

# AMBLE 7

(EVERY ISSUE MORE ALIKE)

29th 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

Beginning with what threatens to be an outsize instalment of that old faithful

## THE SHAMBLES

reviewing mainly the 28th Mailing and not unlike that.

OFF TRAILS v7:4 (Daphne OE Buckmaster)

With which Daphne brings her reign to a close with a flourish. I am very much afeared that Proposals 2 and 3 will be passed. 3 I'm not so concerned about - e'en though I'm agin' it - but I have serious doubts about 2. I don't mind the extra copies - I'm having more than that printed now for various reasons - but I have a horrible idea that the resulting OMPA will be too big for comfort. I'll give it a year's trial though, before doing anything drastic such as resigning, suiciding or not unlike that. As for Proposal 4, the "no more than ten Americans" one, if that should perchance pass, it had better be negatived <sup>again</sup> within six months or else. And in the mean time, I advocate its immediate suspension. Though I do have hopes that this one won't get through at all.

THE BULLFROG BUGLE 9 ) (Lynn  
CONVERSATION 12, 14, 15 ) Hickman

On the contrary, Lynn, one sizable issue would make far more impression on me than a collection of several little ones, which give the impression of not being big enough to get properly started on anything. Concerning old (or even new) cars, I cannot claim the least interest in the subject I'm afraid. I'm highly un-mechanically-minded. I was sort of wryly whatsitted to observe that apparently there WAS a "Hupmobile" - I'd always assumed it was a sort of satirical name for any motor of that era. Is Chas de Vet taking into account that ocean currents don't necessarily flow in the same direction at all levels? Ughhhhhh - Prosser artwork forsooth. I hate it.

BURP! 20 (Ron Bennett)

Sorry, but iffour sides was all you could run to, I'd have far rather had mailing comments and/or general ramblings.

THE COMPLETE STORY OF HOW NOT TO MOVE (Belle Dietz)

Highly readable throughout. The one (to me)

jarring note is the cute little insertions of "British equivalent" terms here and there. Dammit, Belle - you've met us, surely you don't think we're THAT ignorant? (And I'm sorry if it looks as if I'm jumping on you for trying to be helpful).

DEFENESTRATION (Terry & Miri Carr)

The ideal review for this of course would be "as soon as I saw this I threw it out of the window". I was sorely tempted in fact to do just that. In this regard I must admit that the Caughran tailpiece tickled the Mercatorial sense of humour, so I'll let you off. Which isn't, by the way, to say that I don't appreciate some of the other contents as well, particularly the Diary thing and Reiss's strip.

ERG 8 (Terry Jeeves)

Come into the garden, Maud/For the black bat night hath flown/Come into the garden, Maud/I am here at ERG 8 alone (sorry, but while I'm in a Maud mood:) Come into the cowshed, Fred/I am here at the gate alone/Come into the cowshed, Fred/I'll be yours till the cows come home. (This is a review of ERG 8? How deluded can you get?)

KOBOLD 2 (Brian Jordan)

Yes, but what are they doing on the cover? Re your "Times group" tie-up in the New Maps review, I wonder why you didn't include the Radio Times, TV Times, New York Times and Science Fiction Times? Actually, although the Times Supplements (eg, Literary) are put out by the same mob as the Times itself, the Sunday Times (a Thomson-group paper when last heard of) is no connection, and I'm pretty sure that the Financial Times isn't either. The best part of this I thought actually was the ramblings.

LXICONSHOT (Bruce Burn and others)

I admit to being present, but not necessarily in the order given. Somebody else (I forget who) interposed between Bruce's opening and my part (which begins in mid-paragraph).

PACK RAT 1 (Jim Groves)

For a start, who's Margaret Kennedy? Douglas, Helen and Peter I've heard of; Marjorie Hyphen Fraser I've heard of. And the White House Kennedies (I forget their given names offhand - I'm like that) I have likewise heard of. But Margaret escapes me. Am I supposed to have heard of her? Anyway, I hereby pronounce you to have laid the keel of a promising zine, Jim. Has a vague George Lockish look about it, too, which is part of the promise.

