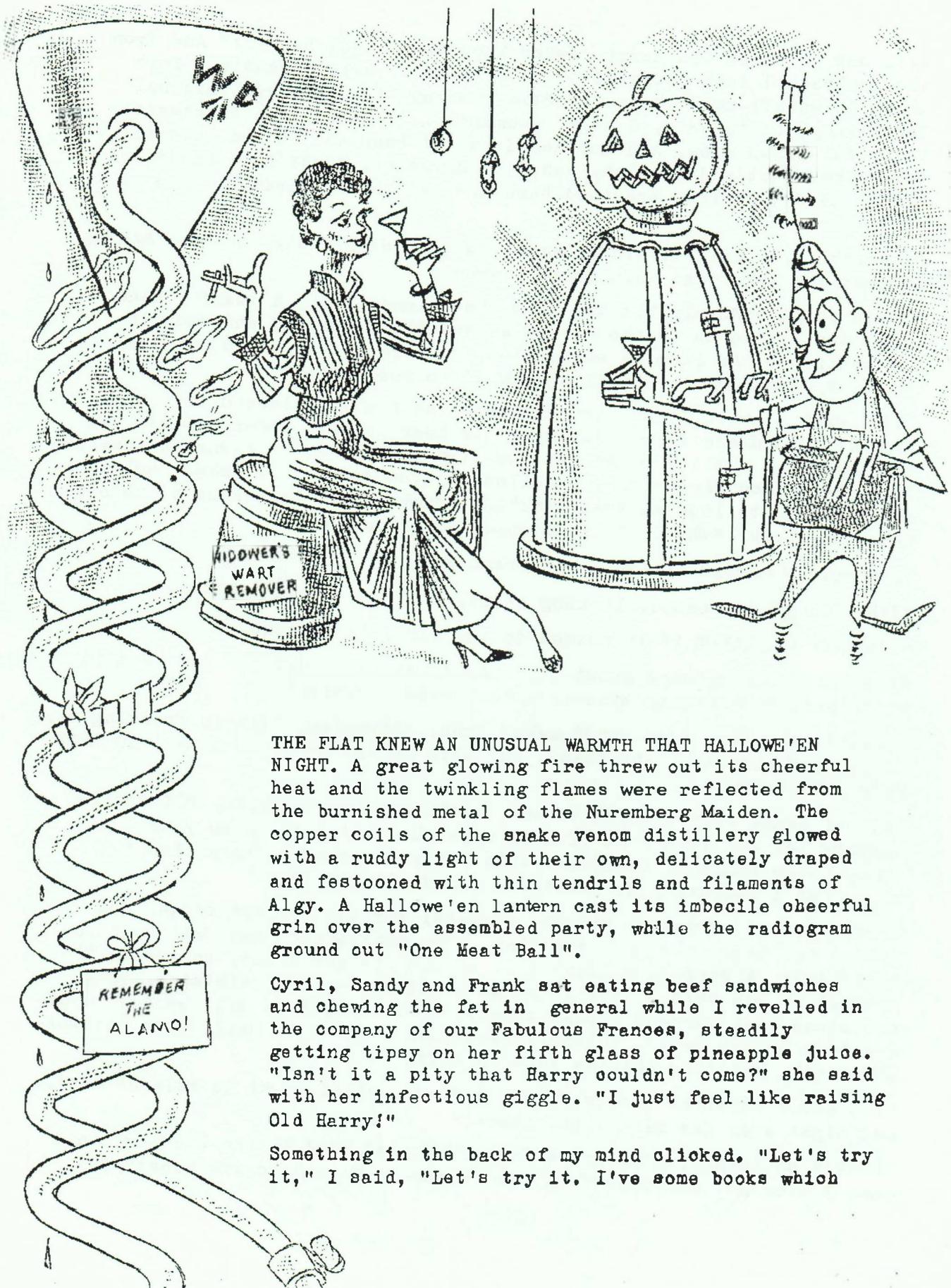




NOW
&
THEN 6

2002-July-1





THE FLAT KNEW AN UNUSUAL WARMTH THAT HALLOWE'EN NIGHT. A great glowing fire threw out its cheerful heat and the twinkling flames were reflected from the burnished metal of the Nuremberg Maiden. The copper coils of the snake venom distillery glowed with a ruddy light of their own, delicately draped and festooned with thin tendrils and filaments of Algy. A Hallowe'en lantern cast its imbecile cheerful grin over the assembled party, while the radiogram ground out "One Meat Ball".

Cyril, Sandy and Frank sat eating beef sandwiches and chewing the fat in general while I revelled in the company of our Fabulous Francoes, steadily getting tipsy on her fifth glass of pineapple juice. "Isn't it a pity that Harry couldn't come?" she said with her infectious giggle. "I just feel like raising Old Harry!"

Something in the back of my mind clicked. "Let's try it," I said, "Let's try it. I've some books which

tell how to raise Old Harry. Never know what might happen!" And from the bookcase I took down all my rare tomes... all the ancient lore which Lovecraft never knew - Goëtic Theurgy, Thaumaturgy, Infernal Necromancy, Cartomancy, Geurgy, Geomancy... I gazed into Frances's beautiful brown eyes, had another drink of beer and shoved back all the books. "Let's just wish, huh," I suggested, "Just hold hands and wish, huh?" But Fran breathed hard and sat on her hands, giving me a cold look.

"Errrrhhh...I...wish...Old...Harry...was... HERE !" she hissed, "Making suggestions like that when Cyril's around !"

A cold chill suddenly hit the room and silence fell. A fearful dank chill that froze us to the marrow as something swirled and spun in the centre of the room, a suggestion, no more, of a pallid spectral Shape. Frances gave a shrill squeak of horror.

