

I guess there comes a time when a person has to return to the land of reality. That means, among other things more mundane, sitting down once again to put a few words on paper for friends far and near to let them know what's happening in the Denton household. So you hold in your hot little hands THE ROGUE RAVEN # 26, a personalzine written on the whim of the editor, Frank Denton, 14654 - 8th Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA 98166. It is, as ever, a Bran & Skolawn Press Publication. Freep!!!

TIME PASSES, THE DENTONS GO AWAY AND COME BACK AGAIN

It has been quite a while since I sat down to do one of these, and I'm finding it difficult to get going. That is quite natural, since I've been away from the beloved typer for quite some while. In our last thrilling episode, the Dentons were poised on the edge, waiting for a plane to whisk them away to a fantasy land, which the mundanes know as England. That was back around the 21st of July. Now I begin this on September 12th and I've had to come back and face the workaday world once more. It's a horrible thing to face. Hirings to be accomplished, the school year just ahead, state and federal reports to be done. Blech!

There will be a trip report! There will be a trip report! There will be a trip report! I figured that if I said that three times, it might actually come true. I realize that I said that last time and it never happened. Who knows? I may actually do the 1975 trip, too, one of these days when a certain madness overcomes me. Nevertheless, I thought I might actually say that in print and hope for the best. But for those of you who just can't wait to hear about it all, I thought I'd start off with an abbreviated version here. Just a couple of pages which will give you an idea of where we went and what we saw, and should easily get me into the swing of talking to you via typer again. (It's hard when you haven't set finger to a keyboard in over seven weeks.)

Naturally the trip really started with London. Well, of course, we had to take off from here, but that's just one of those necessary things. We spent five days in London, seeing sights and meeting people. First off, my cousin Joe, who teaches at Michigan State, had taken a flat for the summer in London, so that he could do some research. We had a fine visit with him, attended a play together, and one evening he had us out to his place for crackers and wine before going to a fine Turkish restaurant. It was nice to have a chance to visit with him as I had not seen him for

five years. We also had a very nice visit with Michael Carlson and his new wife, Theresa. They had us out to dinner one Sunday and afterward we took the tube out to The Museum of London. It's gorgeous and I was particularly grateful for a small, but select group of statuary from a Mithraic temple. I have visited several Mithraic temples but this was the first time I had seen any of the statuary. Later we had lunch with Michael and Theresa before leaving London. Another fine day was spent with Keith Roberts and a friend, Peter Pearce. We pubcrawled until we couldn't hold another ounce (at least I couldn't - no way to keep up with the pros) then went to visit St. Batholomew's Church, a lovely Norman church and the oldest church now standing in London. The others were burned down in the London fire. We also managed to visit the British Museum this time. Finally, after three previous visits.

After picking up a rental car we started southwest on our tour. We visited Winchester first, primarily to see the cathedral, but were entranced with the rest of the town as well. Thence down through New Forest and a stop at Dorchester. Then on along the coast to Plymouth where we stayed two days. There we were fortunate enough to see the dress rehearsal for the Queen's review of the Royal Marine Commandos. It was quite a show; the Queen was to be there the following Friday.

Then we drove on to Bodmin where we took a hotel and drove out each day from there to see more of Cornwall. We visited many of the seaside villages, had a much too short visit with Archie and Beryl Mercer. Beryl was excited in having taken Cornish during the previous winter and passing with very good marks. She also is in the process of writing a novel. We visited the Lizard Peninsula, the furthest south point in England and walked for several miles along the coastal footpath. This particular footpath, one of many in England, runs something like 515 miles along the coasts of Devon and Cornwall and it is now one of my life's ambitions to walk the entire distance.

Leaving Cornwall we drove north to Exmoor in the north of Devon and Somerset. We stopped along the way to watch glass blowing at Liskeard and Dartington. On Exmoor we hiked the moor to The Long Stone and Chapman Barrows, ancient sites in this most desolate part of the moor. Got caught in a rainstorm, which has become par for our hikes on Exmoor. We spent another day touring by car to some of the small villages on the moor, Simonsbath, Dulverton, Dunster and Porlock. During our stay in Lynton, along the coast, we made one trip to Ilfracombe to listen to a magnificent youth symphony from the Nottingham School of Music. We also were privileged to see the Bath City Morris Dancers do their dancing in Lynton. Somewhere along the way we found time to buy several small paintings.