PHENOTYPE Op Crif CLXXXVIII (Dick Eney)

Let's see. The polling station is usually a school or hall or something. At my present address it's always been either the Memorial Hall or the Co-op Hall - two small erections used for small meetings and 21st parties and such. I wander in on my way to work probably and give my name to the bloke at the table. He looks it up in the printed register, verifies the full details, then tears a numbered ballot out of a book and gives it to me. The number it bears is the number against my name on the register. (The ballot is secret, but if anything funny is suspected, a vote can be tied back to its ostensible perpetrator.)

I take the form (in effect much the same as the specimen American sample) into a small booth with a shelf and a pencil. There I mark X in the space against the candidate of my choice, fold the thing in half and take it back to the table. The bloke verifies that the folded paper bears the official seal, then I drop it through a slit in a small box and stroll out again.

Now I'm pounced on by the tellers. There are one of these (there IS one of these, I can't use shipslod grammar at Eney) per candidate outside the polling station, and what they want is the "polling card" - the official notification

that one is on the voters' register and where to go). This embarrasses me. I can't tell one from t'other to start with, and in any case I have no desire to show favouritism, so I sort of put the thing where they can both (it's usually just two) grab it and leave them to it. What they want it for is to check on who's voted and who hasn't, so that in the evening the party cars can go round picking up the laggards who are thought to be sympathetic to whichever party it is. Actually the tellers work in cooperation, exchanging information on the cards they hold, so that in practice each party has the same information.

The various levels of election are usually held separately, and parliamentary election is never combined with local elections (though on occasion these can be run in harness on the lower levels). In a local election, there are often multi-winner wards, so as party affiliation is never shown on the ballot itself (in theory, the British constitution does not recognise parties in elections, only candidates) it is sometimes necessary to come fully-armed with a list of the Faithful. In a multi-member ward it is apparently legitimate to not vote for the full number of places (I've done it, anyway), though nobody seems to know for sure.

As a final sour note, I have never yet voted for the winning parliamentary candidate, either in the City of Westminster (County of London), Borough of Brentford and Chiswick (County of Middlesex), or Grantham and Sleaford division of the Parliamentary County of - whatever it is nowadays, County of Lincoln (parts of Kesteven) and Rutland if memory serves. And for City of Westminster (County of London) read Cities of London and Westminster. I'm getting my references crossed.

I'd never realised that Nanny Share was chairbound. I sincerely hope it's nothing permanent, and I like her conrep style.

Changing people's opinions - mine for instance. I have an aversion to doing something just because I'm told to, when I don't see (or, if I see, agree with) the reason. I certainly wasn't taught to be like this. I know one is taught that one lives in a free country and should be proud of same blah blah blah, but that's mere words, doublethink in fact. In practice one is taught, with varying success, to do what one is told. But I have always resented blind obedience, and though I may have on occasion to comply, I can't imagine any system that would make me like it without destroying my personality in the process.

Yes, the switching of initial letters is a valid name-making system. If I remember aright, H.G. Wells used it, though not necessarily in pairs. Not one of the systems I invented though.

#### PHENOTYPE Op Crif CXCI (Dick Eney)

In contradistinction to the above, the expression "Yngvi is a Louse" is an article of faith fundamental to the entire fannish concept. Or something. Don't you believe? To hell with rationalising it - ACCEPT it!

I can't read Greek but I'll take your word for the Sporades, alas. The conrep's confusing until one fixes firmly in mind that IT DOESN'T MATTER IN THE LEAST which Con is involved - it's what goes on and how it's put that counts.

#### RANDOM 3 (Daphne Buckmaster)

I never realised Rackham could draw - he's good. On stencil, too. Papers - the Times is owned by a trust of some sort, too. (Amerifen beware - a "trust" to us is not something that anti-trust-laws are anti to, but a legal term denoting property etc administered by trustees in accordance with the deed under which the trust was set up, as modified by subsequent legislation etc as appropriate. OK, Belle?) The Times's women's page (once a week) seems fairly sensible as these things go, too. The Times is afflicted by the Court Circular and upper-crust social news

(presented dry though, not gossip-column style). Likewise by sports and financial news. That's what one has to put up with, it's the other stuff that makes the whole acceptable.

