

ACY

BINARY 1011

This is BINARY 1011 (decimal number 11) produced for the 63rd mailing (October 1971) of the Off Trails Magazine Publishers Association, by

Joe Patrizio
7 Oakwood Rd.
Bricket Wood
St. Albans
Herts.

and

Gray Boak
6 Hawks Rd.
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey
1KT 3EG

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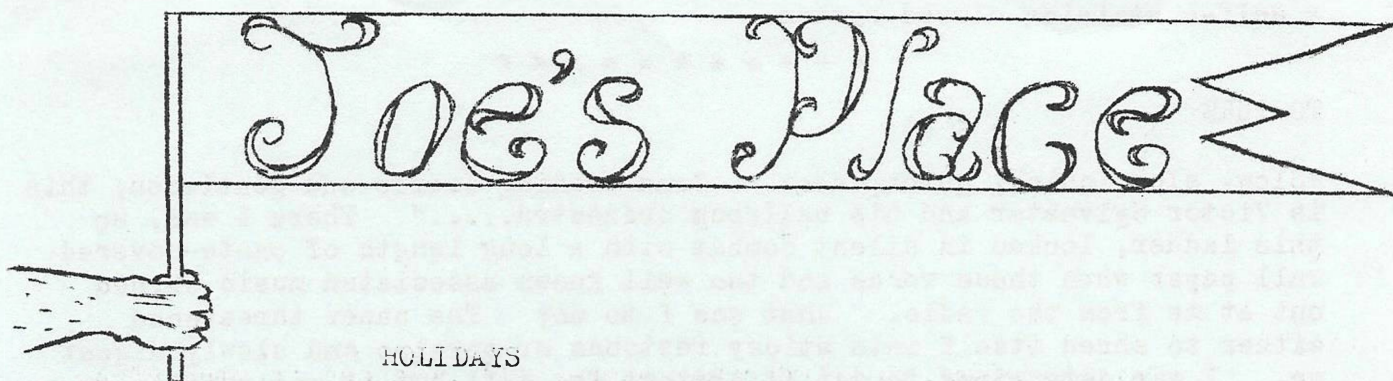
Any interior illustrations will be inserted by Gray and I'll give credit next time.

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I should point out that any opinions in this magazine are those of the author, if anybody. Each editor wishes to disclaim any responsibility for the mad ravings of his opposite number.

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J.P.Patrizio



HOLIDAYS

This year we holidayed in the Vale of Marshwood, near Lyme Regis, in Dorset. We went the first two weeks of June, happy in the knowledge that the Met. Office had promised us dry, sunny weather and hot, hot, hot. However, I must admit to being a little disappointed in their predictions. True, it didn't rain every day, we did see the sun for a couple of hours one afternoon and I did get out of my sweater on no less than three of the days -- but I didn't take kindly to having to use hot water bottles every night.

Perhaps I overstate the case. Really, we enjoyed ourselves despite the weather and managed to take in many of Dorset's (and Devon's and Somerset's and Wiltshire's) delights. For example, the swannery at Abbotsbury, Lulworth Cove (where 4-Sided Triangle was filmed), a couple of Saxon earthworks, the tank museum at Bovington, and (a pilgrimage) visits to Clouds Hill and T.E. Lawrence's grave at Moreton.

We liked Dorset; it's pretty, the people are very friendly and we will certainly go back. But I ask you, hot water bottles?

MAILING COMMENTS

Do I detect, from recent mailings, that we are due for a whirl on that old roundabout 'Mailing Comments'? Is the membership, once again, to be racked with civil war, the holy traditionalists holding the bastion against the nihilists of no mailing comments? Is Armageddon... sorry, I got carried away again; but it is in the air, isn't it?

The proportion of any magazine that should be given over to commenting on the previous mailing has always been a source of discussion within the organization. My own view is that OMPA cannot survive without mailing comments, and to illustrate what I mean, here are extracts from a letter I got from Mary Legg:

AS an ex-member of OMPA, I think it would be instructive for the people who are interested to know why people leave OMPA. I joined OMPA about 6 or 7 years ago. At that time there used to be 40+ members and a waiting list. Anyway I got in quite quickly, but the reason I decided to let my membership lapse was the lack of reaction to the fmz I was producing. When I sent out, say, 40 copies of the mag outside OMPA, I would reckon to get at least 20 letters-of-comment, and inside OMPA would be lucky to get half that (as mailing comments). Not having joined OMPA for the other mags, this was very discouraging. Then came the year that OMPA 'died', and then when it was resurrected I produced a smaller, different mag for it. Experience with my second mag bore out the above, and since I now can finance only one mag, I decided to kill off the OMPA mag and leave.

