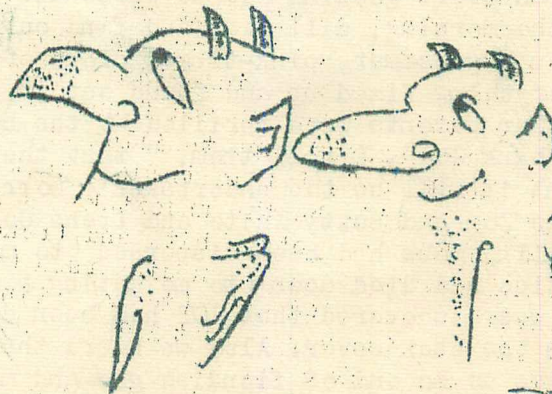


ROOT

Nº 2



Look Charlie.....
No hands!



Dave Wood

) G I B B E R I N G S)
) FROM THE)
) G I B B E T)
) _____)

Do you mind removing your searching fingers from my left earhole ?/// She looked awfully pretty - I could have bashed her! /// Oh, No - it's deceitful to bring someone and then cook them. /// Where the Hell is this monkey that you can't tell from a horse ? /// Yes, but you can't live in a piano. /// I don't think it's quite usual to lie down while you're discussing Einstein's Theory of Relativity./// "RATS - cunning and prolific. This country has as many rats as it has human beings." /// He's got the wrong sort of skin for making love. /// Well I hope she's too old!!

Which is all of the Gibberings for this issue. Those who gibbered (often unknowingly) were: Tom White, Irene Gore, Beryl Nutter, Sheila and an advertising copywriter whose name I don't know. Originally the Gibberings for this issue filled a whole page, but that has been held over until next time for:

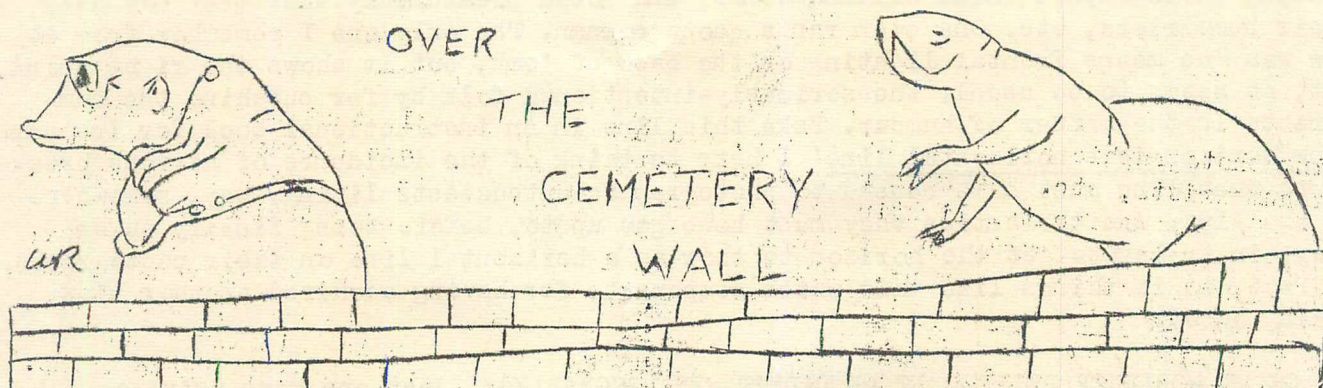
A T H I N G

An excusing/explanatory/notificatory/gratitudinary type thing. Looking through the stencils already cut for ROT, I see that the next to the last stencil claims to have been cut in October, 1956. It may very well have been. I don't know when the very last one was cut. But this is now the laster Than Ever one - the date is now mid-March '57. Some of this issue may be a little dated by the time it actually reaches/^{you}e.g. the announcement of the engagement of Ken Potter and Irene Gore would rather tend to date the issue of one of their grandchildren had just been lynched for stealing a spaceship). This should be apologised for. I apologise. Perhaps it should also be made excuses for. OK.:-

One day when we were sitting on the top of a tram I suddenly felt the transience of all existence as it wafted gently by my brooding spirit. Or maybe there was a draft from an open window. Anyway, I said to Sheila: "You know - it's about time we were starving in a garret." No sooner had the thought come into my mind than, with that quickness and surety of action which is the hallmark of everything I do, sixteen months later, we were getting married. In the middle of January a reasonable-looking flat snuck up on us, we looked at each other and weighed things up in that golden haze which poets call "Love's Young Dream".... 'Well - I've got all the stencils cut for the next ROT and most of them for the last BEM. Spring and the decent weather is about two months away which should just give us time to get all the rotten fuss over before we can start getting out at weekends. I suppose we might as well take it. Ring up in the morning, will you, and find out about getting married."

And so, riding on a gossamer, pink-tinged cloud of bliss, we did. (We got it all arranged and everything fixed up and found out it wasn't Sheila's morning off work that Saturday.) Our parents were thrilled at the happy contentedness which came over our natures. ("Thank God", I told them, "that the next time I have to get dressed up to this extent it will be the undertaker's worry and not mine.") We had a few people there plus Tom and Betty White and Irene Gore. As a consequence of all this, when all the milling mobs had been dispersed (to me 23 people is a milling mob) and the big festivities had died down (to me eating a meal with 22 other people is big festivities) it was discovered that ROT had been delayed and our address had changed to that shown on the back cover. Also we heard that Dave Wood and Brenda had got engaged which gave us no end of fiendish glo and made up for a lot.

Oh, and - thank you, everybody, for everything; for your good wishes and everything.



UH-HUH: One more lovely little thing from our local evening paper: "Vigorous and energetic, and wearing a kilt to fine effect, Mr. Debie's rich voice showed no signs of his age."

And from the weekly outpouring from the same publishers: "The idea that the Presidency of the United States is a man-killing job is mostly a myth. Only six Presidents have died in office, three from gunshot." A mere trifle.

THIS AGE OF MATERIALISTIC SCEPTICISM - HUNC ?: Sometime before last Christmas, Sheila and I were talking about those semi-seances where several people sit around with their fingers on an upturned glass and ask idiot questions of stray spirits, which, if they feel so inclined, move the glass around lettered cards to spell out an answer. Sheila told me that she and another girl at the office had once tried it and nearly collapsed from hysteria over the seeming stupidity of sitting there and asking questions of the empty air - until they had dredged up Queen Elizabeth (the First) and the Devil (who, incidentally, told them that he wasn't Evil. I merely pass the message onto you for what it is worth. Personally, I hope he was lying; it begins to seem rather pointless keeping him around if he's going to protest that he isn't Evil at every opportunity.). Anyway, they had had enough of the supernatural after that and foreswore upturned glasses, but I still consider that Queen Elizabeth and the Devil, in one session, constitutes a pretty good score for beginners. It made me think that maybe Sheila was mysteriously 'in tune' with these supernatural BNFs and that it might not be a bad idea to have a chat with them, find out when I was going to publish another fanzine, how short notice I was going to be given for the next instalment of my column in TRIODE, etc., and I accordingly suggested trying one of these seances. "Yes, all right," Sheila agreed, and then, a cautious after-thought; "But on one condition - that you don't ask it any questions about your Christmas present. If you do, I shall take my finger off the glass."

(We have never got around to the seance yet, by the way. It is one of those things that has Never Got Done. ~~But~~ I do not despair - another Christmas is almost here!)

