

Compact







I am working under the happiest conditions it would be possible to imagine. It is a beautiful day and the sun comes right in onto my desk which sits under the window, I have Handal's MESSIAH playing on tape while I work, which will, I know, shock those purists among you who consider works of that nature should be listened to while unoccupied with anything else. That is a theory to which I do not myself subscribe. I enjoy THE MESSIAH so much I like to have the music floating throughout the flat while I'm doing my housework or anything else I might have to do, like this issue of cOMPACT. Mind you, there are occasions on which I do play it and sit to listen.

The latest progress report of how things are going at the new flat, is good. We have now taken delivery of the last item for which we were waiting, our carpets, and they have been laid. It is now beginning to look as if we are living here. The only thing that in any way bothers me now is that we can't do any decorating until we have been here for six months; we still have two months to go. Once I can get my books out of their packing cases and my ATomillos up on the walls where they belong, it will really look more like home. This is as good a time to ask those of you Stateside cOMPans as any, if you know what a 'pelmet' is? I ask because I happened to mention to Betty Kujawa that Jimmy Groves had made mine for me, only to discover she didn't have a clue what I meant. I confess, when I was over there I was too preoccupied with the occupants of a house to look around and examine where they lived for this kind of detail. Do or don't you have them? I'll give you this much of a clue: they can be made from either material the same colour as your curtains or from wood.

I have been pondering the question of Mailing Comments; should I do some or not. I have decided. If there is something on which I feel compelled to comment, I will do so, if your mag. doesn't get a mention, it doesn't necessarily mean that I didn't read it or, having read it, didn't like it. Oh no, it just means that it didn't make my blood boil or didn't raise any argument in me. OK?

I know there has been much discussion concerning this method: it isn't really fair to the ones you don't mention, and so on. On the other hand, what is the point of mentioning a magazine by name and then saying something like: "no comments", or "I liked but it doesn't raise any comments from me"? It strikes me not only as a waste of time, which is always precious, but of giving nothing either in the way of: egoboo or pleasure to the editor concerned. So, if my method doesn't please all of you, I apologise beforehand but will do it my way just the same.

Saying which, we come to the one magazine I know you all expected me to latch on to: Bruce Burn's SIZAR in which he attempts to make some sort of an assessment of character/personality. In his opening paragraph Bruce is talking about BNPs and, as he goes on to mention me later I can only assume he has elevated me to those lofty heights. I'm sorry about this; I thought all this nonsense about BNPs, who is and who isn't one, had died out, seems not. For those of you who don't me, not having met me, I must admit to some things, like for instance, I do love to talk...and talk. Unfortunately for my listeners I have a loud, maybe even raucous voice which I've no doubt grates on the ears and nerves. I also have an unfortunate manner of speaking which comes out sounding abrupt in the extreme. To anyone who doesn't know me well this sounds downright domineering and dictatorial. As a consequence, when I express a personal opinion it comes out sounding as if I mean it to be taken as a matter of fact. Now, without prefacing all my remarks with the 'in my opinion' gambit, there is nothing I can do about it unless I change in some radical way and that I can't foresee at this late date. I admit it is impossible for an 'acquaintance' to get to know me, I've had much practice in keeping them at a distance which I still do instinctively. My friends know me for what I am and that satisfys me. I don't think that I go to extremes in my loves and hates but I will admit once having made my mind up I seldom, if ever, change it concerning a person. I won't bother with people I don't like or who bore me, why should I? I don't expect those who dislike me or whom I bore to put up with me. All this, of course, proves how self-centred and selfish I am. As for Bruce's stupid assertion that, and I quote: "...and the only way for her to feel sure of her 'importance' to them is to see how happily they accede to her wishes" Rubbish! If he has taken seriously what is a purely local type joke - that I am bossy and a slave driver - then he saw less than he reckons on. Yes, Bruce, I acknowledge you as an acquaintance but nothing more.

ENVOY: CHESLIN. The one thing about you and your magazines that annoys me is your carelessness with spelling. I know it isn't done from ignorance but just that you are too bloody lazy to turn to the dictionary you admit you have. And why stick pages into your mag. that are of a different size to yours? Surely they could have been clipped on to the back outside your zine? Your industry is to be commended for those hand-painted covers. I hope Fred Hunter appreciates the trouble you took to provide him with somewhere to live!

CONVERSATION: HICKMAN. Lynn, talking of taxes: I used to feel such a fool while doing any shopping in the States. I'd look at something on the counter and decide to buy it. Feeling pleased at myself for having exactly the right money I would hand it over and then have to change a bill in order to pay the 1-3/4 tax owing. It is true that this is a fairer method than ours of charging a purchase tax on certain goods only; your way everyone pays their share no matter what they buy, our method means that only those wanting and buying a particular commodity which carries purchase tax pays, but I do wish they would display the price wanted inclusive of tax.

