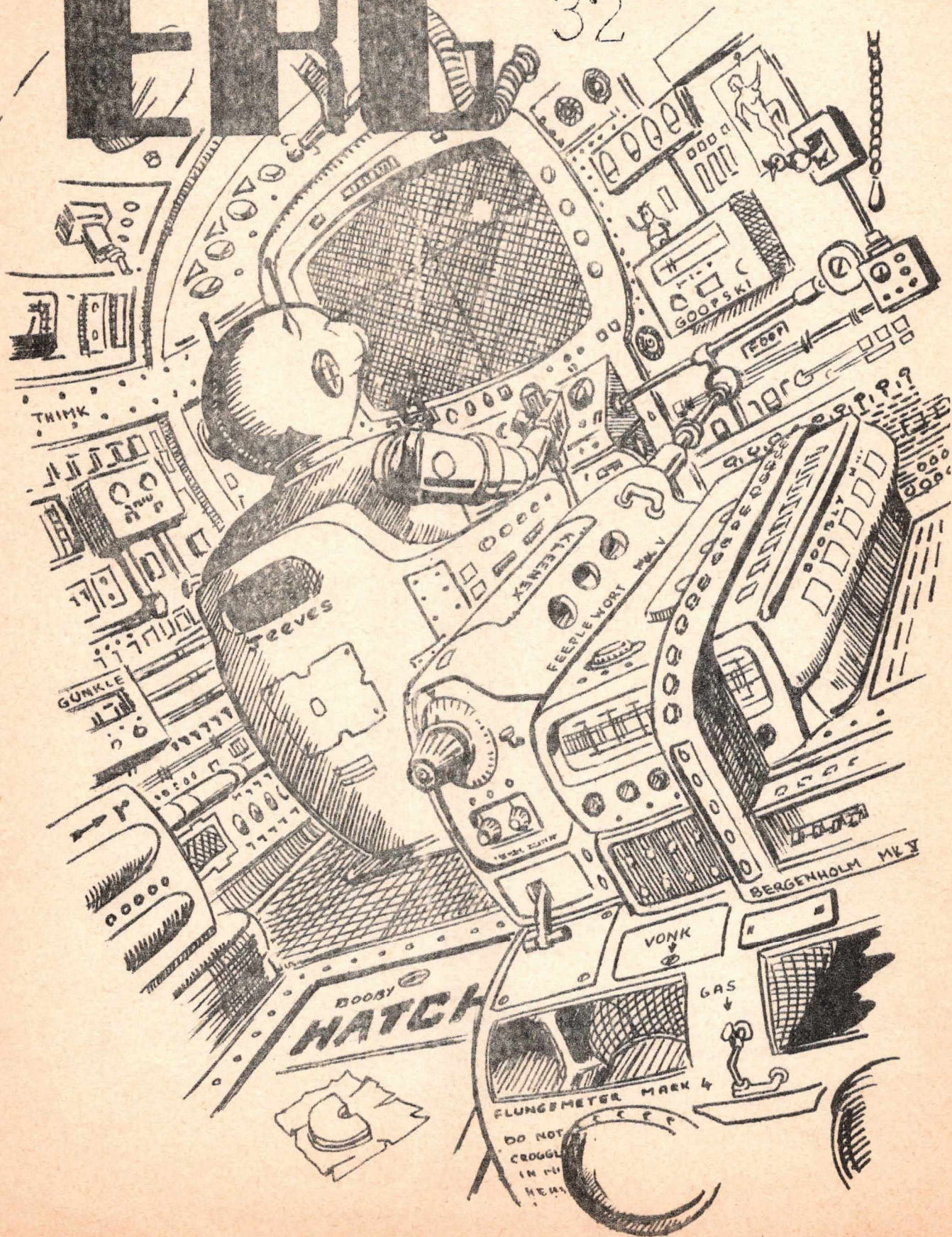
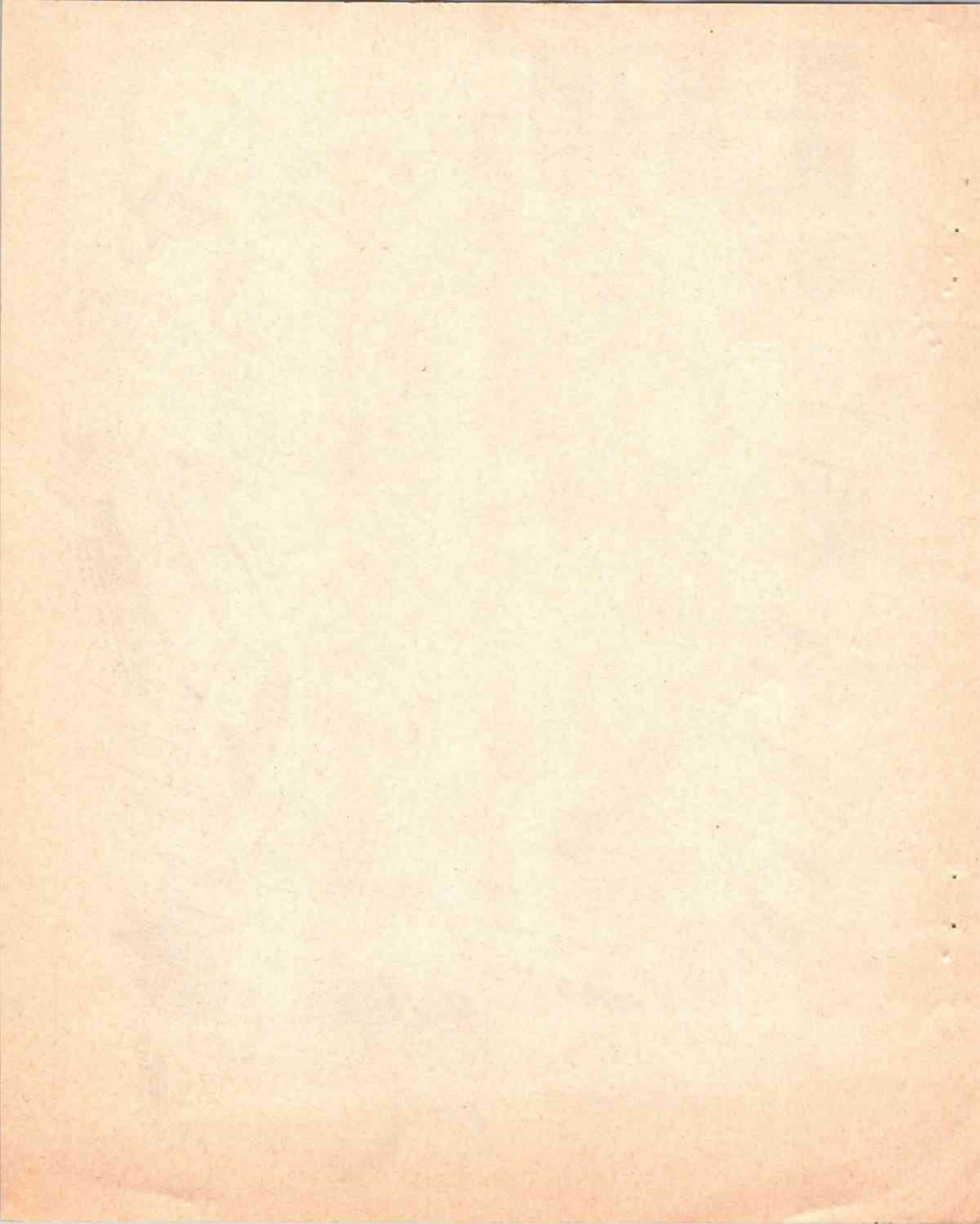


ERIC

32





Ergitorial

ERG time is here again, an event which happens with monotonous regularity. This time the issue has had more than its usual slew of snags. The main one is the sale of the crumbling Jeeves' mansion. We have found a ~~£40k~~ buyer, and now all that remains is to find somewhere to live...we had a lovely place all lined up, but serveyor's reports gave us a £500 bill for repairs..so we're still looking. So if this issue has a little sticker in it with a new address...please pass it along.

