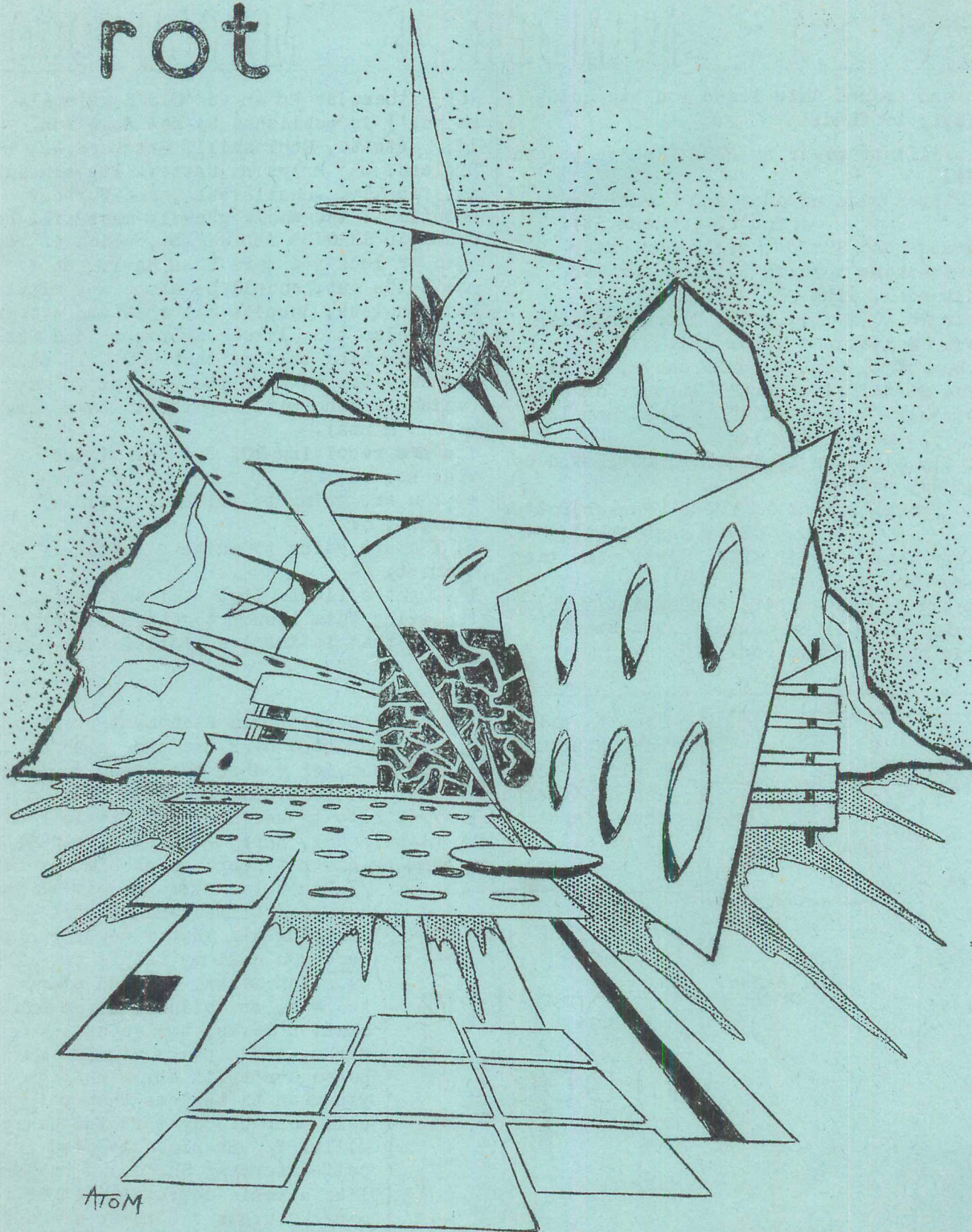


rot



ATOM

NUMBER FOUR

# ROT NUMBER 4 MARCH 1980

In and around this issue you are quite likely to find:

A brilliant cover by ATOM (You've passed it).

A wasted page of odds and (even) ends (You're reading it).

Shrouds and Shreds, which has crazy aspirations towards being a sort of editorial, like (It's facing you).

Over The Cemetery Wall, where anything goes (A little further on).

A beautiful bauble by Birchby, to wit "The Wintoff Incident" (Further on still)

"Witchcraft at Pendle" by that hopeless lil ole me (Keep going)

Pretty pictures by Rotsler, mutilated by me (Way beyond)

The Promulgations of Irene (Punkah) Potter (Even past that)

Harry Warner "Going Like Sixty" and then some (Way way out)

Sneaky me back again, confessing to book-loving (Ad Ultima Whatnot just about)

Your name and address.

ROT (otherwise known as 'Old Bore's Almanack') is published by Mal Ashworth, 14, Westgate, Eccleshill, Bradford.2., England, who knows no better. Its schedule is, frankly, unbelievable, and further details of the whole ghastly mess will be found in SHROUDS AND SHREDS, which if the kind of luck you have been having up to now holds out, should be along any minute. Nevertheless, despite all this and everything else too (like commonsense and all) a little bird told me that ROT No.5 will probably try to worm its way out in May (which is otherwise reputed to be a merry enough month).

You are receiving ROT for one of two reasons:

- a) You are going to write a letter of comment, or
- b) You are going to write a letter of comment.

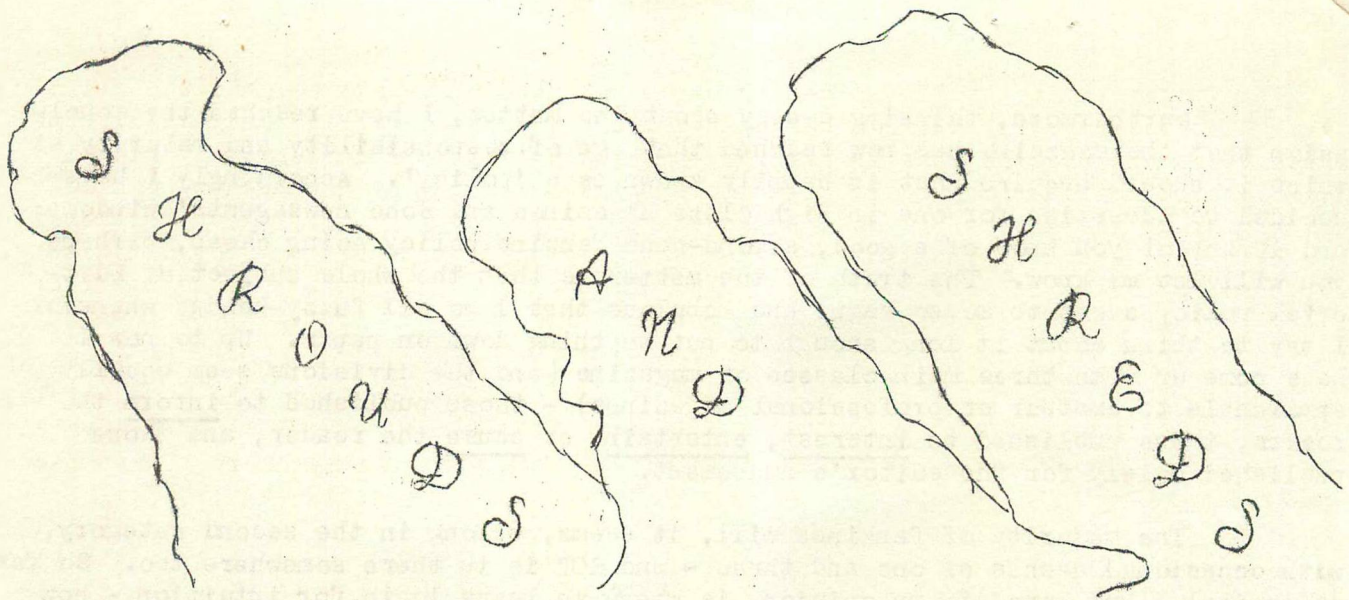
I've got a little list - of the people receiving this issue; together we can ensure that it isn't a littler list next time.

Come to think of it we do have an Old Testament prophet with a pram// Will you just step back one pace without moving// No - get away from me; you're the wrong sex// You can't expect a poor little Yobber to stand up to that fierce old Pro// I hate to see horrible little red blobs all over the place// Hey, Harry - if King Lear is so important, how come we haven't heard about him before?

Gibberings  
from the  
Gibbet

// Don't you ever get hit on the head and killed when you're carrying all that money ?// How dare you call my father two question marks, a pound sign, two @'s, an oblique, three exclamation marks, two question marks, and a pound sign!// My bones don't fit any more// Do you mean to tell me that you call your bloody tortoise Henry Miller ?// He probably died in self-defence// She looks rather like a manic-depressive floor mop// (Sources too numerous (and forgotten) to mention.//////////





With this issue ROT celebrates its 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ th birthday, and this seems a fine time to sit back proudly and take stock of the magazine's achievements, to look around with a half-smile of self-satisfaction, and to ask, sincerely, "What the hell's going on?"

In September 1955 ROT started out as an informal general fanzine, publishing material which seemed to have some general interest value, and happened to be handy. In a vague, nebulous sort of way, never giving a thought to anything, this pattern has been followed throughout all the subsequent issues of the magazine (two). With a publishing schedule like September 1955, March 1957, May 1958, it hardly seemed fair to solicit material from other people and then keep them waiting all that time to see it in print, with the result that most of the material in ROT has, in the past, been written by me. A monstrous disadvantage like this, any fanzine can do without.

Originally, ROT vowed to stick to a maximum of twenty pages and 100 copies per issue. ROT No. 2 had twenty-two pages, and 150 copies were produced of both No. 2 and No. 3. So much for a Fine Old Tradition. Again, the original intention was for ROT to be a general, non-apa, magazine aimed, with a lack of precision born of long years of practice, at anyone likely to be interested, and yet all three issues have been distributed through OMPA and Nos. 2 and 3 through FAPA as well. You can just see how much I have to do with the running of the magazine.

