March 1965. It was produced within the confines of the Tin Shack, alias 59 The Fearnings, Crabbs Cross, Redditch, Worcestershire, England. EAOE. Copyright Beryl Henley 1965.

+ + + + +

I don't propose to bore everybody with a potted autobiography. I'll simply say that if there is anything you want to know about me, please ask. To start you off, my name is Beryl Mary Henley, I'm 39 years old and married. Although I've been reading sf, on and off, for over 20 years, I'm a comparative neo-fan in that I joined the BSFA in December 1963, having discovered fandom via Pete Weston a few months earlier. (Some say, "good old Pete!" Others ...).

OZ is inexpertly stencilled by me and duplicated by Pete. We haven't yet decided who's to do the collating! The cover of this issue is by Ron McGuinness of London, as are any interior illoes which may appear - I can't draw worth a row of beans ...

The name of this zine is OZ, because OZ is "the wonderful land where anything might happen." I hope that this definition will apply here. There's another reason, viz.: it's short for OMEPA-Zine!

Having thus performed a perfunctory self-introduction, I'll leave you to tackle the:

### C O N T E N T S

"I Just Can't Seem to Break the Habit, Doctor ..."	pages 2 - 5
C-OZ-MENTS! ... mailing comments ...	pages 6 - 10
We're Human, Too! (I think).	pages 11 & 12
Missing Link. ... poem ...	pages 13 & 14
Party at Poyton's Place ... talking point ...	pages 14 & 15

After I'd completed this page, Pete persuaded me to have a back cover illo as well - that, too, is by Ron. Then I decided that the front cover would look best in green, so Ken kindly agreed to run those off for me. Talk about Combined Operations .... Thanks everybody.

I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO BREAK THE HABIT, DOCTOR ...

The following is No. 43 in a series called STRANGE WORLD, issued by Anglo-American Chewing Gum Ltd., Halifax, Yorks. ("Getcha bubble-gum here, folks! A 'Strange World' story in every packet! Getcha ...").

"Two of Napoleon's Army officers - Major Dupont and Captain Fournier-Sarlovese - fought the same duel 2100 times over a period of 19 years (1794-1813). Both opponents were so evenly matched that each encounter resulted in a draw."

But, one wonders - why did they finally STOP ?

It seems reasonable to suppose, since both were officers, that the original quarrel occurred when they were past the first flush of impetuous youth. This being so, it is possible that this duelling marathon came to an end with the natural death of one or the other. But suppose this was not the case ?

+ + + + +

It is a sunny morning in the year 1813. In the forest near Fontainebleau, there is a pleasant, grassy glade. In the centre of this glade, however, there is a strip from which the grass disappeared many years ago, trodden remorselessly into the hard-packed earth by four carefully-pacing feet.

Every tree around this spot bears witness to some form of violence. There are long furrows on some trunks, a few fresh and raw, others partly healed by growths of moss. Lower branches have been slashed bare of leaves. Obviously this place has known the sharp snap of pistol-fire, the whine of ricochetting shot, the ringing clash of steel and the flash of blades.

Some trees also bear cuts deliberately inflicted to mark the passage of time. Over two thousand of them, if one had the time and the will to count them. Cigar-butts, both old and fresh, litter the grass at each end of the bare, brown strip.

Through the trees come riding six men, conversing amicably. None of them is young. Reaching the clearing, they draw rein and dismount, carelessly tethering their horses to bushes which have been much used for this purpose.

Let us move closer and eavesdrop ...

M. LEPINE: Well, it's a nice morning. When I saw the ring round the moon last night, I thought we were in for some rain.

M. de la ROUX: (stamping his feet): Oh, how I hate this early morning caper! I was at a reunion dinner till two this morning. My head is fit to burst!

M. LEBRUN: Serves you right. You must realise, my dear de la Roux, that at your age you can't tiddle as you did in your youth without paying for it.

M.d.l.R.: (indignantly): What do you mean, Lebrun - MY age? You're older than I am!

M. LeB.: I do not deny it - but I'm not so foolish as to try to drink like I did when I was a young stripling.

M.d.l.R. : Well, really, I ---

M. CARTIER: Come, come, gentlemen! The Major and the Captain are waiting. M. de la Roux - the next time you are due to go out roistering, may I suggest that you arrange for a substitute from one of the other teams of seconds?  
(M. de la Roux grumbles quietly to himself).

\* \* \* \* \*

Having met four of the party, what of the other two gentlemen? Have they been glaring at each other in bitter hatred while waiting for their respective seconds to make ready? Not a bit of it. Listen ...

Maj. DUFONT: I think it's too bad of the doctor, I really do. He's the seventh we've engaged in the past two years - why do they always let us down like this?

Capt. FOURNIER-SARLOVESE: I do so agree, Major - after all, they're well-paid to attend, and it isn't as if we call upon their services more than once a month. I wish I could earn so much for doing so little. How's that nicked ear of yours, by the way?

MAJ. D.: Healing nicely, thank you, Captain. And how is your cheek - oh yes, doing well, I see. What are those seconds arguing about now? I don't much care for this team, do you?

Capt. F-S.: No, I don't. I infinitely prefer Manasset's lot ...

