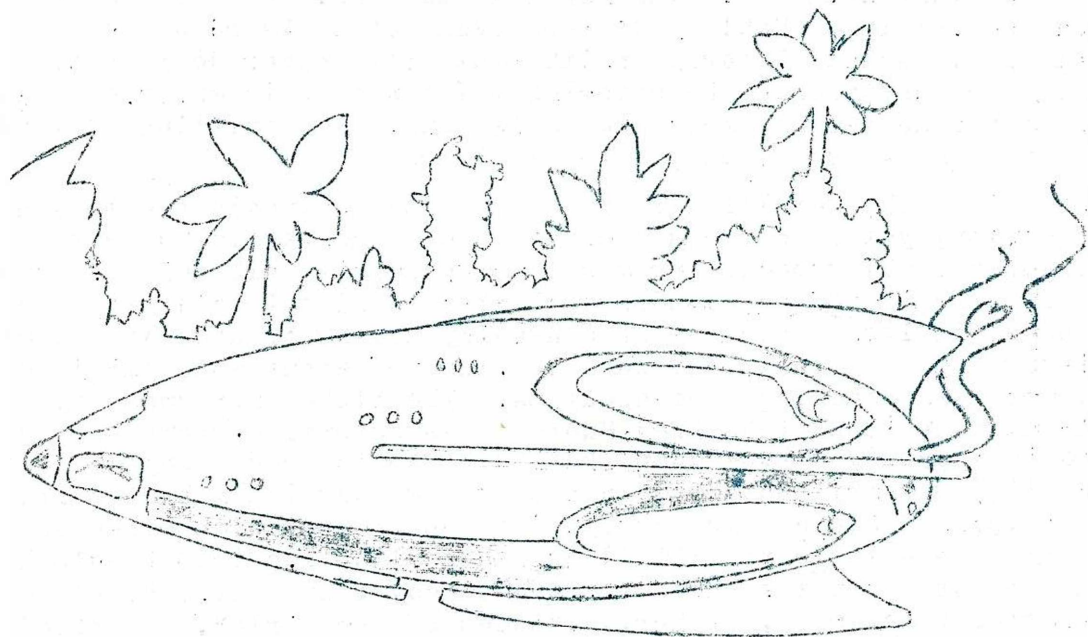




"the swordsman
of Mars of course,
who the heck did
did you think
I was?"

BIG DEAL

Peculiar little posters have been appearing outside Family Planning Clinics all over the country. They read "Remember - Pajamas are safer than Nightdresses" and are issued by the National Society for the Prevention of Accidents.



And to that pregnant thought, I'll add the information that this is BIG DEAL. There were two issue of this magazine numbered 3, but as I suspected they would, nobody noticed. Consequently, this is 5, and is produced by Dave Hale of 12 Belmont Rd., Wollescote, Stourbridge, Worcestershire, for the 39th OMPA Mailing of March 1964. Thanks for last minute duplication go to Ken Cheslin.

The two outside contributions have been on paper awaiting this issue for almost a year, and if I'd waited any longer, the cartoon, at least, would have become quite ludicrously dated. However, everything eventually has its uses, including the piece with the micturate title. This intrepid wogland explorer is anonymous - so much so, in fact, that even I don't know definitely who he is. However, the style and opinions are so distinctive that there is little doubt some of you older members will recognise the author. This apart, everything else is jumbled....intentionally, of course.

If this mailing has done anything it's brought about some change in my attitude toward OMPA. But, as frequently happens, the new attitude has proved little spur to activity. After being a member for over a year I still have a feeling of emptiness over the whole thing...a sense of uninteraction. I can't be certain that other members feel the same, but the recent heart searchings seem to confirm this. The turnover of membership may also be symptomatic. Having neatly presented the problem what explanation have I to offer. The answer is

unfortunately none. When first I joined I used to smile at those who found difficulty in producing a magazine and whose main method for producing their magazine was to ramble on the difficulties they had in producing it. Yes, I used to smile - and now, here I am, in almost the same position. It used to be a case of missing a mailing, and then hoping you'd feel more like it next time. But now I realise that I missed the last mailing and that if I don't do something but quick I stand a fair chance to miss the next mailing, and then there won't be another mailing. Hah! I'd never even get to be regarded as brilliant deadwood. And if I carry on like this I'll never be regarded as brilliant anything. Nevertheless, I would be interested to hear how any other member has felt when he's considered quitting. Might be food for thought - as are unexpected visitors.