Anyway, having followed the progress of this simple, likeable, old, 100-copy village fanzine right up to the days of it slick, enormous, government-shaking, 150-copy greatness, and of its editor from a tweedy, tattered but honest, midnight-oil-burning doyen of the publishing profession to a corpulent, caviar-eating, Dorchester-dwelling, Jaguar-driving, inaccessible, millionaire-mogul (who me?), the time has now come to ask, "So what?"

Well, this what. I intend to try and put ROT on a more frequent publishing schedule. (Sound of a pause for loud applause.) I also intend to distribute it generally (i.e. not through FAPA and OMPA) to all those loyal readers out there who have been following the magazine's progress through all these difficult years, and who would rather cut off their right hands than miss an issue (sound of running feet receding rapidly into the distance), as well as to other people who can provide certificates from competent psychiatrists to say that it couldn't possibly do them any harm.



Furthermore, thinking deeply about the matter, I have reached the conclusion that the magazine has now reached that age of responsibility and maturity at which it should acquire what is happily known as a 'policy'. Accordingly I have decided to advertise for one in High Class Magazines and Soho newsagents' windows; and if any of you know of a good, second-hand fanzine policy going cheap, perhaps you will let me know. The truth of the matter is that the whole subject of Editorial policy seems to me so vague and nebulous that I go all fuzzy-headed whenever I try to think about it long enough to put anything down on paper. Up to now I have come up with three main classes of magazine (and the divisions seem equally applicable to amateur or professional magazines) - those published to inform the reader, those published to interest, entertain, or amuse the reader, and those published solely for the editor's amusement.

The majority of fanzines will, it seems, belong in the second category, with occasional dashes of one and three - and ROT is in there somewhere too. So far so logical. But here, in my opinion, is where we leave logic for intuition - how to interest, entertain or amuse the reader. This is the question that has always seemed to me one of those mighty Imponderables of the universe, to be tucked away hurriedly on a dusty shelf in the back of the mind. So far as I know, I have no conscious rules (some would say 'no conscious thoughts') of selection; quite simply, if I feel that an article will be of interest, and it is well-written, I print it. It is through the use of this mighty, complex system that, this issue, ROT brings you an article on witchcraft rather than an account of the Gentlemen v. Players cricket match. This statement however, is not intended to discourage all those fans who are even now working on accounts of the Gentlemen v. Players cricket match. If the treatment and the writing justified it, I don't doubt it would be possible for even one of these to get between the magazine's pages. I tell you, it's chaos in there.

So, as a result of all this heart-searching, we are left with this by way of editorial policy (if we may cruelly contort and mangle the term) - well-written material - serious, discursive or informative, as well as humorous - that I feel will be of interest to the majority of the readers. Three cheers for the Dictator. If, in your opinion, I take the wrong turning, you have the remedy in your own hands (no, not the lump of mud, madam; nor those tomatoes, sir) - shout long and loud. By a Special Arrangement I have concluded with a fine new principle known as Democracy, the majority opinion goes.

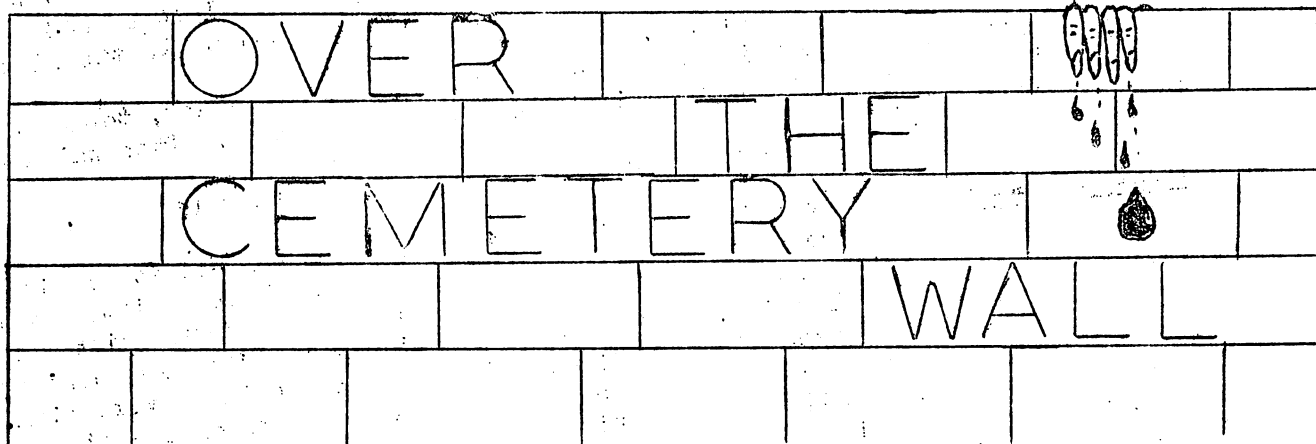
The only other major policy which comes to mind at the moment is "Less of me and more of other people"; with a more regular schedule this should be feasible, and two very fine fans, name of Harry Warner and Sid Birchby, have already started the ball rolling by breaking their necks for me in an impossibly short time. The general make-up of the magazine will remain pretty much as at present; OVER THE CEMETERY WALL will no doubt be with us regularly, MUTTERINGS FROM THE MORGUE will be back next issue, presenting the distilled effervescence of your million sparkling letters - plus articles, maybe even a Con report, free balloons and green stamps.

All in all, it adds up to a lot of ROT.

But then, you can always emigrate and forget to leave your address.

-----





### LIVING IT UP IN LIVERPOOL:

One Saturday early in January we went over to Liverpool for the annual party of the Liverpool Science Fiction Society, for no better reason than that they happened to be holding it that day. We spent the Saturday morning busily ferreting around in musty bookshops and the Saturday afternoon busily missing Ron Bennett whom we were supposed to meet. ( This was accidental. I mean the fact that we missed him was accidental, not the fact that we were supposed to meet him. By accident we got to the rendezvous five minutes after he left it by accident. They do say that accidents will happen, and I think they're right.) To fill in the time we took in the local Art Gallery. (Note for Foreign Students: This is a Fine Old English idiom - or maybe a Fine New American idiom - which really means "The local Art Gallery took us in".) Anyway it is a fine Art Gallery.

Along about 5.30 we found a remarkably well-preserved flesh and blood replica of John Roles in a back street, and only a few minutes later added life-size, moving reproductions of Eric Bentcliffe, Terry Jeeves and Alan Rispin to our collection, along with several others not so easily identifiable. We all went along to the nearby Hammer Hotel and sat around in a small party which very rapidly became a large party with the addition of Ina and Norman Shorrocks, a whole huggin' of people from Cheltenham, headed by Eric Jones, and divers societies, clubs and associations - not to mention people - we had never met before. When the party looked nearly large enough to march to Aldermaston, or wherever it is that is in fashion at the moment, we marched to a local Chinese restaurant, and there ensued one of those uniquely happy hours when one is completely immersed in a congenial activity (eating and talking) with a group of congenial people (fans) and there is nothing one would rather be doing. John Roles and Sheila and I made hearty inroads on piled plates of Chinese tastiness and happily discussed things Indian, TAFF, things Chinese, fans we didn't know among the assembled company, and other things too numinous to mention.

From the Chinese restaurant the party headed towards its ultimate destination, which was the house of Ina and Norman Shorrocks - the well-known long-suffering Shorrocks of Higher Bebington. Fans like Ina and Norman who blithely turn their whole house over to a group of thirty or forty fans for a weekend and never bat an eyelid at the ensuing devastation have my most profound respect. In such unrestricted circumstances there flourish the finest of fan parties and this one was no exception.

During the early part of the evening everyone - who had up to then been standing around talking - sat down, some on chairs, some on the floor and some on other people, and films were shown, which were greeted with cries of delight and shouts of "Harrison". After the films there were many happy hours of



talking, drinking and dancing. I joined in the first two activities happily and the last one most unhappily, and only when quite unable to avoid it. Joyce Collins who was mostly responsible for my even attempting such a thing (only a small part of the blame resting with the Demon Alcohol) then proceeded to tell me what a lousy dancer I was, which was the point I had been making all along. Full reports of the whole proceedings will no doubt be appearing from the typewriters of persons more competent than I to say what went on (Sheila, for instance, is writing an only slightly expurgated version which is destined, I believe, for FEMIZINE) so I will content myself with saying that I had such a good time that I never got to join the Brag School - despite my intention to do so - which started up in the kitchen in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Sunday was spent in the peaceful afterglow of Saturday, topped off by another fine Chinese meal and a visit to the LaSFas clubroom, after which we reluctantly came home.

These Liverpool annual parties should come around more often.

FABLES OF FANS: The above item about the Liverpool party seems to provide as good an excuse as I am ever likely to get to tell a little story about John Roles that I have been wanting to put into print for a year or two now. It shows, I think, a wonderfully Harrison-like 'Englishness' and has brought chuckles of pleased mirth every time I have told it in conversation.

A few years ago - 1955 or 6, I guess - some of the Liverpool and Manchester fans, along with such experienced hangers-on as Terry Jeeves and myself, congregated for a fannish day at Belle Vue zoo. In the course of our tour of the zoo I ended up in the reptile house with John Roles (the whole thing was quite fortuitous). In one of the cages there, safely behind a glass screen, lay coiled an enormous and deadly-looking Indian python. "Did you see any of those when you were out in India?" I asked John.

"No", he said, "I never did." After a moment he added, "As a matter of fact I used to go out into the jungle alone at night just to stand and listen to all the noises." He smiled at me and then glanced back at the cage, "I realise now I was rather foolish."

-----

And what better after one fan fable than another. I rather like this whimsical little story I picked up about what was once Lancaster fandom. Coming out of Ken and Irene Potter's house with them, Harry Hanlon kicked over the milk bottles, which rolled down the steps and all over the path. The milk bottles were picked up, the mission, whatever it was, completed, and they all ended up at Harry's house. As Ken and Irene were eventually leaving there, Ken happened to kick over the milk bottles on Harry's doorstep.

"Snap" said Harry.