Then, with a noise like a thunderclap, the Shape coalesced into the form of a Headless Horror carrying its bearded head under one arm. We recoiled from the icy blast and the figure alike as it advanced towards Fran. "Art thou the witch who called me from hence?" it asked, holding out its head to look at Fran. "WITCH!" fumed Fran, beginning to recover from the shock, "Why I.." and stopped with a gulp.

"I'm cold," moaned the ghost to Frances.

"I'M COLD !" it moaned, looking at me.

"I'M COOOOOLLLLLLLD !" it moaned to the party in general.

"I should do something about it," chattered Cyril, "Either get used to it or hire yourself to Widower's Ice-cream Factory."

"Doesn't the fire warm you?" asked Fran, shivering, "You're freezing me. Eric's a skeleton at any feast, but this is too much. GO AWAY ! GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME !"

But the Shape stayed where it was, radiating intense cold. "If you're staying for any length of time it might be better to raise your temperature somehow. Otherwise this party is going to be a flop," I said. "Can I measure your electrical conductivity ?"

I whipped out my meter, set the ohmmeter for its highest range, and jabbed the terminals into the Shape. The needle spun and fell to zero resistance. A perfect conductor... at 273 degrees minus, no wonder the poor ghost was cold. "This is awkward. If you've no resistance, then no matter what current I pass through you, no wattage will be developed - unless we can create internal resistance, fast," I said, with chattering teeth, watching icicles form on Algy.

"How about chemical energy ?" asked Frank. "Acid ought to release heat, and might even get rid of the ghost!"

"That's an idea... I've got a few gallons of acid in the bedroom, in case I ever get married. Turn the Nuremberg Maiden on its side!" In

refrigerated glee I poured gallon after gallon of acid into the Maiden, took the ghost's head, placed it on the TV, and manhandled the ghost into the acid. "Excellent," I said, then realised that the acid was freezing fast. In desperation I grabbed the battery-charger, plugged it in, clipped one lead to the ghost, one to the Maiden, and poured 20 amps through it. To my amazement, metal from the body of the Maiden began to deposit itself on the ghost, and after a few minutes we switched off, hauled the cast-iron ghost out of the acid and set it in front of the fire to warm.

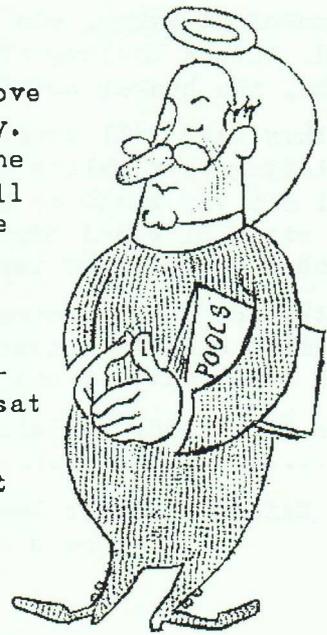
"Oh, lovely," sighed the head from the TV set. And so the party warmed up again, drink flowed and conversation flowed and my head spun and the fire glowed until Fran and Cyril and Frank and Sandy piled into a taxi, tired but happy, and went home singing. I tottered to bed.

In the cold light of morning the sight of the head leering at me from the TV, and a cast-iron ghost on the hearth-rug did not have the same appeal. "Do you want to go home?" I asked. "Would that I could," was the answer, "but Union Regulations stipulate that I can only be returned by the witch that summoned me." "Tough," said I, "but you can't stay here, the neighbours might start talking." So back in the acid the cast-iron ghost went, with the battery charger connected with the polarity reversed. I switched on and started to get my breakfast ready. It was one of those mornings... the milk boiled over, the toast was burned, my shoelace snapped, I cut myself shaving, and finally, cursing, examined the Nuremberg Maiden for signs of the ghost. "Where are you?" I asked the head. "You appear," it said, with heavy sarcasm, "to have electro-chemically deposited me on the interior of the Nuremberg Maiden." I blushed and mumbled "Sorry" as I grabbed my jacket and left for work...

That night, rather than face the ghost again, I drove out to see Harry and told him the whole sorry story. "...so if I use an electrode to get the ghost off the Nuremberg Maiden," I said mournfully, "The ghost will be deposited on the electrode. Then I'll still have the head and haunted electrode to deal with..."

"The Archbishop will be round soon," mused Harry. "Perhaps he could give us a few tips on how to exorcise a ghost from a Nuremberg Maiden." Thoughtfully, he laid out the Chinese Checkers board and sat awaiting the Archbishop's arrival.

Over a hard struggle we gently broached the subject of exorcising ghosts. "Is the ghost in limbo, poised forever between heaven and earth?" he enquired. "This one is very definitely earth-bound," I said, "Most of it anyway..."



"The only method I know is the old Bell, Book and Candle technique, which in the past has been so effective that very few residual ghosts are left," beamed His Grace, collecting his winnings and departing.

"A bell ? I gloomed. "That's nothing but a sonic device!" Harry looked up with a gleam in his eye. "Sonic frequencies..." he murmured, " and a candle gives off visible light frequencies, with infra red heat frequencies as well. Multiple heterodyning of a Nuremberg Maiden might very well shift any ghost. What sort of Book did he mean?"

"There was the Book he was studying last week...'Football Pool Permutations," I offered, "Seemed very important to him. How do you use that?"

"Perhaps if you read it aloud that would supply sonic frequencies not covered by the bell. Certainly none of these frequencies could damage your Nuremberg Maiden. I think we ought to try it."

"If it's just a case of variable sonic frequencies, wouldn't a record of Johnnie Ray do? Save time reading a railway timetable out loud."