\* \* \* \* \*

No acrimony there, obviously. Look at them. Elderly, yes, but upright and of fine military bearing. Keen of eye and firm of purpose. Both are wearing the full-dress uniform of Napoleon's Army; the uniforms, though somewhat threadbare, are clean, and show evidence of loving care. Both men are facially scarred, and, were he to walk, the Major would be seen to favour his right leg slightly. No war-wounds, these ...

The four seconds disperse; Lepine and de la Roux to the eastern end of the strip, Lebrun and Cartier moving across to the western end. The two old soldiers begin to walk towards the former.

MAJ. D.: Look here, F-S., it's my turn to have my back to the sun.

Cpt. F-S.: No, it isn't, Major; I had the sun in my eyes yesterday.

Maj. D.; How could you, you imbecile? - it was raining yesterday!

Cpt. F-S.: Oh ... oh yes, so it was ... Dammit, you have all the luck ... well ...

(He trudges towards Lebrun and Cartier, muttering crossly. Lebrun reaches under his cloak and brings out a pistol-case. The Captain stares at it, swings on his heel and calls to the Major, who is just lifting a pistol from the case proffered to him by Lepine).

Cpt. F-S.: Major! It's rapiers today, surely?

Maj. D.: Oh really, Captain! Are you still half-asleep, pray? How can it be rapiers today when it was *épées* yesterday? (To LEPINE) I really think he's breaking up, you know, poor old chap. (Flexes his muscles proudly). It's getting to be too much for him. (LEPINE nods wisely but makes no comment).

So the two old soldiers remove their cloaks and tunics, check their pistols, prime them (or whatever it was they did to load pistols in those days) - and move ponderously to the middle of the strip, accompanied by Lepine.

M. LoP.: I don't think I have to repeat the instructions, do I ?

Cpt. F-S.: Of course not, you fool.

Maj. D.: Get on with it, man! (He and the Captain turn back-to-back).

Cpt. F-S.: (over his shoulder): Since the doctor isn't here ... or ... the usual ?

Maj. D.: Naturally, my old. But mind my scalp this time ...

(M. Lopine begins to count).

M. LoP.: Un ... deux ... trois ... (the old soldiers pace, almost wearily, along that damnably familiar strip) ... sept ... huit ... (a bird calls shrilly from a nearby tree) ... DIX !

The Dupont ball tears through the sleeve of the Captain's shirt. The latter's shot fans through the Major's sparse hair. No damage done. The seconds sigh in resignation. Another damned draw ...

The old soldiers resume their tunics and cloaks. The pistols are replaced in their cases. The seconds mount up and ride off through the fast-dispersing mist to pursue their various occupations. And the Major and the Captain also mount, a little stiffly, and urge their horses into a leisurely trot. They repair to a nearby hostelry for breakfast. Being well-known here, they are ushered into their own private room, where the meal awaits them. Mino host, on seeing them enter, merely lifts an enquiring eyebrow. He doesn't have to ask. The two old men nod resignedly. "Another damned draw," mutters the landlord.

+ + + + +

Maj. D.: Pass the salt, Jacques. Merci.

Cpt. F-S.: Pierre ... there's something I want to ask you. I hardly know how to begin. It implies a confession which I could make to no-one else but you.

Maj. D. (a little concerned): Say on, old friend. What is it ?

Cpt. F-S.: It isn't that I feel too old for this duelling lark. (Ciel ! this coffee's hot !). I mean ... I can still hold my own with you. You haven't beaten me yet. But ... but ...

Maj. D.: Come, Jacques - you can tell me. Am I not your best friend ?

Cpt. F-S.: Indeed you are, and a finer friend no man could wish for. (He hesitates, and then, in a burst of tortured confidence:) Pierre, I fear that I am losing my mind !

Maj. D. (now seriously alarmed): Nonsense ! I don't believe it ! You have no cause to think such a thing !

Cpt. F-S.: Oh, but I have, I have ! You saw this morning - I thought it was rapiers and not pistols.

Maj. D.: Is that all ? But that is nothing, Jacques - after all, I thought it was my turn to ... oh no ... dear me ... it was you who thought to take the eastern end ... tut-tut ...

Cpt. F-S.: You see ? But that's not the worst. Brace yourself, Pierre: tell me, please - what are we fighting about ?

Maj. D. (taken aback): WHAT ??

Cpt. F-S.: All these years, day in, day out, we have fired at each other, slashed at each other - and now I cannot remember the cause of it all! Help me, Pierre, I think I am going mad! (He buries his face in his hands with a sob).

Maj. D.: Don't distress yourself, old friend - of course I'll help - we duel because, back in 1794, we ... we ... (his voice trails off into appalled silence).

(The Captain raises his head and stares at the Major, hope dawning in his ravaged face.)

Cpt. F-S.: Pierre! Do you mean - do you really mean that you can't remember, either? Then I have naught to fear!

Maj. D. (testily): Wait a minute, wait a minute. It was over a woman, surely ... that little black-haired girl from the theatre - Aurore, that's it! (The Captain reaches into a pocket and produces a small, much-thumbed book. He leafs rapidly through the pages, his fingers trembling with excitement).

Cpt. F-S.: Adrienne ... Avril ... no, that can't be right, Pierre - I never knew a girl named Aurore. And you know that all my amours are listed in here!

Maj. D.: True, true ... oh bien, let us face it. I do not remember our original quarrel, either.

