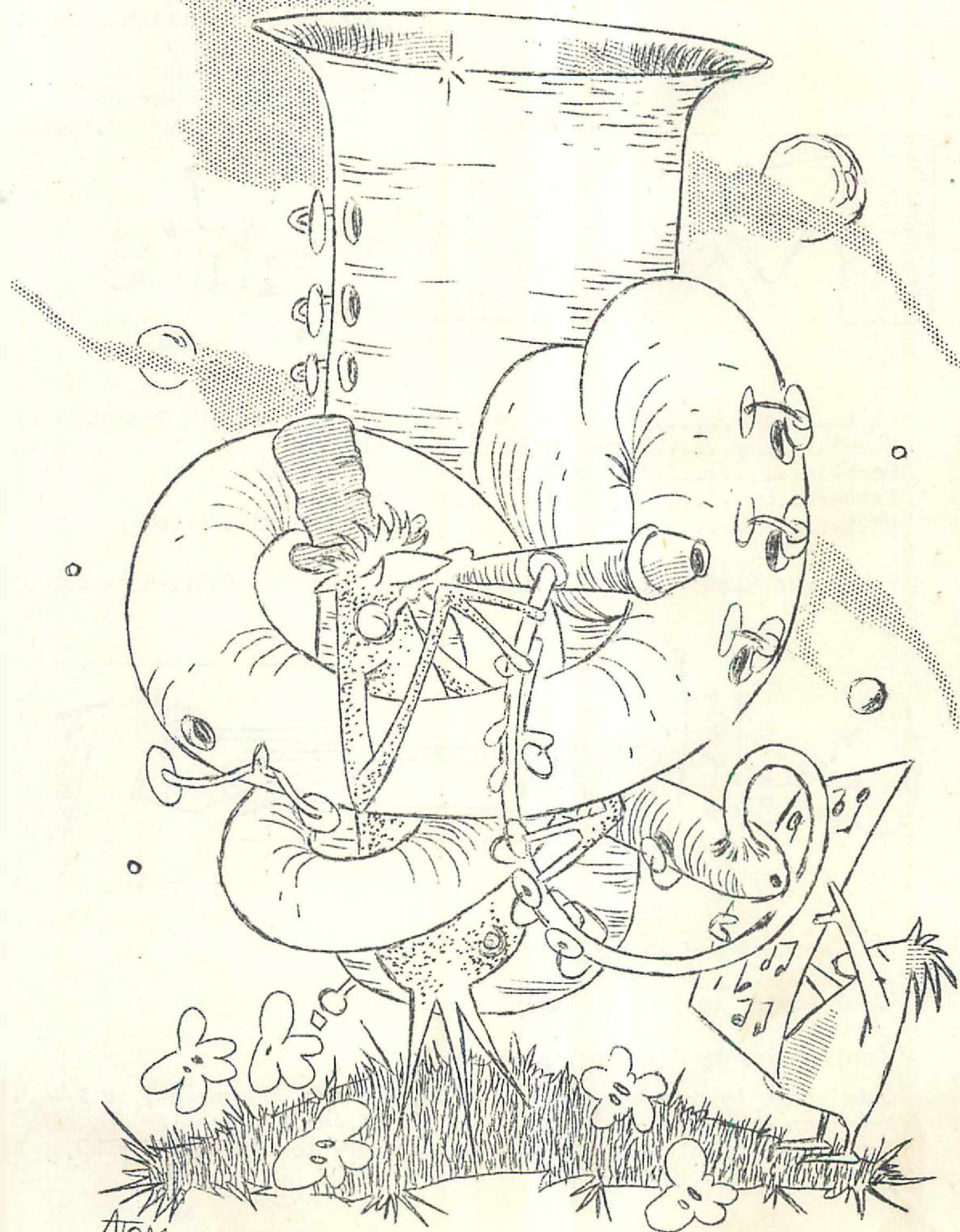


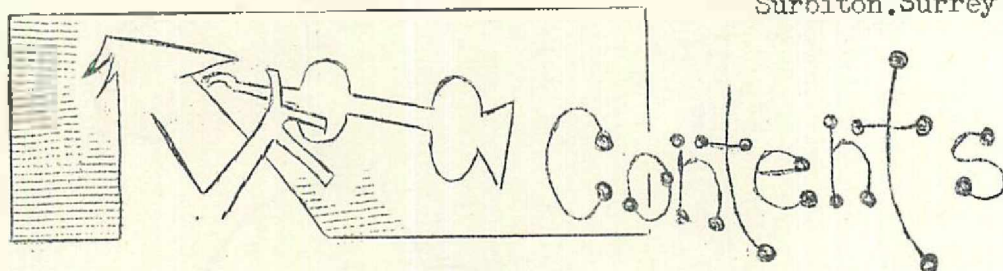
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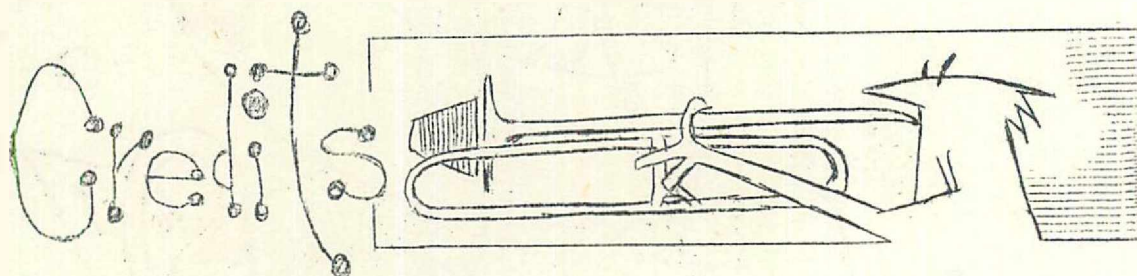
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Bletherings.....Ethel Lindsay..comments on the 30th Ompa mailing
MachiaVarley.....Brien Varley...his column
Warblings.....Walt Willis....I Remember Me.
Letters.....The Readers....have their say
Natterings.....Ethel Lindsay..hospital and book natter.

