

I can't stand to read plays, can you? Least of all can I bear to try and read Shakespeare. I have never gone to the theatre to see any of his plays and for years I've been resisting any and all suggestions made to me by Bobbie Gray that I should go to see the films. I have been converted! Hey, you listening, Bobbie? I'll tell you how it happened. Who among you doesn't know that this is Shakespeare's Centenary year? I noticed in the Radio Times that they were doing HAMLET from Kilsinore. Curiosity decided me to watch it; after all, if I didn't like it I could switch to the other channel and watch a modern play starring an actor I knew and liked. HAMLET began at 8.5.p.m. and finished at 11.5.p.m. with a break of 10 minutes for the news. I sat enthralled and watched and listened to the lot. Nowza! Now I am all at sea. Was it just that I was in a receptive mood, or was it the fact of it being shown on location thus giving it more impact? I think the first must be the truth, because since then - all in the same week - I've sat through and enjoyed RICHARD III & the modern-dressed JULIUS CAESAR. I confess I listened with some trepidation when certain of the characters began their well-known & oft-quoted speeches. I feared they might sound stale, but it says much for the actors concerned that they were as fresh to me as if I were hearing them for the first time, as indeed I was, in their proper setting.

I can well imagine those of you well familiar with the works of Old Bill chuckling in your beer at my sudden enthusiasm; any day after receiving this I expect to get a sarcastic letter from Bill Temple - who is a Shakespeare buff - for my lamentable ignorance of the good things in life. I don't give a damn. You can laugh as long and as heartily as you please. It is a relief to me to discover those plays are not the bore I have always found them to be in the past.

I consider myself to be a most lucky fella. Nearly all the things which give me most pleasure have come to me pretty late in life. I was already middle aged by some standards when I found fandom; now I have found Shakespeare and I believe my enjoyment in these things to be all the keener because I could so easily have gone the rest of my life without them, and I can appreciate the narrow squeak I have had in both cases. Makes me wonder what marvels old age has in store.

The older I get the more my pleasure in certain pursuits is heightened. I enjoy conventions more each year, though I don't do the same things now that I once did. Hold it, I mean I don't attend many programmed items - I used to be sure I saw and heard them all. I have always loved to talk, as anyone who has met me will tell you, but when I first came into fandom I was far too busy dashing around to make sure I didn't miss out on anything to take more than a minute to stop and talk to anyone. Now I am content to sit and chat with them all and I let the bustle go hang. Much more satisfying.

I have, at last, achieved an ambition I have long cherished. Walt Willis' name is in my Visitor's Book! Sounds like lion hunting, doesn't it? It wasn't really. I first met Walt at the Marrogate Eastercon and what I saw I liked....this comes as a surprise to you? We had exchanged a few letters, but for some reason I was never at ease writing to him as I was writing to others I'd never met. I think I allowed his reputation in fandom to intimidate me. Daft! I resolved, by hook or by crook, I was going to get him to the Pen and really get to know him. How to arrange it was the bother; I just couldn't see him hopping the Irish Channel to one of my Friday night meetings. It would have to be something else. But what? Then fate took a hand.

Walt and Madeliene were coming over for the Eastercon this year a day early and they had to have somewhere to sleep. When I first heard this news I jumped in quick before anyone else could and offered them a bed here if they didn't mind roughing it in a fannish way. Actually, at the time I wrote I thought there would be more staying the night than there was. This must have come to Walt like a poke in the solar plexus, but he took it like a man and accepted my invitation like a gentleman. Good recovery, that lad. He came, but did I get the talk with him that I hoped for? Of course not. You know things never go as you arrange them in fandom. There was some last minute duplicating to be done before we left for Peterborough next morning, so I was chained by my own petard or something. One of these days, I promise myself, I'll tie that man down in a corner and get him talking. Walt, you have been warned.

Actually, it was a nice evening. Wally had been in Belfast with the Willis' so I had perforce to bed him down as well. Ethel was here for the night as well and we had a few people in for the evening. Joe and Anne Patrizio came; Joe had never met Walt and was anxious to do so. Bill Temple, the proudest Gradfather I know of in fandom, came along too. Teds Tubb and Forsyth were there as was Ian and Olivia McAulay. Oh, ATom was there as well. Right there you have the ingredients for a pleasant evening any night of your life. It was a case of 'many hands making light work'. Walt cooked the frozen peas we were having for dinner, and right well he cooked them too. Madeleine made the gravy; Ethel dashed in and out serving at table, me? I just stood around supervising. Bedtime came far too soon, but we had to be up betimes in the morning.

