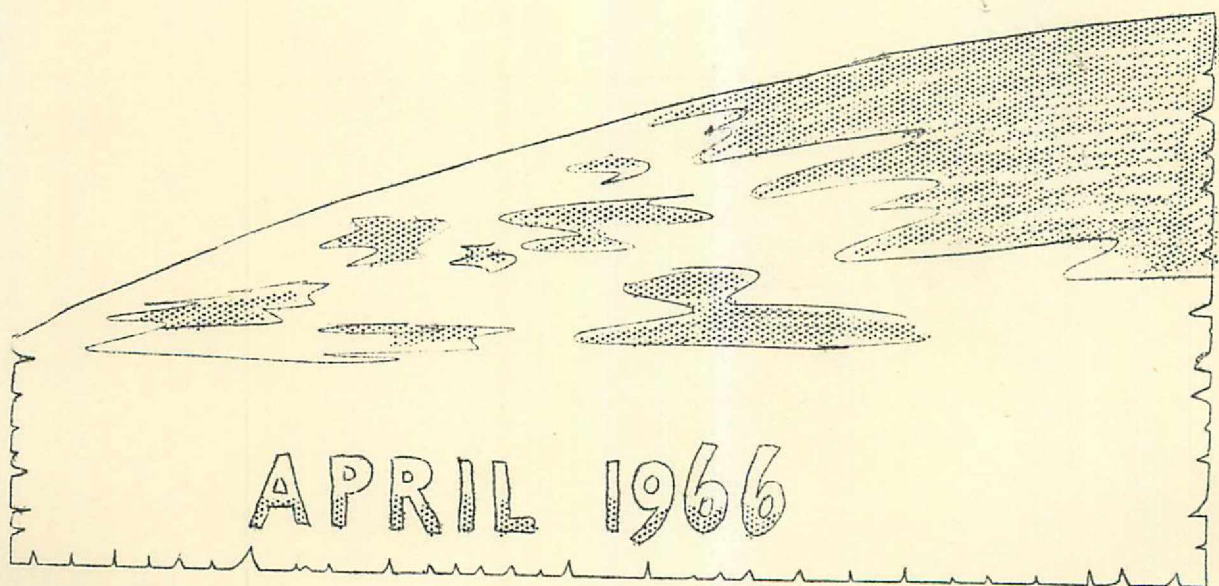
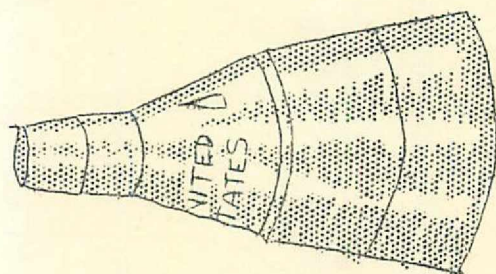
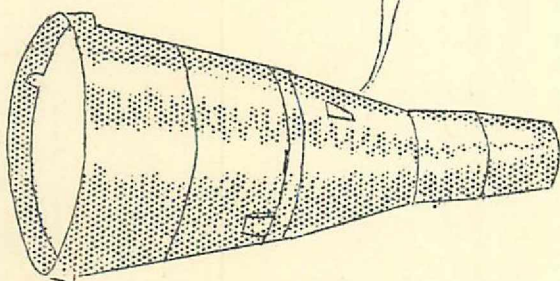
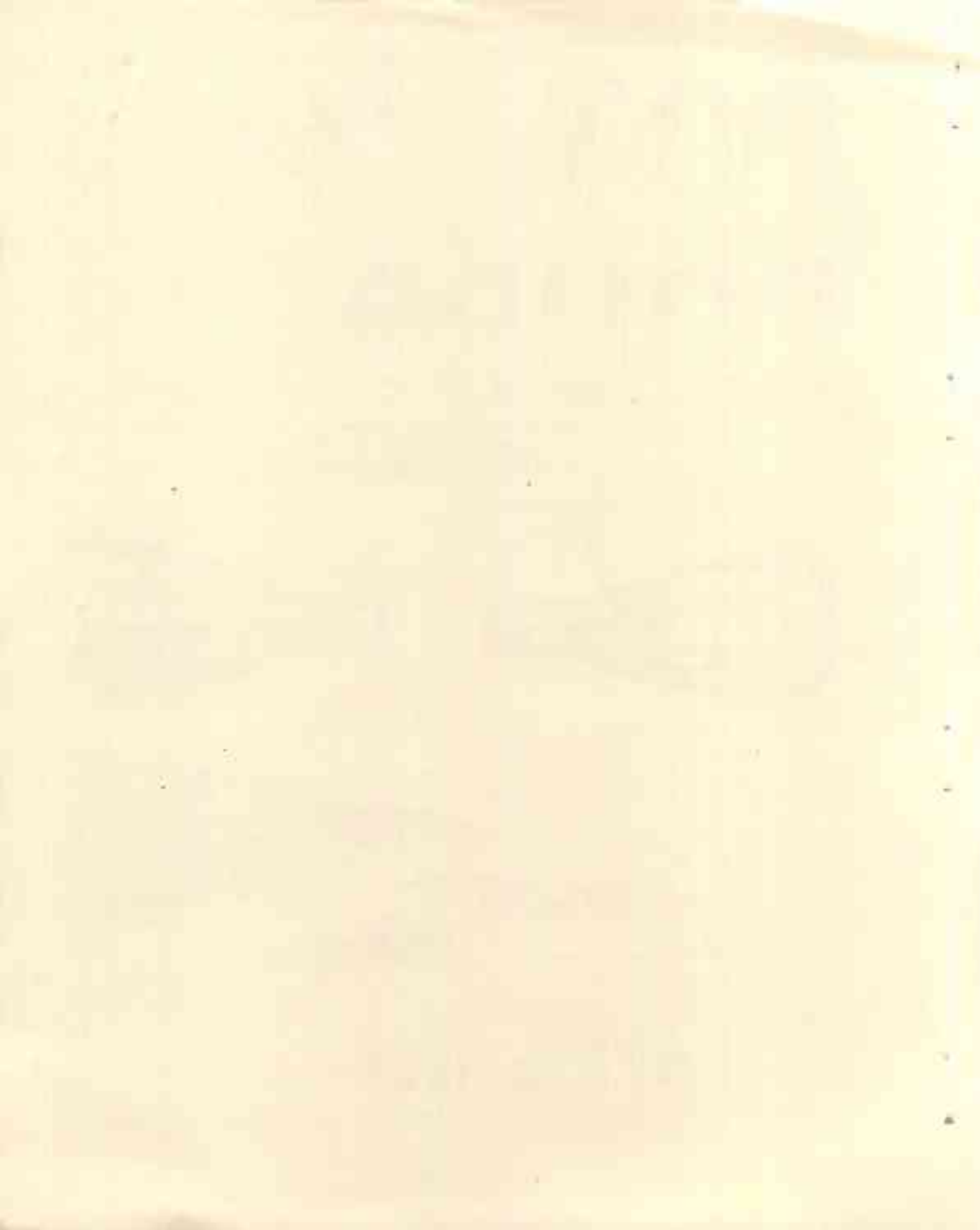


