

THE LESSER FLEA



I sat down feeling desolate ... not because my name is Haaj - or, for that matter, Borodin who perhaps has better reason - but simply because time has flown so rapidly I don't know quite what happened to that last three months between mailings, apart from having changed my job re-organised all their records, made myself some new clothes, helped Sandy instal new hi-fi equipment, visit several films, and read a few books in between keeping house for three very hungry mortals (one of whom's me). Having sorted that sentence out and checked on my grammar, cursed the odd space that nips up in the middle of some of the words, and realised that I have saved my skin (in OMPA) by the margin of a few days,

you can now (if you don't like review zines that contain arguments, general natter, and criticisms besides the reviews) chuck this away. It's far too hot to burn so just go to the shop and buy a reel of thread. When you have done this measure it off in 18 inch lengths, tying a knot to mark the end of each 18". With a ruler and a pair of scissors, cut this page into sections 4" x 2" and do the same with all the other pages. Then measure off in the exact centre of each piece a half inch section, marking it 'Tie here'.

Look through your wife, mother, or sister's needlework basket for a needle. After you've found one, sort out the mess you've made of the thread - go to the first aid cupboard and put some iodine on the pricks now dripping blood from your thumb, then, making use of the needle you have found, loosen each knot sufficiently to slip into it one piece of paper. Twist this gently so that the knot is tied tightly around the section marked 'Tie Here'. Continue to the end of the pieces of paper or the end of the reel of thread, whichever lasts longest having the remnants either cut off or thrown away. This will then make a superb kite tail or, for those do-it-yourself fiends who own gardens (such as Enever) a bird scarer.

I had intended to write comments on the current mailing but as Archie is still in possession of the editorship, I assume he could refuse to pass it in order that he could get out Archive between Meals out first - then I should be overdue and forfeit my membership. So what'll I do? General natter first, then comments on the last last mailing and maybe I can sneak a few past Archie on the current one if I'm careful to hide them in the middle of my comments on the old mailing. (That'll make him read every single word, that will. Won't it, Archie?)

I trust you people realise that with this type (a sort of miniature Elito, as far as I can see) you are getting more to the inch than from people who use those typers with flipping large size Pica. Appreciate it, you clods, appreciate it.

I guess maybe I'll start off about my new job. I'm a member of the advertising copy staff of a publishers. The books published are HOUSING AND ESTATES, SCOOTER AND THREE WHEELER, MOTORING WEEKLY ADVERTISER, and (my own baby) NATIONAL WEEKLY, a sort of two-colour exchange and Mart. Although E & M have been going 89 years, they have never had any competition at all and apparently we, with our considerably cheaper ad-rates and with reportedly swifter service are making them look to their ... the heck with it, let's use a cliché... laurels.

For the benefit of the foreigners in OMPA, especially the Americans who I believe have no similar publication, I should perhaps explain that the E&M is a magazine composed solely of advertisements, the majority of which are the small ad or 'classified' type. It is on a rough newsprint paper and sells at 4d each week to a very large public. National Weekly is a similar publication although at the moment we have a larger proportion of display ads.

The staff consist of the usual rather weird collection of ad men - the Advertisement Director, Phil Turner, who is over the ad section of all four zines is a pleasant faced, pleasant natured man with bright red hair. Under him in our magazine comes the Ad Manager, one of the crawlers, who ignores your suggestions then turns up with them to the directors a few days later as his own bright ideas. The Make-up Man is an anarchist of, I should say, 24 or 25 with a small Henry VIII type beard. The Small Ad Manager is a pleasant woman whose husband is works director at a plastic bottle manufacturer in Kingston and who has no need to work but is one of those people who read very little and who are bored if they stay at home because they have no interests other than the 'tolly' (ugly word!). Her assistant is a young boy named Harry, then there is me who gets in copy, helps compose direct mail shots and general assistant to everybody who needs help, and finally Pete Taylor another British fan.

We had quite a major shock the other day when we discovered our zine had been used by homosexuals to advertisc under a code in order to get in touch with one another. I personally have met a few homos and lesbians and have not been noticeably repelled because there are no advances from them to a normal person. However, in this case, no box number was added to the advertisement and we were at a loss to know which ad the replies were intended for. The rule in a case like this is to open the envelope, read the letter to trace the ad, and forward it explaining why it was opened.

