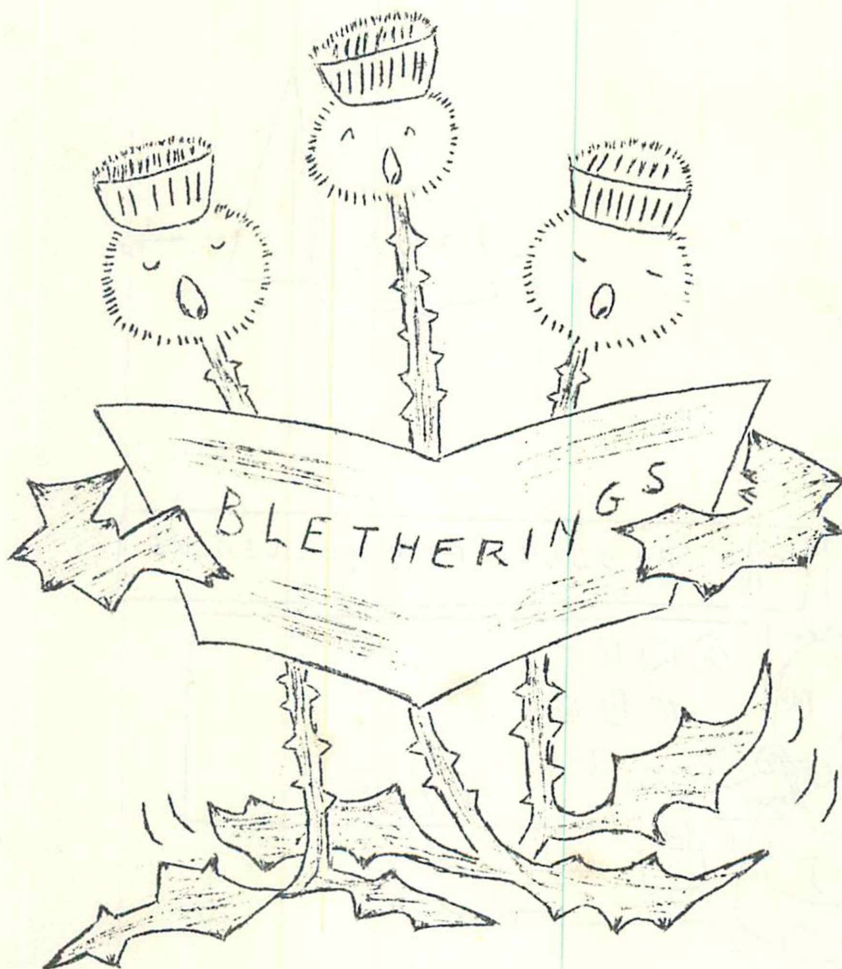
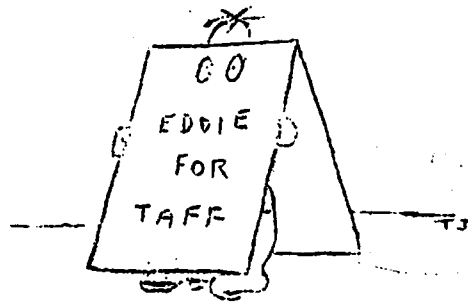
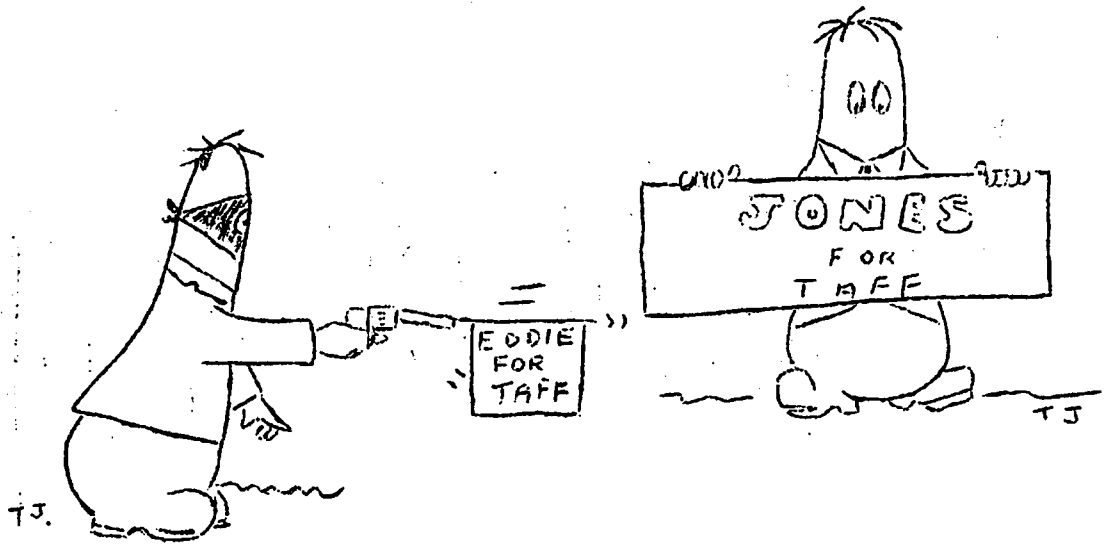


