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GAY

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Over
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PRODUCTION

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ATOM

Flame of the Convention

by Penelope MachioVarley Blundergaste

Gwendoline Champneys-Murgatroyd palpitated. The express train was sliding smoothly into Kettering station and her "real-life" adventure was about to begin! The thrill of the adventure surged through her veins, to think that she should be the first of the Champneys-Murgatroyds to break away from the monotonous round of engagements that their illustrious lineage thrust upon them. Away from the banal, the dreary, the never-ending social round of Ascot, Wimbledon, Henley and the Royal Garden Parties. This time she was going to a Science-Fiction Convention.

Gwendoline looked down the corridor as a door opened and through it appeared a swaggering, arrogant group. Could these, she thought, these gay people, stepping sure-footed over prostrate bodies, also be Convention bound? Deferentially she stepped aside for their leader, a tall bearded figure, dressed with casual elegance in a polo-neck sweater and flannel bags. She gasped as the next figure passed, such daring, what femininity, those slacks could only have been tailored by the renowned "Bort" of Peckham Rye. At last the stream of people passed and she darted down the corridor to see their compartment. The engaged sign still showed on the door and as she peeped inside she saw that the seat was down. Gwendoline smiled fondly. "Such gentlemen", she murmured.

Gwendoline Champneys-Murgatroyd palpitated. As she stood in the hallway to the hotel, frozen to the spot, the voice boomed in her ears, "Blog is good for you" Slowly she turned and gazed up and up, far above her head to the inscrutable mask which hid the brain that produced this thought.. The mouth moved. "I walked here", it announced, "I started a week last Tuesday and I've just arrived. Got to start back in an hour." Abruptly it turned away and strode across the room, the great boots scarring the polished wood with every stride. It halted on the outskirts of a small group, and, as a momentary silence fell on the room, the voice boomed loud and clear, "I walked here....."

Gwendoline Champneys-Murgatroyd palpitated. She had registered and carefully unpacked in her room and then had stepped forth to seek her adventure. Outside her room a man had stopped her, he seemed to have been waiting for her as he moved a lock of hair had fallen across his forehead and the quicksilver eyes had seemed to penetrate her soul, or at least her corselet. He had spoken quickly and persuasively, showering her with epigrams and compliments. Her heart quickened as she remembered the subtle nuances and gentle innuendo of his lightening courtship. What was that phrase again, she thought, ah yes! "The sparkle in your eyes, like a handful of precious stones strewn by a careless jeweller. Room Eleven, three o'clock, I can give you half-an-hour." As she closed her purse a stray thought crossed her mind Where did he say the party would be held and how on earth could she drink two pounds worth of tonic water?

Gwendoline Champneys-Murgatroyd palpitated. She stood at the entrance of the ballroom, watching the gay, colourful crowd laughingly drinking their orange squashes and ginger beers. She watched the gallants squiring their ladies and toasting them in blood-red Coca-Cola. She edged her way round the floor until she came to the raised platform which supported the two-piece orchestra. She studied the pianist as he played the last movement of the Sibelius Violin Concerto in D Minor. Gwendoline gasped, she'd never heard it played like this before. He certainly has a Bent for music she thought. As the movement ended he glanced at her from under the tumbling curly blond hair. In his glance she read the true aesthetes distaste for women, she sensed that here was a man who regarded women as a crude distraction from the eternal search for truth. Disappointed she turned to his fellow musician, he was a slender wand-like youth who swayed dreamily entranced by the magnificence of his own performance. What a pity, she thought, that their music clashed so badly. Even they couldn't make the Violin Concerto bend with "Where My Caravan Has Rested" played on the concertina.

Gwendoline Champneys-Murgatroyd had ceased to palpitate. Now she felt forlorn, she had arrived full of great expectations, and where the Dickens had it got her. She watched with envious eyes as a femme in a nurses dress and wearing a tartan tammy sang "Hoots Mon" into a microphone before an admiring group of men. She sighed wistfully, all she needed was a gallant of her own, a tall, dashing, mustachiod rake-of-a-fellow, a handsome devil-may-care swashbuckler. Her dream ended as a voice spoke softly behind her, she turned and stared. It was he, her dream man come true!

Gwendoline Champneys-Murgatroyd palpitated. Her eyes devoured him, the ramrod back, the elegant mustache, the broad sweep of his intellectual forehead surmounting the deep poetic eyes and laughing mouth. He looked every inch a military figure in his black shirt and fair-isle pullover. He offered his arm with a courtly gesture. "Let me tell you of my journeyings through the Mystic East, the Mediterranean, Manchester and Berkeley Square," he murmured as they swept elegantly onto the dance floor.