HOW TO CHEAT DEATH AND LIKE THAT: Last night we went to see the film "The Man Who Could Cheat Death". You probably don't want me to tell you that it is set in murky, misty, fog-bound, 1890 Paris, and believe me I really don't want to, but I'm afraid I must. I don't think it has ever occurred to anyone that there is any other possible location for cheating death, building monsters, inciting gorillas to murder people, etc., than murky, misty, fog-bound, 1890 Paris. For all I know there may be some sort of international agreement in existence which provides that death may only be cheated, monsters may only be built, and gorillas may only be incited to murder people in murky, misty, fog-bound, 1890 Paris. I suppose when all said and done it is as good as anywhere else to do such things.

Anyway, now that you know the setting, I feel



certain that you also know, by instinct (and, possibly, by nauseous repetition), the whole story, so that I do not feel constrained to hide delicious tit-bits (including the ending) from you, as is the custom. I do not think that anything that I write could possibly spoil the film for you; I do not think that anything anybody might write - or do or say - could possibly spoil this film.

The story, briefly, concerns a young fellow of 104 who has some gland or other replaced every ten years and is thus enabled to go around looking like any other normal young mad scientist of 35. If the gland isn't replaced on time however he has to drink the usual greenish coloured Andrews Liver Salts to keep him going on a temporary basis until he can get the spare part put in; and as these times are as good as any for him to turn into a moderately ghastly homicidal monster, he grasps the opportunities - as you might imagine - with both claws. To continue; His dear old doctor friend from Vienna, Ludwig (who showed some real acting ability and must have wandered onto the wrong film set) turns up (three weeks late to allow time for a few vertiginous transformations) but is unable to perform the operation as a stroke has left him with unsteady hands. Young Father Time therefore hits upon the happy solution of kidnapping a ravishing redhead (who does little other than flit through the film wearing a series of low-cut gowns to show off her high-cut breasts) to persuade her boy-friend, Sanctimonious Sam (this isn't his real name), who is also a doctor, to perform the operation. Sanctimonious Sam finally manages to forget the vicar, and whether he would like it or not (not to mention his Hippocratic Oath) and double-crosses our hero by only pretending to replace the gland (subtle stuff this). Young Father Time then dashes off to the rat-infested cellar where he has left the Ravishing Redhead (well, wouldn't you have done the same if you thought you had been suddenly rejuvenated?) where the film ends in the traditional holocaust of mouldy metamorphosis, decaying disintegration, screaming mad women (that's an exaggeration; there is really only one screaming mad woman), and the burning down of the whole building and its contents. Oh, and by the way, the Ravishing Redhead comes out of it all right. I don't want you to think from any hint I might have dropped that this is a uniquely bad film; it isn't at all uniquely bad - there have been lots of films every bit as bad, and some even worse. But if that is cheating Death I rather fancy that I for one may play it straight.

I GOTTA GESTETNER: You will know by now that Ken and Irene Potter sometime ago removed from Lancaster - a distance of a mere 65 miles from Bradford, to London - a distance of approximately 200 miles from Bradford, solely and simply to deprive me of the use of their duplicator. They calculated, with fiendish accuracy born of deep innate cunning, that whereas carting six or seven reams of duplicating paper plus stencils and etceteras 65 miles is a mere trifle never to be noticed, carting the same quantity of goods 200 miles is a mighty undertaking to daunt the spirit of any fan. So, callously, they went to London and, no doubt cackling in malevolent glee, took their duplicator with them.

I was seized by a violent fit of desperation; a mad outburst of passion overcame me; quivering wildly in a feverish rage, I thought: "So what the hell."

But then along came ROT, the femme-fan's "Fanny's Friendly Fortnightly", and I thought: "Now what the hell?"

After a week or two of this I thought: "What the hell!"

So I bought a duplicator. It was simplicity itself. Sheila rang Gestetner and said "We want a cheap duplicator". We went down to look at one at lunchtime, said "Yes" quickly so we could get away for our Chinese lunch, and the obliging gentleman assured me that it would be delivered the following Saturday morning and that the fine fellow who would deliver it would also see me "all right for supplies".



Came Saturday morning and a small van containing the duplicator, two Hard Sell merchants and, apparently, enough supplies to keep the "Daily Mirror" going for the next ten years. They carried the duplicator in and plonked it on the table. (That's not strictly accurate; it went 'klunk' if you want the truth. It is one of the old, solid duplicators.) They struggled for five minutes trying to get the metal cover off it, grinning sheepishly at me every time they came up for air and mentioning apologetically that they weren't very familiar with this particular model. It didn't seem to intend to let them get familiar with it either.

Eventually they got the cover off. They stood back looking triumphant and breathless. I had noticed when they came in that one of them was toting a large cardboard container plainly labelled "Initial Supply Pack" and being of a naturally suspicious turn of mind I was mentally crouching there with my hackles up, spitting venom.

Came the ingratiating smile and the persuasive "Now I've brought you an Initial Supply Pack to see you on for the time being" accompanied by the tidy unpacking of same. "Stencils, ink, stencil files, correcting fluid, brush for cleaning your typewriter keys, ruler, writing sheet, lettering pens, fluid for cleaning up the mess you make, piece of rag for wiping Aunt Bertha's nose" etc., etc. But he didn't get through it quite as smoothly as that. To everything - except the ink, which I needed - that he drew forth from his magic box I growled either "Got it" or "Don't want it". The ingratiating smile became a bit glassy-eyed, and he ran quickly through the Hard Sell gamut right down to the Simpleton Approach: "Oh, this isn't just an ordinary brush for your typewriter keys; this is a special brush for cleaning the wax out of them from the stencils."

It seemed I could have the whole £11 somethings worth for only £10 in this fine Initial Supply Pack. I took the ink.

After a last tentative skirmish about duplicating paper - I told him I was buying it between 3/6d and 7/- a ream cheaper than he could provide it - he got down to showing me how the machine worked; which seemed a pretty Christian sort of a thing for him to do in the circumstances.

But he couldn't get the counter to work. He fiddled with it and he consulted his companion on it. He took time out to tell me he wasn't very familiar with this particular model. Eventually he suggested that if I had used one similar perhaps I would know better than him how to get it to work, and they left.

Sheila and I kept a rough schedule of their movements throughout the rest of the morning. "They should just about be on the carpet in the Manager's Office now", "They'll just about be getting to the Employment Exchange now", etc. We allayed our guilt pangs by reflecting that they would probably find their niches with Roneo. And that is that.

I gotta Gestetner.

FROM A PUBLISHER'S CATALOGUE:

"GNANI YOGA

The Yoga of Wisdom. The highest Yogi teachings regarding the Absolute and its manifestations are given, and many other subjects of equal importance are explained."

-----

And then, of course, our local evening paper just couldn't bear to be left out of ROT completely, after a happy association of four or five years, and so here it is, in fine form, with a piquant little story about the complaints of local residents of a farmer whose cows churned up their country lane:

"The Rector told (our reporter): The cows have churned up the loveliest beauty spot in the area, and we can do nothing about it. My wife and I have to clear away the



mud from our front door. It is quite outrageous." Mr. Dalby, who owns three farms and drives 70 cows up the lane several times a day, said: "People say I should drive the tions in the hedges injure them cows across the fields, but obstruct- and affect the milk yield."

Obviously the poor fellow was quite overcome by it all.

FANS IN THE MOST UNLIKELY PLACES: Only a couple of weeks ago I discovered that one of the reps who comes to see me twice a week, reads science-fiction. He gave me a lift on that particular day and as I got into the car I happened to see him slipping an open copy of ASTOUNDING into the back seat. I quizzed him about it and he told me that he had read ASTOUNDING from its very first english issue, that he buys all the other science-fiction magazines he can lay his hands on, and that after reading them he passes them round a circle of about half a dozen of his friends. (I found out later that he buys MAD too.) After this we got along like a house on fire and now when he calls we never so much as mention business for our heated discussions of the latest Campbell editorial or a short story in THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE-FICTION.

Of course, it is just possible that I am being made the object of some new, streamlined Sales Technique and that all this is just a front to break down my Sales Resistance, but if so my heart bleeds for him. I still think his firm are a bunch of 100% no-goodnicks who couldn't be trusted to put their shoes on the right feet. And he will be landed with all that crazy Buck Rogers stuff.

-----  
And while on the subject of reps, I am reminded that one of the other reps who calls was telling me about his Scottish holiday. "I was at the Braemar gathering" he said, "it was a very impressive affair. And the Royal Family were there too. In fact, their car passed just in front of me within touching distance."

With no little effort I managed to resist the temptation to ask him if the Royal Family did touch him, but it was only when telling Sheila the story that evening that I was supplied with the perfect answer: "Fooley", said Sheila, "That's nothing. Tell him tomorrow that when the Queen came to Leeds I was sitting on a wall in Roundhay Park and she passed so close I could have kicked her hat off."

HOPES AND FEARS AND FAN LETTERS: I believe there is a touching line in an old Christmas carol something to the effect that 'The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight'. Well, this last Christmas I suddenly thought "Why do the thing by half? If I'm meeting all these Hopes and Fears anyway, why not meet my Fan Letters at the same time?" So accordingly, I spent a long time dragging out large, dust-covered, long-hidden cardboard boxes from spider-infested corners and carrying them all down into the living room. There, Sheila and I emptied their contents all over the floor, sat in the middle of them, and for six solid hours we sorted and filed the accumulated fan letters of the last six years.

We ate pork and drank coffee while we waded through piles and piles of letters - some to people I am sure I have never heard of and some from people I am sure have never heard of me, and others that we couldn't read, which were from Ron Potter of course. Eventually the task was finished and about 2 a.m. we staggered off to bed feeling that 2,000 years of Christmas was finally justified.



DEPARTMENT OF RARITIES AND CURIOSA:

Like a good film from Hollywood. This is, of course, "ON THE BEACH", and if you haven't yet seen it, throw this rag to the dog and go, man, go: right now. You know of it, naturally; that it concerns the last foothold of life on earth after World War 3, in Australia, and the death sentence (five months when the film opens) under which everyone is living, due to the drift of radioactive dust clouds. My carps about the film are next to nothing; I only wish 50% of the films made were 50% as good as this. All the actors are adequate to their parts (even though one might have wished for faces other than Ava Gardner's and Gregory Peck's in the lead roles), and Anthony Perkins, as a young Australian naval lieutenant, gives the performance of the film and, quite likely, of the year. If he does not get an Oscar for it, there ain't no justice in this world.