Leaving Exmoor we skirted around the Bristol Channel and entered Wales. We spent a morning in Cardiff and that afternoon in a wonderful folk park, St. Fagan's, where houses from various parts of Wales and various periods have been rebuilt. The park is large, people picnicked; there is a castle where we had tea. Finally we had to leave without seeing the museum, which I am told is excellent.

We continued along the south coast of Wales stopping in Llanstephan for the night, and the next day visiting Laugharne, the home of Dylan Thomas. We visited Thomas' house and saw the small shed where he wrote much of his poetry. Then we continued on around the Pembroke Peninsula to Fishguard. There we met a young American couple who were on a hitching trip and were introduced to a young lad who was in the film of "Under Milk Wood."

On up the coast we stopped briefly at Aberystwyth to hunt for books. Since we have visited there before we did not stay, but moved on to Dolgellau, where we stayed for a couple of days. On one of these days we climbed Cader Idris, The Chair of Arthur. A nice climb, although my knee had bothered me since London. (As a matter of fact, it did not stop hurting until we had been home about three weeks.) The day

was rather overcast; probably just as well or I would have melted away. The climb up and back took 6½ hours. When we got down to the car and got cleaned up, we took off across Wales in a northeasterly fashion to spend the night with Pete Presford and his "brood," as he calls them. Wife Anita had a marvelous dinner for us and we had a good time with the children, Mark and Justine. We spent the evening in talk and some of Pete's good home brew. In the morning we accompanied Pete and the kids to Moel Arthur, a short but stiff climb along Offa's Dyke, another long distance path. From the top we could look out over the Plains of Denbigh, a nice view. In the afternoon, after goodbyes, we traveled along to Chester, a beautiful city, but crowded. After two days in the hills, so to speak, we found we couldn't cope with crowds of tourists. We visited the cathedral, which we had neglected on previous trips, then fled eastward to make our way to Holmes Chapel and the home of Eric Bentcliffe. We had another delightful stay with Eric and Beryl and daughter Lindsey. Lots of good talk, lots of excellent food. Those people would have kept us there for a week and fed us until we were roly-poly if we had let them. On Sunday morning we drove out to Alderly Edge, a very lovely place, and according to legend, where Arthur's knights are sleeping until there is a need for them to awaken to save Britain.

After lunch we had to say our goodbyes and head north for Cumbria as we were expected by Anna Jo's cousin in Culgaith. We spent another five days there, visiting the Lake District from there. We spent some time in some of our favorite places, explored some new ones, and spent a day visiting Anna Jo's ancestral home and the graveyard at Castle Sowerby. That same day we visited Greenrigg Pottery and after traveling along Bassenthwaite, a lovely lake, we wound up into the fells to Watendlath, the scene of one of Hugh Walpole's marvelous novels about the Lake District, Judith Paris.

On another day we discovered that our old friends, Hedgehog Pie, a folk group, would be playing at the Ambleside Folk Club. Of course we were there, right in the front row. Mickey Doonan, the piper and flute player, remembered us from our previous visit and we had a great talk. Except that he would not agree that it had been two years since our last visit. Anyway, he has invited us to visit with him for a couple of days next trip. Nice invitation. I also have some words to send to their new singer, words from a song sung on Prince Edward Island, but to a traditional melody.

On another day we drove to Hardknott Pass where there are exceptional remains of a Roman fort. The pass is one of the most beautiful places I have ever visited and I have the urge to use it in a story, if I can ever get it straight in my head. The one track road leads on from Hardknott to Wrynose Pass and then back to Hawkshead. A beautiful drive if one is not afraid of trying to get two cars past each other on a one-track road.

Finally it was time to leave the Lakes and head south. Two days were spent in Oxford, buying books or just looking. Anna Jo did some brass rubbings. I took the last opportunity to look at books, make notes for future purchases and hit all the record stores.

Then we drove down to Henley to spend several days visiting with Keith. Each day we would drive out to see the countryside. The Vale of the White Horse at Uffington, Wayland's Smithy, Woodstock, Chedworth Roman Villa. And Keith knows all of the good pubs for eating. We enjoyed very much our visit with him. Each evening we would return to his flat to listen to music and talk. Some opera, much Benjamin Britten, and some of Elgar's Caractacus, which I had purchased in London and was carrying around with me. It was tough to leave Keith, but time doesn't seem to stop and ultimately there was a plane to catch.

