

A MEMORABLE THING: Gradually - over several weeks - the realisation came to me that it was a very long time since anything Memorable last happened in Fandom. Or at least so it seemed to my fuddled brain which even at the end of February didn't seem to have made a fannish recovery from Christmas. No one seemed to have done a very Good Thing or a very Bad Thing for a long time and - I figured - fannish historians waiting to pounce on Memorable Things must be getting broken-hearted hand-over-fist and even faster. So I decided to publish a magazine. This on its own would have been a dynamically Unmemorable Thing. But I decided that I would publish a magazine with illustrations in it - good illustrations. I just hope I cut them onto the stencils well enough for them to be Memorable. I just hope also that these artists who don't yet know that they're being made Memorable in this magazine don't violently decide that they would rather have been Unmemorable somewhere else. That's a Totally Unhistorical attitude and Quite Unworthy of Timebinding Slams in a Timebinding Slandon.

I'M A STRANGER HERE MYSELF: Before anyone starts a war or revokes any Treaties or anything over this next bit, I know an account of an English cricket match would almost certainly sound as awesome to an uninitiated American but nevertheless all I can say about this lil chunk from the European Edition of the NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE is -- "Mighty". I quote:

"Smith comes from Phoenix, in the Class C Arizona-Texas League, but his terrific clouting there has the entire Pirate family keenly interested. He led the circuit with a remarkable total of 195 runs batted in and scored 182 himself. His 210 hits included 32 doubles, 11 triples and 35 homers. In addition, he stole 42 bases, walked 118 times as against only 59 strikeouts."

He did ?

THE BATER BIT: This bit I reproduce utterly, utterly'sic' from Donald Susan's reproduction of Orville Mosher's campaign speech in THE NATIONAL FANTASY FAN. Or in Basic English I'm quoting Susan:

"(Note: wherever, Sic.....ed, occurs this indicates that a error in spelling has occurred but is not the fault of the typist...but rather of the author.)"

SWEET MYSTERY OF LIFE: Mentioning THE NATIONAL FANTASY FAN here makes me want



to unburden my soul in public of a whole load of question marks regarding the National Fantasy Fan Federation which have been there a long time. Occasionally I am given to a desperate black despair at the thought that maybe it is one of those things - like bop, both music and dancing - about which I will never know exactly 'what gives?'. My very good friend Thomas Aquinas White was the British Representative of N3F for quite some time but even he can't tell me. He could probably describe to me a coleostat (if he knew what one looked like) or a coelecanth, but when it comes to N3F our semantics just don't 'blesh' and we are reduced to the objective level of silence. Probably some carping critics would convince me that we're not the only ones who are reduced to silence when they think about N3F but I shall ignore such; this boy has set his heart on scientific larnin' and advancement and he aint a'gonna be denied. What I want to know is;

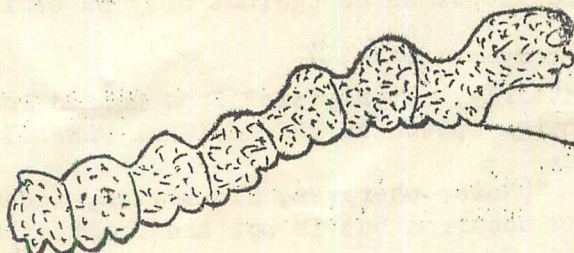
a) What does N3F do ?

b) Why do people in N3F fight to get elected to some Office or Post or other ? Unless N3F is different from what I imagine I'm going to need a course in alien psychology to explain that one to me; if I was in N3F I should fight (if necessary) not to be elected to some Office or Post or other. But then I'm funny that way.

A NAME IS A NAME BUT THAT AINT ALL: I find it cruel and hard trying to acquire an advanced scientific education, a consciousness of abstracting, an immersion in semantic discipline or any one of the other thousand and one such things that a normal, healthy young man longs for nowadays, around here. People just don't understand. I spend a whole afternoon explaining to my mother how a word is a mere arbitrary symbol and no part of the objective level 'thing itself' - and my reward ? I quote: "If it hasn't got a name it might as well not exist". I lend Tom SCIENCE AND SANITY. I ring him up and ask how he is progressing with it. He says "Not Good". I commiserate with him; I agree that the book takes a great deal of 'getting into', that pertinacity and patience are required, that concentration and application are very necessary, that one must 'stick at it'. He says "Yes - I found your book-mark on Page 3". I hang up. The next time I go to visit him he tells me that he would give me the book back but "I haven't had time not to read it yet".

Do I give up because of such minor setbacks ?

Oh no - not once I am aflame with the unquenchable fire of scientific curiosity and interest. I decide that I will explain the Structural Differential to my 17 year old brother. The Structural Differential, I tell him, empirically demonstrates the different orders of abstraction. With its aid one realises fully that the word is not the thing, that one word is not another, etc. And, I tell him, I want a Structural Differential making. But, he says, you already have a Structural Differential. Where, I ask. In SCIENCE AND SANITY, he says, it's printed on nearly every page. Aha, I say standing up and preening myself on my semantic training, but that's just the point. That is not a Structural Differential. That is only a picture of a Structural Differential. Oh, he says --- some catch, huh ?.



"I'm rather young at the moment - but I shall probably get over it in a year or two" --Vernon Ashworth.

"What do you mean 'It was Brillig'?"  
-- James Thurber.







"It's published at five dollars plus."

"How much is that ?"