Note well, all you deriders of mailing comments; no member is entirely a self-sustaining closed system.

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TORTURE

"Slow, slow, quick, quick, slow. Good evening ladies and gentlemen, this is Victor Sylvester and his ballroom orchestra....." There I was, up this ladder, locked in silent combat with a long length of paste-covered wall paper when these words and the well known associated music whined out at me from the radio. What was I to do? The paper threatened either to shred itself into sticky festoons or envelop and slowly digest me. I was determined to get it against the wall but it was putting up a brave fight -- attrition was the name of the game. And then Victor Sylvester came on at me out of the radio. The gods are indeed cruel.

"Tonight we're going to play for you all the modern rhythms danced to in ballrooms today", he told me (I couldn't stop him, you see). Well, we all know the Victor Sylvester orchestra's reputation as a switched on, with it combo, don't we? And when they started to play Varsity Rag, written in the 1920s, we could all rest assured that nothing had changed. After an hour or so of this goodie, we went straight into another rhythm which is pushing the frontiers of modernity -- the waltz. But even this wasn't enough for the man; throwing propriety to the winds, with an air of licentious abandon, he screamed, "And now, the dancers here are going to jive to..." I managed to push the radio into the bucket of paste.

* * * * *

IN PASSING

I read with regret of the death of George Jackson (see last issue); the man had a lot of literature left in him. From his letters, he seemed to have come to terms with the inevitability of his death at the hands of the authorities, but it was surprising that he was killed while trying to escape. What with his trial coming up, and a lot of people agitating (at last) on his behalf, it didn't seem to be the time to make a break. But who knows?

One success that Jackson had, however, was to force the authorities to recognize that literate dissidents are the most dangerous. They have now banned 'subversive literature' from prisons; no definition of subversive has been given. What price the Thought Police, now?

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On the radio the other morning, I caught part of an interview with an American (economist, I think) commenting on the fall in the US birth rate. We got a picture of American industrialists bemoaning the inevitable drop in growth caused by all those unborn consumers (no-body seems to have told them that there may be nothing to consume). However, without going into details, he did finish by saying that the lower birth rate might not be an unmitigated disaster.

* * * * *

No work of pop art has yet convinced me that one can reconcile rock music and true tragedy; such music retains an innate vulgarity and coarseness of texture which impedes the artistic aspirations of no matter what text accompanies it.

Review of 'PINKVILLE', in the Times.

the
biblio
-file

At last I got round to reading Solzhenitsyn's One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, which tells of a typical day in a Russian labour camp. I found a striking similarity in atmosphere between this book and Dostoevsky's House of the Dead, and comparing the two you get the impression that the Russian penal system hasn't moved at all in the last 9 or 10 decades. Except, possibly, in that Dostoevsky's prisoners knew the length of their sentences, whereas Solzhenitsyn's don't, as a further term may be slapped on without warning. There are no tirades in this book; just statements of fact which highlight the Russian policy of using political prisoners as expendable slave labour, and the resulting gross inefficiency and dehumanization. This is an excellent novel; perhaps a work of genius. From this one book alone, it is easy to see why the Soviet authorities don't like Solzhenitsyn.

J.P. PATRIZIO

* * * * *

The stage before political prison is interrogation, and modern methods of interrogation (both physical and mental) are examined in Beyond Breaking Point by Peter Deeley. There are a variety of tortures described, but the number of individual examples given is so large that it has a numbing effect and it all begins to lose its sense of reality. Spain, Greece, China, Korea, Russia, France and Britain all provide examples of the use of torture over the last 20 years or so. Korea turns out about the worst, and the simple brutality given as British torture makes precious little impact in the light of some of the others -- and that really is depressing. The most interesting chapters are those giving interrogation techniques of British and US police, and spy catching methods (which, perhaps surprisingly, are almost totally psychological and non-violent).

* * * * *

With Up the Line, Bob Silverberg, I've now read all last year's Hugo contenders; and I still think Slaughterhouse 5 should have won. Up the Line was fun and I quite enjoyed it, but you must admit that it was hardly in line for the title Best of the Year. I suppose it got all its votes from adolescents (who liked the Byzantine history) and intellectuals (who went for the gratuitous sex). Silverberg has fun with time travel paradoxes, but these always offend me and get between me and the story. Instead of enjoying it, I keep on finding fault in the way the paradoxes are sorted out. In this case Silverberg committed the Ultimate Paradox; he had his hero Non-Existed by the Time Patrol and when this happened, the book should have disappeared. It didn't, and just because I can't find it.....