Gwendoline Champneys-Murgatroyd ceaselessly palpitated. As she moved through the crowd on the arm of her escort she knew that she was truly the Flame of the Convention.

FINIS.....



BLEATHERINGS

on the Nineteenth Mailing:-

Griffin No 1: George Spencer: Welcome to Ompa

Esprit:Daphne: I wish I knew exactly why your remarks on Anglofandom make me so mad - but they do- I'll spit in your eye! I feel like the Irishman in Henry V who reared his head and said "My nation! Who talks of my nation!" I wish you would forget I am a nurse, it tends to make you sound sickeningly so, why the heck should I care what my patients would think of anything I do off-duty?

Perindeus No 1: Mike Moorcot: Welcome, and congratulations to Jim Cawthorne on the fine artwork.

Swan Song Nol:Chuck: I was sorry when you decided to leave fandom, and very glad when you changed your mind.

Dick Ellington: Can you give me some of the titles of the LPs made by Theo Bickel? Thanks too for the information on "The Defiant Ones". I checked the names from a film mag, and it was spelt Cullen, but then they may have made a mistake too.

Kactus No.1:Barry Hall: Welcome to Ompa.

Achee: I can't get myself properly enumerated I wail, I lost the place ages ago! About covers, I know I am very fortunate with Atom being so kind, but if I had lacked that, I would have tried to think up something. Bobbie is no artist, but she always tries, and often very well too, and Joy is learning all the time. Also there are many fan artists who are always willing to be very generous with their help.

The above were a few remarks on the Nineteenth mailing, I have not tried to go through the whole thing, it is a great deal of work, and the last time I did so the only person who noticed was John Roles .
so to the Twentieth mailing:-

Erg No 1: T.Jeeves: From you at least we know we can expect good covers, and the first is a beauty, and very glad I am to see you back in Ompa, we missed you. Your question about queing times in the Doctor's office, is surely that they have too many patients on their lists. I doubt if there could be any plan to reduce this without a rise in salary, and you know what a whoop is let out at the mention of spending more on the NHS. Your other question about Bert getting more because his firm does not deduct the Insurance Benefit. The benefit comes from the Insurance office and has nothing to do with the NHS. Your employer is the one you want to chivvy. They do this to nurses too, but if you

are in hospital as a patient - and providing that it is not your own hospital, they will not deduct the board and lodging, so that we are in pocket to that extent.

Tales from the oubliette:Mercer: Care to tell us how old you were when you first wrote this? I used to spin tales by the dozen to my brother, but never had the energy to write them down. This gets madder and madder.

Archive Q.O.S:Mercer: I snigger with a lot of rrrrr's. As a celtic fringer I wish you had come up with some other suggestion than Anglo-fandom, sounds so clumsy. Your promise to review every mailing I honour with the praise it deserves.

Marsolo No 3:Hayes: Curling I know not, but I have always vaguely felt that it was invented one winter by a frustrated bowler.

Nantz:No 1:Gerding: You don't say, but I imagine your college is in Illinois, but you certainly paint an appalling picture. I have had a glimpse of some of the bad spelling and grammatical errors you refer to. On enquiry, I was really 'shook up' to discover that this is quite common. What do you use the initials IBM for? This was all very interesting, do go on and tell some more.

JD Argassy.No 43:Hickman: Much enjoyed this part of Bob's story as it tells of the part I had to miss, by having to go back to work.

Phenotype CXXXVLL:Eney: I never figure out your Roman Numerals, for that would be some sort of mathematical calculation, and from suchlike things I keep myself spotlessly clear. I want to refer to another Phenotype though, CXXXlll. Thanks for your explanation of the military hospital. I once went to take charge as a Ward Sister, where there had been no female staff for some time... and lor! By the end of a month though I had them all shaving before breakfast by golly!

Feals:Dietz: The cover slayed me. How do you get in touch with Bjo? I have tried everything but smoke signals. I am still waiting on your letter with the comment on the NHS. Liked your reviewing and your diary very much.

Pebbles in the drink: Young: I like poetry, but frankly this lot leaves me cold. Liked the last two though.

Rep No 3:Ashworth: It looks as if your theory that the reactions to Mescaline will depend upon your own mental makeup. Thus, if you are not mystically inclined, you won't have the heightened mystical experience of Huxley. Where, I ask awfully, did Dave Wood pick up that Scottish dialect? I quote "Och, nay some reet in" The och may be Scots, but the rest is surely pure Lancasheer. But otherwise his tale fairly crottled me, enough so that I think I will forgive him.