There is little else to be said; it is an excellent film - logical, inevitable, believable; the end of the world - you are there.

What more could you ask for ?

CONGRATULATIONS, PROUD PARENTS:

Ken and Pam Bulmer, on the birth of an enchanting (I haven't seen her, but with parents like that, how else ?) baby daughter, Deborah Louise, 7lbs and very young. You picked a crazy spot to arrive, baby; but nice.

SUBSIDISED SCIENCE-FICTION:

From Russia, of course. As you probably know, Soviet SF does not as yet bid fair to oust Sturgeon, van Vogt et al from their eminences, but science-fiction is science-fiction; and if in addition, like me, you are unable to resist a book bargain, you may be interested to know of the Russia Today Book Club (36, Spencer Street, London.E.C.1). For 3/- per book, they have available, in addition to the inevitable thrilling stories of life on communal farms/in communal mining villages/or in communal public conveniences, STORIES by Yefremov (the best known of Russian SF works, by possibly the only known Russian SF author), as well as LAND OF FOAM (which sounds like fantasy) by the same author; their latest list also features ANIROLEDA - by Yefremov. If your tastes extend further, as well they might at prices like these, you can have a four volume set of Sholokhov's classic AND QUIET FLOWS THE DON (upwards of 2,700 pages in all) for 9/-, in addition to works by Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, etc., which are virtually a gift - and not a Nessian one either by all appearances; not one smidgin of propaganda have I seen involved up to now. It may yet be 'Gay Moscow, in Sixty Two'.

WE HAD A NICE TIME:

At Ron Bennett's on Sunday last. We spent a happy afternoon and evening in Ron's delightful fan den, sipping coffee and talking fan. So fast and furious did our jaws work that we had our coats on to leave before Ron remembered to deal out Brag hands. He dealt out two quick hands, in which Sheila and I had three prizes; we were sorry to come away.

THINGS UNMENTIONABLE:

Like the Easter convention for one, which I forgot to mention (you all know just when and where it is anyway, don't you ? If you don't Ella Parker, 151, Canterbury Road, West Kilburn, London.N.W.6 will tell you. And you'll all be there, won't you ?). And like Atom's cover and Irene Potter's paralytic promulgations, which came too late to be mentioned earlier, but deserve it. So there we are.

-----



THE  
WINTOFF  
INCIDENT  
by  
SID  
BIRCHBY

At 10.25 a.m. on March 19th, 1963, David Wintoff vanished into thin air while crossing Piccadilly Circus. No one took any notice, it seems, except a street photographer named Randall who had been marking him as a likely client. Subsequently, Randall stated:

"I was watching this man because he looked as if he had a bob or two, and he was a character. They'll often buy a snap. Suddenly he vanished...flick! like that. He had a red beard and a hat with a propellor on it."

Defence: "M'lud, I shall show that this was the usual attire of David Wintoff. The hat denotes his membership of an obscure literary group, the Science Fiction Fans of London."

As stated, Wintoff was a member, and a prominent one, of the SFFL, or 'Skifflers' as they called themselves. In addition to the usual literary activities they organised annual exchange visits with similar societies abroad. Wintoff had been their delegate to New York in 1962, and, under the club rules, he now administered the collection of funds for his successor in 1963.

Prosecution: "You are Henry Bergen, President of the SFFL? Please tell the court what you know about the funds held in trust by the defendant."

Bergen: "The funds were kept in a Post Office Savings account made out in the name of the fund. Anyone could pay into it, but only Wintoff was authorised to draw out. After he disappeared, the GPO advised that the account had been closed. I made enquiries and found that all the funds had been withdrawn the day before he vanished. I recognised the signature on the slip as his."

About three weeks later, on the evening of April 10th, Wintoff re-appeared in the very midst of the Skifflers, much to their confusion, while they were holding an indignation meeting at the clubroom about the missing funds. After picking up various overturned chairs, they surrounded him, angrily demanding an explanation and an account of the funds. He replied that he had spent all the funds "in the best interests of the society" and when pressed for details he added "on the



planet Mars."

Prosecution: "Please describe his dress on this occasion."

Bergen: "He had a long robe with a hood on it, like an Arab's burnous, and his face was very red as if he'd been camping out. He was wearing sandals and he had a pack slung over his back. Oh, and a badge with a picture of Popeye on it."

This costume, said Wintoff, was the usual outdoor dress on Mars, a planet very much like the Arabian desert, only colder. The badge was the Martian equivalent of the Skifflers' beanie hat, given to him by a Martian science-fiction club, to whom Popeye was a typical Earthman, or BEM. He also claimed that he had been taken to Mars under the auspices of the Trans-Ecliptic Fan Fund, or TEFF, as guest of honour to the 91st. Martian Worldcon, which had just concluded...a claim greeted with scorn by his fellow Skifflers, who saw it as a transparent ploy to cover up embezzlement of the funds. Next day they began legal action against him.

Judge: "Call the defendant, David Wintoff."

Everyone turned to see the man who claimed to have been to Mars: a tall, red-bearded man of about 25, with traces of the alleged Martian wind-burn still on him, but alas, no burnous or Popeye badge.

Wintoff: "The Martians approached me with their invitation a few days before I - er - left. There was no time to consult my fellow-members, so I had to make my own decision. It seemed too good a thing to miss."

Judge: "And was it also your decision to take the funds entrusted to you?"

Wintoff: "Well, I thought there were bound to be some expenses, even as a guest, and I could pay it back later."

Judge: "That is a phrase more bandied about in this court than any other I know...'I meant to pay it back!' But pray go on."

Wintoff: "When the Martians realised that I was being put to expense by giving them souvenirs...."

Prosecution: "What souvenirs?"

Wintoff: "I gave them the notes and coins. They were novelties to them."

(At this point there was a cry of rage from the President of the Skifflers. The Judge called for order.)

Wintoff: "As I was saying, they insisted on making good my losses from the TEFF Fund. They said that's what it's for. When I came back, I offered the money to my colleagues."

It was true; so he did. But since there was no exchange rate for Martian currency, which, for all they knew, as the President passionately declared, might have been printed in a back street in Wapping, the offer had been rejected.

Judge: "Kindly satisfy my curiosity, Mr. Wintoff. If there are Mertians,



and they can visit us, why have they not done so openly, instead of spiriting away one man, and that, I take it, in a private venture of a Martian literary club ? It all seems rather hole-in-the-corner to me."

Wintoff: "well, I asked that. Apparently it was this club that developed the means of transport in the first place, some years ago, and they don't see why anyone should spoil their fun by taking it over officially. The reason why they asked only me was to return hospitality. One of them was at one of our conventions a year or two back and had a thoroughly good time."

Prosecution: "Do you seriously ask us to believe that ? Have you ever seen a Martian at a convention ?"

Wintoff: "You get all sorts."

After calling for the alleged Martian money to examine it, the Judge adjourned the hearing for the day. Next morning he gave his findings before a court packed with reporters who had been tipped off by Bergen, anxious that when justice was done to the absconding Treasurer, it should also be seen to be done by as many as possible.

Judge: "In this case an inherently plausible accusation, namely the mis-use of funds by a club treasurer is opposed by an inherently implausible excuse, i.e. that the money was given away as souvenirs to Martians. Yet, on examining the evidence, we see that the accusation, rather than the defence, is weak.

"The key fact is that the SFFL do not deny that Wintoff re-appeared out of thin air. We may be sure that if they had been able to deny it, they would have done, in order to claim that Wintoff had tried to deceive them in this as in the rest of his story. Since they accept his re-appearance, they must logically accept his initial dis-appearance, which is also affirmed by the street photographer. The case therefore reduces to this: that Wintoff went somewhere by means not known on this earth, taking the funds with him. He returned in the same way, bringing in lieu of the funds, what he claimed to be Martian currency. This the SFFL rejected after a cursory examination; the elementary step of having it examined by a currency expert, which I have now taken (stir in court) would have told them that the paper, ink and mode of printing of the notes were truly alien to Earth, and that the metal of the coins, although evidently common in the country of origin, is far too valuable for such use here. I will not name it, for fear of the effect on the markets, but it has many times the value of the missing funds and the SFFL has missed a good bargain."

Here there was an inarticulate cry from Mr. Bergen; he was called to order.

Judge (continuing): "Technically, perhaps, the defendant was at fault in laying hands on the trust funds without permission. But they were, after all, meant to be used so that...ah, fans of different countries could visit each other, and, without examining the club rules, it cannot be said that the money was misused. Why should not an earthly fan visit his Martian fellows if he is the one they have voted for ? Especially if they pay the bills ?

"Moreover, the potential benefit accruing to Her Majesty's Gov..., to the human race, that is, from contact with another planet, is incalculable, and Mr. Wintoff was undoubtedly right to seize the chance. I find for the defendant. Case dismissed, with costs against the SFFL.



"I wish to discuss certain matters with Mr. Wintoff in my rooms."

As to what was discussed in the Judge's rooms, there have been many guesses. Meetings with rocket experts? How to contact Mars again? An Earth-Mars Treaty? We do not know. Perhaps we shall find out at David Wintoff's next appearance in court...for illegally imprting foreign currency and precious metals.