* * * * *

Yet another book I've just got round to reading in the last couple of months is J.G. Ballard's The Atrocity Exhibition. As you probably all know, this is another of his verbal slide shows of space/time quanta -- or, in other words, a condensed novel.

Despite the fact that I recognize his capabilities as an author, he is still not getting through to me, and I'm now pretty sure that this is because we have entirely different outlooks on life.

I see Ballard essentially preoccupied with trivia, incessantly straining at gnats. He has been imposed upon by the automobile, and this is where I cannot

identify. To him, the car (and particularly the crashed car) is deeply symbolic in numerous ways as is shown when he writes such things as:

'Apart from the ontological function, redefining the elements of space and time in terms of our most potent consumer durable, the car crash may be perceived unconsciously as a fertilizing rather than a destructive event -- a liberation of sexual energy - mediating the sexuality of those who have died with an intensity impossible in any other form.'

This sort of statement is intrinsically meaningless to me, and to any other person to whom the car is merely transportation, and a fatal car crash a personal disaster. Recognizing that to Ballard the car is more than just a means of getting from one place to another, doesn't mean that I understand the attitude or can look on it as anything other than pitiful.

Another area in which I find myself in less than total agreement with Ballard is in his continual references to the echoing of the angles and planes of the body in man made structures. My antipathy here isn't as violent as with his ideas about cars, but where he implies a mythical connection in these echoes, I have a niggling feeling that it is merely an engineering one. (If you want to argue that Strength of Materials, Structures and Engineering Practise is mythical, then OK -- but I don't believe that this is what Ballard is on about.)

I feel that The Atrocity Exhibition will date rapidly as its referents fade into the past.

Perhaps you will be interested in the following statement. It was written by J.P. McKinney about Wittgenstein, but somehow it seems to fit the approach of Ballard in particular and his SF imitators in general:

"Nothing must be explicit, there must be suggestion and insinuation, rather than plain statement; questions raised and left unanswered, or answered by a still further question; subjects taken up, followed a certain distance, then dropped, to be taken up later with new accretions of significance which seem, somehow, to have carried the whole discussion an important stage further -- and here 'an important stage further' means further away from the intrusive problem of meaning. "

* * * * *

I'm afraid that I didn't have any pieces of artwork such awkward shapes, Joe....hence these Pica phrases. My apologies for the clash of type-faces.

On the subject of Hugoes (which Joe was) it is interesting to study the latest list. Could this be a sign of a 'return to good old story-telling' in SF? Leiber, Sturgeon, F&SF (always entertaining but never exciting - surely not a Hugo winner?) and Larry Niven. Good old Larry Niven. (Well, he writes like that.) RINGWORLD the best of the year? Shudder. SFR missed its hat-trick, but Geis gained the Best Fan Writer award. It couldn't have worked out neater had it been arranged that way. No Award for Drama. I think that we should all get together to support a 'CLANGERS for the Hugo' next year.

"VOTE FOR THE CLANGERS" Yes.

Response

TO THE 62nd MAILING by JOE PATRIZIO

OFF TRAILS: Glad you published Ken Bulmer's letter. It was enjoyable, time binding and just the thing to give members a sense of belonging. Ken might just have been talking about me when he said that OMPA was a place to fade away in.

Concerning equivalent quarto pages (counting towards activity). Now it doesn't affect me, as I've completed the necessary activity, but (taking the last BINARY as an example) 12 A4 pages don't equal 12 quarto pages -- they equal, as near as damn it, $14\frac{1}{2}$. As I say, I'm not complaining, but somebody will in the future so can we have a ruling -- Editorial or Presidential -- even if that ruling is that A4= US quarto= GB quarto. By the way, taking 10"x8" quarto as a datum, I make equivalent sizes: A4=1.21; US quarto=1.17; foolscap=1.30.

DAVE GRIGG: I sincerely hope that you're not going to keep that title for your OMPazine -- there will be no room for comment if you do. Normally I would consider a two page zine hardly worth the effort -- not so in this case. Welcome; and may your mag ever increase in stature and page count (particularly page count).

SEAGULL 19: Gee, another soured idealist -- ho, hum.

UL 35 & 36: Analog more literate than New Worlds? Smoother, more professional perhaps; but literate is a word correctly applied to precious little in either. But I'm not really the one to comment. Over the last few years I've occasionally tried both and found that, in the main, they are both unreadable -- though for different reasons.

I broadly agree with what you say about Behold the Man. Frankly, I was surprised by the fuss it caused and I put it down to the fact that a lot of people had read precious little in that area. Moorcock treated the subject rather superficially, I thought; anybody interested would get greater satisfaction from Kazantzakis's The Last Temptation.