We followed the usual procedure, and candidly although I consider the people concerned to be mentally sick and in need of help, I was revolted by some of the replies. Apart from the normal perversion, the replies referred to flagellation, various forms of sado-masochism, and even to the procurement of young girls 'preferably about 14 or 15 who can then be trained better'. Stella has no two thoughts on the subject ... her opinion is that advertisers of this nature should be shot, not cured. The rest of us feel they should be cured. Suggestions that details should be handed to the Vice Squad were rejected by the management which is perhaps a good thing... prison seems only to aggravate such diseases. However, the edict is that any ad asking for black shiny fullskirted plastic mackintoshes or riding whips and breeches are OUT. No more codes for us until they manage to think up a new one and slip it past us. Then we shall go on until we discover a link between the volume of replies to a certain type of ad and will make a check on them.

Apart from this sort of thing, however, life is quite fun... I've had lunch with one of the clients whose copy I take, and numerous arguments, enjoyable in the fact that he has the sparkle of a fan and who, strangely enough, knows Helen Winnick slightly, with Don. (Hell my grammar went to pot there.) I can meet Ted Carnoll for lunch quite easily - he's only at the other end of Fleet Street (until he moves next week that is). People talk about the romance of Fleet Street, and it is quite a tangible thing for those who work there. There seems a minor frenzy, a hurry about everything, as if the presses mark off the seconds as they roll. The feeling of being 'in' on everything, on news, on rumours, on who did what when to whom is everywhere. A tingle of excitement seems to be in the air and whether it is felt by those who visit the place for a short while, or only by those who work there, I don't know. It's a fascinating sensation.

And, of course, I'm within five minutes walk from the GLOBE.

My real ambition of course is to get in on copywriting in an ad agency and while I'm studying make-up and production of a magazine I'm also looking through advertiser's Weekly for the right job.

TO ELLIS MILLS I have received your copy of UR for the British Museum via Julian Parr who needs some information I'm still trying to obtain for him. We'll certainly send it to them for you.

Regarding JAN We received two tapes from our long lost Belgium fan, Jan Jansen, the other day, with a request to pass it (the first one) to Ken and Pamela. The main information is that Rosa had changed jobs and this together with the fact that Jan's friend who did the duplicating had had to go to a sanatorium completely put Jan out of the running for some time. He is definitely coming back with ~~copy~~ Contact as, amongst other things, Rosa has returned to her previous job, which leaves Jan free to go ahead with his fanning. Hooray, says we all three here.

Verse - and worse. Can I help it if the following make you feel ill? We don't see why we should be the only ones to suffer.

If things had only been different,
Science says that maybe ants
Might have achieved dominance.
Then, on this earth family trees
Might have shown quite a different descent,
And a male human might now be an ant gent.

OR
A man with fungus on his face
Is often bare in another place.
Through cerobration's vicious forces
Each root digs deeper and reinforces
The shadow caused by facial hair
And leaves his gleaming cranium bare.

All right, you may now open your eyes.

JODRELL BANK Deborah Jones rolled up at the Globe after some long absence and with a gleam of delight in her eyes fished out the roughs she had been working on. She had been commissioned to do an 18' by 10' mural in the laboratories at Jodrell Bank and had just completed it. Nice work for her. She is now doing a lot of selling of her pictures, atomic power stations etc., and at last seems to have broken into the selling market.

She will have a number of oils for sale when she comes back from her present trip to Yorkshire for another openair exhibition and we are after one of them at least. Ron and Daphne have one which is so good one could swear it had been painted specifically for their room. One of the most important colours against a midnight blue background with stars and nebulae is a patch in duckegg blue which exactly matches the colour of the wall upon which it hangs, while a splash of red picks up the colour of their furniture and carpet. Superb. That gal is quite a painter. If you got a chance to acquire one of her paintings, I would advise you to do so.

WAWWISSE?

You've seen all these quizzes on how intelligent are you, how good a wife are you and so forth. Now here is the latest... What kind of a fan are you. Choose whichever of the four replies to each question applies most to you, then check your replies against the results over the page.

