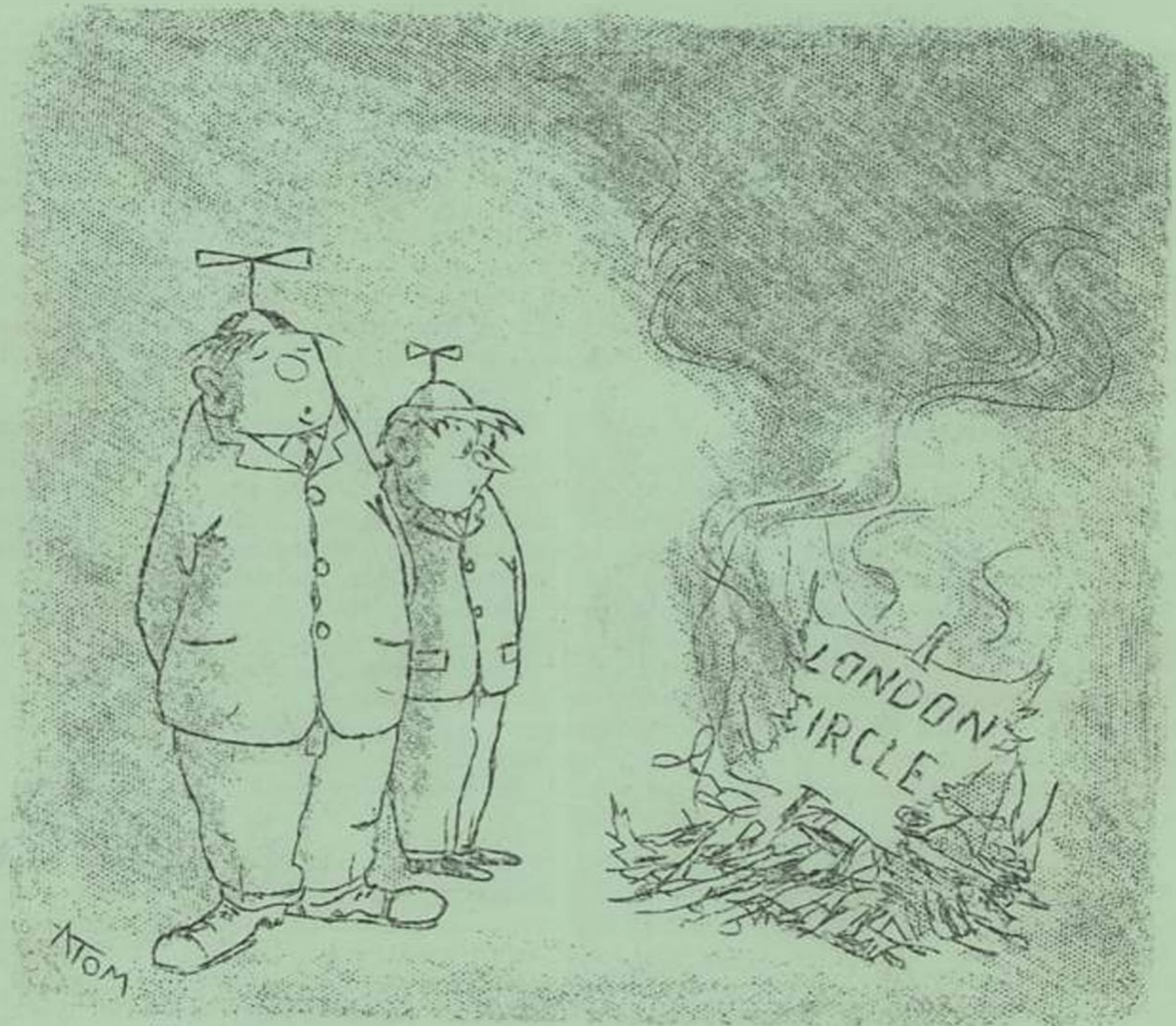


HYPHEN

NO. 23,

NOVEMBER

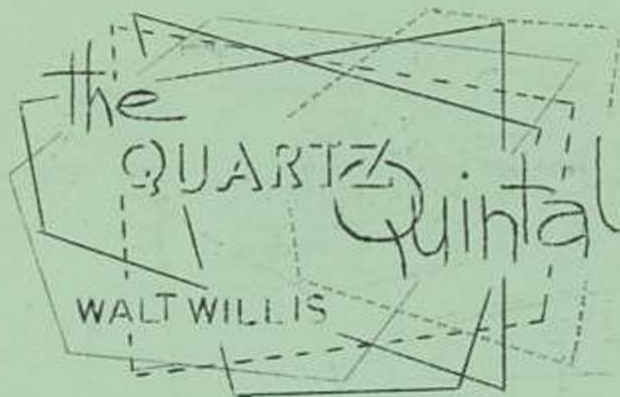
1959



"Keep watching...by all accounts something pretty scary is supposed to rise from the ashes."

THE BOB SHAW FESTIVAL

Walt Hillis, 170 Upper Marlboro Rd. or 27 Clonlee Drive, Belfast 4, N. Ireland & Arthur Thomson, 17 Brockham House, Brockham Drive, London SW2. Pgs. 7-10 by Ving Clarke, 236 Queens Rd., New Cross, London SE14. Incorporating No. 2 of the Bob Shaw Appreciation Magazine



I was looking through some recent Hyphens to find what number to give this one when I came across Bob's reminiscences about bus-jumping and remembered poor Cecil McGivorn. You'll hardly have heard of him I suppose, but Cecil was a bit of a kiff in Belfast bus-jumping circles. People used to get carried past their stops, stunned by the majesty of his technique. He must have been worth a fortune to the Corporation. Of course it was the result of years of practice as well as natural

genius. Cecil had lived all his life in a side street which emerged about forty yards past the bus stop and never within living memory had he deigned to go any nearer. He would just lean nonchalantly against the lamp post reading the morning paper and as the bus lumbered towards him stretch out a casual but firm left arm, the position of his palm in time and space so accurately calculated to intercept the middle upright of the rear entrance platform that he flowed off the kerb and into his usual seat in the corner of the lower deck without lifting his eyes from the paper. The only thing I didn't whole-heartedly admire about his performance was the slight air of ostentation that crept into it through the years, like for instance the momentary slight lowering of his newspaper in acknowledgment of the murmur of awe which greeted his miraculous appearance in the lower saloon. I felt that some day, somehow, pride like that would be humbled.

It happened when the trolley-buses came to Belfast. Fato and the Corporation Transport Manager ordained that they should be tried first on Cecil's route, so he had had no chance to get to know them. Anyhow a trolley-bus looks like an ordinary bus and on that fateful morning I doubt if Cecil, still bleary with sleep, even realised this one was different. He merely saw vaguely over his paper a bus drawing away from the stop, stretched out his confident arm and resumed his study of the sports results. Now as you know the most remarkable thing about trolley-buses is their terrific acceleration. Before an ordinary bus would have even considered changing into second gear, the trolley-bus had reached cruising speed, made a sports car change its mind about passing and, still accelerating, was whirring silently past the unsuspecting Cecil towards a distant green light. In fact if Cecil had raised his arm a millisecond later it would have missed him altogether. As it was, though, the rail cracked into his open palm and plucked him off the pavement like an express train collecting a mail bag. Cecil and his newspaper vanished instantaneously from view.

But not, alas, for long. Another peculiarity of trolley-buses which you may not have noticed is that for some esoteric electrical reason all the handrails are insulated, and in the case of the entrance upright this insulation takes the form of a cylindrical plastic sheath which is often loose. This was so in Cecil's trolley-bus and it made quite a difference. Normally of course his firm grip of the centre brass rail would induce sufficient friction to bring him gently to rest at the entrance to the lower saloon. But this time his firm, even frenzied grip had no effect at all: at the end of his rigid arm he hurtled round the platform with undiminished velocity.

Well, almost undiminished, because the conductor happened to have been on the platform at the time, laboriously pencilling in ticket numbers on his way-bill. But he was a small man and his momentary presence in Cecil's orbit hardly slowed it at all. In fact Cecil and his newspaper were still fluttering regularly in and out of the bus by the time one of the open-minded passengers in the lower saloon summoned the presence of mind to ring the bell and bring the bus to a halt.

THE

OF

Irish

Fandom

PART 4

By

Bob Shaw



I MADE THREE previous attempts to write my part of this history: none of them seemed any good and I tore them up. This period of futile effort wasted about a month and I was beginning to get worried, even though Gibbon took twenty years to write his 'Decline and Fall'—there's a limit to how far you can stretch a fanzine deadline.

Then I realised that the conventional approach to history, the narrative style, was totally unsuited to the fitful fervour, somewhat akin to the last gasps of an expiring candle, of the workings of my mind. What I needed was some way of flashing back to the events so that I could write a little series of vignettes about them. Having so decided I seized my TV set, got wadded a few busbars and things and then, using a soldering iron sold me by Don Charming, I hooked in a desk calendar and one of those little pencil sharpener globes of the world.