"Over five dollars."

(Mal and Vernon Ashworth)

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"I wonder if this shop's open ? I want to get a new tie."

"Why don't you try the door?"

"Oh it's not that important."

( Ditto.)

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"Nobody ever sort of told us - 'There are men and there are women; go out and find yourself a woman.'"

"No. That's one of those things you've got to pick up for yourself."

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TUT TUT: From the DAILY EXPRESS: "Louis ((Wolfson)) is bidding for control of America's second largest maid-order store."

A GOOD THING: I know just how relieved Walt Willis is going to be about this. It must be a terrible thing to be a Foreigner and not know whether or not you're All Right, so I can imagine just how pleased Walt is going to be to know that, even though he doesn't live in - reverent whisper with echoes of "Land of Hope and Glory" in the background - England - respectful pause -, he is really All Right. The Authority I use in making this large statement is my eminently respectable and - hush - English Gentlemanly - double hush - elder brother, who is twenty-nine, married, and as far from a fan as you can get. Which is a long way.

I have been slightly anxious on some occasions in the past, wondering whether perhaps I might not be endangering my Character, my National Respectability, and all the other Good Things to which I, being an - sssssh - Englishman - sssssh sssssh - am a natural heir, by corresponding and swapping fanzines with an Irishman. (As well as Others.) But, it seems, I needn't have worried. I now know that it is All Right. The Irish are not "Rum Types". Neither are they, it seems, "Arty Types". They are not even "Round The Bend". So that, although they are, technically, more or less Foreigners, living as they do across a patch of water, the amazing fact emerges that they must be All Right. For Foreigners this is not only incredible but almost a Record. But this of course does not apply if they live in Liverpool. They are Quite All Right while they are in Ireland (apart from always being drunk on whiskey, but this just shows how very All Right they must have been in the first place, because even while they spend all their lives drunk on whiskey they are still All Right). They are even All Right when they come to England. Provided that they do not go to Liverpool. This is very important. If they go to Liverpool they are no longer just Irishmen. They are then The Liverpool Irish. This is Not All Right. It is in fact All Wrong. As soon as they become The Liverpool Irish they also become Arty Types, Rum Types or Round The Bend, and thus cease to be All Right. Or it may even be that There Is Something About Them. This is Very Bad. In any event they immediately cease to be All Right and the only way one can express oneself about them is to groan, sigh, expirate loudly, frown, grimace, start with shock or wrinkle up one's face and say "Ooooh" in a voice which implies that they have all committed heinous murder, pillage and rapine. Which, of course - being The Liverpool Irish - they almost certainly have. In addition, I need hardly add, one may also remark as to their Artiness, their Rumness, or their Round-The-Bendness, but there the subject ends. The only way they can become All Right again is for them to leave Liverpool and thus cease to be The Liverpool Irish. It would also probably be



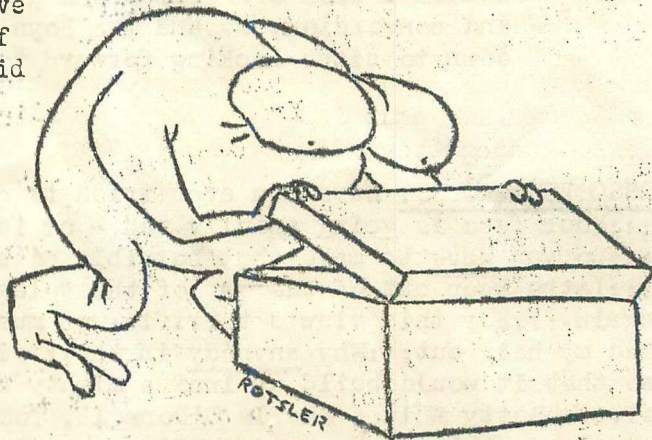
as well if they didn't admit that they had ever been The Liverpool Irish.

All this may leave various other people wondering anxiously where they stand. Without obtaining a definite ruling on the matter I would not dare to express an opinion of course but the odds are that if they stand anywhere other than on true English soil they are Not All Right. In this case they are probably Arty, Rum or Round-The-Bend. There may even be Something About Them. They have only themselves to blame. They should have been born in England - in one of the Right Parts of England of course, because - alas - even England is not perfect. Take Tyneside for example. Anyone who lives in/on/around Tyneside is a Geordie. And Geordies are Not All Right. They are Rum Types. Considering that they do technically live in England this is Shocking Bad Form. But before you start to sneer at them and spit on them - wait a moment. Where do you live ? Eh ? London ? You might be a Cockney, you know. And they are not much more All Right then Geordies. You had better be sure that you live in a Right Part of England before you say anything. But as for other Foreigners, If you are Scotch I don't think you need worry too much; if you are not All Right you are not too far off. Don't worry - you may even be All Right.

If you are Welsh it is an entirely different matter. Then you are not All Right. Definitely Not. You are not even Not All Right in a Hum, Arty or Round-The-Band way. There Is Something About You. Don't try and deny it. It is a simple straightforward and shocking fact - There Is Something About You. You had better go into the bathroom and cut your wrists. (Don't blow your brains out!! That is reserved for Englishmen!!) The only reasonable course for the Welsh to take is to jump en masse into Cardiff Bay and stay there, Under the surface of course. This will not be a Good Thing since they are incapable of doing a Good Thing of course, but it will be a Better Thing than anything else they might do.