Our last visit was with Dave Piper, his lovely wife, Cathy, and the two girls, Clare and Sara. About a mile from Dave's house I managed to have an automobile

accident, but both cars were driveable; nobody was injured. So we were late arriving at Pipers. He took us to his local after I had gotten into some dry clothes. His local is the Ruislip Manor Football Club. Here, with his own darts, he challenged me to a game of darts. Well, to uphold the honor of the United States, even though I had never played an honest-to-goodness game of English darts, I found it necessary to beat him. He shall never live it down. Hi, Dave; been practicing?? I'm sure it was more luck than good management and we had many good laughs during the game. Cath did a superb job with a salad that made the table groan. Remind me to tell you what a salad is sometime, as I'm sure that sounds funny. Heck, best I tell you now or you'll just stay confused. Cold cuts, cheese, fresh vegetables and lettuce, several kinds of bread, dressings. People say, "Oh, we're just going to have a salad," and then they lay this beautiful spread of food before you. Followed by dessert, of course.

We enjoyed our visit with the Pipers very much. Dave had to be up and off to work very early in the morning, but we slept in. I managed to talk Cathy out of a superb cheesecake recipe that she had made the day before. Instead of cream cheese, it uses cottage cheese and is not quite so rich. Delectable. Thank you, Cathy.

I found myself a bit leary on the road after the accident, and we drove slowly to Gatwick, skirting London to the west. We passed Windsor Castle and Ascot Park, home of great horse races. We stopped for lunch at Dorking and in a record shop there I found my last purchase, a McGuinness Flint record that I did not have. On sale, too.

We arrived at Gatwick in plenty of time to do a good job of packing and to take a nap. In the evening we visited The Six Bells, a superb old pub and had some drinks as well as a very nice dinner. In conversation with a pilot, we were warned that we might not get off the ground the next day because of the strike by the air traffic controller assistants. He advised us to keep out room.

We felt that we didn't have much choice but to turn up at the airport on time. We turned the poor battered car in, made out an accident report, and waited in line to check our baggage. We were lucky to be chosen to sit upstairs in the sma-l lounge of our 747. Our departure time of 9:30 had been delayed to 11:00. But a malfunction on the plane delayed us even further. They eventually unloaded 40,000 gallons of fuel, rerouted us to Labrador, and we got away at 2:00 p.m. It took 5½ hours to Goose Bay Labrador, an hour to refuel, and another 6½ hours to Seattle. Altogether we were on the plane for 20 hours. We were more than fortunate to have the small lounge upstairs. 16 people with our own steward. Downstairs it must have been like a cattle car, with over 440 people.

So ends a brief description of another trip to England. I do intend to do a full trip report. Yeh, I know. I promised the same last time, and I may do that one yet. It was a good trip. I feel more at home in England each time we go. I hope that after I retire we can spend a little bit of time each summer doing some hiking there. Maybe not as long as five weeks each summer; perhaps three. Confirmed Anglophile, that's what I am.

A DEATH IN THE FAMILY

When we arrived home we were greeted with the news that Anna Jo's mother had died the previous Monday. The funeral service was set for the morning after our arrival. When we had left, her mother had been in the hospital for some sore ribs injured in a fall in the bathtub. There was no indication at the time that anything else was the matter. Later it turned out to have been caused by a minor stroke. During our trip we were in touch with home to see how she was doing, and found that she had a second, massive stroke. We said that we would come home immediately, but

were advised that it would be fruitless. She was paralyzed, could not speak and probably would not recognize us. So, in a sense, it was a blessing that she did not linger. There is no doubt that she would never have recovered.

This was not much of a homecoming. Tim came up from California, where he had been working. There was the house to be gone through with all of its memories. All of the household goods had to be gone through and some division of the furniture and other goods to be made to various relatives. The house is to be sold as an estate house, as is. There has been no sale so far, but we are not worried about it much. I'll let Anna Jo worry about what to do with the inheritance that was left. It was considerably more than anyone had suspected.

VISITORS A BATCH

I'm not sure that I can get it all straight, with so much going on. The local fen held a non-con over Labor Day, since none of them felt that they could afford to go to Suncon. We chose not to attend the non-con, mostly because of the death and a need to unwind from the trip.

