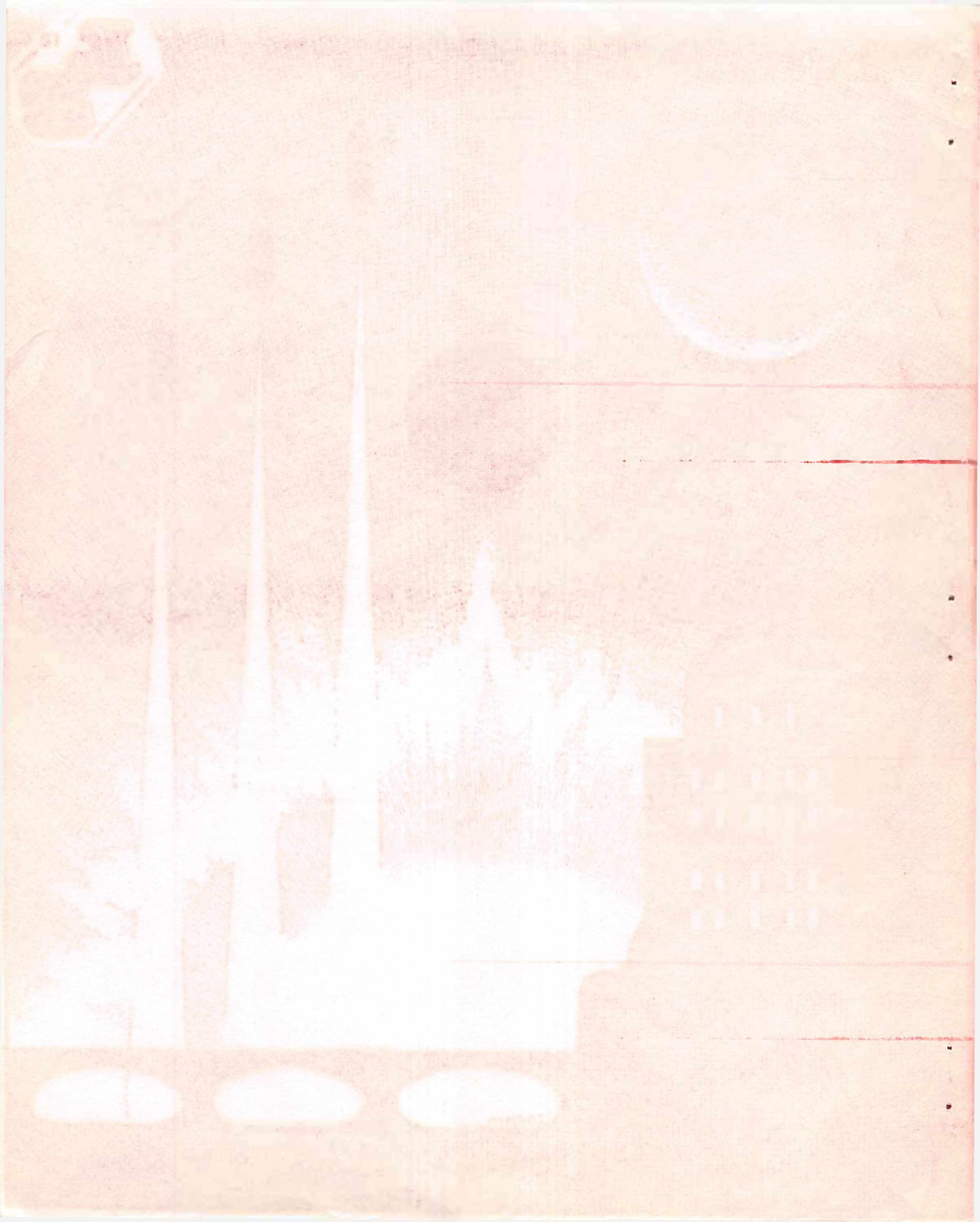


Wilson



.. Les Spinge ..

THE VOICE OF STOURBRIDGE FANDOM IN EXILE

The Waters of Babylon (Editorial)	4
Personally, from Porlock (Pete Weston)	5
Only Thyme will Tell (Mike Ashley)	8
A Slip of the Tong (Ken Cheslin) (Reprint)	11
Radiation (Jim Grant)	13
A Conrep from Santos (Martin Pitt)	14
Instant Love (Rob Wood)	16
Worcester Sauce (Ken Cheslin)	19
Poem (anon)	22
The Anvil Chorus (Readers)	23
The Field (Fanzines)	26
The Last Round-Up	27

COVER by Jack Wilson

INTERIOR ART by Jeeves (19,21,25,28) Santos (9,18)
Jay Kinney (4,23,26) L.P.Hinge (7)
Mike Higgs (11)

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~j·γγωγρωρρ·ρρτγρjω:

THE WATERS OF BABYLON



Greetings once more, fellow slans. Just lately the committee of the next World Convention have been in the centre of the latest fan hassle. Whatever the merits or otherwise of having ~~(separate fan)~~ Achievement Awards, ~~the name~~ proposed for them was to say the least, ill-chosen. Who after winning such an award could with pride display it to their non-fan friends, if it had a name like 'pong'? I was all set to blast the NY Committee into eternity in this editorial, but I have been forestalled by events, in that the name 'pong' has now been dropped. Good. However,

this is really only a minor question. The major one remains.

Fandom owes as much to Hugo Gernsback as prodom does, which is a reason why the fan awards should still be called 'Hugos'. It also helps in binding the s-f world together, in a small way. I personally would like to see the old name stay; but I feel that the gain this year, in the institution of a comprehensive series of fan awards, far outweighs the possible effects of a change of name. There is something to be said for all sides of the argument, but when the bickering over names is cleared away, one thing will remain: the institution of the Fan Achievement Awards was a good idea.

London is a city of some eight million people, but the amount of what one might call public fan activity is very small. It consists of two parts: the Science Fiction Club of London, which is small and of which membership is by invitation only, and the remnants of the old London Circle - the Globe. This latter is a curious institution. On the first Thursday in every month, s-f fans gather there to talk and drink. One month there may be thirty or more, the next, no more than half a dozen. But there's always someone there. The Globe plays a part in keeping a sense of corporation alive in London fandom, and of course it's the obvious place for out-of-town fans to go when they are visiting the city. So the Globe meetings serve a useful purpose, and I hope they go on for ever.

It is interesting that the Globe is one of the few places outside Conventions where the various sections of British fandom are together in the same place. It would be nice to say they mingled, but for the most part, they do not. I am afraid that fandom in this country is in some danger of fragmentation. I discern at least three major currents at the present time; I hope they stay in reasonable proximity one to another. The alternative frightens me.

Slainte!

PETE WESTON.....

..... "PERSONALLY, FROM PORLOCK"

+++++
Tonight is cool after the haze of the day; I sit by an open window and dream of a written SPINGE column. There is a garden, pear trees now blossoming, hedge and stream (which marks the city boundary of Birmingham) and then short-cropped fields rolling up diagonally to the Beeches, a national trust property commanding the skyline. Although it is not dark, they cannot be seen now. Venus is high, bringing a pang of regret; regret that my younger self could not be here, that younger self who propped a telescope on the dustbins of a back yard, who saw the sky only behind a maze of chimney-pots. And now I have sold the telescope and do not care.

What, I wonder, shall I write about? There are slices of my life, stratified and insulated, facets of interest and experience and of personality, each with their minor triumphs and tragedies. There is mundane life (although for me it is far from mundane), and there is the Young Conservatives. There are evenings with The Lads, and there is fandom. I saw a vicious beating one night and a strip show the next; in between I typed stencils and knocked-up voters on election day, door to door in a marginal ward to win it for the party.

Roger Peyton was annoyed the other day at my BSA-marked diary and pen and cufflinks and lighter and tie and visiting-card, and said in disgust "Weston, you must have the letters 'B.S.A.' stamped indelibly on your soul." So then I lifted my foot and showed him the purple lettering on my (BSA) shoe leather.