Manchester life is the nearest thing imaginable to fannish isolation, yet a couple of Sundays ago I was walking up Birch Grove gingerly feeling my aching muscles (snooker -- all this bending over the table) when I saw our landlord, Larry, talking to a bloke. This was unusual in itself because he's usually having trouble with women, but what got me was that they were talking not about some imagined debt or bit of wife poaching, but about me. The bloke introduced himself and it was none other than Fred Hunter! As several members will confirm, I'm very easily struck dumb, but this was the end. Anyway, after convincing Larry that Fred wasn't like my usual Manchester friends we came in, fed him a quick curry made the M/C way with mince and baked beans (yes - it is revolting) and then all piled into Fred's hired car and drove to the Union for the Sunday film. It couldn't have been a better programme, either.... "Nudes of the World", "Forbidden Planet" and a little film written by and starring who else that the literary entrepreneur's current idol, William Burroughs. It would be completely foolish to attempt to describe the comments on these films, Fred enjoyed himself though, even if he did get a mite confused between the two films, ending up shouting 'Strip!' to Robbie the Robot.

We offered him a sleeping bag on the floor, but he reluctantly declined pleading in a pathetic sort of way, business contacts and the need for freshness. Fred did stay a couple of hours though, and told me about his business trip suddenly coming up and how he'd tried to squash as many fan visits in as possible. Said he'd come from B'ham. Quite frankly, I don't believe it. If him and Ker had got together they'd still be drawing little Olaf cartoons.

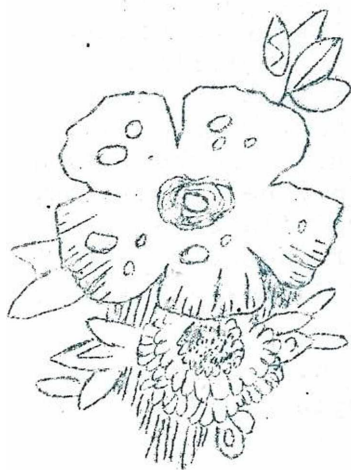
I did see him again for an hour or two on Monday. Showed him a little of old Manchester, all 30 feet of it, and ate in the oldest part, a lovely little 14th century steak house cum sea food place cum pub, called Sinclair's. Then we said goodbye, Fred contemplating a day of work and then a drive to Liverpool, and me conscientiously dashing back to the University for a seminar. Surprises never cease. Who next?

War is, we have been forced to admit even in the face of its huge place in our own civilisation, an asocial trait. In the chaos following the First World War all the war-time arguments that expounded its fostering of courage, of altruism, of spiritual values, give out a false and offensive ring. War in our own civilisation is as good an illustration

as one can take of the destructive lengths to which the development of a culturally selected trait may go. If we justify war, it is because all peoples always justify the traits of which they find themselves possessed, not because war will bear an objective examination of its merits.

-- Ruth Benedict

LEFNUI 1 - Fred Patten Pete Seeger was in Manchester the end of February, and he said that lots of good new folk music and song writers were springing up all over America. I take his word for it, but can add that the same happened over here years ago.// Your use of the word 'genuine' raises a lot of questions, most of them ridiculous because there can be no absolute standards for genuineness. Surely the test of a genuine folk song is not idiomatic, whether it sounds typical of previous folk music, but whether it will continue to be sung for pleasure by non-professionals, or whether it will enter the oral tradition. Though, obviously, this oral handing down of songs is becoming less important with the increasing number of recordings available.// The last sincere example of folk music is probably being written right now. Whenever anyone feels compelled to



express his feeling about an event in words and music, and his creation gains acceptance with singers and performers who will recognise depth of feeling, this work is sincere. Even the fact that the musician may be rewarded financially for his work does not automatically cast doubt on its sincerity. After all, you wouldn't doubt classical works written specifically to please wealthy patrons, would you? There is a considerable difference between brash commercialisation and reward for artistry. In this country the former is typified by the Irish tweetings of Lonnie Donnegan and the guttural electronic jangle of The Springfields. And you have The Kingston Trio. You must have heard some of Woody Guthrie's songs. Some of his best, like "Past-

ures of Plenty", were commissioned by the Tennessee Valley Authority, but are non the less genuine for that reason. The songs expressed the man, and the money enabled him to write more songs.