The following week James Langdell, who had come north for the non-con from San Francisco, came out to spend a couple of days at our house. James had somewhat gaffed during his college years and is just beginning to get back into fan activities. He made his way around the city by bus pretty well while I was at school during the day and we had a nice visit during the evening. One evening we even took in a ball game between the Seattle Mariners and I've forgotten whom. We lost, that much I remember.

Then my daughter, Shannon, arrived home, so James said that he would spend his last night here at Jeff And Loren's. Actually I should have said that the other way around. It's Loren's house and Jeff lives with him. This was on a Friday evening, the evening of The Nameless meeting. Who should show up at the Nameless meeting and need a place to throw a sleeping bag but Mike Horvat and Will Trojan. We had a nice chat in the morning over breakfast and then they were off to see Pauline Palmer in Bellingham, who had promised Mike a pile of fanzines. (Hmmm. At what point does one decide that they can no longer keep each and every fanzine that comes into the house? A weighty question!)

I think it was the following week that Doug and Sharon Barbour came for a night. They had been traveling down the coast, delighting in the Oregon seashore. Doug had taught during the summer at the University of British Columbia and I had seen them only briefly at Westercon. Since I didn't attend the non-con we hadn't had a real good chance to talk books and music and reviewing. Their stay overnight gave us just the right opportunity before they headed back for the prairies. Doug is on sabbatical this year and they are going to be staying on a lake in a small cabin. I hope that they are not found frozen in the spring. It was nice to see them and someday, kind people, we will make our way up to Alberta to see what you have to show us.

The last visitor to appear here did not stay at the Denton household, but I was pleased to be invited to a dinner at Loren's. Peter Roberts, TAFF winner, came to the west coast by Greyhound, after having attended Suncon. I was more than pleased to meet him as I had been so close to where he now lives, yet couldn't make it to his part of Devon to look him up. We had a wonderful evening, loads of excellent vegetarian spaghetti made by Loren, and lots of good talk round the table with John Berry, Mike Acker, Jeff, Loren, Peter and myself. Since I feel that I know Devon and Cornwall fairly well, a lot of the talk flowed around places that we both knew. I was particularly interested in what Peter had to tell about the Cornish nationalist movement. And I faunched after a button which he wore. I hope that I have as much time to visit with him next time we meet, probably at Seacon '79.

AH, NEW CAR TIME

Every once in a while I get new car fever, but in recent years I have been able to curb it fairly well. There have been other things which I wanted more, money to attend an occasional convention, buy more books, remodel the kitchen, and other things. In the old, old days, when the automobile was my hobby as well as transportation, I used to change cars fairly frequently. Perhaps the enormous rise in the price of cars has had something to do with it as well.

In 1971 I sold our Porsche just before our first trip to England. When we returned home that autumn, the very first Toyota Celicas were arriving in this country. I bought one, promptly christened it Fionna, and have been driving it ever since. It was a good car, performed excellently, went to many conventions in California and other places, took us on weekend trips to Portland and Vancouver, B.C. In recent times it has begun to make unusual noises in the gear box and other small things were going wrong with it. I decided that it was time to sell it off and buy another new car. It had run 126,000 miles and didn't owe me a thing. Another consideration was planning ahead five years down the road when I wish to retire. We will then go to a one-car family and it will be good planning to sell off both cars and buy one new one.

So the search began. I have tended to be an impulse automobile buyer. The car before the Celica, which then became Anna Jo's car for a couple of years, was a Plymouth Barracuda. I remember that I saw it on a used car lot at a local dealers, went in, drove it, and bought it. It also turned out to be a good purchase, lasting for 165,000 miles. So, while impulse buying of an automobile is not something to be recommended, it surely has worked for me. This time, however, I determined that I would be a little more methodical about choosing a car.

I've had a yen to drive a Pontiac Firebird, or perhaps even a Trans-Am, for a long time. It was definitely a car I wanted to try out. The test drive was a riot. It looked lovely. But the first thing I noticed when I climbed into the driver's seat was the lack of instrumentation. The Celica not only had a speedometer and tachometer, but an oil pressure guage, fuel guage, water temperature guage and amp meter. In addition the radio was standard equipment, not an extra for which I was being asked to pay something between \$150-200. I let the Firebird warm up a bit and then headed out for a test drive. It stalled in the lane of traffic as I headed away from the dealer and I could see it being crunched. How do you explain that to the salesman when you bring it back? Finally got it going again, but it took a long time to get really warmed up and perform as it should have. It leaked from the windshield onto Anna Jo's lap. It dripped water on my leg from somewhere underneath the dash, and there was a swimming pool in the back seat floor. Would you believe me if I told you that I was not impressed?

