

# LES SPINGE



LES SPRINGS



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LES SPINGE was founded by Ken Cheslin in 1959.

Availability: any of the usual ways, except money, which  
is actively discouraged.

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Pages 4, 11, 18 by Jay Kinney  
Page 15 by Stephen Edgell  
Back Cover by Jeff Schalles.



The other week our new piano was delivered. Ah, the joy of it: the freedom of seven full octaves of keyboard. My clavichord is a very beautiful little instrument, and it's quite suited with its four octave compass to the playing of most of the music of its time, but one can't play the music of Debussy on it very well, for example. And Debussy happens to be one of my favourite composers. So, a piano we wanted to have. When the opportunity presented itself we drove into Cambridge and looked around Millers, the well-known sellers of pianos (and other things). That was an experience in its own right. There were some 15 pianos in the showroom, and I wandered around playing on each one in turn, and peering into the top to determine the presence of steel or alternatively plastic tuning pegs. (Plastic ones are no good at all; they go out of tune eventually on a permanent basis). While we were doing this noone bothered us at all. The salesman on duty was deeply occupied by his telephone in the frenetic organisation of the 357 hire pianos the company rents out to students at the university. It

was early October, the time when all the students return for the new academical year, and the logistics of moving around 357 pianos to the required places must have been considerable. He seemed to be having a hectic time of it, anyway. Over at the other end of the room, in the electronic organs section, a customer was trying out all the electronic organs on show by playing (badly) 'Silent Night' on each one in turn, to the accompaniment of chimes, bells and other organ accessories.

Finally, we decided on a Bentley piano, and distracted the salesman long enough to arrange the sale. It was delivered the same week, and so I'm now in the throes of getting back my piano skills by practicing all my old favourites, as well as one or two new ones such as Debussy's 'Golliwogs' Cakewalk'. Rosemary has also been inspired to try her hand again with 'Fur Elise' and the Clementi sonatinas.

It turned out that we'd bought a piano of the same make as that belonging to Rosemary's mother (though



we didn't realise so at the time.) She says Bentley are one of the best makes of upright pianos around, and I suppose she ought to know, being a pretty expert pianist.

You know, it's strange that my tastes in music are so different dependent on whether I'm listening or am actually playing. The listening side is shown by the contents of our accumulation of records: mostly what would normally be described as 'progressive'. This includes everything from Joni Mitchell to Steel-eye Span, Shirley Collins and Martin Carthy. The playing side, on the other hand, is purely classical: Bach, Handel, Clementi and so on, and especially Debussy (and I hope Ravel, though I haven't learnt anything by him yet). Perhaps part of the answer is that the piano is usually thought of as a classical instrument, whereas instruments such as the guitar are not. But this can't be the whole answer. The fact that I started to learn the piano at the tender age of seven, on a strictly classical regimen, may have something to do with it. Perhaps it's just habit on my part, that I've gone on doing what I did to start with.

When we went to buy the piano, Rosemary's fancy was taken by an ocarina they had on sale, so we bought it (it only cost £1.25). The ocarina is a most peculiar instrument. It's made of pottery, and looks exactly like a proton-gun blaster out of the Doc Smith stories, but with holes in it. It has an odd sound, too, and is a member of the flute family. It has joined the motley collection of tin whistles and recorders of various sizes we have lying about at home. It turned out we'd bought one that was a bit too cheap, though, because it's not exactly in tune, so it can't be played in company with anything else.

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Now that we've moved to Huntingdon, I have to commute daily to London from Huntingdon railway station. I don't mind this at all, since I've always enjoyed travelling by train. The antics of my fellow commuters when the train gets in to Huntingdon in the evening, though, are quite incredible. Most of them leave their cars in the station car park for the day, and so when they are all leaving in the evening quite a jam builds up on the station approach road as they all try to get out of the car park. Thus, the competition to be first out of the station and into their car is intense. As soon as the train comes alongside the station platform, doors are flung open and people take flying leaps off the train, usually missing their footing on the platform and rolling over a few times before picking themselves up and dashing over the footbridge. I'm surprised bones aren't broken. One of these days someone will roll off the edge and under the train (Rosemary can tell them what happens to people who fall under trains). Me, I walk home from the station, so I wait until the train has come to a halt before getting off. It's safer that way. It would be nice to think that all these people are in such a hurry because they want to get home quickly to their wives. I suspect though that it's just a case on wanting to beat everyone else out of the car park. Why should that be so important to them?