POT #44

POURRI

"...and I hear
he called Dave Hulan 'Dick'"





PLAYING THE GAME

Two SAPSites have asked for a rundown on the game of cricket. I think these two enthusiasts were Dian Pelz and Dave Van Arnam. I feel it is my duty to explain the game, and I will endeavour not to be facetious whilst doing so.

Two teams are selected, eleven in each. The idea is that both teams go in to bat twice, and see how many runs they can accrue. This means that in theory twenty wickets fall on each side, although it is possible for a team to win a game without losing even one wicket. Before I get you confused, I'll describe a typical team. It should be well balanced, i.e. three or four specialist batsmen, one wicket-keeper, one or more 'all-rounders' (players who are good at all the essential cricketing skills, but not outstanding at any), a couple of fast bowlers, a fast-medium one, and a spin bowler. The weather plays an important part in the game, and it is necessary to keep a balanced side so that no matter what the weather, your team is still capable of giving of its best. To make this point clearer, spin bowlers perform best on a pitch which is dry and crumbling to dust. They throw the ball up slowly, and when it hits the pitch it bites and shoots off at an angle, putting the batsman in difficulties. Suppose you have concluded that the weather is going to be fine for the duration of the match (up to five days), you take a chance and include two spin bowlers. This means you are a fast bowler short. If the weather changes, and it rains overnight, and is damp and humid, your spin bowlers will be useless, and you require fast bowlers. This puts you up the creek.