- - - - -

And so it was that two days later we carried the ghost-infested Nuremberg Maiden into the backyard, followed by an angry head which we placed on an oil drum so that it could see the proceedings. Hopefully we mounted a fire-alarm bell on the body of the Maiden, and tried it out. When the ear-splitting din died away we looked at the head, which seemed to be blazing wild for some reason. "Here goes," I muttered, switching on the portable searchlight, rated at 8,000 candlepower. Apprehensively I glanced at the head, which was grinding its teeth in fury. With a sigh I switched on the induction heater and watched the Maiden glow cherry red, and saw the head grow purple with raging hatred.

I looked at Harry, who looked at me, and neither of us dared look at the head. With a feeling of here goes nothing we cut in the bell, the searchlight, the heater and 15 watts worth of Johnnie Ray.

To this day, I'll swear that the head was smoking with anger, practically radiating pure malice in superheated fury as thin wisps of ghost began to peel off the interior of the Maiden. Together we felt that icy chill when the wisps of ghost began to form into a Shape. Rocking on its feet, it lurched uncertainly towards its head. And then it happened...

As the icy cold spectre seized the superheated head, the Laws of Thermodynamics came into operation. The icy cold and intense heat cancelled each other out ... and the ghost vanished utterly.

"The Archbishop certainly knows his stuff!" said Harry, admiringly.
.....

The Edison Electric Lamp
 Could not hope to supplant an
 Age-old joy like that wellknown toy

WIDOWER'S HALLOWE'EN LANTERN !

plan Z

A Fanarchist revelation by
SPIDER/NIGEL LINDSAY



DONG! went the clock twelve times and CRASH! BANG! WALLOP! down the chimney came the nightly message from the Chief. I put Helen down and untied the message from the brick.

PROCEED WITH PLAN Z was all it said.

Carefully stowing the brick in the crate labelled BIAS BINDING BUILDING DEPT, I turned to Helen.

"The time has come," I announced, "for action."

"Not again, Nigel, you'll wear yourself out!"

"No, no, NO !" I cried. "This is orders from the Chief of the Romiley Fan Dancing Society."

She paled. "That means... "

"Yes... "

She looked at me so pleadingly and hopelessly. There were no words to convey her utter fear and loathing at what I must do. But orders are orders, so I avoided her eyes. "Hand me the potion," I whispered.

Fiery burning in my throat and oh, the agony of the Transformation! At last I was Nigel no longer... I was Spider. Poor Helen shrieked and fled...

Wasting no time I jumped into the saddle and headed northwards into the night, clippety-clop, clippety-clop. Plan Z called for the dreaded journey to Romiley itself, and there was no time to lose. Torquay was

soon left far behind and a ghostly moon watched a mad rider crossing the lonely moors. 1 am and the Bristol Channel was sparkling just ahead; 2 am and I was clattering over the Clifton Suspension Bridge, clippety-clop, clippety-clop; 3 am and careening along the Severn Valley, the night wind whistling through my hair; 4 am I set up wild echoes in the deserted streets of Wolverhampton and 5 am, swaying to the rhythmic motion of my mount, I entered Crewe. Desperately I pulled up and alighted. What the hell was going clippety-clop, clippety-clop on my bicycle ?

Investigation revealed a pair of old boots tied on the back, no doubt by Helen in anticipation of an Easter wedding. I cut them loose and abandoned them to their fate. By 6 am I had forded the River Coyt and taken up a strategic position in a haystack overlooking the ancient village of Romiley.

- - - - -

The Turner residence was a hive of activity amongst the sleepy old-world cottages. ZZZZZZ-ZZZ-ZZZZ came busily from the upper windows whilst the plodding yokels went deliberately about their chores. Two hours later a fine buxom young woman burst forth, milked the cows, fetched water from the pump, fed the chickens, shaved the goats, hung out the smalls, topped up the mangrove swamp and sent three boisterous youngsters scampering off to school. Another hour elapsed and I caught the first glimpse of my quarry... Harry Turner himself... as he was hustled protestingly from the premises.

For seven days and seven nights I sat in the haystack watching the comings and goings of the Turner family until their routine was indelibly etched in my memory. Only then was I able to put into operation the second and final phase of Plan Z.

- - - - -

Harry reached the cinema with ten minutes to spare, and decided to call in the Stock Dove for a quick one before meeting Marion. The Sinister Stranger who knocked over Harry's drink smiled apologetically and promptly bought him another.

"I can afford it," he said, "I earn good money in my job."

"You're lucky," sighed Harry, swallowing the bait, "what is your job?"

"A highly skilled one indeed," said the Sinister Stranger, "I am a Candy Trainer."

"Oh," said Harry.

"Yes, we earn good money, us Candy Trainers."

"How nice !"

"I suppose you're wondering just what we do."

Harry looked at the clock. "I'm not nosey," he said.

"Well, have you ever been to the cinema and seen one of those advertisement films?"

"So happens I'm going right now."

"Sit down boy, it won't take long. You've seen those films where a

box of candies opens itself and the candies jump out and unwrap themselves ?"

"Yes."

"Well, you don't think those candies have the intelligence to do it all by themselves!"

"No."

"Someone has to train them real good."

"Yes?"

"That's where we come in, us Candy Trainers."

"It's been very nice meeting you, Mr....."

"Let me have that box of candies under your arm and I'll demonstrate, so... "

Poor Harry has one eye on the clock and one on his precious box of candies, which the Sinister Stranger has opened and appears to be giving a good rollicking to.

"Now," says the Sinister Stranger, "we close the box and put it down, so. They are now fully trained. Watch closely while I give the mystic words of command: NEINZ !"

The lid opens smoothly.

"OOZMI !"

The candies jump out onto the table.