Talking about shoes reminds me of the night I crept away from the firm like a refugee from the Power Game, and walked into the local with cherry-blossom shoe-polish still around my mouth, from too much boot-licking.

BSA-fandom is demanding sometimes. You have to watch out for the signals to chuckle; "That was a good one, sir" when the managing director tells a little story. You have to be prepared for dynamicism at 9.00 AM on Monday morning if the M.D. should pick up the telephone, "morningsir, Weston...yessir...willldosir." You have to be quick to pinch full dishes of cocktail onions and olives from other peoples' tables when the Old Man takes you into a bar for a drink.

IN SALTLEY Canvassing was more fun. Quinton branch, Young
 Conservatives, about a dozen or more mixed sexes,
zoomed over to Saltley ward recently for a spot of political work.

Copyright 1967 for Peter R. Weston

Canvassing is when you knock on a door and ask the inhabitants who they intend to vote for in the coming elections; assuming they are not annoyed at an unjustifiable intrusion upon their privacy, and assuming they don't say 'conservative' just to get rid of you, then you write their political inclinations down upon a list of the voters for that road. At election-time you go around 'knocking-up' the people who said they were conservative, telling them that their vote might make the difference, that they should get the hell down to the polling-station, and (last resort) offering them a lift in a car.

But canvassing first, in Saltley. That is an area more than usually blessed with the benefits of the Industrial Revolution, which means gasworks, railway lines, factories, and terraces built quite deliberately as stables for the workers. Plus some new, grim and grey council blocks of flats.

Tap tap on a door, scratched paint and window panes boarded up with lino, sound of knives and forks clashing down on a plate, television turned down and the reek of chips as the door is opened. (Whatever time a canvassing party calls, from 5.00 till 10.00 PM, people are eating chips in Saltley.) Murky interiors, glimpse of newspapers on the table, milk bottles, greasy plates. Little tired, grubby people and nothing to say. People who vote Labour because their fathers did, because they are working class. Occasionally people who vote Tory because they want to be better than working class. Occasionally council flats with bright lights, new paint, carpets. People who will talk. Thank goodness for them; there is nothing so depressing, so likely to make you lose faith in the world, than a trip around the slums. These are people I'm talking about, by the way. People who live and eat and breathe, and I suppose who are fairly happy in their own manner. They just haven't had a chance.

Nothing can beat a trip around the slums to make the average fanzine-reading middle-class 23-year-old realize how lucky he really is.

VIOLENCE AND VIRTUE

Two things came close together to interrupt a bland interlude in my life. At a coffee-bar I saw three or four youths set upon and beat up another, larger party. No reason, no provocation.

In the past I've seen the odd fist-fight, usually around bars or restaurants. But usually both sides are fairly evenly matched, both do little damage, and certain rules seem to apply. For instance, the brawls I've seen are between set opponents, they begin for some reason, and when a man is down, that's it. He is left alone, violence is controlled, women are exempt.

Not so the other night's trouble in the "Tow Rope". Here, a few hard-looking cases started fighting anyone available, and could quite literally have killed somebody. Skull-cracking blows, bottles, knives, "put the boot in, lads, he's down" and really sickening bloodshed.

These were no high-spirited lads, they were fighters, and neither me, nor any other in my small party, wanted anything to do with them.

We kept out of it. "You should have mixed in, grabbed the trouble-makers, overcome them by weight," you say? All right, so we should. But the sight of a bottle, a knife, in the hands of someone quite prepared to use them indiscriminately, causes a feeling of active uninterest in anyone without much experience of in-fighting. The police came, eventually. And an ambulance.

A day after the scrap came the strip-show. I've been to these before, and although this session was a good one, nothing was really new. But it did prompt a few thoughts.

For instance, what do the girls think of their trade, of their audiences? They must have some nerve to go alone into a room where one hundred beer-drinking, laughing and shouting men are eagerly waiting for the clothes to fall. Or are the audiences more embarrassed, more apprehensive than the girls?

At the recent show, one chap in particular was picked upon by a girl for special attention. He was bright red, sweating and ridiculous by the end of the performance, and the audience was laughing at him rather than the nearly-nude girl. And yet, although the performers use every trick to excite, there is a curiously unsexy quality about a show; the girls are reduced to objects, things, rather than being thought of as women. It must be a degrading, numbing experience to be wanted not for what you are, but for what you look like; and this shows in the bored, wooden expressions on the faces of the girls. Maybe I'm old-fashioned, maybe things are different outside Birmingham, but the whole business is vaguely unwholesome.

And there you are for the time being; the lives and loves of Pete Weston. No company car as yet, but the first guns are being loaded for what looks like a long and determined battle from the trenches. Some interesting visits arranged by the local branch of the YCA; including trips to an observatory, printing works, and to BSA's own foundry. Yes, you guessed, I'm the programme arranger, and now I must go to organize, organize, organize...

+++++



Olaf



Les. P. Hinge



Pablo

Only Thyme Will Tell ~.~.~

→ MIKE ASHLEY

=====

I trust you will excuse that rather punishing title, which was solely a means to an end. Have you ever wondered where the myriad flowers, shrubs, herbs, vegetables and what have you originated? We all know the blah about Drake and Raleigh introducing all manner of foods into England, though in most cases the true facts are wholly different. So, how about a look at the genesis of some of today's common-and-garden plants, if only because I can introduce one of my namesakes into the bargain.

While it is entirely against my principles to realize such a fact, it is true that very few plants originated in the British Isles. They were all introduced here, in the not too distant past, by famed, intrepid explorers-cum-smugglers.

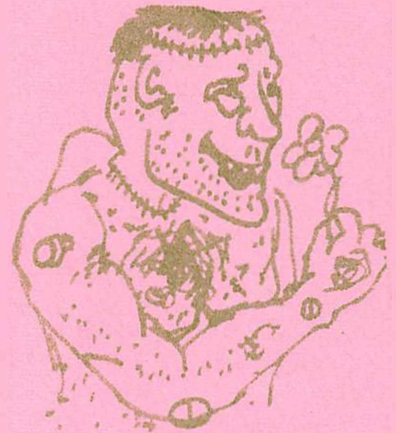
Take one of today's most common foods - the potato. Apparently it was originally cultivated by the Incas of Peru, spreading amongst adjacent tribes as far south as Chile. On one of his many, merry expeditions transporting slaves to South America, Sir John Hawkins, or just plain John as he was then, chanced across the potato, and introduced it to England around 1563. But John Hawkins had a devilish cousin, namely Sir Francis Drake, (who also wasn't knighted at that time) who often accompanied him on the slave trading voyages, and was no doubt acquainted with the potato at this time. Como 1586 and we see Drake taking much of the credit for introducing the potato once more into England. Meanwhile, over in Ireland, Sir Walter Raleigh was planting Potatoes like wildfire all over the Cork area, where he owned large estates. Ireland, per head of people, was by far the greatest potato consuming country in the world by 1845, when the great disaster occurred. For four successive years the crop failed and "there was famine throughout the land." As a result, many Irish either died of starvation or, if they had enough money, they emigrated, the majority to America. So, in some kind of vicious circle, one could say the Americans weren't really "losing a potato, as gaining a nation" of Irish!

While still on vegetables, the cabbage is, next to the potato, perhaps the commonest. Why, I personally fail to see, since I am not a great fan of the cabbage. Perhaps it is because it had a running start, having been introduced into England some fifty years earlier. In 1510 "the great" Sir Arthur Ashley of Dorset (I haven't the foggiest when he was knighted!) was wading about in Holland and no doubt discovered the cabbage growing wild. Presumably liking it, or perhaps deciding it was just the right food for peasants, he brought it back to England and set about cultivating the cabbage as it is known today. Just over a century later, it was introduced

into Scotland by Cromwell's troops, probably with similar intentions! Though it was well known then that the cabbage was excellent fodder for cattle.

Brussel Sprouts, Cauliflower, Kale and suchlike are simply varieties of cabbages, having originated all around Western Europe in this period.

