

SPECIAL REPRINT EDITION

of

OZ NUMBER EIGHT

Unaccustomed as I am to running reprints of my OMPazines, circumstances have ganged up on me at this time to make such a procedure both necessary and desirable. In this mailing you should have been reading the 13th issue of OZ (and the superstitious among you are welcome to do an "I-told-you-so" if you wish). But alas, OZ 13 is nowhere near completion, due to my spare time having been sharply curtailed by the necessity of having to visit my younger son in the Birmingham Accident Hospital, 90 miles from Bristol. (Many of you know about this; for those who don't, I will say briefly that the boy suffered a fractured skull in a road accident on October 4th, and spent 11 weeks in hospital. He was discharged on December 19th, not 100% fit yet, but well on the way to that optimum. During those 11 weeks, most of my weekends were spent with him, and I also visited mid-week as well during the first 3 or 4 weeks.)

So this seemed as good a time as any to resuscitate OZ 8, fifty copies of which were consigned to the then AE in June 1968, for the 51st OMPA Mailing, and which have never been seen or heard of since ... Much of OZ-8's material is now, of course, out of date; dear old Ken McIntyre died a few months after it was produced, our 1955 Morris 'banger' was exchanged for a brand-new Hillman Imp a year ago - but the Downboy Dog Bed is still as caninely attractive as it was then, and with any luck you might get two 'Naked Artichoke' episodes in the mailing for the price of one !

Since I am well ahead on activity requirements for the year, it doesn't matter whether or not Ken counts this as current activity. And Finagle knows what I shall do if the original 50 copies turn up sometime in the future ... anybody got any (printable) suggestions ?

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This, then is OZ-8, originally produced for the 51st Mailing of the Off-Trails Magazine Publishers' Association (June 1968), by Beryl Mercer, 10, Lower Church Lane, St. Michael's, Bristol BS2 8BA, England.

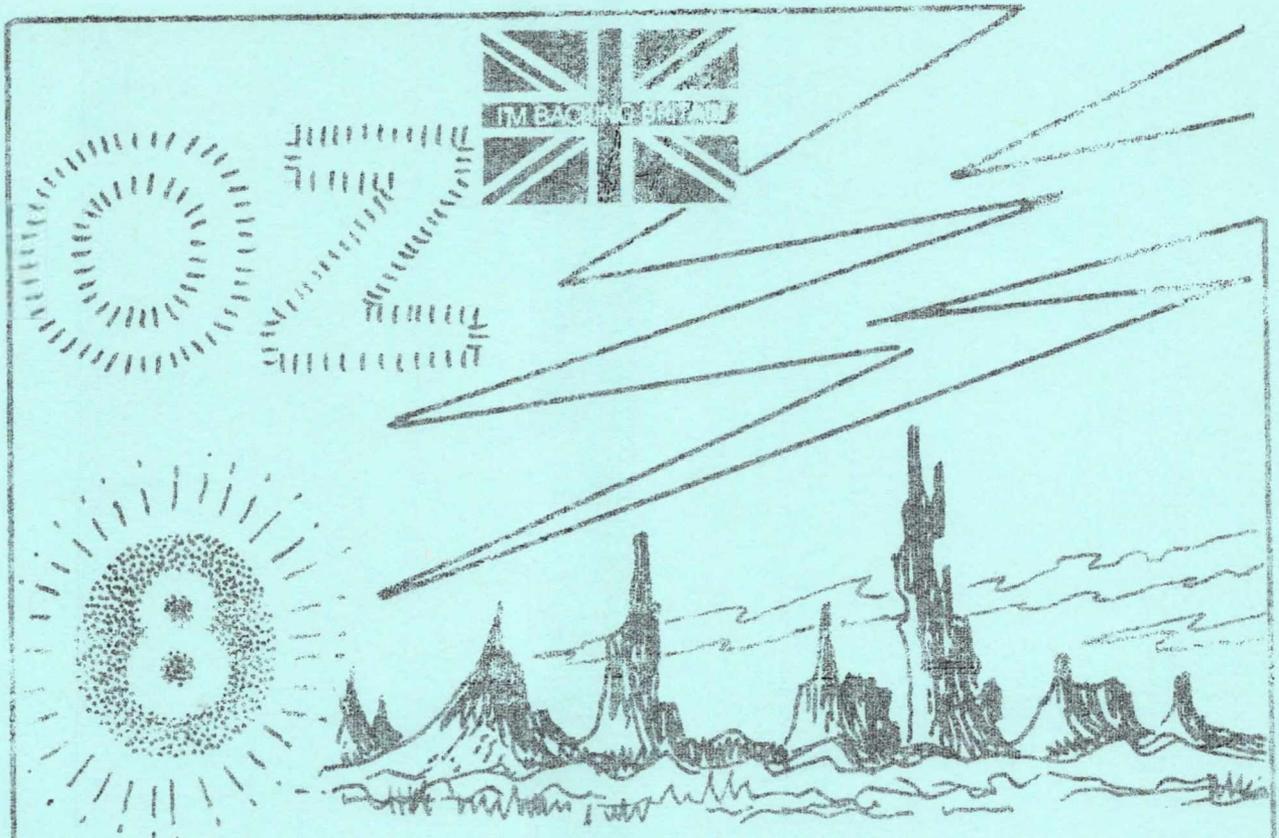
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All proofread and duplicated by Archie Mercer, to whom my loving thanks as usual. The whole lot offered to OMPA for its 56th (January 1970) Mailing. Our thanks to those who sent us Christmas cards, and our very good wishes to all for the New Year.

Over and out.

++ BM

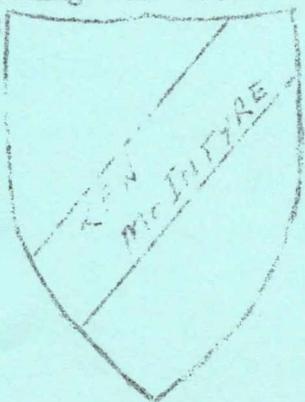
E&OE



This is OZ-8, produced for the 51st Mailing of the Off-Tracks Magazine Publishing Association by BERYL MERCER, currently domiciled at:

10, Lower Church Lane, St. Michael's, Bristol 2, England.

Proof-read and duplicated by the indefatigable Archie Mercer, without whom the world would be an Archie Mercer-less place. This issue includes an interesting article by BOBBIE GRAY (only half of which is as yet on stencil), and a WIND ARTICHOKE EPISELE by Pres. Don Studebaker, which I haven't yet begun to stencil (May 26th) because I've been awaiting artwork - including this cover. Speaking of which, all the artwork in this issue is by:



Except for a winged creature that I dug up somewhere in the Naked Artichoke I forgot, this drawing is by American fanned RANDY WILLIAMS. The shield emblems are by courtesy of the Order of St. Pantony, and Archie called me a vandal when I clipped them out of the next recent St. P. circular from Keith Freeman.

The Bobbie Gray and Don Studebaker articles are to be credited to their respective OMPA activities.

## WHERE MY TYPEWRITER HAS RESTED !

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Well, as most of you know, we've moved again. I've written up a full, somewhat tongue-in-cheek account of The Move for *BADINAGE*, so excuse me if I don't go into details again here. Suffice it to say that it was one of those things which wasn't funny at the time, but is slightly hilarious in retrospect. Offhand, the only person I can think of who could have done it full justice in print is the late James Thurber ...

From the outside, as all our first-time visitors would confirm, the place looks frankly horrible. It's in an area scheduled for future demolition - euphemistically called 'development' by the Powers-That-Be. Ironically, this is the first place we've occupied in which we'd like to 'put down roots' as the saying says, our previous three homes having been on a temporary basis. However, we have good reason to believe that our tenancy will be safe for at least a year and probably quite a bit longer. Next door is a linoleum warehouse, the manager of which told me that he has a five-year lease with four years still to run; this doesn't, of course, necessarily mean that he'll be there for another four years, but it sounds hopeful. Our own lease is on an annual renewable basis.

Our home is a little difficult to describe. It's on the side of a hill, with the only door at the back of the building, which is on ground level. The front of it occupies the second and third floors, and from its windows we have a magnificent view across the heart of the city. The view comprises a fascinating mixture of ancient and modern; brand-new, towering blocks of flats and offices being interspersed with huddlings of mediaeval-looking edifices. Including a 13th century almshouse built on three sides of a square - still occupied, too.

Technically, our home has eight rooms. That's right, eight! - on two floors. The door opens into a large hall-room; like other rooms on that side of the building, it's an odd sort of triangular shape, owing to the fact that fireplaces have been walled off. Because we have no outside territory at all, we have curtained-off one corner of the hall-room, and behind the curtain lurk 'the dirties', as I call them: the dustbin, sacks of coal, tins of paint, cans of paraffin for the oil-heaters, etc.

Another door leads into a passage-way which connects all the rooms of the lower floor and gives access to the stairs. Opposite the hall-room is the bedroom, a fairly large affair with a small open fireplace set in modern blue tiles. Along the passage, on the same side of the building as the bedroom, is the living room, roughly the same size as the bedroom, with a much larger fireplace, also tiled. The fourth room is the kitchen, which is the same odd shape as the hall-room.

A short flight of stairs leads up to a tiny square landing, from which two more, even shorter, flights of stairs lead off in opposite directions. Above the kitchen is the bathroom, where resides the only source of running hot water in the house, in the shape of an occasionally-temperamental gas geyser. (shades of Caesar at Cotham!). It's a pleasant room, lacking only

a wash-hand basin, but we manage, we manage! Opposite the bathroom, and above the living-room, is our little study-cum-office-cum-den, where we have our desks and typers, <sup>and</sup> Archie's vast zinc-collection in its home-made book-cases (painted orange-boxes!). Cupboards are set in the entire length of a side-wall, and are stacked with all kinds of ~~zinc~~ stuff - spare zines, old letters, my ukelele, Archie's concertina, etc.

Above the bedroom is what was originally the BAD Group's club-room, although recent meetings have been held in the living-room - partly because its open fireplace makes it easier to heat, and partly because it's much bigger than the club-room. However, the Group's fair-sized library is housed in the club-room - and for once we have enough space there to arrange all the books in proper order and in full view. Also in this room are one of our two bed-settees (we've acquired a second one since coming to live here), and the long table which is mainly used for collating zines.

Opposite the club-room, and above the hall-room, is the smallest room of the lot - and no, I don't mean that one! The previous tenants had a small daughter, and this must have been either her bedroom or her play-room, since it has pink nursery-type paper on its walls. Caractacus B. O'Flynn von Gestetner lives here, along with Archie's ancient single bed and boxes of duplicating paper, etc.

Archie's 'infinite connectivity' system of electrical connections has really come into its own in this place, because there are no electric power-points at all on the upper floor. (Incidentally, said upper floor is built right into the roof, so that all its rooms have sloping ceilings, and tall people have to be warned to "mind your head!") Fortunately we have an open stair-well, and from the landing between the bathroom and the office, we can look straight down on to the lower floor's passage-way. So it was a comparatively simple matter to run a cable up from the power-point in the living-room (which is conveniently situated near the door) on to aforementioned landing; it culminates in a 'floating' socket, which can be utilised to serve either the electric fire in the office, or the washing-machine in the bathroom. (I keep it there because, as I said, the bathroom holds the only source of running hot water.)

I acquired the washing-machine originally because the place was broken into shortly before we moved in. The burglars pinched all the lead piping they could lay hands on; this was, of course, replaced by the landlord. But the burglars also wrenched off the spout of the geyser, damaging it so much in the process that new parts had to be manufactured to put it in working order again. This process took three months, if you please - and I got so fed up of seeing our nice, gleaming-white bath and being unable to use it that I got the washing-machine. True, we had to wait about a couple of hours for the water to get hot in it, but at least we didn't have to go traipsing off to the public baths in all weathers, and also Archie doesn't now have to make his former regular trips to the launderette, also in all weathers. (We didn't have a car when we moved in, remember; didn't get one, in fact, until March 1st this year.)

We like it here. We only hope that the bulldozers will forget all about Lower Church Lane for years 'n' years. We should be that lucky ... ??

# OH DIDN'T ARCHIE RAMBLE

THE COLUMN WHERE ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN BUT SELDOM IF EVER DOES

I LOST MY HEART  
IN CAPE TOWN, TRA-LA

I, Archibald Henry Mercer, do not wish any part of my body, whether before or after my death, to be removed therefrom for transplanting into the body of any other person, so long as the removal of the part in question from my living body would in the normal course of events render me (a) dead, or (b) deprived of any of my recognised faculties. This is entirely irrespective of whether my life and/or faculties could be preserved by artificial means after the removal of the part in question.

Similarly, I do not wish any part of any other body to be transplanted into mine, under equivalent conditions to those above.

I happen to feel very strongly about this. I have two main reasons. One is that I envisage and fear the possibility (remote though it may appear to be) of "accidents" being staged in order to provide parts for the financially and/or politically powerful. The other, of at least equal importance, stems from the report that Professor Christian Barnard (who seems to get most of the publicity in connection with heart transplants) gained his experience by transplanting the hearts of two hundred dogs before he graduated to people.

Two hundred dogs.

I don't like it.

Their species isn't relevant. They might equally well, so far as my feelings are concerned, have been rabbits, or mice, or elephants. Or, come to that, violent and obnoxious criminals, or instigators of inter-racial disharmony. The simple fact is that I do not regard two hundred healthy animals as fair exchange for one permanent semi-invalid. Nor for two hundred permanent semi-invalids. Nor for two million, nor any other number you care to name.