Come with me now as I warn my timeviewer up. I will focus it on the night I entered Irish Fandom; using the mechanical calendar and then selecting Walt Willis's house on the globe I'll tune in on that great occasion. As I recall, I was looking pretty sharp that night: I distinctly remember I was on top form at making puns and jokes

too. I must have made an excellent impression on Walt.....ah, the picture is forming now. Here we are late in 1950 outside Oblique House.... Aaarrrggghhhh! Something must be wrong. Who is that weird-looking being with the shabby old raincoat munching at a bag of chips as he walks up the path? Okay, I'll keep quiet and let you hear what happens.....

The dimly seen figure halts at the front door, peers at the number and then finishes his chips, showing that he is both thrifty and clean by chewing up the bag to extract any vinegar or salt that may have been absorbed into it, and then carefully licking his fingers. Next he rings the doorbell and waits. Next he knocks the knocker and waits. Next he rings the bell and knocks the knocker at the same time and waits. Next he rings, knocks, kicks and bangs his head against the door and waits. Finally, bruised and beaten he turns away from the unresponsive door and begins to shamble off down the path when suddenly the door is flung open and a tall figure is lined in yellow light from inside.

"Did you knock?" Walt Willis says.

Overawed, the shabby figure goes, "I...I..that is if...washed my hair last night....I hope..."

"You must be Bob Shaw," Walt says. "I got your name from Ken Slater. Won't you come in?"

Still emitting inarticulate sounds the shabby figure enters the house. Two or three hours go by, during which he is seen briefly at the windows excitedly waving handfuls of science fiction magazines and sandwiches, talking rapidly, describing orbits and spaceship trajectories with his hands. He looks ecstatically happy. He is.

Click.

Well, that's enough of that. I cannot bear to watch such neofannish behaviour. I read right through Walt's collection after that and cured my hunger for sf, meanwhile helping Walt & James White to print the famous Slant, eating's Madolaine's tasty cooking, doing linecuts and getting rid of all the pent up fantalk I'd been storing up all the time I thought I was the only lover of sf in the world. Soon the time of my first convention rolled around. It was the '51 Festival Convention in London. By that time I had developed into a suave, self-possessed type of fan with lots of savoir faire. Yes, I was a pretty good representative of Irish Fandom...I'll just time in on The Epicentre, the famous flat inhabited by Vince Clarke and Ken Bulmer at that time.....

The scene is a long narrow room filled with furnish looking people all of whom are listening to Vince give a lecture on early British sf magazines. There is James White, Walt & Madolaine Willis, Ken Bulmer—all looking like ideal fans...cool, humorous, interesting. Suddenly a hitherto unseen figure with a red face, untidy hair and tie turned with the knot to the side like a hangman's noose struggles out of the depths of a chair.

"Where's the toilet?" the apparition demands. It has obviously been drinking.

"Turn right as you go out through the door," Ken says. "And don't make any noise, Bob. The landlady is very strict about noise late at night."

The apparition gives him a reproachful glance. "I never make

noises," it says, "and I remember now that the toilet is straight ahead as you go out through the door."

"No, no," the others chorus, "that's the stairs!"

Flinging them a glance of mingled pity and contempt the apparition opens the door, repeats its remark about never making any noise and marches straight ahead, with absolute faith in its memory it ignores what seems to me a descending flight of stairs and continues on its course. Its heels skid off the nosing of the first step and onto the next and so on, and with a noise like a prolonged artillery salvo the apparition, standing at attention and looking baffled, slowly disappears from view.

Click.

-hen!...funny how these little events slip from your memory. I'm beginning to wonder if I have this thing hooked up right, or perhaps it is like a tape recorder. These things can only pick up certain ranges of my voice with the result that they make me sound like a harmless idiot. A dangerous idiot would not be too bad because people at least take notice of them, but a harmless idiot is an awful thing to sound like.

Meanwhile, back at the wretch. After the Festicon we returned to the quiet fanac we had been accustomed to, then we founded Hyphen. At first putting out a duplicated magazine seemed very little trouble, but Hyphen was on a much more frequent schedule than Slant and we had to work pretty hard. As usual when there was hard work to be done I was right in there, slogging away, never sparing myself, blood and sweat and so forth.... What a worker! Sometimes I feel thankful I didn't impair my health. Here it comes now....

The scene is the fan attic at Oblique House. The room, although located at the front of the house, is a bustle of activity—James and Walt are walking around a table gathering duplicated sheets, George is stapling them with powerful blows on the EISO stapler, Madeleine is writing addresses. One untidy figure is slouched in the armchair, contemplating the ceiling with an expression slightly reminiscent of Simon Stylites deciding to add another ten feet to his tower.

"How about helping gather the magazine?" Walter says hopefully.

"The Goon Show," the figure exclaims irritably. "I never work during the Goon Show."

"But the Goons went off two hours ago," somebody points out.

"The echoes of their exquisite humour are still fresh in my memory. I can't work with the echoes of their exquisite humour still fresh in my memory. What do you think I am?"

There follow faint gasping sounds coming from a number of impulses which have just been stifled. "Well, how about doing some addresses or helping George on the stapler?" James says. The reclining figure considers this for a moment, then with an expression of infinite weariness on its face it rises, goes to the table, shambles around it several times lifting sheets, gives vent to shrieks of laughter every time it comes to a sheet with the Glass Bushel on it, then collapses into a chair. "'I tried,'" it says weakly, "you all saw me try, but I haven't had a bite to eat since tea time and I'm feeling quite faint."

With resigned expressions on their faces the others pick up their bats and take their places....

Bleep - Bleep - Bleep - Bleep
Bleep - Bleep - Bleep - Bleep
Bleep - Bleep - Bleep - Bleep
Bleep - Bleep - Bleep - Bleep
Bleep - Bleep - Bleep - Bleep
Bleep - Drink - Coca-Cola
Bleep - Bleep - Bleep - Bleep
Bleep - Bleep

Ray Nelson



BY A. VINCE CLARKE

DEDICATED TO ONE WHO COULD DO IT FAR FUNNIER
WITH LESS EFFORT.

I've noticed amongst fans that whenever they come across someone who doesn't fit into the normal routine of life, they say "He should have been a fan." I suppose they go around saying this about Napoleon and Marco Polo and so on, when they read history. I would consider this derogatory - a sort of history lessen. There are not many people that I would pick out as possible fan material from the history books because fans rarely seem to get things done, and therefore don't get into history. My only chance is as a history faker, and for the benefit of any future archeologist who digs HYPHEN I'd like to explain that I did it for money, not fame.

It happened when I was working in the shipyard at Portballintrae as a draughtsman. It wasn't a very big place. In fact, a fellow named O'Halloran was the only other worker there. The owner, who was an Englishman and therefore a fanciful man, had an idea that he could revive the coracle industry and sell genuine Celtic coracles to Americans. I did the designing and O'Halloran did the building. The finished article looked a lot like a washing basket, and in fact we did do a thriving trade in Portballintrae and the surrounding area as far afield as Bushmills, selling coracles to washerwomen. They put a lot of pressure on me to include handles in the coracles, and I mentioned this to the Englishman when he paid us one of his monthly visits.

He whinnied like a horse and turned to O'Halloran, who was hovering in the background. "Listen to this, O'Halloran! Shaw wants us to put handles on the coracles! Hnh-hnh-hnh-hnh-hnh! A boat with a handle! Hnh-hnh-hnh-hnh!"

O'Halloran laughed sycophantically, and this threw me into a state of confusion, because I'd expected him to be on my side. After all, he was selling coracles to the local washerwomen too. I tried to make a joke of it.

"I know plenty of boats with handles, Mr. Smith. 'Queen Mary', 'Queen Elizabeth', 'Duke of Argyll'..."

O'Halloran looked at Mr. Smith to see if he should laugh or not. Mr. Smith just looked bewildered and a bit impatient.

"Well, Shaw?"

This confused me still further. It wasn't a very good joke, but I did expect it to be recognised.

"Mr. Smith," I said. "Mr. Smith, what would they have carried them by in the old days if they didn't have handles?"

He looked at me, twitching his nose like an old horse, and his eyes went blank. I caught a glimpse of O'Halloran out of the corner of my eye and saw he was stuffing his handkerchief into his mouth to stop giggling. I though longingly of days at the draught board with no Mr. Smith and waited. The silence went on for what seemed years and then Mr. Smith cleared his throat as if he was bringin up a bundle of hay and spoke to O'Halloran again. O'Halloran was only a year older than me, but that made him the senior worker. Also, of course, there weren't many coracle builders around, while draughtsmen were as common as relations at a wedding.