I'll probably get jumped on for comparing Guthrie to Ewan MacColl, or vice versa, but MacColl is analogous to Guthrie in that frequently he commands prices for his material. Many of his songs have found their way into the folk tradition, his 'Lorry Driver's Song' and 'Canily', for example, have recently been recollected and reported as traditional songs! The trouble about MacColl is that he tends to get people's back up. He's an intellectual, a complete artist, performer and scholar; and people tend to dislike his lack of 'folksiness'. This has given rise to rumours of his 'conceit' and superiority - but leaving aside the validity of these rumours he probably has more reason than most to be like this.

Hasn't a lot of classical music been inspired by folk melodies? I know Vaughn-Williams for one, but there are others. When I was interested in Organ Music, a couple of years back, there were countless pieces based on traditional airs.

If you follow one definition of folk music as 'being produced by the times and showing the opinions and protests of the people' you couldn't do better than look at the songs that have grown up around 'modern' events. Ranging from Spanish Civil War songs, through the 'D-Day Dodgers in Sunny Italy', Korean War ditties, pieces about food or the lack of it and army conditions in WW 2, and more recently still the whole mass of songs inspired by the Nuclear protest campaign. Take for example, the song in TWTWTW after Kennedy's assassination. TIME described this as synthetic, but if it became popular and went the club circuit it would be just as genuine as a song written about the death of a maid two hundred years ago.

And while I'm on your magazine, can you explain what you mean when you say "modern children's books have ended the development of modern traditional fairy tales." Is this a contradiction, or just a subtlety, beyond me as so many things are? How can you have a modern traditional fairy tale? Can't a modern story be just as exciting and relevant as a traditional tale? You've probably seen the book called "Little Red Engine," which as far as I know, is completely original. It reflects current thought on the nature of conformity by telling of the engine, bored by life on the tracks, who leaves them to see the world. You can't have engines doing just as they please, so he has to be put back, only force isn't used. He's made to go back on the tracks by using his own reaction to a red flag, part of the engine's training, to stop him wherever he goes. Everywhere there are red flags -- the only place free of them is his track, and that is where he goes back, and is glad to be there. Surely very relevant to our times, and its a charmingly illustrated book as well.

Len Bailes' article struck me as rather shallow. Sorry, but that's the way a lot of fan comment on sf seems. People could learn a great deal from John Baxter, in this respect.

I'm rather glad I never read "Sword in the Stone" for it might have spoilt my enjoyment of the Disney cartoon. Leaving aside all the specific reasons, I've not enjoyed or laughed at a film so much for ages. Apart from this, the funniest film I've seen this year has been a French thing, which isn't on general release over here, called "Zazie dans la metro" which combined a slight touch of the forbidden ("Is Uncle a homo?") with a child's fantasy world.

Maybe you'd like to hear about Sinclair's. It is is very interesting place, reputedly the oldest building in Manchester, it preserves a great deal of old-world seedy charm without being seedy. It comprises one end, and fully half, of Manchester's oldest street, The Shambles, and provides a beer and wine bar (rumour has it a rendezvous for queers), a choice of oysters and sea food, and if you prefer something a little more restrained, choice steaks, cheeses and wine in a restaurant upstairs.

The whole place hasn't been decorated for years and only the intangibly present 'atmosphere', coupled with good food and clouds of cigar smoke prevents it also carrying a touch of the nausea and revulsion many people feel to its own insanitary age. You can even take children there, a peculiar quirk coming from the fact that originally it was a restaurant only. The child will have to eat something, mind you, but that's a small price to pay for such convenience. A couple of hundred years ago, when that spot, near the River Irwell used to be all twisty streets and top-heavy buildings, Sinclair's used to open its shutters and serve oysters to passing pedestrians. Modern licensing laws and the motor car have put an end to this, but inside the atmosphere is very reminiscent of those apparently restful, but really bustling, days.