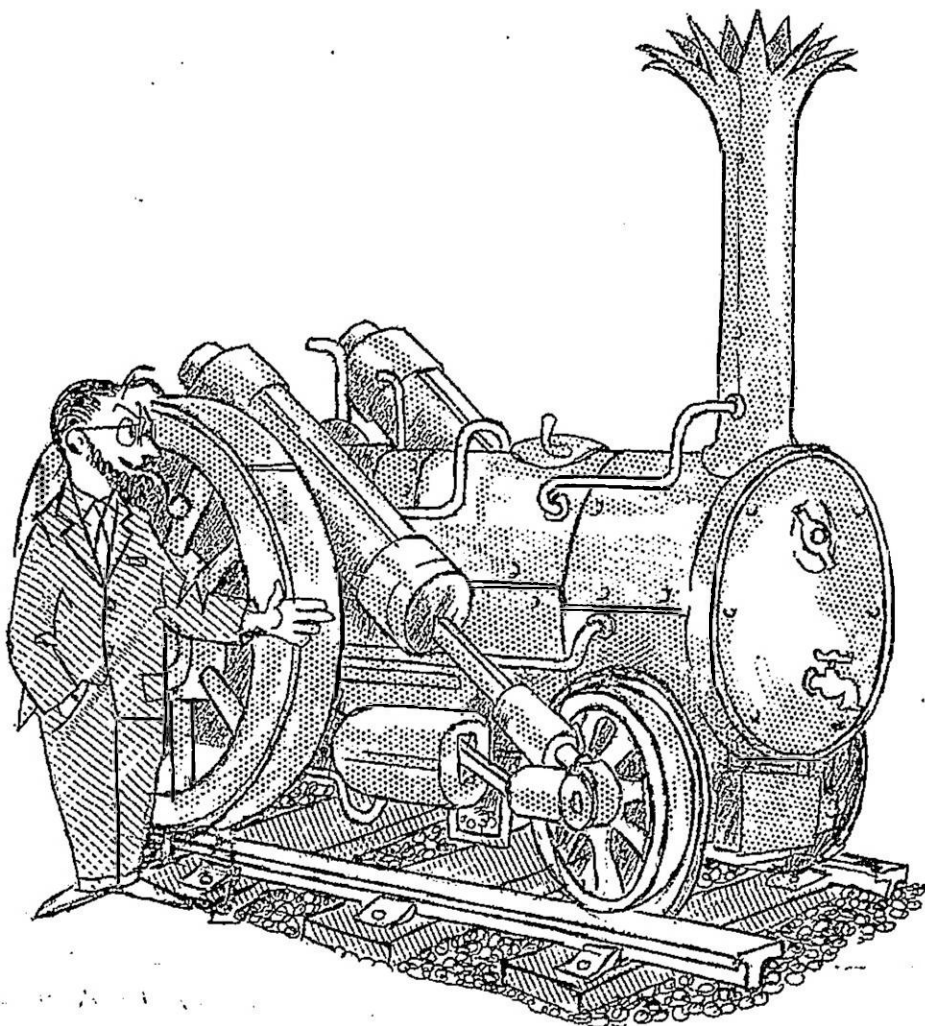
BINARY: PATRIZIO. Poor Anne, my heart bleeds for you. All that work for nothing Isn't it odd, Joe. You can read something of Tubb's and know immediately who it is talking? I wonder does he have a set vocabulary for every occasion or does he really think of what he is saying/writing? It would be interesting to know. So often he sounds as if he just dashes off what comes into his head without stopping to think.

