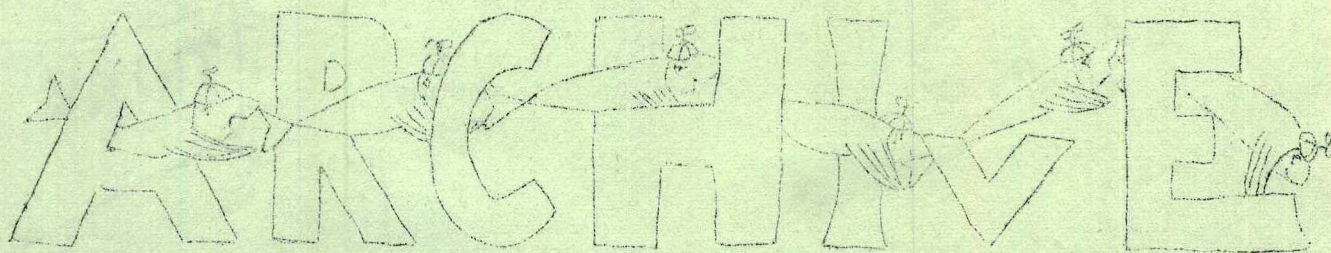


RECOGNISE IT? WHAT THO' ITS FACE MAY HAVE TURNED GREEN -

THE FAMOUS LIGHT GREY PRINT'S STILL THE SAME IN



THE MERCATORIAL OMPAZINE

THAT COMES TO YOU FROM THE SHADOW OF THE MALLEABLE IRON WORKS

Page 1

Number 9

OMPA 9

Autumn 1956

Edited & Produced for the Off-trail Magazine Publishers Association
by

ARCHIE MERCER

at his Caravan and International Centre of Trufannish Pilgrimage, the
address of which is: 434/4 (sic) Newark Road, North Hykeham, Lincoln,
England. (E&OE)

Technical Advisor: Paul Enever
Staff Artist: Bruce Kidd
Trufins drawn by: Ah Chee

AND TO BEGIN the contents - here
once again is that well-known
Annual Column with which this mag-
azine seems to be permanently
afflicted:

METROPOLITANOTES

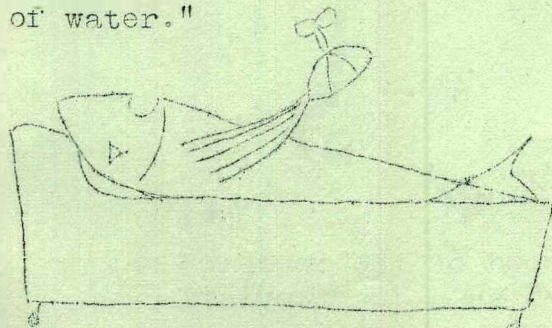
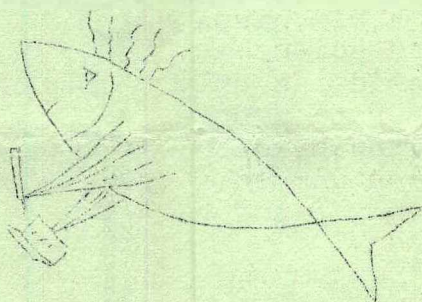
Note 1. A firm of shop-
fitters carrying on business under
the name of "Clark & Fenn." Spel-
ling's all up the creek of course,
but I've always thought the Catford
brigade ought to get themselves
properly Organised.

Note 2. Greengrocer's shop
in Lavender Hill, name of "Benn-
ett & Dodd." Note the form of
conjunction employed.

Note 3. Seen in Wimbledon -
"Star Fish Restaurant." Closed,
so I was unable to sample same.

Note 4. The above was a
Column. Satisfied?

"I know
this'll
sound
silly, Doc
- but I'm
terrified
of water."



Swingin' Easy

by Bruce Melvin Kidel

...You pick up the fanzine with tired limbs, expecting a decent amount of your favourite subject - science-fiction therein.

But this is not so with this particular fanzine. The contents are three quarters jazz, plus some personal interest. Then you may wonder what jazz has got to do with science-fiction. Well, I'll tell you. It's got a lot to do with it. Science-Fiction is the most imaginative form of literature nowadays. Reading it, the mind is sent on weird journeys into times and spaces. For once you escape from reality.

With Jazz, the same sort of thing happens. The mind is allowed to "go," ie, relax and dream. Therefore with both, the reading and the music, you are deeply inspired and at ease. No matter which of the two paths you follow you'll find that they're similar in the way that they leave you "swingin' easy."