Sinclair's has an unofficial feud with the other half of the



Shambles, a pub proper, called The Old Wellington, each claiming to be the older. The Wellington is another bastion of a more gallant age; the bar will only serve men, and the regulars swear the place hasn't changed one bit in fifty years. The floor slopes and the ceiling bulges, making it a hellish place to get drunk -- you can never be sure that it is the drink beginning to take effect! The builder made an arrangement with the first landlord, and the tradition has been kept alive to this day. The bedrooms are open to inspection to any 'interested and sincere' couples. You can inspect the cellars also, and confirm for yourself the legend that there are no draughts in the Wellington. Despite its wooden construction and lack of draughts the air is always fresh, even on a crowded Sunday night.

These are only a few of the attractions of the two buildings. If ever you are in Manchester and have a taste for history and a good drink, they're both well worth a visit.

SIZAR 10 & 10 - Bruce Burn

Why do you dislike referring to a district by its overall social status? You're obviously not socially prejudiced yourself, so why have a dislike for terms which convey a fair amount of information and which no reasonable person will take to be derogatory. What are your criteria for social class -- or to use a nice word, social stratification. Are they mainly economic-educational, or others? It's funny the different ways people do judge class, and I'd be interested to hear any comments.

A bohemian is a person lives outside the conventional moral code. I doubt that anyone can live without some sort of moral code. The point is difference and not lack. The nearest approach to having no moral code is in psychopathy -- the hard core criminal with the genetic bias toward crime. And even these people appear to have their own peculiar morality, as much a part of their personality as our moral code is of ours, and the result is an incurable criminal, the type that gets put in a mental hospital. For all the good it does he may as well be in a special prison because they are completely incurable.

Thanks go to those brave dozen or so of you who returned the little questionnaire thing I circulated a couple of mailings back. You must have realised what it was attempting to estimate: authoritarianism, militarism and orthodoxy. The results (with all the comments) have gone to the Peace Research Centre at Des Moines, one of the worthier aspects of the American Peace Movement. This was by nature a preliminary study to see reaction to questions, and the results will be used to construct what is hoped to be a better test.

In another study, with a similar type of thing, a correlation was found between militarism, authoritarianism and orthodoxy. The new test will be used to validate these findings and to extend the investigation.

SCOTTISHE 34 - Ethel Lindsay

Believe it or not, I did start to write an article on University.

I wrote about 10 pages on a train going up to Sheffield, and all the time I was writing a bloke kept reading it over my shoulder and whispering to his wife. He knew perfectly well what it was all about so just to amuse myself I spiced it up. When I got to the bit "you've all been waiting for..." and "many things have been written about student morality.." he nudged his wife and they both tried to read it. I turned to them, smiled, shut to notebook, and looked blissfully out of the window. Hah.

MEIN OMPF 1 - Colin Freeman

Page for page, easily the best in the mailing, and I don't give flattery

for nothing.//An irrelevant little comment, but you remember that thing you did for Panic Button a year or so back "The Bitter Pill"? It got referred to by one of our social psychology lecturers the other day. Such is fame.

SOUFFLE 6 - "John Baxter

A very neat production - Harry's cover sets it up beautifully, and all your writing

is thoughtful and well executed.// Review The Servant, will you?

Also appreciated: Roy Kay...but why the title? Dick Eney's follow up to TSI. Bill Evans on railways...I can get interested in the strangest things!

PSCHIT

One of the first things one notices on a trip to France is the lack of Durex adverts; the newsagents' etc. windows were rather bare without them.

Having always had a great affection for that most melodious of the Romance languages, French, I was most interested to see something of France, even though it was only from a coach on the way to the Costa Brava, which is indeed a "rugged" but very beautiful coastline. I spent six years at school "learning" French and I really enjoy listening to it, even if my understanding of the speech is small; though I can make my way at a pinch in the written language. English on the contrary is seldom harmonious but even the "news" in French sounds very pleasant, and as a language of love it is surely ideal, n'est-ce pas?