I haven't got a mathematical mind. Not a practical mathematical mind, anyway. I hate repetitive jobs, and in particular I hate trial-and-error systems. It's not so bad if there's something to be done, so one goes ahead and does it. Simple addition, within reason, for instance. But long division, where it is necessary to keep multiplying the thing you're dividing by by anything from 2 to 9, goes against the grain. I had at least as many maths teachers as I had schools - five, or if you like four-and-two-halves, in seven different locations (work that one out!) and they can't all have been bad teachers, surely.

Re the Cardinals & Ordinals though, I must confess to a feeling of disappointment. Nobody has either (a) come out with a categorical agreement that I'm absolutely right, or (b) attempted to prove that I'm wrong in any particular.

Whether or not TAFF voting forms and plugsheets, sale-offer sheets and the like count for activity (and it was the considered opinion of the President when I was OE that they should), I hope nobody will go so far as to suggest that they should not be included in the Mailings? Apa Mailings are a valuable source of circulation for such things, long may they stay with us.

By one means or another I think I've seen photoes of pretty well every American fan of any importance by now, so I don't suffer from the difficulty you mention in your BURP! review, but I can appreciate it. I am told that a certain Amerifan, being sent a photo of me and Ted Tubb without anything to say which was which, immediately decided that I was Ted and vice versa. And anybody this side knows how different we are.

There's plenty more in RANDOM of interest (as usual), too.

<p><u>THE</u>   <u>R</u>   <u>U</u>   <u>N</u>   <u>N</u>   <u>I</u>   <u>N</u>   <u>G</u>   <u>J</u>   <u>U</u>   <u>M</u>   <u>P</u>   <u>I</u>   <u>N</u>   <u>G</u>   <u>A</u>   <u>N</u>   <u>D</u>   <u>S</u></p> <p>Why do I find myself reading, of all possible zines, one with this sort of a title? Why not something simple such as Mal's former titles, ROT, DUPE, RUNE and the rest? Why, in fact, can't I simply abandon this to its fate and go and READ some of those earlier, simpler Ashworthzines. But then I recollect - daunting though it be, it can (surely) be neither shameful nor crippling - so I read on, daunted.</p>	<p><u>S</u> <u>H</u> <u>E</u> <u>E</u> <u>T</u> <u>T</u> <u>L</u></p>	<p>Hacking my way through the jungle of Ashworth OMPazine titles, and to hell with the continuity, I find this. Why? I ask myself.</p> <p><u>MAGAZINE (Mal Ashworth)</u></p>
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But then I recollect - daunting though it be, it can (surely) be neither shameful nor crippling - so I read on, daunted.

I once started reading the "Iron Pirate". It was while I was in the army, and I found it in one of the welfare libraries provided for forces use. I got so far, then found to my chagrin that a whole block of pages was missing. It being something of an antiquity and thus not likely to be in stock at the publishers', nothing could be done, so I've been vaguely looking for it ever since. Of course it wouldn't probably appeal to me now in the same way.

My only real complaint concerning this is the discontinuity implied by the title, anyway. And that, of course, IS Mal - the discontinuous fan.

SCOTTISHE 24 (Ethel Lindsay)

I must admit to being gratified at having my mailing-comment system so highly appreciated.

The picking-up of references for further comment is to my mind one of the essential factors of a worthwhile apa, and the brief mention that a given zine was enjoyed (or, occasionally, not enjoyed) can I suppose be equated with the Golden Rule or something. Anyway, I just sort of say anything I can think of that seems to require saying, and that's this. And for the umpteenth time,

I hereabouts find myself putting it on record that SCOTTISHE is one of my favourite OMPazines. (Favourite fanzines, come to that).

"Four Weeks with Filthy Fanny" - that's a furshlugginer title if ever there was one! Re your comments after Boy Draeburn's letter - "Top People Take the Times", albeit essentially true, is certainly not in what I would call the best of advertising taste. On the other hand, is it sensible to decry a thing, not for its own sake, but because of the slightly putrid way in which it advertises? Filk song - I was under the impression that it started as a typo, and goes back well before the advent of Bruce Pelz. Oh yes - and the usual egoboo to Walt for his reminiscences. And - E T H E L L I N D S A Y F O R T. A. F. F.