Still at this same period (circa 1540) the carrot, turnip and parsnip were introduced into England from Holland. However, none of these three were native to the Low Countries, in fact their origin is as diverse as their taste. How then did they all end up in the same place? As far as I can discover the blame can be laid at the feet of the Romans, who are always a handy deus ex machina. In the case of the carrot however, the Greeks may be responsible, although the Romans carried on the tradition. The carrot originated in Afghanistan of all places, though whether the Afghan tribesmen recognized it as a food, I am at a loss to say. It was known, however, as far back as 500 BC, so come Alexander of Macedonia, a couple of centuries later, the carrot may have proved a useful food, if not for his soldiers then for his horses. At this time the turnip was also well known in its country of origin - Greece. The parsnip originated in the Caucasus (along with horseradish, if anyone's interested) and, as the Roman Empire spread, so the three were introduced as food for troops (and just as likely, horses) at the far flung corners. The parsnip was at this time introduced into England, but died out when the Romans left, but the turnip and carrot prospered in the Low Countries, where the parsnip had also been cultivated, and in 1540 were reintroduced to this fair land.



Many foods were well known to the ancients, and probably the oldest (omitting berries which were obvious foods, even to our caveman ancestors) was the broad bean, which is native to many countries, and has been a food as long as anyone cares to remember.

The broad bean, however, is a peculiarity, since it is a vegetable, whereas all the other ancient foods were fruits. The fig was known as far back as 2000BC, in particular on the Canary Islands! The grape, which grew in profusion around the Black Sea, was known twice as long ago, as the Bible supports. The same with the orange and the peach (both Chinese), the rhubarb (a Mediterranean fruit) and the watermelon (++ ha! - Ed.++) - one of the few of African origin.

With vegetables, however, bar the broad bean, only the garden pea, the muskmelon and the onion were known to the western world (or at least the Persians), and the Chinese had the radish and soybean.

And of course I cannot omit the tomato, and (for sheer hate of the fruit) the pomegranate. The tomato originated in South America,

around Bolivia, and was introduced into England around 1550 (which seemed a particularly abundant period), although it was not cultivated on a large scale until the nineteenth century. The pomegranate originated in about the same place (although it was also indigenous to Persia) where the Spanish recognized it and took it to Spain. Who the actual cause of its introduction into England was, I was unable to ascertain, but Hawkins, Raleigh and Drake are no doubt well in the running, since it is of the same period, and it was introduced from Spain as part of the pillage from a captured Spanish ship.

A final interesting glimpse on fruits, all the yellow-looking ones (bananas, persimmons, pears, lemons, grapefruit, and oranges/tangerines, all in fact with the exception of the pineapple) originated in Asia, chiefly in China; whilst all the reddish fruits - strawberries, cranberries, raspberries (in fact all but cherries and redcurrants) come from the Americas.

Before closing, what about a look at the flowers and trees of England. The laburnum, for instance, is Hungarian, the Passionflower Brazilian, the willow from the Levant. The Japanese Rose was introduced into England from China in 1793. The snowdrop from Carolina is 1756. The rhododendron came from the same area about a century earlier. The dahlia is Chinese, the fuchsia Mexican, and both reached England around the early 19th century. The dahlia also grew wild in northern Mexico as did the marigold. The daffodil is one of the few indigenous English flowers, although it grows wild over most of Europe.

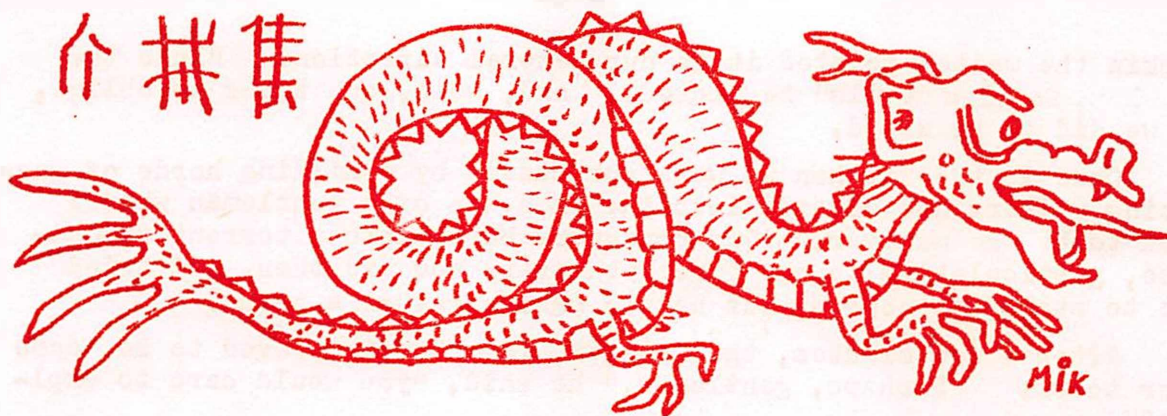
The title of this article refers to the thyme, so I ought to end with at least a mention of its origin. The trouble is, it isn't known. The thyme, and most other members of the mint family, have grown wild over most of Europe and other temperate regions for centuries, in fact they just always seem to have been there.

Which goes to show how much we owe the early explorers. What a dull life it would be in England otherwise, munching thyme and outdated Roman parsnips, watching the daffodils blowing in the wind!

SADO HISTORY DEPT.
(THE PREHISTORY OF
LESLIE P. HINGE)

Some folk have asked for an account of how I got into fandom. Here, then, reprinted from LES SPINGE number 3, is the account of that night, in July '60.

"...I had a couple more enquiries, one of them from a grammar school lad called David J.Hale. After some correspondence it was arranged that I should meet him in Stourbridge and conduct him to Tony's house. He seemed to like SADO for the next Tuesday he not only came himself but also brought along a schoolmate called Darroll Pardoe who was also a s/f reader. We sat and talked for a time and then we got out the Galactic Trader strip. This amusing little game is a SADO adaption of a game called ASTRON; our game is much more complicated and cutthroat than the original, the idea being to make a run starting and ending at Earth, to various planets to trade. The fuel system and the over-abundance of hazards make this more difficult than you would imagine."



A SLIP OF THE TONG

BY KEN CHESLIN

I was feeling in a debonair mood that day. I remember chuckling with delight as I read the pathetically grateful letter the PM had sent me in connection with the High Tor affair, and as we cleaned up the cellar in preparation for the next orgy, I resolved that we'd do something different to mark the occasion.

"We'll eat out today, Dave" I enthused. "There's a rather decent Chinese restaurant in the village I've been meaning to visit. They give you a good nosh-up for only five bob, and..." I added cunningly, "you won't have to do the washing-up afterwards."

So it came to pass that the noon hour found us ensconced in a secluded alcove in a dim corner of the Ying-Tong, an attentive oriental hovering near at hand.

"Neat, that" said Dave, indicating the levitating waiter.

I ignored him. Everyone knows it's done with mǎrrars anyhow. "What would you like?" I asked Dave, "some Chow Mein? Chop Suey? er.. some Y'tang H'loypui?"

"The correct pronunciation of that last dish is Yt'an'gi Hol'Oi puy" asserted Dave..."ah, no!" I corrected him, "possibly in Hong Kong, but in Cantonese the right accentuation sounds like this. Y'tang H'loy-pui."

"Well," said Dave, reaching for a waiter, "we'll see."

Dave addressed the quivering waiter, "Yt'an'gi Hol'ol puy" he said firmly. "Y'tang H'loypui" I countered, with equal determination.

The waiter turned a sort of mottled blue and used a Chinese word not often heard in polite company, meanwhile producing a large revolver from some secret recess of his jacket. Holding the revolver under his

napkin the waiter pointed it in our general direction. "Into the kitchen, foreign devils" he hissed. And, well, one tries to oblige, so we did as he urged.