DEDICATED TO UNO: In a friendly spirit of pure helpfulness:

"How can I compromise with you if you won't do what I want ?"

"I believe in friendliness, but let's keep something up our sleeves even if it's only an atom bomb."

"What you hitting me for ?"

" 'Cos I don't understand you."

FANDOLS EVERYWHERE: Having recently become interested in photography (somewhat to my annoyance, since I already have too many hobbies) I have taken occasionally to

reading photographic books and magazines, and noted pleasurably that they too have their humourists, etc. One even ran a quote column. The only one I remember from it now was "He means frontal lighting on the back of 'em", but it shows the right spirit. But, as seems to be usual, the seriously-intentioned folk by far outshine the humourists in the matter of humour. Take this line in an instructional book for instance; 'The horizon is a horizontal line' I hate to think of the incidence of nervous breakdowns that line must have caused to photographic enthusiasts living, say, somewhere in the Alps. And the antics they must have got up to, before being finally taken away, in trying to get the horizon to show as a horizontal line on their photographs. In fact, it is things like this which compensate for having acquired another time-taking hobby.

THINGS WE WOULDN'T BELIEVE IF WE DIDN'T SEE (PROBABLY): Just one more universe-shaking news item from our much-quoted (in ROT) evening paper. (I begin to wonder why I don't just get total Reprint Rights of this paper and not bother writing my own stuff). This piece goes:

" A tree grown from a peach stone planted in his garden by
Mr. Harry Bell of Auckland Road, Doncaster, a few years
ago, has 44 peaches on it this year."

You wouldn't have believed it, would you ?

ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER AND ANOTHER AND ANOTHER AND....: A phrase I find in my little brown quotebook sets off a train of thought. It is under the heading 'Kettering 1956', so I'll start there. Sheila and I were in Irene Gore's room sat talking to Irene and Ken Potter, while the latter was trying to work out the number of permutations of drinks which could be concocted from one minute bottle of brandy and one equally minute bottle of Creme de Menthe. He lost the top of the Creme de Menthe bottle in the process, and I helpfully informed him: "The top of your Creme de Menthe bottle is under the razor towel." Which it was; it being a cold-blooded statement of fact did not, however, prevent Potter from gleefully pouncing on the phrase and nominating it for a place of honour in future foreign phrase-books, where, he predicted, for sheer usefulness and everyday applicability, it would quite eclipse the good old standby requesting a fellow passenger on a train to inform the Dining Car Attendant that one's aunt has been struck by lightning.

But my poor old Creme de Menthe bottle top under the razor towel was doomed even before it made itself comfortable in its new position. I humbly submit that another phrase I have here in this little book outshines the top of the Creme de Menthe bottle by as much as that may have outshone dear lightning-stricken auntie. It was during some sort of an argument that Sheila and I were having about birds. (We do sometimes; or rather we did until we evolved our world-famous Bird Identification System, which will probably be mentioned elsewhere.) Anyway, this particular argument culminated in a pronouncement of Sheila's that: "The hanging wings are fixed onto the bird by its back." There was, of course, no more to be said after this but the top of one Creme de Menthe bottle, under a razor towel, has gone to join one lightning-stricken auntie in the limbo of lost phrases.

And browsing through this same little notebook reminds me that while we were on our touring holiday last year (reference to which will be found elsewhere; oh, this is becoming a most cross-indexed magazine, this is!), I kept a record of the petrol we bought, so that we could share the expenses at the end of the week. And Sheila, picking up the book several months later, came across this entry on the very back page:

" Fri. Night - 3 gals
Sat. Aft. - 3 gals
Sun. Evg. - 4 gals

Tues. Aft. - 4 gals
 Tues. Evg. - 2 gals
 Thurs. Morn. - 4 gals
 Fri. Morn. - 3 gals
 Sat. Morn. - 1 gal "

"So-o-o-o-o," she said, "A record of your other women, eh?"

And in another part of this book are notes of sundry little incidents on that holiday. Like when we were loafing on the side of Loch Lomond and Ivor was piling stones up in the edge of the water to make a little pier. "What are you doing, Ivor?" I called. He looked out over the vast expanse of Loch Lomond which disappeared in the distant haze in two directions. "I'm filling it up", he said.

At the same place we were floating a tin can on the water and throwing stones at it in a deliciously juvenile manner. After a superbly consistent series of misses, Sheila stood and looked at the floating can. "I haven't hit it yet", she said. Then, brightening, "But I've wet it."

And, as we passed through Edinburgh, Ivor was trying to explain away to Margaret the statue of Robert Burns standing atop a tall stone pillar ('Monument', I believe, is the modern expression). At last, in despair, he turned to us: "She can't understand why they should erect a monument to Robert Burns. She doesn't seem to understand that he's the only man the Scots have to be proud of."

And there was Sheila's half-asleep dissertation on the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the text of which is, alas, forgotten, but the gist of which was why should the Royal family bother only about the animals and not about the children, while the People concerned themselves only with the children and not with the animals? What about all those poor, lonely, frustrated bulls we kept seeing in fields? Only the Royal Family bothered about them; well the People ought to do something about them too. And the Royal Family, on the other hand, ought to give a hand at looking after the children.

And her three-quarters

asleep statement: "We've got to the 'itches"
 Me: "Huh? How's that?"
 Sheila: "I'm sleeping alphabetically."

Don't ask me - I only listen.

CONVERSATION PIECES:

"Why did you put that little pebble on that rock?"

"I didn't put it there; it was there to start with. All I did to it was not move it."

"I'm psychopathic"

"Well - I feel sorry for people, too."

"Grrrrrrrrr"

"You don't really mean that?"

"It'll be an informal evening."

"Informal evening?"

"Yes - the furniture's arriving and we're going to help them move it."

"I shall take your photograph!"

"You can't - I'm out of focus."

"We'll go to the pictures tomorrow."

"Have you seen my pile of ironing?"

"No - who's in that?"

"She looks like something out of the 1920s."

"Yes - a motor-car."

"I used to be very pedantic."

"You mean you used to walk a lot?"

(About a Norman G. Wansborough poem) "Good Heavens - that even rhymes!"

"Naturally - it's the same word!"

"That's a common fallacy."

"That is not a common fallacy - that's one of the best fallacies we've got."

AN OUTSIZE ACCOLADE TO 'SANDY'

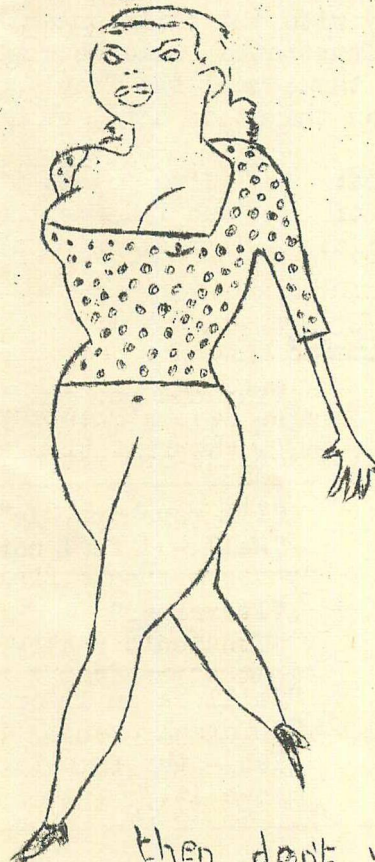
SANDERSON or YOU CAN POOL WHICH OF THE PEOPLE WHAT OF THE TIME?: I am

sorry for one particular reason that I have not written or published much since the news broke that Joan Carr was no more and, in fact, never had been. The reason is, of course, that I have been wanting, ever since, to register profound admiration for the way in which 'Sandy' Sanderson took us all in. It was superb, it was a classic hoax, and it rocked us all right away down to the tips of our shoes when we found out. Walt Willis said 'I can't believe it. I feel as though I've just lost a good friend'. I'd like to echo that; even so long after the truth 'outed' I find it difficult to accustom myself to the fact that there is no Joan Carr. Thanks for being Joan Carr, Sandy; damn you for not still being Joan Carr; sincerest congratulations for the whole thing - and please can I have back any love-letters I may have written Joan, before Laney finds out?