And what of the distant future? What of the surgical millennium, when safe and viable organ transplants (not to mention regeneration) are as matter-of-fact as sticking a piece of plaster over a cut finger is today? Very nice indeed, perhaps, for the recipients of the surgeon's bounty. But how many millions of guinea-pigs - quadrupedal or bipedal - will have to be mutilated before we reach that point?

The future will, I think, hold as many terrors as the present does, and as the past has done.

Back to the womb, anyone?

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THE remainder of this column is sponsored by the manufacturers of the DOWNBOY Dog Bed. Genuine bird-feathers in a special plastic cover that is both warm and washable.  
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THE THINGS I DO FOR BRISTOL... One of the normal facts of life for Beryl and myself is that we are never on the electoral register for our current address.

Every year about October the form comes round, asking for people's whereabouts on some arbitrary date in November. I fill it in and send it off to the council. The new electoral register, for both parliamentary and local government purposes, is compiled from the information thereon and comes into force early in the following year. By which time we have (so far) always moved to another address. A stupid system, based on the theory that people seldom if ever move, and then only in late October or early November. But I have, nevertheless, to live with it as best I can.

Now although I usually vote in parliamentary elections, I seldom bother about local ones. For one thing, I don't like local government - whoever's running it. This time, though, with the world in a state of universal crisis and brouhaha (or vice versa, whichever is the worse) I deemed it my duty to help to keep Bristol out of the clutches (if it wasn't already in them) of the ~~Citizen~~ Citizen Party.

Nobody had bothered to forward me any election literature, so I hadn't a clue as to what was happening, except for the date. I rang up the electoral registration office for the city the day before, and the girls there were ever so helpful in telling me what my polling number was, and where to use it. I still didn't know the name of any candidate in "my" ward, however, let alone what party he stood for. The next day - the day of the poll - I even bought a local evening paper. But that didn't tell me, either.

So a trifle after five-thirty in the evening, I drove the Great Hairy Tribester out of the site compound and set forth boldly for Bedminster and glory. It was still rush-hour, and I chalked up a "first" when obliged to pull up right on top of the Temple Meads flyover. I didn't get much of a chance to admire the view, however, and inched along past St. Mary Redcliffe and up over Redcliffe Hill. Once I got over the Bedminster Bridge roundabout it was easier, and without much trouble I located the polling station and pulled up right opposite.

The outside of the polling station was manned by three people. One was a dapper military-looking man - I don't know on whose behalf he was there, or what his function technically was. The other two were attractive girls, huddled in the porch of the church hall (the polling station's normal role) against the cold and both wearing blue rosettes. "Excuse me," I said to the girls; "I know this probably sounds silly, but I've moved to another part of Bristol. Do you mind telling me which of the candidates is which?"

They were very sorry, they told me, but they were not allowed to say that. Which was somewhat ridiculous - I knew that solicitors were not allowed to solicit, but this was the first time I'd ever known it to be suggested that tellers might not tell. However, the dapper man came over and explained that it was all right for them - as party workers - to give me the information. It was the people inside (plus himself?) who were not supposed to talk about that aspect of things. So one of the girls shyly informed me that somebody or other was the Citizen candidate, whilst somebody else (Richards, if I recall) was the Socialist. Since members of the Labour Party seldom or never refer to themselves as Socialists (unless maybe with a very small "s"), and conversely a Labour Party member would probably have called the Citizen candidate a Tory, it seemed to clinch the girl's identity as a Citizeness herself. I thanked her/them, went in, identified myself, cast my vote for the alleged Socialist, thanked them all again on-the-way out, climbed back

into the Tribester, turned the key, pulled the starter...

And it wouldn't start.

After repeated fruitless attempts I put the handbrake off, got out again, and attempted to push the Tribester backwards down the slight slope. A grating and the kerb got in the way, however, and I didn't get very far. Then the dapper man, - whoever and whatever he was - came over and gave me a hand, and together we pushed the thing just far enough. Then I got in again, gave everybody a somewhat embarrassed wave, and started to coast down the steep hill that led straight down from the road I was on. The engine caught when I moved into gear, and I was away.

That was Thursday. It's now Saturday, and the battery has so far worked perfectly ever since...

So I cast my vote. It comes as something of an anti-climax when I have to admit that I have no idea of the result of the poll, either in Windmill Hill Ward or in Bristol as a whole. But then, I never was very keen on local government anyway.

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LET sleeping dogs lie - each on his DOWNBOY Dog Bed, naturally. Made from the feathers of real birds, covered with a special plastic that is both warm and washable, the DOWNBOY Dog Bed is every dog's dream of contentment. Buy one for your dog, before the rush starts.

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PARADE OF THE PARENTHESES Don't, as the saying says, Look Now - but there are insiders among us! This is nothing new, of course - they've been there behind the scenes for years, insidiously (thank you) worming their way into most of the best positions. Now all of a sudden they're in the open, for all to see. It's too late to do more than make a token protest. We're surrounded.

Or, rather, they are.

By brackets.

Walk down any street and you can hardly miss them. My employers, for instance, go by the name of "Ernest Ireland (Contractors) Ltd." The steel-fixing on the site where I work is handled by "Cara Steel (Bristol) Ltd." Among the firms the site regularly deals with are "Geo. Cook & Son (Bristol) Ltd." (actually a subsidiary of "Hobbs (Quarries) Ltd."), "Ready Mixed Concrete (Western) Ltd.", "Square Grip (Western) Ltd.", "Square Grip (Southern) Ltd.", "Plant Hire Services (Avon) Ltd.", and others similar or worse. One local firm <sup>used</sup> to be known as "John Hall (Tools) Ltd." is now called "John Hall Tools (Group) Ltd." (So now you know what it's like to gro up in brackets.)

Some of these in-brackets words do have a moderately rational excuse. The two "Square Grip" companies mentioned above, for instance, are branches off the same stem that somehow require differentiating one from t'other - though, admittedly, not necessarily in brackets. The companies of the "Ready Mixed Concrete" group fall into the same category. Sometimes a company - call it "Nutcracker Grinders and Sewage Disposal Ltd." - goes broke and is technically wound up. However, something survives and reappears later as "Nutcracker Grinders and Sewage Disposal (1968) Ltd." If somebody called John Smith wishes to start a company in his own name, he will almost certainly have to bow to prior claim

and move into parentheses as "John Smith (Oswaldtwistle) Ltd.", "John Smith (Froth Blowers) Ltd.", "John Smith (Wholesale) Ltd.", or "John Smith (Brackets) Ltd."

On the other hand, the parenthetical insertions are sometimes almost impossible to follow. Panther Books are published by "Hamilton & Co. (Stafford) Ltd." Although the firm's address has been known to move at times, it's always so far as I'm aware been somewhere in western London. Way back in the days when they were publishing Authentic S.F., I asked its editor Bert Campbell what Stafford was doing in his brackets. Bert was (for once) at a loss - he could only suggest feebly that it might be to distinguish them from the other publishing house of Hamish Hamilton. Since the "Hamish" obviously does this entirely adequately on its own, and "Stafford" (sorry, "(Stafford)") needs to be accounted for rather than say "(Chelsea)", I'm still none the wiser.

If you can't beat 'em (as the other saying says), then join 'em. Ken Slater was on to this years ago, when he incorporated his book-and-magazine business as "Fantast (Medway) Ltd." The words "Fantast" and "Medway" present no problems - prior to his discharge from the forces, Ken had been conducting a similar mail-order hobby under the title of "Operation Fantast", in which he was assisted by a small but active fan-group in the Medway towns in Kent. After incorporation the Kentish element dropped out, but the company never bothered to change its title. In any case, there was never any real need for the "Medway" - any more than the "Fantast" - to be in brackets. Obviously, Ken only had them put there because he was intelligent enough to foresee the day when they'd be practically de rigeur.

Personally, I think that the greatest mistake the B.S.F.A. ever made was by incorporating itself as a limited company without any brackets. Some day, it'll cost good money to have that omission put right.

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THE dog would not have been in the manger if there had been a DOWNBOY Dog Bed available for him. Wuff, those super-comfy feathers with the real bird-smell. Wuff, that lovely warm (and yet easily washable) plastic cover. W U F F !!!  
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BOOKS     Some of the books that Beryl buys or borrows I also read, some I  
AND CARS   don't. (The vice Mercer of that also applies, of course.) I  
             hereby tender a few remarks on the subject of some of the books  
mentioned by Beryl in OZ 7.

Alan Garner's two Alderley Edge juveniles, "The Weirdstone of Brisingamen" and "The Moon of Gomerath" I found a bit much. It may or may not be coincidence that the two stories between them contain most of the ingredients of Tolkien's four-volume epic, packed into such a tight space as to be ridiculous. That, I think, is the main trouble - Garner's two books are far, far and away too short for all the material that's to be found in them. Mythic and legendary concepts of, or descending from, the various Celtic and Teutonic settlers in Britain are thrown at one from all sides in never-ceasing profusion, with no time for proper explanations, differentiations, categorisations, etc. Possibly a child with a fresh mind (and the books are after all juveniles) can stand being flung in at the deep end like this, and accept everything strictly on its own terms. I was merely bewildered.

Then John E. Eichenlaub, M.D., and his "The Marriage Art". I thought I'd better read this, just to see what I'm missing or something. I found

Something that I might once well have deemed impossible - a book about sexual practices that, though written for the most part in simple and straightforward language, is not only non-erotic but is positively boring. It occurs to me that it might possibly be susceptible to improvement were it to be re-cast in the form of a novel, with a young couple doing in turn most of the various things that Eichenlaub describes and suggests, being helped out in cases where this would make the plot too ridiculous by comparing notes with their friends. In fact, it would probably sell like a bomb !

(It would make rather an interesting film, too...)

Then cars. No particular connection with books of course, except that I find it convenient to throw them in under the same sub-heading. In AMBLE way back in OMPA's previous incar(huh ?)nation, I commented rather unfavourably on certain characteristics of the Triumph Herald that we were at that time buying on hire-purchase. Circumstances indicated that we and the Herald should part company last summer, and so we did. If we hadn't done, we'd have been paying for it yet. As it is, its eventual successor, the Great Hairy Tribester, is entirely bought and paid for. The Tribester takes its name from its number-plate, as is usual with Mercatorial transport, specifically 2 GHX. G for Great, H for Hairy (or, occasionally, Howling), X for Tribester. Technically it's a 1955 Morris Minor, 800-odd c.c. engine, four doors, divided windscreen, small rear window, coloured a sort of dirty cream under the dust, and showing its battle-scars with pride. (Since we can't afford to have anything done about them yet. The engine wants seeing to first, like.) It works all right - it took four of us to Buxton and back at Easter - and is gradually being reduced to something more closely approximating the proverbial Bristol-fashion. (Oddly enough, it has a Middlesex registration. Although HT, HU, HW and HY are all Bristol marks, HX is Middlesex.)

Although older and smaller than the Herald, it has a number of features that represent a marked improvement on it. The steering-wheel and pedals, for instance, are located logically more or less in line with the middle of the driver. Only one key serves to operate the ignition, the door, and the boot - though I've recently deemed it advisable to add a second, for a locking petrol-cap. The bonnet can only be opened from inside the car - a Herald's can be opened by any casual passer-by unless there are special locks fitted. The spare wheel can be removed from the boot without emptying it of luggage first.

There are disadvantages too of course. It lacks the Herald's magnificent concept of rubber bumpers. There is no reserve supply of fuel - at least there wasn't, until I bought a loose can for it. The driving seat does not move back far enough for perfection, giving an ache in the right foot on a long journey. (On the other hand, there is by the same token more room for the person behind the driver.) I don't like either the colour or the shape - the latter both on aesthetic and functional grounds. (You should have seen me trying to get a borrowed roof-rack on. It went - somehow, and just.)

Still, with all the above, it's O U R S ! ! !

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A QUICK wipe over with a damp cat is all that is necessary to give a DOWNBOY Dog Bed (made with real bird-feathers) that clean-as-new look. And it dries in a jiffy. However, if you want to make absolutely sure that your Best Friend has a dry bed to sleep in, why not buy him a spare DOWNBOY Dog Bed too ? (It will also come in useful when he has friends to stay the night.)  
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HOW TO GET ON WITH THE FANS I was recently commissioned to get a story-book by way of a birthday present for one of my nephews. Selecting one was not easy - all the bookshops I visited seemed to have nothing in the "story-book" category between Enid Blyton on the one hand, and near-adult stuff on the other. The book I eventually settled on, "101 Best Adventure Stories", edited by a certain David Irish and published by Ward, Lock, comprises all sorts of snippets averaging perhaps a page and a bit in length, some retold by the editor from traditional sources and some excerpted direct from the writings of others. The snippet entitled "How to Get On with the Fans" is excerpted from Mary Kingsley's "Travels in West Africa", first published in 1897.

"The Fan", we learn from Mistress Kingsley, "is full of fire, temper, intelligence and go; very teachable, rather difficult to manage, quick to take offence, and utterly indifferent to human life. I ought to say that other people, who should know him better than I, say he is a treacherous, thievish, murderous cannibal."

"The cannibalism of the Fans," she says elsewhere in the excerpt, "although a prevalent habit, is no danger, I think, to white people, except as regards the bother it gives one in preventing one's black companions from being eaten." (But of course! Immigrants are food. This isn't colour-prejudice - it's sheer survivalism.) "The Fan," says Mary Kingsley furthermore, "is not a cannibal from sacrificial motives like the negro. He does it in his common-sense way. Man's flesh, he says, is good to eat, very good, and he wishes you would try it. .... He will eat his next door neighbour's relations and sell his own deceased to his next door neighbour in return." After all, let's face it - relations are food too.

