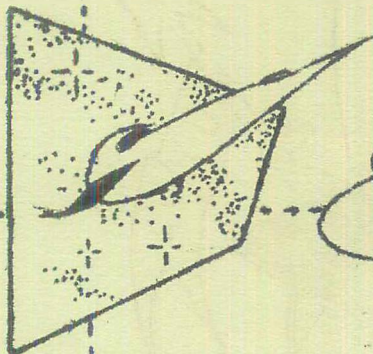




ATOM





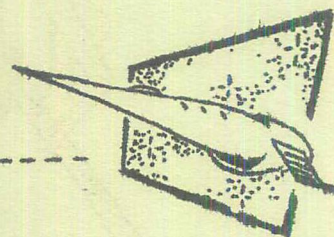
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Eighteenth Mailing.

Natterings on the National Health Service, the  
making of doggerel, the NHS again, matrons,  
almoners, the NHS, and finishing with a  
Profound Thot on Democracy..hoo boy! was I  
in a lecturing mood!

Due to lethargy, sheer laziness, a touch of the  
flu', and a drying up of the mental membranes,  
there is no item by MachiaVarley

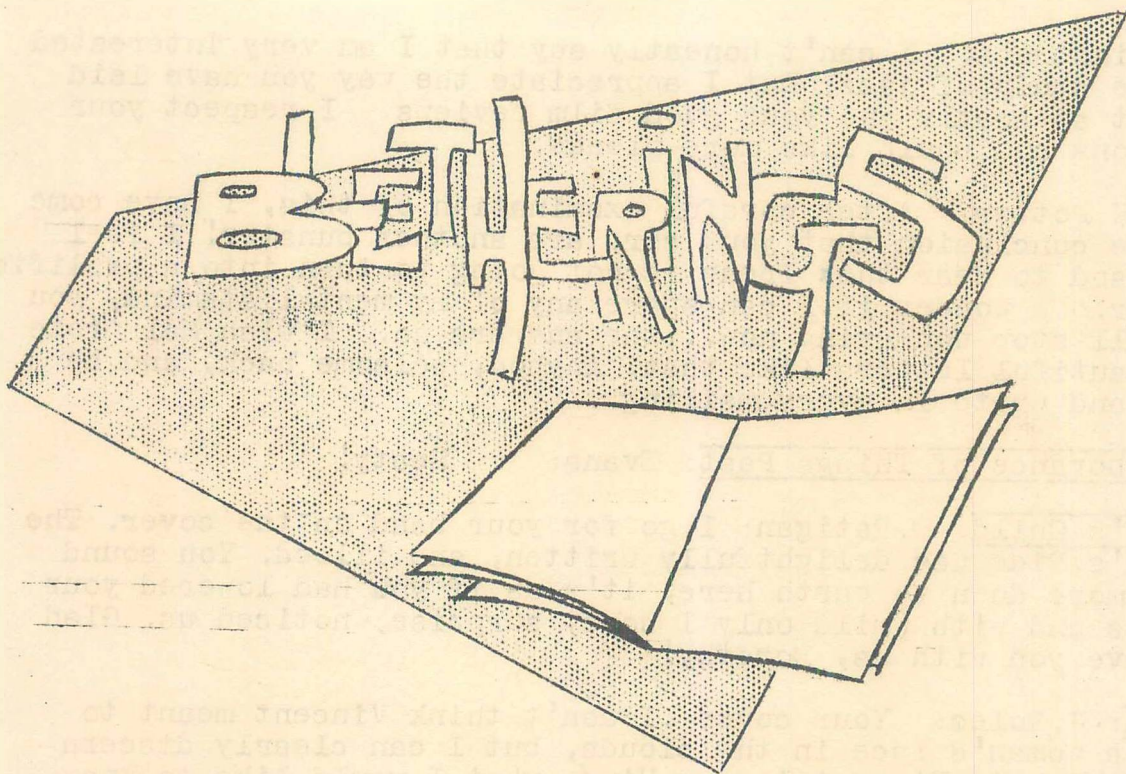
# CREDITS



All artwork by Atom, without whose help you would  
all have conjunctivitis.