I tried other cars. Dale and Mona Goble were visiting here not long ago and I drove Gobe's new Honda Accord. My neice has a VW Scirocco and I tried that out. I had previously driven a Ford Granada. Finally, to be quite fair, I drove a new '78 Celica. I'll give you one guess as to what I ended up with. Right! A new Celica. It's quite beautiful, silver with black trim and interior. Five-speed gear box, all the instruments that I mentioned above, AM-FM Multiplex Stereo radio as standard equipment. It certainly ought to last me for a brief five years. All I have to do now is figure out what I want to name it. It will get its first trip on the highway over Thanksgiving vacation, probably a run down to Portland.

One of the interesting things about the transaction was the way the trade-in came about. I had pretty much made up my mind that I would sell the old Celica myself. When I first approached our salesman, whom we have now purchased three cars

from, I asked him what the blue book said. He looked it up and told us that they could probably offer us \$950 because of the high miles on the car. I had seen some ads in the newspaper in which \$1100 was being asked. The salesman told me that if I sold it myself I should ask \$1350. This was before we got serious. When he called to tell us that there was a silver Celica available because a young lady who had it on order had just quit her job and didn't feel like taking on the responsibility, we had to think about how much time they would give us to sell our car for a down payment. As it turned out, the manager of the used car lot associated with this dealer happened to be on duty that night. Salesmen cannot make deals; they must seek the approval of the manager for trade-ins. This particular manager must have wanted my old car pretty badly. He drove it for about three minutes and came back in to offer \$1200. In a rather offhand manner I said, "Oh, make it \$1300." To which he replied, "You've just sold your car." I was amazed. It came within \$50 of what I was going to ask and I didn't have to place the ad, answer the telephone, clean and wax the car or vacuum out the interior. What a relief!

Well, I suppose that is just enough rambling about my new wheels. Obviously I am very pleased with it. This afternoon I am driving to one of the stereo places in town to have a cassette deck installed and probably two Jensen coaxial speakers in the rear. I threatened to do that with the other cars. Three years ago I was talking about it for the old Celica. But somehow I never got around to it. This time I will not be so remiss. Maybe next time I'll tell you all about that and bore you some more.

MILEHICON

MileHi has been a convention to which we have been going for the past four years. I kept wondering why I went back to it, and basically the answer was that I enjoyed it. Well, of course, that's a stupid answer. Further than that, it was because many people from the southwest whom I don't see unless I go to Denver for this convention would be there and we would have a chance to talk. MileHi has never been overprogrammed. Perhaps for some folks it is underprogrammed, but I find that there is just enough for me and plenty of free time for me to sit around and talk to people without feeling any need to dash off for some sort of program. One of the big events at MileHi is a "Trivia Bowl" run on the lines of the old "College Bowl" with toss-up questions and bonus questions. I am neither very good at trivia and don't care a whole lot. So that gives me a lot of time to ignore that section of the programming and use it for talking. However, lest I slight the event, I should add that there were 14 teams entered this year, including one on which the GoH played. The guest was Roger Zelazny and his team went to the finals. So he must have been pretty good. I heard that he knew comic questions quite well. Also, lest I don't get back to trivia again, Ken St. Andre's team, the Knights of Iguana, won the event.

I should say that Zelazny gave a very fine brunch speech. Unfortunately, I don't think that anyone recorded it. I'd love to have a copy of it. He also read at the "Works In Progress" session. He chose to read an excerpt from the fifth "Amber" book, which he says will be the last. He did say that sometime in the future he might spin a couple of books off of other characters in the Amber series, but for now he wishes to wind it up. He's just a little tired of dealing with Amber. Other than these two occasions and the trivia bowl, Zelazny did not seem to be too available. I understood that one of the children was ill and that may have had something to do with it. He did graciously autograph books when he was present, and thanked me for buying his books when he autographed mine. Wish I could have gotten to know him better and to have talked with him at some length.



Hi-Yo, Silver
Celica, Away!