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings!" he whinnied. "Hnh-hnh-hnh-hnh! We made a mistake! Hnh-hnh-hnh-hnh-hnh!" Then his laughter stopped, and he swung round at me. "At least, you made a mistake, Shaw! You're the draughtsman!"

"But..." I started. I was going to point out that Mr. Smith had sketched out the original designs, but I felt that would be wrong so I didn't say anything. Mr. Smith shook his head.

"It serves me right for engaging a young boy with no historical sense. A young Irish boy. All they're taught is the anniversary of the Battle of the Boyne ... and that's a holiday." He wriggled his nose. "Listen Shaw; the prehistoric savage carried the coracle on his back with a rope around his forehead fastened from side to side of the boat. I want this included in the design."

He then galloped back to his stable, and I had a quarrel with O'Halloran. He pointed out that it was going to make more work for him to include the rope in with the rest of the coracle, and he was pretty cool for some time afterwards. It was unpleasant, and to ease things I suggested that we went out to a farm up the glen and counted carrot rings. At this period, O'Halloran was mad about natural history, and he wanted to make his own contribution. He had read about the experiments of naturalists who had sawn down trees and by counting the rings in the trunks had been able to tell the wet and dry summers for thousands of years back by the width of the rings. O'Halloran had noticed that carrots, cucumbers and other vegetables also had rings, and he was working on a theory that he could tell what weeks had been wet and dry in the preceding few months by studying these rings. At the time this idea fascinated me, and I forgot to ask him what good it would do. This was Pure Science and we didn't worry about the practical application.

My suggestion of a trip up the glen seemed to work, because O'Halloran grew quite friendly again, and we set out one summer evening in high spirits. We grubbed around in a field for a bit, and O'Halloran was quite excited, digging up every 7th carrot - he said that was the best way to strike an average - and counting its rings. I helped for a little, but soon got bored, and started looking at other things. There was an ant-hill with ants madly wasting time running to-and-fro. At least, they looked as though they were wasting time, but I always have a sneaking suspicion that behind our backs ants suddenly drop their aimlessness and start doing purposeful things...learning how to split the atom or making anti-human germ-cultures. Ants are far older than humans and it seems impossible that they could

be so dumb as they seem; they probably resent us as an upstart race who came from out of nowhere and whom they hate.

I'd been studying this anthill at a safe distance for five minutes when something rolled down the side of the hill and stopped against a pebble. It was a small grey ball, marked with lines, and looked like a small lead marble. I picked it up, and it weighed hardly anything, and certainly wasn't lead. I put it in my pocket, to examine later, and went back to O'Halloran, who was busily writing in a notebook.

"How're you going, Tim?" I asked.

"Not bad - not bad." He had been sitting against an old log, and how he started talking about the rings in the wood, and cursing because he said that woodlice had been eating away the wood and he couldn't count the rings accurately.

When he said 'woodlice' I thought he was joking, but he wasn't. I shuddered at the thought that things big enough to eat a tree trunk were hopping around all over the area. I started trying to manoeuvre us both out of the field without seeming to want to shift from the spot. Tim was talking about woodlice, which he said were isopod crustaceans, and wouldn't get up. I looked over my shoulder to see if there were any isopod crustaceans hopping around the field - I imagined them to be about the size of rabbits with a crab shell - and hinted that it might not be safe to stand around like this. O'Halloran snorted with laughter and superiority.

"Oh, you needn't worry. They're only about half-an-inch long. Look, I'll show you." He broke off some pieces of mouldy wood, and behind the third one there was a small grey eggshaped thing with legs all over the place. It hadn't any head, and looked vaguely familiar.

"What-" I started to ask O'Halloran. Then the thing moved, slipped, and fell. But it didn't fall over on its back like an ordinary beetle, which is a rather pathetic sight in those circumstances. As it fell, it curled up in a ball, and there on the ground was a small lead marble like the one in my pocket.

I shot upright. "Tim!" I screamed. "I've got one in my pocket!"

He looked surprised. "I didn't know you went in for entomology, Shaw," he said, with a one-scientist-to-another smile of lofty amiability. I could feel legs creeping all over me. "Get it out of my pocket," I screeched. He looked even more surprised. I couldn't wait to explain to him that I didn't want to feel in my own pocket. I took the jacket off, tearing one of the arms at the shoulder as I did so, and shook it upside-down. A lot of coins fell out and two pencils and a playing-card I had picked up a few months before, but no wood louse. There was, however, a hole in the lining of the pocket. Was the wood-louse still inside the jacket - or worse, had it got through the hole and was somewhere else on me? As this occurred to me, I felt a tickle on my thigh. Desperate measures required desperate remedies. In ten seconds I had my trousers off and my shirt tail was blowing in the breeze.

"Shaw, what are you doing, you fool?" yelled O'Halloran. I think he thought that I had gone mad, because in case the louse had crept up my shirt I was now dancing from one foot to the other in an endeavour to shake it down.

Nothing happened. It was getting cold, so I put my trousers on again. Then I beat my jacket all over, and put that on. I was shivering, and I thought the best thing to do was to run back to my lodgings. O'Halloran had already started so I began to run after him. He heard me coming, and looked over his shoulder, then gave a curious yelp and started running too. It didn't occur to me at the time that he thought that I was mad and was running after him to attack him. We went down the glen to Portballintrae at a fast trot. It gradually dawned on me that O'Halloran thought that I was chasing him, and I was trying to shout explanations, but I couldn't get enough breath and the odd shout only made him run faster than ever.

When I went to the shipyard next morning O'Halloran opened the door with one hand. He had a foot-long spanner in the other. I tried to explain what I had felt, but the coolness I had tried to overcome by suggesting the trip up the glen was back again, and we didn't really get friendly again. It didn't really matter, as it happened, because the job ended soon afterwards. First of all we found that the local trade dropped to nothing, and people were avoiding us in the streets. It turned out that my dancing had been seen and someone had started the rumour that we were possessed by *loprechauns* and so were our coracles. Old ladies were persuading their old husbands to take out the coracles from the sculleries and bury them at the nearest crossroads. There was a lot of dislocation of traffic in the area and this was blamed on us too. If future archaeologists find remains of coracles buried in the Port Ballintrae area they'll probably think that there was a big manufacturing centre there in prehistoric times, and I wouldn't like to be blamed for something false going into the history books like that. As for the export trade in coracles, the next time we opened our storehouse for the coracles to make up another shipment we found them eaten full of holes. "*Oniscus aspidio* or *Ligia oceanica*," said Mr. Smith, kicking a coracle. It crumbled to powder. "They've certainly taken a hold on the warehouse. I'll have to shut down." He twitched his nose. "I wish I knew who brought wood lice into this place." He glared at me. So did O'Halloran, but he didn't say anything, and we both got a fortnight's notice.

I went back to Belfast, and the last I heard of O'Halloran he had a job making pieces of amber with insects caught in them for the export trade. It was the sort of job that would suit him.