SIZAR 3 (Bruce Burn)

Your words about fiction in fanzines, "that someone is willing to order his thoughts, arrange fictitious people in an imaginary plot, and then create phrases in which those characters ... may speak and think seems ... worthy of tumultuous accolade" - this is certainly a refreshing - not to say inspiring if you please - way of looking at the question, until one recollects that about ninety-nine times out of ten, the characters one is so painstakingly introduced to hold no interest for the reader whatsoever. Nothing personal, Bruce - this is general. I don't even (usually) like professional short stories, let alone amateur ones, whose one saving grace is usually extreme brevity.

My main objection to popularity contests is the same as my main objection to games of all kinds - ie, there have to be at least as many losers as winners, and my peculiar nature tends to sorrow with the loser rather than exult with the winner. It's a case of comparisons being (as the saying says) odious.

Anyway, I hope you continue to review Mailings from time to time, because your reviews are well worth the perusal, as well as finishing that voyage.

UL 3 (Norm Metcalf)

I had a similar communication from the Wray character you mention - I either slung it or sent it back, depending on what mood I was in at the time. I imagine Peter Campbell's unauthorised listing was responsible, yes.

VAGARY 13 (Bobbie Gray)

The return of Bobbie to activity is hereby acclaimed. I suppose it won't be possible for John Roles to make a similar eleventh-hour comeback, unfortunately? But, at least, things could have been worse. Those - uh - that chicken - but the two bob should not be added to the 27 bob, it should be subtracted from it, making 25 bob which was the official price of the wretched bird. That isn't a good way of expressing it (I always compose in the sticks, natch) - each man has actually paid nine bob (agreed) OF WHICH two bob all told has been pocketed by the boy.

These very full and interesting mailing comments are worth as it were the price alone, and I look forward eagerly to the remainder of your "haunted camp" story.

ZOUNDS! 4 (Bob Lichtman)

THROUGH THE GORDIAN KNOT (Bill Donaho)

On the whole, I'm In Favour of the New Constitution, and have voted to this effect. However, it too has flaws. One obvious one I've noted is that the Editor and Treasurer have to reside in "Great Britain". Great Britain is an island. Just one island. Politically, the term can be extended to cover other adjacent islands forming part of either England, Scotland or Wales. But it does not cover any part of Ireland, or the Isle of Man or any of the Channel Islands. And as there's no reason I can see why either officer should not live in any of these latter

territories (which are all part of the British Isles, and are only separate entities as a matter of technicality) the limitation to simply "Great Britain" seems unduly restrictive.

I suggest that if the Constitution is adopted, things of this nature should be kept in mind for a year or so then voted on in a mass amendment-series.

Or perhaps it's just that I'm never satisfied.

Daphne's "We do not need warpaint ..." bit seems to have attracted several comments both pro and anti, for the record I'm with Bob (and Daphne).

### VIPER 3 (Bill Donaho)

By the time this is circulated, my guilty secret should be out - I too am growing a beard. Or, rather, letting it grow. The first day I didn't shave was the 19th of June. The original reason was that I had a rash or something all over my face, but by the time I was fit to shave again, a couple of weeks later, I decided not to. At the time of the British Worldcon I had just spent a fortnight without shaving, and the memory of what it had been like then prompted me to with-hold my fire at least until I could get a barber to clip it down first. In the event, having carried it around a few days in public, I decided that after all, who the hell wants to shave anyway? So I'm leaving it alone to see how things develop.

Elinor - I was originally under the impression that there were two Als Lewis - an East Coast Al and a West Coast Al. Then this one turned up in Michigan. Now the Great Lakes form the northern boundary of the United States, so I dubbed him the North Coast Al Lewis. Is it my fault that he keeps migrating?

Still Elinor - if I don't like a zine I say so, I hope. Or just say nothing and side-track the subject. I have on occasion, I think, glossed over a below-average issue of something by mentioning (truthfully) that the zine was still among my favourites, but I don't think I've ever deliberately said I liked something I didn't. Then again, I like fanzines rather than not.

Elinor again - I can have a favourite jazz tune. I know that jazz is essentially a question of how rather than what, but the what can reinforce the how. What I meant was of course tunes that are generally associated with jazz. If a tune has a good strong melody (I know what I mean by a "strong" melody, one that appeals to me emotionally sort of), then all the front line can go off at a tangent and the original tune in the listener's head adds an extra "voice" to the ensemble, unheard but very much felt.

