

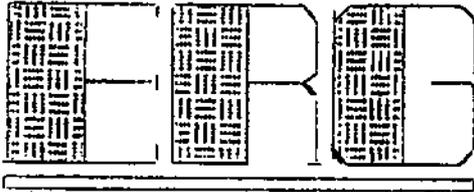
ERIC



JEFFREY

*First
Contact*

21.



21

october 1964

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Editor, Terry Jeeves, who gladly invites comments, preferably accompanied by a £5 note.

DONALD FOR TAFF

In the face of all these suggestions that OMPA mailings are (a) smaller than they should be (b) poorer than they ought to be, and (c) that both matters could be rectified by increasing the membership and decreasing the page quota; I'd like to chuck in my 2½¢. My 'Off Trails' file goes back to No.17 (Erg.1. appeared in the 20th I believe) The page total then was 233. By the 20th mailing, it was 367 and hit 406 pages with the 23rd.

The 27th mailing saw a fall to 197 pages, and the 28th hit the record mark of 441 pages...since then, it has run at 300 to 400 except for the last 4 mailings...the lowest of which made the 240 page mark....so in actual fact point (a) is not even a valid one. Our mailings are holding their own, if not actually showing a slight increase. Point (b) is a subjective one...who says the mailings are poorer? and on what grounds?

Personally, I'm inclined to agree with point (b), only a handful of members really make the effort to find anything new or lively to put in their zines...YES, I'm being controversial here, but scan this mailing...how many zines consist of two or three pages only?? How many are obviously thrown together at the last moment in a panic to get something in the mailing? And how many consist entirely of mailing comments?? O.K., so if you want to publish mc's and a magazine, that's fair enough..but if we just get the mc's, then say what you like about a good discussion, a discussion must come to an end sometime, and then without any new material what does one discuss. A life on a diet of mc's is like living in one's own refuse...it leads to slow decay. That is what OMPA seems to have, too few members willing to try and get something new into their zines. Yes I know I'm going to get slammed over saying this, but if it wakes some members up and incites them to DO SOMETHING, then it will have been worth it. Since joining OMPA, I've made it a point to have something in each mailing, and apart from my 2-page (ERG-0) engagement issue, this has average 10-12 pages. Nothing outstanding you might say...but in that time, only Archie Mercer and Messrs Schultz and Cheslin have made every deadline. John Roles and Ethel Lindsay have only missed one each. On a page count basis,

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Donaho, Hickman and Lindsay lead the field (and Bill's last 'zine was in mailing 34) which means that OMPA's page count seems to rely greatly on a very few members. Let's re-phrase that point about numbers to make it quite clear I'm NOT sniping at anyone at all. I am merely trying to point out that Ompa's page count has not varied greatly since (to my knowledge, mailing 17) and that by and large a minority of member have contributed to maintaining this count...many of the others came in, crudded and crept out again. So we don't need MORE members, only more of the active kind, and fewer of the sleepers.

We will not get active members in by making life easier (lowering the page count) instead, we'll drag in more of the lazy kind who say "Shucks, I can do 8 pages standing on my head"...and they can...and they do...and that keeps out the active member.

Even if he finally creeps in, the active member sees that his fifty page effort draws only one sentence of comment, whereas Joe Bloggs got a paragraph on every other zine, merely by using the first word on page 28 all over the place. Next time our actifan is down to 4 pages...but we all know which word he'll use.

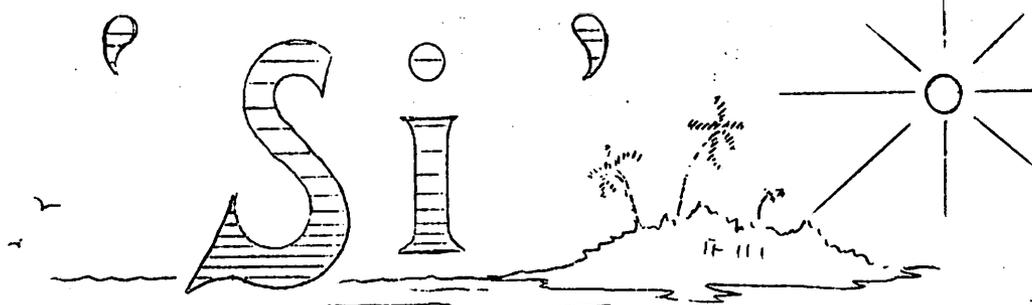
Raising the membership only makes for more work on the people who produce big zines...if you put out a one page crudsheet, it is dead easy to run off another ten copies. If you run to 50 pages as do people like Ethel, Bobbie etc., that extra ten copies multiplies up to another 250 sheets of paper. Then again, ten extra copies is offputting to the people who really do experiment with their magazines...Cheslin and hand coloured covers, Roles and gummed-in bookplates, Hunter and foreign stamps.