BOB SHAW IS A GOOD MAN BOB SHAW IS A GOOD MAN BOB SHAW IS A GOOD MAN BOB SHAW IS A GOOD MAN BOB SHAW IS A GOOD MAN

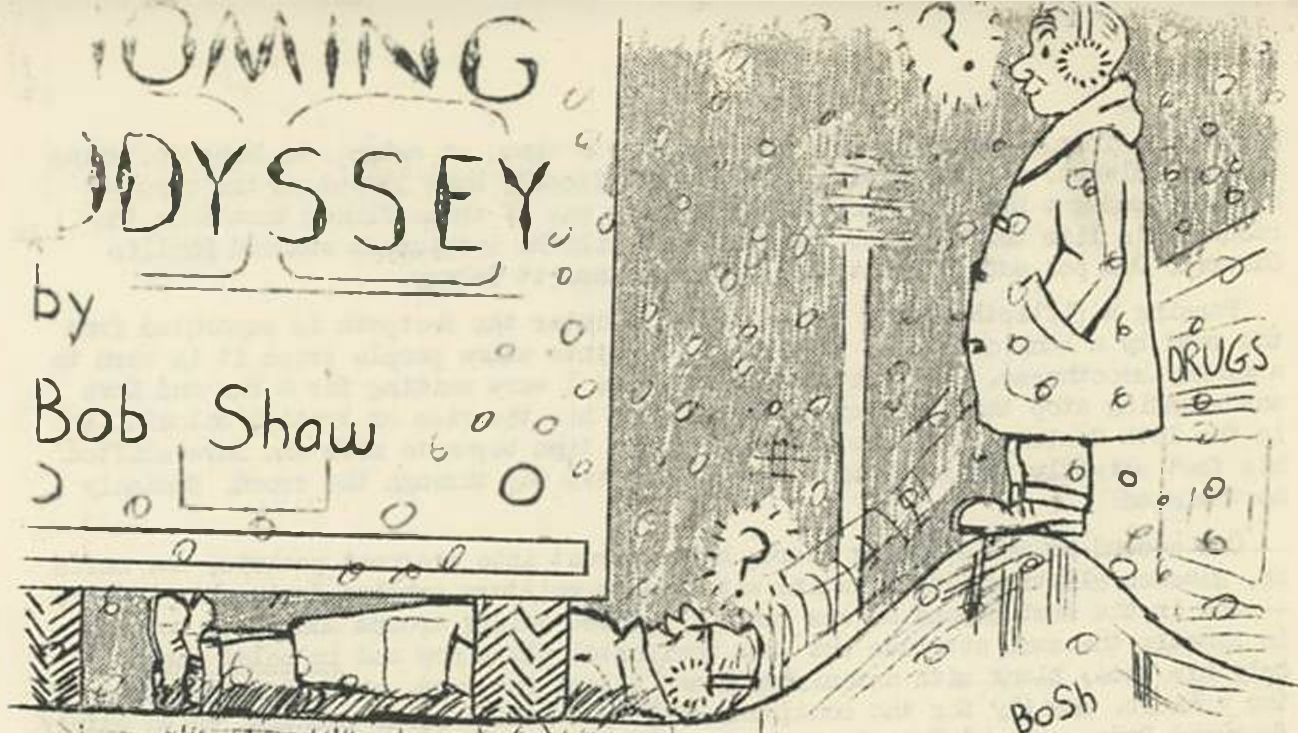
LOOK HOMEWARD, GRUNCH

Back in its proper personality, GRUNCH hereby makes an appeal on behalf of old fanzines; Don't throw us away, some neo of 1967 might love us! Which arises from the fact that a BNF recently confessed to Inchmery Fandom that it had recently destroyed a large quantity of unwanted fanzines. After wiping the blood from our styli, it occurred to us that we might have been a little hasty, as there has been little in fanzines of recent years concerning fanzine foundations and the like. Well, John Roles of the Liverpool S-F Society is most of the way through cataloguing several hundred, but that particular foundation will probably find its way down to the Cheltenham S-F Circle, who are running a fanzine library. Nearer home - in fact, right at home, at Inchmery, 236 Queens Rd., New Cross, London SE14, - we'll be pleased to help with wants and disposals; write us. Remember; however ugly a fanzine is, someone somewhere has loved it. Perhaps. A. VINZ CLARKE

COMING ODYSSEY

by

Bob Shaw



Chapter I August 23, 1958

When I perform a certain action for the last time and realise that it can never be done again I always try to analyse my feelings. It stands to reason that, at these turning points in life, the old brain will be stirred into producing a batch of good solid philosophical stuff, suitable for inclusion in future stories and articles. I suppose most people who write a little or a lot react in the same way.

The trouble is that, cowed by the enormity of the task confronting it, my brain freezes into silence like a scared cat and disowns the Muse. Going through Calgary on the way to the Greyhound depot I was completely unable to think of anything profound. All I could do was remember the stupid things about the past two and a half years.....

Passing the City Hall... The Mayor and Council grew dissatisfied while I was there with Calgary's little advertising tag, "The Stampede City". They drafted a new one which was enthusiastically received by all, and now Calgary is being billed everywhere as "The Industrial City of the Foothills". A lesser breed of men might have been somewhat deterred by the fact that Calgary has no industry whatsoever, but, somehow, there is something typically Californian about this.

Passing the TV station... Being a small company, Calgary's CHCT-TV could not afford any big time announcers and personalities. Accordingly, they used a bunch of queer people, gathered locally, who, apparently under the impression that the TV cameras had exercised a benign effect on their IQs, took every opportunity to instruct viewers on topics of the day. This was the best part of a programme which was for the most part canned. We were often regaled with little tidbits about the "interrogation" of Little Rock schools, or informed that Grenada was written about the island of Grenada.

A favourite method of displaying their erudition was to explain the plot of every film before it was shown. One night one of the lads was giving us a few helpful

hints on a film which started Corinne Calvet to whom, of course, he kept referring as Miss Calvert. His repetition of this must finally have jarred on the ears of his boss and got him into trouble because, by one of those flukes that make the raconteur's life worth while, the very next film he introduced starred Phyllis Calvert. Our pal made a great point to pronounce it Calvey.

Passing a fiftieth avenue bus stop... In winter the footpath is separated from the road by a bank of frozen snow which at points where people cross it is worn to a glassy smoothness. One night Dave Rhodes and I were waiting for a bus and Dave was standing atop this bank expounding one of his theories on British colonialism in the 18th Century. When the bus drew up the line began to move and Dave shifted his feet slightly in preparation for bulling his way through the crowd. Suddenly he vanished!

One second he was standing there, hands thrust into overcoat pockets, our muffs on, glasses glinting, lips white with frozen moisture exhaled during his lecture—and in the next second he was gone! I glanced wildly around and there he was, in exactly the same attitude but on a horizontal plane now and in below the bus. Only his feet, black with astonishment and silent for once, protruded from under the vehicle. Luckily for the continuance of my Canadian Glass Biskets, which mainly featured Dave, several Yugoslavian waiters managed to extricate his bulky and apparently paralysed form before the bus moved off.

My mind was full of memories like these as we arrived at the Grayhound Depot and found Dave Rhodes waiting to see us off, although it was barely seven in the morning. He explained hastily that that he had been unable to sleep and had nothing else to do anyway. Having seen his digs I was inclined to believe him. He lived in a tiny cellar down beside the furnace of a house owned by an old and lady who went around all day clad only in a huge black kimono. There was a noisy refrigerator, a noisy air-conditioning system, a noisy clock, noisy plumbing and a monstrous parrot upstairs. But it was cheap!

Dave, Sallie, Claire & I went in for breakfast. All the familiar sights of Calgary seen through the restaurant windows looked strange to me and everything seemed to have developed a brownish tinge the way it is in Cinemascope film. We had bacon and eggs and a farewell chat. Our pile of cases must have made us look like new arrivals in the country, for the waitress who had served us suddenly asked, quite rudely, where we had come from. ER and I looked at each other to see who would answer; so I told the girl we came from 27th Avenue. She went away looking baffled and I felt we had made a good start on the trip.

A few minutes later we were on the bus and waving goodbye to ER whose face wore, under its coating of egg yolk, a most un-Rhodesian look of sadness. It wasn't until about an hour later that I remembered I still owed him fifty cents, but by that time Calgary was fading away into the mists of memory.

Chapter II August 23-25

IN THEORY THE BUS was a good idea. We were travelling through country we had never seen before and would probably never see again so it seemed best to get the closest possible look at it. The advertisements showed several immaculately dressed people reclining in spacious chairs and having an interesting discussion about the scenery rolling by outside. It looked pretty nice—and it was cheap.

After the trip had started I found that the artist who had drawn the picture had been an expert at what is known in draughtsmanship as "omission for clarity". In fact he had omitted nearly everything, including the looming luggage racks, the profusion of coats and cases and boxes, the other passengers and a number of little

wavy lines radiating from the aforementioned immaculate peoples' faces, which is the conventional way to indicate an excess of warmth.

It is only fair to say that the artist probably didn't know that the air-conditioning plant would not work during my last journey in Canada. It hadn't worked during the first either: in the train from Halifax to Montreal it had been so badly out of kilter that the side walls of the compartment had been unbearable to touch and we spent two days in a perspiring heap in the centre of the carriage. Now we had much the same effect except that the heat came from all sides, and I don't like heat. Even the sight of the Frank Slide in British Columbia where the whole town of Frank was buried under a rock fall failed to cheer me up.

The only good thing about the heat was that it enabled us to sleep during most of the journey down to Los Angeles which was a big help, because you get tired of looking at little rivers each of which has a large notice telling you it is So-and-So Creek. Alberta and British Columbia seem to be full of creeks, in spite of the fact that it is oil country.

The first night we jounced along through utter darkness for hours and I kept waking up and trying to see where we were. We kept going through small hamlets with names like SNACKS, CANNIS and EATS and the bouncing got worse and worse. For a long time I was almost sure that the driver had lost his way and was driving over cart tracks and ditches in an effort to find the main road again. In the morning I found out that he had been lost and my guess had been correct.

The rest of the trip passed uneventfully, or else I was too drowsy to notice anything, and before we knew it we were whizzing along through the outskirts of Los Angeles, peering out of the bus with wondering eyes in the hope of seeing Sergeant Friday or the Empire State Building or something.

Chapter III August 25 to September 3

There was a time in my life when I didn't know what a nervous breakdown was. I would read about it happening to people and try to understand what they meant when describing the symptomatic depression, but I never could. In my mind there was always a smug complacency--if these poor people had had fine stable minds like mine they would have been all right, I would think. Then, in the six months before I left Calgary, I was forced to work at the limit of my capability for thirteen hours a day every day, except Sundays, when I had a half day off. There were only two evenings during the whole summer on which I wasn't at work.



I began to learn about nervous breakdowns.