One of our, and especially Ro's, main hobbies is looking at Royal Arms in churches. We must have seen hundreds by now. It's interesting to note how much variation there is in the way different churches treat their Royal Arms (if they have them at all: a lot don't). This can range from sheer pride to total neglect. When we went to Wroxeter in Shropshire, for instance the Royal Arms there were in a terrible state. There was mould all over the surface of the canvas, and great holes in it, with shreds of canvas hanging down from them. It looked like it might have been a nice one, once, but now there's just the remnants, which won't last much longer. Studley (Warwks) is another of the same type. Not only was it in very bad shape in itself, but they were doing some repairs in that part of the church, and they hadn't bothered to protect it from any clumsy workman who might stick the end of a beam or a bar through the canvas. One or two had, I think.

In complete contrast is a place like Orwell (Cambs), where they have recently had their Royal Arms painted up and cleaned. They take care of it (it's a rare kind, too). A few churches (such as Hanbury, Worcs) have even had a modern set made up to provide Royal Arms when they didn't have any before. Sometimes restorers make errors, and when we wrote to Bradwell in Essex pointing out a mistake on the motto of their example we had a nice letter back thanking us and saying they were going to correct it.

Most Royal Arms are standard in format, but there are occasional surprises. Much Wenlock (Salop) for example has a huge set over the main entrance, with the shield and so forth rising out of a nautical scene with shells, mermaids, anchors and other paraphernalia. Why, we haven't yet found out. Theydon Bois (Essex) has a portrait of a face under the shield, which the church guide book says may be a portrait of James I. We don't think this can be true: one or two other sets we've seen have a similar face, and anyway it doesn't look like James I.

Some examples of Royal Arms have the supporters (lion and unicorn) crawling round from behind the shield, instead of holding it up in the usual way. These are mostly from the late 18th and early 19th century, and form an interesting study in themselves. Ditton Priors is one of these.

A lot of churches are open, but sometimes we run across a locked one. In most cases there is nothing for it but to go away or find the caretaker or vergers who may have the key. We always look around to see if the key is hidden nearby though. Sometimes it's in an obvious place such as under the mat or behind a bench in the porch. It may be under a stone outside the porch. Sometimes an apparently locked door may just be hard to open. I always turn the handle one way and the other while pushing or pulling in various directions, and often a firm barrier may melt away after such a treatment and let us enter.

A church may sometimes be locked up because it's completely disused. Usually there's nothing one can do about it, unfortunately. It's good to see the Redundant Churches Fund taking over some of the more interesting ones for maintenance purposes, though (e.g. Wolfhampcote, Warwks). The utmost in redundancy is when a church is allowed to fall into total ruin, like Langdon Hills (Essex) has done. In this case it's particularly bad because there is a fine Stuart Royal

Arms in plaster inside, which is just rotting away, since the door and windows are broken in and the church is the haunt of pigeons and worse. East Horndon was going that way too, but it is being saved by a combination of the Redundant Churches Fund and a preservation society, and with a bit of luck it'll keep standing a long while yet.

Looking for the Royal Arms is good fun. We cover a lot of territory in the quest, too. We've visited about 600 churches in the last year or so with this in mind, but even at this rate we'll never reach the end of the subject. There are supposed to be about 16,000 parish churches in the country, which makes about 25 years' work, at least. But why want to come to the end of an interesting hobby anyway?

Ro wants to add a word or two on the subject now...

Yes, I just want to elaborate a bit on one thing which Darroll mentions. He says that examples of 'crawling supporters' are mainly 18th and 19th century. This is certainly true, but the general belief of the heraldry books is that it is a "corrupt Victorian" practice. It's an easy mistake to make since most examples are Victorian or late Hanoverian, but I believe I may have traced back the origin and it's a good deal earlier than that. Of course it's hardly surprising that the experts should make a few inaccurate statements - they can't be expected to check everything. But I do think that I'm the first person to bother to try and find the origin of the practice. It's interested me right from the start of my Royal Arms collecting, since it was obvious that they stemmed from the mid-Hanoverian period at the latest. One or two church Royal Arms of this period have crawling supporters. Church Royal Arms are only a part of the question of course - newspapers (including one present day one) have also perpetrated this practice through the years.