THE END

congratulations  
and welcome  
TAFF winner  
DON FORD  
have a nice visit

//I shan't eat the rose this morning,  
thank you// She even dissipated the vicar  
//He was no ordinary Charlie; he was one  
of God's Chosen Charlies// We must get  
stuck in broken lifts more often// Shut  
that door open////////////////////  
Among those who have kindly (and unwitt-  
ingly) contributed quotes to this issue  
are: Harry Hanlon, Anonymous, Irene Potter  
Pseudonym, Sheila Ashworth, Alias, Mal  
Ashworth, Mom de Plume (the Steam Count  
Nom de Plume, of course), and several  
people I don't know and who, pray Ghu,  
don't know me.

support the  
NATIONAL SOCIETY  
for the  
ABOLITION OF  
LIFE

JOIN IN THE MANY HAPPY COMMUNAL ACTIVITIES  
OF THE SOCIETY:

- \* Reservoir Poisoning Rambles
- \* Petitions to the Government to extend testing of the Hydrogen Bomb.
- \* Suicide Sub-Committees
- \* Debates on subjects such as "Is Death Worth Dying?"
- \* Drunken Driving Competitions

Y O U

CAN HELP IN OUR WORTHY WORK



W I T C H E R A F T

A T

D E N D L E



"About the eighteenth of March last past, hee being a Peddler, went with his Packe of wares at his back throw Colne-field; where vnluckily he met with Alizon Device, now Prisoner at the Barre, who was very earnest with him for pinnes, but he would giue her none: whereupon she seemed to be very angry; and when hee was past her, hee fell down lame in great extremitie; and afterwards by meanes got into an Ale-house in Colne, neere vnto the place where hee was first bewitched: and as hee lay there in great paine, not able to stirre either hand or foote: he saw a great Black-Dogge stand by him, with very fearefull firie eyes, great teeth, and a terrible countenance, looking him in the face; whersat he was very sore afraid."

John Law, the peddler, was still crippled and extensively paralysed when he gave evidence in court at Lancaster against Alizon Device, one of the Pendle witches; the year was 1612. Alizon Device admitted the truth of the accusation, herself made a full confession, and on her knees, in court, prayed his forgiveness - "the which he did freely and voluntarily give." She was asked if she could undo the harm done to the man and restore him to health; she replied that she could not, nor could any other of the witches then living, but had her grandmother, Old Demdike, been alive at the time she could have restored the old peddler to health. But Old Demdike had died in gaol while awaiting trial for murder by witchcraft.

Pendle is a rural region, field and farm now, where it was forest and open moor then; the whole countryside dominated by the monstrous slumbering bulk of Pendle hill (This is not mere poetic licence; you need only pass within sight of the hill, even on a busy main road, to have your eyes drawn to it for many miles). Dotted along the lower slopes of the hill, and in the valleys below it, there are now, as there were three hundred and fifty years ago, small hamlets and villages. The moorland is still there, though walled now, and the bleakness, and one could not swear that even the witches are wholly gone, for I have myself passed a wild-looking woman, perhaps not unlike Alizon Device, walking barefoot late on a misty evening beside one of those moorland roads, with no house for miles; a woman with whom I did not stop to pass the time of day.



Old Demdike (whose real name was Elizabeth Sowtherns) was the first, and doubtless the fiercest, of the Pendle witches; it was twenty years before her arrest that she had given her soul to a spirit called Tibb in Pendle forest. In the years between she had introduced many others into the way - her daughter, Elizabeth Device, and her grandson and granddaughter, James and Alizon Device, as well as a neighbour, Anne Chattox, who in turn put several of her own family on the black path (the most notable being her daughter, Anne Redfearne). There does not seem to be any distinguishable group-activity in their doings. They contracted their souls - individually - to various devilish spirits (or the Devil in the guise of various spirits) and thereafter were possessed of certain powers, but mainly, it seems, the power to kill and harm, which they did on the slightest provocation ("....Elizabeth Device, and others, had killed one Henry Mitton of the Rough-Lee, by witchcraft. The reason wherefore he was so killed, was that this Examinates said Grand-mother Old Demdike, had asked the said Mitton a penny; and he denying her thereof, thereupon she procured his death as aforesaid.")

Milk was curdled and cows were killed, and terrified neighbours propitiated the witches and even paid 'protection money'. The next time it might not be a cow, it might be the neighbour's child, or even the neighbour in person. Their services were hired too; Anne Chattox was persuaded to bewitch to death young Robert Nutter, so that the estate which should have been his would pass to other relatives. Although she was later dissuaded from this by her son-in-law, Thomas Redfearne (who lived on Nutter's property) it seems that Robert Nutter was foolhardy enough to attempt to seduce Anne Redfearne, wife of Thomas, and daughter of Anne Chattox. Some time later, Old Demdike, passing the Redfearnes' house, saw Anne Chattox and Anne Redfearne - "the one on the one side of the Ditch, and the other on the other; and two Pictures of Clay or Marle lying by them." Her familiar spirit, Tibb, appeared to her in the shape of a black cat and told her to go help these women, but she refused, at which the spirit became angry and pushed her into a ditch, causing her to spill her pail of milk. Robert Nutter fell sick and denounced Anne Chattox and Anne Redfearne as being responsible for his illness. He died in Cheshire 'before Candlemass, as he was coming homeward' from a trip to Wales.

Anne Chattox seems to have had a long line of deaths laid at her door..... Anne Nutter, who did nothing worse than laugh at her; the child of one John Moore, because Moore had accused her of 'bewitching his drinke'; Hugh Moore, who said she had cursed his cattle; and even John Device, son-in-law of Old Demdike herself. At this time there was a rift between the two families when Anne Chattox and her daughter were accused of stealing some food and clothing from the Devices; but "John Device, being afraid, that the said Anne Chattox should do him or his goods any hurt by witchcraft" agreed to pay her a yearly tithe of meal. Eleven years later, in the first year that the meal went unpaid, he died, believing his death to be the doing of Anne Chattox. The two families seem to have been at loggerheads from this time, bewitching and harrying each other's friends. And this may help to account for the readiness with which they denounced each other and testified against each other, when they were finally arrested and lodged in Lancaster castle.

The first to be taken into custody were Old Demdike, Alizon Device, Anne Chattox and Anne Redfearne; this was in March, 1612. The remaining witches called a meeting for Good Friday, at Malking Tower ('malkin' being a country term for a hare), Old Demdike's house, where they feasted on stolen mutton and discussed their business. This was threefold: 1) The naming of the familiar spirit which Alizon Device had acquired (though this was not done due to Alizon Device not being present),



2) the killing, by witchcraft, of the gaoler of Lancaster castle, and the blowing up of the castle, before the next Assizes, to liberate the prisoners, 3) the aiding of "Jennet Preston of Gisborne" to kill one Master Thomas Lister of Westby. This Jennet Preston, who had "a Spirit with her like unto a white Foale, with a blacke spot in the forehead", had been accused by Thomas Lister of bewitching to death a child, and had been tried and acquitted on the charge, at a previous York Assizes. Now she wanted to be revenged on Thomas Lister and as "her power was not strong enough to doe it her selfe, being now lesse then before-time it had beene" she had come to the witches of Pendle for aid. This they promised her, and before the summer was out Lister died, crying out that his death was her doing. (She was subsequently tried again at York, accused of Lister's murder, convicted and executed.)

At the end of the Good Friday meeting at the Malking Tower, James Device testified, "That all the said Witches went out of the said house in their owne shapes and likonesses, and they all, by that they were forth of the doores, were gotten on horse-backe like unto Foales, some of one colour, some of another, and Prestons wife was the last; and when she got on horse-backe, they all presently vanished out of this Examynats sight; and before their said parting away, they all appointed to meete at the said Prestons wifes house that day twelue-month; at which time the said Prestons wife promised to make them a great feast; and if they had occasion to meet in the meane time, then should warning bee giuen that they should all meete vpon Romles-Moore." But they never met again upon Romles-Moore, or any other place on this earth; long before their rendezvous at Jennet Preston's house was due she herself was hanged at York, Anne Chattox and Anne Redfearne, Elizabeth Device, James Device and Alizon Device, along with several others, were hanged at Lancaster, and Old Demdike had died in gaol.

In the inevitable scare started by the trial of the Pendle witches, other people were accused of witchcraft, and stood trial round about the same time. Some were convicted and hanged, one woman (whose excursions into the Black Arts had not proved fatal to anyone) was sentenced to be exhibited in the pillory in four local market towns and then to serve one year in gaol, and some were acquitted. In all fairness it should be pointed out that the presiding judges seem to have made an honest effort to enquire into all the details of the cases, and to expose any fraud or deceit on the part of the witnesses; the juries, too, while convinced by evidence that would hardly pass muster in a court of law today, were not railroaded by hysteria and religious fervour into convicting blindly. There is a considerable difference in atmosphere between the Lancaster witch trials, and the later ones in Salem, Massachusetts. As to the reality of the witchcraft, the actual spells and curses, the pacts with spirits and the changing of forms, there is no more final answer to be found in these cases than in any other. One person believes and another disbelieves - but it would be less than honest not to admit that the witches themselves give every appearance of having believed, wholeheartedly, in their Art.

All we have left these many years after, as a guide to the happenings around bleak Pendle, three and a half centuries ago, are records, some of them mute, like the wooden image skewered by a nail, found sixty years ago during alterations to an old cottage in the village of Worston.

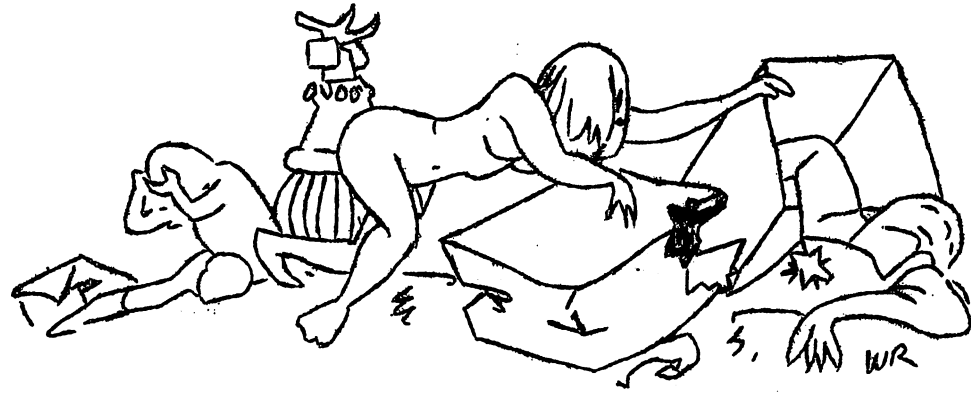
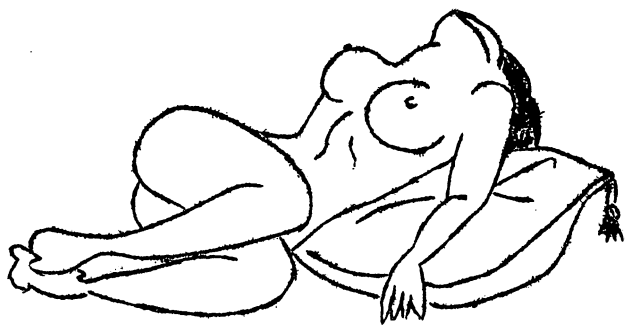
Only these and our imaginations.