France itself turned out to be a great disappointment. (I exclude Paris from this generalisation). We took Route 20, right down the middle and found it a most boring journey. The country was flat, apart from the "massif centrale"; which since I am a Scot was not terribly impressive. There were no hedges since there were comparatively few farm animals to be seen; towns were few and far between. The road itself, though well surfaced was not very wide, no dual carriageways except in the large towns; and in the smaller towns, the bus was up on the pavement sometimes to allow other traffic to pass. The side roads were in many cases similar to country lanes in this country, in some cases virtually cart tracks. Admittedly in Paris and for five miles outside there is an excellent highway complex and some of the multiple flyovers are really tremendous architectural achievements with a real functional beauty. As it happened I had to drive up to Scotland by the A1 directly I got back and there is simply no comparison between the two road systems. Numerous bypasses have been completed on the A1 this year and it will soon be a really first class highway. I was most impressed. Certainly on this evidence the sneers of foreigners and Britons about British roads are unjustified - even though the Germans have autobahns!

Fortunately we were not compelled to buy food in France during our stay. I say fortunately because the cost of living, influenced in part by the exchange rate, was extremely high. I am quite certain, too, that the tourists are deliberately soaked. Due to the absence of safely potable water and the very hot weather it was necessary to make regular stops to make up one's fluid balance.

I do not find wine refreshing, personally, hence had recourse to lemonade. This came in little bottles similar to those sold in Woolworths for 7d; it was very fizzy, orange flavoured and tasted rather foul. I never had the nerve to ask for it by any other name than "Limon-

ade, s'il vous plait" since it went under the name which heads this article, though I thought it rather apt in the circumstances. All this at I/6d a bottle!!

Which brings me to my next gripe - the lack of decent sanitation. As one of our party vehemently, and frequently, declared, "You wouldn't mind paying 4/- for a bottle of beer, even though it was lager, Dutch and rather flat, if you saw them doing something with it!!! (He always included a few exclamation marks). All the hoary old jokes about French sanitation are undoubtedly true, that is one thing at least, this holiday taught me. The French, good luck to them, have very different ideas on the subject of relief and while the extreme British prissiness is by no means exemplary, the casual French attitude becomes at times, distasteful. It was quite common to come on a man micturating at the road side beside his car in blissful disregard of passing traffic, rather than seek a nearby tree. (Hedges were admittedly few and far between). One public lavatory in Toulouse had a glass window between Hommes and Femmes with a large woman at a small desk to obscure the view. Many cafes had one outside toilet at which one had to queue indiscriminately and in many cases this consisted of a hole in the floor with footrests on either side and handles on the walls. In those that had cisterns a rapid retreat on depressing the chain was necessary to avoid wet feet. Some toilets were too malodorous to approach; it was good self discipline. In small towns a walk in the streets of an evening was just impossible due to the stench from the drains. In the mornings they opened the cocks at the road sides and flooded the gutters. This freshened things up considerably.

My most lasting impression of La Belle France is that it stinks.

- - - - -

Travelling with a party of British tourists can be, if one is at all sensitive, a rather embarrassing affair. The British are not particularly courteous in their own country, but abroad, standards drop even lower. They simply refuse to speak a word of any language but their own; their sole effort at gaining understanding with a foreigner being to shout louder, as one would with someone who is hard of hearing. God knows, it takes about half an hour to learn enough simple phrases from a phrase book to be at least polite and count up to ten. Mind you, we never had a chance to use our phrase book's favourite phrase "Las rosas son bonitas." People abroad, I feel, appreciate tourists making the effort to converse in their host's tongue.

The dress of some of the elderly women tourists was, in some glaring cases, shocking. Shorts on a fat old body show sagging thighs and gross hips to advantage. Acres of badly burned skin, tomato red in hue contrasted unflatteringly with the gorgeous honey gold of the Continental girls, who wear clothes or the lack of them so much more graciously than a lassie from Lancashire. English girls dressed up for a night on the town often succeeded merely in looking rather cheap.