Extending the period between mailings is another cry which comes mainly from the lazy-bones (And that will get me slammed) but lets face it. You can work on your magazine all through the year and the only thing that should need stencilling, duping etc when the mailing reaches you, is your comment, either in the form of editorial or mailing comments...you don't have to wait for the arrival of the mailing to start producing the rest of the zine.

Having stirred up the muck, I know I can expect a load of house bricks coming my way, but before you chuck 'em, won't you please consider that I just might have hit a few nails on their heads ??? As for a concrete way to pep up OMRA..here's my second $2\frac{1}{2}$ worth.

1. Raise activity quota to 20 pages (and ABSOLUTELY ban the page credit system) If a member can't produce 20 pages per annum...OUT except in cases of illness etc.
2. Peg membership at 45.
3. Run a regular ego-boo poll, and give a small prize such as 1 year's free membership
4. Allow any member so wishing to use his ordinary genzine to be used also as his Ompazine...OK, so we (some of us) would get two copies...but the mailing would get a lot of good stuff normally not 'wasted' on such a limited circulation.

I hope that these suggestions will be taken as they are intended...to improve OMPA. And now, what do you say about IT ?



Yes friends, the word for Majorca is Si, standing for sunsoaked Island, and also for yes to everything you could ask for in a holiday resort. Good hotels, yes, plenty of good drinking water, yes, cheap booze yes, good beaches yes, and most important of all a good time, yes yes YES. Well this was how I did it.

One sunny Sunday morning a group of us took our places in the airport bus standing in the portico of Newcastle Central Station. After a while some air hostesses and some aircrew turned up and this was the signal for the bus to move off. We arrived at the airport and were promptly shepherded into the lounge and our cases were duly weighed in the balance and found not wanting. So we sat and waited with tongues hanging out for our seat on the plane and the opening of the duty-free bar therein. All too quickly this came about. We had not been airborne for more than a hundred and fifty knots (half an hour to the non-technical) when lunch was served. Quite a nice salad lunch and thereafter everyone settled down for a snooze while the Britannia thundered along through the skies with all the silence and comfort of a tram. From time to time I held my camera to the windows and took a few feet of film, I saw the Pyrenees looking like monster's teeth ready to snap us out of the skies but at last we were moving over gentler land, the sea, a popping of the ears, a bump, bump, bump and we were in the Aeropuerto Palma. A rapid transfer to buses and finally I was in my very comfortable hotel room. At last I was changed, three woolies and two sets of long johns lighter, and able to go down to the bar. There I mopped rum and coca-cola at about the equivalent of 1/6d the glass until it was dinner time. I might add that I watched Spanish TV and if you think we have a commercial service brother you should see the Spanish, 5 mins of every programme, except bull-fighting, to about 45 minutes of adverts.

Come the next day I went down to the travel agents and booked up some excursion, and asked about the local bus services and was told they were bad, well if a bus every ten minutes can be called bad, they were bad, but me, I found them good and ever so cheap, so I did a lot of running about here and there. Now the reason for the good water in Majorca is this, the island is limestone and as full of holes as a sponge, in fact there is no villages without its caves, and these are usually miniature versions of the conventional stalagmite-tite type of cave beloved of writers of mystery stories. All this time the sun blazed benevolently down and people in various stages of undress wandered past me, the anti-bikini laws of Spain don't hold in Majorca, you can wear what you like when and how you like. I spent most of my time either filming or sipping drinks, tall and nobly iced. The best part of the day for me was early evening, when I could stroll out to a little bar I found and sit watching life pass by in a small square of the town. That