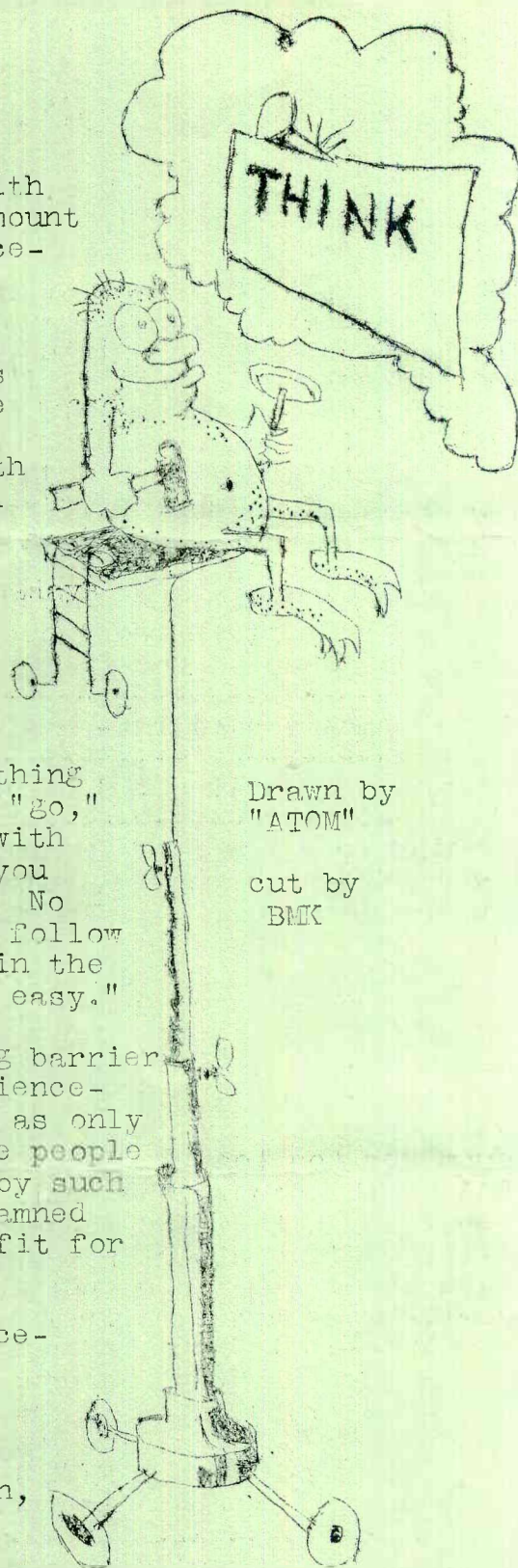
Another thing: There is a big barrier between the general public and science-fiction. It has been cast aside as only fit for ignoramuses and illiterate people to read. Jazz is not separated by such a barrier, but it also has been damned by a majority of people as "only fit for bums" etc.

Therefore Jazz is like Science-Fiction.

So who cares?

Poooooooooooo... Swing 'easy, man, swing easy!!!

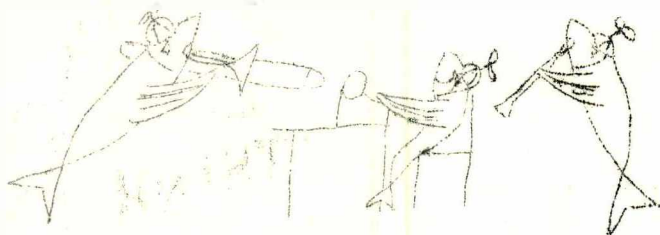
(=Editor's note: I am deeply proud of the touching way in which Bruce refers to ARCHIVE as a "particular" fanzine.)



Drawn by
"ATOM"

cut by
BMK

Drawn
and
cut
by
BMK



WELL IF BRUCE can swing easy,
so can y'all. So over forth-
with to abovementioned y'all, for
another sensational session of

SITTING IN

And the first guest-artist in this sedentary interior is none other than MIKE WALLACE, who writes (6 May 1956): "Dear Old Trufin Haddock-type Crittur; being as you're a broad-minded and understanding entity, I'm sure you won't mind if I begin to postulate all over this nice clean sheet of paper. You won't? I'm so grateful. Not that there's anything you can do about it anyway, so object and be damned to you! Who do you think you are? Ted Tubb? If you won't come to my funeral I won't come to yours. In fact there is a word for you. Tho' why I should give you perfectly good words when I might need 'em myself escapes me. However - must catch the post now (ever see a running post?) Cheers." (I weigh fourteen and a quarter stone stark naked. Can you beat that?)

"Chuck's a pansy - - - - - a chimpansey" - Jhim Linwood

HELEN WINICK writes (16 March 1956): "I think you would like a small club I found recently. For one cuppa cawfee you can listen the whole evening to a group of guitarists, playing alone or together, strictly for their own pleasure, with a beat which leaves you hypnotised by the end of the session. The way the different personalities come through on the same instrument is really amazing - one boy very clear and simple singing ballads, another growling out blues and drama if anyone in the room gets taken with a song, they just get up and sing it. The chief thing which strikes me again and again is how pleasantly spontaneous and musical these young people are, compared to the disgusting caterwauling of "Nellie Dean" and "Knees Up Mother Brown" which which seem to have been the traditional outlet of the British in their cups for too long! In London, I don't know about the provinces, about 80% of the people who would even three years ago have had their local pub, now go to a coffee-house, and most are just as parochial about it! I like this particular one for the music, the lack of lighting, the balance of atmosphere between a home and a club - and also because legendary characters from the prewar days drop in, like Wilf the Saint and Iron-Foot Jack. You can be alone if you wish, but if you want to talk there's always someone interesting within reach. And the music is but terrific. What are we supposed to do with the Maltese section (of ARCHIVE), use the Playfair Code on it, or just contact Paul Hammet?" (If you can FIND him. By the way, would Francezka qualify as a legendary character nowadays?)

