

AMBLE 6

(EVERY ISSUE LOOKS ALIKE)

28th OMPA MAILING

Perpetrated by ARCHIE MERCER of 434/4 Newark Road, North Hykeham, Lincoln, England. (E&OE) Emanating from within the Caravan in the Shadow of the Malleable Ironworks. Yngvi is a Louse. A MERCATORIAL PUBLICATION

Perhaps they don't WANT me to pay for this machine, because they seem to have lost interest in it/me. In the mean time, here it still is in full operation, and in pursuit of my objective to make every issue of AMBLE look exactly like every other issue, here once again to start with is

THE SHAMBLES

reviewing the 27th Mailing and such early and late postmailings as are to hand.

DEFILADE 1 & 2 (Bill Donaho) Concerning No. 1, the suggested amendments to the system of changing the Constitution (particularly the second one) seem so OBVIOUS that I just can't understand who some bright young Thinker (me for instance) never thought of them before. Hooray for them both. As I've undoubtedly said before though, I dislike polls and things more the older I get, so I'm not in favour of having anything on those lines made official. Then No. 2. Here, I am strongly against increasing the membership. Not that I can't afford the extra paper for the extra copies or anything, but I have a horrible idea that the idea might be too successful and the thing'd snowball like SAPS did. In which case I'd probably resign under excess pressure.

For what it's worth, my current opinion is that there's nothing wrong with OMPA that a few more members deciding to treat it as their Number One Apa wouldn't quickly cure.

Nevertheless, I must commend your zeal in trying to Get Something Done, Bill.

SAVOYARD 7 (Bruce Pelz) A savoyard is simply the sum of three savofeet. However, let's deal with this one on its merits. I Approve the way you start by introducing yourself. H'm - you're another one of the select company of fans who weigh more than I do. (I'm around a "mere" 15 stone). Missed mailings - I have missed one OMPA Mailing since the thing started, and that was largely deliberate - I wanted to kill the thing before it became an obsession or something. Never missed commenting on a Mailing though. I like your mailing comments, what there are of them. "Silverlock" - I'm not at all sure this'd appeal to me, if there's one thing I hate it's obvious esoteric references that are way over my head. (I found the same thing in fandom itself when I first wandered in). And this "Widsith" character - I could never be happy around a name like that, mainly because it requires only two internal letters adding to become the General Manager where I work. Myers (why the insistence on the superflous double I wonder?) certainly seems (to put it mildly) a competent writer, pity he has to overdo it seemingly.

Touching the matter of the OMPActivity Survey, this'd be even more interesting if the total number of "places" in all the fannish apas was compared with the number of individual bodies occupying those places.

MAILING COMMENTS 6 (Dick Ellington) There was a "Mailing Comments No. 6" postmailed to the 26th Mailing. Then sure enough, comes a "Mailing Comments" postmailed to the 27th. On the front is a cartoon with the caption "No! No! Please not again!" but no issue number. Looking inside, one finds - yes, it's ANOTHER No. 6.

Fabulous Fred (in response to your query) has no particular significance - he just happened. Virtually literally - I still have the original to prove it. I like both yours and Pat's mailing reviews Dick - glad to meet you in print, Pat, by the way. Moondog's lunar kennel noted with thanks, but I'm about the last person to go round tackling celebrities in the flesh. All the time I'd be dead scared I'd say the wrong thing or something. (And probably would, too). I'm like that. I appreciate the idea though. So much for two smallish but interesting issues of "Mailing Comments" No.6. (Elite and Pica for identifying).

OFF TRAILS v7:3 (Daphne Buckmaster officially) When I saw that my "Fanzine Foundation" amendment had failed to pass through lack of a quorum, I was so infuriated that I had to restrain myself from tearing the offending OT up. This really riled me. As for the take-over bid, I sincerely wish it the best of success. Carry on Daphne, you seem to be staging a running fight with more complications than existed in my day and very well too on the whole.

VIPER 2 (Bill Donaho) No, "Valley Beyond Time" wasn't the one I meant as juvenile slanted, I meant "City of Frozen Fire". "Valley" was I think the other fantasy - the one set largely in the "lost" land of Cibola. Which just wasn't up to scratch for no particular reason that I could lay my finger on at the time. The ideal historical novel of course would have a "timeless" hero who could belong to virtually any age. This is probably impossible, still, it's an ideal to aim at.