WHATSIT 20: I very much enjoyed Jean's conrep -- pity it wasn't longer. Recently I read a book on how to set up a WWII type war game, and soon saw how one could get carried away with this sort of thing. However, I'm still not sure whether or not they're a good thing in principle. Are they encouraging and developing the aggressive streak in all of us? Or are they sublimating and diverting this same trait? Tell me Ken, since you've taken up war gaming, have you stopped beating Jean?

PSYWAR 3: You really must do something about the duplicating. I threw this aside to start with as I couldn't imagine that it would be worth the effort to read -- wrong again. Mind you, I thought that at least two of your "true stories of the beyond" were a bit weak, and open to more prosaic interpretation. Robert Curran's theory of the existence of the Little People was very good indeed.

((continued on page 9))

CIRCLE
OF FRIENDS!
A
SMALL
MAILING
COMMENTS
BY
A.G. BOAK

"I have no idea what goes on outside OMPA" says Kench. We'd guessed, Ken.. we'd guessed. From your previous remarks, on how to improve OMPA. "Get material in the form of genzines". Shall we begin by removing the genzines from the 62nd mailing?

Exit CYNIC, HELL, ERG, BINARY, BLACK KNIGHT, PSYWAR ... Oh, and BADMOUTH. (Let's not forget EGG, either.) Admittedly, ERG and BINARY are really OMPazines with an external mailing list; and C is never put out before the OMPA deadline, but C is not primarily an OMPazine and neither are the others listed. A checklist of VoT is not an OMPA-type article (regardless of its value). BLACK KNIGHT was

available pre-mailing (tut tut) and notice the letter columns of PSYWAR and BADMOUTH -- these are OMPazines?

This is also why Sam Long's bouncy chat hasn't a hope in hell of succeeding; the "lively new fans" can get the magazines they want to read without joining OMPA. What else is left within? A collection of reactionary, anti modern-writing, anti student, old (and not so old) fogies. Articles on hand-guns and unicorns (sorry Ro), terrible fiction....true-blue Tories mumbling to themselves in a warm niche away from the world. Mailing comments on mailing comments (and I'll have a word with the HELL crowd later....).

An exaggeration? I like OMPA; but I'm faced with these arguments whenever I meet my non-OMPAn fan friends, and I find them difficult to counter. Because they are true. How many good, literate items were there in the 62nd mailing? Dick Eney on Chinese Secret Societies. The superb Liz Fishman on first dating. BLACK KNIGHT in its way -- but not an apa way. I can't fairly include the two Harrier publications, but I think they do pretty well in this company. Terry is fun to read in places, as is Sam. Dave Grigg could be, if he wasn't trying so hard to be funny.

But that is all. (Admittedly a poor Kench, and no Peter R, but equally no John Coombe or Bobby Gray. These things average out.) The Australians are conspicuous by their absence -- I've heard rumours, no more, that they are disappointed with the standard of OMPA. Such fictions as exist are shockingly illiterate. Mailing comments hardly seem to apply to the zines being commented on -- though this is not a universal trait, thank heaven. There is precious little sign of any editorial work -- most noticeably absent in the zine that loudly complains of its lack in others -- HELL. (Cast out the mote from thine eye.... then you might even notice that the mailing comments in T5 included those in T4 that the GPO lost in the post. Of course, I shouldn't expect you to understand that, it is only explained first thing in the magazine.)

HELL is too much a typical neo crudzine to let pass, especially as it offers so many examples of OMPA's bad points. I've already mentioned mailing comments on mailing comments -- in HELL. No editorial effort -- in HELL (or at least no ability). Not reading a zine properly before commenting on it -- in HELL (see above). Reproduction faint in places, vast see through in others, smudges -- in HELL. Pages and pages of inane ramblings with no point -- in HELL. Lousy cramped layout -- in HELL. A leading article dealing with a subject that few people are likely to be interested in, in an elementary manner; anyone interested in it would already know it --in HELL.

Unhumorous SF adverts (Christ! how many times have we seen these?)-- in HELL. Checklists -- in HELL. (Checklists in OMPA? Twenty, thirty people, not violently interested in SF -- at least to that extent. Terry has the right idea about Checklists -- sell them to those interested.) Childish, ungrammatical writing as an attempt at humour -- in HELL.

OUTFOOT has made its reputation as the crudzine of this fannish generation. HELL doesn't sink as low as that, but it tries. It is even worse than John Hall's ZINE.