"Just finished building a new cinema in Sheffield, called it the Odeon. (No, I didn't build it)." - Pete Reaney

NIGEL LINDSAY writes (31 May 1956): "Just found one of your letters I

never answered - - you wrote it on 22 March and at that time you were at your wits' end to know upon whom to foist the Three Wishes (whatever did become of it?) You also said you were honoured to be the Schnerd-lites Hole-boring Advice Bureau, and so the SHAB you are to this very day. (Had any enquiries yet?) You were also going to write another letter and two postcards before you went to bed. (Did you ever get to bed that night?) You also begged to remain, and this is a rather belated reply telling you to remain by all means, but you'll be mighty lonely because I have to go. Cheerio." (=Jan put it in ALPHA. No. Must have done - because I got up the next morning OK. I was - but don't forget the pride, you fan you.)=

"I hadn't fun in mountains. I didn't fall. I never have fun in mountains. Too dangerous. If/when I've fun in mountains, I'm fall-ing. So I just have no fun, and I don't fall. Euh." - Jean Linard

JHIM ("COLONIST") LINWOOD complains (11 July 1956): "It seems that every fanzine I sub to folds, funny." (=You mean you SUBBED to PHANTASAGORIA (New Series) ??? However, take heart. All is not lost. ARCHIVE positively DEFIES anybody to sub to it. That way, if ever I feel like pulling in my horns a little, nobody'll be able to kick.)=

"Thanks, Ted, you've ruined my stream of thought admirably with that burning mole." - John Hitchcock, "aside" in a letter

ALAN DODD (19 June 1956) raises an interesting point - at least he raised it casually some time before, but now trains his full artillery on it as follows: "I have seen 'The Benny Goodman Story' and I can definitely state that it does not clear up the argument as to whether Kid Ory is or is not a white musician. He appears to be a wizened, wrinkled up little man of about 70 years with a face like yellow parchment. He isn't actually white but a sort of brown." (=The point is that,

following Alan's original query, I have been totally unable to recollect ever having seen any definite statement to the effect that Kid Ory is a coloured, rather than a white, musician. He makes great play with the title "Creole," but applies it to his band (which anyway DOES contain white musicians) rather than to himself. Besides which, the word CAN in one usage denote a Caribbean-born white. The best picture I have of him makes him look just like the late Tommy Handley. There's probably a perfectly simple explanation for all this - it's just one bizarre angle that's crept

"Well it said 'light the blue touch paper and then retire'."

(Cartoon by Jhim Linwood)

into the Mercer-Dodd correspondence.)

PETE RIGBY is also stomping tonight. He says (20 June 1956): "I want to explain a silly remark of mine at the con, also to relate the birth of a jazzfan. You remember, in your room on the Saturday night I started saying, 'I've started converting John to jazz by getting him to see the 'Benny Goodman Story', and before I could finish you, Daphne Buckmaster and someone else pounced on me saying 'Benny Goodman doesn't play jazz,' which fact I knew, but I never got a chance to explain myself. John (you know which John) had no interest in any kind of music at all. I had always been trying to make him interested in jazz, but I didn't have any success. One time I saw him I mentioned going to see the B.G. story (I do like Goodman even though he does play swing) and to my surprise John suggested he might go. He did, and he said he enjoyed it. Hot on the trail, I then persuaded him to listen to some of my few records (Humph, Barber, Ory) and he said he liked them. Then he read Rex Harris's book, which gave him some understanding of the music. Then he went with me to a Humph jazz concert in Liverpool. By now he was as keen as me on the stuff - then Keith Wright (a classics fan) introduced him to his kind of music. Now John's started his own collection of jazz and classical records. So there you have it. One strange thing about him though is that he never taps his foot in time with the beat of the music, no matter how solid it is. (Change of subject) I too joined the Jazz Book Club like a shot (same proprietor and organiser as SFBC I notice) when I heard of it. I don't agree with your remarks about what the SFBC should publish - one could hardly make a book club out of things like the Day indices. It would be interesting to know just how many people join both clubs. I know I'm one of them." (The Jazz Book Club's first selection has now reached me - "Mr Jelly Roll" by Alan Lomax. Don Ford'll turn green when he hears.)

On the other hand, PETE REANEY (9 July 1956) writes: "After reading 'Toby or not Toby' by Pete Rigby for the fifth time, I then began to understand what he was talking about, don't let that worry you though Pete, I am like that. According to you the SF Book Club doesn't sound much good, have never joined it so I cannot give any opinion, but surely it's better than you say it is in your Rambling." (Hang on, Petes all - I was only suggesting how to run an SFBC to appeal to people like me. Of course, there may not BE any people like me.)