For the 31st Mailing of the Off-Trail Magazine Publishers Association.



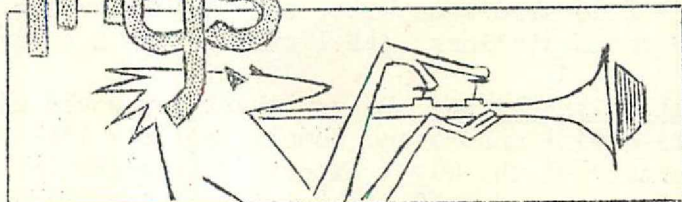
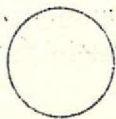
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Good Advice by Frances Varley

Duplicating by Gestetner machine.

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Until April 31st 1962 all subs are donated to the WILLIS FUND.

bletherings



Being comments on the 30th Ompa Mailing:

Off-Tracks: A large vote of thanks to Archie; whose hard work enabled us to get our numbers back. I agree in principle with what is said by our esteemed President on the subject of donating activity from one member to another. I have been instrumental in keeping John Roles in Ompa through this device, and it is the first time I have used it. I am unrepentant: when this was first suggested to me by Bobbie I felt that John was a worthy object. He was a good Ompa- never missed a mailing, gave excellent material in his zine and, by his endless experiments in new cover ideas, really was an Off-trail publisher. When he started up a bookshop fafia got him. John should have written to explain; I think if he had asked for official help then it would have been given. However he did not, and Bobbie and I rode to the rescue not merely for John's sake, but for Ompa's sake also. We felt that John had always shown an interest in Ompa; which could not be said for every member. Bobbie had suggested help for two other members; I did not do anything about them because I felt it was a lack of interest rather than the press of events that was keeping them away from the mailings. I have gone into this in some detail mainly for the benefit of newcomers; I wanted them to know that I did not donate activity without some thought upon the matter, and that I acted in what I thought was the best interests of Ompa. Let's finish as I began..in principle I am in agreement with the President's decree, but provision should be made for exceptional circumstances and worthy members.

OMPassible SF:Lewis: The first piece of fiction is a mood piece, a thing of which I am not overfond. It is comnetant of its kind, spoiled by that long line of exclamation marks. A point requiring all that emphasis should have been of much greater surprise. I am not in sympathy with the point being made in the Keller story, and preferred the last piece of fiction.

UL:No 4:Metcalf: My typer keyboard? +"/@£ &:()11-23456789-32qwertyuiop31asdfghjkl;:88zxcvbnm,?..47 Too late I found out that I could have had some of these symbols exchanged for more useful ones without charge at the time of sale. Now it would cost money. Ompa, as you rightly think, has always had a preoccupation with production; that was one of the things that used to annoy me in the comments I received. Any moron can learn how to get good production (it takes patience and correctine) but writing is a different kettle of fish. The Alva Rogers letter mentioning life in a barracks touches a chord. I once listened to a young girl tell me of the 'fun' she had as a member of the RAF and that, when offered a room of her own, she preferred to stay in barracks.

To me- it sounded like something close to hell! I enjoy your comment zines and find that through them I have soaked up quite a bit of information about you. I do skip some bits, such as when you start to natter in initials about your radio stations. If I ever get to hear any I'll be more alert.

Trial:No1:Hannifen: Do you think you would mind remembering that whilst we British will understand common initials like FBI, a sentence such as..... "Courtesy of the NG, I expect to be going to Ft.Sam Houston in Texas for a 12-week course on ER Tech"..will be just plain Greek to us!

Trial:No 2:Hannifen: This is clearer than the first in type, but the colour was prettier. The material was lightweight, hope the testing period will soon be over.

Envoy:No 3:Cheslin: The drawings of Dick Schultz always reminds me of my brother. My brother's drawings were good too except that his figures were all curiously short and squat as if he had never been able to clearly estimate the length of the trunk. The first four pages of this are typical of what I have been criticising to you. Here are good ideas and meaty content badly written just because you will not take the trouble to correct or rewrite. You know perfectly well how to spell character and similar words! Longer paragraphs and doublespacing between them would help to clarify your words greatly, and you ought to ration yourself in the use of (). I too have read that Joan of Arc was not burnt at the stake, but as far as I know there has never been a book written which delves into the facts. Odd, isn't it? Do you really think that strikers should be shot? I liked your thoughts on CAMP CRAZY though I cannot see any difference between the super-ids you mention and ghosts. This zine gives the picture of a well-stocked mind: now dammit..show that it is a neatly well-stocked mind. I have talked with you and know it is.

2nd Sat after the 1st:Mercer: I have already thanked you for the research entailed in giving us back our Ompa numbers. I note that there are 6 members left who were in the first mailing(though Bentscliffe has been in and out so technically there are only five) which is not so bad all things considered. Congrats to the five, but to you most of all, for you have been the most regular contributor. This makes me start to remember..how I rushed to get into the 2nd mailing and how my first effort was run off on a horrid flatbed by young Brian Miller of Glasgow. He nearly drove me mad by going into hysterics every time I used the word duplicator, he seemed to find endless amusement in the way the meaning could be twisted. I almost got to spelling it!