# Bletherings



BLEATHERINGS NO 2

Produced for the Fantasy Amateur Press Association by Ethel Lindsay  
Courage House, 6 Langley Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey.  
March, 1969.



SOGGIES BY TERRY JEEVES

# MAILING

# COMMENTS

On Mailing 125.....

Honque:Clarke:You certainly put your finger on one of the lures of mystery fiction; the fact that the characters are ordinary people to whom extraordinary things happen. I also like the fact that all ends in a neat and orderly fashion—right triumphs and all is Made Clear. I have, I confess, an orderly mind, I hate clutter. So this neatness in mystery fiction is a satisfaction to me. Dear knows, in real life things are far from neat, orderly, or satisfactory! I've just been watching on tv THE ZIEGFELD FOLLIES. Do you remember that song..A PRETTY GIRL IS JUST LIKE A MELODY? It made me feel quite sentimental to hear it—a song that had a melody. Why! you could hum it! Thanks for letting me know what Boyd is doing. Sitting here in sleepy Surbiton I like to know where he is whizzing off to next.

Dynatron:37:Tackett:I wonder which you would prefer..comments here or in HAVERINGS..the latter might give you some more subs after all. Anyway I was glad to get the end of Don's con report; it certainly was very comprehensive and I enjoyed it for that. I was a trifle annoyed at CWJohn's assertion that a woman writer's works are never worth reading. Such nonsense...Austen alone ought to make him eat his words. Roy, about your thoughts on New Writing—I wouldn't like to argue with your conclusions because they are too sweeping. I'd have liked it better and perhaps agreed if you had picked some specific examples. Prize for the letter column goes to Bill Wolfbarger; he putting you on, of course, but it was a very funny letter.

Diaspar:Carr:I like the sound of your voice,Terry, as it comes through in your writing about the changing culture. It is a voice that sounds so sane and un-hysterical, such a refreshing change. One of the irritating things about the New Wave argument was the way people took such rigid stands. Last time I talked to Mike Moorcock he assured me earnestly that the writings in NEW WORLDS is now IT. Any other way(like with a plot?)was dead, but didn't know it. It's good to know that there is someone like yourself in an editorial job who can be objective about it all. A lot of the antagonism to NEW WAVE writers was caused initially by their very aggressive attitude. Take Ballard, for instance, he cannot get onto the subject without making insulting remarks about other writers. He seems to have quite a thing against Asimov—and is forever holding Asimov up as a

## Mailing Comments

thing beyond the pale. Admittedly writers have, no doubt, to retain a healthy ego and be absolutely sure that their way is the only way--but I cannot see that this need be maintained by attacking other writers in print. I don't suppose the good Professor is all that bothered.,but it sure annoys folks who love his books.

Warhoon:Bergeron:I suppose one of the reasons I can be glad I'm in FAPA is that I can now be assured of receiving WRHN. Thinking your letter column a bit above my touch I've always been uncertain of receiving my copy. I like Bob Shaw, an asset to any room party, providing the beer supply holds out; but it is still EDDIE JONES FOR TAFF, you know! Walt Willis had a fan column in NEBULA - the only SF magazine that ever came out of Scotland. I joined fandom as a direct result of reading it, One of the things that intrigues me about Harry's history of WAW-is how much of it I know already; but I was a newcomer to fandom in these days and every detail interested me. When I first encountered WRHN one of the things I liked was your own writings on the American political scene. I do wish you would give more details of your work for RFK and what decided you to do this. You may have gathered that this is a special interest of mine.