Cpt. F-S.: Then we duel no more?

Maj. D.: It certainly seems futile - but what shall we do instead?

Cpt. F-S.: Have an extra hour in our beds every morning, I'd say. Apart from that - carry on as usual, surely?

Maj. D.: Breakfast here?

Cpt. F-S.: Why not?

Maj. D.: Capital, capital! Ah, no more mending torn shirts ...

Cpt. F-S.: No more slashed cheeks, or nicked ears ...

Maj. D.: No more quarrelling seconds ...

Cpt. F-S.: ... or dilatory doctors who charge enormous fees for doing nothing ...

Maj. D.: That's true! Why, Jacques, we'll be better off!

Cpt. F-S.: Much better off! Better off all round! (They "stare at each other in a wild surmise" ...)

Cpt. F-S.: Another cup of coffee, Pierre?

Maj. D.: Thank you, but no. Let us go downstairs and drink to our new life in something stronger than coffee!

Cpt. F-S.: You mean ...? (The Major rises to his feet; the Captain hastens to follow suit).

Maj. D. (reverently): I mean: Napoleon brandy! (Both salute).

+ + + + +

So that's why they stopped - because neither could remember the cause of the original quarrel!

Of course, it might not have been like that at all ...

++ Beryl Henley

C-OZ-MEMES :

.... being mailing comments on OMPA-42.

Let me say before I begin that I intend to comment only on points which interest me personally, for the moment, or on subjects for which comment is directly invited. O.K. ? Here we go, then, beginning with:

OFF-TRAILS (Ethel). I once had a copy of a very good book called "I'm a Stranger Here Myself," by Anthony Thorne (1944). I loaned it out, though, and it never came home. After the war, I tried to get another copy, but could never find one. However - what this leads up to is that I find I'm not quite a stranger here. (Well, thass nice ...). I'm happy to count among my personal friends: Ken Cheslin, Dave Hale, Archie Mercer, Pete Weston and Charlie Winstone. Also, I've enjoyed correspondence (albeit brief) with Ron Bennett, Bjo Trimble, and you, Ethel. The rest of the members I hope to get to know, through OMPA, in due course. If I haven't directly addressed you, or you, or you - please don't think I'm being unsociable. I'm often told that I talk too much, on paper as well as orally, but when meeting new people, I prefer to listen - or read - for a while until I know them better, and find some common meeting-ground.

So get fell in, in h'alphabetical h'order !

AMBLE (Archie). I must, of course, argue against your summing-up of Ray Bradbury. (Come on, Ron, back me up !). You seem unable to differentiate between waste and bountiful generosity - extravagance, if you like. When Ray uses colour in his writing, he's liberal with it. If he were an artist in oils and/or water-colours (which he may be, for all I know) - I think he'd be what I call a "happy slosher." When his characters are happy, it fairly effervesces out of them. And when they are unhappy, Ray insists that you go down to the depths with them. His situations may be fantastic, ludicrous, even plain daft - but his people are real. He gives of his talent with both hands, with the whole of his mind and heart - that's not waste ! Why don't you simply accept it as the bounty of a generous man, instead of condemning it ? (Mercer, you need educating !). // If G.H. (I mean G. Higginbottom, not G. Henry !) - is right about the art of conversation having been driven underground - count me among the troglodytes, please. Where do I go to buy my patented Hecatorial Conversation-Mining Kit ? H'mmmm ?

BINARY 111 (i.e. 7). (??). Joe Patrizio. Hi, Joe. Your remark about "a fine, gleaming, new duplicator, at a rotten, grubby old, second-hand price" reminds me of the silly story about the small boy who was asked by a visiting uncle: "Johnny, how would you like a nice, bright, shining, new penny ?" To which the prompt reply was: "Thanks, uncle - but I'd rather have a nasty, dirty, mucky old shilling !" // When my elder son was nearly five, we had an encyclopaedia salesman at the door, claiming that the books were approved and recommended by the Ministry of Education, and insinuating that our Dave would be an ineducable nit without them. The patter impressed me not at all. The books did. We bought them as part of Dave's birthday present - £20 for a set of eight. My mother, on hearing of the transaction, called me seventeen different kinds of a fool, despite my assurances that I hadn't been taken in, duped, cheated and defrauded. The big joke is that the books have proved absolutely invaluable over the years to both boys (and me !), especially now that they are at a grammar school and coping with nightly homework. If I wasn't up to me eyes in sf at present (allwright, Pete, I'm not complaining !), I'd be quite happy to sit and read

these every night for sheer pleasure ! // Ref. your Odd - or is it an End ? - about the BBC's pronunciation expert being a <sup>Scots</sup> woman: I've heard it said that the purest English in the U.K. is spoken in ... Inverness ! (Ethel, is this true, or was somebody having me on ?).

THE BNF OF IZ. Carl Brandon. Marvellous ! But I'm damn glad I decided to call my zine OZ before I read this ! (Didn't I, Bjo ?). I'm equally glad that I joined OMEPA just in time to get a copy of this for myself. Being a comparative newcomer to fandom, I confess that I didn't understand all the allusions, but this detracted little from the pleasure I derived from it. The "Exegesis," rather than clarifying matters, tended to obscure them further, since I've heard of none of the people mentioned. No' mind. I'm catching up as fast as I can !