And so we pass from Reaney to ENEY, who writes from the State of the Virgin (20 June 1956): "Alan Dodd's letter about the Confederate song, 'Eating Goober Peas', turning up as 'Eating Smedley's Peas' on commercial TV reminds me of the disaster that resulted from the re-discovery of 'Yellow Rose of Texas' in the first place. Seems the archaeological work was done by the staff of WGMS, one of the radio stations here in DC, who found it and a lot of other similar songs by digging around in the Library of Congress (the American repository for copyrighted matter) and made of them an album, Marching Songs of the Confederacy. Naturally it was first broadcast over WGMS, which claims that its initials stand for 'Washington's Good Music Station' and follows the policy you might be able to guess from such a slogan; no jazz or other musical trash, and only tasteful commercials. Well, who should come along pretty soon but General Motors, Inc., with a singing commercial for some

As for instance, I was going to say but thought I'd better change the paragraph first, MIKE MOORCROCK, who writes (3 August 1956): "I can now disclose the REAL truth behind the infamous "YELLOW ROSE OF TEXAS" - it was really a YELLOW DANDY. After a great deal of research and investigation I obtained from a very obliging gentleman in Soho a dandelion, which, he assured me, was guaranteed genuine. It cost me five pounds, but don't you think it worth it? The same gentleman also offered for sale Nelson's column, but I declined for the time being as I had nowhere to put it, my room being full of stf books and jazz records. I enclose ORIGINAL yellow rose of Texas for your perusal." (=Perused with thanks. B)

MIKE ("GOOTIE") MOORCOCK also writes (undated) to the following effect:
 "I see in ARCHIVE that you write a lot about jaz. As you seem to know
 a lot about it as well could you tell me the name of the following tune,
 it goes something like this:

It's a fine tune but I can't for the life of me remember the title - I'm sure you, or one of your friends, could tell it to me. PS - After that there's a roll which goes TTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTTT-RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH BUFF BAM BUFT BAM BUFT BAM BUFT TTTTTTTTTT-RRRR swip BAM BAM BUUUUUUUUUF FULL STOP. I think this will probably be a help in remembering the toon." (=Yes, it will be, won't it.)

Well I'd like to quote Bruce Kidd and Jean Linard at length, but I've got to stop somewhere so I'll just finish with a bit of BOB PAVLAT (1 August 1956): "Whilst at Derry's last night I happened to notice a bottle of vitamin capsules or something he had about, probably for the children. It was called 'Heptuna.' Somekind of a trufin I guess." (So do I. =)

In what of the page is left to me I'd better explain that, owing to the Birkenhead Hole-Boring dispute (see SCHNERDLITES) I have not had time to write the first instalment of ARCHIVE's sensational new culinary serial (sic.) Therefore, "Roaring Jelly," the ARCHIVE Kitchen Dept, has been unavoidably held over as usual. It WILL appear, though - if ARCHIVE lasts that long.

The following

PAID ADVERTISEMENT*

is inserted at the request
of MIKE MOORCOCK:

OUT OF THE NORTH HE CAME,
A HUNTED MAN. HATED BY
MEN, LOVED BY WOMEN. HE
CAME ALONE AND NONE KNEW
FROM WHERE. EVERY MAN'S
HAND WAS AGAINST HIM BUT
SHE STOOD BY HIM - UNAF-
RAID - LOYAL. THE POGO
KID, TWO GUNNED, TWO
FISTED FOUR EYED SON OF
TEXAS WANTED IN 49 STATES

COMING SOON!
JIM STEWITT
AND AVA BURNER
IN
"THE POGO KIDD"

SEE: FRONTIERSMEN BATTLE AGAINST
INSURMOUNTABLE ODDS AS THE GREEKS
LED BY ULYSSES RAID THE WHITE HOUSE.
SEE: THE PASSIONATE SCENE BETWEEN
JIM STEWITT AND AVA BURNER AS APACHES
HOWL UNCHECKED THROUGH NEW YORK.
SEE: THE SIDEWALK GUN BATTLE BETWEEN
JIM STEWITT AND HANDSOME, DASHING,
BOLD SHERIFF ROBERT MAWLEY AS THE
SUN SLOWLY SINKS IN THE SOUTH.
SEE: THE EXCITING EXPANSE OF
K I N E M A S K O P E BRING TO
LIFE THE EPIC OF THE OLD WEST BASED
ON THE STORY BY RAY BRADBERRY -
"THE FIRE BALLS". ALL THIS AND
MORE IS BROUGHT TO YOU IN

"T H E P O G O K I D D"

SOON AT YOUR LOCAL KINEMA OR
ELECTRIC PALACE

(ALSO "WHAT THE BUTLER DIDN'T SEE" -
A DRAMA OF EVERYDAY LIFE)