"I venture to say that there are few fans who have played the Theme from the Second Movement of Dvorak's "New World" Symphony on one finger, with one eye, on a piano in a forest in the wilds of Utah." Walt Willis in

COPSLA No.16.

Have YOU a
FIGURE like
the girl below?



then don't you think
you'd better put a skirt on?

THIS FUN-LOVING FANDOM (Notes without comment): You probably know of the hoax over the London bid for the 1957 World Convention, how a telegram was received in London purporting to come from Arthur C. Clarke to the effect that it had been necessary to withdraw the London bid to prevent a split in Fandom. Dick Ellington has a piece about this in CONTACT, a commendable new news-type fanzine issuing from Jan Jansen. Ellington tells how he traced the origin of the hoax in New York, partly by circulating a threat of setting the FBI onto the matter. Ellington says:

"Comes to the Dive a culprit who has admitted knowing and being in on the whole thing. I threaten him with the FBI and general doom and destruction and he finally squeals like a stuck pig. The squeals translated roughly into Bob Chazin of Ohio currently a student at that great Institution, Harvard, which says very little for them.

Fun's fun, but Chazin is hereby warned that he better not show his face around New York for many a moon or comes Retribution and I do not mean the John Berry cno."

And:

"I almost wish this idiot was an actfan so's I could rip into him and start a smashing feud in some poor unsuspecting fanzine."

ODDS AND ENDS AND LOOSE THREADS AND MISCELLANIA AND BITS AND PIECES AND SUCHLIKE:

This is the last but one stencil to be cut for this issue of ROT. It is now somewhere in the region of the 20th October, 1956. (I am not sure just exactly where in the region.) This does not signify anything at all really. When it will get duplicated and finally dispatched is anybody's guess. Come to think of it, I don't even know what I'm going to do about a cover for it yet - anyway, if it turns out to be good, thanks to whoever does it; if it turns out to be lousy, you know I had to do it myself. No material is solicited for ROT since it might rot for months or years without another issue coming out; I just use whatever happens to be lying around. Otherwise uncredited credits in this issue are: Tom & Betty White for conversation pieces, Mike Wallace for an illo in Mutterings from the Morgue and William Rotsler for sundry illos up and down (and even a sideways one or two). If you are wondering what the Thing in the next room to us at "Johnson's Joint" was, I'm afraid I'm not the least bit wider than you are.

Also Sheila's article about our Problem is now outdated. We no longer have a Problem. It was very neatly solved when her father objected to Sheila splashing the walls with green duplicating ink after he had just painted them. It didn't pacify him when she did it at Midnight when everyone else was in bed, instead of in the middle of the day. Therefore, we no longer have a Problem. Sheila is not going to duplicate my fanzines; her father is not going to print them. It seems I have to do the goddamn things myself.

IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME: I ring Tom White up for a chat about the Universe every once in a while. Round about the same time, his Discovery, the Mad Artist, Charles Wildman, who works with him always finds a cause to support or somesuch. Like:

Me: Hallo, Tom, I.....

Charles: Tom - what's that stuff that stops perfume evaporating?

Tom: It's ambergris; it comes from whales' gallstones.

Me: And so.....

Charles: Sheer cruelty, sheer cruelty. The poor whales have to have gallstones just so that we can stop perfume evaporating. It ought not to be allowed.

Tom: Well, we're not injecting the whales with gallstones, you know.

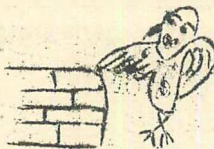
Me:...so there we are.



This is a Watchbird -
watching YOU.



This is Big Brother - watching YOU.



This is a Watchbird -
watching Big Brother
watching YOU.

HA!

In the first place, I don't think for
a moment that Macbeth did it. -

James ~~Thurber~~

People were told they would have to
fight for dear life, and they certainly
got it! - Sir Charles Petrie

There are too many old men pretending
to be gods in this forest! -

George Bernard Shaw (THE
BLACK GIRL IN SEARCH OF
GOD)

You don't know how much skin you've
got until you've had Dermatitis!

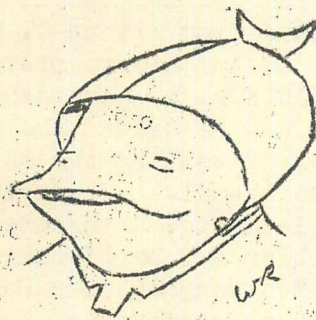
- Eric Needham

Pyromaniacs are people who go round
setting fire to people's funerals.

- Sheila O'Donnell

Hold your head out! - Ibid.

(Good Old Ibid!)



This is Johnny 'Mama' Nordegg, our
Feature Writer. All his life Johnny has
been Writing Features, Fighting Creatures,
Slighting Teachers, Biting Peaches, Secreting
Riches and Frying Rissoles.

Johnny has this to say: "All my
life I have been Writing Features, Fighting
Creatures, Slighting Teachers, Biting Peaches,
Secreting Riches and Frying Rissoles." That's
what we thought he'd have to say. And that's
what he knew he'd have to say - we had a gun
in his back.

Johnny has had a little trouble
with his health lately and has just gone
into hospital to have a gun removed from
his back.

The above picture of Johnny,
which, we think, is a pretty good likeness
(of a dissolute Barbary Ape, of course)
was taken by Wilhelm von Rotslerstein of
Camarillo, California. Fortunately, the
people it was taken from (The Police
Records Department) didn't manage to catch
Wilhelm and that is how we are able to
publish this hitherto unpublished picture.
That, and a complete disregard for human
life and health and safety and sanity and
decency and respectability and morality
and Good Taste anyway...

There may be another popular
feature on another of our popular staff
members next (popular) decade. Or, on
the other hand, there may not - which
will probably be even more popular...

ROT



HOLIDAY SUPPLEMENT

wild

life

by

vernon
ashworth

First off, let me ask one simple, basic question: have you ever camped out for the night on Runswick Bay? If you have never camped out for the night on Runswick Bay, you have never lived; if you have, you have probably not lived either. Be that as it may, the first fundamental requirement of Man in today's civilised society is to camp out for the night on Runswick Bay. How else can he appreciate Life as it really is - Life in the Raw? Let me tell you, for I know; I am one who has camped and come back - as fast as possible. It was during the summer holidays, on a cycling trip round the East Coast, that Philip (my equally demented associate) and I decided that it would be an eminently Good Thing to revert to the days of our forefathers and sleep in the open. We were at Staithes when we decided this and the sun was hot and the sky was blue.