The "Works In Progress," as always, was interesting, but for me, something of a downer this year. There were a couple of stories read that were drug-related and I think I've generally had my fill of such. And there seemed to be a negative feeling in both of those works. One hoped that things would improve, but they only got worse on their way to inevitable endings. Bob Vardeman changed the tone a bit with an excerpt from a forthcoming novel of sword-and-sorcery in which our hero accompanies a giant spider back to his web. Some funny lines which drew chuckles from the audience and helped to improve the mood a bit. Ed Bryant read two bits from a novel on which he is working. Karl Hansen and Peter Alterman were the other two authors from the area who read. And Zelazny's Amber excerpt, of course.

It dawned on me that at MileHi I come into more contact and have more conversation with beginning writers than at other conventions. Perhaps that is one of the reasons I enjoy it so much. Al Ellis and I sat for a good hour discussing writing and stories we were working on. I had a chance to talk to Bob Vardeman over coffee and find out how his work was going, including the string of postponements on a novel which should have been published by now. Reed Andrus from Salt Lake City and Rocky Russo shared incredible story ideas, as well as recommending enough books to keep me reading for the next year without touching my own "must read" shelf.

I had been asked to judge the art show. The show is generally small and I did not think that it would take much time or thought to judge it. Ha, fool that I am. I asked Anna Jo to help me a bit and we probably spent an hour on what was, in truth, not a very large show. We did manage to reach some conclusions, even to judging a tie for third place. We were asked to sit at the head table to announce the winners. I took the opportunity to play a little joke on the audience. When Ed Bryant, who was toastmaster, handed me the mike, I said, "Since I have the microphone in my hand I'd like to take the opportunity to hype the Seattle in '81 bid for just a moment." I paused and it took a moment for that statement to sink into the audience. Then there was a resounding chorus of boos from the solid "Denver in '81" partisans. It was worth the boos to have played that little joke.

The huckster room was not quite as good as it was last year, but still good enough for me to bring home some items to add to the burgeoning collection. Most of it was in the Sax Rohmer, Talbot Mundy, H. Rider Haggard vein. One of the books I picked up from Bob Alvis was a Haggard which proved to have been Edmond Hamilton's at one time. Bob hadn't been aware of it, but there was his signature on the fly leaf.

A comment should be made that this was the first MileHi in many years which was not chaired by Judith Brownlee and Ted Peak. They gave up after a long string of successful conventions. Fortunately it did not prevent them from attending and we actually had more chance to talk than in previous years when they were running around seeing that all was running smoothly. This year's chairman was Doris, the Younger Ghodess, Beetem. I'm not sure how well she enjoyed the convention, as she was concerned. I suppose that's quite natural for a con chairman. Well, I don't know about the rest of the attendees, but I enjoyed the con as much as previous ones, so from my viewpoint it was successful. Doris, the Elder Ghodess, was there and we had a good talk. Two friends from Seattle, Susan Mason and Dan Willott, surprised us by returning a pie plate to us at MileHi.

One last comment on the convention and then I'll search for another topic. On the flight home, a steward dressed up as a Jawa and walked up and down the aisles. A stewardess came on the audio system to comment that the first four persons to correctly name the two robots from Star Wars would be given a bottle of champagne compliments of Continental Airlines. Needless to say the Dentons and Dan and Susan won a little extra remembrance of the convention. It might not have been quite fair and when we told the stewardess that we were returning from an sf convention, she nearly collapsed.

LETTERS AND OTHER THINGS

The Rogue gets letters occasionally and should try to do a better job of sharing them with the readers. Jim Langdell, of whom I spoke earlier, had a paragraph which we'll start with.

"One of the many things I enjoy seeing is your mentioning of books you have enjoyed reading recently. In the event that this interests you as well, I've been re-reading some of the FREDDY THE PIG juvenile novels of Walter F. Brooks and have found them at least as enjoyable as when I devoured them as a child. Freddy's poetry is in a class with Ogden Nash. // Have you seen either of Spencer Holst's volumes of his (usually short) Short Stories? THE LANGUAGE OF CATS and SPENCER HOLST STORIES. Very sharp humor and horror and fantasy, and a longer story that almost makes me want to enjoy baseball again."

Golly, we did take in a baseball game while Jim was visiting here. Saw the Seattle Mariners get soundly beat by New York. And you know what they did? But Seattle, for a fledgling team, did not end up in the cellar as predicted. We left that spot for The Oakland A's.