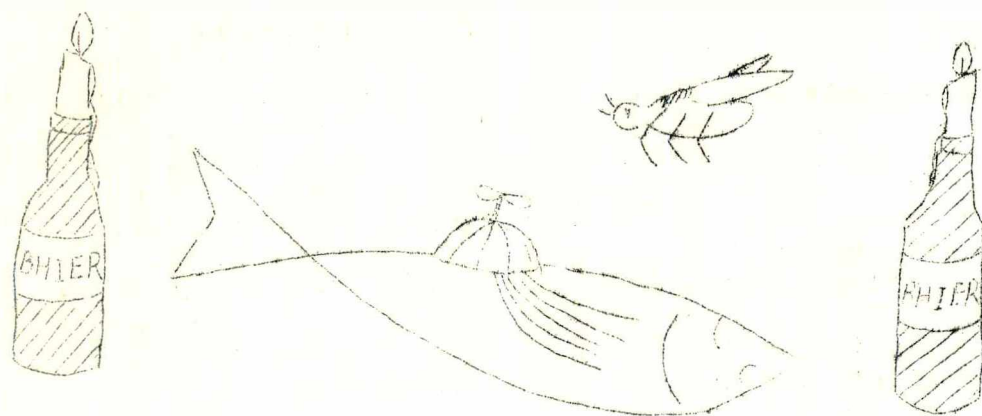
SELF RAISING
FLOWER

as seen by

Jhim Linwood

WANTED: Volunteer for the
post of OMPA Association
Editor as from the 13th
Mailing (September 1957.)
Apply to President Willis.

*Paid by the Editor, of course.
Who did you think paid for this
crummy publication, anyway?



"Ohhh - he was
SICH a good fish"

(Trufin lying in
State)

NOTE:

1. Candles still
burning at both
ends (hence happy
smile on features)
2. Fly (to
keep the fans off)

AND THIS IS OF COURSE

OH DIDN'T HE RAMBLE

The column where Anything can happen, but seldom if ever does.

THE OTHER HALF AND HOW IT LIVES Perceptive readers of this Mailing will doubtless have observed that L. Shaw Esq, the masculine half of L. Shaw Ltd, has already let this particular Cat out of the bag. Yes, it's true. I earn the wherewithal to keep body and soul, as the saying says*, together, by working in the office of the local Malleable Ironworks. What he didn't reveal, however, (maybe on the ostensible grounds that anyway he didn't know) was that I'm actually fifth in line from the Managing Director. To be specific, the chain of command runs: Managing Director, General Manager, Accountant, Cost Office Supervisor, Deputy Cost Office Supervisor, me. Of course, there are plenty of other chains of command around the place, but they don't count. All THEY do is unimportant things, such as making castings, selling 'em, etc. On MY chain, I'm five steps from the top.

Or, to put it another way, I'm in charge of the Cost & Sales Department. Sounds good, doesn't it. Of course, the Cost & Sales Department is not the same as the Sales Department. It is, in fact, merely the bottom left-hand corner of the Cost Office as you go in. Its purpose in life (if you can call it life) is to produce statements showing the estimated cost of any casting when called upon to do so, using either actual or theoretical figures as appropriate. To do this, one takes on the one hand physical data provided by the works and applicable to that particular job, and on the other hand a set of tables based on the half-yearly cost accounts, cross-mates them according to ritual, mixes the result with the aid of a FRIDEN (obtainable only from Bulmers Calculators, advert), and the result is what purports to be the cost price per hundredweight. The mathematical part gets a bit boring at times, but the data-gathering side of it is not without plenty of interest, once one knows ones way around properly.

*I wouldn't know about the soul of course, but I reckon my body's plenty big enough for both if necessary.

Well that's the Cost & Sales Department, and I'm indisputably in charge of it. The only remaining question is, in charge of what? Well, it varies. At times, I AM the Cost & Sales Department. At other times I'm two-thirds of it. (No cracks, please.) At present I'm more-or-less in the position of front man on a pantomime donkey. Oh yes - and the "& Sales" tag is just to mislead the enemy. Reminds me of my Second Echelon days in the army - I was "Registry," and sorted incoming and outgoing mail, also looked after the stationery. About the only things I ever registered were teleprints. "Distribution" compiled "Part II Orders", "Breakdown" dismantled them again, and "Library" put them in envelopes for mailing. This resulted from the adaptation of an involved theoretical setup, the brain-child of some complication-minded brasshatted genius, to fit the reality of an ever-changing personnel who didn't understand the alleged beauties of the theory anyway.

"He's got one foot in the grave, and the other in his mouth."

