

15 Mar

SAPTISHA



ATOM

SCOTTISHE

38

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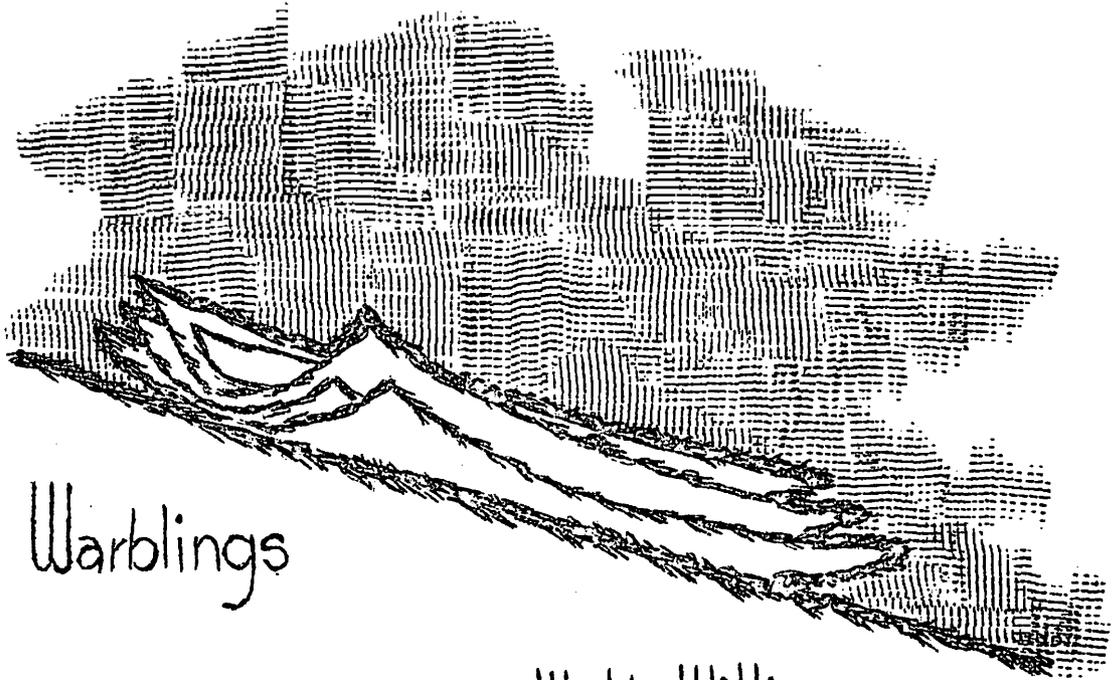
book for

LONDON ~~WORLD~~ CON

and

Vote in TAFF

Terry Carr
Jock Root
Bill Donaho



Warblings

Walt Willis

I REMEMBER ME.....

"There has passed away a glory from the Earth; where is it now, the vision and the dream." It was different in the old days, when there was only a handful of sf mags being published. One had time not only to read them, but also re-read them. A new novel which had even a trace of sf in it---be it only the old Mad Professor---was an EVENT. A new sf film was so rare it was a MOMENTOUS EVENT.

When fen met, they could discuss their reading and be on common ground, for the other fellow was bound to have read the story you were so enthusiastic about.

Today sf batters you with more magazines and books than you could hope to read if you did nothing else all day. It's all over the cinema and tv screens, and drools from the radio. It infests advertisement hoardings, strip cartoons, comics, toy shops, literary weeklies and pantomines. It's even been mentioned at the Globe.

We always wanted to spread sf, and now, God help us, we've done it. And somehow in the stampede the Magic has been trampled underfoot.

"Science fiction is too much with us; late and soon, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers."

Thus William Wordsworth Temple in March 1954, in a letter of comment on The Enchanted Duplicator, which we had published the previous month. This, and indeed TED itself, was typical of the period of introspection which fandom had entered.

The Enchanted Duplicator was received by fandom with such awe-inspiring enthusiasm that it must obviously have filled some deep-felt want for a new basis for our hobby, now that our former proselytising zeal for science fiction no longer seemed to make sense. More surprisingly it was warmly

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welcomed by people like Ken Slater and the new generation of serious-constructive fans in the North (Bentcliffe, Varley, Ashworth, Cohen and Mackenzie) whose attitude to fandom it had criticised by implication. In fact the booklet received such general acclaim that I thought it worth while answering in detail an enquiry from Redd Boggs as to its origins. And since it has been reprinted since and may be reprinted again soon elsewhere, perhaps this may still be of interest to some of you....

"If you are really interested, Bob wrote most of Chapter 5 and 6, part of 7, and the first para of 17, but the idea itself is a much closer collaboration. It arose out of a conversation two years ago about a radio play by Louis MacNeice based on the quotation "Childe Rolande to the Dark Tower Came". We kicked the idea around for a whole evening, ending with a pageful of notes. I wrote the first four chapters almost immediately and passed them on to Bob. That was the end of it for more than a year. Then when Vince was over last September we had a discussion about the sad state of fandom at the time---at that period Seventh Fandom was howling alone in the wilderness---and put TED high on the list of Projects to promote a fannish revival. Like the new Hyphen, and Toto. George Charters offered to cut the stencils, and every Tuesday afternoon I'd scribble a chapter or so in the office, type it out at teatime, and give it to George that evening. At one time I thought I'd never get it finished, because new ideas kept coming to mind more rapidly than the story progressed to a conclusion, and finally I'm afraid I cut it short too abruptly. There was to have been an Ultimate Temptation, science fiction itself, but I found it difficult to symbolise the exact shade of action representing the True Fan attitude to sf; and there was to have been some reference to FAPA and SAPS; but whether because of the same difficulty or plain impatience---I was no longer quite so enthusiastic, having lived with the thing for eighteen months---I just brought it to a close with that purple passage. Which I felt quite uneasy about at the time as perhaps having gone too far."

I see I've mentioned Mackenzie again, and indeed he had entered fandom quietly in 1953 and we have now arrived at the first of the long chain of events which I think of as The Great Mackenzie War. You must have gathered from the number of times I have referred to this without saying anything definite about it, that it is a subject which both fascinates and frightens me. It fascinates me because it was so full of drama and psychological complexity: it may not have culminated in a real live bomb, like the Insurgent Scism in America, but it did ruin at least one life, with such lesser incidental catastrophes as lawsuits, the disruption of the remaining nucleus of Sixth Fandom and of the London Circle, and the downfall of the body regulating world conventions. The subject frightens me because the emotions it aroused cannot be wholly dead yet, and because its ramifications are so complex. Finally I have decided that I was too intimately involved with some phases of it to write an objective history, and since this column is frankly nothing more than the raw material of memoirs, I should confine myself to presenting to you the various events as they presented themselves to me at the time.

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But first I think I should say that the term the Great Mackenzie War is unfair to Stuart Mackenzie, just as it is unfair to blame Jenkins for all the consequences of the War of Jenkin's Ear. He was not even involved in the later stages, when it spread to New York, and even in his early actions for which he was so harshly attacked at the time, I still cannot instance any concrete example of wilful treachery or malicious intrigue. He may have lacked discretion, but basically I think Mackenzie was simply a Force and that it was fandom itself that made him a destructive one. He merely exerted pressure on us, and we split along lines of psychological weakness which had been below the surface all the time.