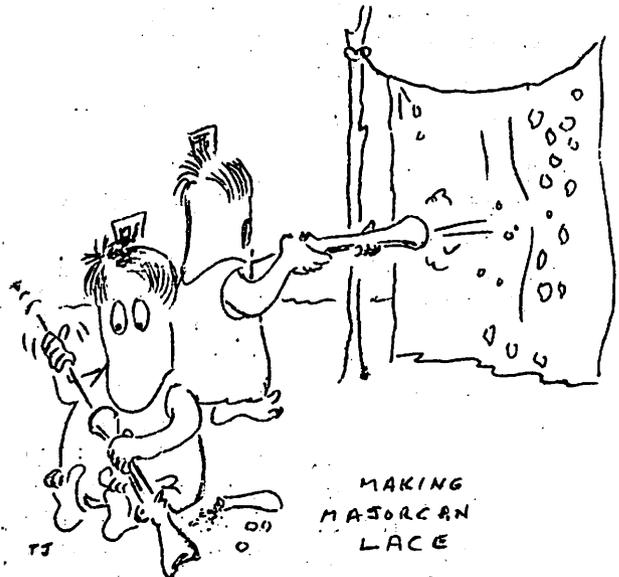
is the one slight drawback to Majorca, namely that everything in the way of streets is small. So the pedestrian has to look out. However traffic is regulated by a good system of pedestrian crossings, but still it's a bit disconcerting to have the reflector of a Chevrolet Impala whizz past about a centimetre from your shoulder, but after a while one gets used to it.

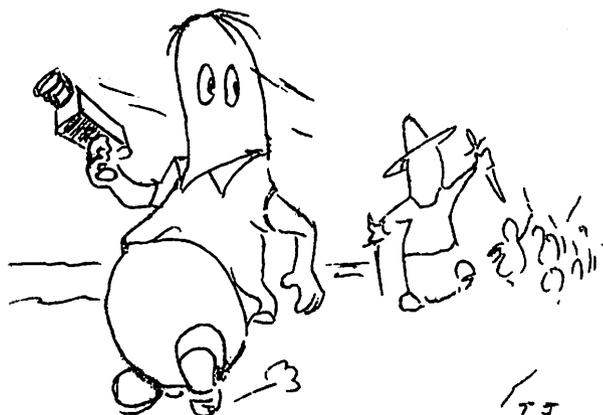
You have not been to Majorca if you don't visit Ibiza. In the beginning whoever made Majorca had a little bit of the same material left over and dropped it carelessly into a sea. Ibiza is Majorca in miniature, but nicer and quieter. We went by plane, a forty minute trip altogether including bus trip from hotel to airport and flight. Ibiza is mostly beaches, but like Majorca the water is rippling crystal clear, excellent for swimming etc. This is the ideal spot in which to unwind oneself and forget all the cares of a civilised existence. I particularly liked the town of Ibiza itself. The old part of the town is built on a mighty rock, a sure protection against pirates bent on rapine and slaughter. But the pirates, weary of the siege, gave up and opened restaurants and souvenir shops and are doing very nicely thank you. But anyway, from the top of this rock one commands a most imposing view right around, a view of blue skies, even bluer sea, and blue looks from he who has drank indiscreetly of the local wine. But the local Majorcan vino is quite tolerable, and not too dear. The price of brandy is fantastic, a half bottle of cherry brandy cost me about six shillings, and wine was about the same for a bottle, but since the bottles usually lasted for three meals, supplemented by generous slugs of Majorcan water ice-cold, the price wasn't too excessive. However as evening drew on, rather reluctantly we left Ibiza, but I think that if I were going to have a Majorcan holiday I think I would have a week in Ibiza.

I took another excursion to a place called Puerto Cristo, famous for the Cuervas Drach, or Dragon Caves. These were big caves with an enormous underground lake whereon sailed boats with musicians in them regaling an audience with suitable tunes such as the Barcarolle. Then we all had to climb into the boats and be rowed over the lake and so to the way out into the sunlight once more.