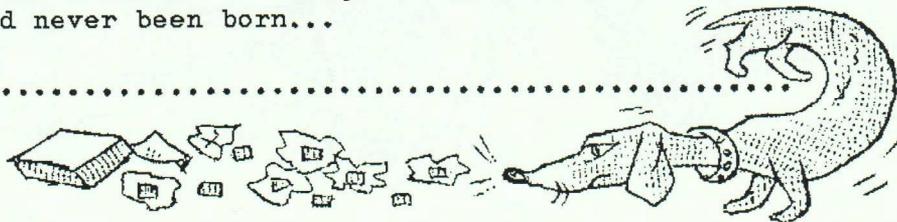
"CHUOG !"

The candies unwrap themselves and lie there in defiant and unabashed nudity. "Goodnight," I said, and left him there, his mouth hanging open like a proper gump. I jumped on my cycle and began the ride back to Torquay, the antidote, and kissable, squeezable Helen.

- - - - -

I never learned the sequel to Spider's foul deed, but I shudder to think of the dire consequences it might have had on poor lovable Harry. Sometimes at night I lie awake picturing the sequence of events... Harry carefully re-wrapping each candy and arranging them neatly in the box... Marion accepting the gift in trusting innocence... Harry being given the box to hold in the cinema foyer and the lid flying open as Marion says TWO ONE-AND-NINES... Harry being scolded and told to wait until he gets inside... then the fumbling stumbling to their seats and all the trained candies jumping out of the box when Harry says EXCUSE ME... the rustling of wrappings coming off as Marion hisses CAN'T YOU WAIT YOU HOG... the blind groping and scuffling on the floor until cries of "Hush", "Shush" and "Turn-it-up-there!" force them to abandon the candies for all eternity.

When I think of the things I do when I'm not myself, I sometimes wish I'd never been born...



IT IS A HARD LIFE BEING A BACHELOR. When it got to the stage of being unable to shut the wardrobe door for accumulated mounds of old socks and being unequal to the task of repairing them all, it was necessary to devise a stratagem, so I cut them all up and made them into a wonderfully soft pillow.

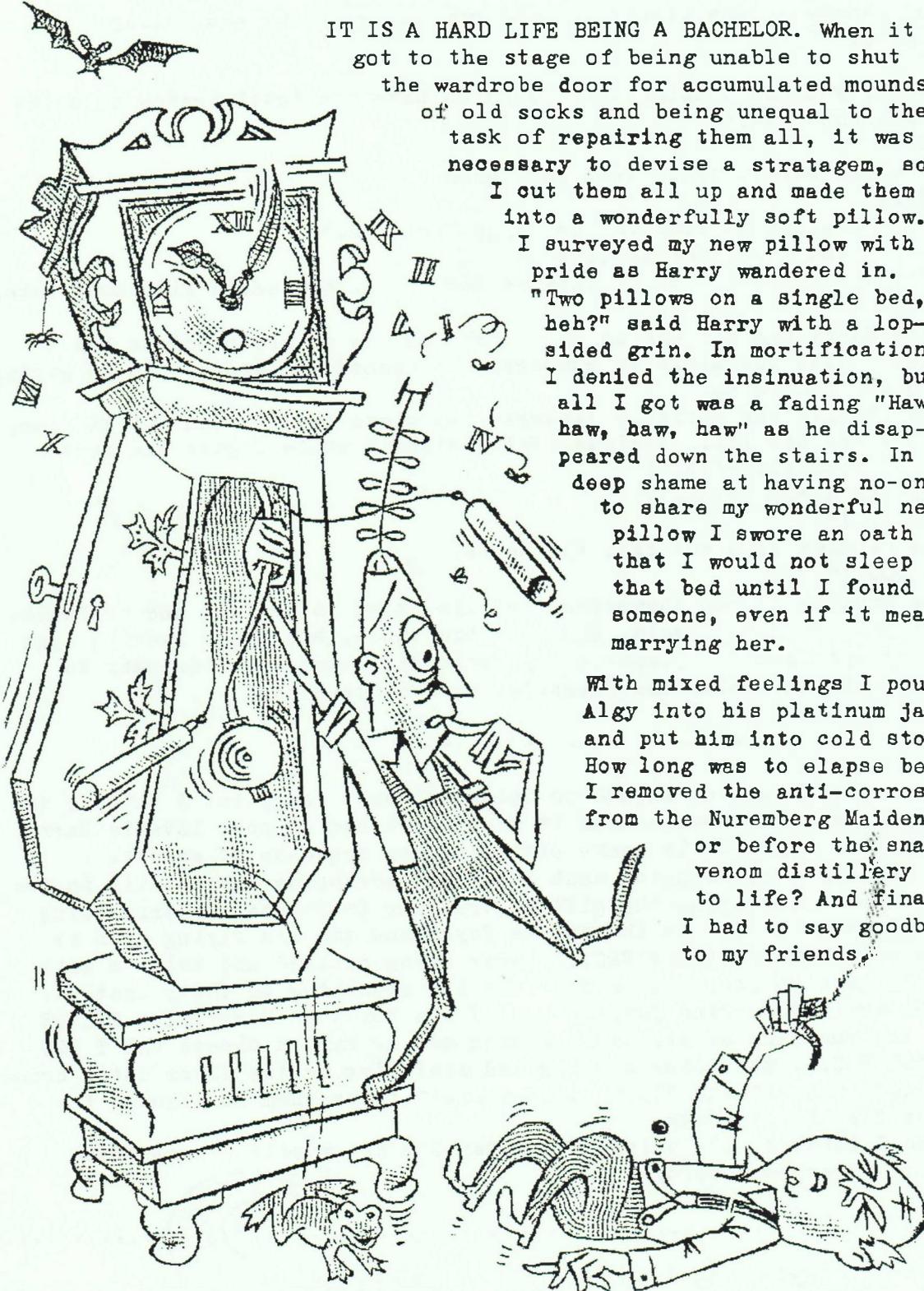
I surveyed my new pillow with pride as Harry wandered in.