It wasn't even he who started it all. In fact, looking at these first letters about the unimportant event which started it all, these scraps of paper blown ahead by the advancing storm, I find to my horror that I could be said to have started it all myself.

In January 1964 I had a letter from Eric Bentcliffe, who was then editing a serious-constructive fanzine called Space Times for the Manchester Group comprising Brian Varley and Dave Cohen who were going to put on the forthcoming Convention in Manchester, the Supermancon. The fanzine was being published by Stuart Mackenzie in London. Bentcliffe told me a deal had been arranged with the publishers of the new prozine, the Vargo Statten Magazine, for them to print the fanzines covers in return for free advertising. Now the VSM was of course devoted to the juvenile potboilers of John Russell Fearn under his various pseudonyms and was properly despised by all us fans; it struck me as wryly amusing that these serious dedicated sf lovers in Manchester should accept a subsidy from it. I sent a postcard to Bentcliffe reading, in part, "Will the golden calf be on show at the Supermancon?" and published the news item in Hyphen with the comment, "Nice, but ST mustn't be surprised if people make the same remarks as they do about girls and mink coats."

This was I'm afraid sheer mischievousness, but I had no way of knowing that pulling one leg in Manchester would throw the entire group off balance. Dave Cohen sent an ultimatum to Eric Bentcliffe requiring his resignation from the editorship of Space Times, for unauthorised disclosures of information leading to the group being brought into ridicule. Eric Bentcliffe sent carbons appealing to everyone involved protesting the injustice of this. I sent carbons appealing to everyone for calm and a return to the status quo after the convention. Mackenzie then wrote me enclosing a dittoed letter he had been about to issue, implying that he had lost the offer of a good job on account of Bentcliffe's "ill-timed disclosure" (it had been Mackenzie, of course, who had arranged the deal with VSM), complaining bitterly about his editorship and refusing to serve under him any more. He wanted my advice on whether to issue it or not, revealing that Cohen's ultimatum had been the result of a complaint from him and Brian Varley. Before I could answer Eric formally resigned, bringing the immediate crisis to a close but leaving a lot of unanswered questions and bad blood.

When the dust had settled the VSM had gone bankrupt and the Northern SF Club was in fragments, but the editorship of Space Times was securely in the hands of Stuart Mackenzie and Brian Varley. It was at this point

that I re-christened the latter Machiavarley, but I am sure this was an injustice. I am not so sure about Mackenzie, because all the following feuds in which he was involved seem to follow an eerily similar pattern.

But let's end on a note more science fiction^{er} than these petty squabbles. When Brian Aldiss was in Belfast recently for the Arts Festival he gave a very fine lecture about sf, but admitted that it had not anticipated one development, that the Russians would be first into space. So it was with some pride I found the following in a letter of comment that I wrote to a US fanzine in March 1954.....

Joe Gibson is an extraordinary mixture of sophistication and naivete. His letter is intelligent, but his article about space flight and Russia is almost childish. Does he really think the concept of space stations etc has only just occurred to the Russians? They have been reading and writing science fiction for years...and they probably know more about what's going on in Western scientific circles than most Western scientists. It doesn't pay to underestimate those lads ...Better be careful that the first space flight isn't made from some base in Central Asia (a steppe rocket, of course) and Mars really become the Red Planet.

Which proves that pro authors, and indeed the United States Government, should read more fanzines than they do.

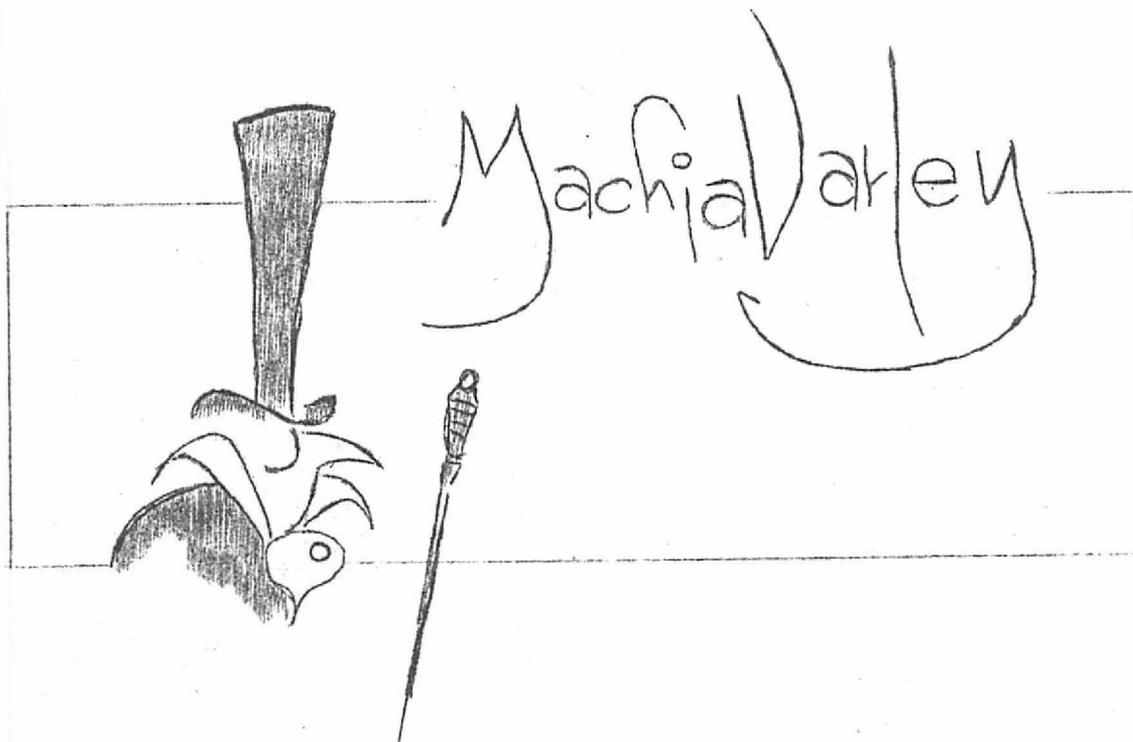
Walter A. Willis.

LONDON WALK

In London there is a road that runs right through the heart of it. It runs from Marble Arch to Holborn and often changes it's name as it goes. It starts as Oxford Street, and is a 'beat' that I know pretty well. I start at Marble Arch and from the roar of the traffic at the roundabout amble past the row of shops underneath the Mount Royal Hotel(home of the LonCon II). Across the street from this is the shop sponsored by the Indian Governement which sells all the products of that country. There are many of these shops in London; at the other end of this street well into the City is the shop of Soviet Russia. Lately I have been taking a note of the many restuarants available; and have been pleased to see at least two all-night ones within a stone's throw of Marble Arch. There is of course, two huge Lyons Cornerhouses one at either end of Oxford Street. I usually pause to admire their animated displays.