Fifteen of us, if I remember rightly, travelled down in the same coach. ATom, who was coming down on Saturday, had come along to see us off and as the train began to move we were convulsed to see from the window ATom leaning well

into the wind, with his cheeks puffed out, pushing the train as hard as he could. We settled ourselves down for the journey and the train was doing a respectable speed when Wally said quietly, "this train sure goes well on ATomics". I'm not sure if the bruises were healed by the time he went home, or not. For some obscure reason known only to herself, Madelaine Willis gave Wally a box of sweets(candies). Immediately we were round him. Not only did we point out to him the ones we liked, we took them. All you could see was a flurry of hands and the fast emptying box. Wally looked in dismay at the two we had left him when I decided that one of the two was also a favourite of mine. Then there was one. Don't worry about him, we gave most of them back to him.

Not all of you in OMPA get CRY, the zine in which Wally is editor of the lettercolumn, so maybe you don't know of his reputation for giving the unexpected comment/answer to something you say in your letters. Many a time I've been a victim of his peculiar talent in this direction. It gave me much pleasure to pay him back in his own coin. On Sunday evening at the convention, Ethel and I took Wally to dinner. We asked him how he was enjoying himself and he waxed all enthusiastic about the generous way in which he'd been treated; he went so far as to mention that he hadn't been allowed to pay a bill so how the heck could he learn to use our currency. I jumped on his neck right away for going around Peterbrough bilking all the restuarants. His face was a picture. Just for a moment there I had caught him with his guard down and he hadn't been expecting this reaction at all. So often was I able to catch him I feel that once more we start out level. The slate has been wiped clean. ((Madelaine, I hope you'll forgive me, I see I've mis-spelled your name on the other stencil at least once, sorry!))).

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An odd thing has just happened. Years ago, when I first saw that film THEM, you know the one, about the giant ants, I thoroughly enjoyed it. It must have been at least two years later, when I was doing some ironing, I heard a noise out in the street. My head shot round and my heart jumped into my throat. Quite without thinking how stupid and illogical it was, my first and immediate thought was, THEM! I hadn't even thought of the film in ages. As I type this, it is 1.15.a.m., I have heard another noise which brought back the same memory of that film. Last time it happened I couldn't identify what had made the noise; this time I know, it was the engine of a taxi ticking over knowing what was doing it, I sat and listened to it more intently and could still hear the ants in it; not at their shrillest as when they were nearby, but as they sounded when they were at a distance. Uncanny.

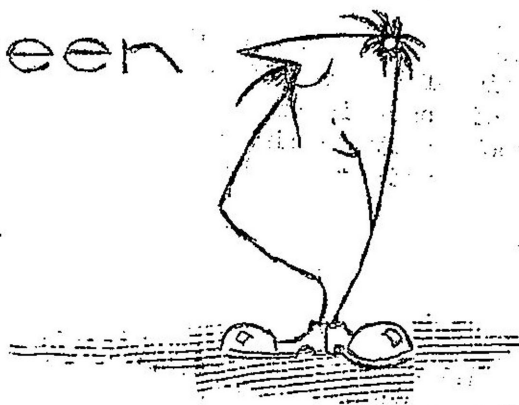
There has been a lot of talk in some of the fanzines on this vexed question of giving up smoking. My head tells me I'd be better off in health without it, but my heart isn't entirely convinced. I have slowed down some, but not as much as I'd have liked. I read all the advice columns on the subject, but they are not really much help. They seem to imagine the entire evening while you are at home should be spent in some active work. Typing doesn't seem to come into this category; although I must admit I burn more cigarettes while typing than I smoke. Wasteful. Another thing that bothers me is, that once you give it up you always seem to put on weight, and I'm already far heavier than I like. Arthur is most always telling me to slim. If any of you have solved this puzzle, I'd be glad to hear how; you never know, it might work for me too. See you. 'Bye.

K.Ha.

ad notes on the



Berry seen



".....flying to Birmingham to see my folks...I will catch a train from Birmingham on Friday afternoon which will get me to Brockham House about 7.p.m.we can go to Ella's....and how I'm looking forward to that....

Bestestm

John".

I gazed down at the letter I was holding again. It was from John Berry, and wasn't it terrific. He was actually coming to London, at long last. This time it was all arranged. We were going to one of Ella Parker's famous Friday night meetings where all those British fen who had never seen berry would, at last, get a chance to meet him and see that he was a real live person, just like I had always told them he was. The fact that he had only been seen, reputedly, by the Irish fans and fen who had visited Belfast, would be nullified; he would have been seen and talked to by British fans, at last.

I had gone to Ella's as soon as I'd received the letter from John saying he was in fact coming to London, and making arrangements. I'd told the fans at Ella's, and others around London about John's visit. These people said they'd make a point of being at Ella's meeting on that Friday night and I felt kinda pleased that I had been the one to bring word of his visit, and, in fact, had sort of been responsible for getting him to come down to London.