Both teams are dressed all in white (except the team I play for...I've played in hobnail boots and corduroy trousers before now, and no one has noticed) and the captains toss a coin to see who goes in first to bat. The toss is important. If the pitch is easy paced, and the bowlers will therefore have nothing to help them, if you win the toss you will decide to bat. Conversely, if the pitch looks green and fast and is drying after overnight rain, it would be good to bowl first, and try and get the other team out for perhaps less than 100 runs.

When it is decided who is to bat, the other side 'takes the field', the eleven of them walk out to the cricket pitch. One man, the wicket-keeper, a specialist, wears heavy padding on his legs, has heavy gloves, and if he doesn't want to spoil his weekend he wears other armour, too. The captain of the fielding team selects positions for the fielders. I must stress that the cricket ball is made of leather and is very

hard. Consequently there is a certain reluctance amongst fielders to be placed near the batsman. The closest a fielder is placed is a yard from the batsman. This position is called 'Silly Mid On'. If the batsman hits the ball hard and it hits silly mid on, it could kill him, and I'm not joking. So Silly mid on is usually a man with superb instinctive movements and a complete disregard for his own safety. A really good Sillymid on is hard to find. There is one disadvantage however in trying to get a fielding position a long way from the batsman. True, you can see the ball coming, and can try and stop it getting past you, but if the batsman hits the ball hard and high and it hasn't touched the ground you are expected to try and catch it. It stands to reason if you are fifty yards from the batsman and he has hit the ball high and it reaches you he has hit it hard. It is also coming down with gravity on its side. Your natural inclination is to dive out of the way, but you have to catch the ball, which dismisses the batsman. If you drop it, the batsman stays put, and your team-mates glower in your direction. To sum up, the duty of the fielders is to stop the ball getting past them, to take a catch if it is given, and to always return the ball as fast and hard as they can to the wicket keeper.

In a moment or two the opening batsman walk out, and one goes to each end of the crease, which is 22 yards long. This is the distance between the wickets. The wickets, in case you don't know, consist of three stumps which are put into the ground close together. Two little carved lumps of wood called the bails are placed on top of the three wickets.

The final actors walk on the stage. These are worthy men called umpires. They make any decision which has to be made, and they are supposed to be impartial. They wear long white coats, and usually have six pebbles or beer tops or halfpennies in their large pockets, for each bowler has six bowls, before the fielding side changes round, and it is the umpires duty to shout "Over" when the six bowls have been sent down.

Now I'll tell you a little about an opening batsman. He is usually the batsman with the best temperament, and he needs it, because it is his job, together with the other opener, to build up a good score before he is out. His is equipped with a bat, made from willow. It is an expensive item, and is usually 'sprung', which means that the handle is treated in such a manner that when he hits a ball hard his fingers don't vibrate with the force. The batsman also has leg pads, heavy gloves, and a box affair where he needs it most. The bowler throws the ball at him very hard, and the batsmans first duty is to protect his wicket. If the ball knocks off one or more bails, he's out. A batsman can usually protect his wicket well, and could stop there all day blocking the ball with his bat. But he also has to get runs.

What is a run ?

The score is made up of runs. Remember the two batsmen are 22 yards apart. If the batsman hits the ball and it goes a long way, he can run to the other wicket, and the other batsman crosses over. This is one run. If the fielder hasn't returned the ball, and maybe still hasn't caught it, the batsman can take another run, maybe even three. If the ball is hit so hard that it goes past all the fielders and goes out of play it is called a boundary, worth four runs. The batsmen needn't run for a boundary. And if the ball is hit so hard that it goes up in the air and crosses the boundary line before hitting the ground it is a six hit. Six hits are fairly uncommon.

There is nothing more enthralling than to see a master batsman at the crease. There are several strokes which such a batsman usually has. He watches the ball leave the bowlers hand, and in a split second he has to decide which stroke he is going to use. He has to decide whether to defend or attack. He has to appreciate what sort of ball it is...is it going to keep low, is it going to rear up to head height, is it in fact aimed purposely at his head (this is permitted, the ball is called a bouncer)... is it going past him to his left or right, or is it an accurate ball aimed at his wickets. The class batsman has an attacking stroke to suit all these varying balls. The bouncer, aimed at his head, is 'out', or 'hooked'. In other words, he moves his head slightly and slashes at the ball as it passes. This is usually a four hit. But in a test match on TV last year between South Africa and England I saw an English opening batsman hit on the head by a bouncer, and he was knocked down and had eleven stitches inserted. And if he had unfortunately dropped his bat or even his cap on the wicket and knocked the bails off he would have been out. I've seen this happen.