My next stop is Selfridges, about the only store that I figure can compete with the size of the ones I admired in New York. When I've time - and the money - it is there I like to visit with a sidetrip to the C&A stores across the way. I always head for those two at salestime. Next is a walk down a sidestreet to the American Embassy. In the summer I like to walk through the garden there(which houses the Roosevelt Menorial) but winter-time I just nip straight into the library to change my book. I usually let out a gasp as I go in and hurriedly remove my coat. It must be the most over-heated building in London. I also take a look through the file of American newspapers.

contd after MachiaVarley.



I have recently been privileged (if that is the right word) to study the workings of British justice at close quarters. In fact, I spent some three and a half weeks incarcerated in the jury-box of Court No 6 at the Old Bailey. I have learnt a lot in that time, in particular that, whilst the wheels of justice may grind exceedingly small, they also grind exceedingly slow!

My ~~talent~~ tuition started on the 13th day of October when I was summoned to be and appear before Her Majesty's Judges and Justices at the Central Criminal Court in order to "do and execute all and singular these things with which you shall then and there be enjoined". The summons ended with the dire words "Wherof fail not, as you will answer to the contrary at your peril". The extent of my "peril" was explained in a small buff-coloured notice enclosed, to wit - a £5 fine.

Having spent anxious days sorting through my outstanding work, preparing copious instructions for my staff, it was a rather sheepish Varley who appeared back at his office on the afternoon of the 13th October. They, it appeared had only required my presence, along with 600 other prospective jurors, to hear excuses from those not wishing to be called, and to allocate new dates for those who couldn't think of a good enough reason for not attending. My jury service would truly begin on the 9th November.

I turned up on the 9th and, together with 11 others, rather self-consciously seated myself in a jury box where we went through the ceremony of swearing-in. We thought we'd got off lightly at first; because a chap was put up in the dock immediately. The prosecutor rose and stated that, for various reasons, the Crown did not propose to offer any evidence. The Judge told the foreman to rise and asked him to render a verdict of "Not Guilty". This he did, the chap was acquitted, and I prepared to leave for the office once again.

Unfortunately this was only to be an appetizer to a 17-daylong meal. These chaps were put in dock and the prosecutor started on an eight-hour summary of the evidence we should hear. A fortnight later, more or less, and we had heard some 97 prosecution witnesses. Then two of the defendants spent two days each in the box. During this time one's existence became a fight against creeping boredom. A monotonous recital of facts heard for the tenth time from the ninth corroborative witness acted like a heavy soporific sleep was very demanding. In sheer self-defense one was compelled to study the ritual of the court.

Every day, twice a day, when the court assembled the Usher, observing the arrival of the Judge, bade us all to "Be upstanding in Court" and, whilst the Judge mounted to his rostrum and took his seat, the Usher intoned his cantation. After hearing it thirty four times I am still unable to make sense of it—a passage of six or seven words in the middle being gibberish to me and my fellow-jurors to this day. When questioned, the Usher smiled mysteriously and refused to comment. For what it is worth the mysterious passage is as follows. "All persons having anything to do before my Lords the Justices of the Queen's Court of yez and terminus and general ia delivery for the jurisdiction of the Central Criminal Court draw near and give your attendance. God Save the Queen." If anyone can relieve my frustration by translating the underlined section they will earn my undying gratitude!

We learnt that it is very embarrassing for any juror who has an undeniable urge to leave the court for a short period. He must first write a note which is passed along to the Foreman, everyone having a peek at it en route. The Foreman passes it to the Clerk of the Court who reads it and passes it up to the Judge. Having read it the Judge waits for a suitable moment and announces to the Court at large that a jury member desires a break. Now, instead of the juror in question nipping smartly out and returning equally quickly, the Judge adjourns the Court for ten minutes and departs. The whole jury now files out into the jury-room and is locked in for ten minutes. We then are led back, the Judge returns, and the case continues, some twenty minutes having elapsed since proceedings stopped. I personally would hate to be a member of a jury where one of our number had a weak bladder.

Occasionally a grandly attired individual enters the Court and sits for about ten minutes next to the Judge. Wearing a red, fur-trimmed robe and carrying a magnificent chain and seal round his neck, he has a quiet chat with the Judge and toddles off again. The Usher told me he was the Sheriff, but as this could be anything from Matt Dillon to Robin Hood's perpetual enemy it didn't mean much to me. There is also another chap dressed in black with close-fitting trousers, short jacket and bags of foaming white lace. He sometimes enters with the Judge, mounts one side of the podium and descends the other, bows to the Judge and exits stage left. The consensus of opinion was that he was just using this as a short-cut.

Actually, as an experience, the whole thing was rather disappointing. I suppose the screen lawyers like Charles Laughton lead one to expect too much. No clever cross-examinations leading witnesses into hidden traps; no fiery oratory, no acid comments from the Judge occasioning the famous

"Laughter in Court", in fact all very disappointing and dull.

Unfortunately, after being out for some seven and a half hours, we were unable to reach a verdict on any counts and the case is being retried as I write this. Comment, therefore, on the actual evidence or opinion from myself would be out of order. Perhaps our inability to reach a decision on any one of the 24 counts is the most frustrating thing of all. To have to spend three and a half weeks incarcerated in court is annoying, but to find at the end that all was to no avail is absolutely frustrating.

Just think too, they can call me again in another two years!

Brian Varley.

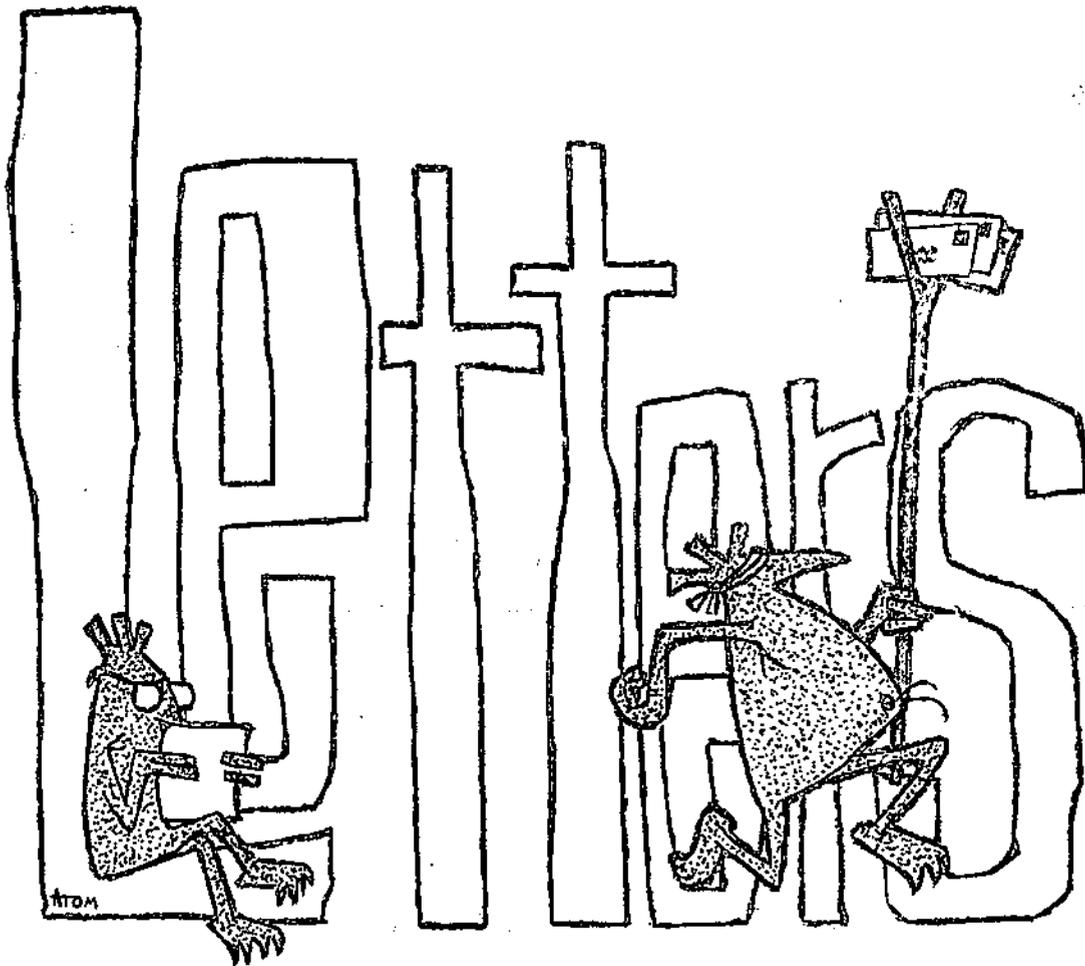
LONDON WALK. contd.