If you are any other kind of a Foreigner you'd better just stand to attention until you are noticed and told whether or not you are All Right.

A FUNNY THING; - it is. About that Big Brother I mentioned back there - like I said he's as far from a fan as you can get, and yet he might not have been. Now he doesn't dig semantics, doesn't like jazz, considers I waste my time with all 'that lot' (fan-stuff) and probably would take a lot of coaxing to read science-fiction (if I bothered, which I don't any longer. I lent him "Odd John" and he thought it was obscene and pornographic and on a level with Hank Janson and Ghod alone knows what else so I sort of admitted defeat.) And yet, despite him being in that (probably happy) state, he is the Prime Cause of me being in this state. He used to read science-fiction; he used to own the first twelve issues of the old TALES OF WONDER and several '39/40 British ASTOUNDINGS. When he came out of the Air Force he lent them to me and eventually (when he got mixed up in the mundane activity of getting married) gave them to me. They were the first real s-f I read; I went on from there. And so did he, but in a different direction. It's an interesting speculation what might have happened had he, back about 1940, written to Ken Bulmer or Vince Clarke when their letters appeared in TALES OF WONDER. Even now he might have been crouched over a typewriter telling you-all about his mundane younger brother Mal who thought s-f and Fandom a waste of time. I wonder.





AN EXPLANATORY THING: Probably most everybody has guessed, from the large number of capital-lettered Things around in this column, that I have been reading "1066 And All That". Anybody who did is right; not very long ago I had the pleasure of reading that for the first time - as well as two other books by the same authors, "And Now All This" ("If the world was flat everything would fall off in the night when it was upside down but because of Geography it's All Right"- or as near as I can remember anyway) and "Horse Nonsense". Also read Stephen Potter's "Lifemanship", "Gamesmanship" and "One-Upmanship" and the Penguin edition of "The Thurber Carnival". All very highly recommended for anyone who enjoys reading humour - or trying to write it. Others in the collection and just as highly recommended are the Pan publication "A Book Of Wit And Humour" and a recent British 3/6d pocket-book, "The Best Of The Bedside Esquire".

NOW WE KNOW: Funny how simple things baffle brilliant people and it takes some real ordinary guy to come along with the answer isn't it? For instance, a definition of "civilisation"; I picked this one up from an insurance journal, THE POLICYHOLDER, for August 6th 1953.:

"Civilisation...consists of the elimination of risk - there are three phases in the process; first recognition that there is a risk which ought to be eradicated; second study and enquiry either a) to cancel out the risk, or b) to find a means of providing financial compensation therefor; and c) (thirdly, perhaps?) selling the idea to the public. And that....is insurance." Anyone miss me if I go outside to be sick?

SOME REAL GOON QUOTES: Just one or two of the many polished gems scattered around ad lib by the Highly Esteemed GOON SHOW:

"Thanks to Brains, the new wonder, head-filler"// "Silence when you talk to me"// "The letter was written in a disguised voice"// "Do you want breakfast now or will you wait until it's ready?"

A VISITATION: After cutting the last stencil for MUTTERINGS FROM THE MORGUE, I got one more piece of mail which I felt I just had to include - a postcard from Ghod. A real, genuine one.:

From the Offices of the Archangel Gabriel  
Dear Sir,

Re: Atheism, Non-Belief, Blasphemy Etc.

It has recently come to the notice of God that you are a heathenish and irreverent little dreg of humanity and he has instructed me respectfully to inform you that unless you find it convenient to visit a member of our specially-appointed and fully-qualified Earthside staff within a week of receipt and get in a mighty ardent case of repentance and conversion, we and the Boys will be over Tuesday week to whop you down to size. Looking forward to the pleasure of meeting you then,

Yrs.

Gabriel (Sgd.)  
Archangel.

ASSORTED QUOTES: Have you ever tried to chase a piece of cucumber with two teeth? ::::Your face is going awfully red - or is it my eyes that are getting bloodshot? ::::Do you have to make that horrible noise every time I hit you in the stomach? ::::Let's keep out of the way of the telegraph poles. ::::My knee's gone bow-legged again. ::::Hay this view's terrific; we must come up and see it sometime when I've had my hair cut. ::::Why anybody in their right senses would want to dam the stream so that it would build up into a mighty cataract to sweep Man and Beast into the river. (Betty White, Sheila O'Donnell, Tom Whit, me, and Vernon Ashworth). Some people do things when you don't say anything.

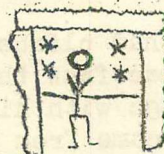


# Sauce of LONELINESS ?

by sheila o'donnell

(( In case the style of this poem worries any Sanguinary Irishmen, Haemoglobin. Colonials or even Uncorpuscular Metropolitans, I should mention that it is written - more or less - in Yorkshire dialect, similar, I am told, to an epic poem entitled "Our Albert", which I have never heard. The point of view from which it is written is allegedly that of my father. It was produced - without the least indoctrination or duress - after we had been going out together for only a fortnight. That may even show something, if you happen to know where to look---Mal))

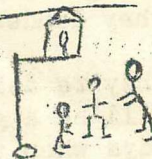
Our Malcolm, a Bright lad, 's a space-fan,  
Wi' his eyes fixed firm upon t'stars.  
He filled t'house wi' books on Spacemen and such,  
An' he wanted to fly up to Mars.



Now Malcolm, he had a friend, Colin,  
A pretty dull kind of a chap.  
And this Colin he tried to play Cupid,  
And our Malcolm, he fell into t'trap.