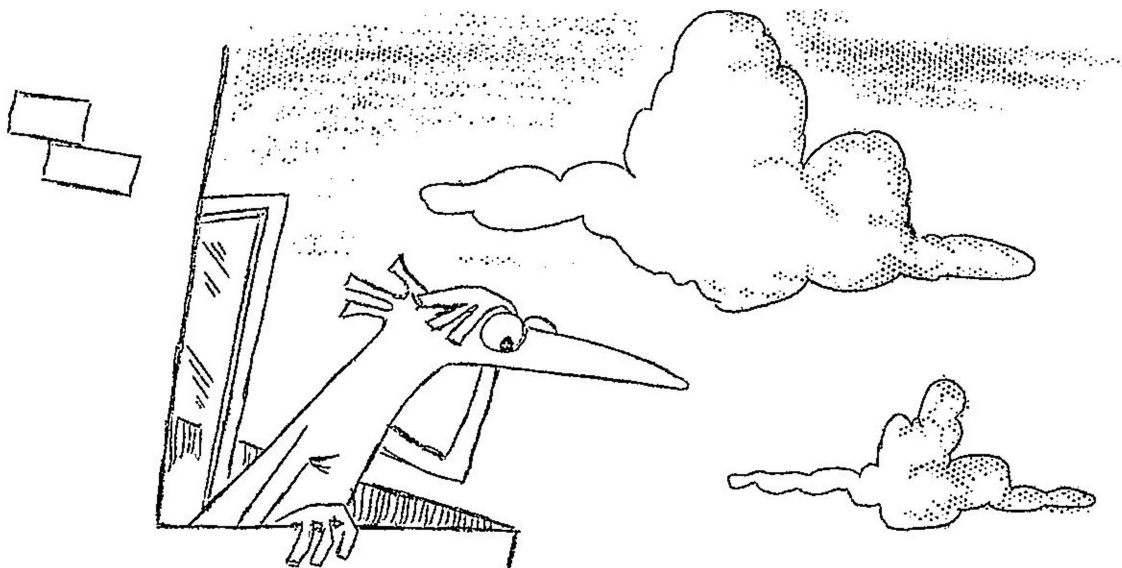
WHATSIT: CHESLIN. Re your comment to John Baxter about books: I buy books for their contents. As long as they are in good condition I would as lief buy the paperback as the hardbac for my collection on the score that it saves money as well as space. You mention that you'd rather have a 1st or more interesting edition if you can afford it. A 1st. I know can be of value but what do you mean by 'more interesting'? Sometimes I think there's a snobbery attached to owning books worse than can be found anywhere else. As long as you can read the thing does it really matter to you which edition it is you have? Unless you are a dealer, of course, and then it does.

Well, I am bowing out for this time. Today is Saturday, I began this last Thursday, and if I get it dupered today Cheslin can take it back home with him when he leaves here on Monday, thus saving me postage. I hate making promises, even half ones, in fandom concerning the appearance of publications. I am always full of good intentions but can so seldom find the time to carry them through. So I'll only say this: provided nothing unforeseen happens I should be able to do your offerings more justice in future mailings, if I make the deadline. I'm not even sure about that. I muchly want to get on with Peregrinations, I would like to publish another ORION before much more time passes. Keep your fingers crossed for me, huh?

I must away, I have housework to do and it must be done today. See you in the next mailing. we hope.

Best.





Odd Notes

by
Arthur
Thomson

Having tried to write my first COMPAT 'ODD NOTES' wittily, intelligently, and, maybe even readably, I was somewhat dashed and cast down by the remarks of our redoubtable editoress, Miz Parker.

"Hhmm," she said, about my column, and a "Hhmm" from her is equal to a punch on the nose from anyone else. This is true. "It doesn't seem to have your usual ebullience" says she. "Oh?" said I, hunting around in the pokey corners of my mind for the meaning of the word she had just used. I found it later, at home, on page 146 of my Chambers Etymological Dictionary (yes, the one I wrote about in PLOY in 1957), so, I decided that when next I wrote my column I would be as gay, charming, and ebullient as all hell.

A Funny Thing Happened To Me On My Way To The Column. I realised that nobody had actually (or factually, for that matter), described this new, plush, palatial penthouse abode of the Parker. "Why, you ebullient old so and so" I said to myself, you have the chance of doing a First. You can go down into posterity, or where-ever they send people like you, as the first ever to write about the Parker residence in a factual and actual like manner. Besides which,

and as well, think of all those fans out there, like F.M. Busby, to name a few, who who will be coming over here for the Worldcon in 1965 (Plug, plug, plug the Con boys), and won't know what he is walking into when he arrives for the Ceremonial Visit to 43, Willum Dunbar House. So.....

Vavoom! Followed by blinding flash and thunderous roar, which all in all is really only me landing mythically and even hypothetically at Albert Road, in the well publicised but, little known, hamlet of West Kilburn, in which lives the well known but, little publicised, fanne, Ella Parker and brother Fred. Albert Road is a somewhat, no, damnit, it is a fullwhat oldish type of neighbourhood. In Albert Road, amongst the tiny little terraced houses, the Council have torn out a large space, no, not in the actual road, clotty, but in amongst the tiny terraced houses and bomb-damage. Into this large, torn out space they have plunked several brand new towering blocks of flats. (For the benefit of our Stateside brothers, it isn't actually a BLOCK long but, the term we use for an apartment building, and, of course, the word 'flat' means, believe it or not, an apartment. Why 'flat', I don't know, other than to differentiate from the word house which means a two or more level building. Mighod, how complicated explanations can become).