While back I discovered that Southwark Cathedral had had two sets of early Queen Anne arms (i.e. 1702-07...when she still bore the Stuart Arms) both of which had crawling supporters. One set had human figures supporting the shield, with the lion and unicorn taking secondary place. This was a great find as it put back my dating of the first appearance of the 'crawlers' by about fifty years. (Unfortunately they are no longer there...lost in the bombing I assume). However a little more research revealed to me what I tentatively think might be the origin of the whole thing. In St. Pauls Cathedral there are two sets of Royal Arms....one on a parclose screen inside (wood), and one on the north transept door (on the pediment to be exact) outside in stone. The one outside is supported by two angels with the lion & unicorn crawling out from behind them. The wooden one has the lion & unicorn crawling out from behind and below the shield. This one is Queen Anne before 1707, and the one outside is Stuart and from other evidence of the building I think it must also be Queen Anne.

St. Pauls is a great building and always has been thought so. It seems quite possible to me that a method of portraying Royal Arms used in it could have caught on and spread.

The crawling supporters have been attacked everywhere for being corrupt and incorrect heraldically. True as this is it's worth bearing in mind that they have a history of at least 250 years behind them, and perhaps what's more important they look good!

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NOTA

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Voir le Moteur  
 au  
 Laboratoire H.

Voit le Nota  
au tableau H.

Table 1

Malles. — Les  
salins d'été, en  
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nombre de halles  
lorsqu'il y a de  
voyageurs à pro-  
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halles ne sont ou-  
vertes qu'aux voya-  
geurs et aux chiens  
accompagnés.

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...	9	4	12	47	17	35
...	7	3	12	5	17	57





Harry Warner Jr: 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Les Spinge made me happy right away at its evidence that the British Isles fans face the same soul-searching about the BSFA that a lot of people over here do about the NFFF. Fandom is not a very good place for organising because so many fans have conditioned reflexes against any kind of regulation. But I belong to the NFFF and find it worthwhile for what I suspect is the real justification for the BSFA: there are some people, including a fair quantity of fans, who are organization-oriented and would have little or nothing to do with fandom if it weren't for the big club concept. They provide some services and contribute some friendship by the presence in fandom that the clubs encourage. Of course, the situation is different over here where the NFFF makes no attempt to enroll all fans, concentrating instead on the newer fans, and holding in connection with conventions no role other than sponsor of a hospitality room where any fan can get away from orgies for as long as he needs to rest up.

I wonder if drag racing in England has a special tang and lure when it is illegal, the way it is around western Maryland? The last I heard, the drag strip near town where racing was staged in organised manner every Sunday had gone out of active operation, and meanwhile the state police continue to be driven batty by drag racing in public highways late at night. The kids have radios in their cars tuned to police frequencies, so they can get out if a squad car is ordered to their area. They even paint the starting and finishing points on the highways. It probably isn't as dangerous for the rest of the motoring public as the bulk of the citizenry imagines, since it's all done after dark on straight, flat stretches, where an

oncoming car would signal its approach by the rays of distant headlights before it became visible around the curve or up the hill beyond the drag strip.

All the railway talk that covers most of the latter part of this issue delighted me, of course. I just saw the other night on television for the first time 'The Titfield Thunderbolt' which most of you could probably rerun in your mental eye, but it was entirely new to me and a sheer delight despite its transmission on a UHF channel in Washington that gives snowy reception back here in the hills.

Incidentally, we're in the middle of an odd legal hassle in Hagerstown involving a railroad grade crossing. Industrial and residential developments south of town have caused a road called the Downsville Pike to get vastly more use than ever before, and it crosses the tracks just about where the Penn Central tracks join the Norfolk and Western. Since railroads are running longer trains for freight than they used to, the yards where the trains are made up are no longer big enough, and this causes the crossing to be blocked for interminable periods before the newly completed train can roll out of town. A small industry went to court for an injunction against the two railroads blocking the crossing for longer than five minutes, the maximum permitted by a local law. The N & W promptly exhibited an agreement dating back a half-century, which assigns all supervision of the yards and tracks at this point to the Penn Central, so the N & W was excused as a defendant. When the hearing was held for the Penn Central, its attorney freely admitted that he gets as angry as anyone else when he's held up for twenty minutes or so at the crossing, but the railroad is in bankruptcy and the court order creating the bankruptcy specified that nobody may interfere with Penn Central trains' operations until creditors are satisfied. This federal court order makes it impossible to enforce the local ordinance, he argued. The judge admitted that maybe he should have disqualified himself because he owns a few shares in the railroad but he unloaded most of his stock before its financial troubles sent the value of shares plummeting, so he doesn't feel too bad about that. He pointed out to the industry seeking the injunction what would happen if he granted it: the railroad would appeal to the state court of appeals, and if the judge's injunction was upheld then it would go to the federal court, and months and months would pass and the legal fees would mount much higher than a small industry's owner could really afford, and chances are that just about the time the question was finally decided in some high court, two or three years from now, the overpass which will carry motor vehicles over the railroad tracks on this road will be completed. The Penn Central trainmaster promised to try to prevent long delays in the future, but claimed he had no right to tell the N & W how it should handle its trains at that point, causing mutterings about dragging that line back into the case. I haven't seen the local newspapers for a month because of the hospital trip, so it may have become even more complicated by now.