I didn't have one, luckily, but I missed it by a hairsbreadth. During the whole of the trip home I was in the grip of a depression that I won't even attempt to describe. My state of mind was such that the slightest mention of atomic bombs or even the Cold War made me want to run away and hide. I developed a dread of seeing new faces, of hearing strange voices. I suppose this type of personal reminiscing is a little out of place here, but as the symptoms were at their peak when I reached Los Angeles and the Convention I feel that a note on my mental state is not altogether irrelevant.

I enjoyed the Convention as best I could in the circumstances. I met a lot of people who were so pleasant and such fun to be with that the sheer enjoyment I got from being with them managed to penetrate my gloom. The South Gate Con has been described in great detail by several expert reporters, and another Con has

come and gone since then, so I won't expand on it.

Unfortunately for our plans, the prolonged bus journey had made Claire ill and by the time we reached Los Angeles it was obvious that she wouldn't be able to continue the journey by that means of transport. Accordingly I went round to the Greyhound Depot as soon as we had checked into the Alexandria, explained the situation and tried to cash the rest of our tickets. Of course they wouldn't do it. I was told that the tickets would have to be cashed at the office where I bought them. I pointed out that that office was 2000 miles away to the north and it would be slightly out of my way when I left for New York. The clerk explained that things were tough all over.

Somewhat baffled I went to a nearby branch of Cocks and checked the prices of plane and train. The train was 300 dollars and the plane 200. I worked it out that after I paid my hotel bill and expenses I would have about 240 dollars left, so I booked us on the plane and paid for the tickets. Then it turned out that I had far too much luggage for the plane and that it would cost \$20 or \$30 to ship the excess to New York. This would mean arriving in New York with practically no money at all, and it posed quite a problem. The Shaw brain probed around for a while and finally came up with a feasible, though illegal plan.

In a previous Bushel I have described my abortive attempts to embark on a career of crime, but this scheme worked perfectly and I became a Master Criminal in no time at all. On coming out of the Greyhound Depot my first impulse had been to mail my tickets back to Cocks in Calgary immediately, even though the refund would have had to be sent to Belfast and would have been useless in my present predicament. I changed my mind and decided to retain the tickets till I reached New York. Then I gathered the excess luggage from the hotel, took it to the bus depot, handed it over and told them I wanted it sent on ahead of me to New York. They said that was a good idea, checked my tickets and took the cases away.

(In New York a few days later I went to the Greyhound Depot and regained my luggage without any trouble. Technically I had defrauded the bus company, but I felt more like a modern Robin Hood, robbing the rich to help the poor. Besides, if they had refunded my money when I asked for it I wouldn't have had to outwit them. I like to think that I struck a small blow against the business mentality: you could walk into any firm anywhere and say you want to pay some money, they'll take it without question—but go in the next day and try to get it back and you're in trouble.)

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"The will is the rejection
of all expressions of the
mundane."

—Abolincoux

Back at the hotel I dashed off a letter to Dick Ellington telling him we would be arriving a few days earlier in New York and asking could he fix up accommodation. After that I was able to relax.

As I said, I'm not going to go into detail about the Convention but I think it might be a good idea to clear up a few misconceptions about the Tea Drinking Contest. To tell the truth, I had never drunk more than three cups of the stuff together in my life. To me tea is merely a lubricant for food and I still find it almost impossible to drink a cup of it by itself. However I was prepared to do my best to give my opponents a good tannin.

On the morning of the contest I was wandering about looking for somebody to go for a couple of beers with me. Suddenly I saw a face which I had last seen in 1951 in London; to be exact, I had seen it in Perry Ackerman's hotel room. Perry had brought us there promising that he could get beer even though it was well after 10pm. He had just been informed that no beer could be had. The face I was gazing

on now and at that time registered dismay, horror, thirst, frustration and misery. I advanced on it with arms outstretched and shouted "Lee Jacobs!"

He was glad to see me, and it turned out that he too was thirsty so we went across the street and Lee introduced me to American draught beer. A couple of beers later I remembered the contest. I went to the room where the event was to take place and took my seat. It turned out that you had to drink ten cups in the first hour to qualify, so people began lashing their back at top speed. I was too cunning for this.

A swift calculation showed me that I would have to average one cup every six minutes and I decided to do exactly that—nothing more and nothing less. Scientific stuff, you see. This way I would qualify with the minimum of effort and give my stomach the best chance to adjust to what was happening. I had the forces of mathematics and medicine on my side so the thing should have been a cinch.

Actually it was a cinch—I got a very tight feeling round my stomach after cup five. Ignoring it I waited till the six minutes were up then called for my next cup. It made my head light. This was ridiculous. I had worked it all out too well for this. But after the next cup I got pins and needles in my cheeks. With me this is a danger signal so I promptly retired from the contest. When I relinquished my seat I received a large ovation, which is another way of saying that people threw eggs, but I hadn't wanted to take any risks.

I stayed on to see who would win and recovered from somewhat, in my own eyes, by quaffing a bottle of beer along with the judges, Bob Bloch & Poul Anderson. One poor chap reached the magnificent total of 21 then turned white and threw up his hands in defeat. Halfway to the

toilet he did the same with his tea. A tall fair girl, who must have been from Southern Ireland because everybody called her Sinn Fein, won the contest with 23 cups, which was more than I could ever have taken—even without the beer. So if, as I suspect, Rick Sheery hired Lee Jacobs to sabotage me he wasted his money.

During my week in Los Angeles I rested as much as I could. Once I made an expedition in company with Boyd Reburn, Ted White and Jim Caughren in which we discovered a shocking fraud on the part of Hollywood film companies. That white wooden signpost, reading Hollywood and Vine, which has endeared itself to millions throughout the world by its numerous appearances on the screen—ISN'T THERE! Bong goes another cherished illusion. Many a winter morning when I was trudging to work through the rain, snuffling with the cold, being depressed by the greyness of Irish suburbia, I would think of that white wooden signpost standing there in the Californian sunshine and it always kindled a little glow of warmth inside me. Now it is banished to the same limbo as Santa Claus and three colour vision.

When South Gate was over and all the goodbyes said, the Shaw family caught an American Airways DC7 for New York.

Chapter IV September 3 to 4

On the plane the seats were arranged in threes along one side. Sadie, Claire and I occupied the two seats nearest the aisle and a student had the one next to the window. It was my first flight and I was quite impressed with everything

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"Alas the musing rings of our fulfillment; they run down athwart the twin hand-maidens of antiquity and futility."

—Mellinson



although I did find one or two minor faults. The little bit of the window I could see beyond the student's head showed nothing but an expanse of wing. I decided to concentrate on the window on the opposite side but, due to what I regard as a piece of sheer bad planning, there was a wing there too.

Sensing that we might want to know what was going on outside the student, as the plane was gaining height, said, "Ah, the Pacific by moonlight." I nodded intelligently and began to read the little booklets you get explaining why you don't have a parachute. Not only did it fail to convince me on this point but it gave me a few bad moments by warning that nothing inflammable must be left in the luggage. Personally I think this notice would be more effective if you saw it before your luggage was taken away and stored in the hold. All through the flight I wondered unhappily about my suitcase which was overflowing with VOTE FOR SPEER matchbooks that people had been handing out at the Convention.

Three hours later the student aroused me from uneasy slumber by a new report from Outside. "Ah, the small farming communities of the Far West." I thanked him and went back to sleep. Another three hours or so later breakfast came round and a fresh bulletin; "Ah, the small farming communities of the Middle West." Later we passed over the top of the East and I was able to deduce that we were nearing our destination. When we reached New York and were going down the student, who had apparently given me up as being an unromantic clog, whispered to Sadie, "The Pacific by moonlight and the Atlantic by dawn."

I just ignored him.

Chapter V September 4 to 11

ARRIVING IN NEW YORK I found I had slightly more money than I had expected and we were able to afford to stay in a little hotel in Greenwich Village without having to disrupt the even tenor of Numery life for a week. I had decided that the best way to regain my normal fairly cheerful mental outlook was to get lots and lots of rest. I had been trying to do this in Los Angeles but with the convention going on it had been slightly impossible. I seized my chance to recuperate in New York.

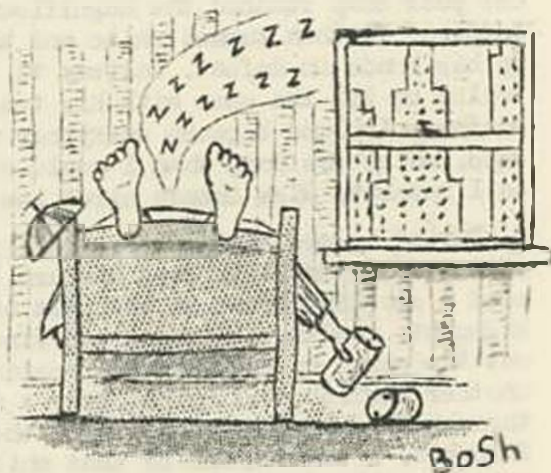
For a whole week I slept twelve hours a day and only occasionally did anything strenuous, like looking over the open air art display in Washington Avenue or feeding the pigeons in Central Park. We had dinner with Horace Gold and Sandy on the second day—a most enjoyable, although for me slightly disconcerting experience. The reason for this is that I am an habitual noncommittal grunter. I go about uttering noncommittal grunts all the time. I suppose it is just laziness, but if anybody makes a remark which I am not too sure about or even downright disagree with I just emit one of these grunts, and everything goes on smoothly.