Between where I stand now and the end of Oxford Street, there are more interesting shops and places than I can enumerate. If you want to see how "the other half" lives you can walk down Bond Street and whistle to yourself at the prices. You can wander into Soho. You can find more than one street market in full roar. There are quaint-looking streets I've never yet had time to fully explore. There are odd things like the coffeehouse full of skeletons certainly worth a visit. Churches appear in the most unlikely places. It's too far to walk today however, so I nip on a bus. From the top of this I survey the pavements full of shoppers, spot the beginning of the street full of bookshops that I'll save for another day, and diagnose from the shop windows that pink is going to be 'the' colour this spring.

I get off at Holborn, now I am in the City and there are less shoppers but crowds of people hurrying to and from their work. This part of London empties at night and becomes almost dead. I am heading for Ella's office to meet her from work. On the way I go into the Soviet Russia shop. Not having much money to spend I come out with the cheapest item - a bookmark - but I have admired the colourful display. They seem to specialise in wooden toys and they are brightly painted as are a vast variety of boxes. I am now more often lured into shops--this one very cheap--that one full of magazines, but at last I reach Ella's office. I find that I am too early as usual so I walk on towards the oldest row of houses in London with their thatched roofs and discover a crowd in front of them. They are admiring an old-fashioned hurdy-gurdy complete with monkey dressed in a scarlet jacket and cap. It is pulled by a small pony all bedecked with ribbons. Two collectors are there also--taking in money for the Folio Fund.

There is always something to see in London.

Ethel Lindsay.



Robert Coulson
Route 3
Wabash, Indiana
USA

"In discussing the Fan Awards Poll, you say you think it's a good idea for fanzine editors to have something to shoot at. If you mean they should shoot at the originators of the Poll, I'm all in favor; that's what I've been doing ever since it

started. If you mean they should shoot at the winning editors, however, I'm against the idea; I'm getting too old to duck quick..."The fact that these novels are set several years in the future does not place them in the sf field, it's merely a device to clear the way for an author's imagination! And when, pray tell, did Mr Latto ever read an stf story that wasn't merely a device to clear the way for an author's imagination? By those standards there isn't such a thing as a stf field and we've all been deluding ourselves for years. I also see that according to Latto's definition, Scotland is a sort of British version of Texas -- seperate nation, feel themselves a distinct people etc. Doubtless true, but not anything that will make me think any better of the Scots.....A conservative is someone who has something worth conserving; a liberal is someone who feels he needs to be liberated.....Con reports; bah, humbug."

+++Obversely then, if the Scots did not think of themselves as a separate people from the English, and the Welsh, and the Irish--you would think better of them? Why? And what would you have them think of themselves as? English? Welsh? Irish? British? When they insist on being called the last they are accused (often) of nit-picking. Should your Texan think of himself as a New Yorker?+++

Letters 2

Wim Struyck
Willebrordusstr. 33 B
Rotterdam, Holland

"The nice thing this time about the letter column is that all the interesting problems are discussed. From both sides, America -anti-Americanism, Socialism - anti-Socialism,

Slavery - Freedom etc, etc. I found all my own ideas there. Being attacked and being defended. Looked upon from all points of view. The only disadvantage from such discussions, I found out not too long ago, is this. They are not really problems you can explain in a letter or even an article. I'd like to discuss these things too, but only from "person to person". Then, when you are misunderstood, (your opponent saying: no, you can say: yes, but---); thus coming nearer to each other. There are often such misunderstandings and I noticed people in letters attacking each other, while both meant the same things actually".

+++You have said this before, and I disagree with you..for what you are saying is that communication can only be established properly by speech. How much poorer we should be if this were true! No, it is possible to communicate by writing..it only needs more patience to probe out the meaning is all.+++

Bill Donaho
Box 1284
Berkeley, Calif. 94701
USA

"Speaking of anti-Americanism and anti-Britishism one of the funniest accounts I ever saw was Margaret Halsey's "With Malice Towards Some" published, as I remember, sometime in the mid-thirties. It's been a long time, but as I

recall the circumstances her husband was some exchange Professor or other and they spent over a year in England. It seems the invariable statement of people who got to know them was: "But you're not like an American at all, you're nice!"

Archie Mercer
70 Worrall Rd
Bristol 8

"This Game thing. I'm beginning to get some glimmerings of some sort of generally-applicable distinction here. Supposing I'm confronted with something of this nature: "The cart-

horse then picks up the tab. If it's in vogue, he sublimates. If it's in excess, he converts to trade-in from the pick-down bank. Each shaft is then laid in turn." I can react in two ways. Either I can take it to be outright nonsense and intended as such, in which case I'd accept it on its merits as more or less inspired (the above is not, I'm afraid, a very good example) nonsense; or else I can assume that it's intended to mean something and the writer is being obscure. If I think he's being deliberately obscure for the sake of being able to laugh at such as I, I tend to say the hell with it/him. The latter was my reaction to the MachiVar article in question."