It's little Sherlock Holmes item reminds me of a passage I was just reading today in Glory Road, the Bruce Catton book about the American Civil War, not the novel by Heinlein that pirated the title. What with battles and being captured and long marches, one Union soldier hadn't had a bath in six months. Recognizing what a job faced him, he got a bunch of other soldiers to help. They got soap and scrub brushes, went into a river and went to work. After long labours, 'one of the scrubbers wiped away a mound of lather with a sweep of his brush, peered closely at the ex-prisoner's torso, and announced flatly that something was wrong with his skin. The other men looked more closely, agreed, scrubbed some more, and discovered suddenly that the man still wore his undershirt. The ex-prisoner expressed great pleasure and surprise at this discovery. He had thought, he said, that that undershirt had been lost six months ago, and it was a comfort for him to know that he still had it.'

Cigarette smoke has been affecting me more severely in recent years. It used to make my eyes smart and give me a trace of a headache if I was around too many smoking people in a closed room. But the last few years, a person who smokes on the next seat at a lunch counter can give me a blinding headache or a half-sick feeling. Just yesterday I was stuck in an office for more than an hour, waiting for the surgeon to do something unspeakable to me. The other patients were smoking, and this morning I had one of the worst sinus attacks in memory, after imagining that I'd had no ill consequences from the experience. I suspect that a ban on smoking in public places will be the next big federal government project over here, now that advertising has been banned on television, and it can't possibly arrive too soon for me. I'm too cowardly to ask people not to smoke around me, but I seem to notice more non-smokers glaring at smokers nowadays.

John Piggett: 17 Monmouth Road, Oxford OX1 4TD

Best thing was Jake Grigg's shaggy dog story, though it's hard to say why. Taken one bit at a time the humour is atrocious, but when pun follows ghastly pun in quick succession, as here, it's really very funny. I enjoyed the bit on drag racing. Something I can never understand is the appeal the sport has to spectators. The actual races are over in about ten seconds, and I shouldn't have thought that this would be likely to attract crowds of 2000+. Purple Clod: this is faan fiction as opposed to fan fiction, isn't it? Perhaps I should read it again in a couple of years time.



Dave Weldrake: 9 South View Terrace, Hill Head, Halifax Road, Dewsbury, Yorks.

Your report of the Heicon made it sound like a pretty fun place. I thought about going but settled for a month playing archeologist in the wilds of Kent.

The 'Purple Clod' was well written, and I got quite a few laughs out of it, but since I don't know the people, places and fannish ideas it was about I reckon I probably missed the point in a few places.

Jeff Schalles: Box 288 G.C.C., Grove City, Pa 16127

I'm rather turned off about drag racing, and any car racing in general: is all that pollution necessary? I don't want people to think I'm a bigot that wants everybody to do things my way, but wouldn't it be nice if everyone drove nice small, low pollution cars instead of these huge gas-breathing monsters copied from the ideas seen on the drag strips? I can't stand it when one of these huge hurtling monsters that shouldn't exist in the first place, or at least belongs safely on the racetrack, forces me almost off the road, or makes me slam on my brakes so that he can zoom through a stop sign without slowing his wondrous contraption. Ech.

I really enjoyed the purple clod. I kept reading, thinking that faan fiction wasn't dead after all, and then found that it dated back to 1960. I'm rather partial to mimeo, myself. My exams in high school and grade school were always ditto, and I think that has something to do with it.