OUTWORLDS No. 4 has just arrived from Bill Bowers..and is the MOST beautiful fan-type fanzine I have ever come across. Around 40 printed pages with absolutely marvellous artwork by Fabian (each illo is a monochrome in red, blue or black) I thought the final D-B was good, but this issue is terrific. I'm not saying that just because I'm the U.K. agent either (or I'd have said it long ago) If you want to sub via me, the rate is 50 cents an issue..allowing for postage, this means 4/6 and issue. Steep? I suppose so, but heaven ain't cheap either.

Once again, I am pickled tink to report having sold yet another article to 'Movie Maker, thus bringing the total up to three. Spurred by success, I have hacked out other items which will duly be fired off in all direction in the hope of bringing in more of the green stuff. All these ill-gotten gains go into a sinking fund for the buying of a new car....some of you may remember that I bought a new Cortina in 1965 out of the Soggy kitty. I reckon that by the time I have raised enough to replace it, I may be able to sell it to some car museum.

Remember TRIODE? This weekend I have been binding my copies into two handsome volumes. Naturally, I had to start reading them, and what a feast of nostalgia it was. The fandom of fifteen years ago was a vastly different place...names like Mike Wallace, Mal Ashworth, Vinç Clarke, and so on filled the pages. Kettering Cons, LiG tape opera scripts, the 'Future History of Fandom' and the inimitable Bentcliffe letter column all gave me hours of pleasure, and even recalled the old 'Sense of Wonder'. Some day, I may even run a few reprints in ERG. I was struck by the shockingly poor stencil cutting of my old typewriter (and by my own immature stencil cutting efforts) However, if any of you want to wallow a but yourselves, I also turned up the following spare copies..No.7, 54 pages, including the tapescript

ERG 32 for November 1970. The whole shooting match is typed, written, illustrated, published and produced by Terry Jeeves, ~~30 Thompson Rd. Sheffield S11 8RB.~~ Thanks are given to Alan Burns for typing his own material, and to Ghu for help from above. Readers other than OMPANS who would like to receive future issues, should send a LOC (preferably with a 4d. stamp to the Ergitorial address. This is a Soggy production.

for the LiG epic, 'FIRST AND LAST FEN', plus
items by Carnell, Berry and Atom.

No.15 (Winter 1958), 38 pages, with Mercer,
Ashworth, Rotsler etc. etc.

No.17, (Jan.1960.) 38 pages by Berry, Warner,
Penelope Fendergaste, Doc Weir, etc.

No.18 (May.60) Two colour cover & interior illo. 40 pages including a
Harrison adventure by Hurstmonceaux and Faversham. Any offers,, singly
or for the lot???? Bids to me..no cash. Winners will be notified.

If Eric Bentcliffe happens to read the above..which he ought to do,
since I'll be sending him a copy to his retirement home in Cheadle..I will
use the money to buy you a new bath-chair, as I gather the one you have
now has just failed its M.O.T. Test. For thos of you who don't know Eric,
this old and tired fan is now living out a peaceful old age hidden away
from the fannish world, save for an occasional trip to Sheffield for the
regular (every five years) meeting of the Stockport and Intake, Dog and
Cake Walking Society's annual draught tournament. We play this fannish
game by alternately opening and shutting the windows. Eric isn't really
THAT old (I was only kidding) really, he is less than twenty years my
senior, although of course, you wouldn't think it to look at him. Who
knows, we may be able to get that palsied hand to again take up its
fannish pen. No doubt this will help to ~~inspire~~ inspire him (Eric ?)

Many of today's fanzines feature poetry (well that what they call it)
At vast expense (spent mainly in bribing the Watch Committee) ERG proudly
brings you this epic ode from the pen of Emualina Hoggewosh, whose blank
verse is among the blankest in the land.

ODE TO A FRANNILWONK

Oh to be a frannilwonk, wurd thou never birt,
Your eyes are green, your nose is blue, you have a dirty shirt.
And has thou seen the Slobbowicz ? or shot a fringly jime ?
Then frabbage it beneath the waves of some secluded clime.

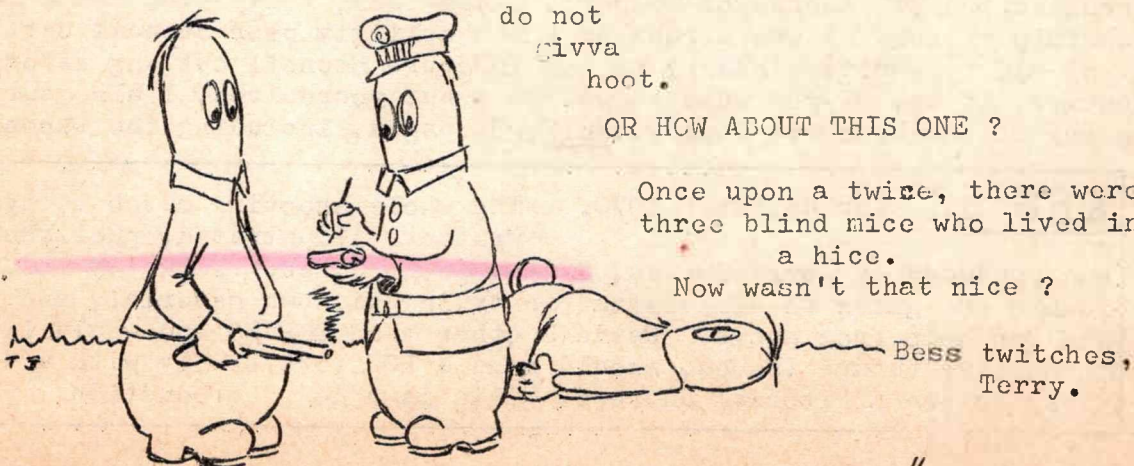
Wonk, wonk, wonk. In stillness absolute.
Soft dreaming pinnacles of foam
Yearning for things
for which I

do not
givva
hoot.

OR HOW ABOUT THIS ONE ?

Once upon a twize, there were
three blind mice who lived in
a hice.

Now wasn't that nice ?



Bess twitches,
Terry.