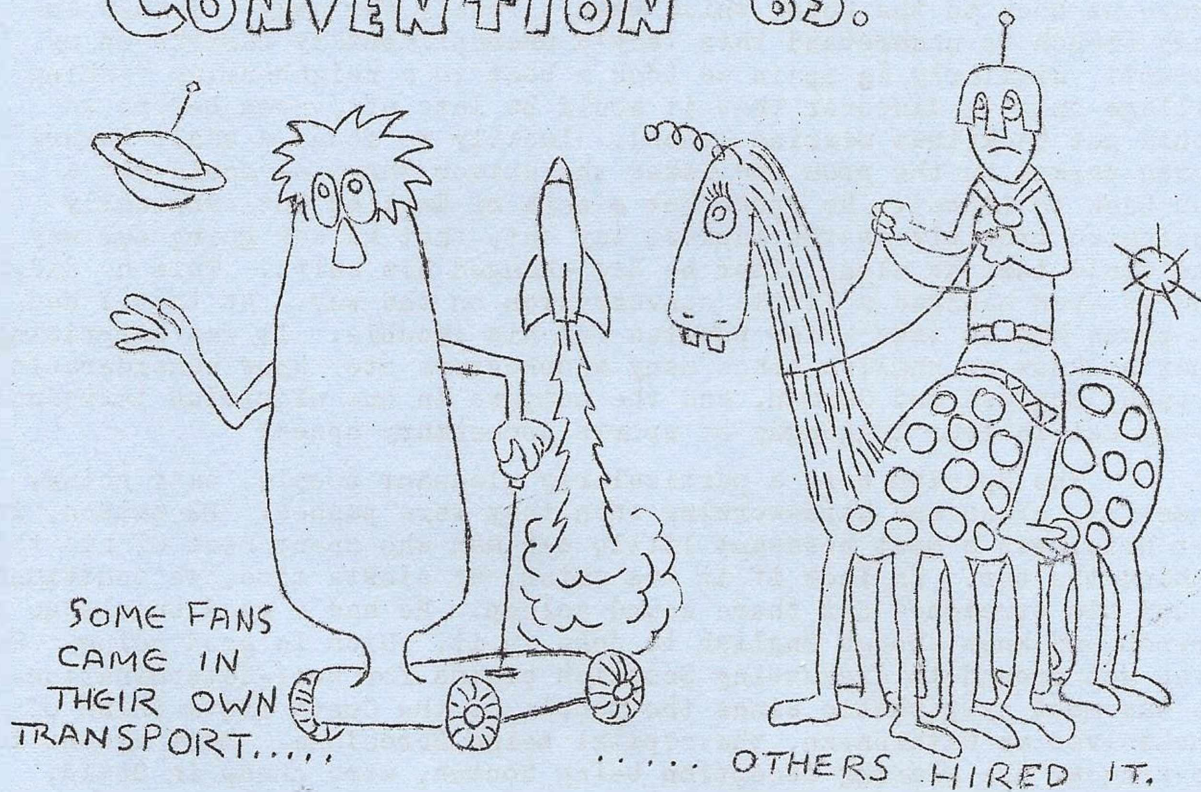
People in both Spain and France were very courteous and helpful. In Argenton, my wife and I in hot pursuit of photographs, became thoroughly disorientated in the twisting streets. To make matters worse it started to rain. When we tried out my school French on a housewife she insisted we wait a few moments for her husband who drove us back to the hotel which wasn't really far away. I knew enough French to understand this lady's uncomplimentary remarks on my accent! Similarly in Spain we took a boat to a neighbouring fishing village only to discover that it would be late afternoon before we could get back (thus missing lunch). Luckily we found a small luxury coach parked on the prom and asked the driver where we could get a bus back to Lloret. He spoke not a word of English but eventually indicated probably as the easiest way out, that he was going our way and would take us along after he had changed his shirt. This he did, and we even managed a little conversation on the way. At that I had to press him to take a few pesetas for his trouble. It was surprising that he knew no English since many shopkeepers etc. know considerable French, English and German, and the compere in one nightclub introduced every act in four languages at sports commentary speed!

The Spanish were a particularly pleasant people, easy going, cheerful, clean and hard-working when they were pushed. El patron, in our hotel was a most pleasant little old man who spent most of his time behind the bar. In fact if it was quiet, at siesta time, we sometimes found him stretched out there sound asleep. He had a good knowledge of French and knew enough English to joke in it, which is good going. We even got around to discussing Scottish claims for self-determination. He was most sympathetic since the people of the Costa Brava think of themselves as Catalonian, the capital being Barcelona. Most alcoholic beverages, the glaring exception being Scotch, were cheap in Spain, the cheapest in Europe in fact.