That sort of thing doesn't work with Horace.

If he says something he means it, and he won't be satisfied with an incoherent noise from the nostrils and chest in reply. Every now and then he would say something which would elicit one of my grunts and then he would question me narrowly until I had definitely either agreed or disagreed with him. Then, if I had disagreed

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"The magnificence of interest is but the tawdry finery of antipathy."
—Dilyris Evans



he wanted to know why. It was a refreshing thing and probably blew a lot of cobwebs out of my conversational habits.

On the night before we were due to sail a small deputation, consisting of Larry Shaw, Ben Curran and Joe Schomburger, came round to the hotel to invite me out to a party. The four of us went to the abode of a fellow called Al, who had a voice exactly like Vincent Price's, and there I had my first experience of a New York ran gathering.

It was a stifling night, and the fact that Al lived in a small basement flat didn't help things. We sat around in our shirts and talked for a good bit about psychiatry and politics, two subjects on which I am completely ignorant. The main figure in psychiatry discussion was a geezer by the name of Rike. His work was lauded by Ben & Al but Joe didn't seem to think too much of him mostly because he advocated sitting inside of a box. Apparently we all emit organs all the time and these radiate off into space and get wasted and this is bad for us. But if you make a big box and shut yourself inside, the organs can't get away and you can seek them back up again—this is the way I picked it up from Joe, who had the loudest voice there.

The others, with the exception of Larry Shaw, who was killing a bottle of gin, argued over Rike for a long time but Joe was adamant. He just had no faith in organ boxes. Al had a huge bottle of ale sitting in the middle of the floor from which he and I replenished our little tankards, so it was quite cozy down there.

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"The window of ignorance protects the riches of Solomon."

—Pope Trivius XIV

Suddenly there was a knock at the door and Tom Condit arrived in a black leather jacket. He sat down and began to talk, every now and then hunching up his shoulders, peering into our faces and emitting a peculiar laugh which reminded me of the sound a lifeboat makes when it runs aground on a sandy beach. He seemed to have taken some kind of a rash around his nose and his upper lip was liberally smeared with ointment. This was quite harmless of course, but when he seized the bottle of ale from the floor and began taking occasional swigs I put my tankard away with a sigh.

The conversation took on a different note now. Rike was forgotten and everybody began to sing anarchist songs which were full of bits about machine-gunning nuns and blowing things up. Each time a particularly atrocious deed was described everybody looked at each other and shook their heads with expressions of reluctant admiration. Finally Al got fed up and threw us out at about one in the morning.

Out on the footpath Larry Shaw regarded me solemnly, clutching his brief case in one hand, and said sorrowfully, "It should have been more memorable. Much more memorable." He had drunk more gin than I had ever seen anyone do at a sitting, but he was commendably steady. He wandered off in the general direction of my hotel with Larry repeating his original statement every few yards. Suddenly he was struck by an idea.

"Let's go and visit Dave Mason," he said. "That'll make it memorable."

The others didn't seem too keen, but after some discussion we went to Dave Mason's "pad" and pounded the door till he got out of bed and let us in. When I entered his room he was attired in jeans, check shirt and a guitar which he strummed in a minor key while making brilliant verbal attacks on Tom Condit. Tom didn't seem to mind and things became rather dimless.

All it once it dawned on Larry that this wasn't going to be memorable either so he decided to make an abrupt exit and wash his hands of the whole affair. His

plan was to simply disappear through the door—no goodbyes, no regrets. Unfortunately the door he picked was that of a closet.

The first intimation we had that Larry had put his plan into action was the banging of the closet door. There was an astonished silence in which we all stared at each other with looks of wild surmise. Larry remained in the closet for a little while, probably wondering what to do next, knowing that we all knew he was in there....

I felt terrible.

Presently he came out again, with the cleverly assumed look of a man who has been casually exploring his host's other rooms. Tactfully nobody mentioned the thing to him and everybody looked the other way as he sidled over to another door—the right one this time. A few seconds later a loud crash announced his departure.

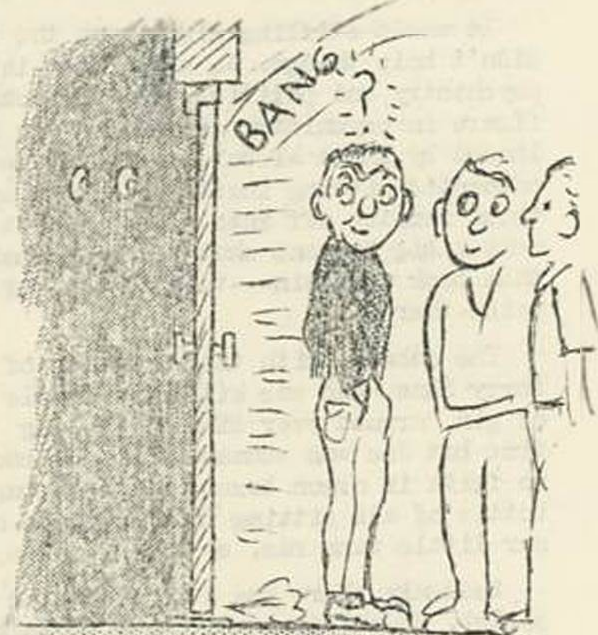
After that the sparkle seemed to have gone out of the evening and the gathering broke up. Joe Schomburger walked back to the hotel with me and on the way we had a most interesting chat about old science fiction.

In the morning Sadie, Claire and I loaded all our stuff into a taxi and headed for the Queen Elizabeth.

Chapter VI September 11 to 16

The Atlantic crossing was absolutely without incident. The weather was perfect and I did nothing but eat, drink, sleep and enjoy books, tobacco and beer and the salubrious breezes of the sunny ocean.

The Statue of Liberty was rather a disappointment. From films we had gained the impression that it loomed right over passing liners and, indeed, before we sailed Sadie was slightly nervous in case that huge ice cream cone effort should fall on the ship. In reality we noticed the statue more or less by accident, and it looked small and lonely and pathetic standing on that little island all by itself, with nothing but the birds and the sea mist for company. I think it would be a nice gesture if *fandom* subscribed the money to erect a statue of similar dimensions on the same island—a male figure wearing a bean'ie and holding a fanzine aloft would probably be popular. The project wouldn't have to be completely impractical because if we made the statue hollow it could be used as a Glen Strick and a hotel for TAFF winners or other famish travellers.



Bosh

That week of luxury and complete rest exercised a benign effect on the old nervous system and by the time we reached Southampton I was beginning to come out from under the cloud.



ON DISSEMBLING we travelled a few miles to Portsmouth to spend a couple of days with Sadie's sister who is married to a professional footballer called Norman Uprichard, who was playing goal for Portsmouth at that time. A professional footballer's house is curiously like that of a BNF, only translated into a different sphere of activity. People, all connected with football, come and go, soccer literature is all over the place, walls are covered with photos and souvenirs, everybody talks football.



Having a passion for Roman history I knew there was a very good Roman relic, Portchester Castle, just outside Portsmouth so I asked Norman to take me out to it. He obviously considered this a rather peculiar way to spend an afternoon but he agreed to go along. The whole way out on the bus he kept chatting about soccer until it dawned on him that I knew nothing about the subject and cared far less. He lapsed into a disarrayed silence, like a Presbyterian minister who has just been confronted by a blatant atheist.

It was a warm sunny afternoon and the rural scenery looked wonderful after my absence of three years. The Castle itself was magnificent. It consists of a huge grassy quadrangle surrounded by massive stone walls with a tower at one corner which was built by the Normans. I pattered around happily for a bit, with Norman trailing along behind politely trying to look interested, then I decided to climb up to the top of the tower, or keep, as it is called in books. Norman looked so depressed during the long scramble up the old stairs that I considered making a joke about how nice it was after all these centuries to have a Norman 'keeper back in the Norman keep. I decided against it.

At the top the air was heavy and warm, the castle was deserted and a mist had risen from the sea to hide all evidence of the 20th century.

"Look down there," I said to Norman, "You can almost see them." And it was true. Emerging from the dark darkness of the keep onto the roof had been like stepping through a doorway into another age and I could almost hear the rhythmic tramp of booted feet and see the afternoon sun glinting on the armour and weapons of ancient Rome. The eerie atmosphere of the place seemed to have affected even Norman for he looked quite impressed.