"Two pillows on a single bed, heh?" said Harry with a lopsided grin. In mortification I denied the insinuation, but all I got was a fading "Haw, haw, haw, haw" as he disappeared down the stairs.

In deep shame at having no-one to share my wonderful new pillow I swore an oath that I would not sleep in that bed until I found someone, even if it meant marrying her.

With mixed feelings I poured Algy into his platinum jar and put him into cold storage. How long was to elapse before I removed the anti-corrosive from the Nuremberg Maiden...

or before the snake venom distillery came to life? And finally I had to say goodbye to my friends.



Sadly I entered the home of old Eb, the retired lightning conductor erector, and told him the news. "Don't blame you," he said, "but take a farewell present from me - my old grandfather clock. Punctuality is a great virtue, and appreciated by women, who do not like to keep their men waiting. Take care of that clock, for when it stops ticking, I shall die."

"Are the phenomena related?" I asked, stopping the pendulum in curiosity.

Old Eb did not answer, and appeared to be cooling rapidly. Thoughtfully I started the pendulum again but Old Eb did not return to life.

"Apparently not," I mused, heading for the mortuary with the clock on one shoulder to see our Edmund.

"I don't understand you," was Edmund's comment. "If it's just someone to sleep with, I could help you out some nights." "Thank you," I said distantly, "but what I really want is an appreciative woman who can see the finer points in pillow making. And grandfather clocks, too." In silence, he listened as I told him how Old Eb would be round pretty soon. "You can't assess the abilities of a clock on one trial," said Edmund. "Give it another go."

So there in the mortuary I swung the pendulum again. "Look," said Edmund in pleasure, "it works. That feller we found staked down at the crossroads last night. He's getting up." In high delight I hugged the clock as the figure shed its shroud and sat on the edge of the slab, examining the hole in its chest left by the wooden stake. A handsome young man with brilliant eyes and jet black hair, his appearance was marred by two protruding canine teeth. "Good evening, sirs," he said.

"Look," said Edmund, "we can't have you here under false pretences. Make up your mind and then we'll know where we stand."

"I'm not staying," yawned the young man. "Where's my evening dress suit?" "We gave it to the Salvation Army for the benefit of the poor and needy," said Edmund regretfully. "But I must have some clothes to go to work in," protested the young man. "What is your work?" I asked. "I'm a vampire," he said.

"But I thought a stake through the heart would kill any vampire," was my puzzled comment. "Ohh, nooo," he drawled. "If a stake is driven through a vampire's heart deep into the ground it will certainly stop him getting about. It's a hangover from the past when someone found that a clothyard shaft from a powerful bow could pin a vampire to a tree. But, fortunately, they began to put their trust in the newer guns." "Why 'fortunately'?" asked Edmund. "Use your imagination," the Vampire went on in his leisurely tone. "In the days when hand-pistols were first developed they were hopelessly inaccurate. Even with a modern rifled pistol it's no easy matter to hit a moving man at 30 paces - with those ancient flint-locks and firelocks it was virtually impossible. What you have neglected to consider is the totally prohibitive cost

of a silver bullet in those days. This was so expensive an expediency that far greater accuracy of aim was ensured, and with this accuracy the casualty rate went up. The silver bullet owes its efficacy to the economic factor, not any intrinsic properties in silver." "So silver bullets won't kill you?" I asked. "Not in the least," he drawled, "but they can blow an arm or leg off." "What happens to a one-legged vampire?" asked Edmund in fascination. "Well," came the answer, "one uncle of mine is a night watchman, guarding holes in roads. We never speak to him now. We vampires have certain moral standards, and my unfortunate uncle has been driven by his incapability to derive his nourishment from the type of women who normally roam around at night, after which he buries their bodies in the hole in the road. A cousin with several toes blown off works on night-shift at a blood-transfusion centre. We true vampires hold these subterfuges in such contempt that these two outcasts cannot bear to look at themselves in a mirror." He spat with deep contempt.

"Don't you fear crucifixes?" I ventured to ask. He gave me a look of pure scorn. "We hate the sight of a crucifix because anybody crucified usually has a number of nails driven through his feet, which permits the blood to escape. Of what use is a kosher corpse to me? An electric chair coagulates the blood, rendering it useless, but people don't flourish electric chairs at us. The crucifix is as much a superstition as the ancient garlic legend." "Go on," we urged him.

"Give me a cigarette first," he said, languidly, "Egyptian, if you have one. Thanks... No, the person who puts her trust in garlic is likely to be a battered old hag living in hope of a midnight visitor. These old wives tales are passed from generation to generation, and only people who are soft in the head or insane believe in them. So garlic hung on a door is an indication of contaminated food, and we never touch food from suspect sources. I prefer the clean fresh blood of a young virtuous woman, drunk direct from her white throat as she sleeps with her lovely hair in tumbled masses on her soft pillow." He sighed... and something snapped in my high-tensile mind.

"YOU ! So it's you ! You cause this shortage of surplus women !" I growled in concentrated fury, visualising an empty pillow throughout eternity. With one grab I tore the mechanism from the grandfather clock and advanced towards the perturbed vampire. "The clock is no use to me," I gritted, "So I'm giving you the works!" And I rammed the mechanism down his throat, stunned him with a single ponderous blow from my mighty fist, and bundled him into the grandfather clock.

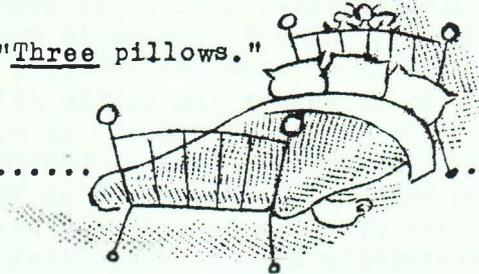
"Come" I said to Edmund, hoisting the clock on to my shoulder. We went out into the night.