From Puerto Cristo we went to Manacor where the only genuine artificial pearls are made in Majorca. I am not interested in this, so while the female contingent of our party went to gaze with oohs and aahs at the lush pearls I went and photographed the Cathedral, and also two little girls seated outside a shop who were busily working at making Majorcan lace which is well worth buying and lasts a long time despite repeated laundering. Then from Manacor we went back to our hotel.

The other long trip I took was to Valledemossa where Chppin shacked up for the winter with Georg Sand (she was a lady--Georg Sand I mean in case you didn't know and thought the worst.) At Valledemossa we also saw some





traditional dancing which does not bear relating since it was exactly like all Spanish type dancing. At Soller, where we went next, Burns nearly got himself knifed. Well the trouble was that it happened to be Corpus Christi day and seeing a long procession coming along the main street I began using the camera, and it wasn't until a very irate mourner came up and said various Spanish words to me that I realised I was committing a most grave disrespect as it was in fact a Spanish Funeral.

But anyway Soller and Valledomossa was our last trip and it ended with a wild journey over the quite formidable

Majorcan mountains, and a visit on the road to the luxurious house once owned by an Arabic Quisling way back in Medaeval times. This Arab took the side of the Spanish King when he invaded Majorca and did quite well from it. The grounds of his house were notable for the sale of most excellently chilled real orange juice. Also there were numerous types of water effects, fountains rivulets and the rest. It would seem that Arabs love water and that is their idea of luxury to have lots of it.

Well now in general, looking back, the holiday was just about the best I've had as far as pure relaxing was concerned. I had no internal troubles of any sort, altho' I took a sulpha-guanidine tablet just for luck each night, but I do know that one in our hotel came down with turkey trot. Also the Majorcans are not very good at making electric power and that is why Majorcan stoves are fitted with both electricity and calor gas, though there is ordinary gas available too. The food I had was excellent, especially the packed lunches. Thank goodness we could get Spanish food on the menu, this was capital. The main dish on offer throughout the island was strawberries and cream, but since I am suspicious of cream whose antecedents I knew not, I left this dish alone and concentrated on the drinks. The flight back was just as good as the flight out, more so because the dinner was better, but to drop out of a blue sky into a blinding English rain storm was hardly a fitting ending to the holiday I think. But as I said at the beginning, the word is Si, sunsaked island and yes to all the holidaymaker requires.

ALAN BURNS

THE

LUNAR

LANDING

Once the Soggy armed forces had completed their chain of artificial satellites around the globe, all fired into orbits by super powered Ferris wheels, the military minds cast around for fresh fields to conquer. Thus Project Luna was born.

Once again, Soggyentists returned to their laboratories and began to search for a way to bring about the conquest of the moon. Their first efforts resulted in a second ring of artificial satellites in orbit around the real thing. Establishing these was no mean feat, as the satellite gondolas had first to be fired into Earth orbits from Earth based Ferris wheels. Next, they were attached to the Ferris wheels orbiting Earth, and from these, launched into Luna orbits.

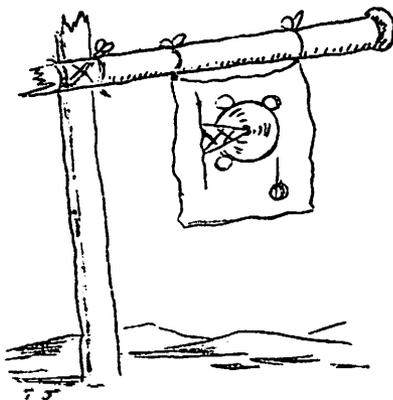
It was at this stage that an overhasty Soggy general tried to become the first Soggy on the moon. His method was to strap on a parachute and bail out over the moon. His parachute opened but the lack of air had an adverse effect on its operation. The general's landing place was duly entered on the Luna maps as the 'Crater of Soggius'. Following this attempt came many others ranging from vacuum-filled balloons and spring-heeled boots to repulsion magnets and levitation pills. Many landings were actually made, but each one proved a dead end, and led only to the naming of another new crater.

Just when hopes of a successful landing were at their lowest, Soggy von Klarc produced his famous set of equations which included the now well known $N^{UTs}.2.U = 0.L$ The development of Earth

these led to the first live landings. von Klarc postulated that a gondola could be placed in orbit with the required speed to equal the moon's rate of rotation. It would thus be stationary relative to the surface of the moon, and a ladder could thus be lowered to the ground. The problem was solved.