The Friday of the great visit dawned bright and clear. I'd phoned the Met' office the night before just to make sure that there wouldn't be any storms or gales between London and Birmingham, and to cover things properly, I had also phoned the British Railways to make sure that the lines were in fact all in order from London to Birmingham and that, yes, they were running trains on this line on the Friday and would sell tickets to anyone who asked. Nothing could go wrong, it was great, great, and this was the day. I had taken the day off from work; I was going to polish the car and make sure it was in running order, and fill up with petrol and oil and make sure that all the tyres were pumped up. As soon as John arrived at Brockham House, he'd get a quick meal wash and brush up and be off, to Kilburn, Ella's and the host of waiting fans.

The sound of the letter-box opening roused me from my musing at the breakfast table (I always have musings with my porridge on a Friday morning...no, nothing religious, but, y'know). I went from the kitchen into the hall and picked up the letter that had arrived. From the writing I could see it was from John, probably to confirm his time of arrival, great, great. I opened the letter, munching on the last of my musings, and unfolded the single sheet of Woolworth's typing paper. It read:-

"....it is now impossible for me to get to London...as you know, I was flying to Birmingham next week to visit my folks....I was looking forward to seeing you all in London....

Bestest,
John".

Everything turned to dust and pigeons fell out of the sky. I crushed the letter in trembling hands and knocked my head against the wall. Again, it had happened again. For the past few years, at least once a year, John had written to me saying that he was thinking of visiting London, and each time I had gone trotting up to Ella's to spread the word of the intended visit. Each time it had come to naught. I had become the object of much derision with my annual tale of the Berry Visit. But, this time, I thought, it was for real. No more jeers and catcalls from London fandom when the visit didn't come off, no more shrieks of sardonic laughter from Ella when I brought up the subject. This time I had convinced them all, except Ella, that it was a fact. I had quoted from his letters the time, date and arrangements, and now all those fine words had turned to number 10 sized police boots in my mouth. It was impossible, it couldn't happen. All those fans going up to Ella's, all that food she had bought. I spent the rest of the day in an agony of indecision - I had picked one up cheap a few weeks ago at a jumble sale thinking I might find a use for a decently refurnished indecision one day. I had. Should I go to Kilburn and face up to the music - the Fans had a little ceremony which consisted of chanting 'Tell me the Old Old Story' when I breezed in with tales of a Berry Visit - or, rather than cook my goose, should I chicken out and leave fandom for ever. No, I wouldn't beat a retreat by going off and joining the Foreign Legion as a drummer boy, Olive wouldn't let me. So, kicking my agony of indecision into a corner of the room where it lay making bubbling noises, I put my fine sensitive fannish mind to work.

About 7.30. that evening, any conveniently casual passer-by in a small dark side street in Kilburn would have noticed a rather shabby furtive figure climbing out of a car in the darkest part of the street, that is, if there had been any convenient casual passer-by. There wasn't. The rather shabby furtive figure had made damn sure the street was deserted before driving into the darkest part of it and parking. The rather shabby furtive figure made its way into the more brightly-lit thoroughfare of Albert Road and turned into the first large block of flats, Wm. Dunbar House. Waiting for the lift that would take me up to the 7th floor where Flat 43, had Ella and a horde of British fans waiting, the shabby figure glanced into the glass doors of the entrance, furtively. The doors reflected an image of a male type man figure. It had tousled hair dangling over the forehead, a long straggly moustache dangled down over an unshaven chin, it wore a rather grubby trenchcoat with the collar pulled up, baggy blue trousers, out of the frayed bottoms which stuck a large pair of broken hob-nailed boots.

To anyone who had ever come within spitting distance of a Good type story, and not many in fandom haven't, the figure looked the living image of John Berry, as written by him and drawn by Atom. I felt kinda proud, pleased, and yet a

trifle humble with myself. My fine fannish mind had finally come up with the fact that if the mountain wouldn't come to the molehill, we'd have to try that old fannish game of changing our image or something like that. Besides which, I had remembered that my father-in-law kept a heap of old clothes in a shed at the bottom of his farden which he wore when he was muck spreading on his three square yards of London clay that passed for what the estate agent had called spacious lawn and growing space. I'd gone down and found the clothes and, stopping only to frighten a passing fairy into running back to his gnome in terror, I tore back to Brockham House, dressed into the old clothes, cut a goodly hank of hair from one of my daughter's 73 plastic dolls, blackened it with boot polish, tousled up my hair and was off in the car, hellbent for Kilburn and whatever fate would make of it all.