But Spain had a poor look about it. Coming from the prosperous south of France with its mile after mile of vine yards, dotted with very attractive modern bungalows, the contrast was very marked. But in spite of this, the little seaside towns, each clustered tightly round its curve of beach, were clean, sweet smelling (few foul drains in evidence) and the narrow dirt streets, in the old parts, kept well watered, combined with the high white buildings to make an oasis of coolness in the tremendous heat of mid-day. Indeed one town, San Feliu, had put down tarmac and widened its streets in the newer part and it was not nearly so pleasant as the traditionally treated parts.

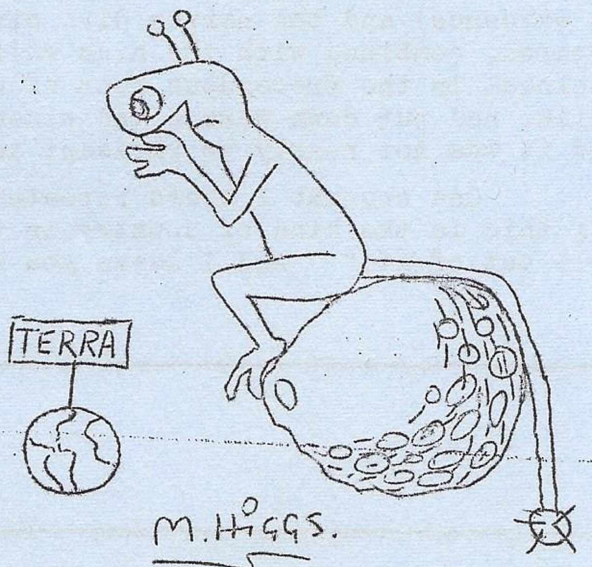
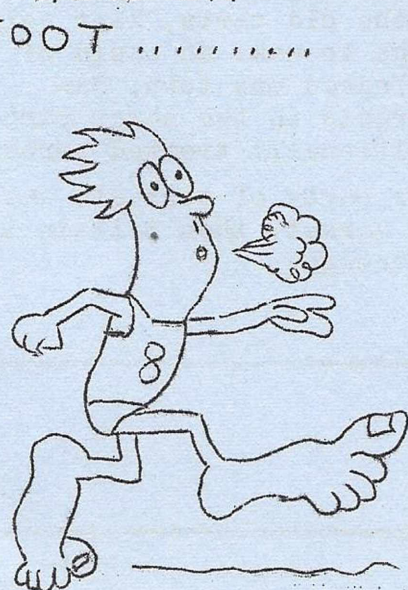
One comment I heard repeated among our party of tourists was, "If this is the kind of country in the Common Market, then Britain is well out of it!" And I leave you with that thought.

SATIRE BY M.W. HIGGS.
CONVENTION '63.



.... SOME
CAME ON
FOOT

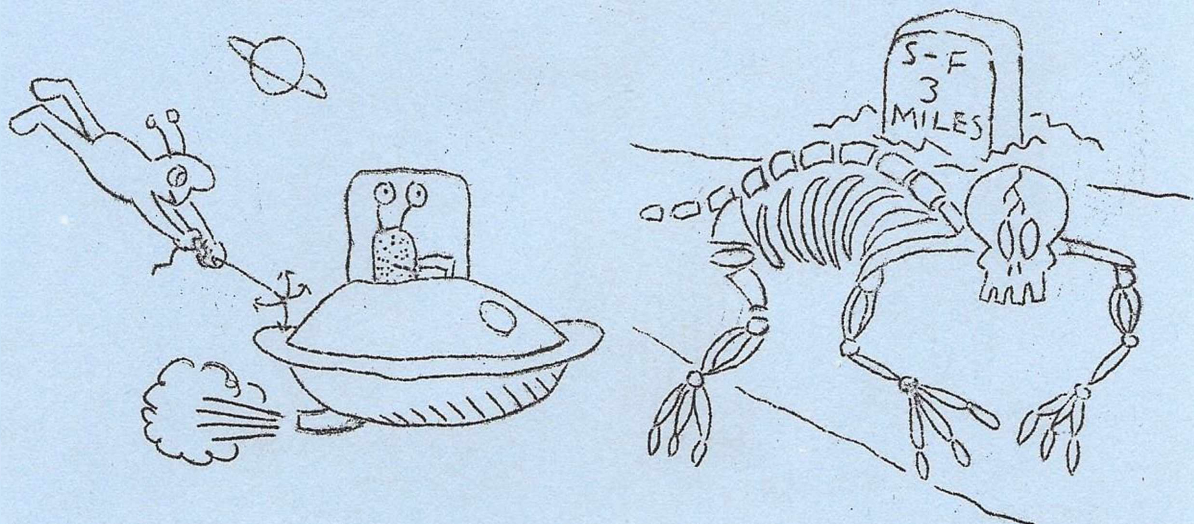
.... WHILE OTHERS JUST
STAYED AT HOME.