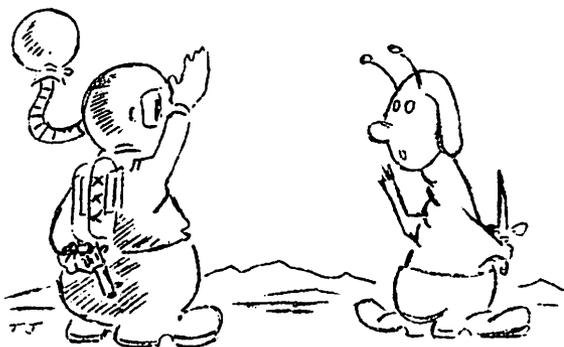
Within hours of publication of the equations, a gondola had been fired into the correct orbit, a rope ladder thrown over the side was scarcely needed, since the orbit had been established with such nicety that the gondola was hovering stationary less than three feet above the surface. Space-suited Soggies were romping on the Lunar plains, and in short order a Ferris wheel had been erected for the return journey. Over a period of weeks, more and more troops were ferried down to the moon and a permanent base established...one that was even more desertion proof than the earth satellites. The culmination of all this

effort was the ceremonial hoisting of the flag of the Space Service. Once again the peculiar conditions inherent in the lack of any atmosphere caused difficulty, as the flag could not wave proudly in the Luna vacuum. However a mathematician pointed out that a simple modification to the upper section of the flagpole and involving a rotation through 90° would solve the problem. For non mathematically minded readers, the illustration to the right gives an outline of the method.



Exploration teams began to scour the surface of the moon, and it was one of these led by Soggy Marzyano (an ex-boxer) made the discovery which changed forever the insular viewpoint that Soggies are the only intelligent life-form in our Solar system.

Marzyano and his men were making a routine trip when they encountered a party of Moon Soggies coming to investigate the unusual activity taking place on their world. You will all have seen pictures of the historic meeting. Perhaps the most famous is the one by Sogasso which depicts Marzyano and the Leader of the Moon Soggies greeting each other with the upraised palm -- the universal sign of peace and trust.



The most amazing thing to appear was the fact that the Moon Soggies did not wear space suits but lived happily in pure vacuum. The Skweegees (as they called themselves) explained the reason in faultless English (which they had learned from the radio). It appears they had lived on the moon since it had owned an atmosphere. Through the years (millions of) as the air had gradually leaked away, their lungs had got used to using less and less air. Eventually as the last atom of air leaked quietly into space, they had adapted to the state where they did not breathe at all. In the same way, owing to less and less food available, they had also evolved to the state where they no longer needed to eat. This ability to live without air had held up their developing a method of space travel to reach the Earth, as they would immediately suffocate in the Earth's atmosphere. Happily, Soggyentists overcame this hazard by evacuating standard spacesuits, and clad in these 'airsuits' as they came to be called, Skweegees were enabled to visit our planet.