-----the end-----

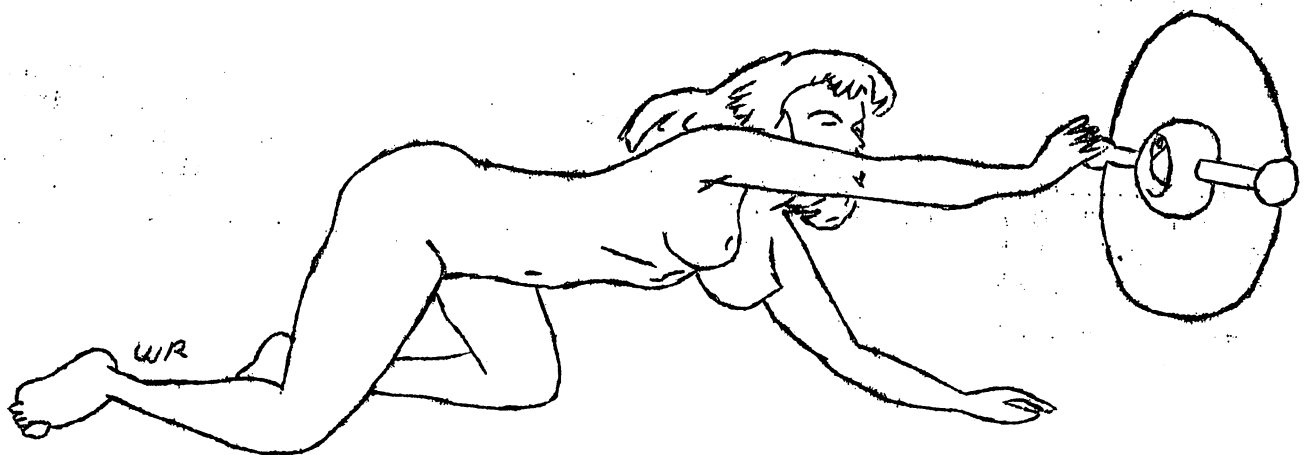
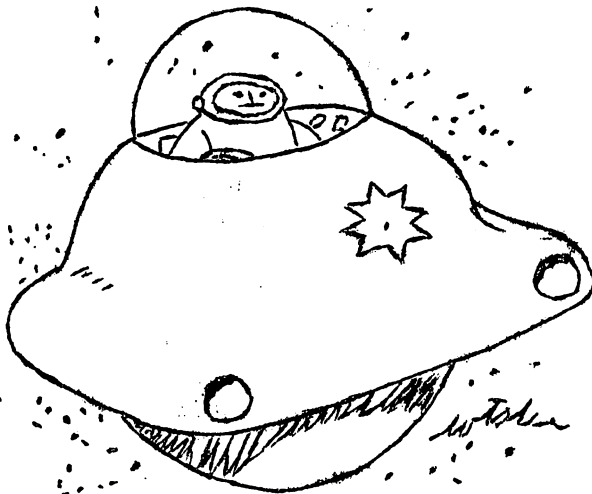
A  
R O T S L E R

# PORTFOLIO

For some years now, fanzines have been enriched by the drawings and cartoons of Wm. Rotsler. You will probably forgive me (very readily) for not writing a searching essay on the Man and his Works. But it suddenly seemed a good idea to put these few drawings together and publish them as a small Rotsler portfolio. I hope that you enjoy them too.







# PUNKAH\* PROMULGATES

BY

IRENE POTTER

The other day I was looking at a photograph of two chubby, bedraggled looking children standing solidly on a weedy patch of ground. The boy's woollen stockings were pushed down to the ankles, in a slobbering heap around his worn boots; his hair was combed hurriedly forward over his eyes, and there was a resigned look on his otherwise carefree face. The girl staring innocently at the camera boasted a huge bow in her short blonde hair and a short woollen skirt and jumper. There we stood, hand in hand - my cousin Arthur and I steadfastly defying the world.

I loved being with cousin Arthur. You see, he was what my mother called 'a bad lot'. Apparently she came to this conclusion as a result of an incident between herself and my Auntie Winnie (Arthur's mother and my mother's elder sister) some years previous to that of the photograph. Arthur and I were unable to be present at the time owing to circumstances beyond our control.

It seems that one Saturday morning my Aunt Winnie appeared at my mother's house, dragging behind her Arthur's elder brother, then about two years of age. "Can I leave him here while I slip down to the shop?" she enquired. She did, and my mother was slightly annoyed when she collected him a fortnight later. So you see, poor Arthur couldn't turn out to be anything else, ever, could he?

Things went wrong from the start. I well remember the day when my Grandfather (the one who was a conjurer) espied us sitting under a rocking horse in his Summer House - Arthur with his hands full of home-grown tomatoes. (My Grandfather knew each of his tomatoes by name.) The conversation went something like this:

Grandfather, knowingly; "Where did you get those tomatoes?" Arthur, hurriedly; "What tomatoes?" Grandfather, persistently; "The tomatoes behind your back, young man." The young man, backing round the other side of the rocking horse; "Ho! Ho!....them." Grandfather, closing in for the kill; "Where did you get those tomatoes?" Our Hero, with a quick glance at me; "Er - me mother gave me 'em on Thursday." That was Arthur's trouble; he wasn't a very convincing liar. And so he became maladjusted.

\* Punkah - large, swinging fan



One day whilst on a bus journey to Todmorden, to see a relation of his, accompanied by the aforesaid Auntie Winnie, we found a bag of bad plums under a seat on the upper deck. What fun we had throwing them down upon the innocent passers-by outside, while Auntie Winnie squeaked away uselessly - as usual - in the background.

Uncle George's stepson, Brian, was another favourite of mine. We fell downstairs together with a bucket of soapy water, much to his mother's delight. It gave us the feeling that we had something in common. What would have developed could we all have got together at any one time remains, thankfully, a mystery.

In the years which followed Arthur turned first into a juvenile delinquent, and then a cook in some Scottish regiment or other. The last I heard of him he had disappeared abroad, leaving a wife and two - or was it three? - children. When I saw him last he was standing in the middle of my Grandmother's shaggy dog rug, supported by a glass of Grandmother's wine and sighing as he spoke thus of his daughter: "I can't understand it. Every time she sees me she screams." And so, may I add, does Grandmother.

On the following page of the album is a group photograph of a large children's party. In this I am portrayed sitting on the front row and sulking; at a guess I'd say I was about six years old.

This party was one of a series of Xmas parties given by the Lancaster G.P.O (usually held in February so as to allow digestion of last year's Xmas pudding). I remember them as delightful occasions from which I usually returned home bruised, battered and a trifle sick. My father is a great organiser of such goings-on, and took a large hand in all games and present distribution effects. One of his many ideas which I particularly remember was in the form of a huge Christmas cracker, full of sweets. It was immense, and father, who always likes to do the job properly, organised a Tug-of-war, girls on one side and boys on the other - all in place and in tip top traditional fashion.

"Take the strain", he commanded, "Take the s-t-r-a-i-n.....", one finger raised in the air; then, bringing it sharply downward, "HEAVE!" They heave.

There was a sharp report, mingled with thuds, cries and screams as the victims were buried under the weight of those on top of them, or shot in the eye with flying Barley Sugars, Humbugs and Gobstoppers. Then came a triumphant yell, and a young lad who had been left out of the Tug-of-war on account of being covered in pink ice-cream, took a flying leap into the centre of the seething mass and began stuffing the contents of the cracker into his numerous pockets. All those who had been left alive after the first assault joined in and soon nothing could be seen but a writhing ball of arms and legs, twisting and gyrating.

It was half an hour before they were all sorted out, and underneath it all they found the slumping form of a small female parent. How she got there no one seemed to know, and I don't recall seeing her at any other party for ever afterwards. This uproarious game was, in any case, never repeated.

There is also another group photograph of a school party, where I can be seen grinning wildly in the second row, a little to the right. This was the party where I caused confusion by promising the same dance to two scruffy little boys. (The scruffiest went under the glorious title of Mr. Frederick Laurence Barrington.

Boothe, which he retained during four years of English lessons by one 'Old Nickie'. Old Nickie used this upon every possible occasion; upon being asked - politely - to refrain, he shortened it to Freddie. This was even worse as everyone else addressed the said Freddie as Barry, and he sat miserably in the corner and nervously dropped ink blots on his exercise books. The other scruffy little boy, whose name was Donald, I considered beneath me as he spelt 'Ophelia' with an 'f').

After they had almost pulled me in half we found ourselves in the middle of "The Dashing White Sergeant", where they both danced woman and I danced man. As it was a progressive figure it caused plenty of idle chatter, instructions and chaos. Joe, our eccentric Headmaster, was greatly shocked by the whole thing; he promptly arranged three half-hour lessons on Courtesy in the Dance Hall, in which it took him half the time inducing, nay, imploing the boys each to ask one of the girls to dance. He even gave demonstrations, which reduced us all to helpless laughter, at which he did his nut. "You boy", he bellowed, "Ask her - go on - ask her!" The boy began: "Erm - er - pleasemayIhavethisdance". The girl: "No." "No!", shouted Joe, "No what?"; and then furiously, screaming: "Ask her again!" "No - I already have". At this point Joe exploded visibly and called the whole school together for a two hour lecture on School Uniforms, Chewing, Throwing Litter in the Yard, Having Bike Brakes Tested, The Use of the English Language, and Don't Let Me Catch Any More Boys Sitting On The Wall Overlooking The Girls' Yard, or Running After The Coaches Of Scottish Holidaymakers. (In the holiday season these strange people used to throw money from the windows as they flew by in paper hats and dense clouds of dust and smoke; hence the attraction.)