The people of Romiley paid little heed to two men burying a grandfather clock in a mangrove swamp, and still less to one of the men driving a ten foot sapling through the grandfather clock. But as we finished and covered up the clock with swamp, I saw Harry looking through the window at us, still with that lopsided leer on his face. My heart sank as we

drove homeward in the hearse. Edmund dropped me at the door of the flat, and my heart dropped further as I realised that there were two empty pillows still waiting for anyone to put on them the vile construction made by Harry. And still the problem... what to do about the wardrobe still half-full of cut-up old socks?

Next time Harry came round I beckoned him into the bedroom with a knowing leer, and pointed to the bed.

"Look," I said with a diabolical smirk, "Three pillows."



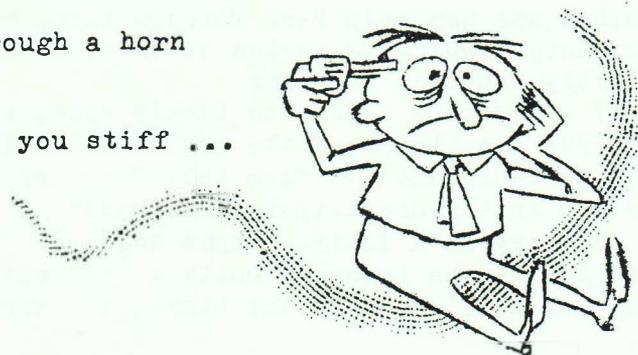
"LEGEND HAS IT that the old Javelin Seller sat outside the railway station of Romiley, crying his wares. At his call, "Javelins! Fine javelins! Indispensable adjuncts to gracious javelining!" the good housewives flocked around to buy, for he sold the finest javelins in all Romiley.

One day there came to Romiley the Man with the Luminous Bloodstream, who desired a javelin and asked the Javelin Seller for a free trial, to which the Javelin Seller assented. Taking a fine specimen, the Man with the Luminous Bloodstream hurled it far up the road, where it stuck in the back of a Stockport bus. The bus drove away and took the javelin with it.

"Give me my gold!" cried the Javelin Seller. "But I have no javelin!" answered the Man with the Luminous Bloodstream, walking away. At which the Javelin Seller was distraught and, binding his javelins to his breast with a length of ship's hawser, drowned himself in the Marple Canal, and now his ghost haunts Romiley evermore..."

(From Tales of the Romiley Pilgrims, 1327)

.....
No sound of corn pushed through a horn
Resembles Satchamo.
If a Kenton riff just bores you stiff ...
REMEMBER THE ALAMO !



natterings

First, we must apologise to John Berry for messing up the title of his article last ish. We were promptly admonished by Walt Willis:

"... you callously massacred poor John's best pun with a carelessly swung 'S'. Or has that devious mind of yours arrived at some other level of meaning than 'Sure to Please' ? Or of course it must be the fact that the English don't pronounce 'sure' as 'shure': though to be honest I've never been able to detect the subtle difference."

We were greatly intrigued by mention of an electronic chastity belt in a letter from Rory M. Faulkner. "Operated by an electronic zipper," she said, "... guaranteed to be wolf-proof. Only husbands can operate." We are pressing for more detailed information. Is the electronic model essentially more reliable than mechanical types? Is it subject to remote control? And if the belt can be released from a distance, as when for instance the wife or husband is away, what purpose does it serve? How are the power supplies derived - is the belt plugged in to a mains source or is it battery operated? Or does the belt derive its power from a heat-transfer system at the maximum temperatures of physical desires? If the belt is responsive to heat, is there any provision for overload, such as leaning on a radiator? Wonder if Chuck has any info... How are these belts tested for efficiency before being marketed? And is there any provision for redress against dissatisfaction? About herself, Rory tells us:

"Am really only 66, not 104, but have every intention of reaching that age and passing it. The name Rory was derived by my friends from Dorothea which they claim is too sweet and mid-Victorian to be suitable for an old battle-axe like me. In my mind's eye I see them spelling it Roar-y, but I prefer to ignore this subversive idea... I live alone, but never lonely, with only Sam the Cat for companion. I have a good job as a dry-run electrician in a ceramics factory; i.e., I wire the porcelain television lamps. It's fun. I do most of the painting and repairs around the house, garden a bit when the temperature allows, and do much of the work on my small old car, the Green Hornet."

This Ancient Matriarch of Remote California is someone with Experience; someone who can help fans Through Life, we thought. So we suggested that Rory might give advice to those of our members in need of it. She promptly accepted the job:

"It would be a proud and lonely thing to be the editor of the Lonely Hearts Department of the RFV&SDS. But I am wondering if the advice which would emanate from this Voice of Experience wouldn't cause a slump in the chastity-belt market!"

So now Rory is a fully-fledged member - full details of the L-H department are on the bacover. Quite a few readers have written to say that they are worried about the Alamo; the worst case is that of Walt Willis:

"A rather dreadful thing happened to me today. I woke up and found I had forgotten the Alamo. What can I do for this attack of alammnesia?"

Your first customer, Rory...

We aim to make N&T a truly ergonomic fanmag; it is being sent only to those who are interested and if we can cut down the number of copies it leaves us more paper to print bigger issues. And these comments suggest further possibilities:

"Poetry - since I hate this stuff, I never read it, so I don't even know if Eric's piece was good, bad or indifferent." - Terry Jeeves.

"Thunder over Fandom - is this supposed to be an editorial? I never say anything about Editorials." - Dennis Tucker.

"I rather feel that the Widower's ads are being overdone; you're tending to sacrifice quality to quantity." - Archie Mercer.