Roger Gilbert: 35 Arbury Road, Cambridge CB4 2JB

Not the original shaggy dog story. It goes like this. Once there were two guys who wanted two more for poker, so they phoned up a friend, and asked him if he'd like a game and could he bring a fourth. So, the friend turns up, and he's brought an enormous shaggy dog with him. To the mens' surprise, the dog settles down at the table, shuffles the cards and deals. Some hours later, after the game is over, one of the men turns round to the dog owner and says:

'It's pretty fantastic, your dog playing poker.'

'No, it's not'

'Why not?'

'He's hopeless; every time he gets a good hand, he wags his tail.'

Don't laugh, you might break your jaw.

Arthur, although one has to make a few concessions and stand a few nags, there's one thing about having a wife. You don't have to cook your own meals any



more or do your own washing or have to have a cleaner in. And she might be nice, too. It also halves responsibilities and worries. Or does it double them?

(++ Rosemary and I share all the household chores as far as we can: things like cooking meals and vacuuming the floors are a cooperative venture. The heavier things which Rosemary can't manage, like making the bed and lugging a suitcase of dirty washing down to the launderette, I have to do myself, but I don't give it much thought. Neither of us actually enjoys household jobs, though - we try to get them out of the way as soon as we can. - D ++)

Archie Mercer: 21 Trenethick Parc. Helston, Cornwall

John Hall, albeit his article is not entirely devoid of interest, overlooks what are surely the two most important things about drag-racing. One, the reason for its odd title. Possibly because I'd have to be dragged behind a tractor to get me anywhere near the thing? Two, the object of the game.

Never (it might be said) mind the distance

Never mind the speed

Bags and bags of decibels

That is all you need.

The winner is the person whose machine can make the most offensive noise, audible over the largest area, and continuing for the longest time. And it's coming your way, baby!

The bits about the Ohio railway are still interesting. Then Ken again, and party political broadcasts. My own impression was that the average listener/viewer switches off or over to avoid political broadcasting from either camp. This is probably through sheer apathy more than anything else, but nevertheless this reaction makes (I think) good sense. A party political broadcast is simply a commercial for the party in question, cast in the most favourable terms that the backroom party geniuses can think up, but largely irrelevant to its actual prospects. In order to size up a party (your own, or the other side's) the best way is to take a look at what it has actually done when given the chance.

As the administrator from year to year of the Doc Weir Award, I am mainly responsible for the alteration to the voting. However, there are reasons. In order that the Award be administered according to the previous system, it is necessary for the Convention Committee to be (a) sympathetic and (b) on the ball. Within the past few years, however, we have had (a) a Concom that flatly refused to distribute the ballots with its own mailing because it would lower the tone of the occasion (or words to that effect) and (whether for that reason or for simple lack of time) would not even give me a full address-list of members; (b) a Concom with reproductive troubles that completely 'lost' one newsletter-plus riders with much the same effect.

Therefore, what was wanted was an electorate that was accessible. Those present at the con can be reached: absentee BSFA members compensate for the (too often unreachable) absentee con-members. That was the basic reason for the change. However, your fears for the result are legitimate, but I have good reason to suppose groundless. Take a look at the list of winners over the years. What do they have in common? Answer - at the time of their Award the winners were prominent in BSFA affairs. So they won the Award, on the vote not of BSFA members, but of Con-members.

On the other hand, in case you're worrying that this rearrangement simply cements the BSFA link immovably into place, it doesn't need to. Last year, as an exercise, I segregated the voters into BSFA and non-BSFA members, and assessed each category separately. There was no significant difference in the result, whichever way the resultant vote was counted.

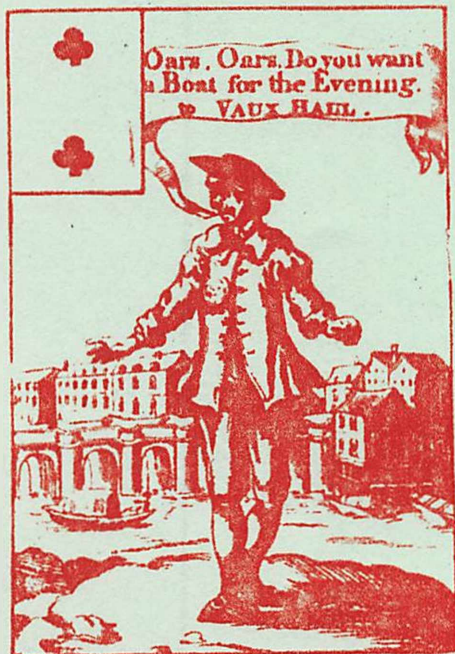
(++ I stand by my views: the Doc Weir Award is pointless, if it becomes, as it has done, merely an award to the most worthy BSFA committee member not to have won it before. Nothing against the winners, mind you - I think they earned it by hard sweat. It's the principle of the voting that I detest. And of late the Award, already firmly associated in my mind with the BSFA, has acquired a little of the distaste that I feel for the BSFA itself. The fate of the BSFA Fanzine Foundation was nothing short of disgraceful, and put me off the BSFA for ever. My revulsion cannot but help rubbing off a bit on to the Doc Weir Award. ++ - D)