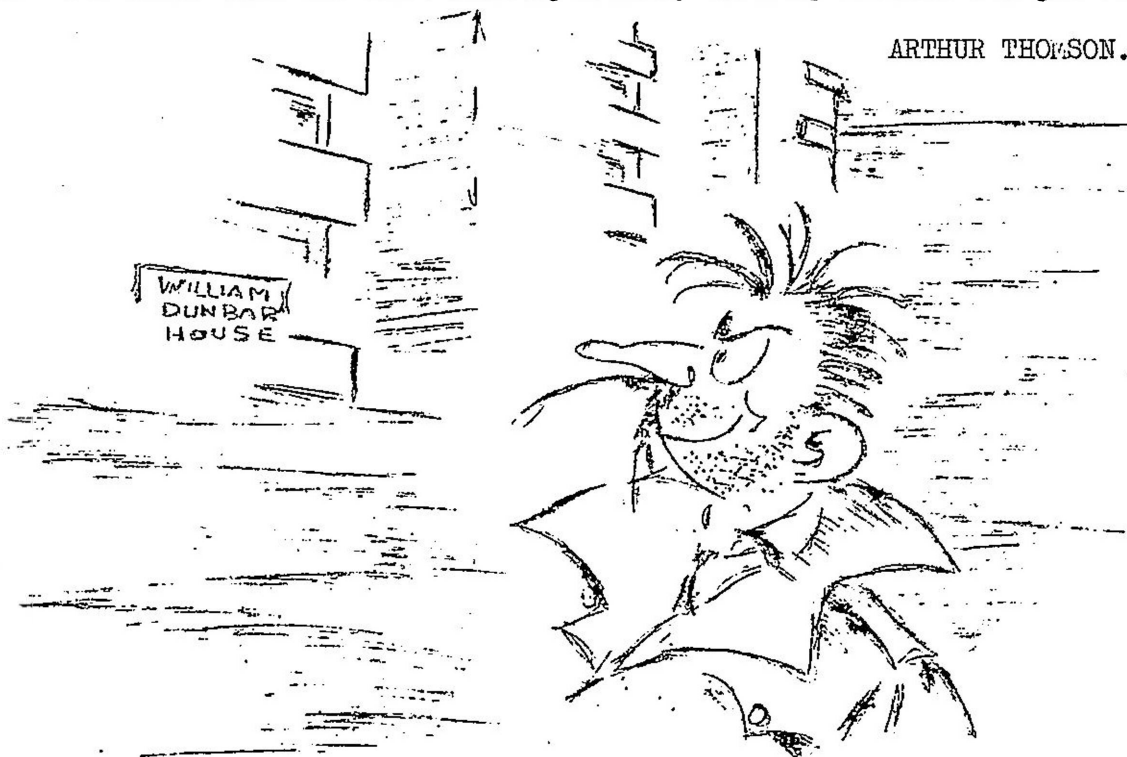
The lift arrived, I rode it up to Ella's floor. Facing the door of #43, I muttered a prayer and rang the bell. The door was opened by some fan; I didn't wait to see who it was, I was pretty keyed up and went bouncing off up the hallway into the Parker living room. It was packed with fans. All staring in wide-eyed amazement as the door burst open, I guess maybe I should have been a mite more circumspect and opened it first. I decided to press home my advantage, the more I acted like Berry the less they would look for the fan who lay beneath. "Hi, folks", I cried. "Evenin' all, sorry about the door, but it's alright, I didn't come to no Harmon it". I bounced into the middle of the room: "Arthur couldn't come tonight cos' his little old granny has been stricken with a virulent form of the dreaded Mugwarts disease and he had to go down and see how her will was made out, so I come on myself; I'm John Berry", I added modestly. I could see a sort of shudder pass round the room, but I went on grabbing and shaking as many hands as I could reach. It wasn't many, cos' most fans there seemed to be reaching into their pockets for their hankies or something. Finally I came up to Ella. "Sufferin' catfish!", I shouted, "you must be Ella Parker. Arthur's told me all about you". I either tripped over a loose bootlace or Ella took a swipe at me, cos' I fell flat on my face in front of her knocking the cigarette out of her hand and into her teacup. She leapt up with a yell. "Holy smoke, Ella" I cried, "what an idea for a story, just give me a pencil and a piece of paper and I'll write it all up for you. It'll make my sevenhundredth and fiftieth article I've written; a million and nine thousand words, ninetythree hundred paragraphs, one hundred and forty thousand sentences, and I'll get it published in a German fanzine with a reprint in some rag a neo puts out in Turkey, I-haven't been published in Turkey yet", I added modestly. I staggered to my feet. Ella's mouth was opening and closing gently but no sound was coming from it, which anyone will testify was an event in itself. I could tell her first meeting with John Berry had impressed her. I blew gently through my moustache at her. "Gee, Ella, doncha feel well?" She waved her hands weakly towards the other fans and I took it as a gesture to get round and become acquainted. I bounced around them telling them a few anecdotes of Irish Fandom, tried to sell a couple of copies of Girlie Tales to Ted Forsyth, showed my ghoddminton bat to Ethel Lindsay, and generally had a Goon time. I felt great. It was all going well. Peter Mabey came up to me when I sat down for a minute to talk about glding to George Locke and said that he'd heard I was interested in classical music. Well, John might be, but I know damn all about it barring being able to recognise the Ride of the Valkyries if it was played loud enough. "Oh heck, Pete", I said, racking my brains for something to say, "I don't want to Strauss my expert knowledge on the subject so I'll be Be(et)hoven to you if we just talk fan stuff tonight cos' I'm only here for an hour before I have to get Bach to Brum, and with all these fans here we'd have to go into H(a)ydn to talk about it properly". Peter seemed to sag slightly, at least he disappeared slowly out of my sight. But I guess, if he wanted to lie on the floor with his eyes

closed for a few minutes, he could as far as I was concerned.