Amble:No 8:Mercer: To answer your question: one reason why we Scots do not like Scotch is that we are taught in school that this is wrong and rather great emphasis is placed upon it- we are caught young in other words. Yes, your atmosphere has changed and, whilst I enjoyed the old zanieness, I like this serious note even better. Particularly the bits about yourself. I too am reading American history-THE BLAZING NORTHWEST by Paul Wellman. Your story THE LADIES BALL is a little gem of writing, one visit to a bowling alley and this pops out. I enthuse!

UL:No 5:Metcalf: Has just dawned upon me that I have been adding an e to your name where no e should be..my apologies! Sorry too that I insulted you by thinking you were in the Army not the Air Force-err..why is it an insult? Ask the man says-if you want to know anything about me-what a temptation, I want to know everything! I am touched at your having Rich Brown write a word picture of you just to keep me quiet, and this is fine as far as it goes. Now, if you will just tell me how old you are, with that six feet description, they're you'll be-concrete! And I'll stop fussing.

Zounds:No 6:Lichtman: Comment hooks, you ask what is so ghastly in the use of this expression. It is all bound up in my mind with the usage. "No comment hooks this time round" is a typical one. I have even seen a mailing comment (though I cannot remember where,)which consisted solely of "No comment hooks." To me, that is bad-mannered; though I begin to suspect that nowadays I may be old-fashioned in what I think of as bad manners. It is also the type of phrase whose reiteration drives me mad, try writing it another way just to show you can! I had forgotten your offer to get THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE for me. I'll credit your account with 7/- for it if I may, for I would like to have it. Also, I figure that if I get that account of yours high enough you will come over one day to spend it. Glad to see Demmon in..why Biff? And why the brackets around Biff?

Erg:No 10:Jeeves: That is a lovely Eddie cover. Thank you for the kind words on Atom's cover for Scot; Ompa rarely remembers to give him his due. I had to laugh out loud at your remarks on TAFF, Eddie and I, you sly dog you! Here is the gen on my Gestetner ink..because I own one of their machines the salesman calls on me to deliver my supplies. Comes cheaper that way than if you go into a shop to buy it. So try contacting a Gestetner salesman, they know all the cheap ways. I am glad you say you were in agony for me when I was singing, though I guess you are just being polite. Your mailing comments improve by leaps and bounds.

Envoy:No 2:Schultz: When you had Flu why did they give you Penicillin? What's wrong with the old-fashioned remedies? I admired your original entry into the mailing comments, and the serial cartoon was a brilliant idea.

Souffle:No 1:Baxter: Oh yes..you are the chap who thinks all femme fans are the organising type, but welcome any old how. My Grandfather was an engine driver and also the first man to drive a tram car in my home town. A good write up of yourself(are you taking note Norm?)I like the Kujawa voice too. My opinion on the poor reponse to your gazette? That so many zines are being published now (I hear tell 137) it is impossible to write locs for them all. Those that try nearly go mad! Other editors are experiencing a shortage of replies too. The poem that is haunting you is.."The beets that talk, The Streams that stand, Th Stones that walk, The Singing sands..That guard the way to Paradise" I can't tell you where it comes from though, I thought that Tey had composed it. Do you want the book?

paraFANalia:No 9:Burn: I keep looking for this in the bundle, the cover sure fooled me. The WANDERING GHU ended up nicely and has been well written. The instalment story is rather revolutionary though, it makes sense! Jimmie tied it off very neatly.

Suwayya:No 2:Main: Light chitter-chatter Andy, so I'll reply in kind. Ella spoke very highly of you and said you were a Good Man. I enjoyed listening to you on the tape she brought back. Only..please don't bring feud stuff into Ompa even if provoked, try to settle it outside and keep Ompa a happy family.

CCON:Eney: Always enjoy con reports, and the potted descriptions of fans were helpful. Thanks for all the Alamo information, guess I feel ashamed at not knowing more American history. However I am remedying that at the local library.

Viper:No 5:Donaho: Thank you, and dear Atom of course, for the back cover. I had an Aunt who had a passion for Whist and she gave me an inferiority complex about my proness at card games. The Varleys Love cards and Canasta(coming over?) and also any new games, so I will pass on your Hearts. There is only one game I like, it is called Cheat. Your chances of winning depend upon your ability to know whether your fellow players are telling the truth or a lie. The faan fiction reminded me of Carl Brandon-high praise! Passing over and enjoying all that good material, you caught my attention with a jerk when you quoted that a concern for mere writing had just about ruined modern literature ...that what you say is still more important than how you say it. So that is why Salinger left me cold-I wondered, after listening to some of the raves. Still: a good writer can make a lot of very little..hmm, of course it is often a new thought on an old theme, hmm, I'll have to think about it a bit more! The first Michael Innes I read was HAMLET REVENGE, and I still think it the best. The quote from Paul Anderson on criticism interested me naturally, but I cannot for the life of me understand why he sees criticism as only an amusing game. I presume he is speaking as a writer and as such, he must surely be keen to know what people think of his writing? Thanks to you and all the other Ompans who told me of the advantages of an electric typer. All right, I'm sold, now tell me how to afford one!

Packrat:No 3:Groves: The percent sign always gives me a strong desire to go and lie down. The comments were good, what there was of them-busy on VECTOR I suppose?