- Heard at the Malleable

POETRY You've probably heard of Jean Linard, France's number one Tru-
 YET fan. If you haven't, you probably soon will. Anyway, you
 have now. The reason I mention him now is that he's trying
 to learn English, on the grounds that that's the main sf-language of the
 world. But he sometimes gets worried when he plays over his collection
 of English-language gramophone records, and fails to comprehend a word
 of what they're saying. Accordingly, he sent me a list of song-titles
 he wanted the words for, and I picked several people's brains and sent
 him the result. There are still plenty more he wants, however. Any-
 body who knows the words of any of the following, and cares to pass them
 on to me for onward transmission, will receive both our thanks:

Moaning Low, Ain't Misbehavin', Mean to Me, He's Funny That Way
 (with verse), Love for Sale, Moon Glow, Frankie and Johnnie, Deep River,
 Go Down Moses, These Foolish Things, You Go To My Head, Time On My Hands,
 Loveless Love, The One I Love Belongs To Somebody Else, Yesterdays,
 Lover Come Back To Me, My Man, Stormy Weather, Remember, I Can't Get
 Started With You, Thanks For the Memory, It Might As Well Be Spring, Old
 Devil Moon, Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea, September Song,
 Rocking Chair, Don't Worry About Me, I Feel So Smoochie, Lover Man, St
 Louis Blues, Back o' Town Blues, The World is Waiting for the Sunrise,
 Sweet Lorraine, What Is This Thing Called Love, Paper Moon, Willow Weep
 For Me, 'S Wonderful, Exactly Like You, Somebody Loves Me, All Of Me,
 Darn That Dream, Take the "A" Train, Make Yourself Comfortable, They
 Can't Take That Away From Me, You Hit the Spot, If I Knew Then, Polka
 Dots and Moonbeams, By the Waters of Minnetonka, Some of These Days,
 On the Sunny Side of the Street, Sister Kate, Listen to the Lambs,
 Nicodemus, Moses Smote the Waters, Bones Bones Bones, Taking a Chance on
 Love. And thank you very much.

Except, I should say, that instead of the last-named song Jean
 actually put "Tanking a Chance on Love." But his correction came too
 late. "Tanking a Chance on Love" was too good a title to let go of so
 easily. Here, then, are the ORIGINAL lyrics to "Tanking a Chance on
 Love." Any resemblance to a song with a similar name is probably a

coincidence, because I have no idea of either the words or the tune thereof. Ladies and gentlemen - "Tanking a Chance on Love."

1. I'm on the booze,
I'm in the bar-room,
For I can use
You in my harem.
I'm just a craven
Out to be brave an'
Tanking a chance on love.

I've never asked
If you would care to.
My love is masked.
I never dare to.
Drinking makes daring,
So I'm preparing -
Tanking a chance on love.

Let me go on drinking wallop,
And I'll defeat your frigidity.
Boldness I'll gain by the dollop,
And my timidity
Lose its validity.

Just one more drink,
The night is falling,
And then I think
I'm coming calling.
Thanks to the brewers
Soon I'll be yours
With a barrel-shaped moon
above -
Tanking a chance on love.

2. I'm getting set;
I'm just a coward
Until I get
Alcohol-powered,
Then I'm a brave man,
Regular cave-man,
Tanking a chance on love.

Love will provide
The right conditions.
I'll set aside
My inhibitions.
Storm your defences,
Damn the expenses,
Tanking a chance on love.

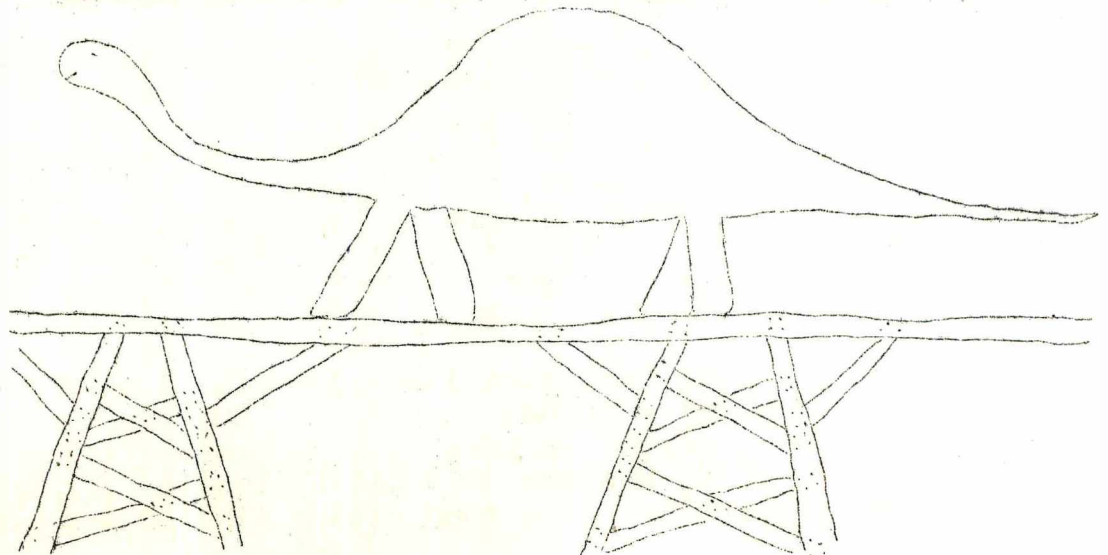
As I grow bold and courageous,
No use you calling for ma-ma.
If you pronounce me outrageous
I'll come for my charmer
In heavy armour -

If love you spurn
In style Victorian,
I will return
In my Centurion.
Here I come rumbling,
Walls will go tumbling
After the first sharp shove -
(CODA) Tanking a chance on -
Any advance on -
Tanking a chance on love.