ENTROPY-1. Terry Carr. I cackled like an egg-bound hen over "The Iron Curtain Drops," and the illoes are admirable, too. Some comments apply to Sam Youd's piece. Sounds as if he - or at least his pal "Chunky" - was as devilish at school as I was ! // I read the first few lines of "The Little Boy Who Bit People," muttered the last line to myself, and turned the page to check if I was correct. I was. This doesn't prove that I'm clever, nor is it meant to. It just proves that I'm the mother of boys. When I ask Dave, "Why did you hit John ?" and Dave replies, "Because I wanted to," or "Because I felt like it" - what rejoinder can I possibly make ?? // Since one of my main interests in life is people, and what makes them tick, I'd rate Mal Ashworth's piece one of the most memorable I've ever read - and don't start me off yet on the subject of some of the characters I know - I intend to save them for later issues !

ERG-22. Terry Jeeves. Despite many comparisons made between Terry's reviews in ZENITH, and my own, this is the first direct contact I've had with him. Hello, my long-suffering mate. If I may get personal for a few minutes (have a chat among yerselves, the rest of yer) - my younger son, John, had his first (and worst) attack of asthma when he was 11 months old. I thought he was going to die. At that time, he was also covered in infantile eczema, and suffered from intermittent hay-fever and urticaria. All these were due to a protein allergy - can you imagine trying to feed adequately a baby allergic to protein ? The many doctors and specialists to whom I took him all said much the same thing: that there was little they could do, except prescribe Elixir Benadryl (he was too young for ephedrine), and that he would probably "grow out of it" when he had cut his second teeth.

I am a sucker for a challenge, and this defeatist attitude made me so mad that I determined I would prove them wrong, somehow. Meanwhile, I tried to bring the boy up to regard his affliction as a damned nuisance and nothing more. If he had to live with it - he would live, fully, not as a semi-invalid.

However, when he was  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years old, I came into contact with a quack (self-styled, furthermore !), and, to curtail a very long story, John was submitted to his treatment, and virtually cured. All the eczema disappeared; he can now drink his daily pinta with the best of 'em. Previously, milk was absolute poison to him. He rarely gets asthma nowadays, and then only mildly; the onset occurs when he is (a) over-tired, or (b) cutting new teeth. He now has a full set of these apart from his wisdom teeth. He is now  $11\frac{1}{2}$ , plays football, cricket, etc., is out in all weathers, and cycles like a fiend. I'll supply further details privately, if you're interested; in the meantime, if you can get hold of a copy of "The Secret of Life," by Georges Lakhovsky, this will explain the basis of the treatment given to John. No injections, no drugs or medicines, no pain or discomfort. // Got a feeling the



Soggles might grow on me (parasitic lot!) - especially if I could read preceding instalments ... hint, hint ... !

HAGGIS-2. Ian Peters. All your remarks about adding things to whisky (whiskey?) apply equally to rum, which is my particular tippie. Well, I'm an ex-Wren, see. (You lot across the Pond - you probably know that the Wrens - Women's Royal Naval Service - are the British equivalent of your WAVES, and if you didn't know, you do now). If I follow one of Ken Cheslin's (publishable) suggestions, OMPA may be hearing more of my brief Naval career later. Needless to say, the British Navy has Never Been The Same Since. Oh, yes - I'll just mention here that one of the lessons on my training course was given by two deadpan instructors on How to Shoot the Greater Flying Haggis. Which always flies backwards, because (a) it fools the hunters, and (b) it doesn't want to see .... The detailed diagrams of the special gun used for this purpose were fantastic - I wish now that I'd taken copies to reproduce here. // May I repeat some remarks anent abortion and sterilisation which I made some time ago in a round robin? "I'm not sure about this sterilisation business. After all, it is not unknown for women to change their minds!" (Another member of the RR later suggested that perhaps it would be better to sterilise the men!). "Both my kids were born by Caesarean section, and if I had another (which Ghod or somebody forbid!), I could be legally sterilised at the same time, if I wanted it. Now, Caesareans are distinctly unfunny, and I'm definitely not a maternal type - yet I have this vague feeling that sterilisation is a sort of negation of womanhood. However, that is an individual opinion - although everyone is entitled to that. I am completely in favour of making abortion both legal and safe. It's all very well for the men - they make all these daft laws, and get to be Pope and things, and far too many of 'em seem to think that this entitles them to dictate to women on subjects which are strictly feminine affairs. If I wasn't so damned idle, I could get mad about this sort of thing ..." From which you will gather that I agree all the way with your views, Ian.