This Colin, he knew a girl, Sheila,  
An' he managed to make the two meet.  
On one cold Tuesday night Mal first saw her,  
Under a lamp in a street.



This Colin, he went an' he left them,  
And they went to a Leeds picture show.  
Then the rot it set in, and the game was all up.  
She mucked up his space dreams you know.



Stars he saw now were in t'lass 's eyes.  
He gazed out o't' window no more.  
T'ony Venus he thought of were this lass hersen,  
An' t'unread space books covered the floor.



He stopped thinking of rockets and spacemen;  
She'd him under her thumb pretty soon.  
But the fans were at hand, and the case was discussed,  
At t'convention they held in the June.\*



Now t' Chairman, wi' beanie and zap gun,  
Thought Mal Ashworth a jolly good bloke.  
So he planned to rescue our Malcolm,  
And these were the words that he spoke:



"With Sheila our Malcolm's got tangled,  
And he swears that he'll never desert her.  
There's only way, one course we can take -  
We'll just have to go and convert her!"



\*Poetic licence. She knew the convention was in April.



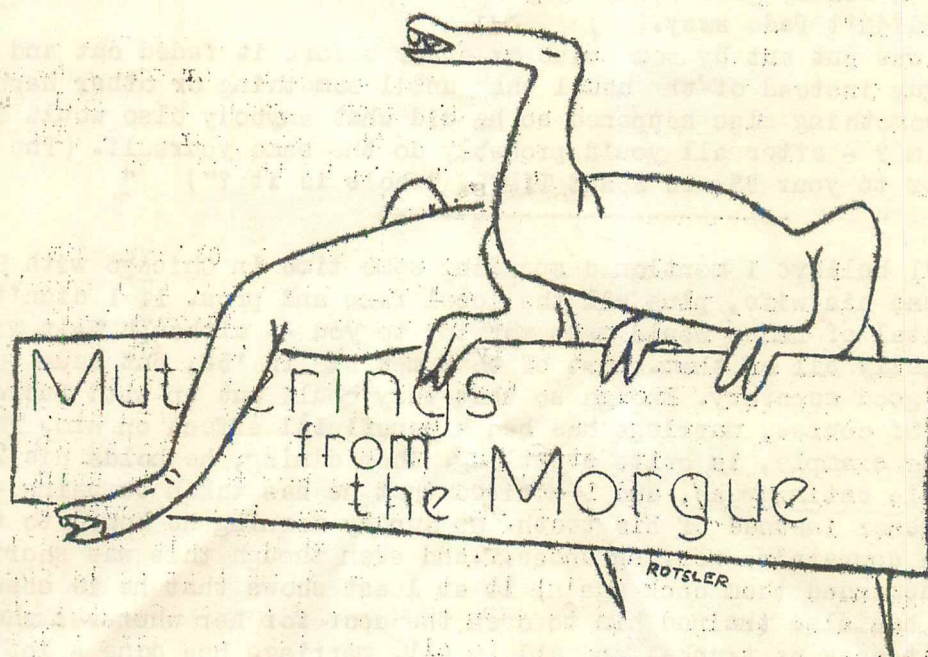
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[illegible]

Advert.

Advert.





Consisting of chunks hacked, mainly without the least hint of permission, from the letters of various people who have, at some time, been crazy enough to write to me; I hope this won't cure them of the insanity. But if any of them are mad at me, I'd like to say right now - I don't blame them.

No, seriously - for most of the pieces quoted I haven't asked the writer's specific permission to quote; but I have tried to exercise a something laughingly known as "editorial discretion" and to avoid quoting anyone into a Hundred Years Feud. If anyone who writes to me is still losing sleep at nights about it, just say so and I promise never to quote you without permission; or never to do so again if I have here. The main reason for the existence of this column (yes - I surprised myself by discovering that there was a reason for it) is a view I hold that there are many sparkling gems of wit and interest in one's ordinary correspondence which deserve to be shared with other people, even if a commentary is necessary to give context to them. The main reason for not begging prior permission in each case is lack of time. I rest my case - any brushes, mops, voshleathers?

Firstly, since I am so proud of the achievement of having actually exacted a letter from him, I'd like to quote from a letter from George Gibson. Believe me, when I got this letter I could hardly have been more pleased if it had been a cheque from Horace Gold in payment for a 20,000 word story. But I would have tried hard. Tom and I had visited the Leeds clubroom one night and been the only attendees and I had borrowed a SPACE TIMES which was lying around. I wrote and asked George who it belonged to and supplicated with him for a reply:

GEORGE GIBSON      "Dear Sir or Madman,

Thank you for your letter; I am not at all pleased with your assumption that I am some kind of deity unaccustomed to answering letters. Bennett said to me only the other day: "Look, Your Gracious, Majestical Holiness - why the hell don't you reply to peoples' letters?" I gave him my usual enigmatic smile (some call it idiotic) and lowered my dignity by replying, "Balls", a favourite expression of one of our Directors; some kind of mystical incantation, I suppose, because anyone he says it to just gives a sickly grin and fades away.



"Bennett just gave a sickly grin (or it may have been I got a better view of his face) and unfortunately didn't fade away.)