Morph:No 25:Roles: What is the legal ruling about obscene matter through the mails? Why doesn't someone try the oft-times mentioned gambit of writing to the PMG to ask for a list of words forbidden through the post? All those hospital things you ask about, yes, they come later. I wonder how anyone ever had the patience to gather together all those things that were needed for conjuration! Now let me see...two crowns of vervuin..dash..and it's early closing night!

Mailing Comments:Ellington: Sorry to hear about your stretch of unemployment, are we in for another depression, do you think? This on the IWW whets the appetite, look forward to more, and I would like to see any pamphlets you can spare.

The Wall:Donaho: Thanks a million fo making it tidy!



"Japanese in South Africa are to be officially regarded as white. This was announced today(31/10/61) by the Group Areas Board, which decides on living areas for different races. Chinese in South Africa are classified as a non-white race and have to live in their own separate areas"

British United Press Report.

"As the MacMillan Government entered its 21st year an announcement was made by Mr Macleod, Leader of the House and Deputy Prime Minister that henceforth Scots were to be officially regarded as white. Englishmen within the boundaries of Great Scotland are classified as a non-white race and have to live in their own separate areas. Welshmen are to be driven into their coal-mines and henceforth classified as troglodytes"

Scotland-For-Ever Free Press Report.

Speaking to a packed assembly in the House of Natural Lords Mr Macleod said that the time had come to take a realistic view of the racial differences between Scots and Sassenachs. This difference had too long been ignored by successive governments, afraid of uninformed liberal opinion in countries which had no racial problem. The people must realise that apartheid was not a backward step, but an advancement, a great advancement, in race relations. No longer would the Englishman be forced into the society of the Scots, thus increasing the racial inferiority complex but would be able, through association with his own kind, to regain a measure of self-confidence. He would also have the comfort of knowing his position in society, thus being more secure.

The peoples of the world must realise that far from degrading the English, it would be the Scots who would have to bear the strain and suffering which go automatically with leadership. The English would not, contrary to world opinion, be denied a voice in the government. They would be entitled to elect members to the House of the Common where matters of topical interest (such as the quality of Indian Tea compared with Chinese) could be debated. There would also be 3 members of the House of Natural Lords charged with the special responsibility of looking after native affairs,

Mr Macleod waited until the rousing cheers had reigned for five minutes, then waved his claymore for silence. His next words were spoken heavily as he admitted that he now had to touch on a very serious subject. This was the grave issue, which the government had given great thought to, but one that had to be faced. The problem was that, and he would mince no words, that of mixed

marriages. There were cases where Scotswomen had been trapped into marriage with a native, more seriously there were cases where the marriage had borne fruit. What was to become of these women and their progeny? It was natural that the House should be concerned over this great matter and the government had decided that the Scotswomen should be returned to Scotland for re-indoctrination. The offsprings of such marriages were to be taken to such border towns, like Berwick-on-Tweed, where they would first be sterilised, then trained as overseers. This would have the dual advantage of eliminating half-breeds within 60 years and providing a strong and loyal (because of their Scottish blood which would naturally be dominant) body to assist during the change-over. Mr Macleod paused to sip a dram o' whisky.

He went on to say that this problem would not occur in the future. Government, scientists had assured him that reproduction was impossible between Scots of pureblood and 100 % English. It was therefore possible to allow any Scotsman of pure blood up to 5 English concubines, but they would be limited to one Scots wife.

He next touched on the formation of a Cabinet, an announcement would be made later as to the precise membership. However he could assure the House that there would be a preponderance of sandy-haired Scots in the Cabinet, and sympathetic consideration would be given to those who, although not sandy-haired, could prove that their forbears had so been endowed. He added that, owing to extreme popular demand, the Campbells would be excluded from holding office.

Finally Mr Macleod said that he wished it to be fully understood that no victimisation of the English was being made. The government was deeply sensible of its responsibilities to the backward people, but at the same time it must be plain that whilst the Scot was not truly at peace unless surrounded by things of aesthetic and intellectual value such as television, refrigerators and automatic washing machines, the Englishman felt more serene in his natural habitat, the slums of the large cities they had deliberately created themselves. Indeed, many of them had made pets of the rats which shared their dwellings.

On this note Mr Macleod ended his speech and the House rose and stood silent and erect as the Glasgow Orpheus Choir sang "I belong tae Glasgae". A truly impressive moment.

***** Brian Varley.

WARBLINGS

Walt Willis

I REMEMBER ME.....

The British Convention of 1951 was the first I had ever been at, and the 15-page report on it I wrote for Quandry was frighteningly uninhibited. At least it frightens me now when I re-read it: if it had all happened in New York, I'd probably still be in jail. It didn't frighten me at the time partly because I didn't yet know personally any of the people on the official programme, and partly because I was under a peculiar misapprehension about them. I thought of them as pros, remote godlike figures who moved and had their being on a higher plane altogether. Nothing a scruffy little fan could say about them could ruffle their Olympian composure. So I was cheerfully caustic about everything on the programme, from the food (I'm not saying a word against the catering arrangements at this hotel. It's just that it's the first I've seen where they have a fifth place on the cruet stand for a stomach pump.) right up to the Convention Chairman.