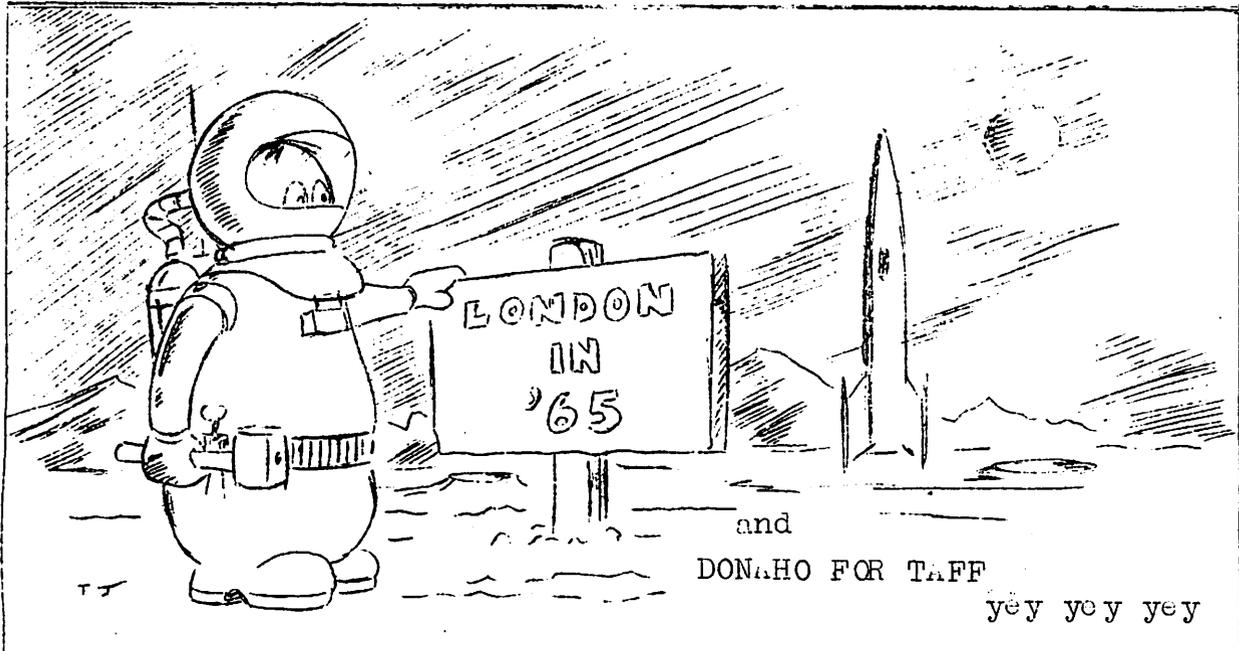
It soon became apparent that the Skweegees had a very high order of civilisation. Their cities, buried beneath the surface to keep out the dust were every bit as advanced as those on Earth. The roads were wider, the buildings taller, and the traffic jams bigger. Every home had the advantages of Commercial TV and they

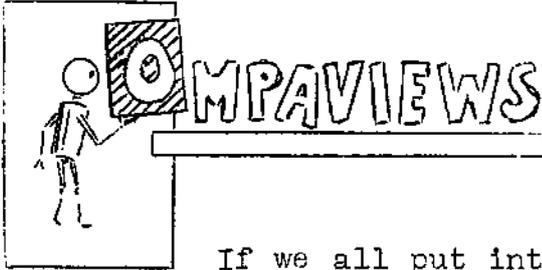
had Skweegee equivalents of our football pools and cigarettes. They were equivalents only, as owing to the lack of air, they could neither blow up a football, or light a cigarette. Instead, they played vacuum ball was inflated with a hard vacuum, and two teams would try to kick into each other's craters. The side which scored the most 'holes' was the winner. Like the ball, there wasn't much in the game. Their substitute for smoking was most ingenious, as although the Luna tobacco had naturally evolved to burn with less and less air, and would now burn in total vacuum, the Luna matches not being alive, had been unable to make the adaption.. The skweegees overcame this by making one giant cigarette which burns continually, and smokers stand in line for their turn to puff. 16 year old Skweegees do their National Service by working for a year at re-building the unsmoked end. Many Skweegees are in favour of a reduction of this period, but as the Defence Minister pointed out. Some future generation may be heavier smokers, and without a backlog of trained cigarette builders the communal cigarette may be completely burnt away.

There are many other fascinating habits of the Skweeges, such as their coming of Age ceremony. On attaining adulthood, each Skweegee must dig a new crater. This of course explains an age old astronomical problem. Skweegee radio sets employ 'air tubes'. Mental defectives are called 'Terratics' and they have a nursery rhyme concerning a woc jumping over the earth. They firmly believed that the Earth was made of green cheese and that GAFIA was the real name for Heaven.