Once in the kitchen we were surrounded by a milling horde of gun-toting waiters and ushered into the presence of a gentleman whom I took to be the manager. Our conductor burst into a torrent of Chinese, gesticulating in our direction every now and then. I tried not to stare, of course, but he was making rather a scene.

After a few minutes, the Manager, for thus he proved to be, came over to us. "Perhaps, gentlemen," he said, "you would care to explain?"

"Certainly" I replied, warning to this genteel approach. "We merely came into your establishment to take refreshment. When we ordered one of the dishes on your menu, we were conducted hither with more haste than grace."

The manager nodded slowly. A waiter came forward and handed him a menu, and one to Dave and to me. "Demonstrate, please" requested the Manager.

"Yt'an'gi Hol'oi puy" pronounced Dave, confidently. "Y'tang H'loypui" I quoth assuredly.

The Manager regarded us intently for a long moment. Then he sighed and shook his head. "You inscrutable occidentals" he murmured admiringly.

A flick of his hand, and the waiters moved forward. Before we realized what had happened, we were both handcuffed to a steel girder, the thickness of which indicated that it was a main support of the building we were in.

Meanwhile, all was hustle and bustle. Chinese waiters hurried to and fro. Some I heard ushering the customers out of the restaurant, some were hastily changing into civvies, and others were dragging suitcases out into the middle of the floor and packing them. No-one took much notice of us. I began to feel that we might never get served.

After a while, the crowd grew thinner, and eventually only the Manager and two waiters, in street clothes, were left. They proceeded to drag filing case drawers out of the Manager's office into the kitchen, where they dumped the contents into the red hot coals of the steak grill, where they were quickly consumed.

Co-relating my observations, I tentatively formed a theory that something was not quite as it should be, restaurantwise.

"If you haven't got Y'tang H'loypui," I volunteered, "we would manage very well with Chow Mein."

At this, the Manager, a very obliging fellow to be sure, came across. "Do not be impatient, Capitalistic spies" he said in tones of great agitation, "we will serve you out soon enough."

Thus reassured, I was content to wait a while longer.

The last of the papers from the filing cabinets were flung on to the fire. The Manager brought out a small but heavy black box and set it near our feet. The box emitted a curious michanon sound. "No doubt very pleasant to the Oriental ear," I thought, "but Chinese music is just so much ding-donging to me." However, I smiled my gratitude to the manager, as was the polite thing to do.

The Manager and the two waiters left the kitchen, and a few minutes later, we heard a car start up and drive away.

"I have a feeling" said Dave, "that we have had it as far as that Chinese meal is concerned."

"I'm inclined to agree with you, Dave," I said, feeling a bit disgruntled. "They all seem to have left."

"In that case," said Dave, opening our handcuffs with a neat twist of a hairpin (he dislikes keys). "We may as well leave."

As we left the building there was a whooshing sound, and the whole place went up in a sheet of flames.

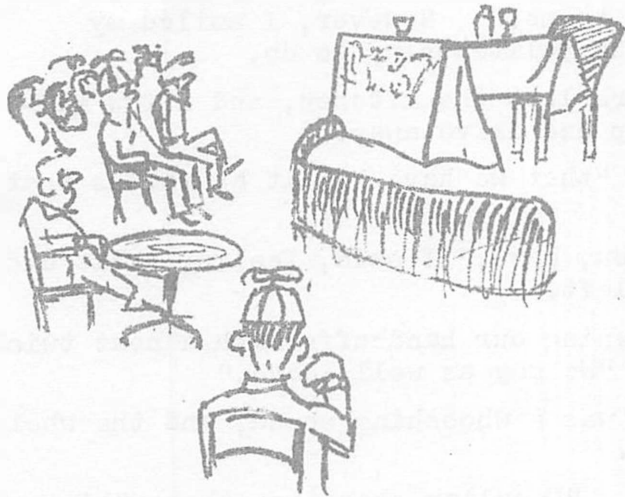
We turned to watch the blaze. "Peculiar chappies, these Chinese" I observed. "But then," put in Dave graciously, "they're not British!"

"True, true," I replied. "And now how about something to eat... I believe there's a very good Indian place just up the road..."
.....

RADIATION

The smoke grey clouds
Like hands of death,
Point out across the sky.
Their forms,
Like nature's barest woods,
Have artificial symmetry.
The winds that blew the ships of old
Across the tumbling sea,
Make the clouds that carry death
Follow after me.

A CONREP from SANTOS



THE (WHERE IS?)
BRIAN ALDISS SHOW

COFFEE!

COFFEE!



PRO PANEL

VALUABLE
RUBBISH!



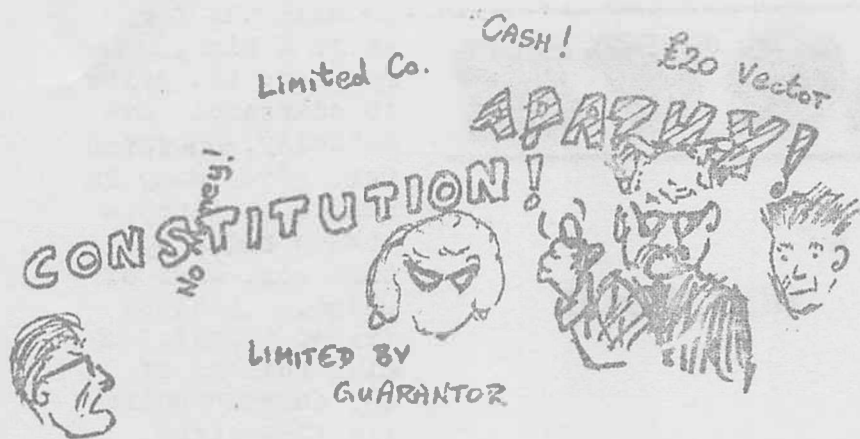
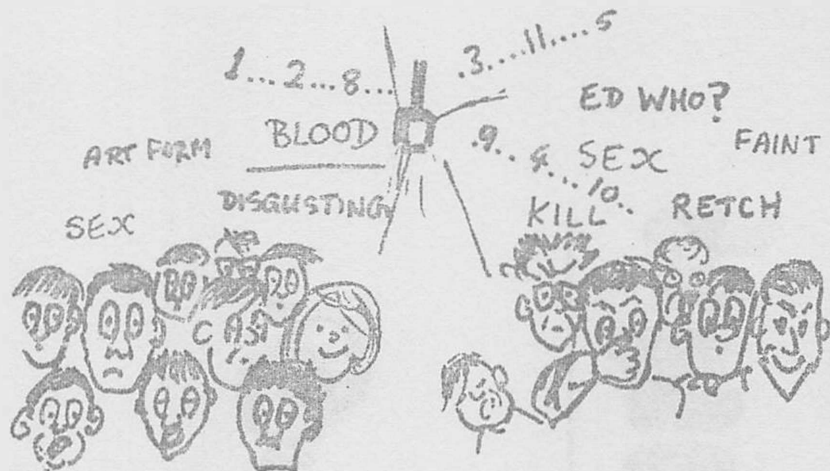
YARGO WHO?