The finest sight is a batsman hitting a true ball for a 'square cut'. There is a flash of arms and bat and the ball is at the boundary. Slow bowling isn't as easy as it sounds. As I've explained, a slow bowler has to use the ball and the pitch. It stands to sense that if the ball is slow it's easy for the batsman to hit it. But by a subtle flick of the wrist the slow bowler can make the ball go where the batsman doesn't expect. The ball is spun, so that when it hits the ground the heavy stitching on the ball bites and sends the ball in any direction, usually one the batsman hasn't envisaged.

During a test match against Australia in the middle fifties, an English spin bowler called Laker took nineteen of the twenty Australian wickets. He was unplayable. The ball went slowly through the air, hit the ground and spun acutely, even class batsman could do nothing because they didn't know where the ball was going, or what it was going to do next.

An opening batsman would be happy with 60 or 70 runs. He would love to get a century, even a double one, but his job is to take a grip of the innings, so that those who come in after him can play attacking cricket, and not defend too much.

The batsmen who come afterwards are usually more flamboyant characters. After a few moments to get a sight of the ball, they hit out like mad. They also try to rattle up over 50 runs in 'even' time, that means a run a minute.

As the morning progresses, maybe three or four batsmen are out, for, say round about 140 runs. Sometimes, in two hours, the opening batsmen are still at the wicket for around 130 to 150, very often the whole team is out in less than two hours for less than 100 runs.

Later, as wickets tumble, the less experienced batsmen go in. The bowlers go in last, they aren't expected to get many runs, not more than a dozen or so, although some are lucky and get big scores. But we'll presume our fictitious team is out for 249. That means that the eleven batsmen have obtained that total between them.

Between innings there is a ten minute pause, and then the fielders come out, the team which has just batted. They await the opening batsmen of the team which has just fielded. The fielding team has scored 249 runs. It is now their job to try and get the opposing team out for considerably less than that total.

The following list gives all the methods by which a batsman can be given out by the umpire :-

LEG BEFORE WICKET Known as 'l.b.w.' Many bowlers try to get the ball to hit the batsman's pads, and if the circumstances are favourable they let fly with a tremendous shout of "Howzatt!". They appeal to the umpire who then makes the fatal decision. He has already placed himself in the position of the bowler's arm, and he follows the ball's flight to when it hits the pads. He asks himself this question. "Supposing the pads had not been in the way, would the ball have hit the wicket?" Strange as you may think, even with the pads directly in front of the wicket it is not necessary for the umpire to give the batsman out. He may consider that the ball is swinging to either side of the batsman, or he may conclude that the ball would have gone over the bails. Usually an umpire doesn't give an immediate decision, which might be an instinctive answer to the bowler's loud appeal. He waits a few seconds before either ignoring the appeal if he has turned it down, or raising his right forefinger if the batsman is out. The batsman might rightly consider that he wasn't out, but if given out by the umpire there is no appeal.

BOWLED. As the term suggests, the bowler sends down a ball which passes the batsman and knocks off one or more bails. If the ball comes off any part of the batsman's body and dislodges a bail, he is out. If he is injured and drops his hat or bat on the wicket, he is out. If, in attempting to make a mighty hit, he knocks a bail off with his bat he is out. It is credited to the bowler however he is out.

CAUGHT. If the ball comes off the batsman's bat or gloves and is caught by a fielder before it has touched the ground, he is out. Some bowlers bowl so that the ball moves off the ground, hoping that the batsman will miss-time his stroke and give a snick to the wicket-keeper. This is also out, providing the umpire acknowledges the appeal. With the ball moving so fast, there is sometimes a snick when the ball maybe touches the batsman's pad, but the wicket-keeper will appeal. It is then up to the umpire to give his decision. It has sometimes happened that a hard hit by the batsman hits a fielder, flies off part of his body and is caught by another fielder. This is out. You'll have gathered that it's no sinecure being a batsman.