I glanced at the clock and leapt to my feet. "Sufferin' catfish, Ella" I shouted, "I must get to Kings Cross to catch my train to Birmingham. I've left my pencil there at my parent's and I promised sixteen fan editors in the States that I'd write up my visit to London soonest". I tried to shake her hand in goodbye, but it was shaking so much already that I only managed to knock her cigarette into her teacup again. "Goodbye all, Cheers", I shouted. A few hands were raised weakly in my direction as well as quite a number of fists. I blew gently through my moustache at them all again and nipped off down the corridor. I must have made a good impression for a few of them came down the corridor with me and carried me in style out of the front door. I must have tripped up again on that loose bootlace, for I found myself on my hands and knees outside the door.

I leaned against the lift door waiting for it to come up and wiped the sweat from my face. I noticed that my hands came away streaked with boot polish, but I felt triumphant. I had carried it off. Nobody could say that Berry didn't visit London Fandom, Thomson had told the truth. I got into the lift and did a jaunty little impromptu clog dance on the way down. Boy, wouldn't they be surprised if they knew how they'd been hoaxed. Everythin' had gone smashin'. I pulled myself up short, I would have to stop myself using these Berry type expressions. I got out of the lift and made my way back to the car humming happily. The only thing that marred the whole affair was the large bundle of fanzines that narrowly missed striking me on the head as I left the vicinity of the flats and the fact that when I got back to the car I was arrested by a policeman on suspicion of trying to break into locked cars. I didn't have anything on me to prove my identity, so I spent the rest of that night in the Kilburn police station 'til Olive came the next morning with my driving licence and got me out.

ARTHUR THOMSON.





In the county of Hertfordshire lies the town of St. Albans, home of Joe and Anne Patrizio. For years now the Hertfordshire County Council have been holding an annual get-together with the large

number of French exiles who make their home in St. Albans. This glorious excuse for a party is looked forward to by everyone concerned but a few of the more influential Council members find their joy mixed with sadness when they recall that the festivities include a sporting event - namely a boat race - between Herts and French teams, and that in the past the French team have always won, and the St. Albans boat has always sunk.

This year Joe was involved for the first time and he resolved to apply his sensitive fannish mind to the problem of winning the boat-race. As the two crews and their friends worked their way through the Champagne, Gin, Burgundy, etc. he snooped around until he found what he was looking for, then he ran to the Herts captain and whispered in his ear.

Together the pair left the scene of the festivities and ran to the liquor store where they removed one case of bottles and hid it where no one would find it. Later, as the winning St. Albans boat passed them, Joe was heard to say to Anne, "I knew I was right. ~~It~~ sinthe makes the Herts crew founder!"

Ted Forsyth.

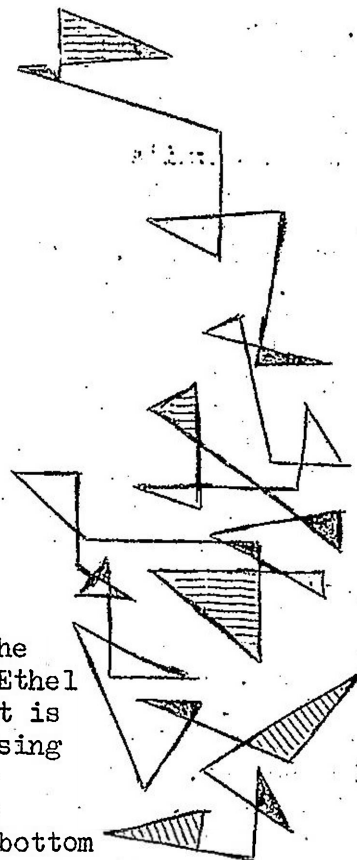
P.S.

This should pay back Patrizio for the thing in BINARY about "as ye row so shall ye seep!"

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This is cOMPAct #4 and was edited and published for the 40th mailing of the Offtrail Magazine Publishing Association, due out in June, '64. cOMPAct is the responsibility of Ella A. Parker, who lives at, 43, Wm. Dunbar House, Albert Road, London, N.W.6. She is amazed at having met the deadline this time round, with ease!!!!