Did you know that half a dozen of the younger British fen are talking about setting up a rival apa, because they find OMPA so insalubrious? I've tried talking them out of it, for I can't see such an occurrence as anything but harmful to British fandom. However, if I tried to do proper comments on all the 62nd mailing, I feel that I would be driven to their point of view. (Yet the 61st was even worse...) I'll stick to complimenting Lynn and Norm on their duplication -- not Dick, for the typeface is too tight and dark, though the artwork is magnificent. Kench's cover I like very much, Sam's and Keith's the reverse.

As for the Egoboo Poll -- shame on those who didn't vote. The first placings in each case were inarguable, the others laughable. I don't think the votes meant anything at all.

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RESPONSE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

OSTEEN UNIVERSITY REVIEW: I do not, sir, propose to get involved (again) in a, so to speak, ethnic argument, but I should like to point out that I'm not bloody English. Your explanation of the origin of the word 'twit' is plausible; most other people I would believe without question -- however.....

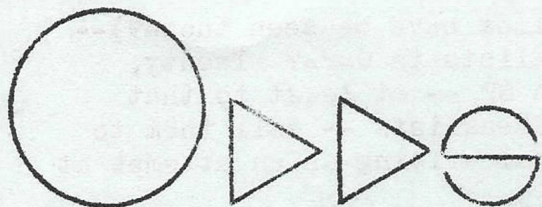
BLACK KNIGHT 2: Pretty incomprehensible (my fault).

SHEILA THARI:9 Marvellous stuff; most of it new to me too. Your conclusions echo the thoughts I've had for a long time -- that not even Mao can get rid of 4000 years of Chinese culture in just a generation. These comments are totally inadequate for such a fine offering but I really don't know enough about the subject to comment as I feel I should. By the way, the artwork was excellent -- yours?

ERG 35: What happened to Alan Burns? He break a leg or something and let all his acid ooze away? An enjoyable issue (as we've come to expect) but somehow lacking in bite.

HELL 1: Desist with the fake modesty -- if something needs apologizing for, apologize for it, otherwise... You may have a point with your tirade against skimpy magazines; but remember, a point is dimensionless, a thing without substance -- and that's exactly how I found your argument. Nowhere do you make the obvious point that the first essential of a good mag is not mere size but quality (oh, come now, you know what quality is). If I didn't believe, deep down, that the 12 pages of BINARY 1001 was better than the 36 pages of HELL1, then I'd leave OMPA and take up snail racing or something. But I did think your mailing comments were good.

Joe Patrizio.



TO my mind, what SF is for is opening windows in the mind that would otherwise stay closed -- and it bothers me that so few of our leaders seem to be steeped in it.

(Katherine Whitehorn)

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[South African] lawyers accept that sentencing policy must reflect to some extent the "mores of the society of which they (the judiciary) are a part".

This has been neatly illustrated in a note in Africaans made by an advocate on one of Dr van Niekerk's questionnaires. It said:

"I do not regard discrimination as unfair. For a white woman rape, particularly rape by a non-white, is a terrible experience. For the majority of Bantu (African) women, rape, even by a white, is something which can be compensated for by a payment of cattle."

(The Times)

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On the macro-economic plane, exogenous factors are unlikely to affect the downwards rigidity of prices so long as the cost push element continues to produce sectorial imbalances, paralleling the rapid secular increase in costs.

(OECD report on Japan)

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The bird that I'm going to write about is the owl. The owl cannot see at all by day and at night is as blind as a bat.

I do not know much about the owl, so I will go on to the beast which I am going to choose. It is the cow. The cow is a mammal. It has six sides -- right, left, an upper and below. At the back it has a tail on which hangs a brush. With this it sends the flies away so that they do not fall into the milk. The head is for the purpose

of growing horns and so that the mouth can be somewhere. The horns are to butt with, and the mouth is to moo with. Under the cow hangs the milk. It is arranged for milking. When people milk, the milk comes and there is never an end to the supply. How the cow does it I have not yet realised, but it makes more and more. The cow has a fine sense of smell; one can smell it far away. This is the reason for the fresh air in the country.

The man cow is called an ox.

It is not a mammal. The cow does not eat much, but what it eats it eats twice, so that it gets enough. When it is hungry it moos, and when it says nothing it is because its inside is all full up with grass.

(essay of 10 year old child, quoted in The Complete Plain Words)

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Sir,

The British Sausage Bureau:
let them do their Wurst.

(Letter to The Times)

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In the West they still treat sport as a game.

(Victor Maniak, Polish athlete)

+ + + + +

[In Italy] a one-way street-sign does not necessarily mean that cars will only be coming from one direction; it is merely an indication that the majority of cars will be coming from that direction.

(The Times)

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ENDS