SPEND
SPEND SPEND



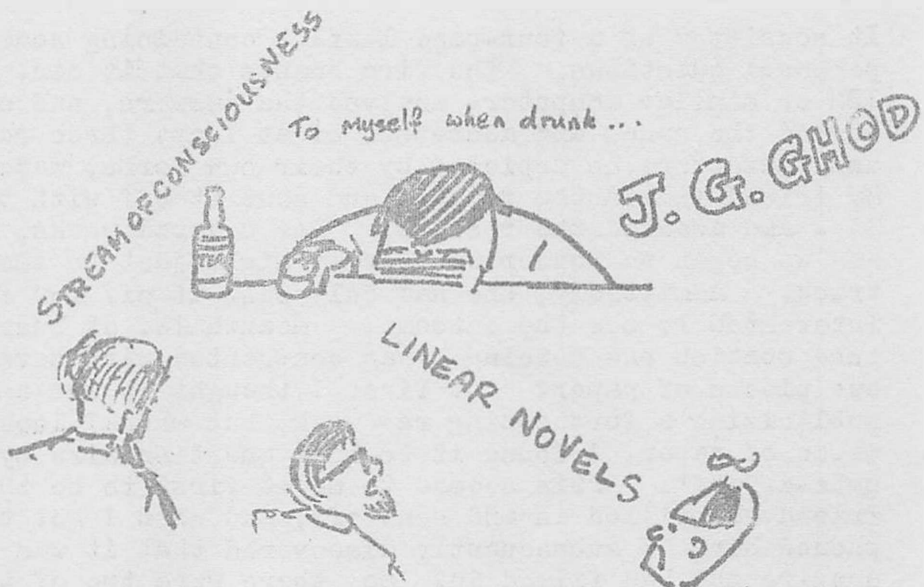
AUCTION

FILM SHOW



BSFA AGM

MOORCOCK
SPEAKS



I N S T A N T



LOVE

BY

ROB WOOD

As far as people can make out, it all started with a firm called, somewhat precociously, "Operation Match". It began on a small scale; mainly the forms were distributed by a few 'guinea-pigs' who first filled in the questionnaire; gradually, they began to spread the word, and the questionnaire, round. They began to sell the forms at 1s a time, later reducing the price to sixpence. Eventually, the forms were given away in masses as distribution began to take some sort of shape. A close friend (female) of mine told me of the questionnaire for 'Operation Match' which she filled in.

It consisted of a four-page leaflet containing some hundred or more personal questions. The firm boasts that it can, with the aid of an IBM or similar computer, analyse the answers, and offer the party concerned the names and addresses of at least three people whose analysis and character, as depicted by their own forms, match that party's own. My friend filled the form in and sent it off with the processing fee of £1 - and awaited the results. For several weeks, she heard nothing, and we began to wonder whether it might just be some kind of confidence trick. Admittedly, she had only sent it off for fun, but she was interested to see the outcome. Meanwhile, at busy Liverpool Street tube station one morning I was confronted with several people handing out pieces of paper. At first I thought it was a party of students publicizing a forthcoming rag week, but when I looked at the proffered piece of paper, I found it to be a questionnaire by a firm called 'Compute-a-Date'. This seemed to me at first to be the same thing as my friend had filled in and sent off, and when I got to the office I phoned her; I subsequently discovered that it was not the same questionnaire she had filled in. So, there were two of these firms.

Later, my friend was sent the address of a male partner, and she has since met him. It seems they have little or nothing in common, which leads one to believe that (a) not enough people have supported 'Operation match' to enable them to offer a choice of more than one suitable 'mate' and (b) they are not getting the variety of types of character which can agreeably be paired with other 'dates', also that those who are filling in the questionnaires and sending them off are doing it for a joke, not taking it seriously, and putting in erroneous answers. In any case it doesn't look as though the firms are having a lot of success.

Another female friend of mine filled in and sent off the 'Compute a-date' version of the mating questionnaire. She too did it for a laugh, and spent a pound in the process. To this day, I don't believe she has had a reply - certainly she hadn't when I last asked her. But recently, as I entered Oxford Circus tube station one evening, I was presented with another, more elaborate form entitled 'Confidential Dating', and whilst I had no intention of filling it in, I kept it purely for research purposes, as I wanted to compare it with the form used by 'Compute-a-Date', which I had been given earlier that month. It certainly appeared on the face of it as if there were three of these firms in operation, but having since seen the original questionnaire given to my friend originally, I am pretty sure that what was originally 'Operation Match' has been slightly altered, and the same firm is now doing 'Confidential Dating...by electronic computer'. I am not certain of this, but have not seen or heard of 'Operation Match' since 'Confidential Dating' came on the scene; and neither have my friends.

Since I am in no position to appraise or criticize the merits of these two firms until I see positive results of their actual procedure, and effect, I can at this stage only compare the methods used by them and attempt to point out any comparisons or contrasts.

The charge for processing is in both cases £1. But the first obvious difference is the age range. 'Compute-a-Date' (hereafter called CAD for the sake of brevity) states that it is aimed at those between 16 and 48 years of age. Confidential Dating (hereafter called CD) states its age range as between 18 and 58 years. Presumably, those hoping for a date with someone 32 years their senior (or junior) choose CAD, those hoping for one 40 years their senior or junior will choose CD. You pays your money and you takes your choice.

Both systems involve roughly the same number of questions. CAD has 118, CD has 111. CAD's offices are in Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey; CD's are in Hendon. Both question one's marital status, race, religion, wealth and habits; both have a 40 'yes/no' part involved with hobbies and pastimes, and the same applies to the section on personal characteristics and manner. But whereas CAD only asks for the answers of the party himself, CD has a section for the party's answers and another for him to put in those characteristics he would like to see in his or her ideal 'mate.'

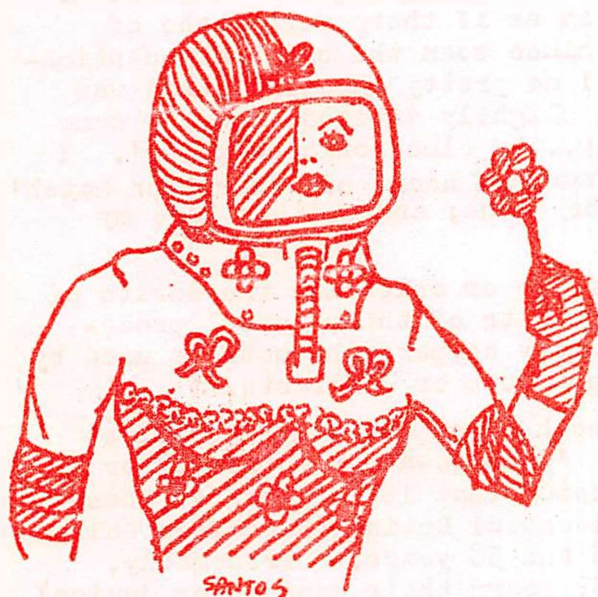
It is interesting to compare the blurb on the front of each of

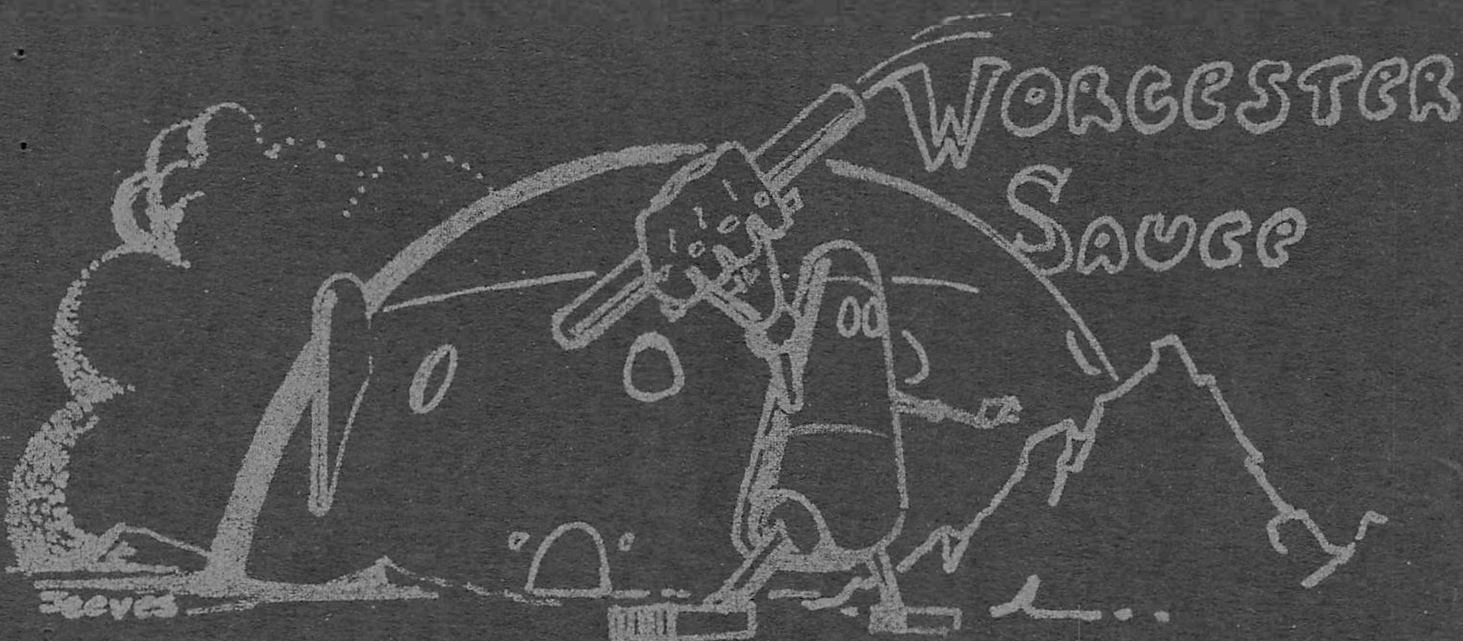
the two, purporting to describe its aims. CD states 'Confidential Dating; an IBM computer is programmed to compare the vital characteristics of thousands of confidential dating partners. Your personal characteristics are stored in a 'computer brain' which carefully selects FIVE prospective dates for you. Simply complete and return the questionnaire enclosing \$1 processing fee, and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of five prospective dates will be sent to you. Your name address and telephone number will be sent to them.' Then follows a guarantee; 'In the unlikely event that the computer should not select five prospective dates for you, then your questionnaire will be fed into the computer a second time. The company guarantees to provide five prospective dates for you or to refund your money.' 'Confidential Dating - introducing the latest and most exciting way of making dates with the opposite sex.' 'Confidential Dating by Electronic Computer - analysis of information in this questionnaire will be processed by electronic computer - International Business Machines Corporation.'