"Honest officer, I made it from a plastic kit"

DOWN

MEMORY-BANK

LANE

The sixth in a series of articles I originally wrote for Lynn Hickman's excellent zine...THE PULP ERA

Having been an aircraft buff since knee-high to a pulp magazine, and an avid reader and modeller of things aeronautical for nearly as long, I can look back to the 1930-40 era with considerable nostalgia. In those days, aeroplanes had huge fans up at the sharp end, and the undercarriages were intended to stay firmly fixed.... unless a crummy landing decreed otherwise.

From where I sit today, only a handful of British journals have made sufficient impression on my brain cells to allow any details to survive. 'AERONAUTICS' was a very s & c affair which appeared shortly before the war, cost a bomb, used high quality paper and had highly technical (to me) articles...things like the effects of drag on high-speed (200 mph) fighters; the effects on airlines if someone ever invented an airliner capable of carrying 50 passengers; or why it was impossible to get a bomber to Germany and back. It had nice pictures but price and pomposity diverted me to its cheaper contemporaries, 'Flight' and 'The Aeroplane'. Both appeared weekly and featured all the current news on what was happening in the air world, both civilian and military. However, these were also adult in presentation, and stuff like, "Some aspects of the use of wind-driven generators in light aircraft" didn't exactly have me hanging on the next issue.

AIR STORIES was quite a different item. Published by Newnes at 1/6, I was forced to win copies by subtle stratagems such as bugging my nose hard against a newagent's window and gazing longingly at the magazine while some relative, long on money, but short on brains, passed by. One by one, they caught on, and instead of Air Stories, all I got was a sore nose. The mag wasn't really worth pains in the proboscis. S.Drigin handled most of the artwork..his style of 90% soot and 10% whitewash has been mentioned earlier in these treasured pages. For a while, I was firmly convinced that all pilots wore stubby whiskers until I discovered it was merely Drigin's enthusiasm with the ink bottle.

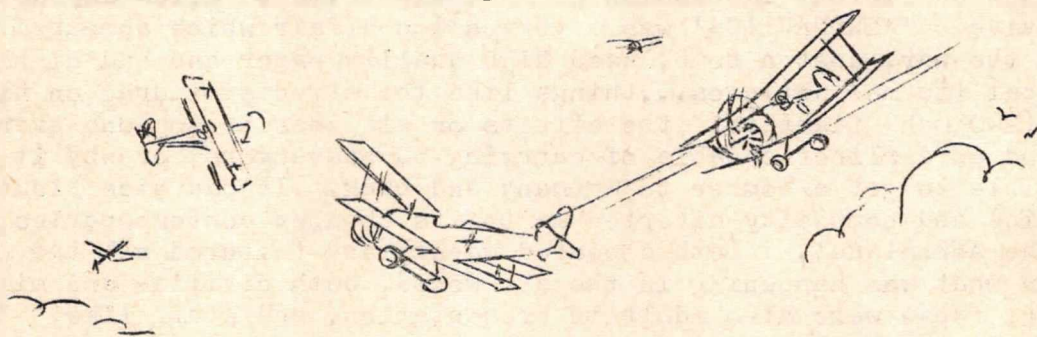
The stories had more cliches and stereotypes per column inch than a dog has fleas. All Germans were bad, and all Allies were good...(although the odd one could be allowed to get big-headed for a chapter or so before finally seeing the error of his ways) In an air fight, the Allied pilot always won except for two stock situations.

1. The wily, sneaky, crafty experienced von Räcketyoveh (They were all called von something or other in the German Air Force) was allowed

to sneak upon the Allied rookie from his hiding place in the sun. (I reckon von Ricketyoven was a very sunburnt character) By doing such a dirty trick, he could clobber one RFC flier at a time. Of course, sooner or later, he would sneak up on the hero by mistake and that would be the end of old Ricketyoven for a month or so.

In case 2, twelve Jerry pilots were allowed to knock the spots of not more than two Allies, provided that before going down in a sickening plunge, each Allied airman shot down three Huns. Of course, if the hero happened to be around, it was a cast iron rule that after he shot down four enemies, his Spad must cop a burst of lead in the engine, cutting off the power, spraying him with oil, and allowing an honourable withdrawal to fight another day.

In the case of an encounter on the ground after a forced landing, the Jerry would aim his pistol at the hero (whose own gun had fallen from its holster during the crash). The lip would curl in a sneer as the finger slowly whitened on the trigger. At this point, the intrepid hero would hurl himself at the villain's legs..usually feeling something whistle through his hair as he did so..(a bullet, what else ?) In the ensuing scuffle, poor old von Supponatime would be rendered hors-de-combat by a straight left.



FLYING weekly, at 3d. was a much more worthy piece of escapism. In addition to dauntless airmen going through their pre-ordained programmes, it also featured plans for flying models. The first one was a Fokker D-7 I duly dug out my balsa wood, tissue, cement and razor blades and hacked merrily away. The motive power was a length of elastic (involving a dangerous side mission to the local girls' school). My model stood complete...just like those blood-red (mine was real blood ..the razor blade was double-edged) Fokkers flown by von Toothree and his mates. I sallied outside into a balmy strength six gale. Jerrys flew in this weather, why shouldn't I? A quick wind of the elastic and away soared my pride and joy. It performed just like the real thing...it zoomed up into a stall, fell off on one wing, and crashed into the ground. I bet old Rocketyoven had his problems too.

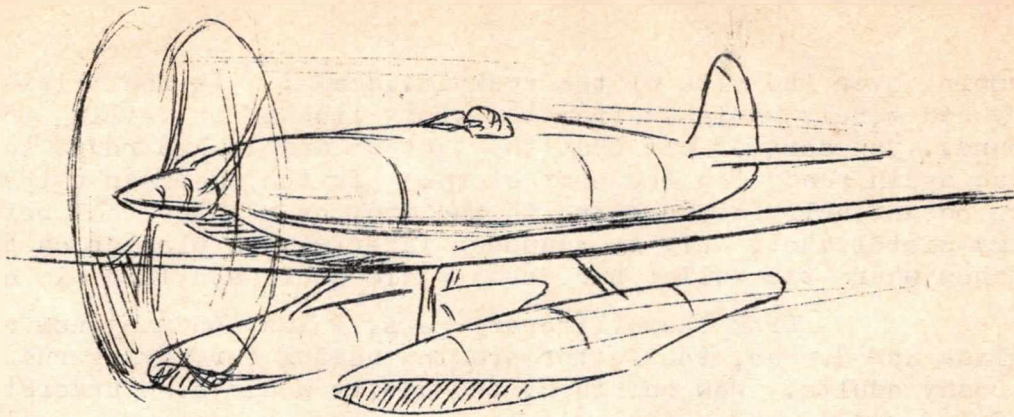
AIR STORIES and FLYING were anaemic stop gaps between supplies of the real McCoy. American pul magazines travelled to England as ballast, and retailed at 3d a copy. G-8, Dusty Ayres, Flying Aces, and Model Airplane News all vied for (and cleaned out) the contents of my piggy bank. In these full-blooded yarns, the aircraft went down in flames! Airmen reared up in agony before

slumping over the side of the cockpit..dead ! In the British stories, they had merely vanished from the story line after falling to the ground...you sort of felt that they got up and walked round to join the queue again ready for the next story. In the American pulps, even the hero occasionally stopped one in the arm, or perhaps fell before an enemy pistol shot, only to reappear later with a plaster on his noggin to show where the bullet had creased his scalp and laid him out.