The main items in this VIPER don't excite as much interest hereabouts as the mailing comments. The "Astounding" review is of interest for the most part strictly as a guide to a territory I've seldom been through. The Berry is sub-standard, though not so sub-standard as some of his stuff that I've recently stopped reading. And I have a thing about reading parodies of things I haven't read in the original. Which doesn't give you half the space you gave to AMBLE in the VIPER in question. The Mailing arrived shortly before the Con of course, and I'm now out of the best reviewing mood, it's difficult to pick up references.

VERT 3 (Ivor Mayne) I have seen it in sundry fanzines that the two Willises Conover are one and the same, otherwise I can't answer your queries Ivor, sorry. No doubt others will though. Much of your zine consists of reviews of books and films that I've never read or seen and am never likely to, and therefore of academic interest (though they DO interest) only. I prefer the bits where you come right out and get personal.

THE WALL part 1 (Edgar Bates) This may get somewhere, and of course it has an impeccable reason for existing, but so far it has failed to move me. I think fannish fiction of this sort has been overdone,

actually. (A few pages later I intend to prove it or something, too).

BURP! 19 (Ron Bennett) BURP! should come out More Often. Bigger, too. This issue has a modicum of pleasant commenting and natter and that's it. (And half the fred cover wasted, too). BOTH versions of the second Lehrer LP (you re VIPER 1) are available here, came out simultaneously. I have the audience version. I often regret this, though there are some wonderful cracks in the introductions that I'd hate to have missed. And, of course, if I hadn't got the full version a certain argument concerning one W.A. Mozart Esq (decd) would never have got under way. (Under weigh?) (see P. 4)

RANDOM 2 (Daphne Buckmaster) A small dozen pages of utterly fascinating opinionating which I, for one, don't feel capable of answering. DON'T retire from OMPA, Daphne. Even though your main effort may be outside it these days, you obviously are still capable of being very much of an asset.

SCOTTISHE 23 (Ethel Lindsay) Such a regular favourite that I don't propose to go into precisely why - though I'll confirm that the issue's well up to standard. Except for the front and back covers, which fail to move me except in mild protest. One point that I will take up here though is my readership of "The Times". The more I read of it, the more I am convinced that it's a G-O-O-D paper. Oh, it has its faults, gives far too great a proportion of its space to sport and finance for instance. But - it gives large quantities of space to other things too. Once upon a time, back in the days when I wouldn't look at anything apart from the NEWS CHRONICLE of hallowed memory, I used to notice every so often that suddenly when some particular country was in the news - it had a civil war or a royal visit or something - the paper was filled with informative articles about it. And I used to think that my ideal paper would have similar articles about countries chosen at random whether they were strictly newsworthy at the time or not. "The Times" does precisely that. Then - it's supposed in theory to be a Conservative paper. Always has been. But after several months of reading (or at the very least glancing down) its leading articles daily, I am in a position to report conclusively that its editorial position is distinctly liberal. In comparatively few cases does it give its full approval to the various doings and proposals of the (Conservative) government, of which it stands considerably to the left. More to the point perhaps, I find it agreeing with my pre-determined opinions on umpteen topics as they arise. And the lettercolumn - that's fabulous. Not all of the same interest of course, touching on subjects that don't interest me as often as on ones that do, but the letters that DO interest do so indeed. In fact I've been hard put to it to stop myself becoming a "Times" letterhack. As a matter of personal policy I intend not to. (For one thing it isn't necessary, somebody else is almost bound to come up with the same point a day or two later). But as I say, with one thing and another more and more I find myself attracted to the paper.

UL 2 (Norm Metcalf) So you take a 10½ EEEE shoe. Bill Donaho takes a 14 EEE. To which all I can say is - Eeeeeeeee. UL's about as big as its name, but what there is of it gives rise to no complaints from this quarter.

ERG 7 (Terry Jeeves) Another one slight in build but meaty in content. These pseudosoggies you mention, Terry, sound about as soggylike as the soggies themselves were like Jean Steer's "twerps" in ALPHA.