SPACE TIMES was put out by some club or other before it faded out and was edited by some other guy instead of the usual chap until something or other happened and then I think something else happened so he did what anybody else would do - who could blame him? - after all you'd probably do the same yourself. (The above paragraph in answer to your PS. re SPACE TIMES, "Who's is it?") "

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ROBERT BLOCH "I believe I mentioned spending some time in Chicago with Bob Tucker and his wife, plus all the local fans and pros. If I didn't, recital of names would mean nothing to you -- although Walt Willis would recall virtually all of them. Most of them met him in '52, but seem to have made a remarkably good recovery. Enough so that they could put up with Tucker, anyway.

Of course, marriage has had a beneficial effect on him. The change in his manners, for example, is quite startling. When dining, he holds his knife in his right hand while eating peas, and I noticed that he has taken to using a conventional bottle-opener instead of his teeth. On Sunday morning he bowed to the amenities and came downstairs wearing shoes...and even though this was short-lived (the irate owner demanded them back again) it at least shows that he is observing decorum. His wife has also trained him to open the door for her whenever she is carrying heavy suitcases or trunks, and all in all, marriage has done a lot for Mr. Tucker. Fern, by the way, is a lovely girl."

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A short while back, as a good excuse for spending a quiet Sunday afternoon on our own in our front room, Sheila and I put out a small one-shot called AMOUR. Some of the reactions were interesting. One said it was lousy. I happened to be writing to Charles Burbee, thanking him for some of his one-shots he had sent me while I was on the FAPA waiting list and mentioned AMOUR somewhere in the letter to this World Authority On One-Shot Publishing. He wrote back and enclosed a copy of a mag called ELMURMURINGS run off by himself and Elmer Perdue. One sentence in Burbee's part of this mag read (about the buildings of Menifee, California): "It's houses yearn for paint."

CHARLES BURBEE "The Elmurmurings we ran off yesterday. Elmer was leaving that last page blank and I couldn't stand the thought of it so I added a page of pretty weak but legible stuff. (Note: I know that "it's" is a contraction of "it is" and does not belong in the sentence about houses yearning for paint. It seems that while I was cutting the stencil our two pups were squabbling at my feet, I was carrying on a conversation with Elmer about ukel-eles, and drinking home brew. So it's not too surprising that I could strike the wrong keys and make a word appear in its improper usage).

Yes, perhaps your one-shot does stink a bit. I say this in full confidence even though I haven't seen your one-shot. I say it because I had been in on the making of many a one-shot and I fear that the biggest task confronting one-shot makers is the elimination of stink. Most of us are not used to composing on the stencil in the presence of talkative people, and not only are we likely to write something we wish we hadn't but also we make little mistakes like writing "it's" for "its". "

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CHUCK HARRIS "This is studying? This is preparing yourself for your insurance peddling job? This is part-time fanac? Jophann -- and the Man from the Pru -- would spit on you. Many, many times in the last month or so I have deliberately stopped myself from taking the pleasure of writing to you, because I



didn't want to distract you from your studies and now, instead of proudly showing us your diploma in Marine Insurance, you flaunt this O'Donnell woman in our sensitive fannish faces.

Mal, Mal, what has happened to you? (Give me a detailed description -- I've got a column that needs this sort of material). Son, I would rather see you enmeshed in the toils of N3F than caught up with females. I knew that one day you would discover girls, but I'd been intending to warn you about them later on. Never did I think it would all happen so suddenly like this.

WHO IS THIS SHEILA O'DONNELL? Is this some souvenir from James as a memento of the Pilgrimage? A consternation prize in the Irish Sweepstake? Tell me everything, dear boy -- I can write it up so much better than you can.

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DAVE WOOD "Received AMOUR yesterday. I must say I was shocked to the marrow! Malcolm, my friend, you has committed the sin. You have let someone from the mundane way of life into our private, highly-intellectual world. Of course I realise the mental and physical anguish you must have gone through. But you should have held out firm, strong, lasting, like Harlan Ellison's 7th Fandom. Well do I remember the early agonising days with Brenda:

"...but what do you mean - 'a fan'?"

"Well, he's a...well a person."

"Only 'he's'?"

"Well no. One or two femmes as well."

"Femmes?"

"Er - women, you know..."

"I don't think I do!"

"Well can't we just forget it?"

And much later into the night:

"But what do they do?"

"Who - er, what - is your mother back?"

"No, silly. What do they do, these fan things?"

"Oh - well - er - they fan."

"Fan?"

"Yes - it's a Way Of Life. The True Way Of Life. Away from mundane existence."

"What's mundane existence?"

"Anything that's not fannish."

"Is what we're doing now mundane?"

"Let's not talk, Bren."

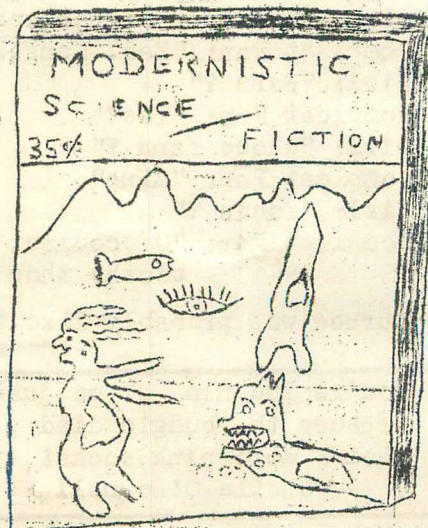
I think there should be a Fannnaship approach to such situations. After all, every fan sooner or later falls into the trap of becoming interested in s-x. And it's a good 1000 - 1 chance that she'll not be a fan, then all sorts of horrible questions, like the ones Brenda used to ask me, result. I see a fan's life this way:

SCENE: Fan's girl-friend's parents' couch in front room of said parents' house. The girl is draped across the couch in whatever drape you feel like conjuring up for her. The fan is sat on the edge of said couch. He is preparing to settle down for an evening of gafia.