We rode on, looking for some suitable place, and came to Runswick Bay about 7 p.m. Now, Runswick Bay is some place - big, and wide and sweeping, with green hills back from the sands and little streams chuckling down through them. Here, we thought. We walked our bikes onto the sands and wheeled them the length of the bay to a place where one of the little streams tumbled down over sharp rocks and across the sands. On either side, for as far back as we could see, grassy hill slopes arose. A perfect spot for a camp, it had only one minor drawback - in front of us was a ten-foot waterfall and we had two bikes with us which we didn't feel like leaving on the beach to be washed up somewhere in the morning. There was but one solution - we had to take them with us up the waterfall. By this time it was 8 p.m. We had, carelessly, forgotten to bring with us any ropes or haulage gear and had nothing to rely on but our own strength - which amounted to less than the chances of the proverbial snowball in Hades. However, I climbed up the slippery edges of the waterfall and Philip hoisted his cycle and virtually threw it up to me. I didn't catch it.

He got up from underneath the wretched thing and tried again. This time I caught it. He got up from underneath me and the wretched thing, and we tried again. This time we managed it. The second cycle followed and there we were - over the first stage. We pushed the bikes along a narrow, precipitous ledge which overhung the stream flowing some thirty or forty feet below, and idly meditated on the fact that we had no equipment for camping, and the grass was too wet to sleep on anyway. It was now 9 p.m. We pushed the bikes into a tree to obscure them from any thieving eyes which might be in the wilderness and looked around.

Over on the opposite ridge was a small stone lookout box, presumably some ex-army establishment. There was nothing else for it; in fact there was nothing else full-stop. It was beginning to get dark as we took everything out of the saddlebags and started down the slope. The grass, as I said, was wet, and the slope was immensely steep. We slipped and slithered and when Philip came careering past me and shot straight over a five foot bank into the stream, it came as no great surprise. Not to me, anyhow, though Philip looked rather startled, I thought. The worst of it was that he had been carrying all our provisions and our hopes of sustenance on the following morning dwindled rapidly into the all-too-realistic prospects of sodden teacakes, soaked bacon, squashed and oozing tomatoes and dripping beans. We started up the other slope and got about halfway without incident - if you don't count my slipping and smacking my head against a couple of rocks as incidents. Then we encountered a hill of red sand which we had to climb over to get to the building, and just on top of this I slipped again and rolled halfway back down the slope. Inspired by the greatness of my mission, however, I climbed to my feet again, lost them, and smacked my face once more into the cool, refreshing earth. After this I went up on my hands more than my feet, to reduce the distance I had to smack over.

The lookout box was small and, not too surprisingly, dark, and had many little window holes, through each of which - no matter what direction it faced - the wind poured. A bench ran along the inside, as did spiders, earwigs, ants and Ghod-knows-what-else. We left a cycle lamp lit inside and went out again to look around. There was a click and the light went out. It was 10.30 p.m. (This had nothing to do with the light going out; it just was.) We concluded that some ghoulish horror of Hell had gotten here before us; it wasn't consoling. We crept back in - one from each end - armed with jack-knife and spanner, but the Thing was gone.

It was growing darker and darker and we began to think about sleep. We came up with the only possible conclusion - there was nowhere to sleep. This presupposed staying awake all night; which in turn presupposed being tired in the morning. We knew nothing then! Except that as it was getting darker, it was getting colder. Cold - my Ghod! - a freezing Arctic wind came shrieking in from the sea, blasting and numbing and howling and battering through those little holes in the wall. It was cold. I put on all my jackets and tied a scarf around my ears and said that that couldn't happen because it was summer and look how warm the day had been. We decided that we had to sleep. I wrapped my cape around my head (as a protection against marauding insects), crossed my arms on the stone bench, bent over and rested my head on them, and closed my eyes. Perhaps I dozed. The next thing I knew I was in pitch blackness with something wrapped tightly around my face and throat and a smell of the graveyard and my head aching and pounding like all hell. I stumbled around and connected hard with the wall; I raved up the steps, tearing at the cape, and fell down on a patch of moonlit gravel outside as though I'd just escaped from premature burial (which I probably had).

Just as imminent asphyxiation had driven me outside, however, imminent freezing of my blood drove me back in. There I found Philip propped up against one wall, contriving somehow in the darkness to read a detective story. We had a conference and decided that the time had come to Light A Fire. We accordingly started to collect odd scraps of wood and almost before we had finished a fire leapt into being with an avidity for existence which amazed us. It immediately took its destiny in its own hands and in a few moments had roared up into a tremendous blaze like the biggest of all European cities being gutted by a vast conflagration. Reflecting that someone in the huts off the beach might think that Satanism or Devil Worship or just plain human sacrifice was taking place, we struggled mightily with the leaping flames and eventually managed to extinguish them. We went back to freezing.

The night wore on - particularly on us - very slowly, and we were always awake, sometimes inside, sometimes out, sometimes suffocating, sometimes freezing. About 4 o'clock we decided to get out; it was half light by then and we could find our way down, we reckoned. We stepped outside and it started to rain. Rain? The most torrential, driving, thundering, howling, lashing downpour that Man has ever witnessed in his evolution through the ages! It rained. We decided to stay for a while, and have some breakfast and - at all costs - a temperature which, if it was not actually favourable to Life, was within about three hundred degrees of the point where it was possible. So we tried to light another fire. It flickered derisively and went out; it had not forgotten. Half an hour and a whole box of matches later, we coaxed an insipid little flame to stay with us long enough to have a can of beans (which had taken us a full hour and two jack-knives to open) rammed on it. Philip held a rasher of bacon over the flame too; for a second or two he held it, anyway. Then we fished it out of the ashes and threw it away at about the same time that the fire went out and we resigned ourselves to a breakfast of cold beans and dirty, soggy teacakes, spiced with a squashed, mushy tomato or two. About 5 the downpour stopped and we issued forth.

All the 'paths' were of clay and the clay was wet; also it seemed possessed of a predilection for covering us from head to foot every time we slid through it. We reached our drenched bikes eventually, though, and started down with them. I went down faster than Philip and fell over the waterfall, landing, with my bike, in a large splash of water and sand and mud and clay. As I climbed out, it started to rain again, so we hunkered down to wait it out under our capes. This seemed as good a course as any, until we noted that the tide was coming in. We made a run for it, then, along the half mile of beach through a downpour, wet sand, and a wave or two that came too fast. As we dashed across the last ten feet the waves came in faster and higher and our bikes slipped and fell into deep pools of water, soaking everything in the saddle-bags again.

And there we were; we had camped out for the night on Runswick Bay and even if we were wet and muddy and tired and dejected and miserable and sneezing and half-dead, it was a great epic of human courage and endurance, set against the heart-searing background of disguised graves on the top of a hill. What more could any man want? A hell of a lot - sleep, food..... Next night we came to Robin Hood's Bay and saw that it was very similar to Runswick Bay, and yet, somehow, we wandered into the door of the biggest hotel there.