FOOTNOTE: I'm funny that way (with verse.)

MONDAY THE
ELEVENTH

(his wife
doesn't
understand
him, either)



"My uncle's a lawyer - well, he's not really my uncle, but he's married to my aunt."

"Oh - legally, I hope?" - Heard at the Malleable

REFLECTIONS I hereby register the Mercatorial approval of the activ-
ON WHAT I'M ities of Penguin Books in the realm of Greek mythology.
MYTHING Besides Robert Graves's stupendous two-volume summary of
the entire field, there are numerous translations of the
old Greek mythographers themselves. With more continually appearing.
However, one thing I do regret is that it seems to be only the Greek
mythology (and its Roman derivative) that's getting the Penguin treat-
ment. This, apparently, on the grounds that the Greco-Roman works are
"classics," whilst anybody else's myths are only glorified folk-lore.

As I say, this is a real pity. Because, to me, it's the folk-lore
angle of the myths, and not the literary, that I find interesting. And
having the Greek setup thus placed at my fingertips, I want to have all
the other cognate mythologies, to compare them to. And in particular,
as one of British Isles stock, I'm interested by the Teutonic and Celtic
mythologies.

The Teutonic myths, as exemplified by the Scandinavian version, are
not, as it happens, too badly dealt by. Quite a lot about them is
known to the man-in-the-street, and they are frequently dealt with in
fantasy stories. The Celtic myths, however, are another matter, and
are virtually a closed book to me so far. In fact, the only branch of
Celtic mythology known to the above-mentioned man-in-the-street is a
bastardised Mediaeval version of the Arthurian cycle. But of the real
thing, of the Mabinogion and the Gaelic equivalent whatever it's called,
all I ever see are occasional fascinating glimpses in footnotes to
Robert Graves's Greek compendium, or stories like the Green Magician and
Sons of the Swordmaker.

Which brings me on to the general subject of Maurice Walsh. Now
Maurice Walsh happens to be one of my favourite authors. I revel in
his works. Which on first sight is somewhat surprising, because he
idealises a Way of Life which is most definitely un-Mercatorial - one
in which the men spend all their free time in angling and fist-fighting -
two sports that appeal to me even less than most - whilst their womenfolk
are desirous of nothing more than the privilege of staying home and
keeping house for them.

And yet Walsh makes his characters so obviously happy and friendly
that it makes me almost wish that that WAS the Mercatorial ideal Way of
Life. So I just lap him up whenever I come upon him, and purr conten-
tedly. And it isn't many authors I can speak so highly of.

Two films - to my knowledge - have been made from Walsh's stories -
Trouble in the Glen, and the Quiet Man. Trouble in the Glen I was dis-
appointed in - partly because of the ghastly colour-system that was em-
ployed (I forget which one, but it was horrible), and also because the
film in general didn't seem to rise to the occasion as it should have
done. But the Quiet Man I found very enjoyable indeed. I've seen it
twice, and hope to be given the chance to go again periodically, it's

that sort of a film. The story is based on an episode in his book "Green Rushes", crossed liberally with incidents that are sufficiently Walsh-like to make me suppose them to emanate from the only book of his I know of that I haven't read (because it's short stories.) Anyway, Walsh's Ireland and Hollywood's Ireland sit very well together, and though the thesis that if a villain is thoroughly beaten-up he will thereafter become best of friends with the hero and administrator of said beating-up takes quite a sizable chunk of suspension-of-disbelief to accept, I still found

myself with the usual wish-I-could-have-been-there feeling that Walsh usually, unmercatorially or no, engenders in me. I LIKE those characters.

And on top of Walsh, there was the music. The background score is itself a bit of all right, being as it is based firmly on a number of well-known and exceptionally tuneful Irish melodies - such as the Kerry Dance, Rakes of Mallow, and St Patrick's Day. But even apart from this, every conceivable effort is made to bring the music into the legitimate action of the film itself. Thus we hear them chorusing Irish songs at the wedding-breakfast and in the pub, a couple of pipers play at the races, the heroine sings (very haltingly) to herself when she's alone, and the village accordionist turns up virtually everywhere as and when required.

This film, incidentally, throws a bit of light on a certain fannish legend that's recently gained great prominence, to my one-time bewilderment. The fannish angle is provided by some technical breach of the postal regulations by the subject of the legend. The Irish angle typified by this approximate quotation from the dialogue of the film:

"I remember your grandfather well. It was in Australia he died - transported for stealin' a sheep. And your father was a Good Man, too."

(Next week: Exploring the Great Irish Rift Valley - or - Ency's Fault.)"



All illos on this page are by Bruce Kidd. This one (taken from a photo) shows me on the beach at Whitsun, near Liverpool. NOW d'you see what I mean?



"I've got a friend in the Air Force called Neil Lees."

"That sounds rather like a pālindrome." - Heard at the Malleable

ON ROCK & While in London recently I indulged in a spot of musical
 ROLL BEING research by way of attending a showing of the "Rock & Roll"
 HERE TO film "Rock Around the Clock." Because, being as I am with-
 STAY out a wireless, I tend to be somewhat behind the current
 musical trends, and I was genuinely interested to see just
 what this much-panned Rock-and-roll music consisted of.