+++Let me tell you about The Game. It came into being one idle day at an SFCoL meeting. We were talking about the coming visit of Wally Weber... and if it were possible to hoax him. "How about a game that doesn't mean anything with some way in which we can involve Wally?" asked someone - probably Brian - "a game in which we can all drop out one by one and leave him in till the end?" This was seized upon enthusiastically and they all set to work devising a complicated game which would be "too complicated" to explain but which we'd assure Wally he could pick up as it went along. We decided to use coinage, then split up into two teams who would produce random movements to arouse his curiosity. The only rule we made was that

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nothing we did would be logical. When Wally arrived we tried it out. How we all kept our faces straight I'll never know; in fact Betty Peters judged that she couldn't and retired to my room till it was all over. A really "wild" element was introduced by the fact that Brian Burgess joined in and some of his movements had to be covered up hurriedly as we felt that Wally would be bound to suspect. We steadfastly maintained that of course he should be able to understand it. We learnt afterwards that he had been highly suspicious but, when told he could not understand probably because of the difference in coinage, he began to believe it. A hot arguemnt, designed to take his mind off details, as to whether the game could be played with American coinage apparently put the seal on his conviction. Ella did not tell him the truth till after he had made a tape to the US describing the game in glowing terms. After that Brian started to wonder if anyone would fall for it in article form..and might actually try to make it work. Fans being what theyare I don't suppose any of us would have been surprised if someone had! However: reaction was practically nil; only that arch-hoaxer Bennett joining in the fun. Considering this I did not publish a further article although Peter Mabey had drafted a real beauty. Yes, Archie...it was a hoax and you had every right to be miffed at it and say so. It's fun doing the hoaxing; but it isn't fun being the hoaxee. Right Wally? Hoaxers are terrible people I always say.+++

Lloyd Biggle Jr.
569 Dubie
Ypsilanti.
Michigan

"In a review of a book on America by Simone de Beauvoir, Mary McCarthy makes this statement:-
"She does not wish to know America but only to ascertain that it is there, just as she had imagined it." These emotional tirades against an

"American Way of Life" --which I maintain is non-existent -- have a similar genesis. The USA is a large place -- as you well know! It offers an immense variety of people, places, things, climates, topography -- in short, something for everyone. Those with a phobia to nourish can, like Mile.de Beauvoir, find America just as they imagined it. I recently saw a comic map of the US prepared for the benefit of visiting Russians. It detailed a grand tour through slum areas and over unimproved roads. This is no more representative of that mythical "American Way of Life" than is the prostitution, dope and pornography of Eric Frank Russell's America. Mile. de Beauvoir's generalisations are sheer idiocy, and so is Russell's assumption that America is a place of "general blatant dishonesty" because he was able to bribe a policeman. In Russell's bribery transaction, at least half of the dishonesty was English....An example of the dangers of generalisation from limited experience: A London theatre. A woman with two sons, aged perhaps eight and ten, sat down beside me. Light classical selections were played before the film began, and to the woman's delight she recognised one of them. "Why, that's 'Poet and Peasant,'" she exclaimed. Her eldest son looked at her enquiringly. "I beg your pardon?" "That's the Poet and Peasant" she said. The boy cocked his head, thought a moment. "I'm none the wiser," he said. What a charming scene, and what charmingly polite people these English are! Royal Albert Hall. A Promenade Concert. Orchestra and soloist began the Schönberg Piano Concerto, and within five minutes it was impossible to hear the music. Virtually the entire audience was talking in normal conversational tones, and continued to talk to the end of the concerto. A latecomer would have thought he was arriving during the intermission. I have attended concerts all my life, in America

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and several foreign countries, and never before or since have I been a member of such a rude audience. I do not think that this could happen in America. An American audience might have a similar opinion of Schönberg, but it would be aware of the remote possibility that someone might want to hear the music, and suffer in silence. What boors these English are! I enjoyed both experiences tremendously, the latter as a glimpse of a facet of English character that I had not suspected. A generalisation upon the basis of either experience would have been patently ridiculous. Neither did it occur to me to essay an appraisal of the "English Way of Life" on the basis of what went on in Hyde Park after dark. Human vice and human virtue are present in every national group, and no nationality has a monopoly upon either. I feel rather sorry for those who visit a foreign country and see it only through the distorting lenses of their prejudices, darkly. Gilbert and Sullivan lampooned an age that thought anything superior as long as it was foreign and different; have we now "advanced" to the point where we think anything foreign or different to be necessarily inferior? With so much of interest to see, with fascinating people, and customs, and places, and foods to enjoy, how utterly sad to be anti-any country!"

Sid Birchby,
40 Farris Wood Ave.
Didsbury
Manchester 20.

"Thank you for No 36, and incidentally I have just this minute see a little message on the wrapper; "No comment; no more copies". How hard, how unfeeling. And THANK YOU for the following issue. How generous, how forgiving. You ask for

definitions of the word 'liberal'. This is a hard one, the word is so loaded with double meanings nowadays. Like the word 'catholic' which my dictionary defines as "universal, general, liberal, the opposite of exclusive", the word 'liberal' has changed its meaning. I suppose if one said that so-and-so had a catholic education, most people would think that he had been brought up in a church school. And I venture to say that the education given in most church schools is the very opposite of catholic. I say this from knowledge, because from the age of five until the age of nine I did have a Catholic education, name! at a convent school. 'Liberal', again according to my dictionary, means "becoming to a gentleman, free, free from restraint, generous" - and I suppose that the term "a liberal education" suggests to most people something open-handed, given without restraint, e.g. -- a liberal dose of Epsom Salts. I choose the comparison deliberately, because is there not about the word "Liberal" a faint air of being generous with something that doesn't cost very much, or isn't worth having, or is unpleasant. It sounds patronising, as if the donor says: "Here, my good man, take this as a small reminder that I can afford to dispense largesse to the lower classes!" Dear me, if I'm not careful, I shall be getting round to politics and that's just what you didn't want, so you said. So I'll wish you a Happy New Year, and don't cut me off the mailing list yet, eh?"
+++Uh..I don't suppose I'd have really cut you off the list..but I figured a message like that might bring forth a letter like this! +++

Harry Warner,
423 Summit Ave
Hagerstown.
Maryland 21740
USA

"The only possible explanation that occurs to me for the lack of interest in science fiction by most females is the home-making instinct that women possess. Maybe it's so strong in most of them that it sets up a conflict whenever the girl

tries to take an interest in a time or planet where it would be obviously impossible to create anything like a normal home. I believe that in most young couples I know, it is the woman who is more interested in real estate and architecture and such things that are normally bartered and built by men.....The Clan MacGregor had a big memorial ceremony at nearby Antetam battlefield a couple of weeks ago. They threw a wreath onto the waters of the creek that runs through the battlefield. I finally got up the courage to tell a group of them that this Scot custom was new to me. "Oh, we never heard of it before, either," one of them said. "We just made it up because we didn't want to favor either side and all the monuments around here belong to either the North or South."

+++After a chuckle at your Scots tale..I'd add that I think the main reason for the lack of interest in sf by most women is due to the educational system which does not stress science early enough. To say nothing of the number of young girls who have it firmly in their head that to be intelligent at all will be a barrier to marriage.+++

Rick Sneary
2962 Santa Ana St.
South Gate
Calif,USA

"You are right, labels are badly applied in this country. Certainly our right wing thinks of Socialism when he thinks of liberal, and "knows" all socialists are Red agents. While the fellow who would be likely to call himself a liberal, is

really only a progressive. My definition would say a Liberal was for greater(working towards total)social justice for all; with as much personal freedom as possible. A progressive I'd say merely wants to improve things from they way they were."

Paul Williams,
163 Brighton St
Belmont,Mass.