This was poor Ted Carnell, whom I saw as a Machiavellian figure who had manoeuvred Walter Gillings out of his central position in English science fiction. This theory was based on nothing more than doubt as to whether Carnell was really a better editor than Gillings, reading in old fanzines about their long standing rivalry, and a speech which I reported as follows:

"Ted started by saying how sorry he was that Gillings wasn't there, and you got the impression that his grief was mainly due to the fact that there were a lot of things he wanted to say to his face that he didn't like to say behind his back. However he managed to overcome this handicap pretty

well. All that was missing was a little wax image of Gillings. First he contrived to make it quite clear that Gillings' resignation was not due to illness, unless you think bad blood is illness. Then he announced that he himself was taking over the editorship of Science Fantasy. The magazine had apparently been losing money like a fanzine, but nevertheless he paid a glowing tribute to Gillings' work on it. Obviously Gillings had every quality of the ideal editor except ability. There was absolutely nothing wrong with Science Fantasy that a complete abolition of all traces of him wouldn't cure...."

And so on. The first warning I had that the Olympians could be ruffled was a letter from Vince Clarke to Madeleine, whom he affected to believe was my widow. Then George Charters told me he had had a letter from Carnell in which he asked me to pass on the message that my convention report "stank". I'm relieved to see that I didn't respond to this by a grovelling apology: in fact I was almost defiant.

George Charters was here this evening and passed on your comment on my convention report.

If you mean the report stank as a report, OK, but if you are objecting to the way you appeared in it yourself I can't agree with you so easily. This was a frankly impressionistic account and that was the impression I got...

Nevertheless I was, judging from carbons of other letters to friends at the time, quite upset about the affair and Ted's reply was a relief. It was to the effect that my report had stirred up a lot of "shall I say, discord" but it was now all water under the bridge as far as he was concerned. I found out later that immediately Bill Temple got his copy of the Quannish (he was at that time the only London pro on Lee's mailing list) he had telephoned Ted Carnell and probably the others and read out the juicier bits.

The Quannish was of course the 100-page anniversary issue of Quandry, I think the largest fanzine ever published up to that time. And it went on being monthly, Lee at this stage of her life being able to fan pretty near full time. By now she and I were in correspondence on three different levels simultaneously --airletters for urgencies, long surface letters for conversation, and postcards for stray thoughts. Or maybe I should say pactsarcds, for that was when that particular piece of nonsense started. There had been a hiatus in their flow and I had typed a hasty PS to a letter which came out, "What, no pactsarcds?" Lee Replied:

No Walt, I'm sorry, but it is very difficult to get pactsarcds here now. Seemingly there is a shortage. I have been to every drugstore and every dime-store in Savannah. I can get some fair pitcuer pactsarcds for twice the price of regular pactsarcds. But that is outrageous. I will go back to the place where I originally got pactsarcds and see if they have any. If not, you are out of luck on the pactsarcd situation.

Having a printing press gives you an advantage in some situations. I got some blank cardboard and promptly printed some "Pactsarcds" and sent them off to

her. While I was at it I ran off some for myself and printed Lee's name and address on the other side. She was charmed at the idea of incoming mail with her letterhead on it. I also printed up a supply of visiting cards and mailed it to her at the Nolacon Hotel, where the great Secret was to be revealed. Though the inner circle had grown (and Chuck Harris was being uncannily perceptive. Way back in June he had said casually "I'd always thought previously that Lee was a female.") Lee had set her heart on keeping the Secret until the Nolacon, an event which was looming very important in her young life. The way she told me was by sending me a photograph, with a letter which read in part:

Concerning the Secret which is enclosed: You, Shelby Vick and Bobby Pope are the only fans to whom this has been revealed... All will be made known at the Nolacon of course, but until then I want it kept secret. I've built Q and myself up in fandom pretty well on merit alone... no quarter asked because I am a girl and none given. The N3F's voted me top fanned and I like to think that I earned it and not that I was just given it. It's a nice feeling to achieve something.

My immediate reaction was a stunned and airmailed postcard, which Lee pinned to the wall of her room: I can't remember what was on it, but later I was writing:

Still haven't got used to your being a girl. I suppose the idea should have crossed my mind some time or other, especially when I got the valentine, but it never did. I had quite a clear picture of you in my mind---a short, stubby chap with twinkling brown eyes and an absent-minded manner. Don't imagine I'm disappointed--I'm delighted, especially when you turn out to be pretty. And it's an absolutely wonderful bonus. I don't think there's ever been one as good. And that business of sending me a valentine was delicious, like THE PURLONED LETTER.

By the time the Nolacon came I knew Lee pretty well, and looked forward to it nearly as much as she. I was with her every mile of the way to New Orleans... more literally than you would expect. For instance there was this letter I got postmarked Montgomery, Alabama:

Well, I'm off. Right now I'm on the train, 20 miles out of Savannah. This is a 'local' and it stops at every crossing between here and Montgomery. Left Savannah 7.30pm, arrive Montgomery 7.50am. Change trains. Arrive New Orleans 3.10pm. My first train trip alone... I am and we're sitting on a siding waiting for some other train to use the track. This is a very modern train. All the latest conveniences, like wheels. Only trouble is that they stop every few miles--probably to water the mules. Laid over 45 mins. in Waycross, so I had a cup of coffee... Well, the train we've been waiting for has finally come. I'll mail this in the next stopover, probably Montgomery Alabama.

This arrived in Belfast even before the Convention had started and, intoxicated by this participation in Lee's historic trip, I replied immediately under the subconscious conviction that she was still on the train.