BJOTTINGS (Bjo Trimble) This is the sort of thing that everybody ought to do from time to time in order to bring interested types up to date with personal affairs. Or, possibly, some people don't go in for having all that interesting personal affairs. The Trimble family does, and the way Bjo writes it up makes it even more so. I wish somebody'd tell me it's not true about said Trinbles having to retire from OMPA. Though I grant they have much reason to cut back their activity, more than I have in fact (and I am cutting back outside OMPA as some of you may have noticed).

TOPEE OR NOT TOPEE (Everybody Else) Just about the right length for this sort of thing.

paraFANalia 7 (Bruce Burn) In contradistinction to what he's done ~~to~~ for Ethel this time, I like ATOM's cover to this. As for the contents, my only complaint here is that it didn't go on to complete the voyage.

ROMP 1 (Les Gerber) I'm not sure who's supposed to be arguing which way re mailing comments now, you've got me (or possibly yourself) all twisted up Les. I'm supposed to be IN FAVOUR of comments on comments and sub-comments on sub-comments and the rest of it. Printed discussion, yes. And I may or may not dig your pronunciation as you suggest, but I do claim to be capable of recognising an autobahn when I hear one spoken. Those "poems" by Stephen Crane I read against my better judgment, and found them (a) on the whole very well put, and (b) no more "poems" than I am. They're simply chopped-up prose. Actually they remind me strongly of Moondog's recorded rambling monologue, except that Moondog makes some attempt to insert rhyme-words, but his sense tends to be more surrealistic.

Anyway Les, welcome. You seem enthusiastic to good effect. And before I forget, I'd just like to mention that the more I hear about Chris Moskowitz, the more we seem to have in common, if not exactly for the same reason always.

Another word in connection with my review back there of BURP! 19. Of course I should've realised when I mentioned W.A. Mozart Esq (decd) that that particular bit of natter is an integral part of the "Clementine" item, not just in-between talk, and thus occurs on both versions. But I wouldn't know if the laugh that follows the word "crowd" does or not.

Reviews over. Less than four pages, perhaps I'm not TRYING or something. Or getting like elderly and weary in the traditional nannish fanner.

SPECIAL FEATURE

(Several years ago, I ran a serial in ARCHIVE and its numerous supplements entitled "The Great Irish Rift Valley Expedition - The Search for Eney's Fault". It seemed to be fairly well received at the time, and did succeed in its ostensible purpose of eliciting from Eney (FOR TAFF) an elucidation of precisely what was supposed to be his Fault, and why. Upon which, of course, it had perforce to be brought to a conclusion - and probably about time too.

I rather liked the scope of the idea though, a sort of not-very-planned neander through fandom stopping off haphazardly at various facets of the

fannish continuum to parody each in turn as it came up. So I bethought myself to commission Gridban Minor (the narrator) and his friend Sid Crockett for another expedition. I advertised for a publisher (because my schedule had fallen off drastically just about then) and Lars Bourne came forward. So Grid and Sid were duly equipped and despatched on their way, and the first instalment of WHO SAW COURTNEY ? appeared shortly afterwards in BRILLIG 11, dated "Second Quarter 1958".

That instalment dealt mainly with the commissioning of the expedition and a visit to Ken Slater's premises. A second instalment was then sent off, but was eventually returned unused. Lars had been steadily orienting BRILLIG away from the fannish and towards the beat and avant-garde, and had now come to the conclusion that a fannish serial no longer fitted his policy after all. ~~So I regretfully filed the unused episode, and that was that.~~ So I regretfully filed the unused episode, and that was that.

A few days ago I was reorganising a corner of the Mercatorial filing system when I came upon this unused instalment. Naturally I read it, and came to the conclusion that after some three years it's probably more worth printing than it was at the time. Gives a view of then-contemporary fandom that compares quite interestingly with now-contemporary fandom. That, at any rate, is the one and only excuse I have for placing the instalment before you now. Thank you.)