As all the flats have numbers, they (the Council) confuse it further by naming the blocks instead of just running the numbers up into the thousands as they do in the U.S. So, by the luck of the draw, and even, just blind chance, the Parker residence is No. 43, in William Dunbar House. Ol' Willum, as we regulars affectionately call it. The flats are only a stones throw from Ella's old home, 151, Canterbury Road, and, as you approach William Dunbar House you can see this by the number of broken windows. The approach to the main entrance to the block is rather hazardous, as the surrounding grounds seem to be in the hands of the Contractors still, from the amount of rubble, building materials, w.c. pans and cement bags that are slowly hardening in the gentle drizzle. I guess there's nearly enough stuff lying around to build another block of flats.

Going through the main door, you find yourself in a rather gloomy foyer, with a large central trunk wall, into which is set a small steel door fitted with a tiny glass and steel mesh window. The effect is something like a film version of the special prisoners section of Lubianka jail. Set in the side of the wall, by the lift doorway, is a small black button and a little red light that, when the button is pressed, gleams balefully at the button presser. There's nothing to indicate that the is going up, coming down, stuck on the second floor, or even lying at the bottom of the lift well. You just have to press the button and stare back at this little red light hoping for the best - thebest is usually about two minutes.

After the two minutes, during which time you have a chance to inspect your fly buttons and blow your nose, there is a dull "whump" and the lift door slides open - oh yes, it's all very uncanny. The regular visitor is ready for this and moves circumspectly into the lift; the unwary visitor steps forward, after making sure that the lift is in fact there, and he isn't stepping into a black void, only to be trapped by some vital part of his anatomy by the lift door which has shot closed again. Once in the lift it's really quite simple. You just have to select the floor number button and press it to carry you up. Ha! You have forgotten on which floor No. 43 flat is. The buttons only tell you the floor numbers, 1,3,5,7, etc. and not the numbers of the flats on each floor. You remember that you did see outside the lift a board giving this information, so you press the 'door open' button and nip out to see which floor you want. Meantime, someone on the top floor calls the lift and it smoothly glides away leaving you hammering on the small black button to bring it back.

After half-an-hour it returns, and three small boys trot out - they had been playing with the lift- you dart in, press the correct button, if you remember it, and sail upwards.

Arriving at the required floor, you step from the lift, walk the wrong way on leaving it and have to trot right round the lift well, looking at all the door numbers before you end up back at the door nearest to the lift in the opposite direction to the one you had taken on leaving it. Pressing the door bell brings a shadow looming up on the frosted glass upper panel of the door, and it opens. Inside there is a corridor stretching way up the length of the flat, with other doors leading off it. To the left of the front door is a coat-rack with about 40-50 coats on it. I'm only guessing that these are all hung on hooks, there could be several young neos under it all holding the coats up.... I don't know. Having managed to successfully get your coat to stay put on top of the pile you make your way up the corridor, past the two doors that turn out to be Fred's and Ella's bedrooms, at the end of the corridor are three doors leading to the bathroom, kitchen and living room. The bathroom has, besides all the usual sort of stuff a bathroom should have, a pair of defective weighing scales that puts the wind up all the femmefans who nip into the bathroom during their visit as a result of the innumerable cups of tea one is forced to consume at Ella's.

The kitchen holds a large washing machine, fridge(ice-box), and cooker. as well as a pile of teacups a mile high. The living room is jampacked wall to wall with fans all holding large mugs of tea and trying to ignore the high-pitched 'Wwwhheeeeeeeee' that issues from the central heating system without stopping. On one of the outer walls there is a large glass door that leads out onto a small balcony(it holds eight people.E.A.P.) clinging to the side of the building. Fans have been known to venture out on to it but, never in a high wind. The position of the furniture in the rooms is at present constantly being changed around. Fred has been moved into and out of every room in the flat before finally being established in his haven of refuge from visiting fans, in the small bedroom half way down the corridor. In Ella's room, and nearly every other place in the flat, lie piles of books, fmz, letters, tapes, tubes of ink, duplicating machines, tape recorders, cameras, mascots, trophies, plastic models, imitation spiders, bamboo poles, foldup putaway tables, that are neither folded up or put away, odd fan guests, visitors, Council men, telephones(KILburn 1422) and pieces of foam plastic that will, no doubt, come in useful for something one of these days when Jimmy Groves gets round to them after having finished putting up curtain rods, pelmets, bookcases, shelves, hooks, light fittings, racks(not the torture variety, despite what you've heard), and all the other gimcracks that seem to be necessary for the continuance of fannish life for Ella Parker.