STUMPED. A slow bowler particularly will throw up an inviting slow ball, which, if the batsman hits it, will probably go for a six hit. Most of them do go. But the slow bowler is patiently tempting the batsman. He will maybe throw up several easy ones, from which the batsman will score heavily. Then the bowler will spin one, the batsman, with a gleam in his eye, will leap forward to smite it, and miss it. The wicket-keeper, who knows what is planned, will be standing close, and whilst the bewildered batsman is wondering where the ball went, he will knock off the bails whilst the batsman is outside his permitted area. Stumping doesn't happen too often, probably not even one per innings on average.

RUN OUT. Recall that when a batsman hits a ball past a fielder he can run to the other wicket, the other batsman doing the same, and this counts as a run. If the fielder can catch the ball quickly and throw it at the wicket-keeper or the wicket, and knock the bails off whilst the batsman is outside his permitted area, the batsman is out. There is no more pathetic sight in cricket than two batsmen at one wicket, in other words, one went for a run, and the other one didn't. The one who ran is given out.

We'll now flip back to our hypothetical match. One side was out for 249. The second team do very well, they get a total of 376 for seven wickets. The captain can go on until he has lost all his wickets, but having built up a substantial lead of 127 runs it is reasonable for him to declare his innings closed, and put the other team in again. The rule is that a team can declare anytime, but it usually only done when the team is in a strong position.

The first team bat again. They are 127 runs behind, which means that they have to make up this leeway before they start increasing their score again. We'll presume that favourable scores are presented by some of their good players, and the teams second innings closes at 380 all out. We'll presume this is a three-day match, and the first team, having had two innings, has scored 629 runs...in other words, 253 runs more than the second team, who have to bat again. In other words, if the second team can score 254 runs they've won. Unfortunately, time is running out, and there is less than four hours playing time left. The captain of the second team has to decide whether to go for a win or a draw. If he goes for a win, he has got to score 254 runs in less than four hours, which is quite possible but still requires some 75 runs per hour. This means his batsman must take risks to score quickly, and it is possible that he may lose all his men without getting that score. Also, he is having the last use of the wicket, which favours the slow bowlers. His other alternative is to play for a draw, this means that his batsmen will take their time, play normally, so that when play closes they haven't scored 254 but they haven't lost many of their batsmen. The game is therefore a draw, and quite a few games finish up this way, especially if the weather has been poor.

Our captain, being a sporting type, decides to go for a win. But things are against him, time, the wicket; and his batsmen, going too fast, are out for 180, which means his team have lost by 73 runs.

The game is usually unpredictable. I've listened to test matches, and I've gone out of the room to nip upstairs, and England's total is something like 288 for one wicket. I leer, because this is a fantastic score, which has put them in a commanding position. I tune in to the score again about ten minutes later, and the score is something like 289 for five wickets, and they are back on the defensive.

In this short resume of the game, I've tried to be as non-technical as I can and still give you a 'feel' of the game. Very often I'd sat glued to the radio or TV for five whole days listening to a test match. Every moment of the play in those five days has been full of drama and excitement. Just a couple of weeks ago I was setting the alarm clock to waken me at 6 am, to hear a commentary of the test matches in Australia, where England, incidentally, drew the series, three test matches drawn and one win each.

Many people who know nothing about cricket think that it is merely a matter of hitting a ball with a bat, but I've tried to show that it is an exceedingly skillful and technical game. Of course, you have to live with cricket for years before you fully understand it, and for this reason, Dian and Dave, I hope my short summary has been of interest. When the summer comes, and the cricket season starts, if you are keen I'll send you newspaper cuttings with all the English county cricket scores, and you will be able to appreciate the complications of the scores, and perhaps be in a position to nod wisely when so and so is out 'lbw', or someone else has scored a century before lunch. Dammit, I've forgotten to tell you what happens when someone 'bowls a maiden over'. Maybe another time.

John Berry
1966.

BLACK TAKES WHITE

On the Italian front there was a sector
That neither side had any respect for.
Jerry looked down from a west-Appennine hill-mass
That one brigade could hold from now to Christmas,
Whilst, for attack, he had no troops to squander.
In fact, the show was largely propaganda;
The Yanks had negroes, Jerry had Italians
In regular divisions and battalions
To prove that they were pukka fighting allies;
Though plainly neither mob had any relish
For warfare (and why should they, lacrima Christi,
Negores for Jays, peasants for squadristi ?)
The only major movement in those quarters
Was a dense, two-way traffic of deserters.