S-F CONVENTION

... WE HEARD THAT
A FEW HITCH-HIKED.

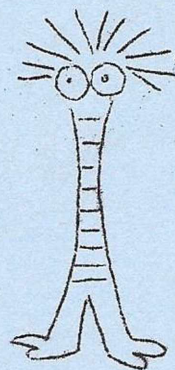
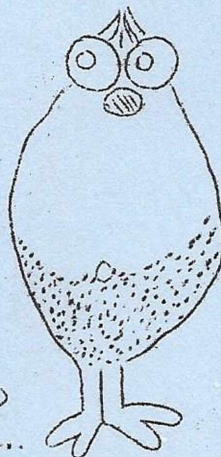
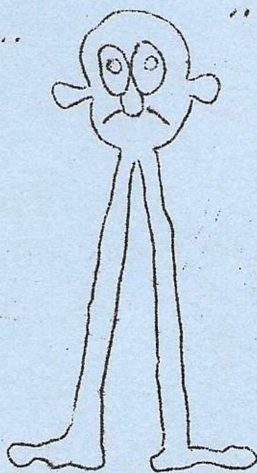
... SOME DIDN'T
MAKE IT ...



HOWEVER, THERE WERE A LOT OF FANS THERE.

SHORT ONES....

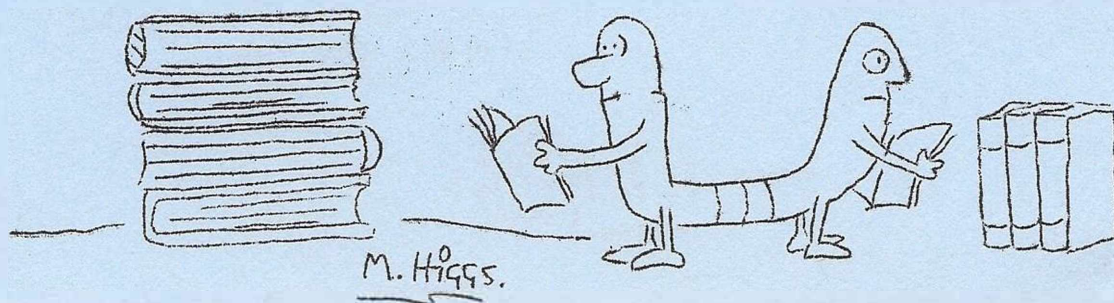
... FAT
ONES



... TALL ONES...

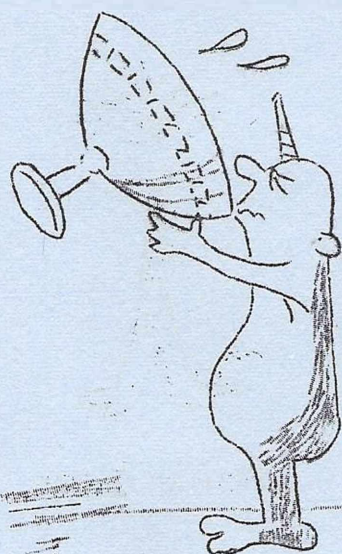
... + THIN ONES.

THERE WERE LOTS OF BOOKS + MAGS. FOR SALE



S-F CONVENTION,

..... IN SOME CASES,
A BIT OVER HEATED...



.... THERE WAS LIQUID
REFRESHMENT....



.... WE CAN
SAFELY SAY, THAT
A GOOD TIME WAS
HAD BY ALL.

— M. HIGGS.