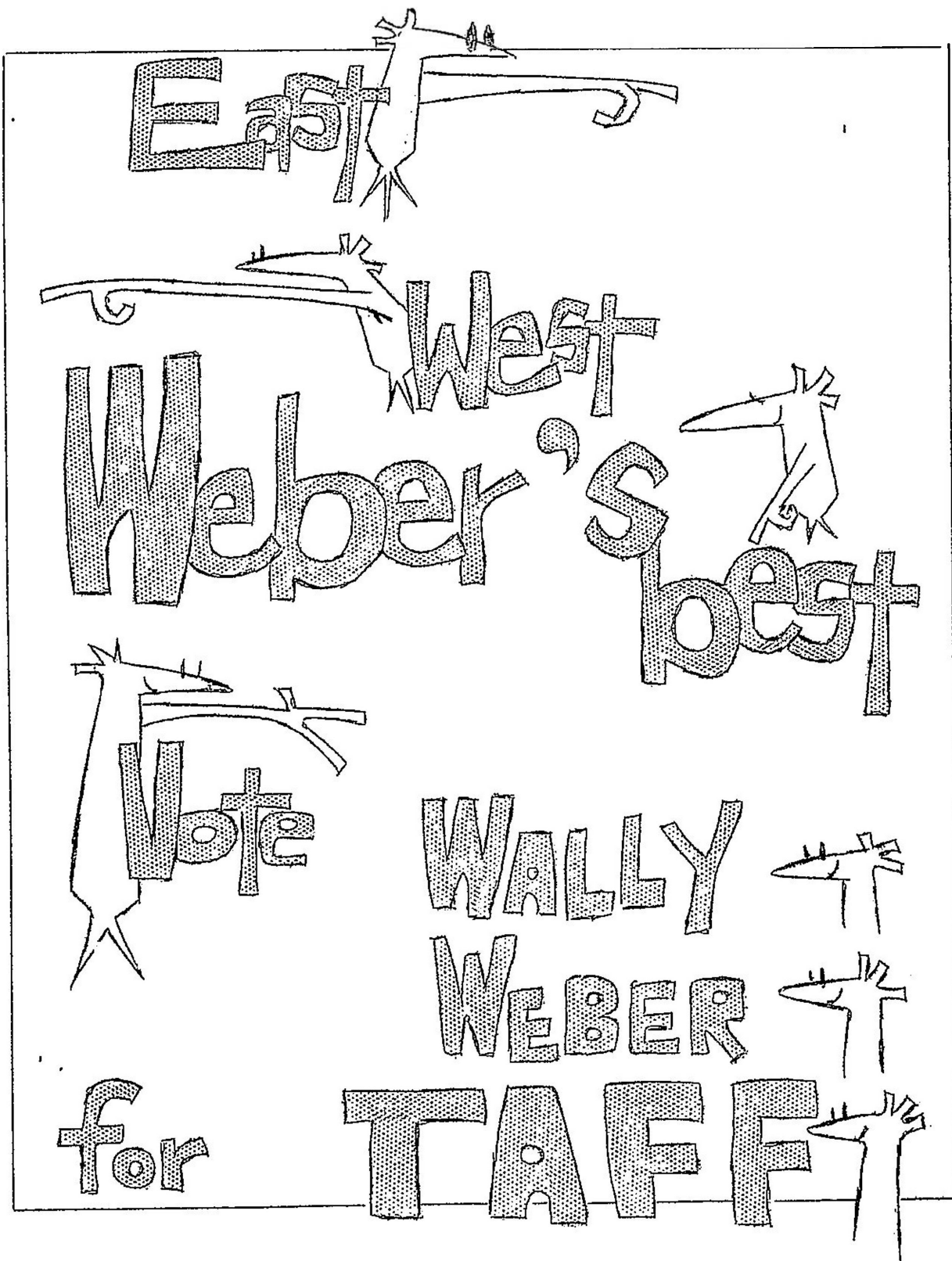
Even so, 43, Willum Dunbar hasn't yet acquired that fabulous fannish air that so graced 151, Canterbury Road; but give her time, Ella's working on it.....

Ella here:

It gives me great pleasure to let you all know that at last we have managed to get Arthur to accept nomination in TAFF for 1964. No, I'm not trying to tell you for whom to vote, just that I'd like for as many as possible to be aware as soon as possible that he is a condidate. Naturally, it would be nice if you felt as I do and voted for ARTHUR THOMSON FOR TAFF, in 1964.

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