'Compute-a-Date' tend to deal with the matter in a more jovial tone: 'A scientific method of matchmaking, comparing physical, mental, social and psychological characteristics using newly-developed electronic computer technique. Would you like a computer to analyse you and to calculate the characteristics required for your ideal partner, then select as a date for you the nearest to this ideal from thousands of other character studies, someone who must like you and who you must like? If so, please complete this questionnaire. Perhaps you will only do this for fun, but the method is so satisfactory that you are very likely to meet someone who will be, if not a marriage partner, then a life long friend.'

CAD has recently added the following tag: 'After analysis and processing, you will be sent the names and addresses of

at least THREE persons whose analysis and character study complement and match yours. These persons will also be sent your name and address. This tag always seems to remind me of the postal game I once took part in as a child, where one sends postcards to an address and to four friends, who in turn do the same; eventually you are supposed to receive hundreds of replies from all over the world. I always thought there must be a fallacy to it, and my sentiments regarding 'Compute-a-Date' are very much the same. However, CAD whimsically goes one step further than CD: 'for extra questionnaires, telephone





Hot from the pen of the scourge of Swinton pours the voice of Stourbridge Fandom in Exile... or at least $\frac{1}{3}$ of it.

It snowed up here the other day (++ Ken is writing a month or two ago ++). If you could call it snow - it was great chunks of snow as big as sugar cubes, bearing down out of a leaden sky, sweeping down and dashing in waves against the buildings like spray tossed by an angry sea against the rocks. Even now the wind sighs around my window like a lonely Lovecraftian monster of the deeps seeking its mate. It's cold. Damn cold. I'd love a great storm just now - black clouds crashing against the hills - torrents of heavy storming rain, the sort that beats the oxygen out of the air and makes you gasp - and lightning. Ah, lightning; potent, thick, heavy balls and rods of electric solidity, ripping open the belly of the night; jagged and terrible, thrusting and stabbing and tearing at the earth, with a mindless, solid, beastlike ferocity.

And thunder, the veritable crack of doom, the war drums of the old strong, ~~dark~~ rhods, the hoofbeats of the Valkyries; the sound of a giant tearing great sheets of iron like paper. I love the fury of a storm.

There is something that awakens the primaeval in me about the unleashed power of nature - I feel the thunder throb through my bones. The tightening of the mouth into a half-mad grimace as the shock of sound and light makes echoes in the blood.

I guess it's my sense of wonder. I get the same sort of emotional reaction - I mean the same primitive order of emotion - laced, I suppose, with terror, from looking up at the stars. Have you ever lain on warm grass and felt the earth living beneath you - and heard

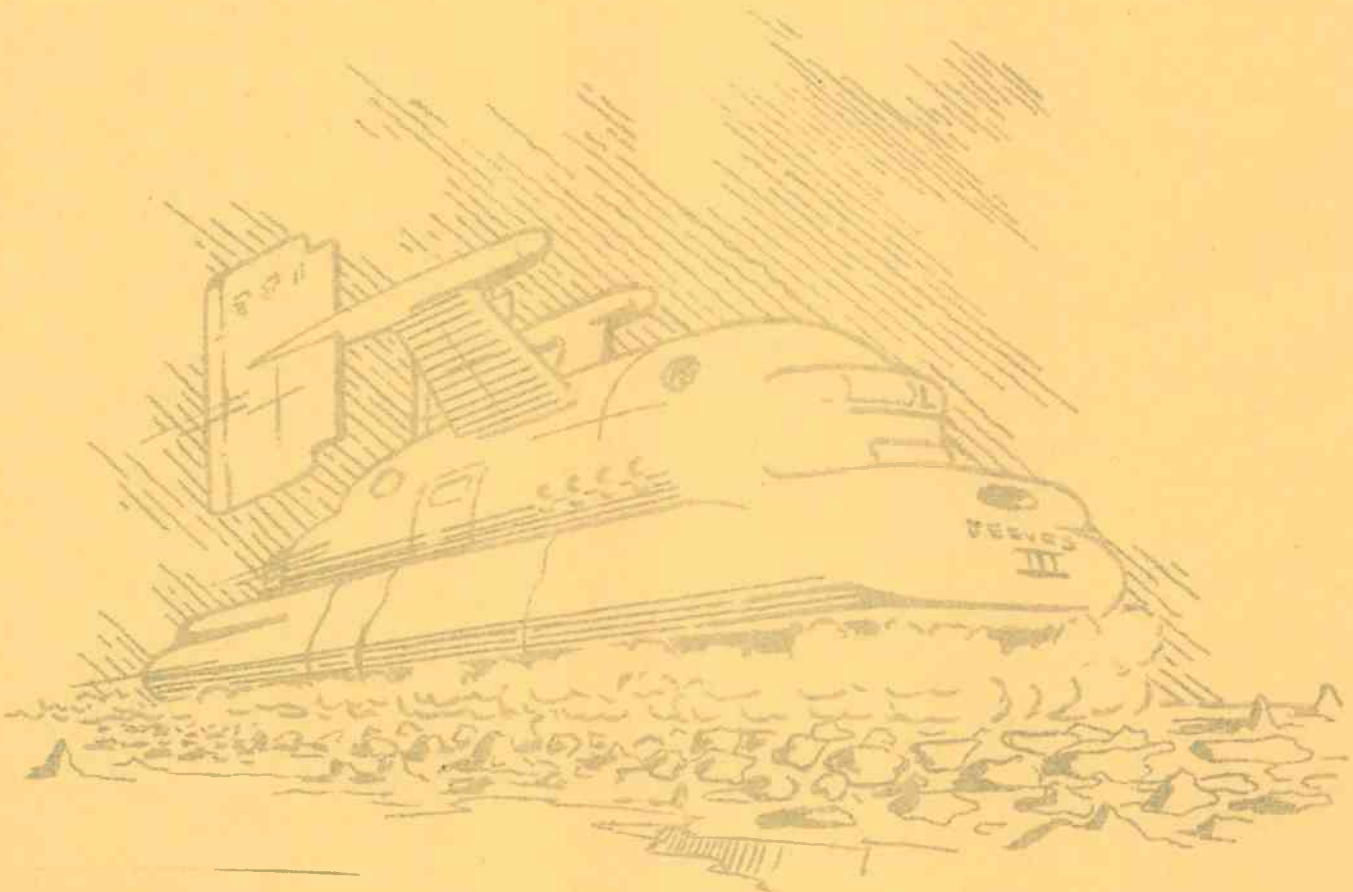
then he hasn't understood what I've said. I'm sure that nothing I've said is original. But why go on - those who understand me need no more explanation, those who don't will only understand less as I go on.