Will other readers please write and tell us what type of material they dislike; this will enable us to omit such material and send them custom-built copies to give them maximum pleasure while saving us paper, ink, time and cash. (Sorry, last quote is from Terry; Archie actually said: "WIDOWER'S ads getting very feeble, you should drop them altogether except for the occasional gem that crops up.").

"It's easy to see," writes Ghod, "that Vernon McCain, faithful and dedicated though he may be, is a mere tyro when it comes to the higher mysteries of theology. Admittedly it is hard for a mere mortal to comprehend these mystic relationships but to anyone reared in Christendom and who has been instructed since an early age in the mysteries of the Trinity there should be no difficulty in the relationship between Bloch and myself. Surely McCain knows that Bloch is my grandfather? He begat Tucker, who died not once but twice and thus doubly qualifies for the role of Holy Ghost, and Tucker begat the four 16-year-old twin brothers -- Lee Hoffman, Max Keasler, Shelby Vick and myself. Modesty forbids me to indicate to whom I correspond, but if McCain doesn't understand I shall walk across and explain it to him. It shouldn't be necessary though... these sacred matters were fully understood by the Priests of Sixth Fandom."

And we hope that clears that up. Bob himself brings us news of members at present touring the States:

"By this time, as you've doubtless heard, the Cleveland Convention is just a garland of precious memories. I enjoyed meeting Ken and Pamela Bulmer (though at times I was somewhat embarrassed by the fact that I was unable to tell them apart. /You mean Pam has grown a beard too ?/ Ken is pretty smart, though, and he saw to it that they weren't apart very much). I thought they did an admirable job of upholding the traditions of British fandom -- just managing to stay on their feet was enough after the ordeal they went through... Tucker brought his child to the convention, you know -- and I wonder what the Bulmers thought when they saw him putting Jim Beam in the kid's bottle? It's incidents like these which give nice people the ~~the~~ wrong impression. Tucker's wife is very nice though. She came

home with me after the Con, although Tucker insisted on trailing along. So did Bill Grant and his mother from Canada, and Martin Greenberg of Gnome Press. We had another Convention up here at home, with Dean and Jean Grennell looking in during one evening. My wife found it a pleasant interlude."

Which reminds us to thank Dean Grennell for the films he kindly sent via Chuch Harris; remains to be seen if he thinks we're putting 'em to good use! The SPWARP reprint roused Dennis Tucker to point out that the financial jugglery was affected by purchase tax being imposed on space warps after the original article had appeared. In view of the latest Budget and tax increases, his info is also out-of-date: we can only advise intending purchasers to consult their local customs and excise officer for details. They should also listen to this sad tale told by Dennis:

"I must state quite unequivocally that I would never recommend anyone to purchase a second-hand warp, as, at best, they may be of dubious quality and age. I am reminded of the case of M. Idris L. Emmonade, resident of a small village some 25 miles from Paris, who had installed a second-hand warp between his back door and the little shed at the bottom of his garden, thinking it would come in handy on cold winter nights. Well, one of these cold winter nights he stepped out of his back door and was never seen again. Next morning his wife discovered that the back door, garden, and little shed had vanished completely. It was theorised that, owing to old age and also possibly due to the fact that it was painted red on the inside, the warp had estrievated, /It says here! / stretched, and circled completely through the space-time continuum, probably to rematerialise on one of the nearer planets."

So be warned... Events of the past couple of months have me confused, (Harry typing), there's been so much to squeeze in. The Dependable Douglas has carried Eric to Torquay to visit the Happy Fans and Lampshade Makers. After a letter from Nigel Lindsay reading: "Eric was duly entertained and stuffed with strange foodstuffs, but was bewildered at the hectic pace of life in Torquay, so he has been returned to you for reconditioning...", duly reconditioned, Eric departed for the Mercatorial Caravan and spent a day with Archie Mercer. Informed of our peculiar production methods, Archie thoughtfully sent a supply of stencil backing sheets, all overprinted "Well - what d'you expect for free - toilet paper?". Ha ! For entertaining the Founder, Archie is now enrolled. In between his travels, Eric has been decorating the Flat. "The decorating is nearly finished," he wrote, "and I have come to the conclusion that the human organism can withstand anything after the initial shock. Drop in and feast your eyes if you're near. Comments not invited - even the mice have left me. But most certainly ... it is different. Very different. Ever so very different. Oh, yes, by hell it's different." I called round busting with curiosity. By Ghu, it is different ! Mention of this state of affairs to the Lyons

prompted Pat to comment:

"Your little flat sounds very inviting. It would be nice if we lived a little closer. I'm itching to do a little decorating myself but although our apartment is quite spacious and very nicely laid out, we are not quite satisfied with it. I think the first time I became a little annoyed was when the toilet fell apart. These new apartments look very nice but are thrown together rapidly and fall apart with the same speed. Someday I shall win the sweepstake or Howard will win first prize in a beauty contest and then we shall buy ourselves a nice little house and start planning paint and trimmings."

Another two new members are Sheila O'Donnell and Mal Ashworth, who spent a weekend at Romiley recently. An almost "dry" two days brought this letter from Mal:

"Just supposing I was capable of writing reams in thanks and appreciation (which I'm definitely not) I don't think I could express what a great time we had more comprehensively than I can in one sentence; that one sentence is this: Yesterday morning I had to take benzedrine before I could drag myself off to the office and I feel pretty awful today too - Sheila doesn't sound so bright (over the phone) either. We had a fine time thank you."