Bill now - still on tunes. Yes, you have guessed - it is the tunes I like, not the songs. Songs have their place - specifically, when one wants to sing - but the more "strong" tunes that can remain uncorrupted by words, the better. Words, to me, are like corsets - they constrict a tune. And once one has connected the words to the tune, one can never hear the tune without thinking of the words. Even though the words may be worthy in their own right, the tune has infinitely <sup>potential</sup> more meaning without them. One way of partially overcoming this is to counter with one's own words, but this is at best only second-best. This, too, is one reason why I hate the advertising profession - they take a snatch of tune, either from the public domain or specially composed, usually highly tuneful, and set it to advertising-type words. Thereby ruining it.

Mailing comments should, I agree, be designed to be read by the entire membership. I should know - often I let a reference go by when it first crops up in somebody's zine, then take it up from somebody else's comments on the zine it appeared in. (See above, under ZOUNDS!) But selective reviewing that you advocate has its disadvantages. When somebody makes remarks in commenting on my zine that call for an answer, I feel sort of honour-bound to pick up the reference, as I'm doing right now.

VIPER is a Good Zine, anyway.

Which has cleared the mailing comments in six pages - less than I was under the impression I'd be running to this time. But of course, larger Mailings are to a certain extent self-defeating - the greater bulk makes it harder to turn up specific references, and if one has an eidetic sieve like mine, the size of the resultant mailing comment tends to average out. Or something.

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THIS TIME I think we will have a session of

# OH DIDN'T HE RAMBLE

THE COLUMN WHERE ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN BUT SELDOM IF EVER DOES

## THE MOAT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

One common literary habit that always slightly irks me is that of the author referring to his protagonist by surname only. I know it's perfectly good usage, but (like plenty more instances of theoretical "good usage") it just doesn't seem right. The author may belong to a social class where one does normally address one's peers by surname only, but surely to goodness he of all people should be on intimate enough terms with his protagonist to refer to him by his given name. And the reader, in turn, is interested in getting on similarly intimate terms with the character - "identifying" is the usual expression. I find I can far more readily identify with the hero if I'm encouraged to think of his given name rather than his surname.

By no means all protagonists are male, of course. Plenty of stories are told from the heroine's point of view. Personally, I find no undue difficulty in achieving a satisfactory state of identification with such female protagonists as I come across in my literary travels. There is one region of outstanding exception in this regard though - I just cannot summon up the slightest enthusiasm for the average female protagonist's boy-friend. Almost without exception, female protagonists seem to "go" for one standard type - big, strong, gentle, dominant and oh, so deadly dull. This seems to apply equally whether the author is man or woman - Elspeth Marriner can be matched with Zenna Henderson's "People" narratrices in this respect.

I don't know - it may be that I'd be able to follow the identification more happily if the boy-friend bore a somewhat greater resemblance to me. Or perhaps it's simply that I can identify with a female character only so long as her activities are more or less of an epicene nature, and tend to part company with her as soon as they get more specifically female.

"Epicene" - that's ~~rather~~ a useful word that ought to get more use than it seems to. It denotes the possession of properties common to both sexes (or, by obvious extension, common to both genders) and thus nicely squares off the male-female-neuter and masculine-feminine-neuter series. "Sibling" for instance is an epicene word, meaning (just in case anybody didn't know) brother or sister, and one which shares with "epicene" a virtual unemployment in contemporary usage. Ask somebody "How many brothers and sisters have you?" and you get a reply after the fashion of "I've got three brothers and two sisters", when all you wanted to know was the total number of siblings, to wit, five. But if you were to ask the simple question "How many siblings have you?" in all probability you'd just get a blank stare.

Mother and father are parents. Son and daughter are children. Brother and sister are - or should be - siblings. Similar epicene words for "uncle or aunt" and "nephew or niece" would also come in handy. In the case of cousins, the opposite applies - there is an epicene word, but no word to denote a cousin of a particular gender. The French have "cousin" and "cousine" for male and female cousins respectively, but no separate epicene word denoting cousin pure and simple.