He stared down for a long time then, suddenly, Norman gave a strangled gasp and pointed a shaking finger at the quadrangle below. "Look!" he cried.

I did look—and there was nothing there! A strange chill descended on me and, but for the fact that I had been to the barber that morning, the hairs on the back of my neck would have prickled.

"Who... what is it?" I quavered.

"Look. Don't you see it?" he cried excitedly.

All at once I realised what had happened and felt an upsurge of guilt. Norman's football-impregnated brain had given way under the powerful imaginative impact of

THOUGHT FOR TODAY

"Thought is a laurel leaf, green veined but deadly."

--Agravius, circa 550BC

this place and he was having delusions. I should never have brought him.

"Take it easy, Norm," I soothed. "There's nothing there."

"Don't be so bloody daft," he said crudely. "Can't you see that football pitch?"

I looked again and, sure enough, faintly outlined on the green quadrangle were the faint markings of an old football pitch. I had no idea how it got there, but there it was. Norman was overjoyed. When we went down I decided to go for a walk along the walls and while I was doing that I suddenly noticed that Norman was no longer with me. I looked around and there he was, down on his hands and knees, peering into the remains of a goal post hole. He stayed there during the whole of my inspection of the walls and, for all I know, he got as much out of that little hole as I did from the crumbling stones that had been placed by legionaries' hands.

Back at the house Norman told everyone about his find: who would have thought that these old forts were such interesting places?

The following day Sadie and I went up to London leaving Claire with Sadie's sister and mother. We paid a visit to the White Horse for old times sake then went and met Ving and Joy Clarke and Sandy Sanderson, who gave us food and shelter for two glorious days of sight-seeing in London. We all went to the Globe where the London Circle had turned out in full force and it was like old times again.

By this time I was beginning to come back to the BoSh of old and we had a really uproarious time the next day when Ella Parker and Ivor Mayne very generously gave us a full day to act as our guides to a lot of places I had missed seeing during the time I lived in London. At Madame Tussauds we bought only one catalogue between the four of us so Ella elected to read out what each tableau was as we came to it. She has a very strong clear voice and in no time at all we had collected a large audience of school children and interested adults who followed us around under the impression that Ella was an official guide. This would have been all right except for the fact that, somewhere along

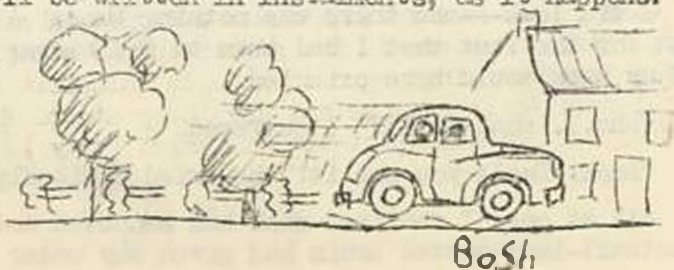


the line, Ella missed out a number in the catalogue and began reading out the wrong titles. The expression of growing bafflement on the faces of the crowd as we went from scene to scene would alone have made the trip worth while.

Next day we met Sadie's mother and Claire at the station and caught the Ulster Express for Belfast.

Chapter VIII September 21 onwards

THIS IS LIKELY to be a very long chapter and will be written in instalments, as it happens.



(Ctd. from p. 2) As I pointed out to him later, he was lucky the conductor wasn't hurled through a plate glass window. As it was, the soft fruit of a greengrocer's stall arrested his flight quite safely and by the time the driver had half of scrape him down he was quite a lot calmer. In fact he was quite civil about it after Cecil had made up the money he said was missing from his bag. He hasn't forgotten though, and nowadays he always makes the driver wait when he sees Cecil coming out of his street. I doubt if Cecil will ever return to big time bus-jumping however; something seemed to go out of him that day.

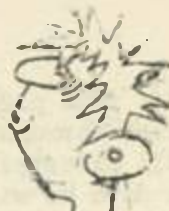
As you'll have suspected by now, this issue is a special one celebrating Bob Shaw's return to Ireland. There has never been enough Bob Shaw writing in fanzines—how could there be?—and this one is no exception. In fact it even looks a normal type Glass Bishel, and Ving and I have tried to remedy this deficiency. A regular (haw) issue will be along later with lots of leftover letters. Meanwhile I just want to apologise for breaking last time what Co-Founder Chuck Harris points out was a fine old tradition, that at least one of the banquets is always from him: and to mention that Alex Morrison of 5 Canyle Place, Staverston, Stirling, Scotland would like correspondents in the station and to say SF backhandedly etc

Merry Jooven. 53 Sharrard Grove, Sheffield 12. == Sweet and Lo has probably started something...Thousands upon thousands of queer queries...I suggest you get an article of even queerer answers, and offer a prize for the best juxtaposition of question and answer. There does appear to be a connection, although somewhat adiled, between those already published. Notice, that whoever sawed Courtney's boat, probably had to push it out first...pushing the boat out is a slang term for supplying drinks...this is what happened in the case of Mrs Schenarhorn, and to such good effect that the formerly straightlaced lady immediately lost her lacing...Now could it be that the lost lacing was used to sew Proad's underwear to the bedroom floor? If so, the vibrations in the floorboards could well have toppled Knorr's dictionary into the boiling water. Methinks a diabolical plot lies buried somewhere here.



I share Sid Birchby's admiration for Reader's Digest system of advertising. According to the various circulars I have received from them, they now have reserved in their vaults (just for ME) The Kepsake (which they've already sent me once), two or three assorted 'Six Bedside Books' (presumably for celibates), a Children's Compendium and various other odds and ends. Ron Bennett was here last week and one of those 'reserved for you' letters arrived complete with its mass of reservation data, return paid postcard, and two dinky little 'Yes/No' stamps. Being case hardened, I explained their whole system of reader intimidation to Ron (who had never met it before) and slapped on the NO stamp. Ron caught on quickly to the idea, and even added a pointer for RD to consider...weaker gum on the NO stamp. The idea being that this will immediately peel away, the only thing to do then being use the YES one instead. Of course, you could always steam off the 2nd stamp and not reply at all. (One of these days the Reader's Digest is going to cotton on to the idea of incorporating a poison in the gum on the NO stamp, causing you to expire in agony shortly after mailing your refusal. The simplest and safest countermove is to paste a label over their address and use the postcard for mundane correspondence, such as applying for membership of the Communist Party.)

San Diego, At. 1 Box 148, Spokane, when I say I suggest that
 now Bob Lutz has covered some of the more classic questions, he
 attack the one: Who throw the overalls in Mrs Murphy's chowder?
 This has been haunting me for 15 years. Not only I don't know
 the answer, I don't even know what the question is all about, which
 makes it most confusing.



..I find I cannot agree with your correspondents that the termin-
 ology is esoteric. The spelling, however, sometimes is. Obviously
 "gaffia" is correctly Gaffiya tetragena, an organism used in the manufacture of
 cheap soy sauce. To anyone who has eaten cheap soy sauce, this is a clear term of
 opprobrium. (Thanks for the help. Soybean troubled.)

One sartorial note, inspired by Ving Clarke's column. The ABC Lincoln or string
 tie is coming back in this area and seems rapidly to be becoming a trademark of
 physicians. I have inquired and find that most claim that in a bow tie they resemb-
 le captive balloons, while a four-in-hand invariably escapes from the clip and is
 peddled by a baby boy. Every profession has its hazards.



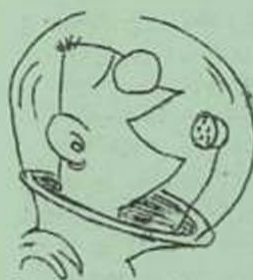
Larry Shaw, 319 East 9th St., New York 3 == Honored? To say that I
 was honored at finding myself one of the group invited to comment
 on Hyphen 22 would be putting it much too lightly. I was bowled
 over. Why, I had thought it would take years of struggle before I
 would attain such status as that. After all, not only am I an LNT,
 but I have the added disadvantage of having been once known as a
 dirty old pro, and certainly there could be no blacker mark against
 my name. I certainly haven't done anything to deserve the high hon-
 or you have bestowed on me, and so can attribute it only to your
 own benevolence. I hasten—hmm, better make that 'crawl'—to ac-
 cept the invitation, and will always try to make myself worthy to
 remain on the pedestal on which you have placed me (which is difficult, since some-
 thing seems to be tugging at my leg.)