Dear Lee,

Gosh, what are you doing in Alabama? I don't want to worry you but are you sure you're on the right train? Besides how did Alabama get in there anyway? I don't see any justification for it at all. I don't know much about US geography, but I do know that both Savannah and New Orleans are somewhere down there in the bottom right-hand corner only an inch or so apart. With such a convenient arrangement I see no reason for Alabama to come butting in and spoil everything. In fact I'm beginning to take a very poor view of Alabama altogether. Sinister sort of place. Did you notice you are always hearing about midnight choo-choos leaving for Alabama, BUT YOU NEVER HEAR OF ANY OF THEM COMING BACK! Vestigia nulli retrorsum or something --no footprints coming out. Of course I'm willing to admit that my knowledge of the US is not very extensive---in fact it could be written down on this form. There are 48 states plus Washington DC. There may be a Washington AC too but I never heard of it. On the top righthand corner is the communist state of Rhode Island, a foul sort of place. At the other end is California and at the bottom are various Mexicos in various age groups. But the bottom righthand corner baffles me. I don't ever like to talk about Texas for instance because I have a sort of neurotic bloc about it---one of those things that are always happening in ASF when you feed electronic brains contradictory data. 1;The west is where people shoot sheriffs and punch cattle. 2.Nowhere do they do this more assiduously than in Texas. 3.Texas is in the South East. Let's see, this is the 31st. This won't arrive till the third at the earliest, by which time the con will be over. Imagine that. I'll bet you're worn out. So:---WELCOME HOME!

***** WALT WILLIS.*****

THERE IS STILL TIME TO SUPPORT THE WILLIS FUND..

Send your donations to:Larry Shaw,16 Grant Place.Staten Island 6
New York. USA

or to

Arthur Thomson,17 Brockham House,Brockham Drive
London SW2

In the last instalment by Walt he mentions an article he wrote for a magazine called The Glass. This was an introduction to sf aimed at a highbrow mentality. There was not space to publish the article last time: so here it is now -

FANDOM FOR THE Highbrow by WALT WILLIS.

The first magazine to specialise in scientific romance was published in 1928. It was called AMAZING STORIES, and included reprints from Poe and Verne alongside new stories by hack authors. At the end of 1950 there were 26 such magazines in America alone. A few specialise in reprints, chosen recklessly from the works of authors ranging from E.R.Burroughs to G.K.Chesterton, Arthur Machen, Olaf Stapledon and C.S.Lewis, but most of them consist entirely of material that is original, or at least new. Much of it is written by professional authors who have specialised in the genre, or by scientists and technicians with some literary talent, but on the whole the standard of writing seldom rises above the competent. The aficionado is accustomed to skimming through a dozen stories before he finds one he considers worth reading, but the superficial observer is apt to take away with him the impression of a mass of nonsensical and ill-written rubbish. The appearance of some of the magazines does nothing to encourage a closer look. Since none of them has a circulation of more than 200,000, they fall inevitably into the category and company of "pulp" magazines, with whose lurid covers their own must compete for the attention of the casual buyer. Recently the better magazines have tended to give up the struggle, adopt restrained covers and pocketbook format, and rely on subscription sales. The best of these are FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, GALAXY, and Street and Smith's SCIENCE FICTION. The cover of this last actually bears vestigial remains of its former juvenile title ASTOUNDING. A reprint is available in England, and except for the British magazine NEW WORLDS is the only "sf" magazine on sale here that is worth inspection.

One of the first things that the publishers discovered about sf was that it inspired an extraordinarily articulate interest among some of their readers. The editor of AMAZING, commenting incredulously on this in his third issue, dubbed them "fans", and in time they have come to accept the name with a special significance of their own---rather as the "Contemtibles" did. Those correspondants whose letters were printed in AMAZING immediately began to correspond with one another and in 1929 some of them published the first fan magazine. Since then about 3000 fan magazines titles have appeared, some lasting only one issue but many publishing regularly for years. Quite a variety of reproductive processes have been used---letterpress printing, lithography, mimeography, hectography, handwriting with carbon copies, and even wire recording. At the moment there are about 200 being published. Their circulation ranges from 50 to 1000. Their paid circulation is notoriously less. It has never been reliably confirmed that any of them has ever made a profit: they are very seldom mean to, and many are distributed free.

These magazines all circulate in the tiny world of "fandom", sometimes called the Microcosm. Estimates of the number of fans vary according to the degree of activity one adopts as the criterion. The nucleus is the two Amateur Press Associations of some 100 editors, who as it were live by taking in one another's magazines. Just outside are the editors of subscription "fanmags", each the centre of the closely knit group of his own subscribers,