NEXUS-2. Pete. You aggranoying man - putting NEXUS into OMPA as well as PADS! H'mmm,lessee ... yes, I'll do me's in OMPA, and write an loc for PADS, OK. ? // Well, you know that I agree with you all the way about J.G. Ballard. Somebody once referred to my articles in BEYOND as "tepid ramblings" (heh!) - I think this fits Ballard's writings even better than it fits mine! Tell you what, Pete - let's both go and sit at Moorcock's feet and ask him to enlighten us! However, I'm not completely maddened by Cordwainer Smith; "Alpha Alpha Boulevard" flummoxed me utterly, but I liked "On the Gem Planet," and "The Boy Who Bought Old Earth." // Terry again - I think it's in Pete's ZENITH-7 that somebody (you?) implies that if a reader enjoys a feature in a zine, he says nowt, but if he dislikes something, he writes a howling lop. (Letter of protest). There is another category of reader, though: the "charitable critic," as you call him, who, if he has/praise to offer, keeps quiet. I hope I can be included in this group. (I only moan in public about Ballard's writings because Pete once foisted "Terminal Beach" on to me for a Z-review). If I'm asked outright for an opinion on something I dislike, I try to be honest without being vindictive. // Pete - what do you mean by saying that England has no written Constitution? Isn't the Magna Carta exactly that, or am I showing me h'iggerance again? // Re "Quote 4" - I agree with Joe. It's like I keep saying - it is meaningless to generalise about human beings because they're all different! Dammit, that's what I find so fascinating about the maddening creatures! As for "underdogs vs overlords" - I am only on the side of the former when injustice and/or exploitation is/are involved. I'm fully

aware that there have to be the leaders and the led. Also that some people are happy as underdogs, and would be completely lost if their status were changed. Everybody is entitled to his/her own brand of security. // Well, I do think you could have introduced the BrumGroup to the Colonials with a better account than that - you'll have them thinking we're all "a load of yobs," too! // Joe - I think I'm too old to grow out of anything - but I'm prepared, even eager, to grow into anything interesting and promising - fandom, OMEA, etc. ! Read half of "Dianotics," have you? H'm, yes, well, even that is more than has been done by many of the scoffers. However, for the umpteenth time let me say that I am not trying to convert anybody (too old for that, an' all !), neither do I go along with all of Hubbard's claims and theories. But I have experienced practical application of Scientology (which, though based on Dianetics, has a much wider scope), at a time when I had "hit bottom" and was ready to quit. It works - for me personally, at any rate. And surely that's the acid test? // Pete - your reply to Joe on this point surprised and pleased me very much. Will you be mad at me if I say that I think you are maturing very gracefully? (Or is it the magical Reed influence ??). If I gave the impression that I was connecting Sci. with psi, I apologise - the article in question was, after all, based on what Pete had written earlier about Campbell editorials, and that is how this particular connection came into my article. // Ron, I don't know if JWC and I would have owt in common (unless Walt Willis classes us both as crackpots ??) - but I'd give a lot to find out! Have a look at "We're Human Too!" (I think ...)" in this // Pete, I called it "A Kind of ~~Yob/No~~ BerylCon" because that weekend at the Timmo Shacks brought under my roof a number of people of whom I'm very fond. Yes, it was as simple as that! (For those of you whose eyebrows are forming question-marks - this refers to a weekend last April when I had four fen here, including Pete and his Mary, and other (non-fan) friends also dropped in - a fantastic weekend! But the one Ken refers to in WHATSIT-9 was even madder - though in a quieter way, if you see what I ...)

PANTHEON-2. Burkhard Bltm. I'm sorry, but I find this regal "we" very off-putting. However, I was interested in "On Education." My personal opinion is that far too much fuss is made about children's sex-education. The normal child is a bundle of curiosity - healthy curiosity, they don't know any other kind - and the simplest way to impart the so-called facts of life is to answer their questions frankly, and within the limits of their understanding. If a parent finds him/herself too embarrassed to do this, he/she should refer the child to someone who will give such answers. Though I must admit, one question asked by Dave when he was five really did floor me. We had been having a session of "where-did-I-come-from?" etc., and finally I said, "Anything else bothering you?" "Yes," he replied. "How do you fall in love?" Anybody got a constructive answer to that??

WHATSIT-9. Ken. This is your favourite twit on the line. Put Wendy down for a minute and pay attention! (Long pause here - about four weeks, to be exact!). And in those four weeks, quite a lot has happened. For one thing - I took a trip. I arrived at work one afternoon, and my boss said, "One of your boy-friends rang up this morning." "Yes," I told him, "oddly enough, I phoned him this morning. He wanted to know if I'd like to go to London with him for the weekend..." At which my boss looked terribly frustrated, because when I say things like that, he never knows whether or not to believe me! // Anyway, folks - we went to Ella's. The first time she and I had met. (I know this has nothing to do with WHATSIT-9, but I've got to fit it in somewhere!). At one time Ella made some (Ken and I, I mean).

remark about my genzine, LINK, and said, "Charles Platt does your duplicating, doesn't he?" I replied, "He does LINK, yes - but Pete's going to do my OMPazine." "My God!" cried Ella, "are you in OMPA?" At which we both burst out laughing, and Ella added, "Well, how would I know? - I'm only the President!" // Later, Ella expressed the opinion that newcomers like myself - newcomers to fandom, I mean - are entering OMPA too early. I was told that the "turnover" of OMPANs in the last few years has been fantastic - people joining in a burst of enthusiasm, staying for two or three mailings and then dropping out. Ken: as far as I recall, you expressed no opinion on this. What do you think? Is it sheer lack of mental stamina, or do you think I may have been right when I said that perhaps people join OMPA in search of something, don't find it, and so lose interest? // Ella had earlier bemoaned the fact that the latest crop of fen don't seem very interested in corresponding actively with Amerifen. And when I pointed out that perhaps British fen join OMPA in order to make some initial American contacts, Ella said that it wasn't the same thing at all. // I'd like to clarify my own position on this point. One of my alleged peculiarities is that I have always enjoyed writing letters. But there are only 24 hours in a day (revolution) and at present I have a round two dozen letters awaiting replies. Taking into consideration all my other commitments, it is quite impossible for me to take on any more correspondents. So, as far as I'm concerned, my main reason for joining OMPA is to establish closer contact with American fandom. Which gives me cause to wonder: why do people join OMPA, anyway? Would some of you mind giving me your reasons, please? You, Ken? // Back to WHATSIT - is Don Studebaker real? // I see that your Japanese contributor got you into a right tiz with his idea of living-life-backwards - some of your illoes are reproduced back to front! But there was a story based on that idea, wasn't there? About travelling through to the other side of an hour-glass or something? There was a character in it named Henley, if I recall correctly.