WHO SAW COURTNEY ?

by Gridban Minor

Part II

(Dig this first: Gridban Minor and his friend Sid Crockett, commissioned by Archie Mercer to identify the mysterious Courtney (he of the demolished boat) are on their way to Liverpool, prior to embarking (they fondly hope) for New York. Read all about it - - -)

The roads are cobbles, broken and dirty ... and the trancars travelling these roads (travelling with the double-l because they happen to be British roads) move slowly, swaying and bouncing up and down in suggestive rhythms, like street-walkers. Talking about the latter ... they are there too, of course, promenading advertisements on the rain-wet Manchester pavements. Fen stand around watching them, their masts, their sterns, their twin bowsprits, their sails - I mean sales ... Once In A Blue Moon they come here, some of these fen, others come oftener; Twice, Thrice in a Blue Moon, some of them, or even oftener ... The best things in life are free, Jophan ... Hell, I didn't come here for bheer, damn it, I came here to see the Manchester Circle ... (Chances are he won't get to see them this trip, the scenery's too entrancing, next time maybe, when they've changed their pub again) ...

"What the hell are we hanging around here for?" complained Sid Crockett. "There's nothing going on here that you can write up into an instalment of our fannish adventures - come on, let's find these fen before they chuck them out for the night."

"Blow the fen," I returned. "We're appearing in BRILLIG now, remember, and fannishness is demode there - gotta move with the times, boy, if Lars Bourne wants this sort of thing, then it's the sort of thing he'll get."

"That's all very well," said Sid. "But don't you realise that our adven-

tures are now the only thing holding BRILLIG to fandom? If we stop behaving fannishly for it, then all the fans'll lose interest, and what'll Mr Bourne do for a public then?"

"There is that," I conceded. "Come on, then - can't be much further."

Rounding a depressing corner, we came upon a sordid line of raggedly dressed characters hanging round a fly-blown sausage stand.

"What are they up to, I wonder?" I mused as we passed.

"Waiting for dogot, by the smell of it," said Sid. "Hey - isn't that the pub?"

It was, and we settled ourselves down with the overgrown quartet of fen already there, to discuss matters fannish and unfannish.

"Have you decided what to call the next issue, after THRICE IN A BLUE MOON?" I asked.

"Well, not exactly," I was told. "We did investigate the possibilities of the square root of four, but Frank here worked it out that it came to two, and we've already had TWICE IN A BLUE MOON - the issue before last. Of course, we could cohen our own language for the purpose - force in a blue moon, fice in a blue moon, mice in a blue moon - they're after the cheese of course - sex in a blue moon ought to go down well, too, besides being thoroughly in our tradition."

"Talking about sex," put in somebody else, and we duly talked about sex. After all, what else CAN one talk about nowadays?

+ + +

Morning found us on the road again, heading west for Liverpool and the possibility of some form of intercontinental transportation. As we drew away from Manchester the clouds rolled back and the sun came out to congratulate us on our escape from the Rainy City. Liverpool is quite near Manchester, so we got there before Monday. This meant that the clubroom wouldn't be open that night of course, so we looked up the first address we could think of in the neighbourhood, being that of Dave Inhuman, Director of the WSFS, Inc. He wasn't in, so we followed native directions to the local yacht club, where we were redirected down to the beach where a moustached fan was pushing a boat into the water. He agreed, on interrogation, that he was indeed Mr Inhuman, and we introduced ourselves.

"Where've you come from?" he asked us.

"Manchester, Mr Inhuman, sir," I told him.

"How - down the canal?"

"No," Sid put in. "We thought the water was a bit too thick for swimming - too much stew floatin' about."

"Who said anything about swimming?" asked Mr Inhuman. "There are boats on the canal, you know - that's why they call it the Manchester Ship Canal."

"SHIP?" we both screamed, aghast. "We thought the word was - - -"

But talking about ships gave me the opening I needed. Cutting the sentence off short, I asked: "Are you launching a ship now?"

"Well, not exactly," said Mr Inhuman. "I'm actually launching the British Science Fiction Association."

"All by yourself?"

"Well, I've plenty of assistance - the Secretary lives only forty miles away."

"But that's not very - - -" I commented.

"And then the Assistant Secretary lives only thirty miles from the Secretary."

"Yes, but even - - -"

"And then the Treasurer only lives about forty miles from the Assistant Secretary."