Then there is a pile of wedding photographs (mine), one with a wonderful view of the gasworks in the rain, and one of me on my own where I look as though I'd just had the satisfaction of seducing the vicar (I hadn't; I was afraid of missing the train). And after that, two or three large, hazy scenes of Paris, where Ken and I spent a few days. They're not very clear though because of the wine we were drinking at the time; the best one is a close-up of a Parisian grid.

Another photograph - a small grey faded relic of me dressed in a blouse and jeans recalls the time I was on a five-week telephonists' training course at St. Anne's. I also have one of the landlady's cat. I met a girl there from Burnley who was crazy-mad on horses and wanted to take me riding. For some strange reason I told her I'd go and, like, I'd never ridden a horse in my life, man. Every time I saw her after that my knees would weaken, my hands would tremble and perspiration would start from my brow. On the second week we ran into three R.A.F Romeo's in Blackpool who occupied her attention (one a week) until I was able to slide silently away.

Next on the agenda is a photograph of assorted 13 year old girls dressed in a variety of ridiculous clothing standing by a much overloaded dustbin. Two of them are draped in long dresses with frills and football stockings, one in a black bonnet and huge, bat-like cloak, one in pyjamas and boots, another in a 19th century silken dress with high collar, reaching down to the floor, and lastly, me, in a pointed cardboard hat, a tiny white blouse, waist-length silken cloak and a pair of white briefs dripping with lace and frills; I am also wearing a pair of court shoes and holding a cushion. A passer-by would be excused for not recognising immediately the characters from that olde, olde fairy tale, 'Cinderella'.

A performance of the same was 'put on' by a group known - to only a few - as the "Four Leaved Clover Club", one Xmas in a semi-detached house we happened to have handy. The top landing served as a stage, having a door at each end (tho



bathroom and box-room respectively). The audience were highly inconvenienced by having to sit on the stairs, which we disguised as two rows of seats by means of a couple of stray ironing boards and stools. The reader is asked to note that the proceeds of this little drama were well spent, as they enabled us to get into the baths cheaply the following week.

But if you want to know how things really look, Mal Ashworth will be sure to supply the answer. For sheer beauty, nothing can compare with the photographic works of Ashworth. For example, consider the effects of a portrait of my beloved husband making love to a sheep's skull on a lonely country road, superimposed over a ghostly white structure at an angle of  $45^{\circ}$ . It certainly seems to have the Ashworth touch, doesn't it? But that is by no means all, for in wedding photography he seems to excel himself, by catching all at a homely angle. The very people themselves seem almost alive, skilfully handled under his masterly technique, which is to loaf around until he finds you in embarrassing circumstances and then immortalise you with a click, a nod of the head and a triumphant leer.

One of his best works was of a fight between Ken and myself for the last crust of bread, at a picnic party - or maybe it was the last chunk of pineapple; it matters not. "Surrender", shouted Ken, "Surrender", and as I was forced backwards chokingly to the ground, I heard the familiar click and my heart sank. Just try to tell anyone that I was fighting in that photograph and they'll laugh in your face, like the nasty man in the cinema where Ken lost his wallet.

"What's the wallet like?" he asked cunningly. "A little pigskin one". "And what's inside it?" "There's a photograph....." "What of?", a grin spread from one ear to the other and his eyes were bright. "Erm.....well, it's....er.... me and....erm.....er....." "Me" I suggested. "Yes, that's right" continued Ken crossly. The man gave us an evil smile and a sly look, then reluctantly handed the wallet over. "I suppose it must be yours..." Another wide grin, which remained until my unprotected back had vanished from view.

I also have a photograph of a young boy demonstrating how to hold a camera and all sorts of other pretty little pictures.

-----  
-----  
( ( Editorial note: The author forgot to mention that in the photograph referred to in paragraph two on this page the sheep's skull was wearing a pair of horn-rimmed glasses, and its lover an inane grin. We feel sure that this was a genuine omission. The ghostly white structure was a church. ) )

---

T H E E N D

---

# GOING LIKE SIXTY

by

2000  
1927  
73

HARRY WARNER JR

Throughout January and February I have listened each morning for the unforgettable soggy thud that a fanzine makes when the postman tosses it onto my doorstep. The thuds have occurred almost daily, but anxious leafing through the fanzines of these two months has failed to bring me the reassurance that I had wanted. Ardently, but uselessly, I had yearned for a sign in a fanzine that somewhere at least one fan exists who realizes what happened at the start of the new year; we moved much deeper into the future.

I don't blame the younger sprats so much. Most science fiction of recent years has been set in the fairly distant future, and the arrival of 1960 would hardly jolt those who discovered the prozines in the past few years. But I am saddened to see that the older fans have overlooked the fact that the decade which was such a magical, infinitely distant thing when the stories were set in it in the 1930ish prozines has arrived.

Maybe someone has kept statistics somewhere on the time in which prozine writers located their stories. If such figures exist, I believe they would show that the 1960's and 1970's were almost equal favorite choices in the prozines from AMAZING's beginning in 1926 through 1940 or thereabouts. The authors of those days didn't dare to use a year that was too close to the present, for most of their stories, because too many things like atomic weapons and national races into space hadn't occurred yet. And it always made the stories seem more exciting to place them in a period into which the readers might expect to live.

So somehow, I find myself, in these first months of 1960, much more ready to believe that tomorrow the first man will set foot on the moon, than I did in the last months of 1959. I know that mathematically the decade doesn't change until next December is ended; but it's the appearance of the magic figures '1960' on the calendars and on the newspapers, just as they used to appear in those large-sized AMAZING STORIES and WONDER STORIES, that seems to increase immeasurably the probability of scientific marvels. Only last year I wrote, somewhere in a fanzine, that I didn't believe there was the slightest chance of anti-gravity becoming a reality. The other day I read a little squib about reported research on that topic, and it sounded so logical that I decided not to buy the stylus pressure gauge just yet that I need for my record player. When I ordered a new mimeograph last week, I decided to invest in an electric machine, instead of the normal hand-cranked type, because suddenly it's 1960, and I have a sneaking hunch that someone will figure out a method of transmitting power without wires almost any week now, making the



electric device much more economical to operate.

At the same time, I think I know why there have been no learned essays on the philosophical import of January 1, 1960, from Bob Tucker or Redd Boggs or Dean Grennell. I can't speak for them, but there was another sensation that overcame me just about as strongly as the sense of moving into the future overwhelmed me. While I was impressed by the coming of 1960, I didn't feel like jumping up and down in glee, because it reminded me powerfully of the fact that I'm very, very old as fans go. If you count decades by the unscientific, illogical, but popular method, this is now the fourth decade during which I've been engaged in fan activity. I was corresponding and collecting from the middle 1930's onward, I published my first fanzine at the end of 1938, I gradually slackened my fanning pace during the 1940's, until I was almost invisible to all but FAPAns at the start of 1950, and then allowed myself to be prodded back into a semblance of fan activities during the past decade. It might not sound like a long span of time from the cosmic point of view; But it is positively frightening if you approach it from the angle that four decades make up two per cent of all the decades that have occurred since Christ was born.

This thought, which would be sobering if I weren't a teetotaler, brings me to the final point in my barely perceptible chain of logic; the fact that the completion of another four decades will bring us to the turn of the century. When I was a very small boy, I used to subtract dates in a half-fearful manner, study the results, and turn over and over in my mind the chances of my survival until the start of the new century. While I was still in knickers I thought my chances were even-Stephen, in September of 1939 I decided that most of the probability had vanished, and now I've cheered up once more and decided that I have once again a fighting chance, except on mornings when I have a bellyache, and on the occasions when I yield to the temptation to enter a cloverleaf intersection of a superhighway. Unfortunately, the goal of living to see 2,000 A.D arrive has lost some of its savor because of a conviction that has gradually overcome me through the years, a conviction that the things that will occur immediately after 2,000 will be much more interesting than the arrival of that fabulous year itself.

Because I'm convinced that there is a situation, which the Germans like to call a 'zeitgeist', that causes mankind to take inspiration from the start of a new century. Sometimes it seems to express itself in progress in the arts, like the flowering that music enjoyed immediately after 1800. Or it may manifest itself through the applications of science; just think of the automobile, radio, airplane, electric lighting, and a dozen other advances that had not quite made it as long as the 1800's persisted, but suddenly burst forth and transformed everyone's life during the first years of this century. That is why I'd love to be around long enough to see what form this sudden breakthrough will take after 2000, when the first figure of the date will change along with the century, for the first time in anyone's memory.

I'd like to think that the sudden wave of progress inspired by the brave new century will take the form of world peace, permanent and pleasant. In any event, since I shall be 78 in 2000, and hardly likely to spend many years in the 21st century, I shall probably have to content myself by learning the answer to the riddle of what Twentieth Century-Fox will call itself, instead of waiting around for the dissemination of a happy immortality for everyone, that may come a few years later.

oooooooooooooooo T H E E N D oooooooooooooooooo

For a long time I have felt that something should be done about my books; and now - at last - I have decided to do something about them. I shall write about them. About the books I have acquired, and the books I haven't acquired; about books large and small, and books back-to-front; about books in general and books individual. In short, I shall write about - books.

THE CONFESSIONS  
OF AN ENGLISH  
BOOK-LOVER  
part one

REVERIES OF A SEMI-CONSCIOUS BIBLIOPHILE

I have often been asked how it was, and through what series of steps, that I became a book-lover.

I have also been asked lots of other questions, such as "Well, have you read them all?", "Why do you buy them if you aren't going to read them?", "What are you going to do with them once you have read them?", "Haven't you anything better to do with your money?", "Where do you put them all?", "Are you crazy?" and so on.