Fan (Taking off shoes): "Warm in here."

Girl (Moving head): "Yes"

Fan (Taking off tie): "Yes it is"





(Still Dave Wood).

Girl (Stretching shoulders back): "Isn't it ?"

Fan (Taking off jacket): "Yes it is, isn't it ?"

Girl (Stretching) "Yes it is"

Fan (Undoing shirt): "Phew"

Girl (Arching her back): "Few what ?"

Fan (Thoroughly warmed up): "Not few - phew"

Girl (Unbuttoning the top button of her blouse): "Oh"

Fan (Sweating): "Warm ?"

Girl (Sweet): "Yes"

The Fan folds his jacket and places it across a nearby chair.

Fan (Moving in): "What a lovely off-the-shoulder dress"

Girl (Sweetly): "But I wasn't wearing an off-the-shoulder dress"

Fan (Sweetly too): "You weren't ?"

Girl (Tightening suddenly): "What's that dear ?"

Fan (Leaping up) : "What's what ?"

Girl: "That letter. That letter there. That letter there in your jacket pocket. The inside one."

Fan (Uncomfortable): "Oh - just a letter"

Girl: "Oh yes! And who might it be from ? As if I didn't know!"

Fan: "It's - er - from a friend. He writes to me often."

Girl: "He ?"

Fan: "Er - yes - it's only a fan letter"

Girl: "A what ?!?"

Fan: (Realising his mistake): "Er - nothing dear"

Girl: "Nothing my eye. Here let me see that....."

This, of course, is the point where our friend the Fan finds himself with a choice of two directions. And they both lead to Hell! Now if he had known his Fansmanship he would have had no trouble whatsoever. Let us assume that he is the Compleat Fan. We will slip back to the point where the Girl discovers the letter in his underpants pocket; this is a fairly safe place to keep fan letters when entertaining prosaic females.-(It is ?)-

Girl: "What's this letter here ?"

Compleat Fan: "Which letter ?"

Girl: "The written letter"

Compleat Fan: "Oh that letter. Nothing dear - jus' one from my old friend Horace

Girl: "Horace Gold ?" Gold

Compleat Fan: "Yes - editor of GALAXY - you know. Bob Silverberg put me on to him"

Girl: "Galaxy ? Silverberg ?"

Compleat Fan: "Yes. Fans, you know"

Girl: "Fans ?"

Compleat Fan: "Yes"

Girl: "Whose fans ?"

Compleat Fan: "Mine"

Girl: "Yours ?"

Compleat Fan: "Of course, dear; whose do you think ? Now just lie back and I'll soothe thos tired little nerves of yours"

Burbee was probably like that. I wasn't. Neither, I perceive, are you."

You're laughing at me just  
because the budgie died  
when I wore pink socks!  
-- Sheila O'Donnell

End of  
MUTTERINGS FROM  
THE MORGUE  
for  
this issue.

This sort of weather brings  
out the females in their hun-  
dreds - but I like them a bit  
younger myself.--V. Ashworth



A PIECE OF CATERWAULING BY

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The creative artist is renowned for his erratic system of work and his eccentricity, but these traits are often thought to be exaggerated when one reads the pure literary masterpieces which spring from the artist's pen. A certain trueman - so he says - with whom I happen to be intimately acquainted is no exception to his peculiar (very) class of genius. How he comes to write his works with such a dominant hand, with such artistic and masterly power, and how, when written, they read like sheer bilge, makes an interesting, if tragic, story.

For many days he will have no inspiration and of course at these times he doesn't write articles. It would be sheer idiocy for him to risk his reputation in the fanworld by writing any articles but those which are divinely inspired. During these times I guess he just has to trust in Ghod and wait till Ghod thinks up some idea for him to work on. So for many days he will be passive, and then all of a sudden - wherever he is - the idea will hit him.

After the initial shock it will hit him again and keep on pounding him until he collapses in a screaming fit. It is rather umbarassing to watch him prostrated in utter hysterics on a Zebra Crossing in a busy street, blithely unaware of all the affectionate curses bestowed on him.

When he finally reaches the sanctuary of his home he goes straight to his room ( incidentally, let it be noted in passing that this is the only time in his life he does go straight), hurling books from his path, grabs the typewriter, tears the cover off, sticks a piece of paper in and types furiously. After about a quarter of an hour the clacking of the keys will cease. When I hear this I will enter his room and, ignoring the fact that he is indulging in some such pleasing diversion as tearing his hair out by the roots or hanging himself, inquire if the article is completed.

Now he keeps his typewriter on one bamboo table and a mass of notes on the other; when he hears my innocent question he yells, "It's lousy", picks up the table of notes and hurls it at the opposite wall. He then sits down, sinks his head in his hands and dissolves into black despair.

After watching him for several minutes I perceive movement. His head rises slowly and I see unshattered faith, new resolution and courageous determination in his eyes; he rises, steps to the table with the typewriter on and hurls that at the opposite wall. Then he sinks back into his previous position again.

Then - quite suddenly - he will fall over backwards on to the bed in sheer ecstasy, huge guffaws escaping unrestrainedly from his mouth.