Produced by Ethel Lindsay,  
Courage House,  
6 Langley Avenue. Surbiton. Surrey  
for the March 1959 mailing of  
The Off Trail Magazine Publishers Association.  
may it not rest in peace.





.....On the Eighteenth Mailing.....

AQOS Squared A. Mercer: Your 'wanna go back poem was SHEER genius.

Tales from the Oubliette A Mercer: At last I am beginning to enjoy this..why! I even sniggered once.

Phenotype R. Ehey: Read with delight your thoughts on Bobbie and GMCarr, and laughed at your final remark. I havn't been paying very serious attention to Bobbies remarks on the subject of the Aldermarston march. Because, you see, she is the same whilst talking, and I've often heard her 'toot off' about something. She has the saving grace however of a lively sense of the ridiculous, and the ability to admit another point of view. You are quite right, there is no resemblance between her and That Other. I have come to the aged conclusion that you must know sumpn about nearly everything

UR: E. Mills: I hope you do not believe that I am going to read a page with 'remedial calibration' on it - even if it is signed by S. Claus. The dear ol' Santa I know doesn't use such words! Ellis, I wish you'd ever say who writes what - I presume it is your own Solacon report? It was interesting, but far too brief. I enjoyed Bob Leman's article very much and hope you give us more of him.

A L'Abandon: J. Caughron: There are times when I think I could kill somebody- and when somebody dismisses a meeting with Bloch in one sentence - thats a time! Why don't you sit down and think about your lost opportunitys? Your whole writing style is too hurried and slapdash -- take your time!

Movie Music: J. Linwood: Liked the cover. I found the paragraph about Nelson Riddle very interesting, I am a fan of his as well as



Sinatra's. I can't honestly say that I am very interested in the study of jazz, but I appreciate the way you have laid it out so neatly and your good film reviews. I respect your opinions and would like more please.

Fix: K.Potter: After careful examination of this, I have come to the conclusion that you.. sir, are another punster! I feel very sad to hear that Irene is not going to turn into a prolific writer. I wonder if I can spare any of my mental stamina, you can all stop wondering now...the answers no. I wish Mal wrote me beautiful letters like that. Anyhoo, welcome back, and be sure and write in every mailing.

Remembrance of Things Past: Evans: Meaty!

Satan's Child: D.Ratigan: I go for your band on the cover. The Devil's Ride was delightfully written, and illoed. You sound much more down to earth here, it's as if you had lowered your sights and with (mild only I hope) surprise, noticed us. Glad to have you with us, Dorothy!

Morph: J.Roles: Your cover..I don't think Vincent meant to have a woman's face in the clouds, but I can clearly discern one. Now, if Vincent is our Vinc, what I would like to know is, why can't he put covers on his own mag too? To say, nothing of the other pair's when he is at it. I hope you stayed in Singapore a long time.

Veritas: J.Berry: Liked your ruminations on quote cards, and agreed with Barry Hall's conclusions on the subject. I heartily second your plea to Ken to write the history of his TAFF trip. Hoo Boy! I bet he thought that Big Steam would keep me quiet for months...what a hope he has! I liked this very much, you are allowing yourself to peep out from behind the Goon, and much as I am devoted to him, I think this is A Good Thing. The reviews were well done too, please keep this up.

Vagary: R.Wild: Congratulations on the cover. Thanks too for the explanation of Green Grow The Rushes OK. There is another song with that phrase in it.. "Green grow the rushes, oh, Green grow the rushes, oh, The happiest 'oors that e'ere I spent, Were spent amang the lasses, oh."...Burns natch. I was glad to see you complaining about that child-bearing crack. You are quite right, and I applaud your remarks heartily. It takes a man.. to make an insensitive remark like that. When a woman is feeling 'catty' she has no hesitation in making a crack about another's lack of allure, but I can't recall even the cattiest of women making a sneer at another's childlessness. Your remarks on feuds amused no end, Bobbie my luv, just you re-read those worrrds yersel' and tak' them to hearrrt! I would bet Chuck had written the poem in a rare moment after taking his head out of the car engine. A very serious congratulation on 'London', and on a very meaty issue.