To be quite truthful, I feel that my addiction to science-fiction and my gradual and unintentional ascent (or descent, depending, as you might expect, on your viewpoint) to the status of book-lover somehow go hand-in-hand, but here the old Chicken-and-Egg riddle comes into operation, and I cannot tell for certain whether either one thing caused the other. If one of them was the cause of the other, it must certainly have been reading science-fiction which led me to become a book-lover, but it is equally possibly that they just developed together as a combined means of leading me to a state of book and magazine saturation, and the bankruptcy court. Unfortunately, I am not one of those people with a crystal-clear memory which can reach back without hesitation to the age of 10 months and remember exactly what Cousin Jessica said to Nephew Herbert when he wanted to take her into the shed to show her his white mice, after Uncle Alexander's wedding to that dreadful barmaid from the Old Kent Road. If I were, I should no doubt be able to unravel the tangled skein of whether I started to read science-fiction or to collect books first (although I rather doubt that I started either activity quite as early as 10 months). But alas, I am, instead, one of that band of poor unfortunates who



cannot even remember whether or not they wore a shirt to go to the office in yesterday, so that everything in my past beyond the last couple of hours is something of an enchanting mystery, and a subject for either pure speculation or the most arduous research.

Probably the truth of the matter is that I was the proud possessor of some books before I started to read science-fiction as such, but that after I came across sf, I took to it so avidly that I started collecting magazine science-fiction and then book science-fiction, and at about the same time, started buying books on other subjects; subjects, it might be added, usually allied to science-fiction or fantasy in some way, if only in my mind.

As to whether I have read them all, the answer there is quite simple and unequivocal, and it has never changed from the earliest days of my book-buying mania - No, I have not read them all. I have just taken out of the shelf two of the earliest books I can remember buying, and I still haven't read them. To my way of thinking one just can't afford to rush these things. Whereas on some occasions, all other books which I might be reading at that time are pushed on one side to allow me to read immediately a brand new acquisition, like local mail trains for a through express, at others the books I buy are put straight onto a shelf after a mere cursory glance and left there to mature over the years like some fine old wine. I have just been sipping a couple of vintage '47 volumes and I am sure that their flavour is much enhanced.

No, indeed, I haven't read them all, and I don't suppose the time will ever come when I shall have read them all. I am almost certain to die without having read them all; that is to say, I probably have books now which will not get read before I die, quite apart from all those which I have yet to buy which will never get read. Calculating very roughly, I estimate that with my present stock of books, if I stopped working and was maintained in leisure luxury so that I could read one book a day, it would take me approximately four years to read all my books - and this makes no allowance for the big thick ones that I couldn't possibly read in a day. It doesn't allow me any time out for going to the toilet either; and I don't think I could wait all that long.

Then, of course, there are the magazines.

So why do I buy them all if I am not going to read them, people sometimes ask. Well, of course, I am going to read them. I intend to read them. I am always potentially about to read every book I have just as soon as I have finished the one(s) I am reading. I am every bit as likely to pick up Machiavelli's THE PRINCE as I am to start ALICE IN WONDERLAND, or to read Kant's CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON as HE CARRIED A SIX SHOOTER. This introduces an element of breathless expectation into the whole business since I never know just what I shall be reading next. Very often, in fact, I plan to read a particular book and actually go so far, when the time comes, as to take it from the shelf to start, and then, on a sudden impulse, put it back and start something totally different. And Sheila wearies of my repetitious cry "I want to read that soon", or "I must read this next" or "I really must get around to so-and-so before long". So that is why I buy them, I suppose - because then they are here, to be read whenever I want to read them; just as ready to wait ten or twenty years to be read as to be taken out the next day and hurtled through like a china shop by a runaway bull.

As to what I am going to do with them once I have read them, I have to admit that I am going to keep them - in the vast majority of cases at least. Only



if I have found a book particularly valueless and I am quite certain that I shall never, never re-read it, do I set in motion the mental machinery that eventually culminates in an attitude of mind which allows me to get rid of the book. But it is a very nasty and painful business, rather like having to eject an old and honoured member from a club. Ugh! Otherwise, I keep them. I just pop them back on the shelf and that's that. I suppose if I have to give a logical excuse for keeping them I say that I may want to re-read them at some future date, or at the very least to refer to them to refresh my memory on some point. But this is just rationalisation; I may want to re-read them of course, but the down-to-earth truth of the matter is that I am attached to them because they are books.

"Haven't you got anything better to do with your money?" is a bit of a stunner really, and I usually try and evade the question in some way. The fact is, I have never thought about it; and if I did stop to think about it I fancy that I should eventually come up with a negative answer. I don't believe I have anything better to do with it. I suppose I could save it up and buy out Great Universal Stores, or purchase Windsor Castle or something like that, but what would be the use? I wouldn't know what to do with them when I'd got them, and even Windsor Castle - which might, on the whole, be <sup>the</sup> more useful of the two to me, - wouldn't be likely to have a book collection which would appeal to me as much as my own; and I feel convinced that there wouldn't be any science-fiction amongst it either. What else could I do with my money? Well, I could buy a Rolls Royce. That, I must admit, is a slightly tempting thought; I could travel all up and down the country book-hunting then - but if it's a Rolls or the books, it must be the books and I'll travel by bus. Similarly, I could buy a big house - well that would be nice, but since a big house mainly means to me plenty of room in which to keep my books, it would be rather defeating my own object to have the house and no books - instead of, as at present, having the books and no house; well, not exactly no house, but an inadequate house as far as book room goes. What else could I do with it? Well, I suppose I could keep a string of mistresses; or perhaps just one mistress. Again, the idea appeals to me but I'm afraid if it came to a showdown and it was a case of either a mistress or my books, the mistress would have to go by the bawd. We have an Old Saying in these parts - "A woman is only a woman, but a good book is an experience". What else do people do with money? Well, I could use it to buy whisky and drink myself to an early grave, but that way I would get to read even less books before I go; consequently the idea doesn't appeal over much. I could, perhaps, endow some charity, but this would almost certainly be a library rather than a Home for Aged and Destitute Illegitimate Children, and to my way of thinking I might just as well collect the books myself as allow a library to do it with my money. This is, I recognise, the rather more selfish path, but then the way that a very large percentage of the public treat books is a foulness and an abomination in my sight and they would be more than likely to get themselves thrown out of any library I endowed, on their ears - even if the library happened to be on a second or a third floor. This would result in endless lawsuits and legal wrangles, which, as a means of spending my money, appeals to me less than any of the other alternatives. So, on the whole, endowing a charity is out. No, unless something quite revolutionary comes to mind later, I have to admit that I haven't anything better to do with my money.

I am even less equipped to answer the question "Where do you put them all?" than I am to reply as to whether I have nothing better to do with my money. I only buy the books, and keep them and read them and generally lavish worship and adoration on them. Who am I to say where I put them? Still, if it is a genuine, disinterested, scientific query I must do my best to answer; where do I put them all? The only truthful, comprehensive reply is - all over. But I will try to be a



bit more specific. In the early stages - as soon as I get the books - I put them in a carrier, briefcase, rucksack or saddle-bag, usually (though the latter custom has dwindled in recent years, as you shall hear). In dire emergencies I put them in my pockets, or simply carry them in my hands. During the week I carry my briefcase, not so much for business reasons as, purely and simply, for carrying books. Once upon a time I used to carry books daily - to read on buses etc. - in my coat pockets; but I was careless when buying a new coat and ended up with one that had very unsatisfactory pockets, from a book-carrying point of view. So I more or less had to take to carrying a briefcase. In any event, the method comes into its own in the book-buying sphere. If I suddenly come across a fabulous haul of between half a dozen and a dozen books, even my old coat would have sagged at the seams, but the briefcase can take much more punishment before it starts to groan and stretch ominously and fly open. Thus my capacity is immeasurably increased. At weekends a carrier or some other form of bag accompanies me, and when I go out on a specific book-buying expedition, a rucksack too. Once upon a time we used to cycle to York two or three times a year; now, York, to me, is a sort of Isle of the Blessed and our pilgrimages there a time of great rejoicing; no doubt I shall enthuse about it in a later instalment. But, in those days particularly, the return from York has always been something like travelling a roundabout route to Hell - or like Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. Slowly and painfully we would slog out the thirty or so miles, our saddle-bags laden to overflowing with books and weighing down the back ends of our bicycles, and a full and angular rucksack making deep indentations in my back and twisting my shoulders in directions that human shoulders were never meant to take. But nowadays we go by bus.

Once in the house, I put the books - if humanly possible - on bookshelves. Some of these are of comparatively recent acquisition, and I calculate the overall area of bookshelf room in the house at the moment to be in the region of 120 square feet. So, just now, most of the books fit on bookshelves; I know, in my heart of hearts, that this state of affairs won't last indefinitely because they are getting pretty full now, but I refuse to cross my bridges before I come right smack bang up against them, and therefore I am not going to examine the question of where I shall put them when the shelves are absolutely full. The bigger books which won't fit on any standard shelves, I put on a large bay of steel shelving which otherwise houses magazines, prints of paintings, records, a camera tripod, files of notes and assorted papers of various types and kinds. On a shelf which was, until yesterday, otherwise empty (yesterday my travel book section overflowed slightly on to it) there are two small piles of books which I have steeled myself to getting rid of - sometime.

Also, at various times, and for a variety of reasons, I put books on chairs, on tables, on top of cupboards, on a pile of SUNDAY TIMES' which have been waiting for two years for me to look through and throw out, on the bed, and, on rare occasions, on the floor. That, roughly, is where I put them.

There is only one honest answer to the last question, 'Are you crazy?'

I must be.

-----

Make sure of your copy of ROT No. 5 to read Part Two of this breath-taking real-life drama of a lone man fighting against mighty odds - and losing. Entitled:  
"We've got 'Eight Great Comedies'"



From: MAL ASHWORTH,  
14, WESTGATE,  
ECCLESHILL,  
BRADFORD.2.,Eng.

SEE IMPORTANT MESSAGE BELOW

PRINTED MATTER

10

*Rick Sney,*

*2962, Santa Ana,*

*South Gate,*

*California,*

*U.S.A.*



write!