I'm glad Bob Shaw arrived back safe-
 ly. I had been secretly worried about
 a certain aspect of this situation for
 a long time, and even made an attempt
 to keep him from returning to Ireland
 by sidetracking him into one of New
 York's worst dens of iniquity. For a
 long time I had been thinking of IF
 as being sort of like Jerry Todd and
 his gang or similar Assemblages in
 the kids' books of my youth. That is,
 it consisted of four male members, &
 the number 4 took on somewhat mystical
 proportions. It was obvious that John
 Berry was created only to fill the
 gap left by Bob Shaw's leaving, and I
 lay awake nights worrying about what
 would happen if Bob ever did return.
 Would his ship go down at sea? Would
 he vanish without trace one moonless
 night? Or would he get back, only to
 have John vanish with a blinding flash
 and a deafening report as soon as Bob
 set foot in Belfast again? (Bob will
 not be properly settled in Belfast un-

til his new house is ready, in early September. At approximately the same time
 blinding flashbulbs will herald John's arrival at the Detroit Convention, and his
 deafening Report will follow.)

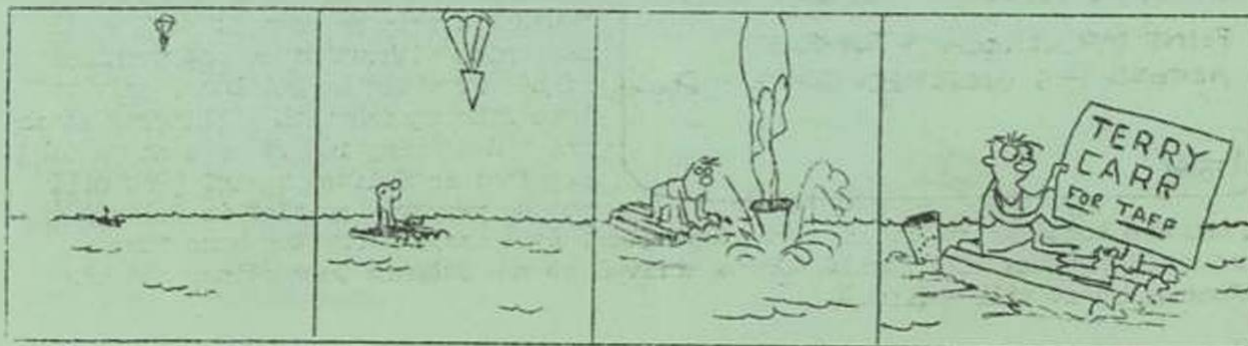
TERRY CARR, 332-- 21st St., San Francisco 10 == Ryphen was extremely welcome, partly because for the last 3 days we've been down with flu, sitting around with no money coming in and staring at each other bleakly wishing there'd be at least the bright side to it that we'd have energy for sex...but no. I suggested we could tell each other dirty stories, but Miriam didn't seem interested. So when Ryphen came it was quite welcome, as you can see. (Hmm. It hardly seems the sort of testimonial to build an advertising campaign on, but maybe Arthur can work out a strip.)You might point out to Vine that all people and animals slosh liquids round in their stomachs audibly, if one will only listen. (Anyone interested in forming a Sir John Audible Belly-Listening Society?) Why hell, I once knew a fellow who claimed he could hear carbonated drinks sparkling in his stomach. But on investigating I found this was only audible when he had his mouth open.

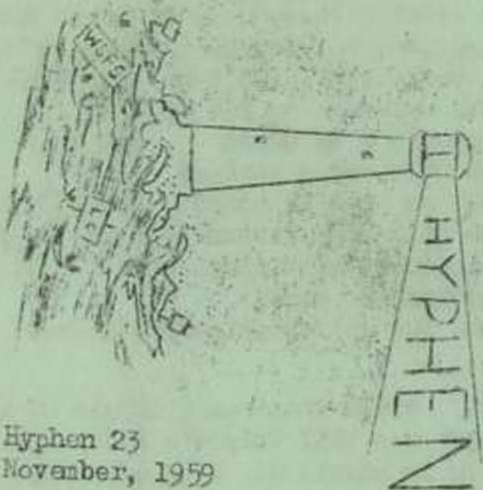


Rick Snerry, 2962 Santa Ana St., South Gate == I boggle at the years I've written about Ryphen. And Bill Temple's little thing helped take me back, as well as to boggle me. I do of course well remember the old (and seemingly happier) days, and the "fud" between Bill and Ego. But much has happened, and our onetime cohorts Clarke, Ley, Haber, Van Braun & Richardson have become names to conger with. (Big Eels?) They are on tv, and speaking tours, and their names are as familiar to the general public as they once were to us. And it came as something of a shock to see Bill still kicking away at his old roommate. But maybe it's as well to remember that some of today's heroes were once only clay idols.

While battling along through the wilds of Santa Monica last month, Bjo remarked "I could never respect a man that didn't have the will power to turn over and go to sleep". It was not meant as it sounded, but Elrik nearly drove into a cliff. It was at once voted the discover quote of the month. Even if too long. (The trouble with it is a bugquote is that you, well me anyway, can't see any other meaning than the way it sounds. It's a bit like that lovely reply of Ken Bulmer's when I asked him whether as editor of Storm he had any influence on Pamela's fanzine Ugh: "I have no connection with the other business in the same bed.")

Bob Tucker, Box 702, Bloomington, Ill. == About six months ago as if by conspiracy people began to suggest that a new edition of The Neofan's Guide might be in order. Even Boyd Reburn suggested it, and you know how we mortals snap to attention when Boyd Reburn speaks. So, seeing my duty to fandom, I done it...or rather am doing it...Anyone wanting a copy should send a postcard now. There may be a five or ten cent fee for envelope & postage, but we'll worry about that later. All I want now is to build up a mailing list. (This letter was dated 26th April, so perhaps sending money may now be in order. The last edition was well worth much more to anyone interested in the background of fandom.)





Hyphen 23
November, 1959

Walter Willis
170 Upper N'Ards Rd.,
Belfast 4, N. Ireland

Eavesdroppings



EVERYTHING THEY MAKE NOWADAYS
SEEMS TO BE CONTEMPORARY...BUT
WHY TRAVEL 6000 MILES TO PLAY
BRAG?...I WAS SO DISGUSTED I
JUST SCREAMED THE CHEESE INTO
A BALL AND THREW IT INTO THE
BANK...I HAVE TRIED THE GINGER-
BREAD AND FOUND IT NOT GILTY....NOTE THE
STEADY HAND WITH WHICH SHE FILLS THE
SAUCER FULL OF TEA....THE LEAVING PELS
OF TABA....I BELONGED TO A HUNGRY FAMILY—
MY MOTHER USED TO COUNT US AFTER EVERY
MEAL....FARTISH GOOD CHEER....HE MANGLES
HIMSELF AS A WHITEY BECAUSE HE HAS HAD
THREE ARTICLES REJECTED BY THE PHILADEL-
PHIA HERALD....HE FIRST SUSPECTED HE WAS
BEING WATCHED WHEN HE FOUND SOMEONE HAD
BUILT A TOILET ONTO THE END OF HIS YARD-
ROBE....THERE WAS A STARTLING ARMY OF
FOODSTUFFS—NOT GOOD, JUST STARTLING....
WHATEVER BECAUSE OF YOU. GEORGES?...WORK
IS THE ONLY THING YOU CAN DO FOR YEARS
WITHOUT GETTING THE HABIT....CELLULOSE
IS NOT SO GOOD FOR MENDING SOCKS....
REGALED? DOES THAT MEAN THEY GIVE YOU
WIND?...I AIN'T HALF BLOODY SAVE MY-
SELF....WORK IS THE CURSE OF THE THINK-
ING CLASSES....IF THERE'S NO GOD, WHO
PULLS UP THE NEXT KLEENEX?...I DON'T
CARE WHAT HAPPENS AT THE CONVENTION AS
LONG AS THE KETTERING ARRANGEMENTS ARE
SATISFACTORY.....THREE FOUNTS IN A
COIN TIN....SATURN, EH? I HET THE AUTH-
ORS IN THAT MAGAZINE COULD WRITE RINGS
ROUND THE ONES IN PLANET.....THE SALT,
DEAR BENTUS, LIES NOT IN THE JAR BUT ON
OUR SHELVES.....I WAS BORN IN 1931 IN
THE MIDDLE OF THE DEPRESSION—OUR HOD-
SPRING SAGS VERY BADLY....MY HAIR RE-
SEMBLES AN EXPLOSION IN A MESSPRESS FAC-
ORY...BUT WHEN YOU READ A BOOK AND THEN
FORGET IT, YOU'RE LEFT WITH A DIFFERENT
KIND OF IGNORANCE...HE WENT TO HOSPITAL
TO HAVE A CYST REMOVED—I UNDERSTAND
THEY HAVE A KIND OF NURSE ESPECIALLY
FOR THAT.....THEY'RE NOT REAL PEOPLE—
THEY'RE PSEUDOBODS...WHY'S DIFFERENTIAL?
SIBERIAN BOY SOUTS?... I WONDER HOW
THEY HAVE ENOUGH PROPELLORS TO GO ROUND

chuck harris 1, bob shaw 28

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