Moonshine:Sneary/Moffats/Woolston: Reading Rick's letter I couldn't help thinking -isn't it awful that you almost have to apologise for liking or wanting a 'happy ending'. Someone is sure to mutter about 'escapism' and refer you to 'real life'. Yet life does have some happy endings I've even seen a few.

Horib:Lupoff: Hi folks..this means it is nearly five years since I was your house-guest..but I won't make nauseating noises about time flying etc. I see Les Nirenberg is alive and well in Montreal and making speeches Of course he isn't saying anything in the speech; which is unlike the old Les I remember. That's the cutest idea I've seen yet for Lucy.

Horizons:Warner: I liked your memories of Christmas and every now and then you touched on a feeling I could share. Like Christmas card lists and who to put on and who to leave off..this year I received 79 cards which is a record for me.

Vandy:Coulson: You hit the nail on the head calling the early UNCLE shows "fine comedies". When that comical air was lost the show went downhill rapidly; and I still feel mad about it.

Fantasia:Wessen: I really loved your cover and thought it easily the best in the mailing.

Sam:Stiles: Glad to hear you have started your TAFF Report. I would be happy to publicise this over here if you give me details. It seems such a long time since we have had a TAFF Report. I do wish Terry's would come out; this was one I really looked forward to reading.

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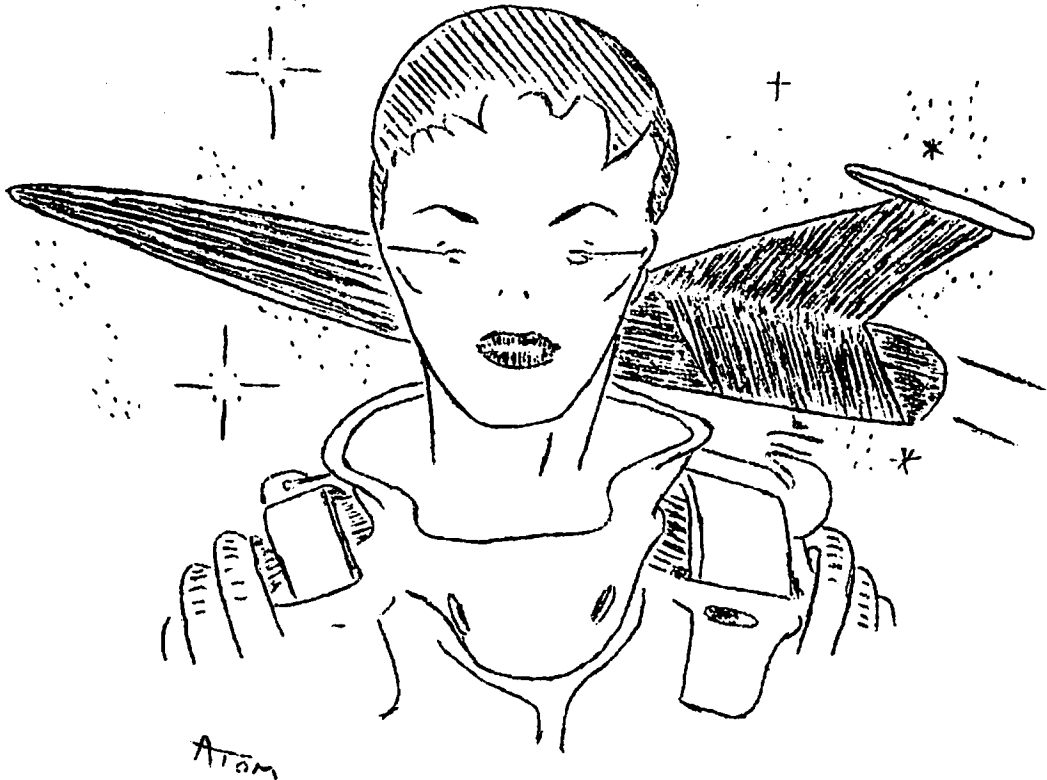
Different: Moskowitz: I showed this to Mike Moorcock whose remark after reading it really tickled me. Mike said "Nothing wrong with argument of course but Holy War seems to be going a bit too far!".