From these literary gems, I learned many new words...both English and German, the latter proving useful for saying rude things to bossy adults. Now and then, the adults would also understand such edifying words, and a thump in the lug usually followed. All these stories led to some curious offshoots. For many years, I had a confused mental image of military cannon firing the kind of 'shell' one finds on the seashore. When flying, pilots always 'kicked the rudder-bar', a brutal trick that would have given any instructor the hanby danbys had he had me in his aircraft...as would my attempts to 'yank back on the stick', or to 'cut the engine and sideslip in to a deadstick landing'. It also took a while to catch on to the fact that 'tanking her up with gas' simply meant re-filling the petrol tank.

Another side effect was when my pals took up reading the marvellous tales (under a threat of a bashing from me if they didn't) In short order, our bicycles became Spads and Fokkers. Under the spell of one particularly vivid yarn in 'Daredevil Aces' we became the 'Orange Tango(..every bike bearing aminiature wooden orange aeroplane on the front mudguard. Dog fights (and busted spokes) were frequent, and a favourite game was, 'limping home with the engine shot out'. This involved coasting home without pedalling, using every bump and slope of the road to conserve momentum. It often became hectic, as to maintain velocity for the next rise, it was very easy to take a corner without braking sufficiently....thus having to make a forced landing in the ditch.

Apart from the fictional aspects of the era, there were also many real heroes around, and many epic deeds being did. Amy Johnson had captured the public imagination (by a fantastic coincidence it turns out that she lived in the road where this is being typed... ..perhaps in this very house !) The toyshops flogged clockwork toys with an effigy of Amy and a rotating propeller..there was even a pop song about her. Also in the news were the Kings Cup Air Races, and races to Australia, mass displays at Hendon, new aircraft appeared almost daily...Britain was an air-minded nation then...it saddens me now to think of Princess flying boats mouldering in their morrhings, TSR2 as a small arms target, and even mighty Concorde in peril. I still recall nostalgically that beautiful Macchi Castoldi floatplane which for so many years held the absolute speed record with 440 mph.... or those lovely Schneider Trophy racers the forerunner of the Spitfire. Then there was the original D.H. Comet...not the jet liner, but the twin Engined 'Grosvenor House with its G-ACSS on the side which won the England to Australia air race. Many of its lines were to be seen in the incomparable war-time 'Mosquito' from the same designer



Then there was that heroic venture, the 'Mayo Composite' aircraft in which a complete Empire flying boat with a strengthened and broadened hull (The Maia) took off carrying another four engined float-plane on its back. Once altitude had been gained, the 'Mercury' set off on a world record long distance flight which she could never have achieved under her own power...once again an outstanding venture which to-days tycons and politicians would have frowned upon as not bringing 35/- back for every quid spent. Also unusual was the gawky Cierva jumping autogyro which I saw demonstrated at an air display. Set in neutral pitch, the (normally autorotating) blades were revved up by the engine which normally drove the front prop. Suddenly, the pitch angle was changed, and the autogyro would leap into the air before flying off horizontally. Not quite so successful when I saw it was the 'Flying Flea' built by the Frenchman Mignet. It belted up and down the field, but never even bounced into the air. From America came details of the Gee Bee supersportster, a stubby, radial-engine job from the National Air Races. From Germany, the king sized, 12 engined DO-X. These and many others served to give the aviation of the 30's a flavour which now seems to have gone for good.

Naturally, when I volunteered for the RAF, it was as a fighter pilot. No soap, I had a weak right eye...Gunner ?? No. Observer ?? No. I settled for a ground staff Wireless Mechanic, but I still got at those aeroplanes. It shattered me to find that our wonderful new RAF still used bracing wires and bungee cords. Fabric was still doped (and made highly expensive tearing noises if you stood on it. Flying box kites such as the Wapiti, Swordfish, Rapide and Heyford were still in service...in fact, my first (unofficial) anti-submarine patrol was made in a Rapide from Juhu aerodrome near Bombay in 1942. Oh yes, we had Spitfires and Hurricanes, but even these wonderful aircraft were fitted with such radio gear as the TR-9 which was an archaic device..the official test procedure was to tune it, then kick it to make sure it stayed in tune ! Even the early 1942 bombers used a five valve straight receiver the 1082, and a two valve transmitter which because of its huge change over switch became known as the 'one-armed bandit.'

I shudder to think what G-8 and all those WW1 peclots had to endure in 1916 if this was the progress to 1940. As for guns..once I'd tried loading and firing the Lewis and Browning guns, I know those WW1 men deserved all their kudos, and all the yarns written about them.

THE END.

IN PRAISE of

IRISHMEN

by
Alan Burns

For far too long the Irishman-- and woman--has been regarded as nothing but a nuisance, an unnecessary member of the human race, speaking as fifty percent Irish I feel that it is time the account was set straight. Let us therefore praise the Irish.

The Irish serve a most valuable purpose in principal. After a time of peace the body politic of England grows sleepy and inactive, and just before it gets too lethargic to be worth a light, as indicated by the return of a socialist government, a small green pin is inserted into its posterior, whereupon it leaps up with a roar of rage, and goes after the Celt who has dared do this offensive act. In short, a boil, a sore, a heatspot tells you somethings wrong with you and it's heigh-ho for the brimstone and treacle. The fact that the Irish start getting troublesome indicates that it's high time they were sat on once more. Seating on them permanently isn't worth the candle, alas.