Arthur Cruttenden: 11 Heath Lodge Site, Welwyn, Herts

Let's hope that the Crystal Palace (Low Level) Scheme is adopted, especially the track for steam running. If the museum goes to York it'll be like Clapham - static, which is a sad waste. This sort of thing is happening all too often. The RAF museum is to be at Hendon. They have planes in flying condition, but they aren't allowed to fly from there.

(++ we now know that it will be at York. I think it's a shame, too: the Crystal Palace scheme was such a good one. - D ++)

WAIVE Audrey Walton, John Hall, Ed Reed, Thom Penman, Dave Rowe, Brian Williams, Roger Waddington and others. Thanks for writing, one and all.



" I have not been able to ascertain exactly the negro notions concerning the 'Duppy', indeed I believe that his character and qualities vary in different parts of the country. At first I thought that the term 'Duppy' meant neither more nor less than a ghost; but sometimes he is spoken of as 'The Duppy' as if there were but one, and then he seems to answer to the devil. Sometimes he is a kind of malicious spirit, who haunts burying-grounds (like the Arabian ghouls) and delights in playing tricks on those who may pass that way. On other occasions, he seems to be a supernatural attendant on the practitioners of Obeah (== black magic ==) in the shape of some animal, as familiar imps are supposed to belong to our English witches; and this latter is the part assigned to him in the following 'Nancy-story'.

Sarah Winyan was scarcely ten years old when her mother died, and bequeathed to her considerable property. Her father was already dead, and the guardianship of the child devolved upon his sister, who had always resided in the same house, and who was her only surviving relation. Her mother, indeed, had left two sons by a former husband, but they lived at some distance in the wood, and seldom came to see their mother, chiefly from a rooted aversion to this aunt, who, although from interested motives she stooped to flatter her sister-in-law, was haughty, ill-natured and even suspected of Obeahism, from the occasional visits of an enormous black dog, whom she called Tiger, and whom she never failed to feed and caress with marked distinction. In case of Sarah's death the aunt, in right of her brother, was the heiress of his property. She was determined to remove this obstacle to her wishes, and after treating her for some time with harshness and even cruelty, she one night took occasion to quarrel with her for some trifling fault, and fairly turned her out of doors. The poor girl seated herself on a stone near the house, and endeavoured to beguile the time by singing:

'Ho-day poor me-O!  
Poor me Sarah Winyan-O!  
They call me neger neger!  
They call me Sarah Winyan-O!'



But her song was soon interrupted by a loud rushing among the bushes; and the growling which accompanied it announced the approach of the dreaded Tiger. She endeavoured to secure herself against his attacks by climbing a tree, but it seems that Tiger had not been suspected of Obeahism without reason, for he immediately growled out an assurance to the girl, that come down she must and should! Her aunt, he said, had made her over to him by contract, and had turned her out of doors that night for the express purpose of giving him an opportunity of carrying her away. If she would descend from the tree, and follow him willingly to his own den to wait upon him, he engaged to do her no harm, but if she refused to do this, he threatened to gnaw down the tree without loss of time, and tear her into a thousand pieces. His long, sharp teeth, which he gnashed occasionally during the above speech, appeared perfectly adequate to the execution of his menaces, and Sarah judged it most prudent to obey his commands. But as she followed Tiger into the wood, she took care to resume her song of 'Ho-day poor me-O!' in hopes that someone passing near them might hear her name, and come to her rescue. Tiger however was aware of this, and positively forbade her singing. However, she contrived every now and then to loiter behind, and when she thought him out of hearing, her 'Ho-day poor me-O!' began again, although she was compelled to sing in so low a voice, through fear of her four-footed master, that she had but faint hopes of its reaching any ear but her own. Such was, indeed, the event, and Tiger conveyed her to his den without molestation.