The remainder of the excerpt is not specifically applied to Fans, but is of a more general nature. Highly digestible, though. If I was to come across her writings in somewhat larger quantities, I don't think I'd find it at all hard to become a fan of Mary Kingsley.

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EVERY dog has his day - especially if his nights are spent in a DOWNBOY Dog Bed. Well may you have cause to envy him his comfort! Our "Great Dane" model measures a full six foot long by three foot six wide. So why not get one for yourself?

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A DOZEN LINES TO FILL 1929: the year of the '45 Rebellion. The year of the Great Depression, caused by Floyd J. Winklehammer (the late Floyd J. Winklehammer) throwing all 400 lbs. of himself from a 98th-floor window in Hoboken, New Jersey, on to the pavement of New York's Lower Middle-East side. And the year in which Hereward O'Brienstein first ran the four-minute mile in 35 seconds.

It all started the previous year, 1912, owing to an unfortunate error that had crept into the calendar the previous February. Hereward O'Brienstein, at that time a rising young teenager of some 25 summers and half a dozen winters (his parents were rich enough to live where they liked) was in the habit of bathing in the sea every day between 12 a.m. and 12 p.m., except during the kipper-spawning season when he seldom emerged from the sea at all, except when he wanted a swim. And that's yer lot, as the saying says. 'Bye.

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YOU HAVE NOT HEARD THE LAST OF THE DOWNBOY DOG BED. WATCH THIS SPACE.

# C-O-Z-MENTS.

... Being comments on the 50th OMLA Mailing ...

ANOTHER ONE-6. (Heinrich) Obviously I'm very pleased by your remarks about the Bristol Con, having been a Concommittee member, and I've passed your comments on to the other, non-OMLAN members of that committee. We all hope that you enjoyed yourself at least as much at Duxton. // I agree with your remark to Pete Weston that "PADS shouldn't be any threat to OMLA". Archie and I have now handed over PADS to Dave Sutton of Birmingham; our last Mailing consisted of exactly one fanzine - Adrian Cook's WARLOCK! (I mean the last Mailing we put out.) We haven't heard from Dave recently, but somehow I doubt whether he'll get many more zines than we did. I don't think there were ever more than six or seven zines in any Mailing we issued. // "T&OE" stands for "Errors and omissions excepted"; it simply means that if any mistakes have slipped through without your noticing them, you didn't mean it deliberately! // My life before joining fandom? - but Heinz, that means most of it, because I didn't 'find' fandom until 1963, and you know I'm 42! Well, lesseecc ... I was born and raised in Birmingham, and was an only child until I was 12 $\frac{1}{2}$  years old, when my sister was born. The war started just before I was 14, and for the first few months of it I was evacuated to Hinckley in Leicestershire. Went home again because my sister was fretting for me, and I missed her a lot, too. Continued my schooling in a rather patchy manner, and managed to take - and pass - the important School Certificate examination in July 1940. (They call it the General Certificate of Education nowadays). Later that year we were bombed out, and moved to Redditch, a small market town in Worcestershire, about 13 miles south of Birmingham. I left school and started work just before Christmas of that year, in one of the offices of a large war-factory. I stayed there until I was old enough to join the Services, and in August 1943 I went into the Fleet Air Arm. It was while serving in the Navy that I met my husband, though we weren't married until August 1946. David was born in November 1950, and John in June 1953. A few years after that my marriage began to go slowly downhill; it wasn't anybody's fault really, it was just that we slowly began to 'grow apart.' My interests went one way, Bob's went another, and finally I had to face the fact that I would one day have to make a break. I would like to stress that this decision was made long before I got into fandom and met Archie; I was just sticking around until my boys were old enough to fend for themselves. I got in touch with Pete Weston via the Science Fiction Book Club in 1963, became a member of the Brum Group ('Brum' is just slang for Birmingham), joined the B.S.F.A. at the end of the year. Archie was then editing VECTOR, we started up a correspondence, and ... well, I guess you know the rest. But if I've missed out anything that you'd particularly like to know more about, please ask. // The most recent letter I had from Don Studebaker is undated - it's the one that accompanied the latest N.A. ms. - but the post-mark on the envelope is April 8th. He says in the letter that he still hadn't received his OMLA Mailing then, so I wrote him an air-letter pointing out that this might be because he has changed his address from the one shown in OT (it's now 1585 Arch Street, Berkeley, California 94708, U.S.A. - for your information, Heinz.) Let's hope that this is the reason for his not having

received his Mailing - although George Scithers told Archie not long ago that America was having some mail-delivery labour troubles, which may have delayed all the American Mailings. I dunno, looks as though poor old OMEPA just can't win, doesn't it? // Enjoyed very much Jean's Heidelberg - it's so very Jean-ish! I mean, I can almost hear her talking, in her dry, quiet way, as I read it. // Both Archie and I liked your bacover, Heinz - especially the bit that says, "Ingwy (?) is a Louse"!

COGNATE-8 (Rosemary) As you'll have read on the previous page, I, too, have a David, and he, too, was "a charming little boy." He is now 17½, and his father (who still writes to me occasionally) recently reported that he (David) is now "well over six feet tall, weighs over 13 stone" (that's 182 lbs. to you) "and hasn't an ounce of fat on him." Gad! - I mothered a giant - and I'm exactly five feet tall! // I was most interested in your account of 'peopling' ghost towns. I'll have to try that sometime with the many old buildings in Bristol, although it won't be so easy because of their being hemmed in by more modern constructions, thus making it difficult to visualise the setting of the old buildings in their own time, what kind of view and neighbours the occupants had then, etc. // Your Indian beads sound like fun; as for "is this how it starts?" - well, I wouldn't know, not having been bitten seriously by any collecting 'bug.' For one thing, I believe that yours is the first - perhaps only - type of collecting I've ever heard about that doesn't cost money. Or, wait a minute - don't some people collect sea-shells and make necklaces and other knick-knacks with them? Even so, we don't live on the coast, so we'd have travelling expenses to meet if we wanted to go and collect shells! Then again, I know I'm not the collecting type, because I'm the sort of idiot who asks, "Well, what do you do with all these stamps (pictures, shells, what-have-you) when you've collected them?" Stamps, for instance - which I used to collect when I was at school, but only in a half-hearted sort of way because it was at that time "the thing to do": you fiddle about with tweezers and stamp-hinges, and stick them in an album. You swap your spares for other collectors' spares, and stick them in your album. Sometimes you even sit and look at your stamps... but what's the point?? You, of course, hope eventually to have a pretty ornament for your neck, a demonstrable result of your collecting zeal, and that, I admit, certainly makes more sense (to me, anyway) than sticking bits of coloured paper in a book and just looking at 'em!

HAGGIS-10. (Ian) I can understand why you and other males applaud the mini-skirt, but last winter I found myself eyeing wearers of it from what I hope was a detached and coldly (apt!) logical point of view. I saw shivering slaves to fashion dressed in what wrote me utterly ludicrous get-ups: skirts nearly up to their bottoms, fur-lined or wool-lined anoraks or jackets (many hooded) showing about two inches of skirt, and knee-high boots. A Dickens character once declaimed, "The law is a ass and a idiot!" No more so than fashion decrees, in my opinion. Take women's stockings, for instance: as Archie says, they're pretty stupid garments. They don't keep you warm in cold weather, or cool in warm weather; until quite recently they were not at all colourful, in fact for many years "flesh" was the colour for stockings. And most women have to buy, on average, one pair per fortnight. I once wrote an article for the small weekly paper for which I was then working, commenting on the fact that men's clothing was, on the whole, eminently sensible for winter but not for summer, and women's clothing was the opposite. (I don't include you, you kilt-swinging Caledonian!) At that time, a town in summer

displayed bare-headed, bare-armed, bare-legged girls flitting about like butterflies in pretty, light-coloured, light-weight dresses, while scowling, sweating men lumbered along in trousers, shirts, collars-and-ties (well, sometimes), jackets, socks and shoes, or even boots. Even on the beaches of Britain one might see middle-aged men being daring enough to discard their jackets and ties, and roll up their shirt-sleeves, revealing writhing tattoos and striped braces! But in winter, men are, generally speaking, comfortable, but girls aren't. It's all pretty barney; it takes Archie about thirty seconds to dress, but it takes me at least five minutes! // Glad you enjoyed your trip in October, and your visit to us. I expect you've read about the fairly recent decision to dig into Silbury Hill, which is (so Archie tells me) the largest man-made earth-works in Europe. Archie climbed the thing once; I decided to chicken-out, played the fragile female (huh!) and sat in the car while he climbed. Have they found anything interesting, do you know? Not having TV, and switching on the radio only in the mornings to get a time-check, we may have missed something on the subject. // To a certain extent, I agree with Archie about Nationalist movements - that the creation of new frontiers must always be a regression, pulling us further away from the realisation of the dream of a "United Earth." However, I would always agree that it is a pity to let native languages and customs, etc., die out for lack of encouragement and regular use; I believe that nobody now living can speak Cornish, for instance, and I suppose that any literature in that language will finally be lost to posterity for lack of translators.

MORSETAIL-II,1. (Gretchen) Welcome to OMEA, and thank you for telling us something about yourself. One small gripe: I found that bright pink paper a bit hard on the eyes, even though there were only two sides of it. // You say: "I took up history because it gives me a chance to study any and everything: from psychology to mathematics ..." Re psychology, there's a point I once tried to take up with an American friend (I think it was Joe Gibson), but somehow the anticipated discussion never materialised. It's about race-psychology and space - I don't mean outer space, I mean living space. You, for instance are obviously quite a few years younger than I am, yet in your lifetime you have to all intents and purposes crossed a Continent in the course of your various family and personal moves. And obviously you think nothing of it: "I have travelled quite a bit to the various big cities of the United States and to some of the countries of western Europe, briefly," you say casually. Now, the longest journey which can be undertaken in the U.K. - excluding Ireland, to reach which one has to cross water - is, as one of our proverbial sayings says, "from Land's End (the southernmost tip of Cornwall, looking out over the Atlantic) to John o' Groats" (the northernmost point in Scotland, excluding the Orkney and Shetland Islands). This involves about 740 miles of travelling; I suppose an American would think nothing of driving that distance to have dinner with a friend, and driving back the same night! But, to a Briton, such a journey would be a pretty serious undertaking - I remember my mother once saying doubtfully that it was "a very long way to go just for a weekend" - I was proposing to go from the Midlands to Bridgwater in Somerset - a distance of just over 100 miles! What I'm getting at is that you live in a country of long distances, vast open spaces, and you grow up being used to counting your miles in four or even five figures, rather than our two or three. We live on a small, densely-packed island, and I'd imagine (somebody correct me if I'm wrong) that the biggest of our open spaces could be easily crossed in less than half a day. Does it seem to you, therefore, that we Britons tend to "think small"? What differences does it occasion in our respective national characters? I'd be really interested to read your - or any American member's - comments on this, please.

SPIROCHETE-17. (Redd) Welcome to you, too. Apropos of what I was just quizzing

Gretchen about, you present a facet of the other side of the picture: our famous Weather. H'mmm, where was I in 1944-5 ... oh yes, most of 1944 I spent on the east coast of Scotland. Yes, of course, I remember now; poor old Redd, that was one of the years when we never got a summer! One of the most prevalent Service sayings around that time was: "Last summer? Oh, I missed it - I was taking a bath (or having a cuppa in the NAAFI) at the time!" As far as I can recall, I spent only two off-duty afternoons lazing on the beach - though one of my mess-mates did land up in sick-bay with a bad case of sunburn! Mind you, I wasn't aware until now that the rest of the country was similarly deprived that year. I recall reading somewhere, quite a while back, that some psychologist or other had said that it is our unpredictable, madly changeable weather which makes us an inventive, active race. Never knowing what the weather is going to do next keeps us on the qui vive, so to speak, keeps our minds active, resilient, ready for anything. I think he's got something there ...

WHATSIT-11. (Ser Kon) Am very interested in your fantasy-world, Ches. Have a couple more ideas to account for your people being on this planet:

6. Refugee planet (there must surely be worlds worse than ours in your galaxy!)
7. Quarantine planet - not only for physical plagues, but for psychotic-type thinking. Frankly, it would never surprise me to find that our Earth is just that, and that the U.F.O.'s are a never-ending patrol to keep us in! They'll let us go to the Moon, I think; perhaps even to other planets of the Solar System; but the orbit of Pluto may well prove to be the "so-far-and-no-further!"

// Hey, that thing by the fifth-year student is damn clever, immit? I wonder what kind of a Saucer he came out of ... // As you'll have read by now (if you've read OZ in proper order, instead of hunting for your own name first, you dog!), Archie and I no longer run PADS, and in any case I rather suspect that PADS is a dead duck. // I found myself 'singing' that 'Auld Secceder Cat' thing to the tune of 'Wild Colonial Boy'! // Loved 'Gorey Road.' More, MORE! 'The Finding of the True Cross' - h'mmmm, if the Pope got an eyeful of that, I reckon you'd have to spend the rest of yer natural in confession, Kon! // Ferdinand Fughead - yes, agreed: Yecchhh! Old, too!