"But it still - - -"

"And then the Editor of the OO helps, too - he lives not much further away than the rest of us put together. It's a very good system, actually."

"Even so, Mr Inhuman, sir," I managed to get a full sentence in, "wouldn't it have been a bit easier to have you all together in the same town at once?"

"It might at that," said Mr Inhuman. "Still, if a thing's worth doing, it's worth doing the hard way, and this is most certainly worth doing - everybody says so, so it must be. Look here, you two - care to help stick up some envelopes?"

"Well," said Sid Crockett, "we'd be proud to help you, Mr Inhuman, but actually we're trying to get to America."

"So am I," said Mr Inhuman surprisingly. "I'm supposed to be a TAFF candidate. Can I interest you in a couple of ballot papers, with no strings attached?"

We'd both voted for Mr Bennett already as it happened, Mr Berry, from Belfast, was also standing, but naturally we were prejudiced in favour of our old schoolmaster. However, not wishing to be impolite, we accepted some more blank forms, put our heads together, and unanimously decided to vote for Bobbie Wild on them. She'd already stood down, so it wouldn't affect the validity of the voting, and anyway, people keep telling us that she deserved some votes, so we were on the whole highly pleased with our ingenious solution.

"Anyway, Mr Inhuman, sir," I suggested, "you've got a boat here - why can't we all just go to America in her together?"

"Wind's blowing the wrong way," said Mr Inhuman practically. "Somebody must have left that South Gate open."

This was a blow. "Then what can we DO?" I wailed.

"Well," said Mr Inhuman, "you might try John Roles. He's OMPA Official Editor now, and there are so many Americans in OMPA nowadays that he has to charter a ship every time to take their mailings across. Wouldn't be any use for me - too slow - but if you don't mind taking your time, you might arrive in New York by the time the Worldcon's finished."

This was certainly better than nothing, though we had secretly been hoping to make it to South Gate and see Sneary (another former spelling pupil of Mr Bennett's). So we duly wended our way to Pine Grove, where John Roles lived. The first person we saw was a black man. Sid commented on this.

"But of course there is," I answered with a flash of brilliance. "Any crossword-puzzle-clue addict would be able to spot the Negro in "Pine Grove" straight away. But it isn't Africa we're after just now - it's India. Come on - here's the house."

We were admitted by another moustached fan, this time however clad in nothing but a loin-cloth. The room he showed us into was comfortably furnished in the Hindu style, with rugs on the floor to sit on, bowls of highly spiced food standing around, and in one corner a duplicator powered by a primitive spinning-wheel.

"Excuse the mess," apologised our host, who was of course Mr Roles himself. "But I'm in the middle of assembling the OMPA mailing."

I fell to examining the design on the top of a pile of paper. "One of your own Indian designs, I suppose, Mr Roles, sahib?" I asked.

"Never," said Mr Roles aghast. "That's a bit of genuine Wansborough duplicating, and must be treated with the reverence it deserves." He bowed his head. "And now, what can I do for you?"

We told him. And, to cut a long story short, here we are in mid-Atlantic. It's a great life on the rolling sea, but it does have its awkward side. I don't mind travelling Second Class, but surely there ought to be some better way of sending us than disguised as OMPAazines?

I'm supposed to be SCOTTISHE, which, though the wrong sex, is at least passable. And Sid's supposed to be THE LESSER FLEA, which is worse for him than for me.

Or would be - if only he didn't have to perch on my head all the time, just to maintain the furshlugginer verisimilitude.

OH DIDN'T HE RAMBLE

WELL NOW THAT you come to mention it, no, he didn't. Not this time.

Instead, let me present over the page:

ANOTHER SPECIAL FEATURE

CHRIS MILLER

on

"THAT CROWD"

(This was written on the 4th of January 1961, about 3½ months ago and just too late for AMBLE 5 which had already gone to bed. Since then I've been wondering whether the subject had now grown too stale. Since reviewing the 27th Mailing, however, I've observed that it doesn't seem to be exactly dead yet after all. So over to Chris Miller:)

Oh yes, may I step in on this Tom Lehrer thing? About "Mozart or one of that crowd" - (I think the name was, but for the purposes of my argument, it is irrelevant which so called classical composer is actually named).