Cousins always were complicated though, the term covering just about any relation who is not one's ancestor, descendant, sibling, or ancestor's sibling. There are first cousins, second cousins, first cousins once removed, and permutations of cousinships and removals till the cows come home. For a long time this perplexed me no end, until it eventually sunk home that "straight-numbered" cousins are nominally of one's own generation, "removed" means by so many generations. Thus the child of my parent's sibling is my first cousin. My parent's first cousin is my first cousin once removed - and vice versa. Or in the opposite direction, the child of my first cousin is also my first cousin once removed - and again vice versa. The child of my parent's ~~first~~ cousin - of my first cousin once removed backwards if you will - is my second cousin, because he or she ~~belongs to~~ my nominal generation. My grandparent's first cousin would be my own first cousin twice removed. I'm not quite sure what the child of my first cousin once removed forwards would be - are you?

These older-generation cousins - mainly first cousins once removed - ~~are~~ particularly anomalous. When one is young, one is expected to address them as Uncle So-and-so and Auntie So-and-so. Then as one gets older the honorary unclehood and auntship lapse, and one is expected to start addressing them by their given names, as is befitting between cousins. Some people may take this in their stride - I find that trying to change one's mode of addressing somebody ~~some~~ extremely awkwardly. And in particular, it seems (to start with) wrong to address a considerably older person by his or her given name. Given-name usage varies wildly, too. One addresses one's workmate, of either sex, by his or her given name, but the workmate's spouse (another useful epicene word, by the way) is as often as not Mr or Mrs Surname, even though you may be near neighbours of theirs. And in Society, the employment of given names between men is traditionally restricted to relations and very close friends indeed - two business partners, for instance, <sup>quite possibly</sup> ~~may never~~ address each other as anything other than "Smith" and "Jones". And an author possessing upper-class characteristics or pretensions is all too likely to let this form carry over into his writings, referring to his protagonist as just "Smith" or "Jones" instead of by his given name. A habit which tends to irk me.

Which is where we came in.

HELP! As time goes by, it becomes increasingly apparent to me that I'm being haunted. So far as I can determine, this has been going on for a decade or two now. And the person, place or thing by which this haunting is being carried out is the Juph Jad Bammah Bo.

I'll qualify that slightly. "Juph" (pronounced "juf") is definite. "Jad" may possibly be spelt with an "h" on the end - "Jadh" - but I pronounce it "jad". "Bammah" is definite. "Bo" may possibly have some sort of accent over the "o". Though I tend to think that this latter may be due to confusion between the Juph Jad Bammah Bo and the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo, the identity of which latter, at least,

is known to me.

As distinct from the Juph Jad Bammah Bo, about which I have now told you all I know.

To be specific, its identity is unknown to me in the least particular, apart from just the name. Is it animal, vegetable or mineral? Singular, plural or collective? Masculine, feminine, or neuter (or, of course, epicene)? British or foreign? Terrestrial or extraterrestrial? Terrene or contraterrene? Weed or fish or floating hair? Dammit, I haven't even been able to determine whether I read or heard about it somewhere, or whether it came up off its own bat so to speak straight from the depths of the Mercatorial subconscious as did the sorry Stypas and the Hade (Further details concerning which are likewise unbeknown to me except that they are strictly incidental to what lies Beyond same).

If perchance the Juph Jad Bammah Bo did originate externally, maybe some day I will be able to track it to earth (or wherever it reached me from). But if, as I strongly suspect, it's actually a Mercatorial original, I can never know that it is.

Frustrating, ain't it.

T.A.F.F. IN PERSPECTIVE      "ENEY FOR T.A.F.F." goes the cry that is heard on all sides, interspersed with shouts from the opposition to the effect that it would be preferable for a small busy-tailed rodent (or an even smaller sub-atomic particle) to be spun instead. An outsider viewing All This with aloof detachment might be forgiven a bit of perplexion as he tried to sort out, if both ENEY and ~~was~~ rival candidate were supposed to be FOR T.A.F.F., who the heck was supposed to be against it?

It all seems to boil down to a question of semantics. Here am I shouting "ENEY FOR T.A.F.F." at the top of my voice all this while, when the phrase seems to be in fact semantically ridiculous in the context. Nobody's seriously thinking of giving ENEY to the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund. The idea, surely, is to give the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund to ENEY.

"ENEY FOR T.A.F.F.", then, is utterly wrong. Instead, let the cry be:

"T.A.F.F. FOR ENEY".