He rolls over, still shrieking hysterically, and only when he connects with the floor does he retrieve the tables, notes and the mangled wreck of the typewriter.

Muttering "This'll kill 'em, this'll kill 'em", and breaking out into screams of mirth every now and then, he begins to type.

Tentatively I ask: "Is something funny?"

"Funny?", he scowls, "Oh Brother this'll kill 'em."

"Well - what's the joke?"

"Joke? This is the funniest thing since Norman G. Wansborough sold Walt Willis a ticket for the first trip to the third moon of Mars!"

"Yes. But what is the joke?"

"Joke? Oh - er - well - damn", he starts scowling now, ferociously, "When you come to explain it, it doesn't seem so funny - no it 'aint funny". He ponders. "It's lousy; it stinks. No damn it - why the Devil should I write stuff like this just to please you? Get out!"

As I tactfully withdraw there are two dismal crashes against the further wall of his room.

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"The End"

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A BEE IN MY WHAT? -- Mal Ashworth

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It all started the day we were going to see Lancaster Fandom. The early morning bus whizzed blithely past us, full to overflowing, and we had to half walk, half run, half a mile (or so) to catch a tram. That was when Sheila kicked her first bee into my shoe. Or rather, that was the first time Sheila ever kicked a bee into my shoe. I don't pretend to know why she did it in the first place. I have never found out why she has done it in any other place. But she has. Now, every time we go out together, every time I see her, every time I wear shoes, every time she finds a bee, every possible opportunity, she kicks a bee into my shoe. Of course, if the chance presents itself for her to kick more than one bee into my shoe she doesn't neglect it; she kicks them. Whoomph - into my shoe. Every time I leave my shoes for a few minutes I come back to find them full of bees and Sheila happily kicking away. She never misses. If she finds a bee she kicks it; if she kicks it she kicks it into my shoe. It is an immutable Law. Perhaps this may seem to be a small thing; perhaps to some people, having their shoes kicked full of bees wouldn't matter very much. But I am funny that way. I hate to have bees kicked into my shoe. I am not at all happy if one bee is kicked into my shoe; if two are kicked there I am distinctly disturbed. But when it gets to be dozens and hundreds I get the feeling that Something Is Going To Happen. I think Sheila is suffering from a compulsive neurosis which makes her kick a bee into my shoe every time she sees one, but that is not what worries me most about the matter. I lie awake at nights, wondering what is going to happen when there are no more bees left in the world for her to kick into my shoe.

END.



# Spiders In The Bath

When I was on holiday we had two spiders in our bath. One was a **little one** and that was at the tap end and the other was a big one at the curved end. How nice, I thought (not really though 'cos I don't like spiders. These were the awful kind with short legs and thick bodies), a mother and her little baby spider. Well they kept trying to get out of the bath and they kept slipping down 'cos our bath is slippery. All during that day I kept popping into the bathroom and the little one kept walking a bit nearer to the big one. Soon the little spider was on a level with the big one but they were still at opposite sides of the bath and then they started to walk towards each other. I was thrilled. It isn't often that you see two spiders walk towards each other is it? Especially in a bath. When they got to each other they sort of had a little fight and scurried to opposite sides of the bath again. I was worried. They didn't seem to like each other and it must be awful if you're in a bath with another spider and you don't like each other. Well later on I went in again and the poor little spider had two legs missing. I looked and looked but I couldn't find them. Just before I went out to meet Mal I went upstairs again and the big spider was on top of the little spider. This wasn't fair I decided so I blew on them and the big spider's legs curled round the little spider. So I blew again and they both toppled over and lay still. How wonderful I thought, they've had a fight and killed each other. That night when I came home I went upstairs and there was only the big spider left in the bath walking around trying to get out and all I could see of the little spider was one solitary leg.

TWO NATURE-STUDY TYPE  
VIGNETTES - OR

SOMETHING

by:

Sheila  
O'Donnell

# An Eel In A Pool

When we were away on holiday we found an eel. A poor little baby eel that was in a pool. The pool used to be in a river but it had dried up. The river I mean. Isn't it funny that when it doesn't rain the rivers dry up? There ought to be a tap so that you could turn it on when the rivers started drying up so that there wouldn't be any pools that used to be in rivers and poor little eels wouldn't get stranded in them. Well there was this poor little eel all squirming and wriggling 'cos there wasn't much water in the pool. See if you had a tap in the river if you had to let the river dry up you could make pools with lots of water in them couldn't you? Well we couldn't let the poor little eel squirm in a waterless pool could we? I mean how would you like to have to wriggle in a pool that wasn't really a pool 'cos there wasn't much water in it? Mal tried to pick up the eel with two stones but it didn't seem to want to be picked up between two stones. It began to flop around and started wriggling away from the pool which hadn't got much water in it to where there wasn't any water at all. Well I mean it would die wouldn't it without water? So Mal being a brave man tried to pick it up by its tail. It didn't like that either. I wish I could learn eel language so that when I meet another eel that's in a pool without water I can tell it what we're trying to do. It tried to hit Mal with its tail and that's not nice is it? I mean when somebody's trying to save your life you don't hit them with your tail do you? Would you **hit somebody** with your tail if they were trying to put you back in a river after you had been stranded in a pool that wasn't? Well we didn't know what to do so Mal borrowed



my hand and lifted it out with that. The river wasn't really a nice one when it was a river 'cos it had a lot of stones in it and poor Mal was running for the water and he tripped over the stones. I don't think the river wanted to have an eel in it 'cos it tripped Mal up when he tried to put the eel in it. Well the poor little eel flew out of Mal's hand when he was tripping and went spinning through the air. I bet it felt like a spinning top and then it fell into the water. So did Mal. Well we didn't know where the eel was so we looked for it and found it gasping by the side of a stone. Then I just made a casual remark 'cos the eel looked really queer and Mal put his head in the water. All I said was "Are you sure it's meant to go in water?"