Sizar No 3:Burns: In Scotland the pubs close at 9pm, and drunkenness is seen more often than in England, where they close at 11pm.

Meet:Burns: What I like best are the drawings, and the descriptions of yourselves. Is Lynette really only 16yrs old?

Satans Child:No 6:Ratigan: My congrats to Jim for his lovely cover. When you write things like "Spring is rampant" you always surprise me, when talking to you this is a side I have never seen, but probably because we have never had the time to talk long enough.

Morph:Roles: Thought I had got the pile mixed and pawed through it looking for Morph. Nearly gave me heart failure when I found it, sure must have been an emergency, and yes, I see it in. But no Rollings! what a life! Your correspondent Mrs Whitehead shows all the classic symptoms too, I hope someone eventually took the poor soul to a psychiatrist. Which reminds me - that when a very respectable woman becomes senile, and is hospitalised, she often has the del-usion that she is in a brothel. The nurses, of course, are the 'ladies' and they are trying to make her become one too. I have been called a 'wicked houri', more times than I can recall. That was an awful cold little comment upon Sgt. was it really as bad as all that?

Let George say it:Raybin: Nice reviewing.

UR:Mills: Brr, what a cover. It probably did Bob Leman's heart good, that diatribe on the Top 40, did nine good to read it. I still find your layout confusing, but then my mind needs simple things. I don't remember brainwashing you...you looked clean enuf to me.

52nd Street:No4:Linwood: I read it all carefully and found it interesting, only, of course, I do not understand just what it is you are both arguing about. I am in agreement though with Archie's 'faugh' at the stories that are featuring futility.

Swan Song No2:Harr@s: We all greet this with hearty relief.

Esprit Noll:Buckmaster: Your witchcraft article is just not to be compared with the Sunday paper ones..wot! no sex orgies? The tweed skirt and blouse strikes a dull note; I don't think I would like to join, sounds too boring. Maybe I should not have written anything about the NHS, not if it is to mean that everyone with a greivance against it is to back me into a corner with a gleam in their eye.

The Lesser Flea:Clarke: I would like to add to your comments upon concientious objectors, I worked with them during the war. They were Quakers who had volunteered to nurse TB patients. This was in the days when you stood a good risk of contacting it yourself. They were brave lads, and good lads. Have come to where you tell Daphne off and bring up Scotsfen. Thats the answer, thee and me are Scotsfen and she is merely an Anglofan, now lets ignore her! I see about a thousand points here I would like to discuss with you eagerly.. but..space! and I don't mean outer.

Blunt Nol0:Sanderson: I hate to see Ving leave, and I hope you will coax him into guesting often.

Blunt 11:Sanderson: I heartily echo your words on Caher in the Rye.

Blunt No 12:Sanderson: You feeling alright honey? I can understand your feeling that missing a mailing lessens the interest. Glad it was Ompa that you chose to stay in

Perindeus No 11:Moorcock and Cawthorne: I like your Runyonese, in fact I think it so well done, you practically outBerry Berry.

An introduction to Syncretics: Hayes: Is Art Coulter a doctor of medicine? The workshop sounded to me as if they were psychoanalysing themselves too, and also closely allied to the new technique in work study called brainstorming.

JD Argassy:No 44:Hickman: I do so admire your production, particularly the cover. "Oh Harmon", I liked this, particularly the brief appearance of Bob Silverberg, he had some very telling lines. Hope you can coax Bloch into some more of his Tv experiences, I wish we could see it over here. I think I agree with Buz that Adkins is not a particularly good reviewer.

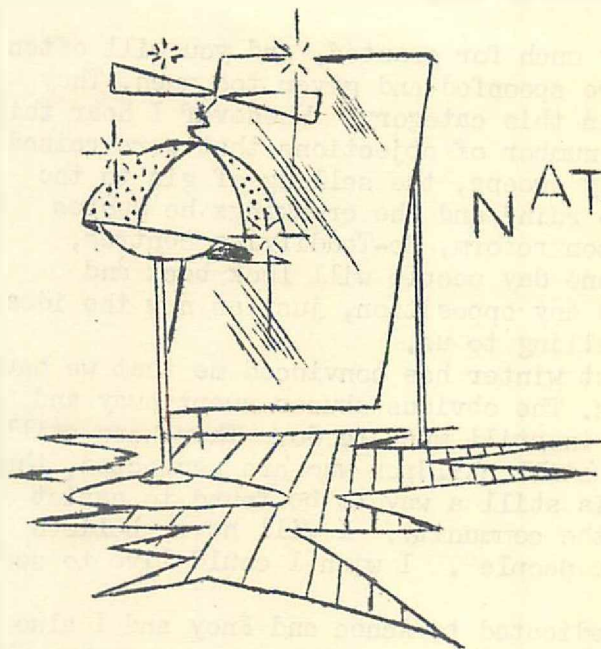
JD Argassy No 45:Hickman: Not much to comment on once I had closed my mouth after that sweeping statement by Nick Falaska.."it seems that the British fans that bellow peace the loudest are involved in more controversy than GMC when she tries" Can say though that there is no doubt that JD is the handsomest mag in the mailing.