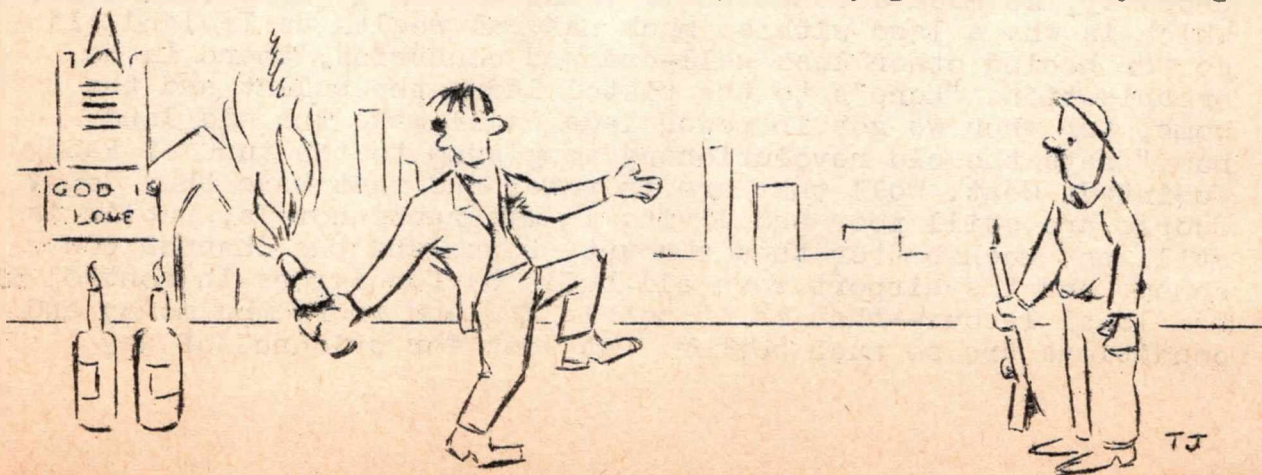
Now let us consider the Celt in some detail. First and foremost the Celt loves a fight. A true Irishman can no more exist without conflict than without air. An Irishman denied conflict turns broody, and either drinks himself stupid or writes poetry, both deadly vices and calculated to inflame. The Irishman likes his little patch of property, so much so that he is incapable of looking beyond it. Which is why a land with so much natural wealth as Ireland, is so far behind other less well-endowed countries, there is no organisation. "Here's to the pistol lads, the bullet and the bomb, for when we get in power lads we'll make the old land hum." says the old revolutionary song (sung to the tune of Paddy McGinty's Goat. Well they are in power and what have they done? People are still poor and living in miserable hovels, Dublin is still not much better than a county town, and the Shannon power scheme and the airport were all built by foreigners in control of the local labour--that of it not in England where the money and conditions are so much better. But look for evidence of any

advancement in Ireland and you won't see any except what has been imported. Granted the average Irishman goes out to work with bacon and eggs under his waistband, but there is almost always a whacking great patch on his breeks. In short, the only time you can get Irishmen to organise is when there's a fight, and even then it's usually every man for himself.

Now legend hath it that all this was instituted by Blessed St. Patrick himself, the dear man. You see the men were so busy listening to the preaching that their work among the praties was forgotten and the women had to do it. Now as the snakes fiod from the good man's preaching (who wouldn't?) they shot through the fields and finding the women there took what refugo they could, the result being that every Irishwoman has nursed a viper to her bosom ever since, and sonthe children get infected literally with their mother's milk, and are thereafter lost to civilised behaviour. But I digress from praising Irishmen.

We must not forget that the Irish provide a unique chance for troops and police to get first hand experience of riot control techniques. Rather unfortunately the lessons are only now being learnt, the main one being that the true Irishman does not like water--inside or out. So instead of stinking the place out with riot gas, the first action should have been to divert the fire-engines from fighting fires and turn the hoses on the rioters to cool them off. Besides it's almost impossible to light a petrol bomb under the gush from a high pressure hose. But however, beaten one way the Irishman will seek another and trots out the cabho of guns laid up by Uncle Seamus during the Troubles, and starts sniping. This is not nice, and should be dealt with in the appropriate manner, by cannon shells filled with shrapnel of the American Lazy dog pattern, this doesn't harm property, it merely reduces everything living in the vicinity to mincemeat. The last act is to try the ringleaders giving them a fair hearing and a quick hanging. That will quiet matters down until another twenty years has passed and they're ready to try again.

Irish psychology is so peculiar that Freud himself would have blenched at it, and what puzzles the visitor most is the Irish love of lying. It can be said that no Irishman would tell a malicious lie, but my goodness they'll go



right up to the borderline. It isn't the slightest use the angler going back to his hotel empty-handed and grumpily saying the fish weren't biting. Indeed no. He must have ready details of the struggle he had with a pike the size of which made the biblical leviathan look like a minnow. He must relate his struggles, how he was within an ace of landing the beast when "sure and if he didn't sever me line with a flick of his tail." I had a wild and wonderful holiday in Ireland, simply because as an embryo writer I entered into the spirit of the thing and spun tale for tale. I was even led into Mick Cassidy's place in Killarney and bought a drink. So, we should learn that whatever the Irish say, a fair interpretation is the opposite.

Lastly the Irish are terrors for underground movements. Stranded on an island two Englishmen would form a club, two Frenchmen a government, and two Irishmen a secret society, complete with passwords code, and a set of rules threatening bloody death to the breaker. It is pretty safe to say that all Ireland is one vast secret society, which probably accounts for the ineffective efforts by the government to stamp out the IRA, they're all members. The IRA was dealt with in England very effectively by the Sleeman method, a few good hangings. Now the visitor who keeps his eyes and ears open will learn something of the existence of these secret societies. Go into any Irish pub and almost always you'll see a little group seated in a dark corner talking furtively. They aren't discussing what won at the Curragh, or what teams did well. No, they'll be working out who has to conceal the bombs and who has to throw them or something such. But even if you could go up and listen you wouldn't be any the wiser, because the Irish love to use a sort of symbolism for everything, particularly their own country. Ireland is known as "The poor old woman" or "The minstrel boy" or "The Harp"(shades of Willis). These symbols are wound and twisted so that even an apparently innocuous poem can be an incitement to mass murder. But the nature of the Celt is such that he likes his own little patch of territory and so almost every secret society has its informer who whispers into the ear of a plainclothesman who takes the information away, deals with it in portentous officialdom and then tries to make an arrest with the ease of someone trying to pick up split mercury.

So finally I say again let us praise Irishmen for losing a Pandora's box of troubles on this poor land of England. I remember once attending a meeting in a pub in Newcastle, and an Irishman starting tell us about symbolism. Finally as a great treat he told us the most sacred and secret of Irish symbolism. Ireland is symbolised, he told us, as a small bunch of nuts. I rest my case.

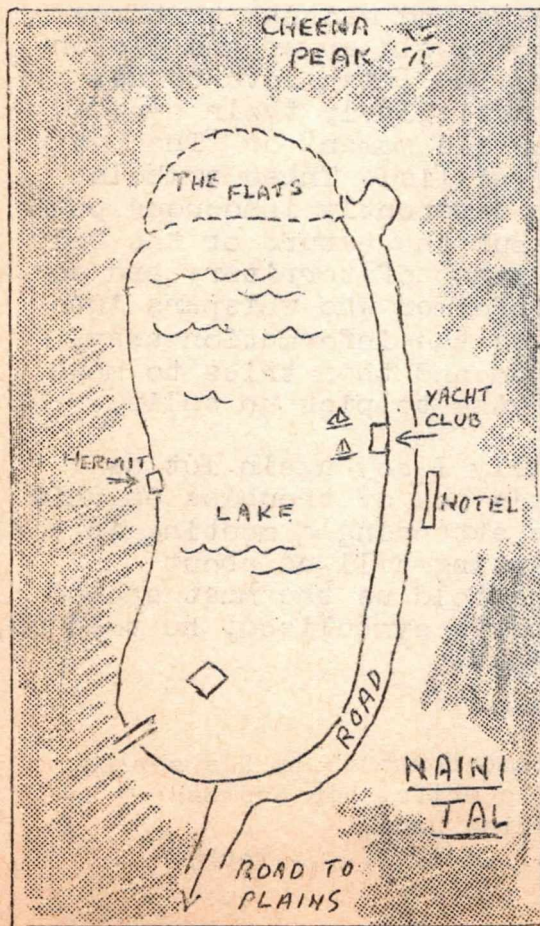
((I'm pretty sure that Alan would welcome comments on his series of articles in ERG...so if you wish to write, his address is :- Alan Burns. Goldspink House, 6 Goldspink Lane, Newcastle on Tyne NE2 1NQ.....Terry)

Carry On JEEVES

part. 8

By 1944, with over two years in India behind me, and no leave or even a week-end pass behind me, it seemed a good time to bung in for a spot of furlough. The machinery was set in motion, application forms signed, duty rosters re-drawn and eventually, Pat O'Hanlon and I began the 1,000 mile trip across India, to Naini Tal.