POST-MAILINGS. FANZINE FOR ATOM/ROTSLER. This began by being way over my head, which was obviously my loss. (No cracks about my height, please. Or lack of it). Then, on the third page, a slow grin was born at "Let's have one for the woad." The grin became a Cheshire Cat exhibit at "Yeah, let's share the community chest!" and developed sound effects in the form of a chuckle at "SHAZAM! actually. Panel hogger." The chuckle gathered momentum and became a full-sized, Beryl-type guffaw at: "are you calling me a critical mess?" // It was the early postman that week (Paddy - the blond, dishy one). Anybody who can make me laugh like that at that uncivilised hour of the day is tops with me. Thanks, both.

COGNATE-6. Rosemary Hickey. Thanks for taking me along on your trip. "Sanitary Land Fill" - the dustmen over here (garbage collectors) were given some high-flown title a while back - "Refuse Disposal Operators" or something. We still call them dustmen, though. I met two of them on my way back from the shops this morning - one, an ever-smiling Jamaican. They informed me with some pride that they had ~~promoted~~ been promoted. They are now "Dustbin Inspectors." "Got two to go an' look at right now," they said proudly. "We have to ring the yard every day for instructions." "Scotland Yard?" I asked. The English lad mulled this over for a minute, then replied with absolute seriousness: "We aren't police inspectors..." // Perhaps they called the morgue the dead centre of Hastings? // Rosemary, do you think that chiropodists or podiatrists will ever get around to supplying false feet, the way dentists supply false teeth? If so, consider me the first customer... I'll even be the first guinea-pig if necessary. And I won't even ask for a trade-in allowance on my old ones!

UL-47. Norm Metcalf. You're right - "Hilgard O'Reilly Sternberg" is a frabjous name. I don't believe it, of course - but I'm terribly envious and wish I'd thought of it first. Question: do people lumbered with outlandish names feel that they must make some effort to live up to them?

WE'RE HUMAN, TOO ! (I THINK ...)

Some years ago I read, in an sf mag, a review of a book called *FADS & FALLACIES IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE*, by Martin Gardner. At that time the book was not on sale in England - (or so I was told when I tried to get a copy). But the review was very detailed, and left little doubt as to the contents of the book, or the style of its writing. I was then writing a regular feature for the local weekly newspaper, the "Rodditch Indicator." Strictly speaking, it was supposed to be a column for women readers, but the editor allowed me plenty of scope. So, among the recipes, fashion news, reports on what's-new-in-the-shops-girls - there sometimes appeared an item of more general application.

This was, I think, in 1956 or '57. I had never heard of fandom (what a damning admission !), though I had been reading sf for around 20 years. Extrapolating from the review, I suddenly found myself angry with Mr. Gardner. I recalled some of the so-called cranks and crackpots of history who had been laughed at - and later proved right. Galileo, Harvey - and Christopher Columbus, too, for all I know. The outcome of all this niggly cogitation was an article entitled: "Leave the Cranks Alone !"

"Self-defence ?" asked my editor, twinkle in his eye. "Partly," I retorted. This was true, although by that time I had learned to live with the crackpot label which had been attached to me for as long as I could remember. Even to take a kind of inverted pride in it. "That peculiar little Brown girl," said the neighbours. "I don't know where you got it from," complained my baffled mother - neglecting to specify what "it" was, exactly. And teachers: "Oh yes, she's clever - but she asks the damndest questions !" (But I thought that's what teachers were for ... to answer questions !).

However, I have now read the book - loaned to me by Alan Roblin of the BrumGroup - and I see no reason to retract any of my earlier comments. Unfortunately I haven't a copy of the article - I have kept very few of my newspaper cuttings - but I remember that part of it went something like this ? "Why sneer at people, just because their habits are different from yours ? Being in the majority does not automatically make you right. As long as your vegetarian neighbour doesn't pinch your Sunday joint, he's not doing you any harm, is he ? And if the man across the road chooses to believe that the Earth is flat, that's no skin off your nose, is it ? If a friendless woman can forget her loneliness for a few hours at a seance, is it really anybody else's concern - even if the medium is an out-and-out fake ? You may protest that she is being cheated; would she believe you if you told her ? And whose money is it, anyway ?"

And more of the same. I think I ended it with a somewhat impassioned plea for greater tolerance towards minority groups, as long as they were not harming anyone else with their beliefs and practices, and as long as they didn't attempt to force their own way of life upon others. "(Please can we have a little *laissez-faire* around here ?)."