"I disagree with Ivor Latta's definition of sf. I think that something like Advise & Consent definitely is sf; indeed it seem to me that as a general rule, sf is "merely a device to clear

the way for the author's imagination." Now A&C may be bad sf--I don't know, not having read it. And obviously it was only written in the future because he could not put a novel about people in the public eye in the present and have it be fiction, not without getting sued for slander. For the same reason, Algis Budrys' novel on the theme of "What makes a ruler?", Falling Torch, was set in the future because if it were about the present or the past it would be history, and it would mould him rather than vice versa. But Falling Torch, for my money is sf, good sf, because it couldn't have been written without sf techniques, and it is a good story in its own right. All sf is just a particular device applied to fiction; and those stories where the device is all are the stories which are poorest, most ephemeral. Bring the Jubilee had to be written as sf because the South didn't win the Civil War. Methuselah's Children had to be written as sf because immortality has not yet been discovered. More than Human had to be written as sf because the gestalt, although an excellent literary and psychological device, probably does not exist. Skylark of Space had to be sf because for many people the confines of Earth no longer held sufficient wonder. And, yes, such a book as Fail-Safe had to be written as s. because we haven't had a nuclear war yet. The fact that a book is sf does not make it good. But in the same way, the fact that a book is a best-selling, unimaginative pot-boiler does not mean that it isn't sf.The place of sf in literature is that of a damned interesting, amusing, and

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useful device. The place of a good sf novel is right up there with a good anything else. I've shared your experience of news-hunger--only I think my situation was twice as bad. This summer, after a steady diet of the New York Times, I flew to Holland, where I picked up an international NYT; then immediately to Finland, where I was able to find a London Observer, and then on into Russia. In the USSR western newspapers are considered dangerous propaganda, and as a result I was in the Soviet Union eleven days before I found a readable newspaper--the British Daily Worker! It was a week old, and an incredibly annoying propaganda sheet (how would you like to learn via the Daily Worker that the US has bombed VietNameese camps and is rushing into full-scale war? It can be disturbing), but certainly more readable and even more interesting than Pravda or L'Humanité (the French Communist Party organ). I read the DW wherever I could find it, and then finally, after three and a half weeks, saw the international NYT again, in the American Embassy in Moscow. The people there also gave us a copy of the latest NEWSWEEK, and I've never read anything so thoroughly. In Poland the NYT was available, and the hotel rooms had short wave sets, so we heard about Humphrey being nominated for v-p. But I don't see how anyone could be more starved for news than the American tourist in the hinterlands of Russia."

Boyd Raeburn
89 Maxome Ave
Willowdale
Ontario, Canada.

"I was going to have a stab at defining 'liberal' as I see the term, but it struck me that in a short definition I'd wind up using wooly phrases which would be open to various interpretations. 'Liberal' has two meanings in the US. One is the dictionary meaning, more or less, which also had the same meaning when applied to politics, at one time, but the word in its political sense has become so distorted that as currently used by many people, it is almost the opposite of what the word used to mean when applied to politics. It may suprise you to learn that a lot of Goldwater's policies were 'liberal' in the old sense.. ..freedom of the individual, government playing a lesser role, instead of getting into everything, and so on...."Liberal' being used with two meanings can be confusing to people, I have found. Norm Clarke was quite confused by a Wall Street Journal article he saw speaking with approval of the growing economic liberalisation in Communist countries, when, at the same time, the WSJ assails some of the things the Liberals (self-styled) stand for. He didn't understand that in the first instance the word was being used in its true, dictionary sense, and in the second was a self-styled label which has no relationship to the usual meaning of the word."

+++Although not as many people weighed in with their definition of the word 'liberal' as I'd hoped. I think I may have clouded what I was getting at by saying that I'd take the definition "A member of the Liberal Party" as dodging the issue. What I meant was that I'd also want that further defined..in what was someone who called himself a 'liberal' and a member of the Liberal Party (over here) like?

Brian Aldiss
24 Marston St
Iffley Rd
Oxford:

"Perhaps you would let me, as one of the co-editors of SF Horizons, answer RachiaVarkey's review of the first issue. First of all, perhaps, I should say that I think he is hardly the right person to do this job, since he undermines his whole case by

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admitting that he reads SF only as a "form of light relief". SF HORIZONS is dedicated to the proposition that SF can be, and sometimes is, more than this. To take his points in the order in which he raises them; SF HORIZONS is not a fanzine in the real sense of the term" however much its lateness may seem in Varley's eyes to qualify it as such. As far as I know we have committed ourselves rather more deeply financially than is the case with fanzines. Nor could I agree that "even the beginnings were fannish in nature"; for when Tom Boardman did his subscription stunt at the 63 Convention most of the contents had been written and the rest was planned. At least he is correct in saying that the main item is the taped recorded discussion between Kingsley Amis and C.S.Lewis. I do not see that it is a particularly unhappy thing to feel like "an idle eavesdropper to an in-group conversation" when the conversation is on one's subject, science-fiction. There may be no particularly staggering conclusions emerging from the conversation, but one thing at least was of interest(although it seems to have escaped MachiaVarley's notice), namely that Lewis was more concerned with his story than his message when writing SF: the opposite view has been dogmatically insisted upon with regard to his fantasies. If one was not too prejudiced against the whole idea of SF Horizons, one might perhaps also think that it was pleasant that at least one person interviewed so distinguished a critic of English literature as C.S.Lewis concerning SF before his death. Harry Harrison's contribution is indeed a re-write of his speech at Peterborough in 63, although MachiaVarley's claim that "few who heard it then would want to read this article to refresh their memory" presupposes a lot of readers with exceptionally sharp memories. I am happy that we are in agreement that Geoff Doherty's is "an excellent article". About MachiaVarley's remarks on my essay, I will say little. It would be interesting however to see where he thinks I say that science fiction(i.e.all science fiction)is a serious form of literature and must be treated and written as such. MachiaVarley ends by asking "are the pros I wonder misled by the very existence of fandom in believing that SF is a special case?" This might have been the beginning of an interesting discussion had he carried it further, but he fails to do so. For myself, I think SF no more "special" than several other branches of writing. But since some of these branches already have magazines of criticism devoted to them, it surely is not a very vile act of eccentricity to wish to publish SF Horizons. It does not merit fanfares perhaps but a dribble of thin humour is not a very bright response either."

+++Ordinarily I'd make Brian Varley wait till the next issue to answer this letter from Brian Aldiss; but there has been such a holdup with this issue I've decided to urge things a bit forward by printing his remarks. As for myself: I thought Varley was the best person to review SFH as he reads all SF that is published and has done so for years. Also he was the only person I'd heard who kept hoping that SFH would come out. I think he expected(or hoped) for too much. As a point of interest--with so many new fanzines devoted to "serious" study of SF now being published in this country; I was a little surprised to find SCOT first in the field with a review+++

Brian Varley
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Raynes Park
London, SW 20

"Ethel has graciously given me permission to reply to some of Brian's points briefly, so without more ado... Firstly, SF is a type of popular fiction and surely must remain so. Let it by all

means be better written, but I just don't see how it can become more than light entertainment. Secondly, I don't see that the degree of financial involvement really affects its classification as a fanzine. Like any other fanzine it is available only by subscription, at least I've never seen it on a bookstall. It's contents are comparable to several fanzines, perhaps the best example being WARHOON - James Blish is a contributor to both. Thirdly I still don't know who Peter Wilkins is. Fourthly: regarding my comments on Harry Harrison's piece. Part of our disagreement here is due to a misprinting of "need" for "read". The actual sentence should read - "If you did hear it then you won't need this article to refresh your memory." This was intended as a tribute to Harry's delivery which, I think, was remarkable enough to impress the talk firmly on any listeners' memory. Fifthly, I admit that Brian does not say in JUDGEMENT AT JONBAR that SF is a serious form of literature etc. However, the article as a whole conveyed this message to me. In other words I was only trying to summarise the feeling I personally got from it. Finally, I object to being termed "a critic of thin humour" --a dribble of sadly fattening humour would be a much more accurate description I fear."