WHATSIT-12. (Him Again) No, I wasn't, unfortunately, at the Stourbridge Nov. 5th party. // The ... the things on page 5 are perfectly horrible. // O.K., you are at liberty to hate my illos if you want to; I wasn't all that keen on 'em myself, but, like you, I can't draw. No, that's wrong - what I mean is, I can't draw even the happy little squiggles that you throw around your WHATSITS. (Go on, have yourself a preen on me!) // What you said to Brian Stableford about education reminds me that my younger son, John (the one who used to beat you at chess when he was eleven ...) started writing to me last November, and has maintained a somewhat sporadic correspondence ever since. His writing is terrible schoolboy scrawl, but the content of his letters is surprisingly mature. The subject he likes best at school is biology (which he refers to as 'bilge'), particularly genetics - he draws little diagrams in some of his letters, thus educating his grateful Mom ... On the whole, however, he dislikes school, and can't wait for his 16th birthday next year so that he can leave. I've been trying to persuade him gently to give the Vith form a try, but what he wants is to be supplied with the necessary books, etc., and then left to find things out for himself. He hates being taught - and I can't really reprove him because I remember the feeling very well from my own school.

days. I mentioned this to Chris Priest in a recent letter, and he says that there are a few schools in this country which do educate their pupils in this principle; he says it's called heuristic education, and that it's obviously what John is seeking. If I had time to go browsing in Bristol's Central Library - which I haven't - I expect I could find some information on the subject. Do you know anything about it, please? // 'In that Land' is a little better than the things on page 5, but not much. It's odd, really, because on the previous page you say (to Ian Peters) "Sniff a spring morning and exult in the ecstasy of being alive." Now, if you were to write a poem on that basis, it might be quite something ...

WHATSIT-13. (And Again!) I got in a right tangle with this one, until I realised that pages 2 and 3 were transposed ... you silly old Cheslin ... anyway, I've recently read 'Celtic Myths and Legends' too - I suddenly realised that, although I've read, and been interested in, Roman, Greek and Scandinavian mythologies for years, I'd never investigated the home-grown product. But, heck, Ken - isn't it confusing? All the Celtic gods seem to have at least half-a-dozen names apiece, and some of them - especially the Irish ones - are quite unpronounceable, and therefore completely unmemorable. I mean, in order to be able to remember a word or a name, I have to be able to 'say' it in my mind. I also read a couple of other books on the same theme, but I can't remember what they were called now ... I've read so many damn books in the last few months. But I agree that the Alan Garner juveniles you mention are extremely good, though Archie wasn't so keen - says there was too much packed into each one, and that they should have been about three times as long, in order to do justice to their material. But I enjoyed 'em just as they were. // Re Holmes - I suppose you saw the recent newspaper reports of how a gang of Holmes addicts went to Switzerland (? I think) and there re-enacted Holmes's battle with Moriarty. Some folks apparently got a bit upset because one of the 'actors' was a Sir or an M.P., or possibly both. I must say it does seem a Bit Much ... But it would appear that there is indeed a British Holmes Society - half a tick while I nip downstairs and see if I can find any ref. to it in the pile of old newspapers down there ... (3½ hours later) - yeah, found 'em - the bigwig was Sir Paul Gore-Booth, head of the Diplomatic Service and Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office. (I say!) Anyway, I'll send you these bits of newsprint by post, and perhaps you can locate the society you want via the newspaper or something. // Dear old Olaf on the back - I'm so glad to see him again. Now then, Ken, what about us or me or somebody having another go at the Olaf saga that I started three or four years ago? Well, sure, I know we've no longer got MiK to do the illos - but don't forget that Ken McIntyre is now a Kt. St. F. Couldn't you threaten to cut off his Guinness at Kettering next August or something, until he agrees to take over? (I don't know how I can be so cruel; after he did the illos for the Naked Artichoke, too ... not that I've seen 'em yet, mind, but he said he would, and I trust him.)

And here endeth OZ's mcs. for this time.

Being in a burbling sort of mood, I'll just carry on from here. Ah yes: St. Fantony. (Pause while Cheslin stops cringing and cackling at the same time ...) Well, see, I was sitting there in the ~~back~~ audience at Buxton on the Sunday night, minding me own business (sitting next to Ken McIntyre, too, and I don't believe in coincidence, so there), and the Knights

had dispersed in search of the ~~next~~ Chosen Ones. I was craning my neck to try to see where Archie had vanished to, when suddenly there's a horrible snarl in the car-'ole, a pair of arms are flung around me, and I get a good thump in the back - from Cheslin's Iron Hand ... "Gotcha!" he cries, grinning all over his mug, while I squeak "OW!" and then permit myself to be ~~led~~ led up to the dais. Where I stand alone, thinking, gad, they're not going to initiate me all on me tod, are they? But no; suddenly Archie appears at the back of the hall, leading a dazed Doreen Parker to join me.

Apparently Doreen had been having a quiet drink in the bar with friends, when suddenly Tom Schlück, assisting a frantically-searching Archie, dashed in, said "Come on, I want you!", sort of scooped up Doreen under one arm, hauled her out and presented her to Archie. "Ghod," she muttered to me, "my knees are trembling!" "I know," I whispered back, "I can see 'em!"

Which was just about the time that Ethel Lindsay pounced on Ken McIntyre. When we were presented with our initiation draughts, mine was pale green, which meant only one thing - Vurguzz - and although I enjoy its effects, I do so hate its peppermint flavour! So I said, "Oh, drat German fandom!", drank it down, took the Oath, and let's have a little respect around here from now on, for The Lady Beryl Mercer of the Most Noble and Illustrious Order of Saint Fantony!

No, seriously: I'm honoured. Even if somebody did shout "Nepotism!" as Ken led me up to the dais, I hereby assure everybody that I had no idea I was going to be selected at Duxton. Anyone who knows Archie well will back me up when I say that wild horses would never have persuaded him to tell me - he didn't even let on that I'd been nominated. And I preferred it that way - it wouldn't have been nearly so much fun without the element of surprise. I'm also very happy that it was Ken Cheslin who grabbed me (yes, really, Ken!) because he obviously revelled in the task, and anyway I've got a very soft spot for the lad.

Phil Rogers had earlier been instituted (invested? instigated? installed? in-something, anyway) as the Order's new Noble Master. After our initiation, he stepped forward with upraised hand, and cried in stentorian tones: "I demand my Rights!" Doreen swears she didn't know what he meant ... apparently my muttered "Droit de Seigneur!" in reply to her look of blank enquiry simply didn't register!

Only one thing bothers me about my new status: never will I be able to look as glamorous in black tights and red tunic as Ina Shorrocks does. And she's had five children, too; it just isn't fair ...

So now I've got another 'head' to wear. Member of OMPA; member of RADS (formerly co-administrator); assistant secretary and member of the B.S.F.A. Limited; Co-Leader, Bristol Area, Tribe X; and Lady of St. Fantony ...

There was a fair-sized contingent from overseas at Duxton: seven Americans (IAFF-man Steve Stiles, Don Wollheim, Dave Kyle, Alex and Rhyllis Eisenstein, Billy Pottit and Gardner Dozois); seven Germans (Heinz Arenz, Waldemar Kunning, Gary Klüpfel, Tom Schlück, Walter 'Fux' Reinecke, and Thea 'Molly' and Hans-Jurg Auler), and two Italians (Gian-Paolo Cossato and Alfio Bertoni). Oh - eight Americans - I forgot Tom Disch. Which reminds me:

Funnist thing I saw at the Con: I was sitting on a corner of the bed at Chris Priest's room-party. Boozing. Swopping rude jokes with Vic Hallett and Tony Sudbery. Keeping an amused eye on Ted Tubb, who was making a determined effort to steal Pat Kearney's girl. Suddenly the door of the wardrobe was flung open, and out staggered Michael Kenward (who will shortly be taking over the editorship of VECTOR from Tony Sudbery). He was clutching his pint in a dazed manner, and wearing the most croggled expression I have ever seen on a human face. "What the devil were you doing in there?" I asked him. "I - I don't know," he stammered. "Tom Disch - he just - he just sort of picked me up and put me in there ..." I don't think Mike will ever be the same again. Which reminds me (again):

I hereby declare that I am a Cordwainer Smith Fan. And for many moons I have been trying to get hold of a copy of a Smith collection called "You Will Never Be The Same." It was published - quite a long time ago, I believe - in the States by a firm called Regent or Regency. The proprietor of a local paper-back shop promised to try to obtain it for me; I called there last Saturday to see if he'd had any luck (this was about the fourth such call). The shop was empty. Closed up. Finished. I do hope he hasn't sold up and fled just because he couldn't get my Cordwainer Smith book ... I'm not that formidable - am I? AM I??

If anybody across The Pond can get me a copy of this book, or has a copy that he/she would be willing to sell, or swap for something that I've got - he/she will be my Friend For Life.

Back to the Con. Funnist thing I heard: there was a comfortable settee in a sort of lobby which backed on to the Con hall proper. On Saturday evening there was a chap sitting on this settee with his girl-friend. The latter was wearing a dress of white lace. I was boozing at the other end of the lobby with some of the Manchester lot (the Group which staged the Con), and we were all a bit sloshed. One of the girls, Marge Edwards, remarked, in an entirely non-catty way, that the dress reminded her of lace curtains. We all went off into peals of drunken laughter, including the wearer of the dress (I think her name was Frances.) I was struggling to find a pun or some other kind of 'capper'; but Marge beat me to it. "Hey, Frances," she called, "what time does the curtain go up??"

And if I don't go now and turn off the tap, my bath will be overflowing. I might think of some more burble tomorrow evening. And then again, I mightn't. Actually I'm really only filling/killin' time until I get the N.A. illos from Ken McIntyre; then I can get cracking on stencilling Don's stuff. What's the date ... May 13th ... yes, I reckon I shall just about make the June 1st deadline!

May 14th. The postie (a crash-helmeted, bespectacled girl on a scooter) gets later and later. Time was I used to be able to read the mail in bed, and still get to work before my starting-time of 8.30.a.m. But for the past three weeks I've had to wait until I get home before being able to get at the letters. What maddens me more than anything is when there is a 'P' on the back of one of the envelopes - as this evening, for instance. The 'P' is written on by the postie him/herself, as a reminder that, in the depths of the mailbox is a packet or a large envelope, to be fished out at the relevant address. And if said postie is late, this means that the packet-or-whatever can't be delivered

(Really large parcels, which arrive later and are delivered by van, are taken round to the sports-equipment shop above which our home is situated. Its proprietors are also our landlords, incidentally.)

So here I am with an envelope bearing a 'P', and going batty because it might have been Ken McIntyre's artwork for the N.A. saga ... I suppose it's too much to hope that when the postal charges go up yet again in September, we shall get better service ... Doreen Parker's late, lovable father used to be a postie, and he used to say that since the Post Office got computerised, he reckoned that carrier pigeons were more reliable!

Which brings me very neatly to the next subject on the OZ-agenda.

Computers. Just before Christmas, one of Mardon's (my firm's) computer programmers - I think she was the only female one they had - left to take up a job in Australia. Shortly afterwards a notice appeared on the firm's boards to the effect that anyone interested in filling the vacancy should apply to take an aptitude test, to discover if he/she was suitable for training.

Well, I like my present job, and without wishing to appear big-headed, I think that it would be slightly difficult to replace me right now. With the help of a half-trained junior, I'm doing two people's jobs, and until the junior - Jill - has learned a bit more, my working capacities are stretched to their absolute limit. Nevertheless, out of devilment and a sense of challenge, I applied to take the test. ("Aye, the test!") So, one morning in early March about six of us (including my junior! H'mmm, wonder if she thinks I'm working her too hard ...) set off in spring sunshine to walk to Bridge House, a large block of offices housing the local branch of I.C.T. (International Computers & Tabulators). The test took 55 minutes; I was later told that, until the thing was streamlined a few years ago, it was a 9.a.m. to 5.p.m. affair!

It was along the lines of a glorified 11plus exam., in four sections; I won't go into details in case any of you ever take the thing, but the time-limit for each section is very strict. In fact the professor-ish bloke in charge told us, "We don't expect you to finish any of the sections." I mean - 15 minutes to deal with 60 questions! I did, however, manage to finish the fourth section, which dealt with words, and which contained only one question which I couldn't answer.

About a fortnight later we got the results. 20 or so people from Mardon's took the test in different batches, and four passed. A chap in his twenties - who got the job - a man in his forties, a 19-year-old female punch operator - and me. Archie was disappointed when I told him I hadn't got the job (I was given a lot of egoboo-type flannel about being indispensable in my present job, etc.) (lapped it up, too!), but I wasn't. I think that the only circumstances under which I'd have got the job would have been if I'd been the only one who passed. All I really wanted to know was whether my brain is still agile enough to keep up with younger minds. Apparently it is - so I'm not yet a candidate for a shawl and a bowl of gruel by the fireside!

And I've since been told that computer programming is a boring job; whether this is true or not, I wouldn't know. Pat - the girl who left for Australia - never gave that impression, but perhaps she was the type who isn't easily bored. I'm afraid I am - and whatever my present job may be, it certainly isn't boring!

## CELTIC MYTHOLOGY AND RELIGION

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... by Roberta Gray

This article will deal mainly with the Brythonic Gods, as it will develop mainly into how religion evolved in this particular island. Unfortunately, the British Gods are not as well defined as the Irish ones, as they were either suppressed or altered into human forms by scribes. Scholars over the years have done their best to sort things out, and considering the obscurity of much of the material they had to study, they did very well.

But it is only in the first four branches of the Mabinogion and in the ancient poems that the gods appear as supernatural beings and masters of magic. Later on some appeared as kings in the history by Gruffydd ap Arthur (Geoffrey of Monmouth) and some as knights and kings in the Norman French romances.

The stories of the gods are stories of the constant struggle between light and darkness, summer and winter, and newer and more sophisticated religions overcoming or absorbing the older. This is why there are three main families of Gods in British mythology. These three families were the Children of Don, the Children of Mudd, and the Children of Llyr. In fact, one can say that there were really only two families, as Mudd, Lludd, was a son of Beli, the husband of the Goddess Don. Don herself can be equated with the Irish Danu, mother of the Tuatha De Danaan. (Incidentally, there is a legend that the Tuatha De Danaan flew to Ireland in some sort of machine). Beli equates with the Irish Bilé, the universal All-father.