Maybe I should ask Darroll to entitle this 'The Unreality of Reality', but that wouldn't cover the whole thing.

Stourbridge Fandom shall rise again! Viva Pablo!

+++++

(++ Editorial Comment. To forestall possible letters from angry readers I should point out that the L3 editorial policy is to spell certain words with an 'h', and ghod is one of these. You likes it or you lumps it. ++ I regard myself as an atheist; the nearest I get to supernatural forces is the I-CHING; but I do hold that the inanimate 'things' of the world are of no importance, and that the only part of the world that matters at all is the people in it, and their relationships with one another, who and which are real, in a sense in which shoes and ships and sealing wax can never be. ++)



"The trembling starlight of the skies
He saw there mirrored, shimmering."

Sad is the sound
Of the waves that break on the shore
That break on the shore of my heart
Sad is the sound

Bright were the eyes
Of my love, and flowing her hair
Flowing her hair in the breeze
Bright were her eyes

Keening the wind
That sings with the song of my mind
The song of my mind that is dark
Keening the wind

Wet were the lips
Of my love whose kiss was my joy
Whose kiss was the joy in my life
Wet were the lips

Bitter the pain
I endure now my love she is gone
My love, she is gone, she is gone
Bitter the pain

Blowing the thyme
In the wind, in the hills where it grows
In the hills where it grows far away
Blowing the thyme

Salty the tears
As I weep, for my tears are the sea
My tears are the sea that I hear
Salty the tears

Sad is the sound
Of the waves that break on the shore
That break on the shore of my heart
Sad is the sound.

- Anon.

(Hastings 1967)

ROB WOOD
Shenfield

Jim Grant's
poem - well,
first I

thought 'great', then I thought 'plagiarism of MacNiece and/or Auden', then I thought 'no, a hurried interpretation of an interesting subject not quite convincingly enough developed, but well-nigh came off'.

CHAS LEGG
Stevenage

Much as I
hate to say
it, one

thing that Roje Gilbert has no knowledge of is human psychology, or he wouldn't have said the things that he did about certain fans being completely extroverted. Many

people who appear to be so are really downright introverted, extroversion is merely a protective shell that they put up. In fact, it's surprising how different many people are when you get to know them properly. Unfortunately, however, so very few fans really know each other very well, although very few fans will admit it. Would anyone care to comment on this idea? After all, it's only my point of view. I think that Shakespeare was nearer to the mark than anyone thought with his 'all the world's a stage' bit, but in a slightly different way. Any number of people slip into a sort of act when in certain company which gives everyone a false impression of their true selves.

(++ I agree. It's a pity that people won't just be themselves, for the true personality is usually so much nicer than a cardboard mask ++)

ARCHIE MERCER
Bristol

Terry Jeeves being the accomplished artist he is, his 'lament' instalment is undoubtedly very much to the point. Being myself not an

artist, but a runner-off of stencils on the duplicator, however, I would like to take issue on the subject of electrostencils. And I wish the things hadn't been invented. A good electrostencil, if duplicated on a good machine with loving care, should in theory always reproduce 100%. However, if either the machine or the loving care is below optimum, the result is likewise. Duplicating is a chore. A chore that's worth doing, in order to distribute propafanda. However when it becomes necessary to peel each sheet off the drum (as often happens), to pull the ink lever every few copies, to fiddle about with little bits of stencil that just won't stay stuck in place and/or lie flat, I wonder if it's all worthwhile, and sigh for the days when all fanzine artwork was cut directly on to stencil.

(++ I enjoy the struggle of man v. machine. And folk unwilling to devote loving care to their duplicating shouldn't be publishing fmz.++)

THE ANVIL CHORUS



D.WEST
Bingley

Really, most fan art is decoration; it isn't intended to be examined on its own but as a part of the whole page. The

illos in LES SPINGE have no connection with the written contents; they are just the frills round the edges. To comment on them is like commenting on the typeface or the colour of the paper; you can only say that you like it or don't like it, and leave it at that. I agree with Terry that fan editors should make clear what they want and show appreciation for what they get, but I cannot altogether agree that the lack of response to fan art is unjustifiable. Both the Jeeves and the Santos pieces are neat, well-drawn and well reproduced, but they could not be called either ambitious or serious. They fulfil the purpose of breaking the monotony of slabs of printed matter admirably, but they are not in themselves (with the possible exception of the covers) capable of drawing much more than a passing glance, so why should the artists expect much in the way of comment? Certainly, when they produce artwork of real quality and of more than casual interest in itself, they have the right to expect more than a word or two. But very often fan art, from the critical point of view, is not worthy of much more. The work may be good of its kind, but it is not a kind about which much can be said. Unfortunate for the non-serious fan artist, but that is the way of it. Unfair to soggies.

(++: No. The purpose of LES SPINGE is to entertain, and occasionally to provoke serious thought. Therefore, the artwork is just as important a part of the contents as written material, and deserves comment. It is unfortunately true however, that it is much more difficult to comment intelligently on artwork than on writing, and so the artwork is neglected. ++)

JULIA STONE
Chipping Norton

The editorial was short and to the point, but I don't quite see the link with the 'waters of Babylon'.

(++ Several folk have raised this question. The title is connected with the fact that Stourbridge Fandom is now widely scattered, away from Stourbridge. The words actually come from a biblical source, psalm 137: 'by the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept, remembering Zion.' which psalm incidentally sounds very good to the music of Gelineau. ++)

ANONYMOUS
Antipodaeon

Mike Ashley seems to have done a lot of research into word origins, and there are some surprises among them, too. I think

I'll have to send him a few of our Aussie words and see if he can sort them out. Something like; drongo, bloodnut, sarcer, or perhaps a few aboriginal ones such as nuana, cadibarrawirracanna, or goondiwindi, or even coonabarabran. Probably make him think a little, eh? Pete Weston has, I know, excited the envy of young Alan France, the 14 year old editor of Fenattic. In his last letter to me, he kept repeating that it is almost unbelievable that people can remember whole conversations with such apparent ease! The Mercers must be very dedicated

fans, and such prolific writers of articles, stories and LoCs, as I see something from either one or both in almost every fanzine. More power to their elbow; if it were not for people like then, I don't know what would become of fandom in general. It's really only the faneds and a few of the faithful who do keep things going. Anyway, Pete's account of his visit to Bristol is a peculiarly vivid one, it must be, as I was re-reading it last night, just before going to sleep, and fair dinkum, I dreamed about it half the night.