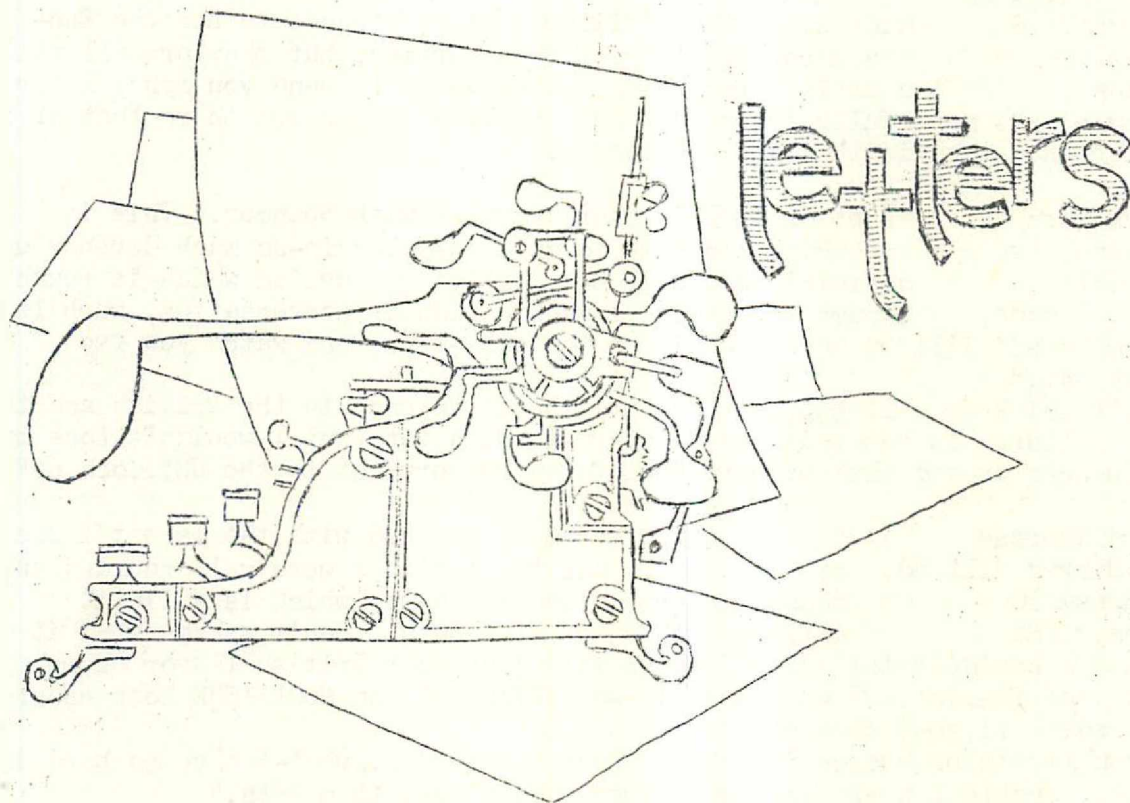
many of whom are in close touch with other groups. Most of these editors spend all their spare time in fan activity---publishing, writing, drawing, editing and corresponding. The most active often end by throwing up their jobs for a hazardous existence as professional authors, editors, publishers or agents. About half the editors of the professional sf magazines are ex-fans.

At any one time the number of really active fans is about 300. In addition there is the comparatively sane fringe of people who are active to the extent of occasional subscribing to and writing for fanmags, writing letters to the professional magazines, and corresponding. The total number of people known to take an articulate interest in sf is about 1500. About a thousand of these are in America, and the rest mainly in the United Kingdom, France and Australia.

Explanations of fan psychology have ranged from a viable mutation to a castration complex, but the truth is probably no more than that they are journalis manques, brought together by an interest so eclectic as to give them almost the status of a persecuted minority. As for the interest itself, it seems to me what requires explanation is not why it exists, but why it is not more widely shared. There are two facts that should be more widely realised. One is that space flight is today a practicable proposition (1). The other is that there are estimated to be a hundred thousand planets in this galaxy inhabited by intelligent beings (2). Either space travel or contact with extra-terrestrial thought would be the most important event in the history of mankind. Are science fiction readers wrong to take an interest in them? They were virtually the only members of the public who were mentally prepared for the atomic bomb, the political and psychological implications of which had been a subject of discussion among them for ten years past.

- (1) "The Conquest of Space", Ley and Bonestell
- (2) "The Nature of the Universe", Hoyle.

Walter A. Willis.



Len Moffatt
10202 Belcher
Downey, Calif.

"Come this summer and ole Sarge Tackett will be in civvies again. As is obvious from his article his life with the Gyrenes was hardly a waste. He should be able to get a very good job in electronics, and he was fortunate enough to come thru two wars without physical mishap, he's had a lot of Experience and Travel, something that can enrich anybody's life. Of course one has to be willing to put up with the discipline (sometimes overdone) of military life. I suppose if I'd stayed in I'd be at least a Chief Pharmacist's Mate by now, and ready also for retirement. That is, if I wasn't spending time in the brig for telling some tin-god-type officer the obvious nature of his ancestry. I was a nice, mild, order obeying corpsman during my WWII hitch, willing to take the crap handed out by some of my superiors for the sake of patriotism, like-there's-a-war-on etc. so the closest I ever came to brig-duty was the time I was taken to church in a Shore Patrol Wagon. But as I grew older I grew more independant in living and thinking, and upon wondering if I should re-enlist would shake my head and smile. Benefits, to be sure, but the possibility of having to work under some joker of the "your soul may belong to Jesus but your ass belongs to me" school negated any inclination I might have felt toward re-enlisting."

Bernot Ruthstrom
Brahegatan 8
Stockholm 8
Sweden

"SCOTTISHE was utterly interesting, though there wasn't much sf in the articles. It is strange to see the fanzines contain less sf than earlier, but they are all still utterly interesting. I am going to send you money later.."

*** Money always gratefully accepted! But you know it appears to me that sf is being discussed more in the fanzines lately.***

Boyd Raeburn
89 Maxome Ave
Willowdale
Ontario, Canada.

"Best of luck in your argument with Spencer. This is something I'd hate to get embroiled in--so much depends on definitions--and is the sort of discussion which is rough enough to achieve communication in conversation, much less

so in fanzines. I'll be happy to sit on the side-lines and watch you two battle it out."

+++I don't think we will battle about it: the difference in the British and the American cultures is something that interests me a lot, but I wouldn't lose my wig if Spencer proved that we were "painfully subservient to the US"..och no"

Richard Ambrose
1745 Murray Hill Rd.
Birmingham 16
Alabama, USA

"I must say I was most pleased with the latest issue of SCOTTISHE. All the articles were well rounded and showed a form of fannish humor which is a little different than any I've seen. Don't ask me what it

is because I couldn't tell you, I guess it's just your British flavor which spices up the fanzine. I was wondering--do HAVERINGS and SCOTTISHE both count as one trade? If so--3 cheers!"