The Children of Don were mainly gods of the sky - solar deities. What we now call Cassiopeia's Chair was known to the ancient Celts as Llys Don - Don's Court. The Northern Crown was Caer Ariamrhod, the Castle of Ariamrhod, and the Milky Way was Caer Gwydion - Gwydion's Castle.

Llyr, equating with the Irish Ler, was a sea-god and was also connected with the underworld.

Nudd, or Lludd, son of Don, founded a dynasty of his own, and is described in a Welsh Triad as one of the three generous heroes of Britain. In Roman times he was known as Nodens or Nudens and a great temple for him was built at Lydney, a place which contains part of his name.

Nudd's son Gwyn was even greater - indeed, many scholars say that he is the other aspect of the mythological Arthur. The name means white or light. He was a god of battle, a hunter of men, a god of the dead and the conductor of souls - a sort of British Hermes. He has also been described as "Gwyn ap Nudd, whom God has placed over the brood of devils in Amwn, to keep the balance, and so that they cannot destroy the present race." He is also known as the King of the Tylwydd Teg - the little people - and as the Wild Huntsman of Wales and the West Country. There is a legend that every Hallowe'en he opens the gate to this world on Glastonbury Tor and rides out with his hounds,

seeking the souls of those who have died during the year. These are taken back to the Tor and the good are separated from the bad, the former going to the land of youth, the latter to an icy northern hell until they have learned to be better.

But Gwyn ap Nudd, beside being the god of battles and the dead, and the conductor of souls, would always be ready to offer his protection and help to those who asked for it, if he thought they deserved it. Here is his own description of himself, from the Black Book of Carmarthen; which more or less sums him up as the conductor of souls:

I have been in the place where was killed Gwendoleu,  
The son of Ceidaw, the pillar of songs,  
Where the ravens screamed over blood.

I have been in the place where Bran was killed,  
The son of Iweridd, of far extending fame,  
When the ravens of the battlefield screamed.

I have been where Llacheu was slain,  
The son of Arthur, extolled in songs,  
When the ravens screamed over blood.

I have been where Meurig was killed,  
The son of Carreian, of honourable fame,  
When the ravens screamed over flesh.

I have been where Gwallawg was killed,  
The son of Gohoeth, the accomplished,  
The resister of Loegyr, the son of Lleylawg.

I have been where the soldiers of Britain were slain,  
From the east to the north,  
I am the escort of the grave.

I have been where the soldiers of Britain were slain,  
From the east to the south:  
I am alive, they in death.

But Gwyn had his lighter moments. He was a suitor for Creurdilad, daughter of Lludd, or Llyr - Cordelia, daughter of Lear. Unfortunately, so was Gwythur ap Greidawl - a solar deity. They spent their time stealing the maiden from each other until the matter was referred to Arthur, who ruled that they should fight every May day until the day of doom, and whoever was the winner then could have the girl. As one writer put it - this must be the longest engagement on record. Mythologically, this is the eternal battle between winter and summer, with Creurdilad as the Spring - a British equivalent to the Greek myth of Persephone.

Now the goddess Don had a brother Math, son of a mysterious Mathonwy, which may have been an early form of Merddyn or Merlin. This Math was a benevolent ruler of the Underworld - a far happier place than the Greek one -

and his name means coin, money, or treasure. In the old days, wealth came from underground, the wealth being iron, gold, silver, and tin. In this respect, it is interesting that Math was also known as the giver of metals. Not only wealth came from underground, but wisdom did, too, and Math was a master magician. He taught his magic to his nephew, Gwydion ap Don, and the latter became the druid of the Gods, the master of illusion and fantasy, the teacher of all that was useful and good, and the bringer of culture. He was helped in this by two brothers, Amaethon, the agriculturist, and Govannon, the smith, and his sister - who was also his wife - Arianrhod.

Gwydion had two children - twins - by Arianrhod. These were the twin powers of light and darkness. Dylan eil Ton, the Son of the Sea Wave, was the dark power, as darkness was always connected with the sea, and he was killed by a spear thrown by his uncle Govannon. The other child, Llew, became a Sun-god. However, Arianrhod was dead narked because Gwydion had tricked her out of a soft job with Uncle Math, and she put a destiny on the child - that it would have no name unless she gave him one, and this she refused to do. Gwydion was equal to the occasion, and later he and the boy went disguised as shoemakers to Arianrhod's castle, and invited her to their ship to be measured for some shoes. While she was on the ship, the boy saw a wren, and picking up his bow and arrow, shot it in the leg. This incident, by the way, makes him a solar deity or Divine King. The wren was the sacred bird of the summer king and the robin was the sacred bird of the winter king. And each king was symbolically killed at the summer and winter seasons. When Arianrhod saw this display of marksmanship she exclaimed, "The Lion aimed with a sure hand!" So unwittingly she gave the boy his name, Llew Llaw Cyffes, the Lion with the sure hand. Much annoyed, she put another destiny on him - that he should have no armaments except from her. Gwydion, of course, got her to give them to the boy by another trick. So she put yet another destiny on him - that the boy would have no wife of the people of this earth. So Gwydion and Math made Llew a wife out of flowers whom they called Blodeuwedd - Flower Face. Unfortunately she soon picked up some of the not so nice human characteristics and eventually betrayed her husband with Gronw Pebyr - a god of darkness, or winter. Having plotted and planned for a year - Llew, being divine, was not so easy to kill - they finally managed to murder him. Llew gave a great cry and changed into an eagle.

Gwydion then commenced a long search for his son and eventually heard that a farmer in N. Wales was puzzled by the behaviour of his sow, who used to go to one particular oak tree by a brook to root for acorns. The sow, of course, would have been Ceridwen as earth goddess in one of her disguises. Gwydion followed the sow to the oak and noticed that in its branches was an eagle. The flesh dropped off this bird and the sow ate it. An instance of the flesh and blood of the divine king fertilising the earth. Gwydion was not a magician for nothing, and he sang:

"Oak that grows between the two banks;  
Darkened is the sky and hill'.  
Shall I not tell him by his wounds,  
That this is Llew?"

The eagle came halfway down the tree, and Gwydion sang another verse:

"Oak that grows in upland ground,  
Is it not wetted by the rain?  
Has it not been drenched  
By nine score tempests?  
It bears in its branches Llew Llaw Gyffes."

The eagle came down until it was on the lowest branch, and Gwydion sang:

"Oak that grows beneath the steep;  
Stately and majestic is its aspect!  
Shall I not speak it?  
That Lleu will come into my lap?"

The eagle came down and sat on his knee, whereupon he struck it with his magician's rod and it turned back into a rather thin Llew. Gwydion took him to Math and then went after Blodeuwedd, who promptly hopped it. Gwydion overtook her and turned her into an owl. An older form of the myth says that Gwydion chased her across the sky and the stars scattered over the Milky Way mark the passage of the chase. Llew, of course, insisted on killing Gronw Pebyr, so this myth can be taken either as a version of the struggle between the old and new gods, or the eternal battle between summer and winter for Spring - Flower Face.

To go on to another pantheon, Llyr married two wives, although it is not clear whether he was a bigamist or married them one after the other. One wife was Penardun, a daughter of Don, by whom there were three sons, one being Manawyddan, the British equivalent to the Irish Manannan mac Ler, who gave his name to the Isle of Man. Llyr's other wife was Iweridd, a name for Ireland, and there was a son and a daughter. The son, Bran, was a god of the underworld and a master minstrel, and the daughter was Branwen, a goddess of love. The children of Llyr were very much connected with the Swansea peninsula. An interesting snippet, as the Irish children of Lir were at one time turned into swans.

The other pantheon - probably earlier in time than the other two - ruled in Dyfed, now Pembrokeshire. This consisted of Pwll, the head of the underworld, his wife Rhiannon, the Great Queen, and their son Pryderi. This pantheon was hostile to the Children of Don, but friendly to the Children of Llyr. It is possible that Pwll and his family were the gods of the first wave of Celts, and were at first hostile to the gods of the second wave - the Children of Llyr - but when the third wave arrived - the Children of Don - the first two pantheons merged in their efforts to defy the third. This can be seen in the fact that when Pwll disappears from the pantheon, his wife Rhiannon, the Great Queen, marries Manawyddan, son of Llyr.

Now Pwll did not get his bride without difficulty - a character called Gwawl (light) nearly got her by a trick, but Pwll managed to regain her. After three years of marriage with no heir, the people began to get restless, but finally a son was born. Unfortunately he was spirited away the same night and the women accused Rhiannon of doing away with him. For this she had to do penance for seven years. Here is an indication of an attempt by a patriarchal religion to overcome a matriarchal one. The son turned up on the doorstep of

a farmer called Teirynton, who adopted him and called him Gwri Gwllt Adwy - the Bright-Haired. Gwri Gwllt Adwy was later broken down into Galgavin or Gwalchaved, and later still into Gawain, Gavin, or Kevin. The farmer noticed that the boy was getting to look more and more like Pwll and eventually took the lad to him, and Pwll claimed him. He was renamed Pryderi - Care - because Rhiannon had exclaimed, "Now my care is at an end!" When Pryderi grew up and his mother remarried, he and Manawyddan, his step-father, became joint rulers of the underworld and the keepers of the magic cauldron of inspiration, which the gods of light tried to capture or steal. This is the beginning of the story of the Grail. They also had the birds of Rhiannon, which could sing the dead to life, and the living to death. Luckily, they seldom sang. As an old Welsh triad puts it, "There are three things which are not often heard: the songs of the birds of Rhiannon, a song of wisdom from the mouth of a Saxon, and an invitation to a feast from a miser."

Pryderi married a wife called Kicva, about whose background very little seems to be known. In the second branch of the Mabinogi he appears at the court of Bran ap Llyr, a greater god of the Underworld than Pryderi. It was at this feast that Matholwch, King of Ireland, asked for Branwen's hand in marriage. Bran agreed, but his half-brother Ebnvissen - man of strife - was enraged because his consent was not asked, and took his revenge by mutilating Matholwch's horses. Bran pacified his future brother-in-law by replacing every horse with a sound one, and giving him a staff of silver and a plate of gold, plus a magic cauldron which could bring slain men to life, but could not return their power of speech. So off to Ireland went Matholwch with his bride.

In the second year of marriage, after Branwen had borne an heir, the Irish heard about the insult to Matholwch and insisted that he had it out on Branwen, who was relegated to serve in the kitchen. She took three years to teach a tame starling to speak, then sent it off with a letter of complaint to her brother - the first recorded instance of a sort of pigeon post - and this got round the fact that traffic between Britain and Ireland had been forbidden by Matholwch. Bran raised an army and attacked Ireland, until in the end Matholwch had to sue for peace. Bran demanded the kingdom, but Matholwch suggested that it go to his son Gwern. For a discussion of this a large house with hundreds of pillars was built and Bran was invited to attend the feast there. However, suspended from each pillar was a bag containing an Irish warrior. When Ebnvissen still bent on causing trouble, asked about them he was told they contained men. He went round kneading all the bags until the men inside them were killed. Then little Gwern was crowned. Then, for some peculiar reason, Ebnvissen, after having prevented the ambush, threw Gwern on the fire and killed him. Bran managed to prevent his sister jumping in the fire after her son, but the Irish were so appalled by this turn of events that all the warriors of Ireland were called to fight. They had the advantage as they could throw their dead men into the magic cauldron and bring them to life again. Eventually, Ebnvissen atoned for his misdeeds by shamming dead and getting thrown into the cauldron, and with one mighty heave he burst it asunder. The British then killed all the Irish, but it was a Pyrrhic victory - only seven of them survived. Bran was wounded in the foot by a poisoned dart and was in so much agony that he commanded the surviving seven to cut off his head and take it to the White Mound in London and bury it facing France.

The seven survivors - apart from Branwen - were Pryderi, Manawyddan, Gluneu ap Taran, Taliesin the Bard, Ynawc, Grudyen ap Muryel, and Heilyn ap Gwynn the Ancient.

These seven, and Branwen, returned to Britain, landing at the river Alaw in Anglesey. Branwen looked first towards Ireland, then Britain, and cried, "Alas that I was ever born! Two islands have been destroyed because of me!" Whereupon her heart broke and she died. An old Welsh poem describes what happened when Branwen died.

"Softened were the voices in the brakes  
Of the wondering birds on seeing the fair body.  
Will there not be relating again  
Of that which befell the paragon  
At the stream of Amlwch?"

The Mabinogion says that they made her a grave and buried her beside the Alaw. Oddly enough, this spot, which was traditionally called Ynis Branwen, caused great interest in 1813 when a local group of antiquaries dug up an urn, full of ashes and half-burnt bones.

This story has several mixed elements. In the story of Branwen and her penance we can see again the struggle between the matriarchal and patriarchal ideas, and the eventual blending. The story of the cauldron indicates some form of initiation in the mysteries for which only seven candidates were successful. The other element is a hint that it is a record of an actual invasion and that some of the Brythonic Celts fled to Ireland and made a treaty with the ruler, but after a few years they fell out among themselves and the Brythonic Celts returned home.

After the seven had interred Branwen they went on and discovered the land was laid waste. Caswallon, son of Bellinus, had claimed the land in their absence. Here is the point to the invasion by the Belgic Celts, who were probably the Lloegyr who were mentioned. So what did the seven do? They went, with Bran's head, to the island of Gwales, now Gresholm, and ate their heads off for what they thought was a couple of days, but when they opened the door towards Cornwall, realised they had been there for over eighty years. Then they remembered to take Bran's head to London and bury it under the White Mound where the Tower now stands.