I also remember that when I read it through before submitting it, I experienced a slight feeling of shame. I recalled that, in my mad and reckless youth, I, too, had been guilty of trying forcibly to inflict my own "peculiar" ideas on others - particularly on my long-suffering elders. It was all so ~~z~~ clear, so logical; it made such good sense - why couldn't they see that ? Oh, well. As I remarked to Joe Patrizio, elsewhere in this issue - I'm too old for that kind of wearing enthusiasm now. Perhaps it's something that one grows out of, like spots ?

Another line in the article ran: "What men do not understand, they fear; and what men fear, they will eventually unite to destroy." And this reminds me of a conversation which took place at work the other day, while we were all enjoying our 4-o'clock cuppa. Subject under discussion: flying saucers. Apparently Bill, the chief TV engineer, had said earlier that he couldn't see any reason why such things shouldn't exist. Keith, the apprentice, begged him not to start that again, please. Bill's mate, Joe, said he was surprised at a man of Bill's age believing in such twaddle. DI, the boss, smoked his pipe in silence and waited his opportunity to drop one of his crushing cracks. Mrs. H., who sells the records, marvelled at the number of daft subjects which came up for discussion during tea-breaks, and said did anybody want a second cup.

And suddenly all eyes were on me. It was as if they had all remembered, at the same instant, that "Beryl's a bit of a nut on space and spaceships and things." Did I believe in flying saucers? I said that, never having seen one, or anything that could possibly be mistaken for one, I would not commit myself. I would keep an open mind. "I ain't sayin' yes, and I ain't sayin' no," I quoted, "I'm just sayin' mebbe!"

Bill persisted. What about that chap in America who swore he'd seen one land, and had talked to the people in it? George Adamski? I asked. Yes - that was the feller - what about him? Gratefully I steered the conversation away from myself and towards a discussion of ~~whether~~ Adamski had or had not met Venusians in Arizona.

"What I want to know is," Bill summed up, "if there really are spaceships from other worlds upstairs - why don't they ever land so that we can all have a look?" The question seemed to be directed at me, so I shot back at him: "Would you, if you were them?"

Let's accept, just for a moment, that there are e.t. ships battling around up there. Let's also accept Desmond Leslie's contention that it's been going on for centuries. Put yourself inside one of those ships for a moment. Take a look at Earth through their eyes. (We'll assume for the sake of argument that they have eyes). What would you and your predecessors have witnessed? Warfare. Tribal, civil, national, global. Murder, martyrdom and assassination. Clubs, knives, swords, bows and arrows, guns, cannons, bombs, poison gas, nuclear weapons. Hatred and slaughter. Unceasing, illogical, indefensible.

So shall we go down, boys? Shall we drop in on Trafalgar Square, Times Square, Red Square? Shall we show ourselves to the natives, so that they can welcome us with open arms, make gods of us, bring us gifts and burnt offerings, and eagerly accept our wise teachings? Shall we, hell!

No. As long as the majority of people view with suspicion and distrust anything or anybody which/who exhibits visible and startling differences from accepted criteria, any more-advanced races which may exist will tend to leave us severely alone, in our self-imposed quarantine. And serve us right, I guess.

When human beings have learned to grant each other the right to be different, when human cranks and crackpots are allowed to be daft in peace, evoking no more than a gently indulgent smile from so-called 'normals' - then, perhaps, "They-Out-There" (if they do exist) will risk removing the OFF-LIMITS sign from Earth, and the tourist season will really begin.

And I hope I'm around, if and when it happens. I already feel a certain kinship with them.

MISSING LINK ....

I reach for your mind, only to find  
you are not there. Where are you ?  
Behind your self-erected walls of silence and solitude,  
lies the core of you, untouched, perhaps unawakened.  
A trumpetless Joshua, I stand, I wait.  
Where are you ?

To what stature might you grow, could I but touch  
that core with my thought,  
lightless, weightless, speedless probe !  
More tenuous the link I seek  
than anthropoid with spark of reasoning;  
more nebulous, this chain,  
than biology's upsurging sequence.

Your heart ? let it beat as it will;  
I seek not to speed its rhythm.  
Your love ? perhaps; but I don't yet know  
the true meaning of that sad little word.  
Your body ? strong, proud, male --  
and just like countless others !  
No, not that ... (Where are you ?).

Your understanding ? yes, closer, closer --  
but I have that already, a benison unsought,  
and therefore doubly prized.  
Your intellect ? is opened freely to my raiding,  
the library of your knowledge plundered  
by my eager mind.

What, then ? What is it I want of you ?  
A contact; a true communication --  
or, to loot an earlier, richer store:  
"a marriage of true minds ...."  
Where are you ?

As always (insatiable Woman !)  
I want what I cannot have; I covet what is not given,  
that which it may be impossible to give.  
I beat upon your doors ! (Where are you ?).  
I am blind, and I long to see:  
I am deaf, and I long to hear: give me the key !  
Dear, give me the key, or turn it with your own hand.

Oh, I will be so quiet, I promise,  
so circumspect, I promise,  
as I tread among the convolutions that are you.  
Spread no cloths of Heaven for me there,  
cast down no dreams to be trampled ---

yet will I tread softly, and speak low,  
and touch with feather fingers.