In the meanwhile, her two half-brothers had heard of their mother's death, and soon arrived at the house to enquire what was become of Sarah. The aunt received them with every appearance of welcome; told them that grief for the loss of her only surviving parent had already carried her niece to the grave, which she showed them in her garden; and acted her part so well, that the youths departed perfectly satisfied of the decease of their sister. But while passing through the wood on their return, they heard someone singing, but in so low a tone that it was impossible to distinguish the words. As this part of the wood was the most unfrequented, they were surprised to find anyone concealed there. Curiosity induced them to draw nearer, and they soon could make out the

'Ho-day poor me-O!

Poor me, Sarah Winyan-O!'

There needed no more to induce them to hasten onwards; and upon advancing deeper into the thicket they found themselves at the mouth of a large cavern in a rock. A fire was burning within it, and by its light they perceived their sister seated on a heap of stones and weeping, while she chanted her melancholy ditty in a low voice, and supported on her lap the head of the formidable Tiger. This was a precaution which he always took when inclined to sleep, lest she should escape. She had taken advantage of his slumbers to resume her song in as loud a tone as her fears of waking him would allow. She saw her brothers at the mouth of the cave:

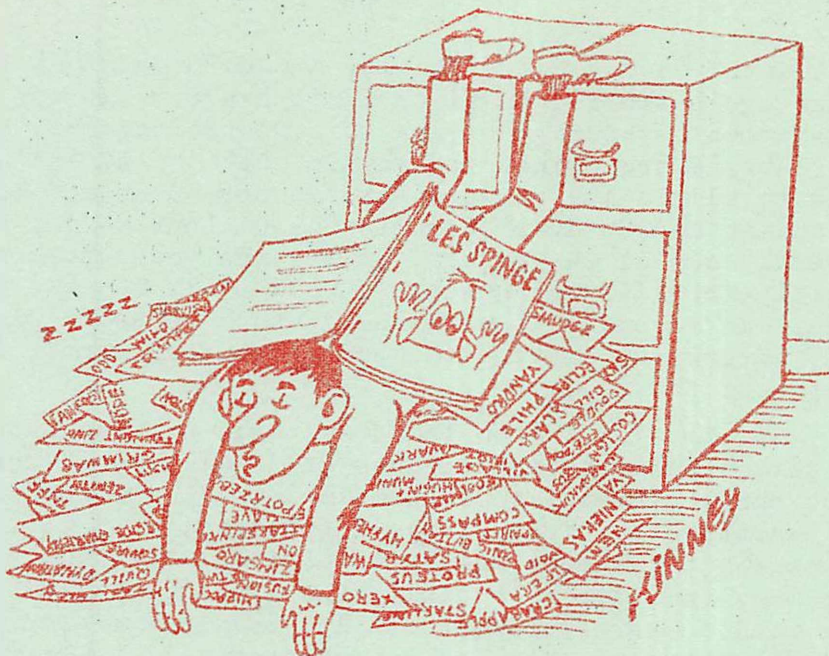


the youngest fortunately had a gun with him, and he made signs that Sarah should disengage herself from Tiger if possible. It was long before she could summon up courage enough to make the attempt, but at length, with fear and trembling, and moving with the utmost caution, she managed to slip a log of wood between her knees and the frightful head, and at length drew herself away without waking him. She then crept softly out of the cavern, whilst the youngest brother crept as softly into it; the monster's head still reposed upon the block of wood. In a moment it was blown into a thousand pieces; and the brothers, afterwards cutting the body into four parts, laid one in each quarter of the wood.

From that time only were dogs brought into subjection to men, and the inhabitants of Jamaica would never have been able to subdue those ferocious animals, if Tiger had not been killed and quartered by Sarah Winyan's brothers. As to the aunt, she received the punishment which she merited, but I cannot remember what it was, exactly. Probably, the brothers killed and quartered her as well as her four-footed ally; or perhaps she was turned into a wild beast, and supplied the vacancy left by Tiger, as was the case with the celebrated Zingha, Queen of Angola, who although she embraced christianity on her death-bed, and died according to the most orthodox forms of the Romish religion, still had conducted herself in such a manner when alive, that shortly after her decease, the kingdom being ravaged by a hyena, her subjects could not be persuaded but that the soul of this most christian Queen had transmigrated into the body of a hyena. Yet this was surely doing the hyena great injustice, for she at least had never been in the habit of composing ointments by pounding little children in a mortar with her own hands, an amusement which Zingha had introduced at the court of Angola. It took surprisingly; shortly, no woman thought her toilette completed unless she had used some of this ointment. Pounding children became all the rage, and ladies who aspired to be the leaders of fashion, pounded their own.