It would be a satisfying place to stop there. Unfortunately I have an anti-climax for you. "ENEY FOR T.A.F.F." may be semantically absurd, but add one additional word - so that the phrase reads "ENEY FOR T.A.F.F. DELEGATE" instead of just "ENEY FOR T.A.F.F." and everything becomes all right again, at least colloquially.

And it doesn't have to stop at ENEY of course. In fact I can even build up to a sort of climax again by reminding you that following hard on the heels of the "ENEY FOR T.A.F.F." (or vice versa) campaign is a "LINDSAY FOR T.A.F.F." (or vice equally versa) campaign.

So let the watchword be "T.A.F.F. FOR ENEY". Followed by "LINDSAY FOR T.A.F.F. DELEGATE".

SOMETHING FOR  
THE BIRDS

There was this book I once read. As I remember it, it wasn't actually a particularly good book, but it at least was a fantasy. I've long forgotten the name of the author, but I think the title was simply "The Birds". And as I keep recollecting the thing, I think I'll give it a mention here for want of anything better to talk about. (Such as sex).

The theme was that the world was mysteriously invaded by birds. Precisely where they came from wasn't stated - the whole thing was of a vaguely mystical nature. To begin with, they were just birds, only in extra-large quantities, that appeared suddenly all over the place and perched on every monumental structure they could find, leaving their droppings behind them. (I think it was this book that introduced me to the word "ordure").

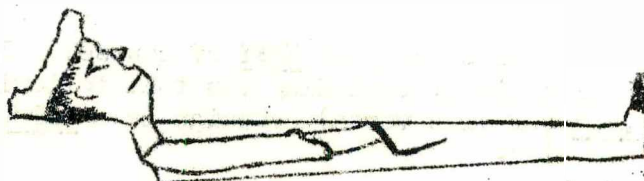
This was just the warming-up, though. When the ordinary (though excessive) birds had done their bit, along came a second wave that attached themselves to the people. There was one bird for everyone, that followed its chosen human about, and bore by its shape a caricaturean relationship to its victim. These "personal" birds were supposed to be personifications (well, ornithifications then) of people's secret dark thoughts and not unlike that, and if left alone ~~one would~~ eventually turn on its chosen victim and destroy him. However, if he was to look it in the eye as it attacked, it would disappear - and he was bird-free, and a "clear" to boot.

The protagonist (who narrated the story from his old age, like the narrator of "The Earth Abides") luckily happened to have a girl-friend who dug the above matters, and under her instruction he faced his bird and won. That doesn't seem quite fair somehow - granted the premise that the dark side of a person's nature ~~can~~ destroy him, ~~why~~ should the survival of equivalent people be determined simply by the chance knowledgeability of their girl-friends? But that's how it happened, anyway, and they went away together and settled in Wales and lived happily and had children.

There was more to it than just that of course. I remember the pornographic tout in the pub who kept pestering the narrator to let him show him some pictures of his wife and family - or something equally innocuous. When it (at last) came to the point, the pictures WERE of the tout's wife and family - or whatever he'd said they were, and likewise innocuous. But what's the use of trying to review a book when you can't even remember the author's name, anyway?

THIS SPACE RESERVED  
FOR FABULOUS FRED

Or possibly something  
else instead.



COGITO  
ERGO  
DICINI  
FORTAFIUM

AND  
ETHEL  
LINDSAY  
NEXT TIME

Such is the way events befall, it was Fabulous Fred again after all.

HERE BE **THE LAIR** -- (ninth instalment), beginning as usual with some recent acquisitions:

INNES, MICHAEL

The Man from the Sea  
Appleby on Ararat

Issued as green "mystery and crime" penguins. There is a certain amount of both mystery and crime attached to each of course, but basically each is simply a good adventure-story. "Appleby on Ararat" was the first Michael Innes story I ever read, and is one of his crazier ones in the course of which a group of shipwrecked passengers find themselves adrift in an inverted bar. The other one is more of a picaresque nature, and (for a change) does not involve the person of John Appleby, whether as hero or as detective ex machina.

RENAULT, MARY

The King Must Die

An attempt to re-create the facts behind the legends of ~~Thesaur~~ <sup>Thesaur</sup>. How far she is justified in doing this, your guess is as good as mine (and probably as good as hers), but it makes an absorbing narrative despite the fact that she has not managed to eliminate entirely the supernatural element.