Of course, I didn't get the entire picture. The "villains" of the piece, exhibitionistic hot-potato-in-the-mouth singers of the Elvis the Pelvis school were conspicuously absent - and I have still never heard any of these except at a distance. Also, the picture was padded out by a mambo band (not bad) and some pretty b. awful "rhythm-and-blues" groups that lacked any pretensions to what I understand to be the characteristic bouncy rock-and-roll beat. Which latter, as exemplified by the really dynamic performance in the film of Bill Haley's Comets, I most sincerely hope IS here to stay.

The vocals for the group (solo vocals that is) are handled by Bill Haley himself, in a perfectly straightforward voice that has no gimmick of any kind attached - unless it be reckoned that to stay right with the beat, even intensify it, counts as a gimmick. He strums a guitar, another such (or maybe two, I forget) plus bass and drums complete the rhythm section - and an excellent rhythm section it is too. If anybody wants to register disagreement at this point, let me emphasise - RHYTHM section. The melody, when wanted, is supplied by what appears to be an unattached clavoline, freed for once from having to play second fiddle to a piano. Finally, there's a tenor sax. This might well have gone towards spoiling the ensemble, particularly as the player (alone in the outfit) definitely IS a visual exhibitionist. Luckily, he confines its part in the proceedings to an intermittent imitation of the braying of a donkey. And the net result meets with, on the whole, the Mercatorial approval.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not advocating Rock-and-roll as jazz, or even as an alternative to jazz. - But when I reflect on the average pop slush record, with some morbid cow of either sex bewailing life's troubles in front of some spiritless, beatless accompaniment, and then turn my reflection on the real LIVE atmosphere exuded by Bill Haley and his Comets and their ilk (if any), give me the Rock-and-roll babies every time.

See ya later, alligator.

"Rainier's a reigning prince, but Massimo's only a titular prince." - GH

IT'S This Ramble seems to be turning into a sort of film-review col-
 GREAT umn - and not an sf one either, though I do hope to see "Forbidden Planet" when it reaches Lincoln in a couple of weeks' time. But I must mention the film I saw last Saturday - "It's Great To Be Young."

This is a most unusual film from my point of view. Usually I go

in gaily, in happy anticipation of seeing something that's at least worth the price of admission plus the trouble of going, and then find myself sitting through a picturesworth of almost unrelieved tedium. This time, I went in in somewhat resigned mood, expecting to be treated to a brief interlude of the Humphrey Lyttleton jazz band and nothing else to speak of. And instead, I found the best film I've seen since "The Quiet Man" hereinbefore referred to.

The story's simple - a school has its own orchestra, but a new headmaster fails to see eye to eye with his predecessor over the matter, and there's trouble. The orchestra members rally round to keep going in the face of stiff opposition, and, with an ending that's rather too slushy for my taste, but who's going to quibble, eventually carry the day - on the whole. The characters generally - particularly the children (it's a co-ed school) and their musically-inclined master, - are a pleasant and happy bunch, who once again make me wish that I could have gone to such a school. And, of course, there's the music. This is multifarious, and varied to boot. Besides the Humph session that tempted me to go in the first place, the orchestra found time to play us several popular classics, such as the Farandole from L'Arlesienne and part of Haydn's Toy Symphony, the master played some real raggy piano in a pub where he was earning the wherewithal to pay the instalments on new instruments, and the Sixth Form gave a sensational "impromptu" performance of the "Marching Strings" with combs-and-paper, humming, rulers tapping, and apparently no musical instruments whatsoever apart from one solitary mouth-organ. (Though I have a vague suspicion they were surreptitiously helped out by the soundtrack orchestra - and certainly, the pub pianist had rhythm accompaniment that was not officially present in the pub at the time.)

Anyway, the general effect of the picture is one rollicking, spirited romp the whole way through. It's a British picture, and I don't know if it'll ever reach the States to any appreciable extent, but if it does, Stateside (or even Canadian) readers who like really TUNEFUL musicals might well consider it worth a visit.

And by the way, while I think of it - the picture on with it, "Magnificent Roughnecks," was about oil-drilling, and again I didn't expect much of it. But it contained a surprising echo of Sturgeon's "Killdozer!" by featuring a duel between a bulldozer and a power-shovel - though both manned by human beings on this occasion. The power-shovel won the fight, incidentally, by dumping a scoopful of soil on top of the operator of the rival apparatus.

"He's a republican - got a 40-pound monarchy on his back"

- Heard at the Malleable

SO HERE So here I am, right down at the bottom of Page 14 once again.
I AM And I must say, it's a lovely feeling this, to know one's two days past the OMPA deadline and yet in no danger whatsoever of getting left out of the Mailing. But I don't want to be greedy. You too, if eligible, can feel like this. Any time from this time 1957 onwards. And whoever you may be, the very best of luck to you.
Goodnight.

"I'm trying to look at this side-saddle" - Heard at the Malleable