-- from 'The Journal of a West Indian Proprietor'  
by Matthew Gregory ('Monk') Lewis, 1834.





It's a popular sport to compare the current state of fanzine publishing in Britain unfavourably with that obtaining in a past rose-tinted Golden Age of nostalgic memory. I'm half afraid I may have helped myself in founding this merry pastime some years back, when the early PaDs fmz were flooding the country. But people now are saying exactly the same thing as I did then - that present fmz do not compare with those of (say) fifteen years ago. This, though, is nonsense (as is the related pastime of saying that British fmz are inferior to American ones. This is no doubt true, as judged by the US fmz that reach this country, but most American crudzines stay on the other side of the Atlantic and we never get a look at them, thus distorting comparisons). The current situation of the British fanzines is better than it has been for a long time. Even OMPA is healthier than for a number of years, in spite of the mutterings of a few disgruntled fans recently who apparently don't understand what an apa is FOR.

What I'm trying to say is that fmz publication in Britain, both in quantity and quality, is a lot better than most British fans are willing to give credence to. I'd like to make my point by talking about three fmz (all OMPA-zines, as it happens).

First off is LURK, published by Mike and Pat Hearn. The first issue announced in large print on the cover 'First Great Issue' and if not great, the fmz has turned out to be excellent quality. It's neatly typed with much attention to layout (though not enough illustrations). The contents are well balanced, the issue in front of me (number three) containing the text of Anne McCaffrey's speech at the 1971 Worcester convention; an account of his American travels by Philip Payne; fmz reviews;

and Peter Weston's wondrous talk on fan publishing given at last year's Novacon. This latter is something any fmz would have been proud to print, quite apart from its timebinding role in making current fans aware of what the past was really like. Book reviews and a sf crossword introduce a serious-constructive note, but are reasonably subdued, and the overall impression of LURK is of a solid, traditional faanzine which can easily stand up to its counterparts of the past. It reminds me of the late PSI-PHI.

The second fanzine under examination is VIEWPOINT (number 9) from Fred Hemmings. This also is well produced and contains a balanced diet of faanish cheer. There is an extensive four-way convention report on the Chessmancon, for instance, and some suitably critical fmz reviews from Jim Linwood, whose reviewing seems to migrate from one publication to another with lightning speed; he doesn't seem to have had a permanent home since the Fanalytic Eye, and that was quite some time ago. This issue also contains book reviews and a problem in logic, and a proper faanish air is imparted by a large selection of Jeeves filloes. My only quibble is with the paper size, A4 (ugly).

The third fanzine is HELL (number 6) from Messrs Robinson and Skelton of Manchester. This fanzine also is well duplicated, and makes use of electrostencils (which for some reason the other two do not). The tone of this fmz is both more serious-constructive and more revolutionary (if I may use the term) than LURK or VIEWPOINT. And yet the range of contents is still broad enough to interest most people in some way. There's a jazz article by Mike Meara, a column by Ian Williams and another by Carol Mearburn, and various interstitial chat.

All three of these fanzines are well worth reading. They are all neatly produced on paper of a constant size but of varying colour. HELL even uses some red ink. In appearance, they have nothing to fear from comparison with a mythical 'Golden Age'. In content also they have a broad, balanced selection of items, and (lo! great wonder of wonders) all have a lively letter column. In these ways also they have quality. I wouldn't compare them to the really great fanzines of the past (such as BASTION, APZ, RETRIBUTION...) but they can stand their ground against the lesser lights (ORION, FEZ, PARAFANALIA...). If a fmz looks good, and entertains, who should want more? Surely the whole point of fanzines is that they should NOT cultivate a professional attitude. F, after all, IJAGH.

LURK - Mike and Pat Meara, 61 Borrowash Rd, Spondon, Derby

VIEWPOINT - Fred Hemmings, 20 Beech Rd, Slough, Bucks SL3 7DQ

HELL - Robinson & Skelton, 9 Linwood Grove, Manchester M12 4QH

Schultz