Mailing Comments



Here I am, full of Good Resolutions and fully determined to get my OMPazine finished long before the deadline so I won't end up in a flurry to get it to Ethel in good time. That is my plan, how it will work out is likely to be another kettle of fish. Right, no messing about, on with the comments.

OFFTRAILS: Ethel, do me a favour, please? At the bottom of the front cover on OT could you remember to put the precise date for the next deadline? Lately my memory is becoming chronic and I'm always wondering if I've left things too late.

MEIN OMP-F, COLIN FREEMAN. Well, I might have known you'd choose a title like that! I'm sorry I missed the mailing last time; if I were to deal with both bundles of zines this time round, I'd be here until the deadline after this'un, whenever this'un is. I'm still tossing up in my mind whether it is of more advantage to us to have you in OMPA iffen it means we are to see less of your genzine SCRIBBLE. Still, if you keep your promise not to kill it off altogether, maybe we'll let you away with it. // Xmas in your hospital sounds more like an orgy than anything else. Some folk I can think of might be asking if there are any empty beds there. // WE MUST LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE is, of course, the kind of writing we have come to expect from you, and that I like even though it leaves me with no comments to make. Having exclaimed over the apparent and comical contradictions, what else can one do? Currently I am wondering how this business of the U.S. trying to make the merchant services charge for freight-carrying what they think should be charged, is going to turn out. I sometimes wonder, does Uncle Sam really believe its own propaganda to the extent when they imagine they can tell the rest of the western world what to do and get implicit obedience? // Why I joined OMPA? Sheesh. I resisted joining for long enough, ask Archie. I finally joined mainly because from force of circumstances I was unable to maintain my usual genzine publishing schedule; I thought that if I could contribute 12 pp per year it would be a good way of keeping some kind of contact with a large number of fen who might otherwise think I had gone from the scene. Mostly members feel that OMPA is for experiment, this is good, but I have a different purpose, I think of it as something of a correspondence club. I can express opinions, indulge in arguments and keep in touch regularly at little cost or effort. You may think these to be all the wrong reasons, but they suit me.

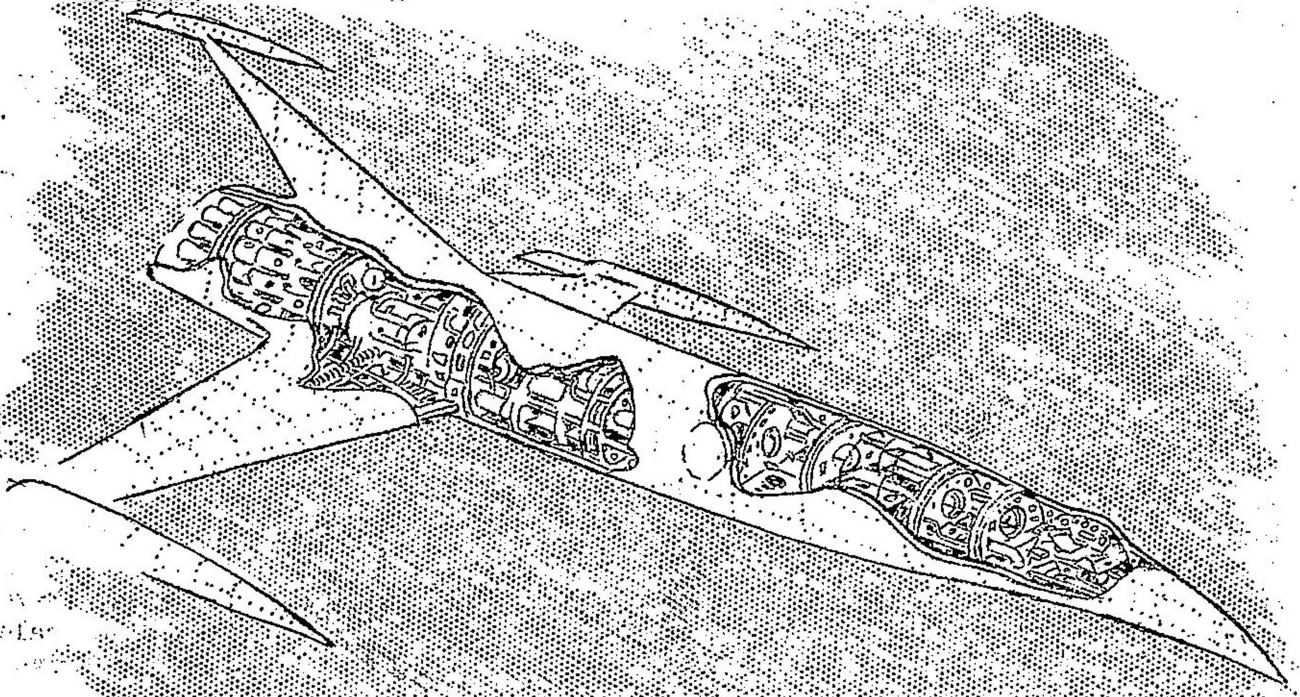
// Frankly, I don't understand how other fen have time/resources to publish a genzine as well as an APAzine. Of course, when I first gave this matter some thought, it was surprising how many of the fanzine publishers were male - I know that in a lot of cases they were/are helped by their wives, but I can't think of another femme in fandom who is entirely responsible for her own fan publications at the same time as she runs a home and entertains fans. Bjo has her John, Jannita has her Buck, Madeleine has her Walt and so it goes on. Ethel's spare time is entirely her own, for which I envy her. No rude noises now, but when I resume genzine publishing I can't honestly say if I'll retain my membership in UMPA. I'll make this promise though, that if I find it too much for me, I won't hang onto my membership by the skin of my teeth, I'll get the hell out and leave room for an active member. //You are right, of course, When I say I feel guilty because I am whole and they - the handicapped - are not, I was talking entirely of their physical handicaps. I wouldn't come near to suggesting that their mind is as restricted as their bodies. We all at some time indulge ourselves in day-dreams. One of mine is that I should be just sufficiently incapacitated that I have to take to my bed for months. I dream fondly of all the reading I would like to do but don't have the time for, I think of all the crudzines I could publish and mail out to the defenceless fen on my m/l, the numerous letters I would write. Naturally, part of the day-dream is that I would have a sufficiency of cash to enable me to do all this. No, I was not embarrassed when I met you, for two reasons. (1) I was meeting Colin Freeman, a person with whom I'd been corresponding and with whom I'd become friends. (2) There was no apparent physical handicap. You didn't have a speech defect which made it difficult to understand you - I discount a broad yorkshire accent. You didn't have a badly deformed hand or anything else that was obvious to me. I think, perhaps, I suffer from a bad case of selfishness. Anything I can see that makes me feel uncomfortable, I resent, so I feel guilty because I know my resentment is unreasonable. This is getting involved?