Manawyddan and Pryderi were now landless, but even after many wanderings, although Manawyddan was heir to the whole land, he only regained Dyfed and he only got that back after the two gods and their wives had undergone enchantments in a castle.

These stories indicate the usual battle between light and darkness. Even Gwyddion was caught by Pwll and Pryderi and imprisoned for a long time - he was trying to pinch the cauldron of inspiration. It is said that his sufferings made him a Bard. It is not said how he escaped, but he did, and later, helped by his son Llew and his brother Amaethon, he fought Cad Goddeu, the Battle of the Trees. This is also known as the battle of Ochren, a name for the underworld. This war was made for three bocns for man - the dog, the deer, and the lapwing, all sacred to the gods of the underworld for some reason. Gwyddion the magician summoned the trees to his aid. When one remembers that the Druids had a tree alphabet one could say that he was summoning knowledge to his aid.

This battle must have happened before the visit to Ireland as Bran was an ally of Pryderi in the battle, which was decided by magic. The underworld

gods could not be defeated unless the name of their ally was known. Gwydion guessed the name and sang these two verses:

"Sure hooped is my steed impelled by the spur;  
The high sprigs of alder are on thy shield;  
Bran art thou called, of the glittering branches !

"Sure hooped is my steed in the day of battle;  
The high sprigs of alder are on thy hand;  
Bran .... by the branch thou bearest  
Has Amaethon the Good prevailed !"

Once he had guessed the secret name of the old god, of course, the power of the underworld was broken, and the dog, the darr, and the lapwing were obtained for man. However, the older gods did not give up without a struggle, and three times Gwydion fought with Pryderi, before he overcame and killed him in single combat and, according to the Mabinigion, "At Maen Tyriawc, above Melenryd was Pryderi buried." However, the poem "Craves of the Warriors" says: "Aber Gwenoll is the grave of Pryderi, where the waves beat against the land."

But Pryderi would not stay down. He reappears later as Peredur and in the aspect of a summer king, "The Bright-Haired", as Gwalchaved - or Galahad - and Galgavin, Gawain or Gavin.

Thus it is seen that the myths quoted have pointed up the battles between the old religions and the new, the constant struggle between light and darkness, and the tussle between matriarchies and patriarchies. Eventually these last two combined and out of them grew the Celtic religion.

It is possible that the unnamed wife of the first king of the underworld Arawn, was Matrona, later Modron, later still Morgain - the Great Mother - Earth, as Rhiannon was Queen of Heaven or Queen of the night, the Moon. Curiously, in Wales the fairies are still referred to as Y Memau, the mothers. And to quite a late date, some Celtic clans reckoned by matrilineal descent.

But out of all this evolved a religion. Lewis Spence was convinced that the religion propagated by the Druids was a cult of the dead. All early religions were, but the Celts, like any other nation, gradually grew more sophisticated. But since the Celts were so sympathetic with nature, much nature worship was retained, and the powers of nature were personified and given forms and attributes. It has always been the habit of newer religions to retain what they considered good in the old - at least, they did if they were polytheistic religions. Although the Druids took care to keep all spiritual power and human knowledge in their own hands. Thus they became priests, diviners, wizards, doctors, scientists, and teachers, second only in power to the kings and chiefs - and their decisions were final. Probably there was human sacrifice earlier, but the real savagery is likely to have belonged to the proto-druids of Iberian stock. It is puzzling that the Romans were so horrified by it in Gaul, especially among the Teutates, when one considers that human sacrifice was only stopped in Rome during the boyhood of Caesar - and at least the Celts never had anything to match the Roman Games, where thousands of people were butchered to make a Roman holiday.

In any case, the Romans and other visitors knew very little about the inner teachings, although Caesar had this to say about the outer teachings:

"As one of their leading dogmas they inculcate this: that souls are not annihilated, but pass after death from one body to another, and they hold that by this teaching men are encouraged to valour, through disregarding the fear of death. They also discuss and impart to the young many things concerning the heavenly bodies and their movements, the size of the world and of our earth, natural science, and of the influence and power of the immortal gods."

It is probable that the Celtic religion was solar worship, but the Druids would have been well aware that the higher inner teachings would not be grasped by the hoi polloi and so there were ritual sacrifices and great feasts. The Druids' own festivals were related to the sun's progress, the equinoxes appearing more important than the solstices. Though this is probably an error on some writer's part, as all times would be equally important as they were the times of the cosmic tides. The Spring Equinox was called Eilir (second generation), the summer solstice was called Hahvin (sunny temperature), the autumn equinox was called Elved (harvest), and the winter solstice was called Arthan (Arthur's season), representing Arthur, or the Sun, fighting the powers of darkness or winter. It was said that at the spring equinox every nineteenth year, the British Apollo - probably Gwydion - was seen dancing in the sky. Every nineteenth year, of course, the solar and lunar year coincide.

However, the ordinary people held their spring festival at Beltane, now May Eve or Walpurgis night. The autumn festival was Samhain, now Hallowe'en. The summer festival, held in honour of the Sun god Llew, was held at the beginning of August. Llew's Mass - Llammas. The winter festival in honour of Brigantia, the goddess of fire, wisdom, and war, was held at the beginning of February, Candlemas, or Brigitta as some call it. It is interesting to note that these four festivals, our modern cross quarter days, coincided with the hunting and breeding seasons, thus putting them further back in time than the true solstice and equinox celebrations.

These eight festivals, the cosmic tides and the cross quarter days, prove that the Celtic religion could live side by side with the older Iberian one - each learned from the other - and the result was that heroes of either race could promise "I swear by the gods of my people."

The classical nations were very impressed by the Celtic idea of immortality, even to the point that a Celt would in all sincerity, promise to pay a debt in the next world or life. Intense faith in a better other world was, of course, a terrific agency in the hands of a priesthood who claimed to have the keys to it.

Incidentally, druidism seems to have evolved whenever the Celts came into contact with dolmen builders. They probably found priesthoods and rituals of the underworld, mysticism and magic, and with the Celtic aptitude for picking up ideas, lifted up what they found, transformed it into solar worship and for initiates formulated a very high type of mystery religion.

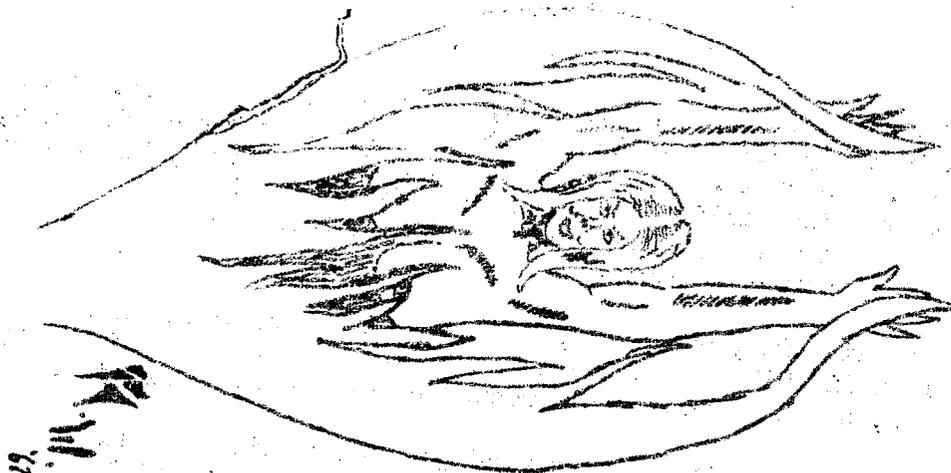
There appear to have been five steps in the evolution of the Celtic religion. Firstly, a mass of popular superstition and magical observances, including human sacrifice. This could vary from place to place. Secondly, a philosophical creed, with solar worship as its central object. Thirdly, personified deities of natural forces and guardians of social law. Fourthly,

a teaching body dealing with natural phenomena and constitution of the universe. And fifth, an organisation, confined to a privileged caste, which administered religious and secular learning and literature. Thus intellectual and spiritual supremacy became the ruling power in Celtica.

It may have been that the Druids were drawn from one main clan, who were once very thick on the ground in Sussex and Gloucestershire. This clan may have been Gwyddelons, as the Welsh word for scientist was Gwyddonydd, which could be derived from Gwydion. And we should not forget that in those days science would include all forms of magic and seership. In the east of the country the G was not sounded, so we get Wyddelon. When the Saxons came, the nearest they could get to saying Wyddelon was Wicca. The craft of the wise. Much of the teaching got into the wrong hands and degenerated into superstitious practices by the hidebound, who mumble about old gods who were out of date even 3000 years ago. Not that it stops them calling it the craft of the wise. Then it degenerated even more in the hands of modern pseudo-intellectuals, who wanted an excuse for sex, but were too dishonest to say so, so they called it a religion. Some of the teachings are being sat on by people who take very good care that they do not get into the papers or on TV, and here and there, particularly in the West, are small groups who are desperately trying to keep the highest teachings of the British Mysteries intact.

This article has dealt mainly with the mythology and outer religion of the Celts. Very little reference has been made to Ceridwen and her children, as she belongs more to the inner teachings of the British Mysteries. But behind all the British deities loom the figures of Hu Gadarn, the Redeemer, the Supreme Being, Merddyn or Mathonwy, master of all the arts, and Ceridwen, the Divine Lady of Inspiration. To this inner teaching also belong the mysteries of the Grail and the Castle.

++ Roberta Gray.



## ANOTHER GOOD PLOT GONE WEST ?

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Some years ago I became interested in the long-term results of the atom-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It occurred to me that I had read no reports, hysterical or otherwise, of 'monsters' being born to survivors of the raids. I also wondered if perhaps there might now be some Japanese children with 'wild talents', brought into action by the damaged genes bequeathed to them by their irradiated parents.

At that time I knew a member of the Birmingham C.N.D., Bill Howarth by name. I figured that if anybody would know about such events, it would be the C.N.D.: they would grab at such evidence to use as propaganda. I therefore wrote to Mr. Howarth, making it quite clear that although I respected the sincerity of most members of the C.N.D., I did not wish to join them. However, I was quite willing to allow them free use of whatever evidence I might discover.

Mr. Howarth must have passed my letter to the Secretary of the Birmingham C.N.D., because shortly afterwards I received the following letter (undated), forwarded to me by Mr. Howarth:

"Dear Mr. Howarth,

"I discussed your friend's letter with Dr. Fremlin" (a sponsor) "and with Alan White who went to Leningrad with the Everyman III. Alan said Prof. Reynolds, their captain, was keeping data about Hiroshima and would be the best person to write to. He would be pleased to send any information which might help our cause, I'm sure. His address is:

Prof. Earle Reynolds  
Yacht 'Phoenix'  
Ebo  
Hiroshima  
Japan.

"Yours sincerely,

"Vera Willington."

So I wrote to Prof. Reynolds, by air-mail. No reply. Some weeks later, thinking perhaps my first letter had somehow not reached him, I wrote again. No reply. My memory is a little hazy here, but I think I then wrote to Miss Willington, asking her if she could explain why I had nor heard from Prof. Reynolds - if I didn't write, I certainly intended to. And if I did write - no reply.

By this time, of course, I was getting very intrigued. I searched the local Public Library but could find nothing relevant. I didn't know who else to ask, so there the matter rested until I came to Bristol.

Apart from a few half-hearted questions which produced nothing but blank looks and shakes of the head, I got no further until I contacted Peter Mabey. In July 1966 he wrote to say that he hadn't yet been able to look up any information, but that he had found "a likely starting point - a

journal called 'Human Genetics Abstracts'. .... If you could contact any of the medical students at Bristol University, I expect they'd be able to find it in the library there."

Unfortunately I didn't know any medical students, and neither did the students whom I did know. And again the matter fell into abeyance - mainly because of lack of time to pursue it.

In September 1967 I wrote the following for my column in Harry Bell's GRIMWAB-5 (for various reasons the zine was not issued until the Duxton Con, Easter 1968, and some copies were not mailed out until May of the same year):

"The 'Sun' newspaper features a strip called 'Frontiers of Science.' Last month it turned its attention to 'Life on Bikini Today', and gave out some astonishing facts. At least, they astonished me: 'Bikini shows some hopeful signs - including a complete absence of mutations or abnormalities among living things.' This, in spite of other facts:

"Fact One: Although the soil gives low readings, all plants, animals, birds and sea creatures carry considerable radio-activity.

"Fact Two: The fission elements strontium-90 and caesium-137 have been absorbed by animals in place of natural calcium and potassium.

"Fact Three: Some crabs have so much strontium-90 in their shells that their meat has been declared unsafe, and parts of giant clams were so radio-active that they 'jammed' the radiation counters.

"Fact Four: Some organisms contain 100,000 times more radio-activity than the waters of the lagoons they live in.

"Etc., etc. ...

"This, of course, does not mean that the higher forms of life would be similarly unaffected by radio-activity. But I think that there is a distinctly heartening element in this news, and I'm rather surprised that it hasn't been more widely publicised. Perhaps the authorities don't want to get people's hopes up too much?

"After all, the fission weapons are supposed to be the greatest war-deterrent ever known to Man ... and if certain parties learned that said weapons are not, after all, as black as they're painted ...

"BANG ???"

GRIMWAB-5 hasn't been out long enough for there to have been any comments on this, and in any case Harry and I aren't expecting many because this was virtually the last issue of G/W, at least for a long time.

But **THINK** about it! NO mutations or abnormalities at all!

And now the sequel: last week I had another letter from Peter, enclosing a cutting - Peter doesn't say what paper it's taken from, but I think it's "The Times." Under a sub-heading: "GENETICS. Children of atom bomb victims studied.", it reports that 128 children of parents who had been exposed to radiation during the a-raids have been carefully studied over an unspecified period of time, in a search for chromosomal damage.