-----END-----

ROOMING IN THE GLOOM

(By The Bonnie

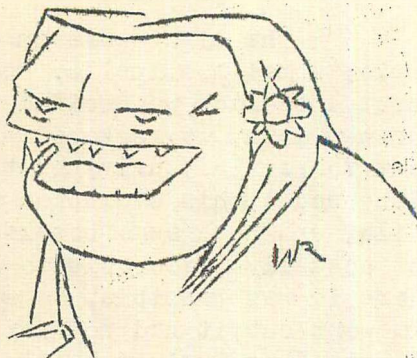
INN

Banks O'Clyde)

I suppose that coming across a "Johnson's Joint" among the picturesque Scottish lochs should forewarn one. A "Lochside Hotel", of course, would be quite all right; a "Hotel Bellevue" or even a "Hotel Bellavista" would be permissible; a "Lochoraigglencairncarn Hotel" or any combinations thereof would be almost commonplace; a "Hotel Bonnie Prince Charlie" would be fine. But a "Johnson's Joint", no.

mal
ashworth

It happened like this. There were four of us on a week's unscheduled vagrancy in the Northlands - Sheila and myself and a couple of non-fan friends, Ivor and Margaret. We had gone quite gently up the north-east coast, through Edinburgh and across to the Loch-land. And, surmising that, since it was the height of the holiday season, all the hotels and such would be crowded out, we decided to improvise a camp for one night on the loch-side. As the evening got later, however, it got colder (someone should investigate this phenomenon regarding nights and evenings) and Sheila wasn't feeling too well, so we abandoned the idea and set out to look for an hotel of some sort after



all. And we found an hotel of some sort after all. We went many miles and tried many hotels and it was getting late; our luck was distinctly out. Then, to help us cut our roving short, a kindly hotel-keeper phoned several of his friends to see if any of them had any vacant rooms. Johnson must have been one of his friends; moreover, Johnson must have been his only friend with any vacant rooms. At the time we were too thankful to get in anywhere to wonder why.

After we got started, Ivor forgot the name of the place we were looking for. We drove along unlighted roads on lochsides and lights from buildings across the other side reflected in the water. We went on and through a little village and suddenly Ivor braked. "That's the place", he said, nodding towards a sign which said "Johnson's Joint" (or something so nearly equivalent and out-of-place that it makes no difference), "I knew I'd remember it when I saw the name."

Now, I have seen horror films and, I imagine, you have seen horror films. I have cursed the heroes of these films for being the stupidest, most insensitive, thick-headed morons in the sidereal universe, and, I suppose, you have done the same. Because we both realise - you and I - that if we ever drove up to such a place as they drive up to, at the times they drive up to them, we would drive straight away again. Don't we? These idiot heroes always contrive to arrive at these places at the most ungodly hours of darkness; the places themselves always manage to be as supernaturally situated as anything could be while it is still fastened to the earth. You take one look at the place and you know that grotesque atrocities are perpetrated there at every feasible opportunity and quite a lot of unfeasible ones too; but not this stupid mutt of a hero - he doesn't realise that. You can see clues scattered all over the place which tell you that if there isn't a slaving Thing going to crawl up from the cellars in the middle of the night and try to tear his throat out, there most certainly is a dribbling Monstrosity going to climb down from the attics for the same purpose; but to our poor Feeblemind it is all 'imagination'. You know that if he stays the night there, his bed is going to fold into the wall with him in it and either start to crush him to death or project him into another room where some other agency can do him the same honour; but not him. Oh, no! You would never stay in such a place for a night, you vow, at the very least without arming yourself with a howitzer, a gross of crucifixes, three hundred sprigs of garlic and letters to the Pope and the Chief of Police, telling them where you were. But you probably wouldn't stay in any event, would you? No, you and I are not like the dumb heroes in these horror films, are we?

Pines whined as we drove up the drive and lights blazed as we stopped. It was a big place and an old place, and a figure stood on the porch, outlined against the light. "Good Evening", he said in the dead of night, as we carried our cases up the steps and followed him into a large hall. He was quite small, with large, quiet, brown eyes and he was probably Johnson and just a bit unlikely. "You will want to put your things in your rooms", he announced and led us up a wide staircase that branched off in two directions halfway up. He started to the right and then stopped. "No", he said, and started off to the left instead, indicating that Margaret and Sheila were

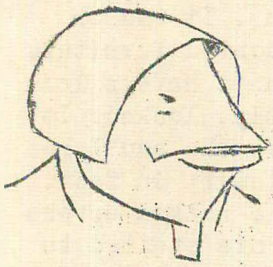
to follow him. He came back for Ivor and I in a few moments and took us off to the right. We had seen no one else. He showed us to our room and left us. It was an immense room, which three large beds and a goodly collection of assorted furniture quite failed to fill. Besides the door from the corridor (which didn't have a lock on it) it had a door leading into the next room which was, apparently, locked. It also had a large, very squashed spider on the ceiling directly above the bed I had chosen. A huge wardrobe - which might almost have been a room in itself; in fact, now that I come to think about it... - stood against one wall. As we walked across the floor it issued the most spine-chilling groan and one of its doors started to swing slowly open. However, in the split micro-second before we slammed it shut and got our backs against it, nothing came out. Then Johnson came back.

We signed the hotel register which he had brought with him and he asked us about our journey and we talked of roads and lochs and suchlike ordinary things. And as he talked, from the next room (the one into which the locked door led) there came the most awesome, un-human sound. It was not quite a shriek and not quite a howl, slightly different from a tortured scream, and not really a moan. Ivor looked at me and I looked at Ivor and we both looked at Johnson. He looked up at us, smiled slowly, and continued to talk of roads and lochs and things.

When he left we decided that we really ought to find out what grim Beast of Darkness Margaret and Sheila had encountered. We crossed the wide landing at the head of the stairs quietly and warily. We knocked at their door, convinced them we were human and went in. They were both in the process of vowing strenuously that they would never stay the night there. They showed us bloodstains on the walls. We tried to quieten them as best we could and assured them that dried bloodstains were less than nothing when compared to the ravening Horror in the room next to ours. They didn't seem particularly comforted. As a last resort we took them to the head of the stairs and showed them the massive black hound which was slumbering halfway down. They shuddered and agreed to stay. As we took them back to their room a clock in the hall below chimed in a mocking, unearthly tune. We looked at our watches - it was five minutes past Midnight. As we got back to the door of our own room it chimed again with a different supernatural melody - it was ten minutes past Midnight. We pushed chairs against all the doors in our room (including the wardrobe door) and scrambled into bed. Ivor expressed deep regret that we had left our carving knife down in the car and I lay there thinking to myself: The word is not the thing, the shriek is not the thing; being scared is Not The Thing either. But I wish I knew what the hell the Thing is. I find semantics a great help at times like that. We heard a telephone ring downstairs (it was way into the early hours of the morning by now) and the clock played its magnificent repertoire of Hit Tunes from the Other Side. Then we heard a scrabbling at the locked door between our room and the next, and the knob turned slowly. We pretended to be dead, which isn't very difficult when you feel you're so near to it anyway and after a while the scrabbling ceased.

The next thing I remember is lying there in the soft bed and considering the fascinating and revolutionary concept of waking up in the morning and finding myself still alive. I felt at my throat and then examined Ivor; he was still alive too. This was proving to be a most amazing holiday. When we had both marvelled at this for some time, we went over to see what had become of Margaret and Sheila and found them both still completely assembled without even any fang marks on their throats. We considered this over breakfast. Afterwards we went outside to see if the hotel itself was still in the same location. It was. We also met the great black hound face-to-face and even that proved to be friendly because it knocked me down with one paw. There was only one thing to do - we stayed a second night.