Eventually, the two races were thoroughly intermixed..the Skweegees gradually adapting to breathing thin air, and the Soggy races doing likewise. The trip to Luna became an everyday affair and once again the spirit of Soggyentific curiosity stirred. Soggykind began to plan for the exploration of the Solar System. In our next issue we present....'Life on other Worlds'

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BEST COVER....WHATSIT...by Mik
 RUNNERS UP....SOUFFLE & MORPH

If we all put into our zines, the same amount of work that went into the cover of Whatsit 8, just think how much we should improve our OMPA.....Just thinking aint enuf

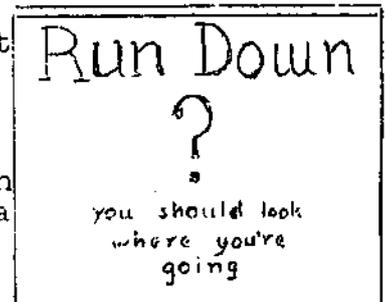
WHATSIT Enough about the cover. I enjoyed the zine without finding anything to argue over (taht's good) and was tickled to see those SST sketches of mine finally made it. 'Fraid I didn't dig Studebaker this time though..pity.

SOUFFLE Another fabulous Atomcover..perhaps a trifle too intricate but who cares. I enjoyed 'Guardian' immensely right up to that flopperoo of an ending. That's what I bitch about in modern pro-writing. A good story is left to flop as the author can't work out a logical end. The opening market scene was really full of life. Re films, Val and I seldom get to see them these days as we object to going to see a bucket load of accompanying trash such as 'Look at Life" or "This is how cement is made" etc. It takes a tempting film to make us pay to see the adverts around it.

MORPH Please don't terminate the Rollingsunless you must Can I wangle you another posting ? and did you ever get the rest of the lolly for that speaker ? Reduce membership and increase activity..here hear hyah. I agree. How to remove the ball from a ball point...see diagram on next page (where I should have put this natter) Hold pen upwards and file upwards along line a-a, at the same time rotating pen. After a few passes, the ball will pop out. Aim the file at junction of ball and case. The brass head part can easily be removed by gripping with a pair of pliers, and then a gramophone needle can be tapped through from the rear. Now a query for you. When making rose-hip wine, do you waggle your hips.

COMPACT Another good cover, nice heavy stock too...how much if it isn't a rude question (and where) Ella ? Like you, I just can't stand to read plays (Shakespeare in partic) Unlike you, I still can't..though I'll admit to having enjoyed Orson Welles Macbeth, and what I saw of the BBC's Hamlet..plus a modern version of Julius Caesar...and of course West Side Story. Want to give up smoking...do what I did, trade it in for a shot of asthma...not recommended. As for weight mine is down from 13st.7lbs to 11st only. Many tas for that luvverly Atom rocketship cutaway, a really professional job...I drool.

EGOBOO POLL Didja get my vote ? I mailed one in I think your 1,2,3 voting idea is a good one for future polls...makes it easy for bods like me without files, but with poor memories. Here's to better returns.



THIS ILLUSTRATION IS FOR JON ROLES.....(and Morph)...

COGNATE I loved that Valentine cover, so did Val. You have a nicely produced zine, and I really sympathise over that gift swap deal. I haven't met those mag. sub. sellers yet, but am fully prepared for them by now..if your husband likes gun shows, he should tick over with Gene Kujawa. Sorry about the inverted puzzle answers, but it was the only way I could be sure of putting them in.

AMBLE I like mr gaudeamus higginbottom, so please keep him on your staff. I also enjoy Famous Freds. and am eagerly awaiting your treatment of Fred Bare, the first of the tramps.

FARRAGO What thundering great nit managed to draw you a cover the wrong way round.? Me,? Oh well, it is quite nice really isn't it..sort of different if you know what I mean.

DOLPHIN I dislike John Mills purely on prejudice..he always seems to try and be the 'stiff upper lip type film British hero' even when the script doesn't call for it. Hayley..just ugh. Dicey is actually RAF slang, and comes from 'dicing with death', the old phrase for taking chances with one's life (such as when eating NAAFI buns) and as a result, anything risky was referred to as being dicey. Of course there are many other equally incomprehensible bits of similar rubbish in my noddle..viz. 'gone for a burton' meaning to have 'bought it' 'scrambled egg' worn by high ranks, and usually accompanying a 'fruit salad'. 'bumpf' carried around by desk wallahs and chaar and wads from the chaar wallah. Being guarded by the chowkidar and riding in a dandy or a tonga...etc. 'nd thank you for my own little article...ta.