This quote struck me as being funny, when I first heard the record - it still does, when I replay the tape of it. The reason is probably this - to the average moron (= human being, if you see what I mean. Myself not excluded), there is something rather mysterious about the Classical Composers. Highbrow people are supposed to be able to understand their music, and, to a certain extent, Joe Moron does too - witness the popularity of certain pieces - flogged to death is probably an understatement. To him, this is O.K. But then there is a lot of stuff that, frankly, he just does not understand - mainly on the IIIrd Programme, but found on the Home, now and then, in Concerts. He quickly switches to the Light, or Lux (no pun intended), but he has the vaguely disquieting feeling that there is a lot here that some people profess to enjoy, that bores him to tears.

This is why he tends to lump together ALL classical composers - they are the people who don't write jazz, or "pops". If he likes a piece of music, it is the name of the piece (and popular pieces are usually given names by someone) that he remembers, or it is the piece "that goes tum-tum-ty taa, you know, Maisie". The individual composer's name means very little, in relation to his music. The name Bach, or Mozart, means a shapeless blur of non-comprehension, in a sea of similar names, all labelled "classical stuff", and pushed away in one corner of his mind.

But even so, he has a vague uneasiness about all this - perhaps he ought to know more about it. Some of his mates go all classical, and can spout things like "Beethoven's third Violin Concerto in C Major" as if they knew what it meant. Whilst, to him, Adam Faith, or Russ Conway mean something fairly concrete, in his mind.

So, when, in a record such as this, where Lehrer is poking fun at various composers, he hears the expression "Mozart, or one of that crowd", he is hearing someone else putting forward precisely his own (unstated and even unverballed) conception of the composers referred to. So he laughs. It perhaps tickles him to think that he is not alone in this, but, more so, I think that it is the release of nervous tension, upon the advent of this realisation, that makes him laugh. It is also someone, on record, some well known (?) figure stooping to what is in fact coarseness, and which all concerned realise as such, that is incongruous, so he laughs.

Chris Miller

(J.T. McIntosh, or possibly whoever edited GALAXY for April 1961, is the latest to get into the act. In "I Can Do Anything", on P. 103, one stumbles on

the sentence: "You could be cultured and still listen to Strauss, and he was a lot easier to listen to than Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart or any of that crowd."

In the mean time, our text for the next twelve months is: "The out-patients are out in force tonight I see."=)