This Thing: Sanders: I read this just after POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC 29 and it was a relief to read your quiet thoughts after the rather hysterical outburst of the other.

Kim Chi: Ellington: Why do Americans say "New Years". We either say the New Year or, if Scots, Hogmany. What about that Tammy then?

This isn't very much in the way of Mailing Comments, I'm afraid. Now I could say that I am still feeling my way in FAPA and it would be no lie that I would be telling you. Only I'd better be honest and say that I decided that I would take the time to comment upon all the zines in the OMPA mailing and only do what I could in FAPA in the time left. I figured that poor old OMPA needed support more—it has died three times and is on its last resucitation. Wheras FAPA goes on and on and has a waiting-list like the tail of a comet.

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# Bletherings on . . . . . This and That

In the last issue of SPECULATION I read a comment by Norman Spinrad. He mentioned that the main theme in BUG JACK BARRON - the effect of TV upon politics and particularly Presidential politics - had hardly been mentioned in any discussion of the book. I thought this a very valid complaint. There has been plenty comments upon the dialogue and the scenes of sex but this central theme has been largely ignored. Yet it did touch upon a vital element in the politics of today.

Over here we saw how dramatically it could work in the case of Alex. Douglas Home. This was a man who, in the days before TV, could well have won the election for his Tory party. On TV however he looked almost skeletal - somehow the planes of his face became accentuated. He gave off an aura of arrogance that even his faithful supporters found hard to defend. So he had to go and we watched him being dumped rather ruthlessly. In his place came Ted Heath who was chosen although Jim Callaghan came over better on TV. This showed that the lesson had not yet been properly absorbed by one party at least. Heath has quite a few mannerisms that can be easily imitated. TV gives an even more subtle impression about Heath - it makes him appear effeminate. This, as you can imagine, is a gold-mine to imitators and comedians alike. I reckon if it rests with the Heath TV image the Tories will never get back.

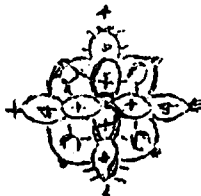
Wilson is another easily caricatured because of his mannerisms. It has been fascinating to watch him make a determined effort to control his gestures; he is one politician who is very well aware of the effect of TV. He is lucky in that his face is round and plump and the screen seems kinder to this type. What he has to combat is an impression of too much self-assurance. Since the majority of newspapers are against Labour he needs every bit of help that TV can give.

One night years ago I said to my friends the Varleys that whichever political party chose their leader with the advent of TV in mind, that would be the party to sweep into power. The leader should be young, good-looking and come over on TV like a bomb. So far, in this country, my theory has not really been tested. One has only to think of Kennedy in the US and Trudeau in Canada to see that it is a possible one. I wonder too if De Gaulle's authoritative image of certainly on TV has helped to keep him in power. If one can't have a young leader image; a fatherly one is very comforting.

I remember when I first voiced this theory to the Varleys they were both shocked at it and indignant. This, they said, would be open to all sorts of abuse. I didn't see that this would necessarily follow. It seemed to me that certain things are required in a man who hopes to be a politician. For one, he must be able to speak well in public. Nowadays one has to add an ability to project a good personality on TV. At the moment actors have a head start on the politicians--hence Reagan--but given time this should

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be no real problem for the politicians. Eventually the parties will start putting "Comes over well on TV" at the head of their list of requirements for a leader . For that reason I'm not so sure that BJB, by making it a TV figure who obtains power, foresees exactly what will happen. It isn't that I would belittle the power of a TV figure—but I have a heartier respect for the politicians'sense of survival.



One day when I was book-hunting with George Locke, I pounced upon a book by Hilda Lawrence. George grumbled that I seemed to be forever coming up with female mystery writers. On reflection this is true; so many of my mystery favourites are by female writers—Allingham, Tey, Sayers, Lawrence..I could go on and on. Well, I'm not likely to enjoy the thud and blunder type of Bulldog Drummond yarn, am I? I get no vicarious satisfaction out of "ows" and "whacks". I can't even bear to watch TV wrestling in spite of many earnest friends assuring me that the pain-filled expressions are the result of acting. I don't believe them anyway; but even if it were true I could never enjoy any depiction of the infliction of pain. A scene like that—I shut my eyes!