BERSERK: ONESHOT. And rightly named. The best thing here was the cover.

SOUFFLE: BAXTER. I don't have your dedicated interest in films and I certainly have no knowledge of the various techniques over which you buffs rave. I go to the cinema so seldom that I invariably enjoy what I do see. I did see the original of THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH, but can't remember much about it. Of those you catalogued I've seen only two, the remake of the above and KEY LARGO. A poor score, huh? // As a matter of interest, exactly the same point you make about your first story dealing with Alien Contact, Parallel Universes etc. being the most memorable and reading later versions of the same plot being not so good, was made at this year's EasterCon. We were discussing whether the SF being written today had the same impact as that written in the 'golden years' as some fen describe them. Consensus of opinion seemed to agree with your views. They may not have the same impact, agreed, but if the variations on a theme are well written, they can be entertaining and so few are these days.

MARG: JEEVES. Yes, I'll play your game, but as I do see ITV as well, I must include some of them. I'll go along with your condemnation of Raymond Baxter, and for the same reason; he always manages to put my back up. Heck, 5 and 8 too, and also for your reasons. Dimpleby(sic) I can just about tolerate as I find his manner so amusing when faced with a royal occasion. Added to these I would name: Alan Freeman and Jimmy Saville for their phoney geniality, David Jacobs for not having the courage to quit a job with which he is so obviously bored, and he doesn't bother to hide it. John Grierison for his gabby habits, when all you want to do in his programme, THIS WONDERFUL WORLD, is to watch some of those fabulous films he always manages to get. Bill Burrud whose commentary in the TRUE ADVENTURE films spoils it entirely by his inanities. What finally finished me was in one film he was showing a group of men out hunting a mountain lion. In the introduction he had already told us the beast was dangerous, and it was going to be hunted to the death. From then on at intervals, he repeated this information at great length and his false attempts to enthuse over what

was happening, like goshWOW boys, was sickening. Hughie Green and Michael Miles come way up on this list. Miles had a dirty habit of being funny (he thinks) at the expense of some old woman he imagines too ignorant to know what he is doing. That he is right in thinking this, doesn't make it any nicer to see. I gave up watching most of these programmes some time ago, but memories of them still linger. With a bit of thought I've no doubt I could come up with more, but why bother? The following is just for you!