No invasion, this; no rude shattering  
of hard-won peace and guarded sanctuary;  
no demands, no loud laughter, no shrilling scorn.  
Just the hush of awe, as a lonely mind is admitted  
with grace into the warmth, the comfort of another ...

Oh, but it is too much to ask ! Presumptuous !  
to want access to the inner sanctum  
where dwells your only true privacy !  
I will beat no door (yet I would beg entrance so humbly);  
I will sound no voice of brass (yet I would worship  
at altars raised by sculpturing thought);  
I will stay blind, I will remain deaf, and be grateful  
for the warmth of the sun on my face,  
and the clasp of your hand as it steadies my groping.

But ... blind, deaf, static --  
my mind goes on reaching out for yours.

Where are you, where are you ?

++ Beryl Henley.  
1962

+ + + + +

PARTY AT PEYTON'S PLACE ..... December 19th 1964 ....

There must have been about twenty people crammed into Roger Peyton's front room. Most of us had brought a bottle or two, to lubricate the proceedings, but I don't think anybody got drunk, or anywhere near it: we were all too busy talking. (Rog, if you see this: I never did write you a letter-of-thanks. Very remiss of me. It was a wonderful party and I wouldn't have missed it for anything). At one point during the evening, I found myself involved in an argument with Alan Roblin, who seems to have a death-wish of some sort. This led to my getting up on a particular soap-box of mine, and trying to explain to him the difference between loving, and being-in-love. Other ears must have been unoccupied at the time, because I suddenly found that the argument had spread all over the room. Chris Priest expressed the opinion that sex was at the bottom of everything (can't think where he got that idea from ! Sigmund, art thou sleeping there below ?). It was at this time that Rog announced: "Well, I don't edit VECTOR for sex !" All eyes promptly turned inquiringly to his editorial predecessor, whose comment on the matter was a Long Loud Silence. Some labelled this Highly Significant; others labelled it Sheer Crogglement.

However, it appeared that the female attendees had no difficulty in appreciating the difference I had been trying to define. The men, on the other hand, didn't seem to comprehend it. Doreen Parker, with her usual delightful frankness, announced that she loved both Daphne Sewell and myself, but had absolutely no desire to go to bed with either of us. A speculative silence seemed to be loading up to

the possibility of some highly personal questions being asked of all three of us, until somebody tossed in the remark that it was accepted that one woman could say that she loved another woman without raising eyebrows, but woe betide any man who said the same thing of another man. Discounting fathers and brothers, I said.

I seem to recall that Oedipus made his entry into the discussion hereabouts, or was that autre temps, autre fois, and have I got that bit right, anyway ?

When I was holidaying in the Isle of Wight with my family a few years ago (bear with me a moment, please - this is relevant), we took a bus to Carisbrooke one day, and visited the historic castle there. It houses a small museum, and in one room was displayed a copy of the new version of the Bible. I took a look at this, wishing to see how it differed from Moffatt's translation, the complete version of which was first published in 1926. The one at Carisbrooke was open, as I recall, at some point in St. Paul's writings - anyway, it was the famous "faith, hope and charity" bit. But in the new version, the word "love" has been substituted for "charity," and the difference this makes is surprising. The oft-quoted phrases seem to take on a new meaning.

What is the matter with the word "love" ? Why do people so often shy away from it ? I recently reviewed a new Gollancz book for ZENITH - Leonard Davenport's "A Man of Double Deed." And I had occasion to use the phrase "... in a world where the word 'love' has apparently become just another four-letter word." I sometimes think that it's well on the way to becoming that right now.

Oh, well. It's a Mad-times-five world. As one character remarked to another in Isaac Asimov's "The Stars Like Dust": "Observe the Universe, young man. If you can't force amusement out of it, you might as well cut your throat, since there's damned little good in it."

+ + + + +

In case I don't get a chance to make proper acknowledgement: thank you, Terry Carr, for sending me a copy of LIGHTHOUSE-11. I will try to write an lcc, but at present I don't know whether I'm on foot or on horseback or whether it's Michaelmas or Pancake Day.

Thank you, Ethel, for SCOTTISHE-38, and I'll do my best for you, too.

Walt: I think "The Perforated Finger" in LIGHTHOUSE is marvellous. Are you sure you can't make it to the BrunCon, because I want to perform suitable salaams? I'm going to show this article to my boss, because his face goes such a fascinating colour whenever I can inveigle him into a political argument !

Ethel again: several people have made vague comparisons between my genzine, LINK, and the defunct FEMIZINE. My curiosity was roused, because I had never seen a copy of the latter - in fact I think I had only heard it mentioned once, in a letter from a fan-friend about a year ago. This morning (specifically February 17th), I received a copy of the final issue of FEMIZINE from Doreen, who had in turn received it on loan from Joyce Slater. I skimmed through it during breakfast. All those names ... I kept thinking of phrases from songs, like "Pale hands I loved ... where are you now, where ARE ... you ... now ?" and "Where have all the femmo-fen gone, long time passing ..." I see that 1960-fandom, according to Daphne Buckmaster, featured just over 10% of women. Well, you're still around, and so are Jill Adams and Joyce Slater, but can anybody tell me whatever happened to all the other Baby Janes mentioned herein ? .... Over and out .... ++ BMH 17.2.65