Diellabah: Schaffer: Whilst I am liking all of this, the one on basic research is definitely something special, and deserves three cheers. Polished writing! thats what I'd say you had produced, and lets have some more.

Peals: B.Dietz: Welcome Belle! peel away. I heartily admire your 'basic', atagirl.. Christine's article though, puzzles me no end. I don't understand this cleavage in New York. I mean, one lot of you seem to stand for "no drinking, SF and nothing else but", and the other lot for "whee! we have gay parties and who wants to talk about SF?" Err! havn't you all ever heard of compromise? Why not have both? Over here we manage it fine. Personally I would find a surfeit of either way rather boring.

Ground Zero: B.Dietz: A very neat con report from Ted, and a good 'taster' of the Spacechild book...but dinna tempt me! A nice newsy zine - appreciated.

Pijagh: D.Ellington: Should I take umbrage at your piercing Tam O'Shanter? Why pick on the tanny is what I'd like to know, what dastardly plot agin the Scots is behind it all? Alternatively, should we be honoured at this distinction, has it some powerful 'fluence working for us all the time? A secret underground movement to rid us of those saucy sassanachs?..weeel some of them anyway! Please let me know. I notice you gaily tell us to send coin to you and you will look after the exchange. But unless I have got it all wrong, than which nothing is more probable, it is illegal for us to send money to you. Perhaps some of the men in Ompa will explain it to you though, explanations that I become at all involved in become very involved indeed. quite nebulous in fact, I freely admit. Your production is impeccable.

~~~~~

Such-a small, wee, puny, mailing! Where are you all at? Come out from behind those bushes! No Ken, I don't mean your beard! Anyway you shaved it off remember? Ohhhh! but you are a lazy lot, I really am ashamed of you..no, Achee, don't ery! I don't mean you, why you had two pieces in the mailing remember? Gad! if this were a regiment you would all be drummed out! ....Ron! please explain to Daphne that I don't mean to hit her with a drum!....and as for you Walt, leave Fapa if you like, and I won't care a twitch of an eyebrow, but drop Ompa and I will never speak to you again...so there! at least not until the next time we meet I won't. ooooo! but some of you make me so cross!



# NATTERINGS

## ME AND MR WILLY:

"I have often thought that Mr Willy suffered from a sort of agoraphobia, that he had a nervous horror of the blank page .. I fancy he was frequently overcome by fits of weakness, a pathological shrinking, when he considered the courage, the grim fortitude that is needed to sit without disgust before the virgin field, the naked page, unscored by arabesques, headings, scratched out words, the cold, indifferent paper, white and blinding, thankless, greedy" Colette.

and like that..

As I am on a course of 'Hospital Administration' at the moment, I tentatively put forward the idea that I might natter about the National Health Service. MachiaVarley was very scornful of this idea, I may have to fall back on it yet though!

Meanwhile I hauled out the folder hopefully titled with the word 'Natterings' and peered inside. I found a small note there which brought back a delightful memory. I was on a train journey with Frances and Sandy, we were standing in the corridor. We started to make up 'fannish' rhymes to the tune of Eartha Kitt's song "Monotonous!". We had a fine time and made up heaps of verses, and vowed we would get someone to sing it at the very next Con. For all our mirth, we were a sober trio, and therefore made no reckless suggestions of singing it ourselves. Ah, well! all that remains is a note of what was to be the last verse. ...

"Norman Wansborough writes his Runes for me,

Robert Bloch composes tunes for me.

Even Walter Willis..erons for me.

Monotonous!".

The idea is not copyright, owing to the inherent laziness of at least two of the trio, and is open to use by any fan song writer and or singer.



Another hopeful peer into the folder only produces a heap of clippings from the letter columns of newspapers. At the time these seemed worth saving, now they fall me with a dreariness of soul...tear em' up and pop em' in the waste basket... National Health Service...here we come.

I have been employed by the N H S for 12 years now, but it is only since taking this course that I have got more than a vague idea of its structure and history. The first effect of the course was rather a curious one, it set me to reading books on the social conditions of from the 17th century onwards. The course itself disposed of past history in about two paragraphs, but I always have to do it the hard way. I was taught... "Begin at the beginning, go right on to the end, and then stop." To understand how the NHS came about, you must first understand the Poor Laws that preceeded it, and these stretch so far back I almost bumped into Bobbie Wild.