JD Argassy.No 46:Hickman: Your output and high standard with it is aweinspiring. Jolly D cover.

JD Argassy:no 47:Hickman: And how you can afford the postage I dunno.Beautiful cover. Seems like Jim Harmon tells you more about himself than about Redd Boggs. Noco, I still don't like Adkins. at least his reviewing I hasten to say. The Liverpool Caper was good, but the interlineations were a sad bunch.

The Last Splotch: Vodruska: Un doubtedly this is the last word in fanzines. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it all. Keep it coming,

an' that's a'



NATTERINGS

I was very pleased at the response to my few words on the N. Health Service. Although, as I tell Daphne elsewhere, please don't back me into a corner with your particular grievance over it - write to your MP or suapn - me I'm just an employee.

The article seemed to arouse a fair amount of interest in America, and I learnt that they are being subjected to a great deal of anti-nationalised medicine over there. Is the NHS so very bad? they want to know. In this country we can never go back. The voluntary hospitals here were all on the verge of bankruptcy before nationalisation, and since then the facilities have increased so much that it would be impossible. There have been benefits and there have been disadvantages, but I think the first far ~~outweighs~~ the second. Our patients do get better treatment, there is on their part a strong feeling that this is their due, and they will not put up with the pre-NHS conditions. Some of the staff grumble about this - "our patients used to be grateful" they say, "now they are forever picking fault, and look at the number of court cases for damages". In the old days the public sat patiently in the Poor Law hospitals for hours, now every appointment system thought up works under fierce criticism.

What makes our NHS unique is that it is still largely in a framework of voluntary service. I have explained already that the top layers are all unpaid. Also, nearly every hospital has its League of Friends, composed of local people. My own hospital has a very active one. They provide an Amenity Fund for extras for both patients and staff. They also maintain the only chair of Ophthalmology in Britain, and this year are endeavouring to collect enough to endow it. This of course is dedicated to study for the prevention of blindness. We also have a group of 6 women who have been coming ever since the days of the London blitz, every Tuesday to sew for us. In the out-patient dept. there is a tea trolley manned by the women from the Womens Voluntary Service. Of course there is a great tradition of voluntary service in this country, and it winds its way in and out of all the Social Services.



We take our Social services here very much for granted, and you will often hear someone say that 'the people' are spoonfed and given too much. They naturally do not include themselves in this category. Whenever I hear this type of remark I always think of the number of objections that were raised against the abolition of child chimney sweeps, the selling of gin to the children etc. Road Turners "Roads to ruin" and the croakings he quotes can often be heard today against prison reform, de-Teddifying centres, children's allowances. I know that one day people will look back and wonder that these could have provoked any opposition, just as now the idea of a child chimney sweep appears appalling to us.

The studying I have done this past winter has convinced me that we have only begun to provide social services. The obvious abuses swept away and the NHS started has shown that there is still much to do. There are still many people who need help, there are still children who are neglected, there are still 'problem families', there is still a way to be found to assist the growing numbers of old folks in the community. I will never believe that "too much" can be done for "the people". I wish I could live to see this country in another 100 years!

The next part of Natterings is dedicated to Achee and Eney and I also hope it will amuse Bill Danner....

Glasgow is the biggest city in Scotland, and the Glaswegians have an accent all their own. It is a very 'strong' accent, very infectious, and outside Scotland the best known. I read a newspaper article which gave some amusing examples of the way the Glaswegian runs all his words together without pause for breath. The examples are taken from that article, but I have added the explanations.

AWARULLMEYIE:-away or I will melt ye..a signal to fisticuffs.

SEESACUPPLASCROOTAPS:- see us a couple of screwtops..i.e 2 beerbottles.

GERRALOADARATALENT: get a load of the talent..see the pretty girls.