It chanced that a deserting negro party
Encountered a like-minded Eyetie sortie.
At this a keen disoussion was engendered,
Each party claiming that it had surrendered
And that the other had become its captor.
The Eyeties held the trump, the winning factor;
Their lot was lod by an uffiziale;
What he said went. (The tale's a tribute, really,
To both sides' rather narrow sense of duty.)
Back marched the negroes with their unsought booty.

Imagine how the F.R.O's got cracking.
Here was a feat of arms they'd long been lacking.
Nobody paused to bother with such trifles
As where the captors had mislaid their rifles.
Quickly these fed-up and embarrassed negroes
Were praised, promoted, given gongs as heroes,
And photographs of their victorious battle
Were published from Long Island to Seattle.

Norman Cameron (1905 - 1953)

(Reprinted from RHYME AND REASON by O'Malley and Thompson.)

In March 1958 Bruce Burn sent me a letter asking me for material and he specified an essay about my den. As a matter of fact, Bruce's timing was a little less than a shining example of E.S.T. because just before his letter arrived, I received an ultimatum from my wife. She said meaningfully that our daughter was growing up, and it was time she had a bedroom to herself. My den, she explained with a leer of triumph, was just what she had in mind. I protested, and said we couldn't afford to spend money on wallpaper and paste and stuff just now, and she leered again, and dumped a big parcel in front of me. And so I admitted defeat. My fannish den is no more. I am in fact writing this, cowering in my attic, attempting to focus my eyes on the keys of this horrible machine by the light of a candle.

As my thoughts flicker back to my so marvellous den, and whilst it is so fresh in my memory, I feel that the following description of my little private kingdom will be something more than just a guided tour. It will be a sort of memorial...I hope to read this in the distant years to come, and thus to ponder and generally take myself back to those happy days. And now, deah reader, just imagine that you visited me a few days ago, and asked to have a look at my...

DEN OF INQUIRY

"Oh, you want to see my den? Well, just follow me up the stairs. Mind the fifth stair, the carpet has worn just a little....cops, never mind ...I've got a First Aid book upstairs, so I'll be able to push that thumb into place again. Now here we are on the landing; that's the door of my den, just over....STEADY...I say, I didn't know you were an acrobat, that cartwheel was superb. Oh, sorry. Let me wrench it off your shoe. That's one of my son's roller skates. Yes, I agree it is dark at the top of these stairs. Just because I wouldn't let him play with my zap this morning. I just don't know what kids are coming to these days. Don't worry about that tear in your jacket, my wife is pretty experienced at repairing clothing, although you'll probably have to make do with scarlet cotton, she hasn't any light gray, I don't think. Here we are. My Den. You'll find a small box just inside with a slit in the top of it, but that's just for my relations to show their appreciation...oh, you shouldn't....no, deah me, I'm sorry I cannot change that ten shilling note. There now. Just look. Shall we start on the left, and work round to...WATCH...oh, for goodness sake, you've knocked over last week's correspondence. Now I'll never find that letter from Bloch. Hey? Yes, I know it was a stupid place to put it, but at least I knew where it was, I didn't trip over it. Honestly, I'm trying my hardest to keep some sort of system going, and you barge in and stick