AMBLE: MERCER. I never felt less like laughing in my life as when I read how you find it difficult, if not impossible, to fit into the world. I know what you mean though, when describing your visits to the theatre. These other people who insist on talking during a film, to say nothing of the gangs of youths who went there just to shout and show-off in front of the local belles, spoiled many a good film for me. Ideally, a theatre or cinema should be empty of anyone else for the duration of the performance. You wouldn't have been subjected to this particular nuisance, but it always seems to be my fate to choose a seat next to or near someone who has forgotten their matches/lighter. When I light a cigarette, not knowing this, my fate is sealed. Unless I move my seat, which I do now, I am pestered for a light whenever s/he wants to smoke. // Kennedy himself was well aware of the 20 year jinx he was bucking. It has been reported that he said he thought he stood a good chance of breaking the sequence; more's the pity, he didn't. // Touchy, who, me? Rubbish! When I first met Betty Rosenblum I had corresponded ^{with} or met neither her or Mike. I wasn't too sure she was 'fannish' in her own right, say like Elinor Busby is, so treated her to the courtesy I would accord any other non-fannish woman I was meeting for the first time and with whom I was unacquainted. What is touchy about that? // I hope you like Wally, now that you've met him?

BLEATHERINGS: LINDSAY. While admitting it is a pity not to see SCOT here, I must admit to a preference for this, your BLEATHERINGS. It is a much more personal zine. Your writing talents have improved almost beyond recognition even though I am left without comment, simply because if I once get started I know I'll go on and on. If putting a smaller zine through OMPA means we are going to have more of this kind of thing from you, then I am all for it.

BINARY: PATRIZIO. Yes, well, I know Andrew's parents and I know exactly what you mean, but not in the way you meant it. I hope you are liking the new job? /// Come, Joe, why be so harsh on the Beatles? I must admit I don't go a bundle on their singing but they are an interesting group for more than one reason. For instance, Fred, you know Fred, raves about them. If I'm in my room watching TV and I happen to be on a different channel to him and the Beatles come on, whether they are performing or just being interviewed, I have to yell for him either to come and watch or change channels on his set. I find this an amazing phenomena. As a general rule he is unable to distinguish between any of these teenage squallers and his opinions of them are unprintable, yes, even for me. Yet, for the Beatles, he raves. I hear tell Minor Busby has been bitten by them as well. I don't care for their singing, but I do sort of like them as personalities. They are cheeky and have their feet solidly on the ground. They know that it's more than likely they'll be O U T on their respective ear'oles any day now and they intend to milk the existing situation for all it will bring them. And who can blame them? If they've been sensible, and I believe they have, they are set for life without having to worry about spending their days doing a job they don't like just in order to eat and pay the rent. Another thing I like about them is that they haven't fallen into the trap of believing their agent's publicity; they even take the mickey out of it. Did you see them on TV when they returned from America? They stood on the steps leading from the plane and looked at all those girls standing around yelling for them. They couldn't believe it. As one of them said, it was mad. I like 'em. // See Ted Forsyth's acid rejoinder to your lousy pun for my reactions too, ugh! Hey, hold it, the Peace Corps was originally a British idea; the Americans have put it to better use than we did, whether we can't afford to do it on the scale practised by America, or if it is just that the Government is too mean to give it the funds it needs, I'm not sure.

This was in the previous mailing, but I feel I should remark on it.
AT 1.30 THIS AFTERNOON: SCHULTZ. Your muddled thinking and your grief were so exactly as I felt that Friday when I heard the news. Some of it has worn off by now, but it lingered for days. I still don't understand how you had the ability, under the circumstances, to put a stencil into the typewriter and pour out your feelings. It makes for poignant reading and I am grateful to you for the trouble you took to do it. One thing that throws me for six, is the letter you printed from Harry Warner. I would never have thought him to be so self-centred that he would think of fandom or self at such a time. Fandom, or the fear that Oswald may have been a fringe fan never entered my head, or that of anyone else I know. He makes it sound as if he's ashamed of his part in fandom, are you, Harry?

WHATSIT: CHESLIN. I loved that cover! You are to be commended/pitied for all that work you do colouring them by hand. I don't think I'd ever work up that amount of interest in sheer hard graft. The more I look at it the more crazy I believe you to be. I much appreciated OLAF too. Would you like to explain something to me? Howcum that oneshot you did with Archie etc. has such a bad appearance as compared with your OMPazine, they were done on the same duper, weren't they? The difference is incredible. // Yes, I've seen those stencils with the film over them, used them too. In view of my habit for knocking out the center of my o's, maybe I should use them allatime.

PROCRASTINATOR: TRIMBLE. Hi, Bjo. No matter what Al Lewis says to you, you keep right on telling us of your doings. It was wonderful to read about the changes in your life brought about by having bought a house instead of renting, and news of the coming baby. I liked the 'newsy' aspect of this zine; it helped me catch up on a lot of news concerning you two. It is ridiculously easy to pick a LASFASzine from the bunch; your illos have a distinction all their own and the paper always seems to be of such gorgeous hues. I used to love that rose pink Bruce Pelz used and can't remember having seen anyone else use it.

This must be all. Your zines were read and appreciated if not mentioned.

Kila

THIS HAS NOT BEEN:-

THE
ATOM ANTHOLOGY