1. Who has a beard, wears his shirt outside his trousers and reads Hyphen while eating?
(a) Vinç Clarke (b) Onassis (c) Baden-Powell (d) Max Brand
2. What author's wife thinks green is a lucky colour?
(c) Ward Moore (a) Ken Bulmor (d) Marc Connolly (b) L.K.O'Brion
3. What makes fans eat?
(d) They have to keep their ho rses company (b) They have to get rid of their money so now (c) Their mothers (a) Hunger
4. If your typewriter hardly works, you have lost your wax-removing brush, your duplicator is broken, your stencils have melted in the heat and your bicycle has been stolen, what would yo u do?
(a) Bring out a fanzine anyway (c) Leave fandom (d) Who wants a bike? (b) Buy some new equipment.
5. Do you read
(b) The Financial Times? (a) Hyphen? (d) Zane Grey? (c) Authentic?
6. You have received four tapes in one day from the following people. Which do you play through first?
(c) Norman G. Wansborough (b) Ted Carnell about the Convention
(d) George A.T.W. Charters (a) Jean Linard
7. You have been offered a complete, brand-new, Hi-fi equipment by your family if you will give up fanning. Do yo u
(a) Ref use? (d) Accept if they will only change it to a steel stringed guitar? (c) Accept? (b) Accept, rent a room in town and continue fanning having your mail sent to the address of that room?
8. What time of day do you feel best?
(a) Midnight (b) 8 p.m. (c) 12 noon (d) 4.30 a.m.

9. Your favorite drink is

(b) Beer (c) Lemonade (a) Tea (d) Rye

10. Your favourite musical virtuoso is

(c) Tommy Stolo (a) Bing (d) Gene Autry (b) Pato Daniels.

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And how does the \$64,000 question leave you. Check your replies and see whether you have more (a) (b) (c) or (d) replies. Then read your character, as under:

If you have more (a)'s you are the Irish-type fan, the Jophan who will attain the Enchanted Duplicator, the backbone of fandom, the B.N.F.

If you have more (b)'s, you are the Liverpool type fan - you don't really need to 'make-do' so you don't. You too can be a B.N.F.

If you have more (c)'s, you are the noof an type fan, the hardly a fan at all type. Apply yourself more strongly to the principles quoted by Ghod in TED.

If you have more (d)'s, I'd like to know what the hell you're doing reading this anyway.... get back to them thar hills pard.

(Have I any friends left, I wonder?)

Back to Business.

Have you seen the quiz in Innuendo... at least I think it was innuendo it was in? Our version rolled up late but we thoroughly enjoyed it. I think this quiz is intended to be answered by a cross against True on I am a BNF and promptly returned. Greatly tempted to do so, but for the fact that on the back there is a question which reads I am in love with G. M. Carr. This demands an answer especially anent my comments on page two.

These questionnaires seem to be all the rage and the Rotsler one deserves far more space for the replies. This reminds me of my favourite foreign film, which is LA BELLE ET LE BETE, a most attractive fantasy film based on the fairy story which was transposed on to film as it should be done. I can't even remember who took the principal parts or who directed it or anything. I must definitely see it again. The most vivid scene in my memory is that as La Belle enters the beast's palace. Through the wall project living arms, each holding a candelabra and the arms move. It was quite weird. I remember I saw it on BBC TV a long time ago, and they quite ruined it for me by giving an English translation (by voice) as the French words were being spoken. Vandals!

Films in general have not been visited very much recently. I saw TWELVE ANGRY MEN, a superb film. I doubt if I have ever seen a film hold my attention so much while the characters were presented so realistically I could believe in every one of them. Sandy feels that the one who wanted to go to a baseball game is not strictly believable but I do feel that if a character of rather moronish nature was called as a juror, and got past the Counsel's challenge, then it is very possible he would have the attitude that.. oh well everybody else is saying it's my duty and I don't see what difference my vote will make and anyway there's my bet for the (suppose you are English) Test Match. It'll be so much up my arse if I don't get there, and we can probably get this over quickly. Yeah, yeah. Yes, I can believe in him, and most particularly when he changes his mind and the reason he gives for changing it. A film I could see again, cheerfully. With a little bit of a shudder too. 'Is fortune really predicated upon such tiry

turns as these?' How easily one could be condemned by a jury of twelve honest men.

Other films I've seen recently are "FUNNYFACE" which I enjoyed for Fred Astaire, Kay Thompson's wicked satire on the Fashion Editress and for the general fashion mickey-taking. I did feel, however, that it was not as good as it could have been. Oh to see American in Paris again. G.W.T.W. was seen again, in the West End, and I was highly impressed with the improvement in the colour which seems to have been muted by the addition of grey tones, and also by the use of wide screen. I think that is the best film ever to have come out of the States.