FABULOUS FRED

MEETS

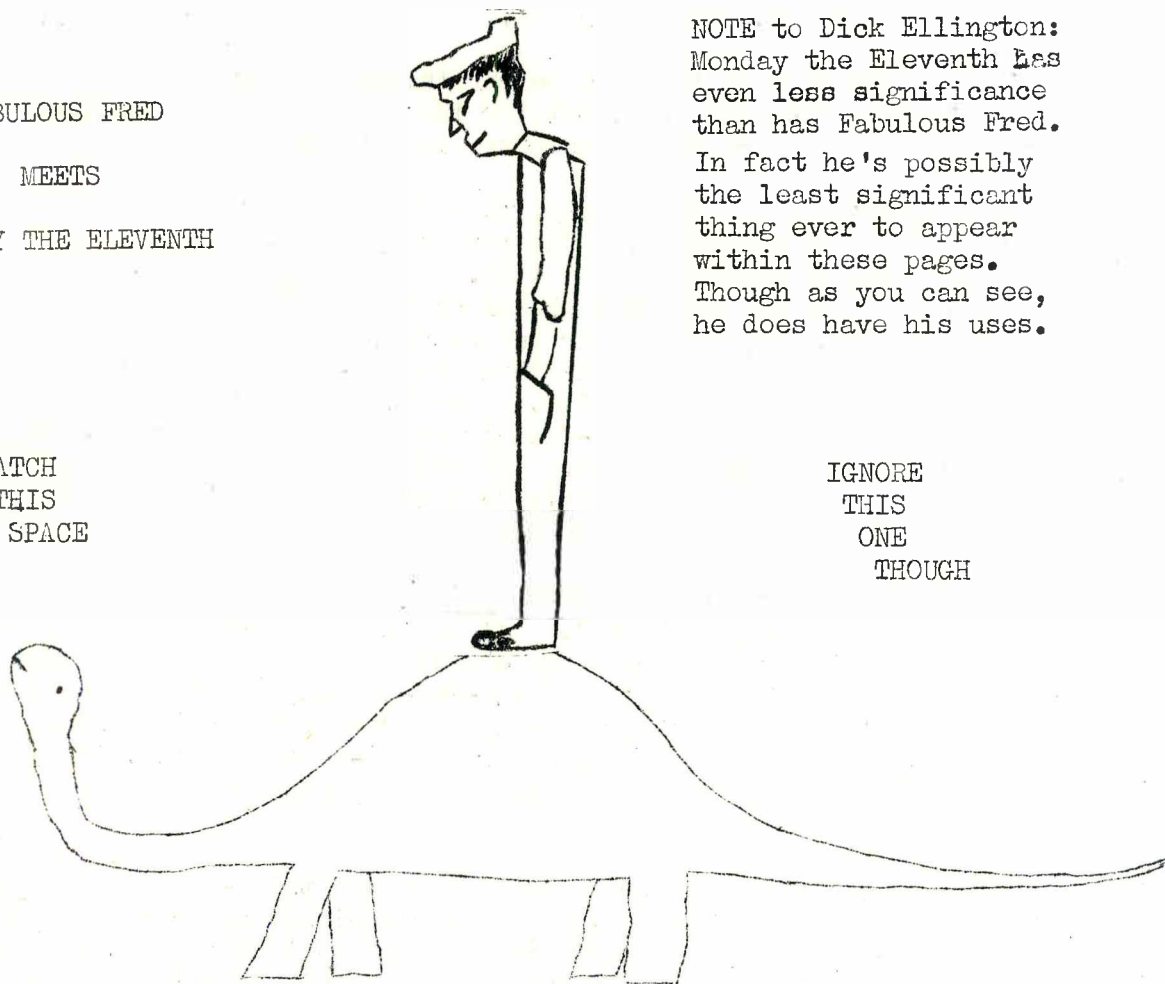
MONDAY THE ELEVENTH

WATCH
THIS
SPACE

NOTE to Dick Ellington:
Monday the Eleventh has
even less significance
than has Fabulous Fred.

In fact he's possibly
the least significant
thing ever to appear
within these pages.
Though as you can see,
he does have his uses.

IGNORE
THIS
ONE
THOUGH



"GRANTED THAT A SYSTEM THAT EMPLOYS TORTURE AND BRAINWASHING IS EVIL - WHAT, THEN, OF A SYSTEM THAT ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO TORTURE AND BRAINWASH THEMSELVES?"

- - - Macdougall

It must have been a female postman coming round for a change that Saturday morning, for I woke up to the following conversation between her and a neighbouring housewife:

"Don't put my letters through the kitchen window love."

"Why?"

"They get wet."

AND FINALLY HERE is the eighth instalment of the

LAIR

OF THE LEADEN-FOOTED FANCY

which, after a glance at recent acquisitions in the fiction line, picks up where the last lot left off.

ANDERSON, OLIVER

Random Mating

Random All Round

"Mating" is another PB, "All Round" I bought as a new hardcover which is usually against my principles but just goes to show or something. In other words, I'm thoroughly sold on this author (tower ever so, Bill) - and am more than ever convinced that I'd already met him under a pseudonym. Actually it isn't the "satire" element that is so noticeable - it is there but has to be looked for. I was simply taking them as glorious extravaganzas until I re-read Bill's HABAKKUK review of the one he reviewed in HABAKKUK (Anderson himself spells it "Habbakuk" by the way) which emphasised the satire element. But whichever angle one reads them from, they're like fun. All three of the volumes in my possession have as protagonist one Guy Random, who (as is frankly admitted in "All Round") is not an ideal protagonist in that his profession denies him any real friends apart from his mistress. But then, in the pseudonymous volumes I've read ("Rotten Borough" and "Guilt Edged" by Julian Pine or Pyne) tended to be somewhat indiscriminate as to who the protagonist actually was at the time. "Rotten Borough" is probably one of the four best stories I've ever read by the way - if I ever get a chance to re-read it I'll know for sure.