There is another type of story which which I am not much taken. I guess you could call it the James Bond type—where the hero lays every woman in sight; tosses back his drinks with abandon; fights with gusto and, in short, is tough enough to satisfy even the meekest of male readers. Nothing there for me either--the women are nearly all pure wishful thinking.

For me nothing can beat the chills thought up by a woman mystery writer. Knowing all the basic feminine fears; she can work upon them skillfully. Their watchword must be the mood of.....

"As one who on a lonesome road  
Doth walk in fear and dread.  
Because she knows a fearful fiend  
Doth close behind her tread."

Dorothy L.Sayers was my first favourite. I confess this is because the first of her books I read -GAUDY NIGHT - gave me a glimpse of a world that seemed rather glamorous to me - that of a woman's college in Oxford. In those days I was rather impressed by the idea of scholars who spent their lives tracking down footnotes to history. The conclusion of the book was very satisfying to me when the woman who had wreaked havoc upon the college turned out to be, not one of the dried-up spinster teachers, but an uneducated woman bent on revenge for the death of her husband. It was only later that I realised that Sayer was right when she made the teacher who had been responsible admit that it isn't enough to act according to principle but that "One ought to take some thought for other people." As I've grown older I've learnt(at first to my surprise)that one can be very well educated and



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and yet sadly lacking in ordinary common sense. In fact the older I get the more I rate the second quality above the first.

I have all Sayers' books; but in the end I would rate THE NINE TAILORS the most absorbing. This is, I think, because along with the plot goes a fascinating amount of information about the ancient art of church bell change-ringing. According to Sayers ---"The art of change-ringing is peculiar to the English, and, like most English peculiarities, unintelligible to the rest of the world. To the musical Belgian, for example, it appears that the proper thing to do with a carefully-tuned ring of bells is to play a tune upon it. By the English campanologist, the playing of tunes is considered to be a childish game, only fit for foreigners; the proper use of the bells is to work out mathematical permutations and combinations. When he speaks of the music of his bells, he does not mean musician's music--still less what the ordinary man calls music. The change-ringer does, indeed, distinguish musical differences between one method of producing his permutations and another; he avers, for instance, that where the hinder bell runs 7,5,6, or 5,6,7, or 5,7,6, the music is always prettier, and can detect and approve, where they occur, the consecutive fifths of Tittums and the cascading thirds of the Queen's change. But what he really means is, that by the English method of ringing with rope and wheel, each several bell gives forth her fullest and noblest note. His passion--and it is a passion--finds its satisfaction in mathematical completeness and mechanical perfection, and as his bell weaves her way rhythmically up from lead to hinder place and down again, he is filled with the solemn intoxication that comes of intricate routine faultlessly performed."

She describes how these mathematical changes are practised upon hand bells. Each ring of bells can be different, of course, the ring she conjures up for this book has 8 bells and, as is the custom, each has a name. The heaviest bell is called Tailor Paul and weighs 41cwt. This is the tolling bell. I have never lived in a part of the country where the custom of tolling still persists; but I should imagine it still goes on in some places. Around each belfrey are the ringers rules and at Southill in Bedfordshire one part of them reads.. "When mirth and pleasure is on the wing we ring; At the departure of a soul we toll." In each belfrey there is also records on tablets of the ringing of remarkable peals in the past. One of the essential parts of the plot of this book is concerned with the nine-hour ringing of fifteen thousand, eight hundred and forty Kent Treble Bob Majors. Nowadays I reckon the neighbours would complain!

This ringing was to celebrate the New Year but, first of all, they had to toll for the death of the Old Year. Nine tailors, or teller-strokes that mark the passing of a man; then twelve strokes more, one for every passing month. The same is done for the passing of a man. So that in a small community in the past one could guess from the number of strokes who had departed. Six for a woman, nine for a man, and then the age would be tolled out. A noble way to go.

Ethel Lindsay.