### A BRAND NEW LIBEL SUIT ??

Allow us to quote you without obligation

I'm being a good Christian,  
you fool !

We ignored them; we had  
to do something !

I haven't hit you yet  
so you can't scream.

I'm caressing you with my tongue;  
in other words I'm licking you.

She's going to get married and  
and all sorts of peculiar serious  
and constructive things.

I'm cheating fairly now.

I'll throw the cat at you!

I've been sleeping with your  
Structural Differential under  
my pillow.

I was indulging in a fannish occupation  
last night - I shifted one and a half  
tons of manure for my father.

Whenever you get the  
Wanderlust we can wander  
off and be lustful together.

The oldest sister's twelve and I think the  
others are younger than that.

This is rather an interesting thing -  
if you're interested in that kind of  
thing.

And what's your name  
nowadays?

If there's one type of person I can't stand  
it's a lousy rotten swine.

Do you find Fandom keeps you  
awake at nights?

My purity wasn't violated - just accepted.

He probably emigrated when we sent him a  
stencil.

The grass is tickling my eyeballs!

I think I thought up something  
funny the other day.

When you say 'interlineations'  
you sound as if you're being rude.

That's not fair - when I say it  
it's a fallacy and when you say  
it it isn't!

I know - it's running down inside  
my glasses.

Ready to spread around confidentially to everybody..

The things I say sound perfectly normal till I've said them.

We can't do that because  
a) it's impossible and b)  
it's not unusual.

I've been saving my letters  
for the last three years and  
when I move I'm going to  
read them.

I shan't kiss you if you've  
got river water on your hair!

And which partic-  
ularly ghastly  
child murder are  
you famous for?

With condolences to Dave Wood, Dave Newman, Don Mackay,  
Chuck Harris, Mike Wallace, Betty White, Tom White, Sheila O'Donnell, me, and  
Nameless Ones for (often unwittingly) providing that little lot.



# shrouds and shreds

You may wonder why this happened to you; you may be searching your subconscious for some scrap of guilt which could account for this grisly punishment. Forget it - nothing could account for this.

There are two possible reasons why you are receiving ROT - 1) You are in OMPA, 2) You are not in OMPA - but I thought you ought to have it anyway.

The reasons for it being published in the first place are not - alas, alack a day - quite so simple. It was published primarily because I had a few ideas which more or less added up to this and before I knew what I was doing (poor, impulsive fool that I am) I had cut some stencils for it. After that it seemed such a shame to waste them that I just went ahead and cut the rest. I must admit though that I also have some hopes of it helping to keep me in contact with a lot of fine people to whom I don't get time to write properly due to my mania for collecting small round pieces of copper, silver, green-coloured bits of paper etc. In other words this is by way of keeping one foot in Trufandom whilst wandering around in the Glades of (Commercial) Gafia with the other three.

It is being circulated to the members of OMPA -after some slight deliberation - in order to fulfill my yearly quota in case mundane intrusions keep me away from stencils and mimeo ink at other strategic times. Also because OMPA seems to harbour the backbone of British active Fandom. To say that ROT is irregular would be a laughable understatement; it is almost non-existent. Another ROT might appear in six months; or a year; or five years; or I may produce my next rot as I lay gafiating in some musty grave. If morbid curiosity prompts you to see if any further issue could be more rottish than this one, the only way to be sure of getting it is to comment by letter, telegram, carrier-pigeon, brickbat or bouquet, on this one. Even if you are in OMPA - because, being the unstable type, I might just change my mind about how to circulate the mag in five years. There will only be 100 copies of this issue and the same number of any future issue; this not because of any snob-value that might give the zine, any desire to make it rare, scarce, invaluable, valueless or anything like that, but simply because collating more than 100 copies gets kinda onerous and financing more than that number gets kinda under my Bank Manager's skin. Any future issues will be produced, like this one, just from anything I happen to have on hand at the time. So if you get a glove-finger in your letter-box one day you know where it came from. A glove.

ROT is devoted to the principles of a Free Press, Free Love, Free Money, Freebooting, Free o'clock in the morning is too early, and Everything for Everybody and Nothing for Anybody Else because they don't deserve it. Anyone who flouts these principles, disagrees with me, kicks his cat etc. is probably either a dirty revolutionary (in capital letters) or a dirty reactionary (also in capital letters), and maybe even both.

I leave you with this last thought:

(\* But no money please.)

ROT is a grave magazine published for anybody that might be interested by Mal Ashworth, 40, Makin St., Tong St., Bradford 4., Yorks., England.  
Credits: Cover by Charles David Wildman (I hope); illos Pages 3, 7 and 11 by William Rotsler, pages 4 and 19 by Mike Wallace, bacover by Dave Wood.  
Anything uncredited you can lynch me for; and thanks ev'body for anything I've used. I've probably forgotten a couple of dozen folks I have to thank for something - so thanks anyway.





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