Apart from those, most of our visits to the cinema have been to reissues of old musicals and the main one of course was Fantasia. I disagree with Sandy entirely on this... when he has seen it eight or nine times as Vinç and I have perhaps he will appreciate it. After all, if an instrument is representing a character on a screen, surely it is far more logical to move in the same way as the character, than to sound as if it is squatting in an orchestra pit. Sandy of course has only seen it twice. After all, he approves of an instrument moving across the screen in other cases. Why then, should not the same apply in this case. Since the colours are Disney colours - and I might add they have not faded with age - why should he expect UPA colouring in something so totally a Disney creation? Disney, after all, is famous for his style, his muted colouring, his extremely pretty animals (usually) and to expect something modernistic from him - especially in a film of this age, would be anachronistic.

I doubt, candidly, whether the people who like classic music would stand for seeing it visually jazzed up by a group such as UPA. Dammittohell, he yammers about classics being jazzed too, does he now turn up and approve visual jazzing? I would say to Sandy go to see it again, recognizing it as a Disney masterpiece. Perhaps you will appreciate it as it deserves.

AND FROM FILMS TO BOOKS. This seems to be the fashion now, and as I enjoy both, I see no reason why I shouldn't get in on the racket. Vinç, of course, did not mean Ages in Chaos, although that was a Volikovsky book - he really meant Earth in Upheaval. I read this too and I am coming to the conclusion that, while Volikovsky may be off his rocker in suggesting that a comet could turn into the planet Venus, he has a great deal of sense in what he says on the Ice Ages and the rather interesting mixup in the fossil regions. A most interesting point brought out in this book was that America WAS formerly inhabited by horses but that they were wiped out in a tremendous upheaval of the world. He does not quote myths and legends in this. He quotes scientific papers by many varying scientists, and I do feel that after further research into this idea and into the data which causes belief in his theory of complete world upheaval, we shall have some very interesting information. After all, wasn't Darwin scorned in his day for the theory of evolution? And he had less to go on, and fewer scientists' research to rely upon, than does Volikovsky. Even if you are an extreme sceptic about Volikovsky's Venus theory, do read Earth in Upheaval.... it is worth it.

Another recent book I read was Dangerous Estate, the report on the history and current conditions in Fleet Street by Francis Williams. This is mostly superb writing with a touch of humour and will interest anyone who is interested in the publishing or newspaper advertising field. Yesterday I read Randolph Churchill's book "That I said about the Press", which W.H. Smith's refused to handle. He has a bee in his bonnet but is good fun to read provided you remember his views and handle his articles with a pinch of salt.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch..... I suppose some people are going to want reviews so here goes.

CINVENTION MEMORY BOOK was well worth having, even if only for the piece by Vane. Many thanks, Don.. it was a grand idea.

BURP What do you mean, Bonnett? FRIENDLY PERSUASION WAS NOT a stinker. It was an extremely subtle, well played, well written story. It possibly fell down a little - and only a very little - in that the story taken from Josselyn West's delightful book had to be added to in order to round off the film. However, as she herself wrote the script, the addition to the story and oversaw the complete filming and introduced Cooper and Dorothy McGuire to the Quakers (she herself is a Quaker) there is nothing out of tone at all about the film. Candidly, to me this is a slice of American life and was filled with a series of pleasant cancos. To say this is crud, as you did, is to mark yourself down as having little or no taste for the quieter things of life. Shame on you. And if Ron has put anyone off from seeing it, let 'em take my advice and go see it. They will be agreeably surprised. In a year or two's time, this film will be reissued as the first film in which Tony Perkins starred and it will then be acclaimed. Bet you. B.... to Bennett. (But you're forgiven for some of your other statements, Ron, you like Gene Kelly and Alec Guinness and appreciated the wicked satire of Court Jester. That lets you out)

NOISE LEVEL. John, I can't understand why, if you must pick over folk songs and legends, you can't do it with English ones. There's a multiplicity of legends over here and they are probably far less known to the Americans than their own, whereas the American ones are usually pretty well known to the British Jazz fans. How about it?