They found 'chromosomal abnormalities' in two of the 128. They decided that these were 'probably attributable to effects other than radiation.' They also stress that the number of children examined is 'statistically very small.' A larger survey will be carried out in the future to determine with greater certainty whether or not the parental gonadic cells were damaged by radiation.

So maybe it's too early to let out our collective breath in a long sigh of joyous relief. But it occurs to me that if any obviously mutated children had been born to irradiated parents, medical attention would quickly have been drawn to them by one source or another.

It has always been said that Man is the supremely adaptable animal. Archie maintains that this means mentally rather than physically adaptable; Man has used his brains to make his environment adaptable to him, rather than the other way round. He has no protective colouring, so he invented khaki and camouflage. He has no great turn of speed with which to escape from predators, so he invented the internal combustion engine and all its multifarious offshoots and modifications and improvements. He has no mighty tooth or claw to rend his enemies, so he invented weapons of ever-greater complexity and deadliness. He has no wings with which to fly away: the aeroplane; no gills or scales to make him at home under the seas: the submarine, the diving-bell, the frogman's gear.

Physically it would appear that he has changed very little over the centuries. He's inches taller, pounds heavier, perhaps, but that is due to better feeding and living conditions, rather than to adaptability. For the same reason he lives longer, barring accidents. But always it has been Man's brain which has enabled him to survive as top o' the heap.

Until now ??? If animals can absorb strontium-90 and caesium-137 harmlessly instead of natural calcium and potassium, is there any reason why Man can't do the same? It's a staggering thought - but we live in a staggering age, do we not? I'm also reminded that an American astronaut is nearly always a married man with children, just in case cosmic radiation renders him sterile - but that a female Russian cosmonaut married another cosmonaut and produced a perfectly normal child.

Verily, verily, truth is stranger than fiction. Until the late lamented Yuri Gagarin went belting into Space, all sf (as far as I know) had taken it for granted that the first man to get off Earth would probably be an American. (I remember that I nearly died laughing when I heard the news - if it was a 'jest of the gods', I must say that I appreciate their sense of humour!)

And now, it looks very much as if any sf author who wishes to write a yarn about mutants may have to find a reason other than a nuclear war to account for their unfortunate existence. Unless - and I'm still wondering about this - the Japanese A-raids produced some undetected mutations. Telepaths, -ports, -kinetics, etc.

If any of You Lot out there happens to be a telepath, I suggest that you start learning to think in Japanese. It just might pay off one of these staggering days ...



WHERE THE NAKED ARTICHOKER  
DOETH BLOOM

WHERE IS THE NAKED ARTICHOKE  
DOTH DLOON

... by Don Studebaker.

His Majesty sat, his young brow furrowed, his chin resting on his balled fist, his grey eyes intent upon some dainty creature at the other end of the hall. The one in blue? The one whose coat d'hardi revealed a daringly cut underskirt? The one who leaned against the big oak double doors of the hall? It didn't matter, really. His wife, the Queen, carried on a spirited, and secure, conversation with one of the Dukes. The music made the room whirl with the leaping, spinning steps of dozens of courtiers dancing La Volta. There was a scent of warm pine incense in the air, and the atmosphere was too thick with intrigue for comfortable breathing.

"I'm afraid there will be bloodshed, for all that I can do or say, your Majesty," I whispered.

I need not have whispered, of course. The shawms blew loudly and no one was near enough to the throne to hear what was plainly spoken. -- But there is something about lurking professionally behind a seat of power that makes one want to whisper.

A flashbulb popped and some shy maiden giggled. Another instant caught for the unborn to peruse in their efforts to deal with the unwritten pages of the unfuture.

"What shall I do?" the King asked.

"Nothing, so far as I can see," I said. "I have already tried all the schemes my brain can devise. -- We could forbid the matter. -- It is your right as King, and I might persuade, by virtue of being his father, that my son should not press the matter. But it would make him look like a coward, and what kind of father would I be if I did that? For that matter, what kind of King would you be to interfere in a matter of honour? No, your Duke must meet him, or the rank matters not at all. And my son must fight, or he will have no respect for himself, or me, or you, or anyone. To have no respect for anyone is a terribly lonely thing."

The King stirred uneasily.

"This has been a foul day," he said. "Too much bad feeling, too many ill-considered statements. The battles have been half for blood, and few at all for the joy of the sport. What's happened to this once-cheerful kingdom, good Seneschal? Where has our form and happiness flown? Why so much anger, so much intrigue?"

Ah! Intrigue!

That was the core, the rotten heart of it all. The word I hoped not to hear. For was not I as guilty of that sin as any other? In the long run, was it not my very own doing? I, the old Seneschal, a left-over from the days of older Kings, now dead or exiled. It was I who schemed and worked, played

one against another for the benefit of the court !

And what was the end of it ?

That my son should be set against one of the King's powerful Dukes, and his life stand in the balance !

Was an old man to be allowed no rest ? I could not even take the blows upon my own bones, for fear of losing the love of that very son. That son who followed me as much or more from love as from paternity.

(After all: what's a little flesh ? So many sons grow up and care for their fathers only that they may not offend the Society. To be a friend, to have a man's respect, is wondrous. That the man should be your own flesh is more than can be dreamed !)

Ah ! The Intrigues.

Above, in the room whose hard wooden floor made a drum of the hall in which we sat in regal pomp: the sound of the first blows.

+ + + + +

"Hey, look at the bridge ! It's shorter, and fatter, and ... It's not the same bridge at all !"

"You're right. I've never been over it before when it was like this. -- And look at the sky ! What a color ! You'd think we were tripping out. Wow, but the colors ... And I could swear Treasure Island went the other way. Over there ... "

The bus veered, buffeted by high winds that were like dawn winds; but it was night, soft dark green night, with bright yellow lamps to both sides, the Day darkling all around, and it was not either dawn or sunset by a mountain.

"The Change Winds are blowing, and we're caught up in them. I always knew this could happen. We're in a different world. Feel it ! Another world, and we're free and beautiful and alive. I am Master of the World. Master of the Universe. I am God. Thou Art God. Feel it !"

The winds, the Change Winds, blew buffety and strong, and we banged back and forth from lane to lane, scared and beautiful and brave, and nothing could wear or go wrong.

"Where do you think we'll come out ?"

"In San Francisco, I hope. I want to sleep a long time in a deep bed before I have to get up and dig mussels."

"What kind of San Francisco ? One with yellow lights and opium dens, and dancing girls who grow red plush from their nipples ?"

The Change Winds blew, and the world buffeted back and forth.

"The power of worlds surging through us, just feel it ! We make the worlds we live in. -- Different theories, you know ? Freud would say we were

perceiving a different set of symbols, and Bhakvedanta Krishna would say we were undergoing ecstatic experience."

"The doors of perception," said Huxley, "that's the key to it all."

The doors of magnificent perception, whereby we perceive the clouds as agents of mighty beautiful gods and devils, and the rainbow as a banding of light through scientific scattered droplets of rainwater.

"I've never felt such a wind. I can barely hold us in one lane. Once, some week or so ago, I saw the water of the Bay a bright chartreuse, just before a storm. -- It's what makes the Game worth playing. -- I love this Bridge!"

+ + + + +

Hello, Ken M. P. Cheslin.

Welcome back to the Noman'sland of Ompa, fabulous Ompa, where many lazy fans go to try and cop out.

Remember me ?

You started me on the road that's led to the presidency, for what that's worth in these trying times.

But I'd rather be President of Ompa than President of the United States. Any day!

I still haven't gotten my mailing; the one I hear you have graced with three issues of WHATSIT? Golly, but it will be good to see WHATSIT again. I personally consider the decline of Ompa to have started when you and Dick Schultz dropped out.

If you're back, things must be on the upswing.

+ + + + +

To eat an artichoke:

Peel away each leaf, possibly dip it into mayonnaise (a courtly dance of the Mayas), put it between your teeth, and scrape off the soft, pulpy, edible part. Discard the fibrous shell of the leaf.

When you have eaten all the outer leaves you will come to the heart. Scrape away the thistly part and discard it, then dip and eat the delicious stem and heart portion.

The first artichoke I ate proved to be a traumatic object of experience.

Gavin Arthur sat at the table, and he knew all about artichokes. I didn't. He didn't start eating, and I didn't start eating, and he didn't start eating, so I did. Before an amazed gentleman of the Old School, I ate the entire thing. Leaves, stem, thistles and all.

He smiled and said he had grown old, and therefore devoted himself mostly to the tenderer portions.

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The amazing part of it, of course, is that, though I edit a financially successful fanzine, Tournaments Illuminated, I really don't have any more money than when I started. The treasury can't be touched because it has to pay the coming year's costs. But still and all, we are growing, and I must confess that my years in Ompa have contributed a great deal to my ability to turn out comprehensive material.

Go thou and do likewise.

+ + + + +

The music continued to blare; the shawms, the krumhorns (nearly drowned in the organic volume of their capless brothers' rudity), the incessant tambours and tambourines. Some few people danced, but most sat silent, their eyes carefully averted from the ceiling.

Why ? I asked myself.

The King's eyes were clouded. He stared straight ahead, lost to the merriment, rapt, wrapped in a pall that lost the merriment to all. What kind of songs would the poets make after his reign ? Would they call him fool for allowing such trouble to ferment ?

Like bad wine.

Would they say he was wise to stay out of the matter ? Was it ever wise for men's honour to fight it out with maces ?

Mauls, they were more properly called. Great blots of steel fastened to the end of hard wooden poles. Spiked and greedy for a bite of flesh, the sloppy spattering of shattered bone or flowing gut.

Crash !

The people shivered and a fine snow of white plaster dust fell from the ceiling. To have such impact the blow must have gone awry and hit one of the fluted iron pillars that lined the upper hall.

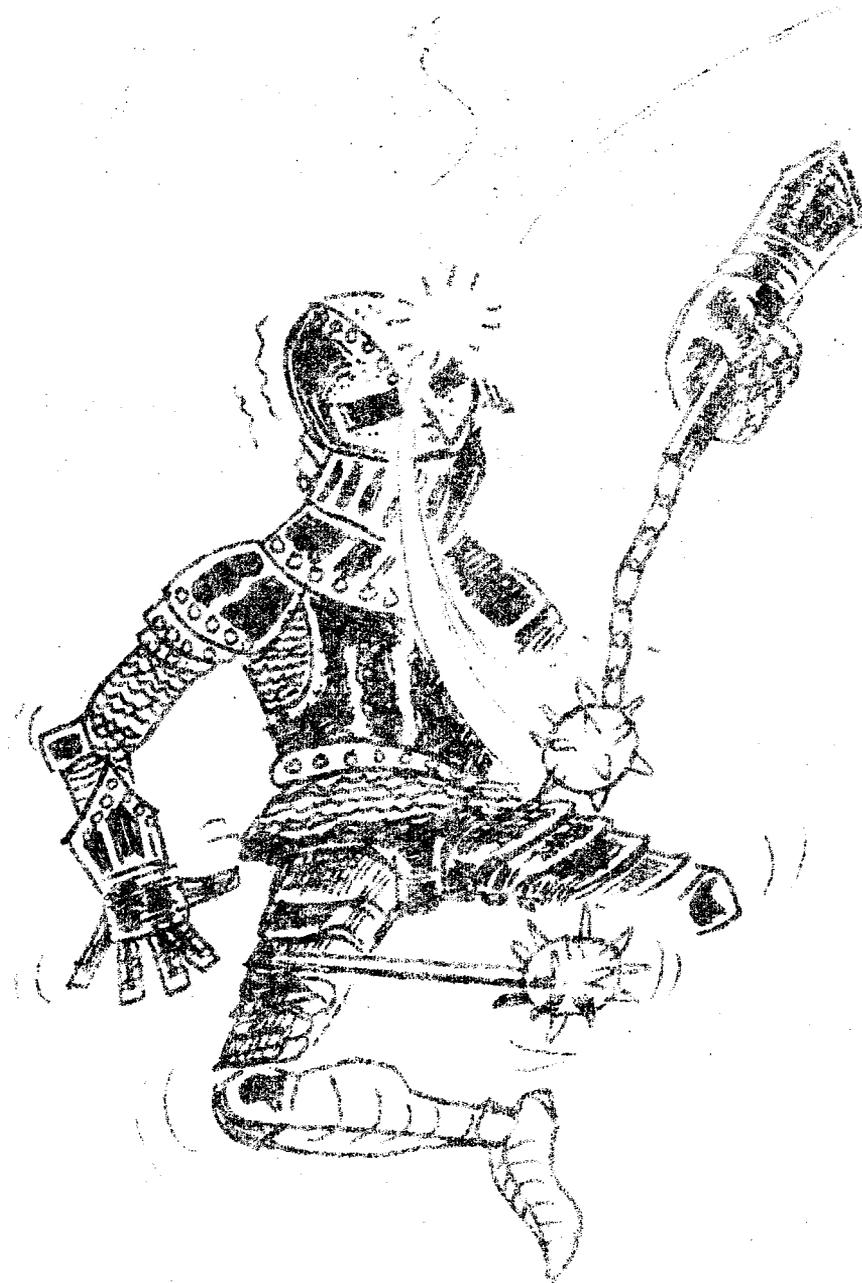
Those who danced tried to catch the beat again; two couples dropped out, nervous.

"What will happen ?" the King asked. "After ?"

I exhaled slowly. "If my son wins, the whole court will be against me, in your ear. The younger men will strive the harder to usurp the points of power. Son against father. Social civil war. I will be thought among the young an outcast from my own camp, but the young will not accept me."