your clumsy big feet over it. Of Course you should have seen it. What ? Oh, I see. You were looking at that nude picture. Say, shake hands. I did the same thing last week. Yes, I'm rather proud of that. You'll never believe it, but that nude was sent to me as a quote card. Honest. You should see who signed it before it came to me. Chuck Harris had it for three years, and I still think he slipped it in the envelope by mistake... er, yes, I've had it since, let me see, er, 1955. I don't think I'll pass it on. I mean, I'm a sort of authority on that pose. I mean, note the way she's bending over to buckle her shoe. Isn't that a wonderful camera angle. No, I'm afraid I can't let you have it, rumour said it was your wife. IT IS YOUR WIFE ? Oh deah. Look, please let me have it. I'll dust it every morning, and I promise sincerely never to send it to anyone else. I mean, I'll swap this for it. Over here. Tucker sent me this, you know. It was in a book called PLAYBOY. Here are the 3D glasses. No, I don't know who it is, I've never seen the face, eh ?, oh yes, of course, it's Diana Dors. Hey, you've been fifteen minutes looking at it, I don't want you to break my record. Move to the next picture. That, deah boy, is a Quinn Original. It was featured on the cover of AUTHENTIC a few years ago. Isn't it really wonderful, the way the black velvet of the sky, liberally sprinkled with stars, gradually turns blue, then light blue, then merges with the cloudy horizon. Yes, that's the Thames below, and I must tell you, me being an authority on aeroplanes and suchlike, that Gerard was most prophetic with that depiction of a stratosphere liner coming in over London. They're designing one in England at the moment like it. Oh Ghod. How can one fan be so clumsy. You've put your blasted shoe right on top of that tube of duplicating ink. It was full, too. I know it was on the floor, I put it there, didn't I ? That's where I file it. Twelve inches from the left of that mousehole. I tell you, man, I have a system. It never fails me, until big ignorant louts like you come in and, ooooh, yes that is a big bicep. Sure it isn't your shirtsleeve rolled up? I say, that fist looks like a leg of lamb. Lovely ring, too. I say, you're BIG. Oh Christ. That's my only ream of off-puce duplicating paper you're standing on now. Look heah. I know you're bigger than me, but watch where you're putting those great big clob-hoppers. Oh, not there, you'll get ink on the seat of my trousers. Temper. TEMPER. Calm down. Look, I may not look like one, and you may not believe I'm one, but I'm a constable. Honest. No, I'm only telling you so that you can put that mimeo crank down without any loss of face. Yeah, I know you're a BNF, and your fanzine is pretty good. Of course I've got the copies you sent all filed away. I keep 'em in this box, allow me to open it. Heck. Suffering Catfish. I told my wife I had no paper to light the fire with. I don't know what to say, I'm sure. Wimmin. Don't feel too hard about it, though, you've spare copies at home, haven't you ? Wait, here's a collector's item here. Ever seen one before ? It's a curio of some distinction. Nothing less, mark you, than a piece of engraved metal off an ancient Persian breast-plate, which was actually purchased by Leeh Shaw from a scrap metal merchant in a rough quarter of Belfast during her visit here with Larry in 1956. Confidentially, there was something primeaval about the way Leeh used to dress up completely in Persian armour, waving a curved sword and lurking in remote parts of Willis's house. I honestly believe she was carried away by the aura of that warlike period. I reckon, and don't quote me in your next column, I reckon the gal has a split personality, dressing up and fighting like that. I really do think she thought she was a Persian soldier. And how did I get