The Ides of MAD

CARROLL, LEWIS

Nonsense Verse

I got this mainly because it contains "The Hunting of the Snark". On reading same over again after all these years I was struck by the utter genius of the perpetrator - and also by the fact that all this time without my knowing I've been under its influence - it rings bells everywhere as I read it. The remainder of the volume contains the "Alice" verses and sundry bits and pieces from ~~presumably~~ elsewhere - it doesn't quote any sources. Nothing else comes anywhere near the "Snark" standard except in flashes. One odd thing is that two slightly-different versions of the same "poem" are printed, not next together and without any explanation, under the titles respectively of "I'll tell thee everything I can" and "Upon the Lonely Moor".

I have since been pondering on the precise difference between Carroll's nonsense verse and that of Edward Lear. Lear's is certainly the most poetical of the two, rising to supreme heights in "The Dong with a Luminous Nose", but in general I think, whereas Lear's is simple nonsense, depending not so much on what he says but on how he says it, Carroll's is actually anti-sense - contra-terrene sense if you like.

REANEY, P.H.

The Origin of English Place Names

No known connection with any other P. Reaney I'd better say at once, though both claim association with Sheffield. THIS Reaney is an elderly University don, and this is a work of scholarship. Its fascinating details include such things as the common derivation of "Hornsey" and "Harringay" (at one time the place was spelt "Harengheye", then it developed an S and became "Haringesheye", "Harnsey" and "Hornsey" by corruption, "Harringay" being a comparatively recent revival for a new mansion built there which has since become a district-name overlapping with modern Hornsey.) The opposite process can be seen in "Nottingham" and its suburb "Sneinton", which have diverged from the days when only the suffixes "-ham" and "-tun" differed. Then there's "Carfax", the cross-roads in the centre of Oxford. I've always wondered how it came to have a one-word name of its own as if it was a village

in its own right. Reaney explains that it's simply a doublet of the French "Carrefour" meaning "crossroads". And I was born in a swine-pasture.

WHICH GETS US back to where we were when the bomb dropped. I was ploughing, if you remember, through a batch of non-fiction that tended to be rather on the heavy side. But due to the good offices of Dr Reaney, we are already back in the heavy-side Lair.

FRASER, J.G.

The Golden Bough (abridged in 2 volumes)

Like whew. Full of fascinating incident, but the author was trying to prove something. What it was, however, entirely got lost among the details - a case of my being unable to see the Bough for the trees. Not so long ago I was having a purge and nearly threw this out, but I decided to keep it on the grounds that if I ever have time I'd like to read through it all again some day and see if this time I can keep my eye on the Bough in question.

THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH

BEOWULF

Both in the "Penguin Classics" series. "Gilgamesh" tickles my Sense of Wonder - in that the story can still be reconstructed after all these thousands of years. "Beowulf" I keep because it's a seven-letter Anglo-Saxon word. Well, for possible reference purposes then, and only the other day, after having read a fictionalised version, I re-read the Penguin "original".

GRAVES, ROBERT

The Greek Myths (in 2 volumes)

In two fascinating volumes, I may add, the fascination being in the notes as much as the myth-narrative itself. I have only one complaint, that being that it would have improved things had the order of myth-events been arranged more strictly chronologically. What first showed up this lack was Graves's comment on Teiresias's life being contemporaneous with several generations of heroes - more internal chronology would have brought this out dramatically. Oh yes, and another complaint - similar treatment should be accorded to the other mythologies, the existence of this Greek-based work shows up the lack dramatically.

GLOVER, T.R.

The Ancient World

CHILDE, Gordon

The Prehistory of European Society

What Happened in History

Three Pelicans, some years old now and which I'll have to re-read if I want to distinguish t'other from which. I must have found them all three worth keeping at the time though.

LLOYD, SETON

Early Anatolia

PALLOTTINO, M.

The Etruscans

Two more Pelicans, which I kept mainly for the detailed examination they give of various bits of the racial jigsaw.

PLUTARCH

Fall of the Roman Republic (six "Lives")

SUETONIUS

The Twelve Caesars

XENOPHON

The Persian Expedition

Three "Penguin Classics" that I keep mainly for possible reference and not unlike that.