+++Well, luv, if you will eat enough potatoes for three ordinary men..... I hasten to assure my readers that I am not wholly to blame for that misprint. Brian Varley gives me his articles handwritten and I'm so glad to get them(after all that nagging)that I haven't the heart to demur. This isn't a private argument..anyone else care to comment upon SFH? One point --it could be termed a 'little magazine' if one didn't care for the term fanzine+++

Ian Peters
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London,SE6

"This anti-American lark will dog me to the grave it seems. While I am unwilling to flog a dead horse, some of the comments from America seem somewhat superficial. The peculiar judicial system, the disgraceful conduct of the A.M.A. - these are trivial? Never mind, it was a lovely argument while it lasted."
++And a salutary one I hope--shedding a little light on that touchy subject of anti-any country.+++

And that's it folks..your letters are now sent on to the contributors.
many thanks...Ethel.



I am very abashed over the lateness of this issue. January 31st and it's not all on stencil yet; and last year at this time I had such high hopes of keeping to schedule. But: what with Ompa, and Taff, and all those letters, and all those fanzines; and then there were the LonCon committee meetings, and all those letters to read about Hugos....I have a long list of boring excuses! I will be really honest however, and admit that there were some days I went tripping up to town and book-browsed for hours; some evenings when I put my feet up and watched television; some nights when I came off duty, sneered at my typer and went to bed with a book!

I made a canny New Year Resolution - to do better with my fanac in '65 than I had in '64. You'll notice I didn't make any silly resolutions that tied me down to a definite quota. I'm superstitious about New Year Resolutions; and think it unlucky to break them. Why! I once made a NY Resolution to comment on every fanzine I received. That's how HAVER got started....

In this issue I continue about my nursing days, mainly because I hate not to finish something I have started. But I wonder if they still interest?

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It took me four years in a Training hospital to become a State Registered Nurse and it all took place in wartime. At the end of the war it was announced that anyone who had worked in hospital during these years would be eligible for a medal for which they could apply. I never had the cheek to apply (I should think few people did) as in Dundee we were far from the bombing and the danger. One stray aeroplane dropped one stray bomb without real damage and that was all. Glasgow was a different story; the bombing there was really bad. My main memory of that time was the remark of a Surgeon who had gone through to Glasgow to conduct nursing examinations. "I passed them all", he said, "they are all suffering from war weariness."

Although we had none of the dangers of war; we had all of the pinpricks. Planes would be on their way to bomb Glasgow and this would set off an air-raid warning for Dundee. We had to get out of bed, get dressed, and go outside to shelters. These were brickmade without heating; only wooden forms to sit on and the brick walls to lean against. This went on for some time; why half the staff didn't go off with pneumonia I'll never know. Naturally people began to avoid this in various ways; a favourite was to hide under your bed when you heard Night Sister coming round to chase you out to the shelter. Gradually, as no bombs came, the staff were allowed to choose to remain in their rooms.

The other panic arrangement was the practise of taking all the children in their cots from their ward on the top floor of the hospital down to the basement at the sound of the air-raid siren. After a few weeks of perspiringly pulling all the cots into the lifts (with the children screaming at being awakened) only to hear the "All Clear" just as the last cot reached the basement --the staff rebelled and just stooped.

After that our war duty consisted of taking our turn to be on call as Air Raid Wardens. This meant about once in three months you slept on a mattress in the lecture room with a helmet and fire extinguisher by your side instead of in your own bed. On the whole this was welcomed as a break in the routine.

Then there was the day when we were told to standby for a large intake of wounded soldiers. The hospital became galvanised--wards were hurriedly emptied of all but the most acute cases; beds were made up, transfusions assembled, theatres readied, and extra duty rotas were made out. Everyone was on the alert and tingling with excitement. Then the trains arrived from London - full of old men and women evacuated from the Old People's Homes and chronic hospitals of London! Slightly stunned at the sight we all rallied round them with cups of tea and commiserated with them at having their lives so drastically upset. They were all full of grumbles, cross, and inclined to blame us for their having landed in the wilds of Scotland--they obviously would have much preferred the bombs. We looked at each other and struggled not to laugh at the anti-climax..at least not before the patients!

We did eventually have wounded soldiers arrive; mostly past the worst of their experiences but still needing a good deal of nursing..and this, we felt..was more like it.

A popular subject of conversations among the nurses was - what to do when you had finished your training. In wartime everyone naturally wanted to go into one of the Armed Services. We had heard tales of what the others had done. One that buzzed round the hospital was of a redhead who had been the despair of every ward sister. She had been "Mentioned in Dispatches" and called "the Angel of the Burma Road". This caused much ribald comment in her mother hospital among her fellow nurses who knew (even better than the sisters) just how lazy and unconscientious she was. I often wondered if the ribald comment was the truth or whether the conditions in which she worked had made her a good nurse after all.

Other tales were grimmer, particularly one from a nurse whose sister had been trapped in Singapore. Yet, nothing daunted, quite automatically for all of my four years every nurse who qualified went straight into the services. Not unnaturally by the time it was our turn we found that the Services were all full up! Frustrated, the nurses of my year turned to the various branches of nursing who had been screaming about their neglect in the face of the glamour of being an Army officer in wartime. I decided to take my maternity training on the grounds that a nurse should know at least what a birth looked like.

Many of my own 'class' also took their maternity training so at first I felt little change--a different part of the diningroom, a different part of the hospital, and a heightened respect in the eyes of our juniors who yet irreverently called us 'the Middlers'. I quickly found that the work was harder. Whenever a birth was about to take place a bell was rung. Everyone was supposed to stop what they were doing if at all possible, and hurry to the labour room to watch the birth. One bell meant an ordinary birth - you could skip that if you'd seen plenty. Two bells meant a Caesarian and you ought to make the effort. But three bells meant something unusual and brought every member of the staff on the run. This constant interruption of your work made it always seem as if you would never catch up with the routine work.

We started off in the ward where the mothers already had given birth to their babies. This was a cheerful place to be and we found the routine hard work but soothing in its inevitability. Bedpan 'em, wash 'em, swab 'em, clean dressings, clean linen, make the beds..supervise the exercises, then hand out the babies for the mothers to feed them. Every four hours on the dot...just like death and taxes! The exercises consisted of massage of the breast with an action of the hands that resembled the swimmer's breast stroke. To watch a roomful of mothers at this was amusing (particularly as we painted the nipples with purple gentian to prevent infection); but we were proud that we did take the time to initiate this. Our mothers never had breast abscesses; although we knew that other maternity units in the district often did because of the lack of this simple preventative.