From Salbani, we caught the 6am. ration wagon into the overgrown village of Kharaghpur some 20 miles away. Here we caught a train for the 50 mile run to Calcutta where we spent an evening riding around Chowringee in rickshaws and tanking up in the Casanova night club. Leaving Calcutta by a late night train and crammed in a tiny compartment with only a hole in the floor for toilet facilities, we headed off into the wild blue yonder. The train rattled through the night, and from time to time stopped at some little wayside halt. At such places, we would stretch our legs or buy earthenware chattis (clay pots) of tea for a couple of annas (pot included) Monkeys swarmed everywhere, and in fact seemed to be the only things moving in the heat of the sun.



At Benares, the carriages clattered over an iron bridge spanning the holy Ganges where it seemed to be bath day. According to tradition, we heaved a few annas out of the carriage window into the muddy waters. Lucknow came and went, and two days after leaving Salbani, we puffed into Bareilly junction, the end of the broad gauge line. We transferred to the narrow gauge 'Oot and Toot' railway.. its official name was the 'Oudh and Tirhut Railway', but Oot and Toot not only sounded better...but suited it to perfection. On reaching the railhead at Kathgodam we boarded one of those overloaded, ramshackle old buses found all over India (Did no one ever buy new ones?) By some miracle, it wound its way higher into the mountains via a road consisting of 90% hairpins bordered by deep ravines. It finally steamed into Naini Tal, 7,000 feet above sea level roughly 2½ days journey from Salbani and way up in the foothills of the Himalayas. The name means, 'Nine Lakes', and the place is a hill station created in a glacial valley

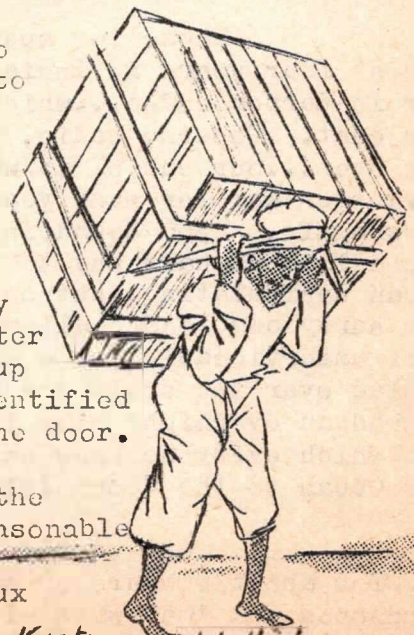
by the British way back in 1841. The houses, chalets and villas were built on the steep hillsides surrounding the lake. The materials to make them had to be carried up by manpower. It was not uncommon to see one of the porters or 'kisti wallahs' trudging along carrying a piano or huge packing case on their backs. Naini has only one road bordering the lake, but despite its inaccessibility, the British have established a Yacht Club on the 1 mile by 1/4 mile lake, and before the war held regular regattas there. Our hotel overlooked the lake, and after settling in we began to explore.

At one end of the lake were the 'Flats', a large (now asphalted) area which in the pre-war days of the Raj, had been the site for a weekly polo game, but was now used for trotting horses. Pat and I hired a couple of the beasts and set off up a narrow winding trail into the hills. The path wound along the side of a ravine. On one side, the cliff went straight up, on the other side it fell spectacularly to a tiny winding stream far below. Much to my relief, the horse I had chosen had a left hand bias to its walk and continually bumped its way along the cliff wall well away from the drop. We reached the end of the trail and enjoyed a panoramic view of the plains baking in the heat. After half an hour, we set off back to Naini - which was when I discovered that my horse was now plodding steadily along the very edge of the sheer drop and kicking stones into the ravine. Somehow, by heaving on the reins I got it safely back to the Flats. Out of sheer relief, Pat and I indulged in some hectic galloping and firing of imaginary six shooters much to the disgust of the local pukka sahibs.

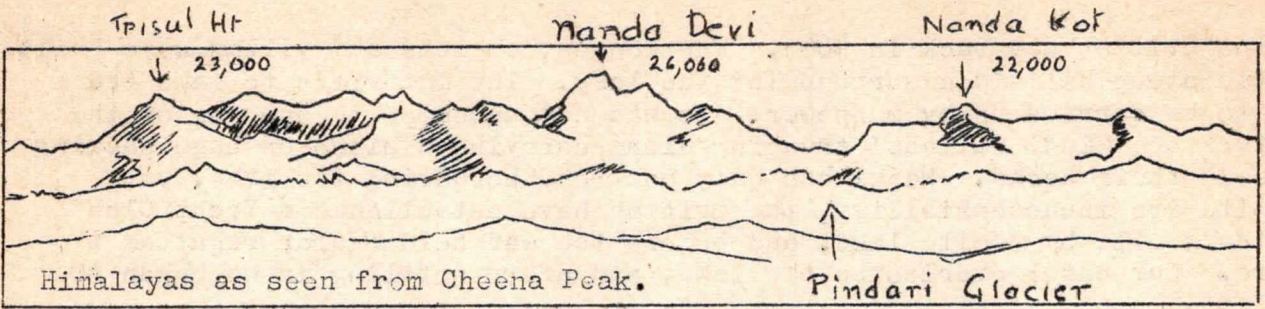
On another occasion (and on foot) we climbed to Cheena Peak about 9,000 feet up and saw the most spectacular view of the lot...away in the distance was what appeared to be a huge low-lying bank of white cloud....then suddenly as the brain sorted out the impressions we realised that we were looking at the Himalayas themselves. Towering Nanda Devi, rearing 26,000 feet high a mere 70 miles away...in that clear air, it seemed less than a score. Flanking it were many minor peaks of a mere 20,000 feet, and the gleaming white of the Pindari glacier.

After sunset, it became too cold to wander around in khaki drill and we were forced to dig out our RAF blue for the first time since leaving England (apart from a showing the flag at a film premier in Bombay). Another reason for wearing uniform in the evening was an edict laid down by the burra sahibs to the effect that 'other ranks' must not wear civilian clothes after 5 pm even when on leave. This was a crafty move to ensure that no low caste airman could enter any of the upper class bars...or horrors! chat up or maybe even dance with a munsahib. Clearly identified as a ranker, he could be given the heave-ho at the door.

In the daytime, we mooched around the bazaars buying all sorts of souvenirs at very reasonable prices - Naini was something of a backwater and still relatively unspoilt by the huge troop influx caused by the war.