I paused, thinking about the bleak prospect.

"-- If, on the other hand, His Grace, the Duke, should win ... Then my position among the nobles will be untenable. Unless I choose to fight the Duke myself. And I am too old to win that match."



"For a Seneschal," said the King, "you think too much on yourself. What of the Throne?"

"It will be unsteady," I said. "The Dukes may look upon it with desire, as they once did, before you were crowned. The younger men will certainly look upon it with some malice: for allowing one so young and inexperienced to fight with one so strong and well-seasoned in battle."

"You paint a black picture," the King said, his mouth curling at the corners in a humourless smile. "I fear me though, there are no brightly appointed artists of the court who may yet paint a picture so true. Your eyes are too sharp, old man."

Another great crashing noise, and once more the dry winter rain of soft white from the ceiling.

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"CLEAN CUP, MOVE DOWN, CLEAN CUP, MOVE DOWN !"

Everyone at the bar stood, moved one stool left-ward, reseated him or herself, and the lady who'd done the calling ordered a round of drinks for everyone.

The man who'd been sitting on the stool to the far left stood for a moment, scratched his head, looked at what had happened, then walked to the far, right-hand end of the bar.

"CLEAN CUP, MOVE DOWN, CLEAN CUP, MOVE DOWN !"

Everyone at the bar stood, moved one stool left-ward, reseated him or herself, and the man who'd done the calling ordered a round of drinks for everyone.

Forty-two minutes later:

"CLEAN CUP, MOVE DOWN, CLEAN CUP, MOVE DOWN !"

Everyone at the bar stood, moved one stool left-ward, reseated him or herself, and the man who'd done the calling ordered a round of drinks for everyone.

The Lady who'd started the whole thing was now unseated at the far left.

She left, having paid for the first round, having been treated on all succeeding rounds, having gotten a seat for as long as she wanted, and, in specific, having broken even. As she went through the swinging doors, the bartender called:

"Goodnight, Alice !"

+ + + + +

A note of interest for you Ompanis who've read Heinlein's STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND. You remember all of the discussion of Rodin's La Belle Heaulmière? Well, Heinlein mentions that Rodin did another work using the same model; when she was very young. I'm not sure of the title, but he says it's in Paris.

Rodin also did a third work using the same model.

You remember La Belle Heaulmière ?

She sits there, withered old dugs, bony, dejected that her beauty has flown. Hopeless.

Rodin used her again in Youth and Old Age.

She sits there, ecstatic, this withered old crone, making a bit of love to a boy of fourteen or fifteen.

+++ It gives me a bit of hope in the future perfect faith in the young and human race that not everyone is willing to send Granny to a Senior Citizens' Ghetto. +++

+ + + + +

CLEAN CUP, MOVE DOWN, CLEAN CUP, MOVE DOWN!

The people in the back set tumbled over to the middle seat. The people in the middle seat tumbled backward. The people in the front seat, such as the driver and the guy riding shotgun, stayed put: so did the boy in the back, who sat on the ledge over the motor.

Much bumptious laughter.

"Can you imagine it, though? Blood all over him, where you sliced him to pieces. -- And I pushed him all over the place! It gives me such a sense of power!"

"That's bad for you, you know. You shouldn't want power over others."

"I know that. I know all about it. But somebody has to do the work, and nobody seems to be willing to do it but me. If I've got to play God, then damn it all, people had better start piling up the gold in them thar' temples!"

"It's your Universe. You have to take care of it. I guess you have the right to enjoy it, so long as enjoying it doesn't stop you from doing the job."

"Most people spend their lives enjoying it, and never get around to the job at all."

"That's why everything is such a mess! They don't realize that the job itself can be enjoyable. That's why they spend so much time inventing moral systems that are no fun at all. To make up for what they're missing. They have the most perverted sense of ... -- That's what I like about the Hippies! The real Hippies, not the fake camp followers who are here now. -- The ones who read Heinlein and knew what he was talking about; before reading STRANGER was a fad, and Heinlein was a demigod. -- The ones who've moved away to form some kind of a family! -- They know the world is there for the working! Not the taking, but the working! That's something the grey flannel mind will never understand. -- I mean, look at it, right in the face, eye to eye! The whole drive of the American people is toward getting a job that pays more for less work. -- And once they get that job, if job you can call it, and the leisure that comes with it, they are lost. They go blind, and stumble in the dark with a pocket full of matches they've never learned to use. They don't know what to do with leisure! -- Jobs they don't want, don't like, so they can make money they don't need, which they have to squander just to stay in fashionable debt, so they can buy leisure they are incapable of filling."

There wasn't much wind that night in the Hashbury District. Just a lonely hitch hiker with a crew cut and a pea coat and glasses. He gave Paul a cigarette and hitched a ride, and wanted very much to get out of San Francisco. He had been in all the States United, except for Alaska and Hawaii, and he wanted to move on.

The hitch hiker loved San Francisco, but he had to get away.

The Hippies all left the Hashbury before the Summer of Love started. They tried to keep the Miniboppers home, but nobody listened. The Hippies said: "Stay home, there is not enough work, we can't provide food for everybody, because there isn't enough free food. There isn't enough work to pay for it!" They tried to keep the Miniboppers home, but nobody listened. The Newspapers, to hawk their wares, said: "Hippies expect influx of a hundred thousand to swell the corrupt environs of the Haight-Ashbury!" And the Newspapers, to hawk their wares, played it big. The Little Ones came by the thousands to starve: and after them came their parents, well-to-do from Omaha, Nebraska, to gawk and stare and take pictures, and S+P+E+N+D money.

CLEAN CUP, MOVE DOWN, CLEAN CUP, MOVE DOWN!

The people in the back seat tumbled over to the middle seat. The people in the middle seat tumbled backwards. The people in the front seat, such as the driver and the guy riding shotgun, stayed put: so did the boy in the back, who sat on the ledge over the motor. So did the hitch hiker, who didn't know how to play the game.

The hitch hiker loved San Francisco, but he had to move along.

The Hippies left the Hashbury before the Summer of Love.

CLEAN CUP, MOVE DOWN, CLEAN CUP, MOVE DOWN!

+ + + + +

Part of the difficulty with time, with my column, with my column of time, with time and my column, (extending forward, backward, through pages of paper/history time/style) was/is and/an accident.

I was driving Hap home (not this night, not the night of the Bridge or the Change Winds, but a night) about fifteen or twenty miles, I'd guess. I noticed that I'd missed my exit from the Throughway, so I took the next Off ramp, realizing that I must be very tired or I would not have missed the exit. It would be wise to sleep, I thought.

(I decelerated automatically, and was doing 31.8 miles per hour, according to the investigating officer, when I --)

Fell Asleep  
Went through the stop sign  
across the road  
over the little cliff  
down, down

(Hap's a pretty good driver. He reached over, as we went through the stop sign, and pulled on the emergency brake. That meant we skidded, rather than rolled. The skid marks tell just how fast we were going.)

Down, down  
the steep incline we went  
THROUGH

the wooden supports of the huge road sign, nosing into the dirt at the bottom and coming to an abrupt

STOP

Hap got a bloody nose. The little girl who was along (so that I would have someone to talk to on the way back) was unscathed. I went into shock.

They tried (Hap and the girl) to get the bus out, but no luck. Hap went home and got his grandfather's jack, tried some more, but still no luck. I passed out.

Hap handled everything beautifully.

I'm alive, and I have a hell of a lot of confidence in the competence of this younger generation.

You know, they are so hip they don't even understand the dirty jokes we used to tell. My generation, the generation before: there were things our generation had to prove. But these young ones ... They don't have to prove their masculinity, or their femininity. They know who they are, so much more than we did. They are the beautiful, clean young people who will inherit the World; and, God help them, God willing, redeem it. From crassness, from materialism, cynicism, anythingism -- Ugliness. Oh, I love these young and beautiful people, and how dearly I wish I were of their hopeful, willing generation. They are not afraid to take this old dunghap and plant it full of flowers.

To quote one of their songs:

"We want the World, and we want it NOW!"

How many of my generation would willingly take on that dirty burden?

How I wish I were born of their hopeful generation!

+ + + + +

There was black silence in the white hall where red blood pounded in hearts, and music stopped, and dancers stopped, and now, at last, eyes dared to look as the King's eyes looked, as my eyes looked: Upward. As if to stare through white painted wood and steel into the warm upper room of the tower, where someone's blood must be pounding out, beating softer, yet softer ...

+++ The Duke: a fine strong man with a sense of justice, but come under unsteady influence. A fine man, and a scholar, and one who'd helped the Kingdom more than any other two. Was this man my friend, and no more to me?

+++ My son! My own blood, my own flesh, if ever there was such beyond my own body and philosophy. And more than son, more than friend. One who'd defended me, who'd cared for me when rheum and weariness, and accident had cut away my senses. Old, and yet, in him, I was young! Friend, dare I call him? Where was my soul, my immortality, without him?

+++ The Herald entered through the great double doors at the opposite end of the Hall. The King stood, and everyone followed suit.

"How is it?" I cried, unable to discipline myself to the protocol that gave His Majesty first word.

A flashbulb popped and caught another instant, of fear, of concern, of me, for unborn ages to peruse in searching out their own salvation. The Herald looked at His Majesty and cocked an eyebrow, inquiring whether my question was in order. The King nodded assent.

"The match is ended," the Herald said. "Both are still alive, and are now in the infirmary, being treated for their wounds. They are both expected to continue to live. The doctors can mend their bones and sew their guts to some satisfaction, and the scars, I am told, will not show overmuch."

"Who has won?" the King asked.

The Herald looked down at the floor.

"Your Majesty, Good Seneschal ... Most noble and admirable guests ... Two brave men have fought on a matter of honour this night. Both have paid dearly in blood and pain. But ... Craving His Majesty's pardon ... It is the express desire of both the participants that the matter not be discussed. Nor ever mentioned again! They are satisfied at the outcome. Their honour, they feel, is satisfied. But they do not feel that the matter is of any concern to any but themselves. Therefore they have declined to tell me, and I must decline to tell you, which of them has won."

The King stood stunned. My own brain went numb. With relief, with joy. Like long plains the future stretched out in my mind. Not war, not civil strife and blood. Reason. Good sense. The good sense of men who know to keep wiser counsel than their own profit.

"There may yet be a Future," said the King.

--- Don Studebaker ---

Berkeley, April 1968.

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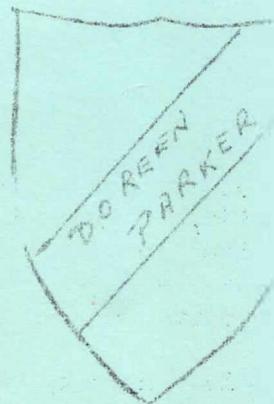
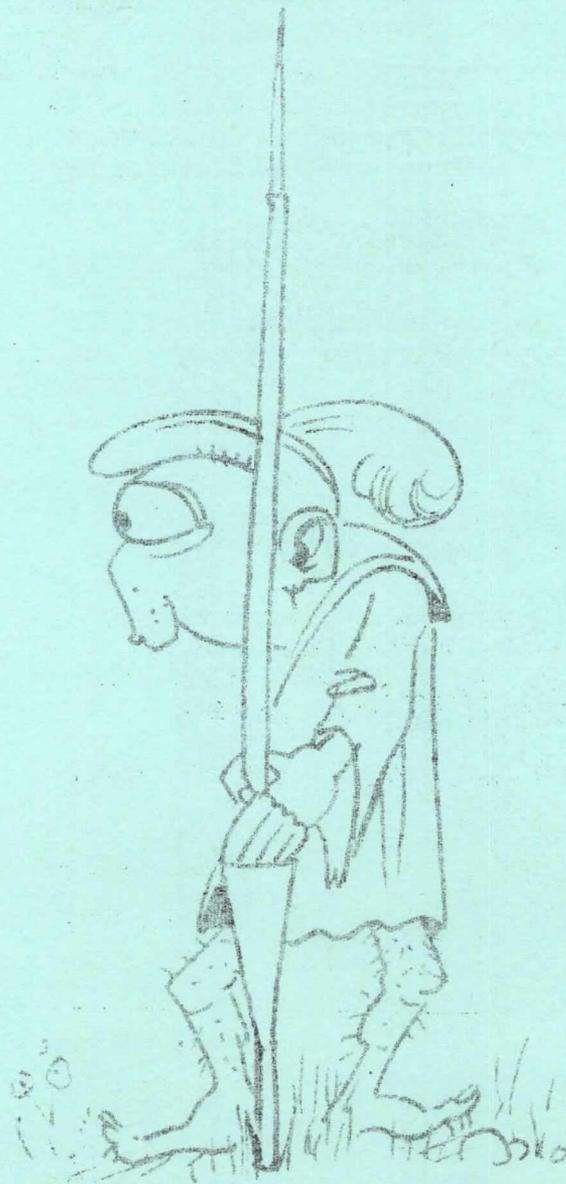
When I typed in the information on the front cover, I still had about half of Bobbie's article to stencil, and I hadn't even started Don's. Consequently, the artwork got a bit muddled; the Randy Williams drawing, lying elegantly on its side, provides a finale to Bobbie's article (I decided to put it there after I discovered that it is not, after all, a Winged Creature, as I'd first thought). And one of Ken's illos has been sort-of relegated to the backcover; I hope you'll forgive me when you see the company you're keeping there, Ken!

which winds up OZ for this time. Hope you all found something to your interest and/or enjoyment.

++ Over and out.

Deryl Mercer.

++



The above is not, repeat NOT,  
Saint Fantasy !