No, I'm afraid that old Grimoire, she ain't what she used to be.



MUTTERINGS from the MORGUE



Assorted assortments from assorted letters from assorted people - all very assorted. There is IRENE GORE, the well-known Sweet Young English Rose, for instance who breaks the bad news that Ken Potter seems quite likely to be posted overseas. She also says:



"Another bit of news you may be interested in. We have gone and got Officially engaged. I've got a ring around my finger. We sort of trotted off to Liverpool last Friday to see Mel Tormé and have a Chinese meal and we took money with us with evil intent. The woman in the shop called him "Sir", which unnerved us completely. In the concert hall he kept taking the box out of his pocket, unfastening it and waving it

around, which unnerved me completely again.

Then we had the job of telling the parents. My mother was easy. We flounced in that night and I waved my hand carelessly in front of her nose and said "Do you like my ring (Ha, ha)?" and she said "(Ha, ha) Yes, what is it?". (I must explain, some people tend to be this way) Ken said wildly "It's an engagement ring" and added as an afterthought, "Is it all right (Ha, ha)?" Ma: "Eeessssss - is it?" Me: "Yes" Ma: "Is it?" Ken and I both: "Yes!!" Then she came over all misty like and greeted Ken like a long lost son, and kinda patted us and made us have some wine. What I mean is, she offered us some wine. We had some, of course.

We told Ken's family the day after. He planned it so that we would just have sufficient time to dash in, tell them and dash out to catch his train back to camp. Unfortunately, we went to Morecambe with Harry Hanlon and we were late back. He missed the 5.15 train and we had to stay for tea. He dragged me in to the house and boomed: "Mam, do you think I'm too young to get engaged - well you're too late (Ha, ha)" She wavered a little and stared and managed "Congratulaaaations" or something. Ken said "Oh well, we didn't know whether we'd get kicked out or something" and his Pa said "Don't be sa daft". So that was that.

((Anti-climactic as it may sound after that, congratulations Irene. And pleeeeeease write me a long descriptive letter like that when you get married. In fact, you might ask Ken, for me, what he can do about it - I want that letter.))

And from co-Lancastrian, DAVE WOOD:

"Did you know that Laws of Chance state that the probability of a lady with a Grecian nose is 0.01?"

It has been proved (doubtless to the satisfaction of the fair sex) that every woman is a woman in a million. "OK, Boy, prove" you say. With the help of a Mr. M.J. Moroney ((Who he?)) I will attempt to do just that.

Let us assume that you are a man with some strong convictions over the woman you want to - well, let us say, marry. Let us suppose you insist upon a Grecian nose, platinum-blond hair, eyes of odd colours and a first-

class knowledge of the early forms of African drum music (why, in Hell's name?). Now, we must know the probabilities for such demands. We shall suppose them to be as follows:-

Probability of lady with Grecian nose:	0.01
" " " " platinum-blond hair:	0.01
" " " " odd eyes :	0.001
" " " " first-class knowledge of the early forms of African drum music:	0.00001

In order to calculate the probability that all these desirable attributes will be found in one person, we use the Multiplication Law. (This tends to get technical). By the use of this Law, we find that the probability of you meeting the above girl and of her coming up to your requirements is:

$$P = 0.000,000,000,001,$$

which, my dear pupil, is precisely one in an English billion.

The above is a rather advanced form of proving to yourself that your girl is the mostest, the differentest and the end. Of course, I don't advise you for one moment to go up to her and size her up in this way!

Scene: Front room, dark, with couch in centre upon which She reclines, wearing a transparent gown of pure nylon. He stands over her.

He: Your eyes, my loved ones, your eyes.....

She: Yes ?

He: Your eyes, my loved one, have a probability of 0.01.

She: What ?

He: I said, your eyes, my loved one, have a promise for this one.

She: For you alone.

He: Hair, 0.01

She: Mmmmm ?

He: Er - hair like spun gold.

She: Kiss me.

He: Lips, 0.0001.

She: Caress me.

He: 37"-24"-36".

She: Hold me.

He:(Sweating) 0.001.

She: I am yours.

He:Wow - 0.0000001!

She: I give you everything.

He:(Multiplying desperately) Sixteen decimal places which makes it 0.000,000,000,000,001.

She: Ah, Ecstasy!

He: Mighod, more than one in a million!

She: Oh, purest, heavenly Bliss!

He: She'll do.

"ONE IN A
MILLION..."



JOHN HITCHCOCK sayeth:

"Have just returned from the New York Convention. I had a fine time, but just by dint of being in the right places at the right times. In other words, finding myself in closed-door parties just before they decided to be closed-door....it takes a noble amount of prescience, near as much as Campbell's. However, the official programme (or program, to be barbaric and American) was the most complete flop so far. It put the Con Committee \$1,500 in debt - according to Kyle when he was addressing the fifty or so left on Monday (Official Business Day) - and \$500 in debt, latest I heard, after you count out the auction and the hatpassing and a couple of other things. I thought before that I'd seen long faces....

I agree with the British: no official programs. Or programmes.

They get in the way of the room parties. ((Well - it hasn't always been preezactly intentional at British conventions.))

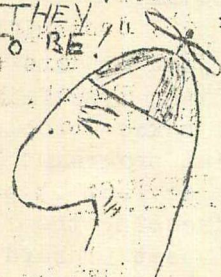
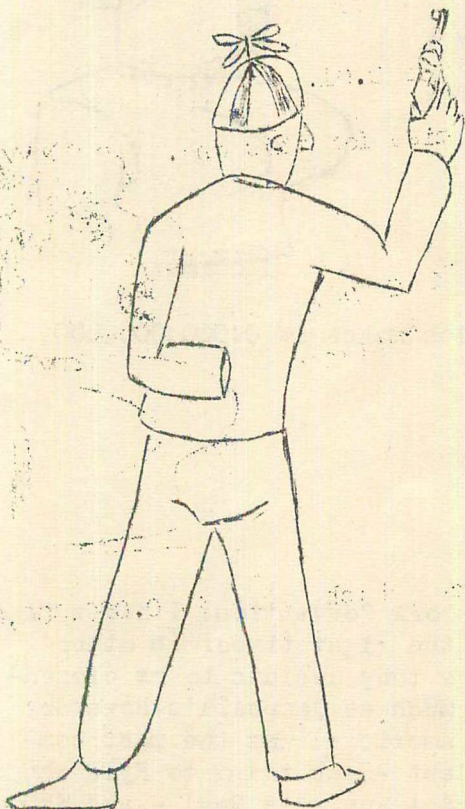
" Only other thing of Importance I can think of there was the Tucker Banquet. Official name: The First Annual world Science Fiction Convention Insurgents' Banquet. This occurred when eleven dissatisfied fans, to wit, Lee and Larry Shaw, demon k., me, Andy and Jean Young, Bob Tucker, Boyd Raeburn, Larry Stark, Gerald Steward and Ron Kidder, marched aimlessly through the evening streets of New York to find a restaurant at which to eat while the \$7.10 raw chicken banquet was going on officially at the hotel. Well, We Found A Restaurant...had a real banquet, preceded by awards to each of the fans there (mine, I remember, was The Fan Most Likely To Be Caught At The Bottom in the Impending Crash of Fandom). Then the bill totted up to \$35. And Bob Tucker paid it all. Strange, isn't it, how you suddenly begin to respect some people ? "

And Uncle HARRY TURNER:

"I don't dig quotes; maybe I'm immune after putting up with the wittiscisms of the junior Turners. Yesterday I was busy bashing down a partition wall to make our kitchen a little bigger. I had to suspend operations to let our six-year-old out. As he disappeared round the corner, his parting remark was: "What are you doing, dad ? Painting ?"