Once I had got that out of my system I was able to take a look at the structure of the NHS, and a very funny thing it is. Here is a state run organisation which is managed at top level by unpaid voluntary workers. There is the Minister and the Ministry at the very top of course, but the next level down...Regional Boards, Boards of Governors and the next level down...Hospital Management Committees, are all composed of people who are paid only their expenses. Not till you come to the Group Secretary do you find a salaried worker. Oh, it is a funny set up alright, but the funniest thing of all is...it works.

Among the general public there is a great tendency to think that the NHS is very extravagant. I felt so a bit myself till I was confronted with actual charts and figures, and especially so with the chart that showed the national expenditure. A third of the amount given to National Defense is spent on the NHS.

Gradually this course has made me feel very proud of the service, I have begun to see what a wonderful ideal it is. This is how the Act defines the Ministers duty...to promote the establishment of a comprehensive health service designed to secure an improvement in the physical and mental health of the people, and the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of illness...Such a big order!...and note too the inclusion of the words mental and prevention.

The Act passed into force on July 4th 1948, and since has been known officially as the Appointed Day. By some trick of the mind I often think annointed instead... The 12 years since then have been spent in welding the service together, taking London Teaching Hospitals, Provincial Voluntary Hospitals, Poor Law Hospitals, cottage, sanatoria, etc and making them try to think on how to try to prevent and treat disease on a country wide scale. It has been an awful upheaval, and it has taken at least 10 years before some of the implications have been fully absorbed. It will, I am



confident, take another ten before the full benefits can be seen. In fact, it may need a whole new generation working in the service, taking the NHS for granted to obtain that end.

Let me give one example of what the change meant to the Hospital Almoners. They were first attached to hospitals to act as social workers, to attend to the purely social needs of the patient. In the beginning the almoners found the need for material things overwhelming due to the stringent Poor Laws. Yet all monies came from voluntary collections and had to be doled out sparingly. So they became involved with the money side, they had to find out how much the patient should or could pay. So much of their time was spent on this that the social side was practically untouched. With the arrival of the Appointed Day they were freed from all this and at last able to do their real job--help with the non-medical problems of the patient.....The man and wife with a mentally deficient child, who so badly need help over the shock of this, the old people whose relatives are frantic at the idea of their return home, are only two examples...and so often what people need is someone, not personally involved who will sit and listen.

To the ordinary nurse there has been little apparent change at all, the majority of them have only the very vaguest idea of which Group they are a part of. The 'higher' up the ladder you go, the more you glimpse the whole, but the nursing side lagged way behind the lay administrative in grasping that something new was afoot. It is my personal opinion, that where the Matron was a strong willed person she retained a great deal of her power. Where she was not quite so wide awake, a great deal of that power had vanished over to the lay admin side before she knew what was happening. I do not wish to give a picture of a 'war' between the two sides, but there was undoubtedly some jockeying for position. It all depended upon the personalities involved. Where they could cooperate, all went smoothly, but that, of applies to all organisations.

I guess I have nattered out enough random thoughts on the NHS. Any questions?

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"Democracy demands, as does no other form of society, that its citizens understand their institutions and their problems. Indeed, democracy is dependant upon the pervasivness of such understanding among its citizens"  
Mr Justice Frankfurter.

"Great thoughts come from the heart: but they must go round by the head"

John Morley.