Well, that opening given by Jim allows me to ramble a moment about a few books I've read recently. I seem to be reading a lot of detective-mystery stuff lately and I'm finding that a lot of sf fans with whom I talk are also reading in this other genre field quite a bit. I just read Last Ditch, the latest of Ngaio Marsh's efforts. For most of the book the spotlight is on Ricky Alleyn, Roderick's son. He has graduated and is spending some time on one of the Channel Islands and trying to write a book. He becomes suspicious of the actions of a couple of persons and wonders if they are involved in drug traffic. There is also the accidental death of a young lady who has jumped a horse over a hedge. The horse fell and it is presumed that her death was from the fall. Except that Ricky finds a wire where it ought not to be. Well written, and pretty exciting at times.

Janwillem van de Wetering has become a favorite in writing about his Dutch detectives, Grijpstra and de Gier. In The Japanese Corpse the murder of a Japanese man in Holland uncovers drug traffic and the illegal sale of Japanese temple art. De Gier and the rheumatism-suffering Commissaris are sent to Japan to pose as dealers in order to uncover the yakusa and their daimyo (general) who control traffic in both in Japan. De Gier has just lost his girl friend, killed in an auto accident, and is stoic and fatalistic about life. At the other end of the spectrum the commissaris develops a very philosophical relationship with the old daimyo. Excellent stuff and probably my most favorite mystery-detective series.

Penguin Books has been publishing a Crime of the Month paperback and is resurrecting some very good titles: Michael Innes' The Mysterious Commission, Geoffrey Household's Rogue Male and Watcher in the Shadows are a few which I remember. There have been about six done so far in this particular series.

Don Livingstone writes from Chilliwack, B.C.: "You mentioned that you were looking for info on Dacoits (anent my reading of Sax Rohmer's 'Fu Manchu' books and his use of Dacoits). The Feb. 1977 issue of National Geographic has an article on Rajasthan in India and on p. 219 you will find a picture of a genuine Dacoit and mention of him in the text. He is now in jail for having murdered two men - among others" Hmmm, it still goes on, though Rohmer was writing back in the '30s.

Don goes on to mention the May issue of the same magazine with a long and excellent article on the Celts, which he says were apparently a violent bunch. Don and his family were going to Scotland to visit this summer and I'm anxious to hear about the trip. Will have to journey up Don's way one of these days soon.

Pete Presford wrote from Wales to tell me all sorts of marvelous things, such as come and stay for a night. Which we did. Pete and 'Brood', the latter referring to wife, Anita, and children, Mark and Justine, are a marvelous bunch and I want to publicly thank them for putting us up and putting up with us. Pete took us out to see a part of Offa's Dyke, an ancient defense barrier and now a long distance foot path. We climbed Moel Arthur and had a marvelous view of the Plains of Denbigh.

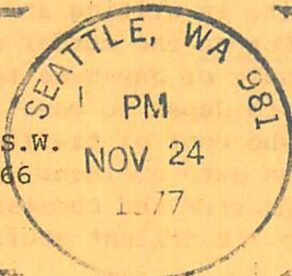
While I'm at it I shall take the opportunity to thank Eric Bentcliffe and Wife Beryl and daughter Lindsey for also being marvelous hosts and trying to fatten us up with their excellent food. And next Dave and Cathy Piper and daughters, Clare and Sara. Bentcliffe's took us to see Alderley Edge, where Arthur's sleeping knights lie and then to refresh ourselves at The Queen's Head. Dave and Cathy took us to the Ruislip Football Club and Dave allowed me to beat him at darts.

Finally, a big thanks to Keith Roberts for putting up with for three days and guiding us about the countryside, sampling history and pubs simultaneously. And for coming down to London with Peter to show us about a bit of London which we did not previously know.

And certainly not least, to Michael and Theresa Carlson, now living in London. Theresa is editing for a book publisher and Michael is writing script for UPI/TN, United Press International Television News (gad, I hope I got that right. The Carlsons had us out to a lovely Sunday dinner and then off to the London Museum, a fine experience, and one we would not have otherwise had.

This was just a short thanks to all the people who made our stay in England so much fun. I hope to give them much more space if and when I ever get the trip report finished. But all of them deserved an early public thank you. Little do they know that I'll be back in '79. (out of space this time, but I'll be back a little sooner next time. It feels good to have at least a small zine done, the first since we came home from vacation. Drop me a line if you enjoyed. Happy Turkey Day!!)

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