I relieved my feelings by knocking a few more cobs of plaster down."

And from CHUCK DERRY:



FAN FEUDS AREN'T
WHAT THEY
USED TO BE!

WE HAVE A PROBLEM...

Mal and I. It is my father. He wants to be helpful. It came about like this:

The scene is the kitchen at home. On the sewing machine is a large quantity of paper. Father (interested) looks at it.

Pa: Whose is this ?

Me: (Angrily 'cos Pa is awful nosy) Mine.

Pa: How much was it ?

Me: Nine and threepence a ream.

Pa: (Who is a printer of a sort) I could have got you some.

Me: (Triumphantly 'cos all Pa gets is writing paper) It's DUPLICATING paper.

Pa: (Taking a sheet in his hands and examining it) It isn't. It's just bond paper.

Me: (Angrily 'cos I'm proud of finding duplicating paper

at nine and threepence a ream, even if it is thin) It IS NOT. It's duplicating paper. Sort of porous.

Pa: I could get you better than that.

Me: Not to duplicate with.

Pa: What do you do **with it** ?

Me: Duplicate.

Pa: What on ?

Me: A duplicator.

(The brilliance of conversation between my father and I never fails to amaze me.)

Pa: What with ?

Me: Stencils.

Pa: Who's doing it ?

Me: Me.

Pa: Where ?

Me: Here.

Pa: What on ?

Me: (Pa is very narrow-minded and it is Mal's flatbed that I am going to duplicate on) A duplicator.

Pa: Where is it ?

Me: Upstairs.

(When talking to father I always feel as though I am playing tennis.)

Pa: I can do it for you.

Me: No you can't - they're wax.

Pa: I can get you better things than that - plates that you can type on and write on, and I can print them for you.

Me: (Panic stricken! Mal isn't narrow-minded and neither is his quote-page - or, for that matter, the rest of his fanzines.) Well - er - I've got everything ready upstairs. Ha ha. I've just got to duplicate it.

Pa: well I'll bring you some plates.

Me: (Hopefully - trying to put him off) Well - ha, ha - there's 150 copies to do.

Pa: (Nonchalantly) Oh, I could run those off in a couple of minutes.

Me: (Weakening and frantically doing mental calculations. Thinks - it is a five-page oneshot that I am duplicating. 150 copies times 5 pages equals 750 pages times six strokes of the squeegee equals 4,500 strokes. Ghod!) Oh yes - ha, ha (hysterically) - well, I don't know. Just a minute.

(I run upstairs and bring down the stencils, at the same time picking out the most

sheila

o'donnell

narrow-minded-looking one I can at that speed.)

Me: Here you are.

Pa: They look amateurish.

Me: (Indignantly 'cos I cut the stencils, and still desperately trying to put him off) Oh, they're all right. They all (ha,ha) do it like that. They - er - like them like that. Ha, ha.

Pa: Oh, I can do it better than that.

Me: (Clutching the table) I - er - ha, ha - like doing it. (Thinks - !!!) If you could just get the paper for us. Uh ?

Pa: I'll do it for you.

Me: Er - well - I'll have to ask Mal. If you'll just bring us the paper....

Pa: I'll bring you some plates on Monday.

Me: (Sinking, exhausted, into a chair and gasping weakly) Oh, er, all right then. Er - thank you - ha, ha.

And he did too.

So that is our problem....

Whether to be polite and puritan, or to preserve the Freedom of the Press and fall out with father ?



OVER OTHER CEMETERY WALLS

It is quite a long time ago now, that Sheila and I paid our first visit to Lancaster Fandom. (Somehow, strangely, everything that happens nowadays is a long time ago.) It was last year anyway; and that is assuming that this sees print in 1956. I made notes about the occasion with the obvious intention of writing about it. But, as with many things, the details are gone now and I doubt that I could fill out the skeletal notes with enough body to make them presentable. So - for what it is - have a skeleton:

"We get into Lancaster and off train. Meet Ken Potter and Irene, Dave Wood and Brenda and Harry Hanlon. They push us back on train (same one). All go into Morecambe and wander along promenade discussing Absolute and Relative Values and William Saroyan and Vargo Statton. Irene and the 'cow stood in the sea'; Sheila and the 'mountain with a table-cloth on'; they understand each other - strange affinity between women.

Narrow path along cliffs with sea below - long way below. Over the cemetery wall. Sea still below. Over the other cemetery wall. Down cliffs and over rocks (Sheila and I in best clothes and Sheila in high heels). Onto a flat rock in the sea. Claim it on behalf of United Governments of Earth. Hold first Nauticon there and eat sandwiches. Dave: "Before we leave, there's a little ceremony I want to perform" Ken: "Mighod, Dave, you're not going to get married ?" Scramble up cliffs. And down again - even further. Find a bottle with photographs in it. And a dead eel with a hole in. Ken chases two little kids with it. Two little kids chase Ken (and all the rest of us) with it. Dead seagulls galore. Barraged with corpses (all projected by two little kids). Sheila changes into my pyjamas. Dead eel thrown at us from cliff. My pyjamas get splashed.

Go to snack bar to recover from rout. Ken spills Coca-Cola over us all. Go to see another fan, Roy Booth, in Heysham. His father comes to door, sees fans straggled all over path, lets out dismayed "Oh - HELL!". Roy not in; not our day.

Go back to Lancaster. Tea at Dave's, jazz at Harry's. Read "The Revelation of St. John The Divine" amidst wild scenes of debauchery; quite a revelation. Catch train for home spattered with dead eel, Coca-Cola and Revelation."

SAGA-WRITING IN ONE EASY LESSON (OR EVEN LESS)