the metal, you ask ? Oh, I say, I caught her a lovely swipe with my spear. It's over there, in the corner. I was dressed up as a Zulu at the time. I had one of Walt's best bath towels round my waist. I'm telling you, boy, those were the days. We did have fun. James White was dressed up as a Crusader, and Larry Shaw of INFINITY fame, and this has never been revealed before, in case his circulation went down...Larry Shaw was dressed as Nero. Yep. Leeh and Larry spent a fortune on ancient armour, and we felt it would make them feel at home if we dressed up. There was something bombastic about Willis's appearance as Attila the Hun. I'm telling you, it was real fanatic. One of my most treasured relics, that bit of metal. And now we move on to another treasured possession of mine. These two...WHAT ? That, my dear sir, is sheer impudence. If I want to have two tins of baked beans hanging on the wall, I'll just let 'em hang. I don't go round your den making snide remarks on what you've got hung up as trophies. You needn't look so complacent. I know all about that pair of black panties you have suspended over your autographed copy of THE IMMORTAL STORM. From the WorldCon in London in '57, weren't they ? Huh ? I know it appears stupid, but those two tins of beans represent the climax of my mechanical career. You've heard about the typer I purchased from Bob Shaw ? It's under that padlocked case over there. Well, the platten wouldn't move, and by suspending these two particular tins over the edge of my desk, and attached to the platten by wire, I was able to type out 205 articles and stories in three years. I wouldn't sacrifice those beans for anything...that is, unless you're stopping the night. I mean, I don't want to have to open them, because they represent my triumph over adversity...I mean, like, you're not stopping, are you....I'd like you to stop, but these beans have inspired me for all this time, and if you went to the Grand Central Hotel you'd get something better than beans, and after all....Suffering Catfish. Now you've really gone too far. PUT THAT BACK. I saw you. D'you know that Bruce Burn could get seven years hard labour if the authorities down there knew he took that photograph. I know she's got a grass skirt on, but it's the look on her face and the angle of her knees that gets me. Yeah, he took it in Fiji. He went there especially to take that photograph for me, y' know. That's his hand at the bottom left, straightening the rug. No, I don't think so, although when the other 49 copies arrive, I may be able to fix you up. Now now, watch how you handle that. I paid fifteen shillings for it from a salesman who called at the front door. That, my dear sir, is a genuine war-surplus American Haze Screen for Aerial Observation. It's made by the Kodak firm in the U.S. See the beautifully shaped wooden handle, and the different coloured glass. It was used in the Pacific War in the forties for spotting Japanese aeroplanes diving out of the sun. What do I have it for ? You do ask some daft questions. I know a bargain when I see one. Don't you know there's going to be a total eclipse of the sun in 1997, there won't be any need for me to start smoking a piece of glass, I'll just whip out this haze screen. I always thought you were an intellectual. DON'T SIT THERE. Holy Ghu, I've never had such an awkward character in my den. I've had some really big names in here, Raeburn, Rory Faulkner, Steve Schultheis, the Bulmers, Chuck Harris, etc, and they've all known not to sit on that orange box. That's my son's pet duck your sitting on, if you don't mind. Don't fret so much, petrol is a pretty good agent for getting dirty marks off clothing. Although I don't know what my son will say. Those eggs were due to hatch next week. Now then, come over to my bookcase, and have a look at some of my rare

first editions. Starting from the left we have the unexpurgated volumes of the Decameron of Boccaccio, then comes seven volumes of Sex Life in Ancient Rome; Hints for Young Girls, The Trials of Oscar Wilde, Forever Amber, The Best from PLAYBOY, and finally Love Life of the Eskimo's. On the second shelf, starting again from the left, we have....oooh? You've read them all. You filthy beast. No wonder some people get the impression that sf Fandom is full of sex maniacs. You get our hobby a bad name. You might at least admit there's one you haven't read. My Ghod. You must do nothing else except read books like that. Smashin', isn't it? And that's just about all. That long bookcase is full of fanzines I've garnered since 1954. That pile on the right, with the spotlight shining on 'em, are all the fanzines which have featured my stories and things. A hundred per cent record of my fannish career to date. That pile of prozines have revcoos of my stuff in them. What's in those tea chests, you ask? Listen. I've been patient with you. You've done nothing in here but flounder like a stranded whale. Your erotic notions have disgusted me, doing nothing but talk about nudes and panties and pornography and such. You've squashed a tube of ink, you've wrecked my filing system, and now...NOW... you ask me what's in those tea chests. Can't you use your imagination. That, mister, is my desk. Well, yes, I've always meant to paint out that PRODUCE OF CHITTAGONG on the left chest. With that rotted plank suspended between the two, I've got a really efficient desk. Utility to a degree, but still efficient. Yeeas, admittedly it is low, but the Romans used to do things on their knees, didn't they? And what's good enough for the Romans is good enough for me. I expect you've got one of those swanky desks like John Champion or Joe Sanders, who've sent me photo's showing fan dens which must be like an MGM office. I maintain a fan's den should represent his personality, and, hell, now he's fainted. Diane...DIANE....bring up a glass of water, will you, quick. That's the third one this week. Some fans must lead a very sheltered life, that's all I can think. It makes me want to spit. What is fandom coming to, I keep asking myself? What is fandom coming to.....?

John Berry
1959.

Well, this is it. You are holding in your clutching digits the 44th issue of POT POURRI. I'd better explain about the poem BLACK TAKES WHITE, I read it in one of my son's school books, and I thought it would interest some of you ex-service types. I may warn you here and now that I'm working on a mammoth 50th issue, I've several stories already on stencil. At the rate I'm going, it will (DV) be pubbed about this time next year. And all I have to do is tell you that this issue will appear in the 75th issue of SAPS due out on 15th April 1966. I am John Berry, of number 31, Campbell Park Avenue, Belmont, Belfast 4, Northern Ireland.....