There were a great many routines to faithfully observe so that no symptoms of complications could be missed. At the slightest sign of an elevated temperature a mother was whisked into a sideward for fear of her giving infection to others. The record of the unit in that respect was high. We all heard hair-raising stories of the lack of asepsis in the less

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well-regulated maternity homes which charged exorbitant fees. In fact, one of our number came back in tears after visiting a nursing home where her sister had given birth - she was so appalled at the lack of care.

One of the back breaking jobs was linen: a constant flow of nappies to be washed; a constant stream of sheets to be sluiced clean of blood before going to the laundry. Late at night we would all gather wearily in the basement for the days heaviest task. A chute ran from the top floor to the basement and into this all day had been pitched the linen for the laundry. It was our job now to sort this out into bundles and put them into baskets. We opened the chute door and an avalanch of linen descended upon us. The linen was damp and therefore heavy; even the most cheerful spirit among us was hard put to dredge up an end of the day joke.

From the main ward we graduated in turn to the nursery. Here were all the babies waiting to be washed and fed with a relentless march that had you on a treadmill from morning till night. Sister showed you how to bathe a baby quickly and efficiently and then stood over you eagle-eyed as you fumblingly tried to do the same. I dote on babies--but not newly born ones. They are such a worry. They had to gain weight or oh..calamity. As for the baby who showed signs of losing weight..panic stations all round. It was the nursery nurses' responsibility to see such a thing didn't happen and she probably wasn't trying hard enough if it did! With nine out of ten babies to get them to breastfeed was no trouble at all; just try and stop them! The exceptions were heartbreaking. They would not suck at the breast, they looked with disdain at the bottle you held out, they fell asleep in the middle of a feed; and they would not gain weight. I can remember so many weary hours trying to coax a baby to suck and also reassure the worried mother at the same time. But somehow, eventually, each one was able to gain those precious ounces, adjust to the fact that in this world you must suck for yourself and sail safely home in the arms of their triumphant mother. We saw each 'difficult' one go with a huge sigh of relief.

The last move was to the Labour Room. I was not at all happy there. I lacked confidence in my ability--not only to deliver a baby--I had a hard time with such routine chores as counting the baby's heartbeat. To do this you used a trumpet-shaped hearing device; this was placed over the mother's abdomen, listening through it one could count the baby's heart-beat. Often it took me all my time to hear it, far less count it!

This was practically the first step in the Labour Room and not feeling confident about this set me off wrong. Then, one ought to be able to know by the feel of the unborn child just how it was lying in the womb and so how it would come out! Again, I had no faith in my ability to judge this right. I was never actually worried of course as all trainee midwives were closely supervised by the Sister. I came to the conclusion quickly that midwives were born not made. One could see the difference between the ones to which this was as water off a duck's back - and the hesitant ones like myself who could not instinctively sense the rhythm of childbirth.

I had still another handicap, perhaps the biggest of all, I am wee and so are my hands and they possess very little strength. At the moment of

birth strong hands are needed. In an ordinary birth, the head comes first and - as soon as it appears - one must firmly grasp it, hand apart with the thumb smoothly exerting pressure to keep the head down. Within seconds of my first attempt I knew that I'd always be in trouble here - my thumb became rapidly numb and weak. As the Sister would be hissing in my ear - "Keep pressing down" I only managed to do so by superhuman efforts. The whole point about delivering a baby is that you must get the largest part of the head through at full dilation; never beforehand or the poor mother suffers a tear..and would require sutures.

To qualify I had to make 20 deliveries and did so with much anguish of thumb, no vaginal tears(oh triumph!)and one major incident. My incident was a three bell affair!

Watch out for the next thrilling instalment!.....

Last night I received a copy of TOMORROW X 4, a pb by Gold Medal. It contained four stories: THE NIGHT OF HOGGY DARN by RM McKenna, THE SOURCES OF THE NILE by Avram Davidson, NO WOMAN BORN by CL Moore, and THE ROADS MUST ROLL by Heinlein. It was the last that interested me. I have it already but I reflected that it is years since I last read it. Yet I often quote it as one of the early sf stories that remain in my memory. Checking, I find that it was published in 1940 in ASTOUNDING. In that year I started my general training but I can't recall when I first read the story. At that time I used to find ASTOUNDING on sale in Woolworths at 6d a copy. I had to hunt the store to get them and was often successful. So it may be that I read this story fairly soon after it was first published. I had not the space to save the mags; goodness only knows what happened to that first copy of THE ROADS.

It is a story that I've always remembered; one that to me epitomised the imaginative leap into the future that I sought in sf. Looking back to the Ethel Lindsay of those days - I recall that all my possessions could be packed into two suitcases; I had one decent suit to my name; hardly two pennies to rub together; my head in the clouds and my feet on the hospital floor. I smile at her now, she would have thought me a most fortunate creature. That story gave me a thrill then(yes of wonder); I read it and read it and thought it absolutely wonderful. I hoped so much that all the future held that much progress.

Now when I read the story I know that Heinlein was right in thinking that the age of too many motorcars would soon be upon us; that the day would soon be here when the whole economy would almost grind to a halt because of transportation that would have to be changed. Well, we can see all around us that this is happening now. But perhaps it would be more logical for those rolling roads to come to Britain first..we have not the space that America or Australia has to keep going much longer. Yet nowhere does one see even the beginnings of a real grapple with the transport problem. It is a tough nettle to grasp and one can't altogether blame politicians from backing off from it. I figure things will have to get much, much worse before that day comes.

As for the story itself, I still think it is good sf. The central idea is still fresh and fertile, the telling of it is still clear to someone like myself with little or no technical knowledge. I can visualise those rolling roads. Even after just rereading it, I cannot remember the various names clearly, the characters do not linger in the mind; although some attempt at characterisation is made. But this is now allowed to waste much time, one character is only there to enable the author to give a brief history of how the roads began. The semi-military setup for the road cadets does not have much validity now. One can see that this was not really necessary to the story of the roads.. but one can see that it was one of Heinlein's pet ideas even way back then. It is only hindsight that allows me to judge this part of the story; in actual fact I quite enjoy the idea of the cadets who learnt to think of their job as more than just a job --but also a public service. I cannot see that attitude to work can ever be faulted. Providing of course, that it springs from the "No man is an Island" premise, rather than the "elite" idea.

To me Heinlein still stands way up high as an sf author. The fact that his three last novels have been practically ripped apart by fan- ish critics does not detract from this. If anything, it shows that he is still full of ideas, still full of imagination and (I'm persuaded); full of mischief. In a way, that one can dissect Heinlein's writing, shows the craftsmanship that put it together. He is still our best storyteller.

Ethel Lindsay.

As for the very first I still think it is good all. The central
idea is still from the feeling of it is still given to
concern like that. I can see
raise the various
research the various
mind; although so
now allowed to waste
the subject to give a
entirely action for the
can see that this was
but one can see that
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stays in contact
to think of that for
then. I cannot see
the "letter" she.



maintain still. And way up high as an
these had never been precisely
as they had never been
this of those, still full of
in a way that one
relationship that put it together. He is still our best

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