VAGARY. Why the bend sinister on the beer? And I can't understand all you people who mean about reviewzines. In my opinion the ones that are put out in OMPA do not consist solely of reviews... they contain arguments, anecdotes and interesting pieces all over the place, as someone else's zine reminds the writer of them. You can't call them 'just reviewzines'. Your comments regarding Leer - mentioning South Africa - for instance, remind me that my opinion is that the next World War will not develop from the Russian USA antagonism but will arise from the subjugation of the coloured peoples, whether in the U of S.A. or the US of A. You can't keep a whole people down permanently and expect them not to revolt. That to my mind will have far more disastrous results than any attempt at de-segregation now.

I still think you and John Roles are off your rockers about B. Nicholls, and that you mean Godfrey Winn... which is entirely different kettle of fish. B.N. doesn't whim-wham at all, he has outspoken and extremely independent ideas at times whereas Godfrey, docah boy, gives one the creeping heebie-jeebies.

Bobbie, don't fall into the pit of mistaking similarities in sound and spelling in different languages to mean similar things. It is something that many laymen philologists do before they really learn their trade. Take for instance Piddletown in (is it Dorset or Devon - one or the other). This place has no connection with the vulgar English word at all but many people believe it has. Hence the uproar when the council in that area wanted to change one of the village names to match in.

MOZ. I was tickled by your comment on the party piece for Americans on how to add pounds shillings and pence. I might try it this year come Contino.

STEAM. John, I refuse to comment on this. It's far too short and hurried for someone who is not only at home all day long, but who doesn't even come to the Globe on Thursday evenings. I know you've got to pay for the new bedroom suite and the living room, etc., but dammit, you can do so much better than this and you know it.

ARCHIVE Sandy has already taken you to task regarding Genevieve and I will not need to add my comments. They coincide exactly with his. It is the very mundaneness of the characters that makes them so funny. We are, with this film, laughing at ourselves, and very salutary it is, too.

HOW How grand it is to see Paul back with us again and to read his comments. I have a little recipe (genuine typo howzomover) to add to your marrow piece. The result I can guarantee to be delicious. First get a large marrow, cut a little piece of the stalk end to act as a cap, scoop out all the seeds and pith with a long handled spoon. Fill this hollow to the brim with rough brown sugar or, at a pinch, ordinary demerara. replace the cap to keep dust out. Hang up in a piece of muslin for three weeks, adding more sugar as it gets lower down in the hollow. At the end of three weeks, stand a large bowl underneath, pierce the bottom of the marrow with a skewer and let the juice run into the bowl. Bottle it and drink it a few weeks later on. This is known as marrow rum and is really yummy.

SCOTTISHE. There is really nothing to comment on here except to say how much I like it, Ethel. Again, and again, and again please.

VERITAS is another of these uncommentuponable magazines which I enjoy so much. I think my favourite pieces in each copy of Veritas are the front and back covers. Arthur, you must take this up professionally. You have no excuse not to.

MORPH Hello John, you got a good going over from Sandy and Vinc for that cover but the more I look at it the more I wonder. Did they notice Pan hiding away behind the tree? I'm rather interested in how you did the three colour work. Did you by any possible chance cut the dark green first and run that off then cover it with obliterine and paper and use the shading plate for the light green, run that off (still using the same stencil) then cover that with cut paper and do the blue? I expect actually that you used several stencils but it just looks to me like a possibility and also a good way of making certain that you got your register correct. While I didn't like it as well as some of your others it was a vast improvement on the previous one.

If you haven't read Earth in Upheaval, John, I'd very much like you to do so and let us have your opinions on it. By the way, was interested to hear the grapevine had got around to you before we wrote to Archie. Wonderful how it works isn't it? Meanwhile congratulations and condolences, Mr. A.E.

You are definitely beyond the pale for disliking Bing and liking Lewis. I daren't continue nattering because I want to pass on a story Deborah Jones told us about herself last week and there's not much room. Seems one of these Christian fanatics passed her one day and said "Have you been saved?" Deborah on a spur of the moment inspiration answered "I shan't know until three weeks!" Being a religious sceptic I reared. Hope you do too.

This was The Lesser Flea, No. Umpty-umpty, produced as a postmailing to Mailing No. 12 by Joy K. Clarke of 7 Inchmory Road, Catford, S.E.6 as a magazine of the Off Trails Magazine Publishers' Association.