Hmmm... And just to add to our worries we have received the following threatening letter from Ethel Lindsay:

"I have just got out the last mailing, and I have started to write out the mailing comments. /Oh, Ethel, but N&T5 was not an OMPA mailing!/ So on rereading N&T I see that I should send you another letter of protest at the behaviour of your partner. This time I see his vile imputation is that I am in love with him and therefore jealous of another female, whom he professes to love. Now this can only be the act of a cad of the deepest water. To actually/a lady's ^{blemish} character, is so dastardly an act of bad taste that I am puzzled as to why you should have lent yourself to this slanderous publication. I had thought you at least a gentleman. I do not intend denying this slander, all my friends already know that I am sane, and I do not intend protesting my sanity to any others. Though I should imagine that any of your readers who have met your partner will have little doubt upon that score. It only remains for me to say how pained I am at your lack of the finer feelings that one would expect from the husband of a Scotswoman."

After that, we must close with this comment from Walt Willis:

"Ethel's letter was the best thing I've ever seen her write."
Wonder if that will get Ethel in a good mood again... ?

Grave-digging is a dying trade -
Cremation offers a greater
Freedom of life - why not get your wife
A WIDOWER'S INCINERATOR ?

GLOSSARY

OF ESOTERIC NAMES, WORDS AND PHRASES - PART I

with notes and explanations for the Beginner. For easy reference, items are arranged approximately in the sequence they follow in our pages.

ROMILEY: the Sacred Place - HQ of RFV&SDS (q.v.) - residence of the Turner family - spiritual home of Eric Needham. A village on the foothills of the Peak District. Eric Bentcliffe says it is five miles from Stockport as the crow flies; by the same method of transportation it is about ten miles from Manchester. Since, however, few fans are crows (and few crows fans), intending pilgrims to the Shrine should note that surface travel is considerably lengthened by the winding Cheshire roads.

RFV&SDS: The Romiley Fan Veterans and Scottish Dancing Society. To quote one of the Founder Members: "Since I fan but don't venture into the Scottish Dancing sessions and Mrs. Turner doesn't fan but devotes herself to Scottish Dancing, and we both have to live under one roof to look after the children, what else could we call it?"

HARRY TURNER: A relic of Second Fandom.

(The self-styled genius who insists on putting all the blame for the contents of Now & Then on me. Has a wonderful wife, Marion, and three lusty sons, the blame for these being shared. Has a garden (containing one cabbage and jar of tadpoles) which is being rapidly hidden by weed-proof paving stones. He is a rabid collector of books, and accumulates old frames for pictures to be painted at some nebulous future date. I like his pictures and he gave me two. The insurance man offered me £5 for one of them, but I refused the offer. Harry never forgave me, and complained bitterly that he would have painted me another for £4.10.0 - he is human it seems! esn)

ERIC NEEDHAM: Another relic of Second Fandom; a Garreteer.

(The literary genius who dwells in the garret of a decaying house in a Red Lamp area of Manchester. Has no need of an alarm clock, being awakened early each morning by the Corporation cement works next door. A man of many accomplishments - his practical skill in electronics, ferrolobotomy, window-cleaning, and marketing WIDOWER'S Wonderful Products needs no further mention here; of his tireless researches into Ergonomics and Enlightened Empiricism you shall hear more later. A bachelor, he is Eternally in Quest of a promiscuous virgin. het)

STOCK DOVE: A wayside inn, frequented by the membership.

JONAH: One of the minor prophets: according to 2 KINGS, xiv, 25, a contemporary of Jeroboam II.

SUPERMANCON: The most successful British National Convention of all time. "The SuperMancon committee deserve credit for other things than committing suicide" - Walt Willis, Hyphen; "I cannot honestly describe the rest of the programme" - Ethel Lindsay, Femizine; "I doubt if there will ever be another science fiction convention held at the Grosvenor Hotel, Manchester" - Ted Tubb, Eye.

SUPERMANCON SOUVENIER: An invention of dag.

DAG: Proprietary name for colloidal graphite.

ROGER BELLAMY: A repatriated, demobbed American fan, present whereabouts unknown. News of him wanted by Eric at 30 Richmond Grove, Manchester 13, England.

STU MACKENZIE: Ex-treasurer of Eye, present whereabouts unknown. Any news will be welcomed by Eye editors.

ALCOHOLIC STEAM: A revolutionary new product being developed by the Bulmer Aqueous Vapour Company.

The HITHER GREEN incident: Since our original, objective account of events was published, some highly imaginative reconstructions of events have been circulated. These may be ignored.

THE ALAMO: That which must be remembered.

TORBAY HAPPY FANS & LAMPSHADE MAKERS SOCIETY: An organisation formed by Nigel Lindsay of Torquay. The Lampshade Makers section is run by his girlfriend, Helen Highwater, who also keeps him happy.

ROMILEY FAN DANCING SOCIETY: A mysterious group of fanarchist intent.

FANARCHIST: See Doug Webster.

CHARLES FORT: A pseudonym of Eric Frank Russell.

TITUS LIVIUS: Roman historian and literary stylist - Known as Livy to his friends.

OLE FAITHFUL: Once a respectable TV set; since rebuilt, haywired, and mangled by Eric into a multi-purpose piece of domestic equipment.

MANGROVE SWAMP: The garden had long been neglected before we took over. An ambitious project of reclamation was launched in 1954 to transform sterile clay into fertile loam. Having faith in the miracles wrought by Modern Science, we decided to use a soil-conditioner called Krilium. Inevitably there was a drawback. This new Wonder Material had to be used when the ground was dry. The wet summer reduced the garden to a swamp. We despaired. But Eric held out hope. It was a matter of ecology, he said, and the application of the principles of Enlightened Empiricism. Co-operate with, rather than fight against, nature; the obvious things to grow were plants that thrived in a swampish environment - mangroves, for instance. The plan proved highly successful.

NUREMBERG MAIDEN: A family heirloom.

ALGY: An indispensable adjunct to gracious living. (To be continued)

While all characters, incidents, and places in these stories are factual, any story based on these characters, incidents and places is fictional, and the Referee's decision final.

Published by the RFV&SDS at 10 Carlton Avenue, ROMILEY, Cheshire, England.