BAUM, L. FRANK

The Wizard of Oz

I've been faunching for OZ books ever I read the "Royal Historian" writeup in F&SF a few years ago. This one is the first I've ever met (I did see the film though) and I hope they bring them ALL out in paperback so there. (I liked it - I'd been prepared to find it much over-rated, but for once something lived up to its reputation).

WILDE, OSCAR

Lord Arthur Savile's Crime & Other Stories

A recent pocketbook that I got on account of its inclusion of "The Canterville Ghost". This I remembered from my schooldays - my opinion has always been that "The Canterville Ghost" should be compulsory reading for all children (adults too come to that) who have been scared by ordinary ghost stories. It wouldn't be out of place in UNKNOWN or somewhere, and I'd been looking for it for years.

The MAD Reader

Utterly MAD

Son of MAD

The HUMBUG Digest

MAD Strikes Back

The Brothers MAD

The Organisation MAD

(how did that

Inside MAD

The Bedside MAD

Like, MAD

get in here?)

As you can see, we're back in the "Humour" Dept. Otherwise no comment.

SELLAR, W.C., and R.J. YEATMAN

1066 And All That

And Now All This

Horse Nonsense

Garden Rubbish (And Other Country Bumps)

Four fabulous volumes that I've treasured from my schooldays, being respectively mock-guides to English history, general knowledge, horses, and gardens

and the Great Outdoors. As for describing them, I'll let them speak for themselves. "Rufus was hunting one day in the New Forest, when William Tell (the memorable crackshot, inventor of Cross-bow puzzles) took unerring aim at a red-dish apple, which had fallen on to the King's head, and shot him through the heart. Sir Isaac Walton, who happened to be present at the time, thereupon invented the Law of Gravity". ("1066 And All That") "Mt. Everest is 29,002 ft. high. Do you consider this sufficient?" ("And Now All This") "...the rule that 'A Good Horse may be of Any Colour' (except green)..." (Horse Nonsense) "In another passage he states that, since bees cannot swim (agreed), it is essential to place stepping-stones for them in all the neighbouring streams. The most charitable explanation is that this is an interpolation from another poem which Vergil was writing, simultaneously, about slugs." ("Garden Rubbish") Incidentally the third volume, "Horse Nonsense", has the authors' names reversed. As the accent of the writing is noticeably different to that of the other three, it seems to be possible to thus distinguish between the two authors' styles. Yeatman's the solid man, writing the body of the thing, whilst Sellar sort of zooms round him adding froth. At times I claim to be able to detect the precise point where one leaves off and t'other begins. And once I met Yeatman. Not socially - I had to take him a paper to sign at the office where he worked. He was a Very Busy Man, and I wasn't even able to tell him that I was a fan of Mr Sellar's. Shame, that.

LEAR, EDWARD

A Book of Lear

This came out in Penguins during the war, the threatened sequel unfortunately never materialised. This one, however, contains most of Lear's best-known works, amongst other things. It's by no means all of the same level, but nonsense or not, something like "The Dong with a Luminous Nose" has to my mind a damn sight more poetic content than anything Shakespeare wrote.

BELLOC, HILAIRE

Selected Cautionary Verses

Some of which also have their points, and the rhymes are frequently pretty clever withal.

HOLE, CHRISTINA

English Folk Heroes

An examination of such names as Arthur, Robin Hood, Godiva etc from the historical and mythological standpoint. Actually the book doesn't strike me as long enough to do the subject justice by any means.

COLQUHOUN, ITHELL

The Living Stones (Cornwall)

A fabulously interesting book. The authoress has been much taken by Cornwall and its assorted links with the past, and covers her interest in them and what she's learned about them in fascinating style. Her ramblings carry the reader from pre-Christian "nominal saints" to Joan the Wad, taking in such sidelines as Aleister Crowley and bullfighting on the way. (I picked this one up at a sale. They should have more sales).

HOBHOUSE, ROSA

Norse Legends (retold from the Eddas)

This is the most authentic-looking writeup of the subject I've come across to date, so it hangs out in the Collection until the advent of a better. Actually it's intended for school use, the particular student who once had the book being one Olga Rawlinson of the Upper III. (Now you know as much about her as I do).