URYEFURRUP?:- are ye for up?..will you dance?

DOANGEEZRAPATTER:-do not give me the patter..no flattery

SHESGOATASCUNNEROAMAN:-Shes got a scunner of a man..he'd make you sick.

FELLAFELLAFFALARRY:-fellow fell off a lorry....try this one quickly!

WEECHOOKIEBURDY:- wee choskie birdie..to a budgie.

FLYMANYOO:} fly man you. fly means sly, usually from a lass to a lad.

AHLLGERRARCLISTAHEYIZ:- I will get the police to you.

YUP?:- Have you risen from bed yet?

MUP:- I am up

YAFAYAT?:- are you off a yaht?..why the sartarial splendour?

ORRABEST; guess this one.



I had to make this a post-mailing in spite of my good intentions. Summer holidays this year have played havoc with my fanac. I had a fine time though, spent part at home in Carnoustie, did a tour of the Highlands from Inverness to Skye. Then later had a week in Cornwall. From the North to the South - and I have to admit, the weather down South is the better of the two. For grandeur of scenery, however, you cannot beat the likes of the Coolins in Skye.

Atom drew a wonderful cover for this issue, and so inspired the contents. I hope he is pleased with the result, it is always difficult to live up to his work.

Now that Joy has issued her Ompa index, I am at last sure of the number of this issue. Don't ask me where No 4 went, I was labouring under the idea that it was No 14 that was missing. I can't help being vague about details ---it's because I think so hard...

Seriously, though, I'm afraid my friends have to be very long-suffering over my 'little ways' with details. Not that they let me off scot-free. Both Archie and Ron Bennett have called me 'Woman!' at different times, and in tones of high exasperation too. Frances goes on for hours about it...she has said, "but I can't understand it, in your job attention to details must be so vital". And that's it, perhaps. When for years you have had to check and double check, and never rely upon memory alone, it is a great temptation to relax off duty. So as long as you have a mental picture of a light-minded, wooly-headed female, and not a tower of efficiency, why! I bet we will get along fine.

I chose a pretty pink cover - and then discovered - after I had duplicated it - that the pile of white paper I had intended using was too big too fit. It was either, go and buy some standard size or cut to fit...I cut. You now have a genuine trimmed edge fanzine in your hot little hands. And the best of Scottish luck to you.

Ethel

HOW TO MAKE YOUR FANAC ROOM GAY

Look round your fanac room. Does it seem dull? Why not try some of these delightful ideas.....

- 1 Buy some narrow lace and sew it in ruffles all round the roller of your duplicating machine. This gives it a very pretty air as you crank the handle.
- 2 If you have a Bem picture on your wall, cut out the face and insert one of Elvis Presley. This gives a shock surprise to your fanvisitors, and can often be the subject of innocent amusement. Should a fan party look a bit 'stinky' at the beginning, this can be a good icebreaker.
- 3 Paint your appleboxes contrasting shades, scatter them about the room and top them with gay cushions decorated with fanzine covers. You can then throw out all your chairs.
- 4 Invest in lots of mobiles. No fanac room is considered chic without them. Make your own with milk bottle tops.
- 5 Remember gay is the keynote, do not be afraid to be enterprising - use lots of colour. Against the black of the ink splashes, they will appear brave and nonchalant.

NURSE LINDSAY HELPS YOU!

Dear Nurse Lindsay,

I am a fan artist, modestly I may add, of some renown. I specialise in cartoons of bem figures, and my speciality is the very cute way I can draw an umbilicus. Recently, to my horror, I have discovered that I had dispatched a batch of cartoons with bem figures, minus the umbilicus! I am very worried as to the cause of this. Can it, I fear, be psychological?

Dear Worried Blue-eyes,

I regret to say that the cause is psychological, but do take heart from the fact that knowledge of the cause does much to allay the symptoms. I would diagnose your case thusly... You are, like all artists of a refined and delicate nature. You were happily drawing your bem figures till one day you happened to read a book by an Uncouth American H.P. Allen. In this book he tells of a man who collected "belly-button lint". Such a vulgar idea so revolted your sensitive mind that your conscious mind could not accept it. You therefore buried it in your subconscious mind. There it had caused such a ferment that you were unable to even notice that you were no longer drawing an umbilicus. Now that I have drawn this festering wound from your subconscious you should once more be able to draw with your accustomed genius.

However to be on the safe side, try a tablespoonful of Gregory's Mixture three times a day.

.....
Other fan who wish to avail themselves of Nurse Lindsay's expert advice will find her advice given at very reasonable cost.