(++ thanks...er...anon, I wish I had the space to quote more from your letter. ++)

TERRY JEEVES
Sheffield

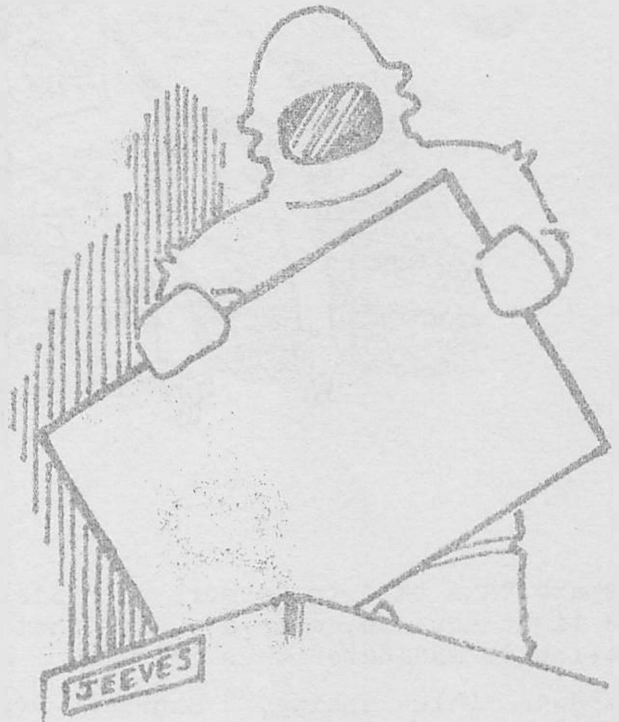
It is
more
than

true that we don't know the origins of half the words and phrases that we use. Once, when corresponding with the late Doc Weir, I used the phrase 'pretty please' in asking a favour. Doc really took me through the hoops on that one, since (he was an expert on Polish dialect) it is apparently a corruption of a particularly vile Polish expletive. Makes yer fink, don't it?

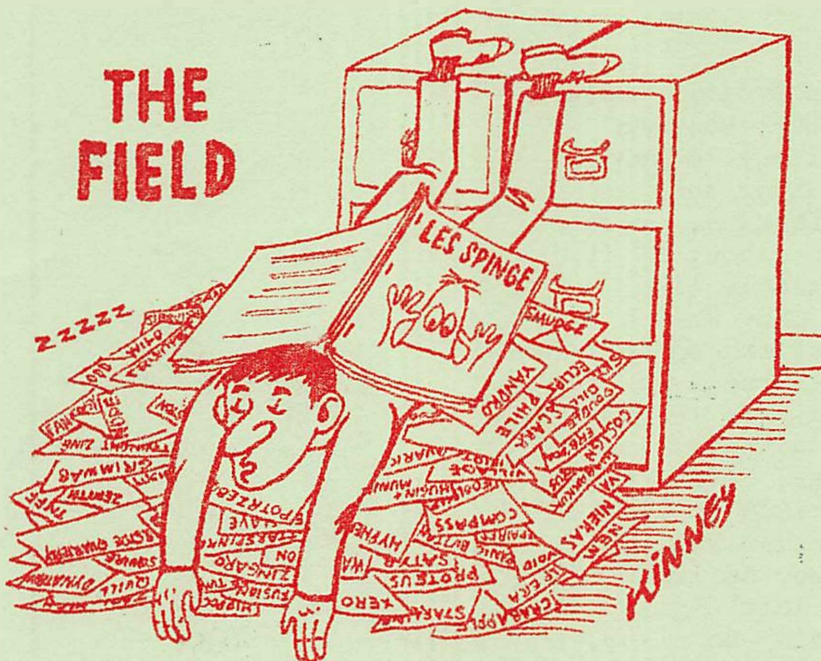
(++ a Good Man, was Doc.++)

++ WEALSOHEARDFROM and as usual are grateful to them also:....
Martin Pitt (Nottingham); Brian Hill (Perth); Barbara Mace (Leeds); Adrian Cook (Loce); Simone Walsh (Bristol); Keith Walker (London); Jay Kinney (Naperville, Ill.); Dave Copping (Chelmsford); Bryn Fortey (Newport, Mon.); John Muir (Manchester); Bob Holdstock (Gillingham); Podge Hough (a colony of the Netherlands). Thanks, people.

APOLOGIES DEPT. One or two people were expecting this issue to have a different external appearance, or to be larger, or to have a photopage, or to include a certain obiter dictum. For one reason or another, these did not materialize. Sorry, folks. It has also proved impossible to include an article in the 'Artist's Lament' series this time, but I hope to have one in the next issue.



THE FIELD



to space this time to do more than list the trades received, and it'll be a tight squeeze, even so. For what it's worth, the Spinge recommendation is indicated thus **

- PLINTH-1 (Mike Ashley, 8 Shurland Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent, UK)
- ECLIPSE-3 (Dave Copping, 121 Springfield Park Road, Chelmsford, Essex, UK)
- ENTROPY-2 (Chas Legg, 5 Park Close, Longmeadow, Stevenage, Herts, UK)
- WARLOCK-1 (Adrian Cook, 'St Lucia', West Looe Hill, W.Looe, Cornwall, UK)
- QUIP-5 (Arnie Katz, 98 Patton Bvd, New Hyde Park, N.Y.11043, USA)
- COSIGN-5,6,7,8,9 (Bob Gaines, 336 Olentangy St, Columbus, Ohio 43202, USA)
- **THE SCARR-112 (George Charters, 3 Lancaster Ave., Bangor, N.I., UK)
- PROTEUS-4 (Tom Jones, 27 Lansbury Ave., Rossington, Doncaster, Yorks, UK)
- **SPECULATION-15 (Pete Weston, 81 Trescott Road, Birmingham 31, UK)
- TRUMPET-5 (Tom Reamy, 2508 17th St., Plano, Texas 75074, USA)
- **HABAKKUK-2/3 (Bill Donaho, PO Box 1284, Berkeley, Calif. 94701, USA)
- NO-EYED MONSTER-10 (Norman Masters, 720 Bald Eagle Lake Rd, Ortonville, Michigan 48462, USA)
- ANOTHER ONE-5 (Heinrich Arenz, 6000 Frankfurt 1, Schliessfach 5002, Germany)
- TWILIGHT ZINE-21 (Leslie Turek, P.O.Box 430, Cambridge, Mass.02139, USA)
- BADINAGE-1 (Gray Boak, 61 Halsbury Road, Redland, Bristol 6, UK)
- COMPASS-2 (Rob Wood, 27 Rochford Avenue, Shenfield, Brentwood, Essex, UK)
- **HAVERINGS-25,26,27 (Ethel Lindsay, Courage Ho., 6 Langley Ave, Surbiton, Surrey, UK)
- SCOTTISCHE-42,43 (Ethel Lindsay)
- **CRABAPPLE-6 (Mary Reed, 71 The Fairway, Banbury, Oxon., UK)
- SF TIMES-442 (James Ashe, R.D.1, Freeville, N.Y. 13068, USA)
- **AUSTRALIAN SF REVIEW-5,6,7,7½,8,9 (John Bangsund, 19 Gladstone Ave., Northcote N.16, Melbourne, Australia)
- STARLING-9 (Hank Luttrell, Route 13, 2936 Barrett Station Rd., Kirkwood, Missouri 63122, USA)

YANDRO-170 (Buck Coulson, Route 3, Hartford City, Ind. 47348, USA)
**RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY-2/4 (Leland Sapiro, Box 82, University Station,
Saskatoon, Canada)

(continued from Page 18)

Kingston 1588: 24-hour Answerphone service.' And now they boast CAD is not a short term operation; you automatically now become a member of the Compute-a-Date Club boasting computer dating parties, dances and holidays. We are besaught not to look upon CAD as a marriage bureau, although it is that as well, but a modern and highly successful method of making new friends, fresh contacts and a whole new way of life. The mind boggles! They end up somewhat ominously with: 'When you get your first dates from Compute-a-Date, that is not the finish, it is the start.' When you consider that the questions you have to answer include: Are you preoccupied with sex? Do you like petting? Do you tire easily? and so on, one wonders what exactly they have in mind. What next - computer dating orgies?

For CD your location is required, be it within a 30-mile radius of ten major cities - I don't think it excludes much of the country!

So, if you think the answer to easy dating for everyone is romance by electronic computer, you know how to go about it. Personally, I still prefer the old trial and error method. Anybody want my unused questionnaire forms?

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THE LAST ROUND-UP

There is, no doubt, a reason why you have received this issue of LES SPINGE. It ought to be indicated below:

- *X* Trade
- * * Letter of Comment
- * * Contribution this time * * last time * *
- * * Sample. Respond, please
- * * Respond, or else...
- * * Copyright Act
- * * You are a good friend and will get LS whatever happens
- * * Special Reason:

LES SPINGE