Kisti Wallah carrying load



Rowing on the lake was another regular amusement, and this was also a good excuse to get near the hermit's rock on the far side of the lake. A hermit had made his home here in a rocky cave flanked by a string of bells. He rang these when the fit took him, certainly not to scare people away, as his own appearance did that. He had long matted hair and dirty straggly whisker. His clothes were filthy rags - a get up which was years ahead of its time...he would look quite normal these days.

On one particularly roasting day we had a try at swimming in the lake. We sauntered down to the diving board and eyed the raft anchored about six yards out - an easy underwater swim, especially from a dive. Full of confidence I dived in...and found myself struggling to surface. The water was only a fraction above freezing point as it came from melting snows...it just about drove all the air out of my lungs and it was only by a struggle that I reached the raft...and stayed there for half an hour to warm up before shivering my way back to the mainland.

Naini was a lovely change from Service life..particularly because of being able to wear 'civvies' even if only in the day time. We went there again in the April of '45, and on the way back to Salbani broke our journey in Lucknow for a few hours. It was here that we found the ideal cinema...we sat in the rear stalls, and throughout the show, a bearer kept bringing us relays of whisky and soda... I can't remember what the film was about, but I know I enjoyed it.

Those two spells of leave were all I managed to get during almost four years in India. Shortly after my return to Salbani, the war in Burpor ended...which left rather bitter feelings to those in the far east. Papers, radio, newspaper, etc, etc, all crowed that the war was over...our end of it wasn't by a long chalk...we had been the forgotten war for many years. ..and now it seemed we were to be forgotten once again. 356 Squadron moved out lock stock and barrel for the Cocos Islands half way to Australia.. ..a move rendered pointless by Japan capitulating, but one which went on anyway. I wangled on to the air party and loaded all my gear into a Liberator...which promptly went unserviceable for a moth. We finally got off...after I had been hauled over the coals for not having my parachute checked in that time. We had an overnight stay in Ceylon at an aerodrome called Karkasanturai but which everyone knew as KKS, before flying the last leg out over the Ocean to the Cocos Islands.

This particular flight was quite eventful..an overwater leg for about 8 hours or so. Suitably bedecked with parachute harness, earphones and 'May West' I curled up on the flight deck behind the radio operator. After about six hours flying, nature made herself known. In the Libs, this meant a trip through a hatch onto a

narrow catwalk between the bomb-bays...a struggle along between the bomb supports (with large lumps of shark infested ocean visible through the cracks in the venetian blind bomb doors. Through a hatch at the other end, round the ball turret which was retracted and thus right in the fairway. Past the waist gunners, and up towards the tail turret...here was the 'P' tube. All went well on the way aft...but on the way back to the flight deck, I was twisting my way past the bomb gear when the aircraft seemed to cave in and grab me like a vice. It was a very nasty moment until I realised that the B-24 wasn't folding up, I had only snagged the trip lever on my 'May West' and it had inflated and jammed me in the cat-walk. I started to struggle to get free, and at that moment a crew member poked his head down from the flight deck, saw my predicament and came to help.....he snagged his 'May West' and the CO2 cartridge did the rest. There we stuck at opposite ends of the cat walk like a couple of flies on a fly-paper. It seemed to take ages before we got the life jackets deflated and got back to the flight deck...and all the time. that nasty wet ocean was floating by beneath.

Finally, the Lib circled over the Cocos group. Flaps and undercart went down, and the tiny chunk of coral began to expand. The runway on one of the island was approached over a lagoon...we learned afterwards that quite often visiting pilots would touch down a bit short...and promptly vanish beneath the waters of the lagoon. This time, we were lucky...but I nearly jumped out of my skin when the wheels first touched down. The strip was covered with metal mesh..and the noise inside the aircraft was enough to scare you out of a week's growth.

On the Cocos we lived in tents, and it wasn't long before we had liberated a spare tent, inverted it beneath ours and raised the latter on poles. The inverted tent was then hauled up and fastened to the elevated one, and we had a huge tent which was big enough to stand erect at the eaves. During my delay at Salbani, another Corporal had been put in charge of Maintenance, and before I could be integrated into the pattern of no work, my repatriation papers came through. Until I could book a flight out, my days were spent in sunbathing, and swimming in the coral framed lagoon...or dodging the coconuts as they fell from the trees. Quite an idyllic existence.. no mosquitos, only a few land crabs. I could have stayed there for ages. However, I got a flight for Colombo, loaded up and off we went.. ..straight into the grand-daddy of all storms. Even the Lib was thrown about, and I clearly remember floating up among the loose gear when we hit a downdraft. Eventually, the pilot gave up, and headed back to the Cocos...but even then, our troubles were not over. He was a Dutch pilot, used to flying Catalinas...he tried to land the Lib in the same way. He missed the lagoon, but hit the strip on one wheel, bounced, on to the nose wheel..up again and down the runway we went with a hop skip and jump...blood wagon and fire truck in hit pursuit. On our next attempt three days later we had better luck, and eventually touched down at Colombo where I had to wait for a boat back to England. Thanks to the abortive flight, I was now able to chalk up my sixth trip across the Equator, a feat I'm still pointlessly proud of. After some shopping in Colombo, I finally boarded the Athlone Castle and plodded steadily homeward via the Suez canal. As a customs defeating precaution I hid a couple of acorn valves inside a toothpaste tube...and never saw a customs man when we came ashore at Southampton....but I did get leave for Xmas before reporting for duty at 274 MU at Lchfield.

(To be continued)

OMPA VIEWS

On Mailing 58

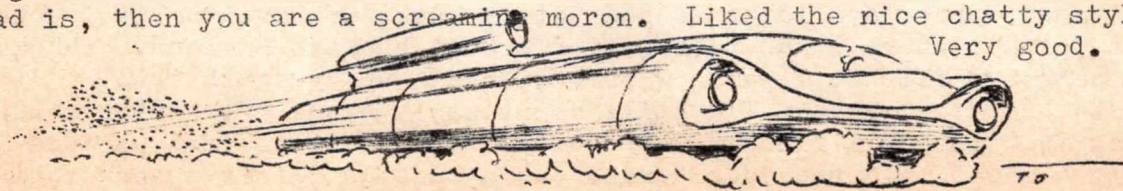
BEST COVER.....LODBROG Nicest looking items....SPINGE & LODBROG

LODBROG A beautifully produced piece of work...utterly legible and a lovely cover...I only regret it was so slim. Oh, I know what the letters mean...Lots of Dogs Bite Rotten Old Gentlemen. Welcome to OMPA..I thought I read in a Stateside fanzine that you were Gafiating, I hope not if this is a sample of your work. I don't think (though I'd hate to be positive) that music could affect me in that Berlioz way..but I know that a low flying jet plane can...and has done, so can a Lanc or a Spit fire.

GERBISH What to say about this ? Slender, precariously held together by a single staple. Bishop on Mendel...a good idea, and well done, but just a trifle too heavy for my crude taste. More next time huh ?