Not long ago I picked up one volume (the second, of course) of a two volume book called "Kalevala - The Land of Heroes". At first I was disappointed about it being only the second volume that I had got hold of, thinking, as I did, that to fully follow it I should probably have to wait a lifetime (or more) until I happened across the first volume. I was, happily, wrong. I was very wrong indeed. "Kalevala", you see, is a Finnish saga. Perhaps I should elucidate. If a book of Finnish sagas is in five hundred and thirty six volumes and you picked up only the three hundred and twenty fourth, it would not matter. Finnish sagas, apparently, are like that. (I did not know this before; I learned it from "Kalevala".) Finnish sagas, evidently, are quite a unique literary form in that one does not need to begin at the beginning and read consecutively through to the end, passing the middle somewhere en route. Not at all one doesn't. One can, just as easily, begin at the middle, read out to the two-thirds mark, back into the one and one third sixths mark and out to both ends at the same time - and one will still understand it perfectly. Now you may be thinking that this kind of thing must be very difficult to write. I don't blame you, but I would like to reassure you. You may think that under such trying conditions it will be almost impossible to tell a consecutive story. By no means. The answer is really diabolically simple. In essence, it is this: Every few lines one repeats the name of each character, together with his pedigree, a list of his ancestors, relatives and friends right away back to the days of the Caves (in order, and with a full life-history of each, of course), his mannerisms, characteristics, peculiarities, a note of his wife (or woman or mother or sister) and her family and friends back over the same period, a description of his horse, sword, nose, knife, fork and spoon. One then allows this character to speak. After he has spoken, one takes his exact words and puts them into the mouth of a second character, so that there shall be no doubt at all about what he has said. And then a third character. And a fourth. And so on. It must be stressed that it is regarded as very sharp practice in saga-writing to discard any spoken word before the whole company of characters has had a chance to mouth it. This way - wherever the reader starts - he never feels that he has missed anything. By this simple method, he can start anywhere at all and follow the them of things perfectly. It is a foolproof method. I can, however, envisage someone objecting that surely this will get in the way of getting on with the story just a little, maybe? It must be admitted that there is a grain of truth in the objection, but it must also be pointed out that it doesn't really matter in the least about getting on with the story. With the above method the reader becomes so perfectly acquainted with all the characters that he comes to look upon them as Dear Friends and to hang upon their every word. (Actually, of course, he doesn't really need to hang upon their every word as each one will be repeated for him a couple of dozen times before it is allowed to disappear off the scene, but it's nice to have him in that state, I guess.) All that is needed, then, before you can start in and make your living writing Finnish sagas, is a little illustration. I will use the four main characters from "Kalevala" for it. These are: Lemminkainen (also called Kaukomieli), Vainamoinen, Ilmarinen and Pohjola's aged mistress (whoever she is!) Lemminkainen, of course, is never just simply Lemminkainen. Oh, no; that's the whole point. To make the reader feel close kinship with him, he is always:

"He, the lively Lemminkainen,
He, the handsome Kaukomieli."

Don't you feel nearer to him already ? Similarly with Vainamoinen:

"The old and steadfast Vainamoinen,
He, the aged Vainamoinen."

That is your good friend (isn't he ?) Vainamoinen - always "old and steadfast" or "aged". (Although it must be pointed out here that in two very revolutionary lines, which must have been added at a later date, he is merely "old".) Ilmarinen is always "the smith Ilmarinen" and "Pohjola's aged mistress" is always "Pohjola's aged mistress". (Except on a few occasions when she is the "aged mistress of Pohjola". In fairness to the lecherous minded, I would like to say at this early point that I haven't a clue whether Pohjola is a man or a castle. Or even a dog, for that matter.) Our saga, then, starts off something like this:

"Said the lively Lemminkainen,
Said the handsome Kaukomieli:
'Pass me the salt'

Then quoth aged Vainamoinen,
Old and steadfast Vainamoinen,
'Oh, the lively Lemminkainen,
He, the handsome Kaukomieli,
Wants the salt'

So Pohjola's aged mistress,
Aged mistress of Pohjola,
Turning to smith Ilmarinen,
Spoke in ringing tones and loud:
'Old and steadfast Vainamoinen,
He, the aged Vainamoinen,
Saith the lively Lemminkainen,
He, the handsome Kaukomieli,
Wants the salt' "

The smith Ilmarinen then picks up the salt and passes it to Pohjola's aged mistress, explaining to her at the same time that he is doing this in accordance with her request, which, he understands, came to her from the old and steadfast Vainamoinen, he, the aged Vainamoinen, on behalf of none other than the lively Lemminkainen, the handsome Kaukomieli. Pohjola's aged mistress thanks him, assures him that it is quite true that the request for the salt came to her from the old and steadfast Vainamoinen (and the aged Vainamoinen as well) on behalf of the lively Lemminkainen (and, of course, the handsome Kaukomieli) himself. She then turns to the aged (and old and steadfast) Vainamoinen, hands him the salt, and tells him that, just as he asked her to do, she has secured the salt from the smith Ilmarinen, for passage to himself, the old and steadfast (and aged) Vainamoinen, in order that he may pass it back up the table to the lively Lemminkainen and the handsome Kaukomieli. The old and steadfast Vainamoinen listens thoughtfully to all this, and after a sombre and significant silence, he thanks her for the salt, which she, the aged mistress of Pohjola, has kindly obtained for him from the smith Ilmarinen. He reaffirms that the original request for the salt came from the lively Lemminkainen, and the handsome Kaukomieli, to whom, even now, he intends to pass it.

And on that dramatic note, you end the first chapter of your saga. Perhaps you would like to continue it on your own now ? But for God's sake give Lemminkainen the salt before supper time, will you ?

POETRY YET!

And a reprint too! Reprinted by kind permission from Harry Turner's SAPSzine, GRIN,
is this sweet and lovely little Eric Needham verse:

THE FRAGRANT MINUTE

In pensive mood I sit and write of things which
bring me pure delight. The smell of a motorist's
burning clutch, or failing brakes on a steep
incline; the fracture of a blind man's ~~clutch~~, a
slip, a fall, a broken spine; the snap which tells
a bone is breaking, the roar of flames as homes
burn down; the deathroll when the earth is quaking,
bursting bubbles as people drown; the torture of
appendicitis, or lunacy and brain diseases; gan-
grened fingers from frost-bite is another prospect
which me pleases; these gentle little joys, I find,
are free to those of purest mind.

--- Patience Feeble

And an original:

INSPIRATION

by Pete Royle

Poetry have I never done,
I'll try to write some just for fun.
Verse ain't really in my line,
So don't blame me if this don't rhyme.

Ghod! It does!

I thought I wuz,
cut out to be a poet,
(And now I know it!)

Well, I'll be damned, ain't that queer,
It seems I'm onto sump'n here.
I didn't know I could write verse -
Even though the style is terse.
I wonder how long it will last;
Am I tapping really vast
resources?

That last bit didn't sound so good.
I wonder if I could
Cram in some more before
All the damned poetic reservoir
within me suddenly dries up.

FROM: Mal Ashworth,

FROM: Mal Ashworth,
53, Hillcrest Ave.,
LEEDS.7., England.

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(FAPA Postmarking)

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ROT

the winner of the Blue Moon seal of Random Occasionality, Unpredictable Infrequency and Intermittent Once-In-A-Whileness, claims to be the most haphazard half-fanzine in half-existence at the present time. It gazes with awe upon anything published as regularly as every five years or every time a zombie wakens. Last issue ROT vowed never to exceed a printing of a hundred copies and last issue ROT didn't exceed a printing of a hundred copies. This time there will probably be a hundred and fifty copies. ROT No. 1 was published in September 1955 and circulated through OMPA and sundry semi-fringe-fake-fans and semi-fringe-fake-pros (or vice versa, thrice around the mulberry bush and back in time for tea). ROT No. 2 will probably circulate through both OMPA and FAPA because I need the activity credit and also to those among the semi-fringe-fake-fans and semi-fringe-fake-pros who read, marked, burned and inwardly detested the last ROT, and said so, and anyone else who seems 'likely' (whatever that is). Where the next ROT will go (or even when) is just anybody's guess. It may circulate through OMPA and/or FAPA or neither. The only way to be sure of getting it is to comment on this issue. To make it even easier, letters of comment may be composed solely of words, any or all of which may be taken from the dictionary. No subscriptions are sought, since who could assess its worth in mere money? And who would actually pay for it anyway? And I should forget who'd sent the money by the time the next issue came out. ROT is sincerely dedicated to the propagation of "What's-It-Got-To-Do-With-Science-Fiction." But then - aren't we all?