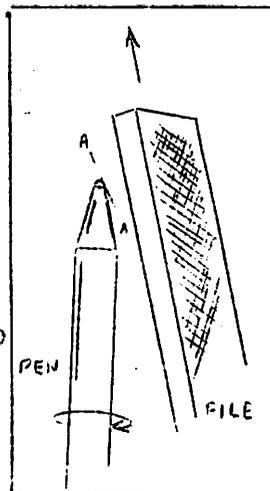
ERG I thought this the best thing in the mailing...I really did.

BLTHERINGS Here's the missing E, put it back there yourself. Sorry you didn't like my story Ethel, but I have to go oogly every now and then (especially after inadvertantly seeing Andy Stewart) Hope you like the current Soggysaga better.

MEIN OMPF This was enjoyable asusual..Funnily (?) I feel a bit embarrassed about my asthma when I have to start coughing my lungs up with guests around...don't know how they feel about it.

BROBDINGNAG With this title, you ought to be full of Swifties, and at least have 50 pages...try Lilliput next time huh ?

SIZAR I don't quite know why all the feuding, but I do know that if you make a joke on someone in print, you have to be damned sure it is obvious as a joke, since any redeeming vocal inflections are not there to save the day. Eric (the Bent) and I slang each other considerably vocally, but not so often in print for this reason..and we both KNOW it is only joking. On paper things can seem BAD. Our congrats to Mrs Bruce Burn..good man. and hope you enjoyed your appreciation issue.



LEFNUI I know. It stands for Let Each Fan Now Use 1. I claim the prize of one crottle sized greep. Those illos were lovely, but oh so few...more Huh ?? please. The cover reminds me of the Western Borthers story about the BrinCESS and the Frog who retrieved her golden ball from the fountain. His reward was to sleep with her in her golden bed. In the morning, the frog had turned into a handsome prince, and her father would never believe the story about the golden ball. Arnold Katz defense of S-F seemed less a defense, than an excuse...not "Its is good because," but "Here's why it's bad" Citing the return of Smith and van Vogt as a sign of better days might mean something if I hadn't read those yarns. I'm a Smith FAN, and usually enjoy van Vogt a great deal...not nowadays I'm afraid As for Codswallop Smith being hailed as a first magnitude writer..this just isn't true unless you add two words..."of rubbish" As for selling fewer serials likely to kill the market..to my ignorant mind, it would ensure that those that did sell, were worth reading in the first place.

PROCRASTINATOR..is the thief of time (or nearly so) and I liked the cover. Was also fascinated to see that my name means tender...a thing I've been trying to bash into people by sheer force and savagery for many a year. Also enjoyed the article on the English Police...makes yer fink don't it ?

ELEFANTASIA...What is yellow, stiff as a board, and goesunder the ground ??? (A dead Chinaman) I worked this out at 4 am while having a coughing session...a really sick joke. However, I liked yours and will keep it by the recorder for ad libs (heh heh) to my tapespondents.

KOBOLD Excellent duplicating, obviously done by an expert. You make an error saying a house cannot be sold with a tenant except with a drop in value...just try letting it to Hedy Lamarr, Bardot, or Sophia Loren before putting it on the market. Also as advertised in your excellently duplicated zine..where can I get my tasty Hypergrunch wafers ?? Query..how large can you make your margins before the OE disallows your page quota ??

VAGARY Normally, this is always the best magazine in a mailing, and to be honest, Bobby, it still is,,BUT..and this is not meant as an attack on you and Bill, both of whom I like a great deal...I don't care for the continued slant towards the occult and whacky. Your choice of material is entirely up to you I know, but I still prefer the old Bobby. As for Astrology, here is a load of utter bilge if I ever saw one. Just a few of the more glaring nitterys. Astrology is just about as old as man I suppose (its aid didn't help Hitehr much) and it has still never vindicated itself as near to being a science even as the prediction of the weather. Also, I wonder how those oldsters managed to predict before accurate clocks, spherical Earth and heliocentric Solar System together with the far more recent addition to the art of using Longitude and Latitude. Nice to see that even Neptune and Pluto have their uses in Astrology even though only discovered well into the 20th Century. Sorry Bobby but you'd do better with an office size IBM computer.

SEE YOU ALL NEXT MAILING.