CYNIC Having just bashed off a letter to you asking what political views of mine you detest (I suspect you meant 'sociological views', not 'political') I'm rather dried up. About my 'Concorde'..well, you may be right about it being too stubby, having the wrong air intakes, wrongly positioned inlets and erratically placed wings...funny though, I traced it from a 'Flight' photograph. Should I write and tell 'em ? I still wish you had joined your non-Ompa issue and this one together..it would have made a very good and meaty issue..otherwise, both a on the slim side. I liked the story of the lift and the slow witted bloke..Nice.

VAGARY Very nice to have you back Bobbie. For many a long moon I have been campaigning for your impeachment for non-activity..not because it was you..but because I wanted to stir up action and activity. I kept on stirring because no one gave out with the facts. However Ken has just come through with a letter telling how you have not only helped OMPA financially, but also offered to go on the w/l list during your hang up. My sincerest apologies for the words..had I been clued up in the first place it need never have happened. Anyway, it's good to see Vagary back (which doesn't mean I shan't disagree from time to time with items therein)..it was always one of the better zines in Ompa..and often made up a large percentage of the mailing. I don't know much about cats..but dogs certainly do get foibles. Ours skoots upstairs at bedtime and peeps at us through the banisters..she won't come down until she is dragged down. I fully agree with you on the comments about books... no form, no plot, no beginning etc. But be careful...if you say things like that these days.. YOU ARE WITHOUT IT. I gather that if you do not like x, y, or z..or whatever the current fad is, then you are a screaming moron. Liked the nice chatty style
Very good.



CUAGHT IN THE ACT

BEAUTIFULLY produced..but slender. I note you mention again that you were invited to the Apollo 12 launch...how come where and why ? This should deserve a full article. Pity that this issue is so dated, but I liked the reprint cover...heck, I like all the reprint illos you turn out.

UL. (assorted) Heck, why don't you stick 'em all together, put one number on 'em and have one good zine instead of a fistful of flyers ? I suspect it is all a fiendish plot to number randomly for several reasons...to bamfoozle the OE, to bamfoozle the Creeper of the Printed Books, add to run up a big issue count. Yep, the artists I was after was Fortunino Matania...who back there...I didn't support the 'English s-f in English zines' school...my point was simply that it was refreshing to meet some English s-f as a change from the 100% American diet we had faced until then. But Ghu forbid a diet of all English..especially in those days. Nope, I much preferred the American..but a change now and then is nice. I'm almost positive there was a TOW 17...I'm not so sure about 18.

TASA I liked this. Re Asimov...I like many'most of his stories..but somehow, I just don't dig his 'comic' yarns..or his science pieces. I feel that he strives to do a Willy Ley..but just fails to bring it off.

SEAGULL..what a Seagull without a Jeeves cover ? shame. Glad you liked the crossword, but no one else had a word for it, so it looks like a dead dodo. Yes, I suppose A4 will take over from quarto...but it just doesn't have the same feel somehow...on the other hand, it will allow better space experiments in layout..so it won't be all bad. Why no cover title ?? are you agin 'em or somep'n.

PABLO 8 & 9 Egad, another A4 zine. (sounds like a main road doesn't it) Quite a tour you had in that there mini. Can I ask a daft question and say..why do you call it 'Prolemy', ..reminds me of that pop song written on one of the Pyramids..."Mahomet done Ptolemy" We call our trolley, 'Tina' ..a handy abbreviation of the make. As for the Welsh part of the trip...I love Wales. I can reccommend Criccieth and Aberdaron in particular.

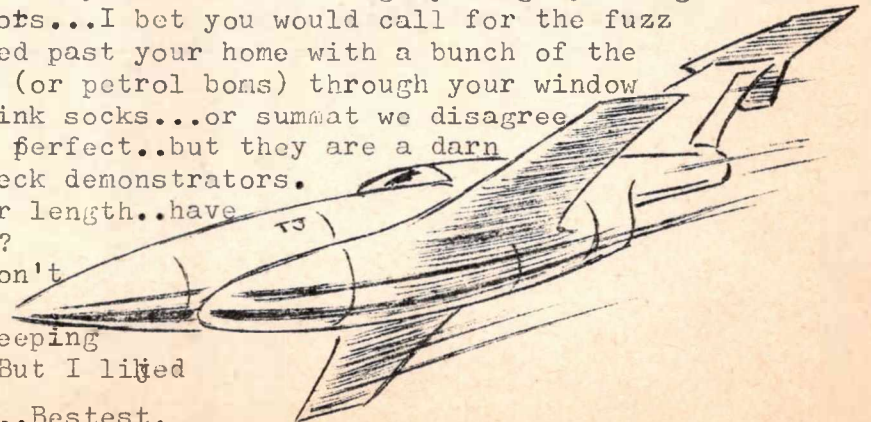
TYKKY DEW Ghad sir, that cover again...I thought butterflies were ephemeral..not this one, obviously. Re your comment to Ken..you miss the point. Human life isn't sacred..and murderers ARE doing something wrong...they threaten the individual (me) that's is why I want 'em bumping off...not because they have done a naughty naughty thing. About policemen and demonstrators...I bet you would call for the fuzz right sharpish if I walked past your home with a bunch of the boys..and heaved a brick (or petrol bomb) through your window because you don't wear pink socks...or summat we disagree with. Police may not be perfect..but they are a darn sight better than roughneck demonstrators.

Re the cartoon about hair length..have you no funny bone mate ??

Re the stamps..Nope, I don't expect to make a profit, but I'm just hooked on keeping the collection going....But I liked your mag.

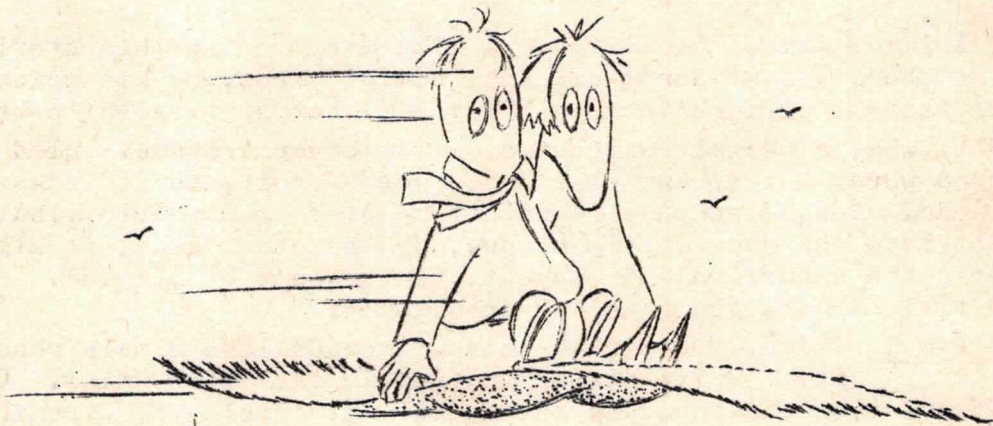
.....Bestest,

Terry.



Mr. & Mrs. B.T.JEEVES,
30 Thompson Rd.
Sheffield S11 8RB

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So would you please make a note of our new address.