+++Are you listening George Spencer? About the trades..weel--I have no hard and fast rule. Should I hear from you enough, you'll get them both."

Betty Kujawa
2819 Caroline
South Bend 14
Indiana, USA

"Right now I haven't the time for a real loc, nor even to properly answer your last letter--know you'll allow that to be put over till after our southern trip. But I had to make some comments to that letter of Colin Freeman and

about how I'm talking thru my Davy Crockett hat and all. The following remarks were made some 100 years ago by an American named Abraham Lincoln (a mid-western bhoy who used to live in Indiana..)

"YOU CANNOT STRENGTHEN THE WEAK BY WEAKENING THE STRONG"

"YOU CANNOT HELP SMALL MEN BY TEARING DOWN BIG MEN"

"YOU CANNOT LIFT THE WAGE EARNER BY PULLING DOWN THE WAGE PAYER"

"YOU CANNOT HELP THE POOR BY DESTROYING THE RICH"

"YOU CANNOT BUILD CHARACTER AND COURAGE BY TAKING AWAY A MAN'S INITIATIVE AND INDEPENDANCE"

"YOU CANNOT HELP MEN PERMANENTLY BY DOING FOR THEM WHAT THEY COULD AND SHOULD DO FOR THEMSELVES"

Perhaps Colin will say Mr Lincoln was also talking through his hat--but I deeply and sincerely believe those words of circa 1862 apply just as much as ever in 1962. Hope you'll have room to pub. those quotations, and wonder how you yourself feel about what he said"

+++I really feel I should leave this to Colin..but you have asked..so I will pick on one of the sayings..Do you really believe that the only way the poor can be helped is by destroying the rich?+++

Harry Warner "Reading something like this(Natterings) makes me sad, for
423 Summit Ave. no sensible reason: the sadness comes from the thought that
Hagerstown while it is fine to be able to read entertaining accounts
Maryland of the experiences of one person in this manner, there must
be hundreds of thousands of unique memories of this sort that will go into
oblivion, uncommitted to paper, simply because the people who have experien-
ced them are intelligent enough to write them up but have no medium like a
fanzine as the communication system. Of course if fanzines became as popular
as chewing gum, I'd probably feel even sadder, knowing that all these things
were being made public and time did not permit me to read more than a tiny
sampling of the total...On the NFFFT, you must read my history of fandom to
get full details. Briefly, you're wrong when you say that it lacked actifan
help at its start. Its first year or two, it included almost all the active
American fans of the time, and it was five years or so later when it began
to change into something different, a group of newcomers to fandom plus some
oldtimers who are not comfortable in general fandom. I think that the organ-
isation is definetly improving of late"
+++Please write that history soon hun? I want to hear more of this.+++

Seth Johnson "And talking about hospitals I wonder if you saw the
339 Stiles St. article in SUNDAY TIMES about the terrible state of the
Vaux Hall English hospitals? Sounded real weird and gruesome to me
New Jersey,USA and I'm wondering if this was typical of all the hospitals
in England or if the author picked out a few horror spots as sort of back-
handed criticism of Socialized medicine. MD's never fail to take a whack at
it on this side of the pond and seem to fear it. Yet the fact remains that
in America only the very rich and the paupers get complete medical treatment.
The rich because they can afford it and the paupers because they go to free
clinics and get it as a matter of course. But those in between can afford
only direct emergency treatment or operations and not always that...Yes
most of the faneds to whom I appeal for fanzines(for the NFF sale of bundles
of representative fanzines for 1 dollar)reply they are looking for means of
cutting their subscription list rather than increasing it. Yet there is good
reason to believe the new subscribers they would acquire would not only
subscribe for cash, but would have ample time for LOC's and contributions and
be highly flattered at seeing their names in print. And I'm willing to bet
right here and now that half the people you mailed your fanzine to did not
pay for them. And more than half failed to respond with either an article,
letter of comment or contribution of any kind. So by shedding one of the
deadwood each time you add one of the neos you get paying customers and
contributing customers and increase costs not at all+++When the Health Service
started here they had a legacy of old hospitals(mostly built in Victorian
days)all practically bankrupt. A new White Paper has just been issued which
will start a huge new building programme. The trouble was that ~~at the start~~
practically no money was allowed for capital expenditure! You are dead right
in your diagnosis of the return I get for this zine...the amount of cash that
comes in is negligib,le, the letters of comment are only fair in amount, but
the trades are duly honoured and very welcome. However no faned expects to
break even; if he wanted a paying hobby he sure wouldn't be in fandom! I
guess though most would appreciate help with the postage+++

Colin Freeman
Ward 3
Scotton Banks Hosp.
Ripley Rd.
Knaresborough.
Yorks.

"Thanks for Scot 26. It's coming better than ever and that is no mean compliment. Liked everything in it this time. Loved Machiavarley, who writes this, or is it anon? Willis and Tackett I found interesting and I am still enjoying your natterings. No mention of any patients though. Were you so busy getting the corners right that you didn't notice there were people in the beds? A lovely 17 yr. old girl started her training on our ward a month ago. The Sister made her life miserable. I've never known a Sister to be so horribly unfair. In my opinion that girl would have turned into a wonderful nurse once she'd worked off her initial slowness. She couldn't take any more. She's left nursing for good now. I wonder how many are lost that way! I've thought of some further arguments in the Welfare State discussion, but my quarrel is mainly with points raised in my own letter in Scot. I think it might be a bit too much, even for fandom, if I wrote a letter picking holes in my own previous letter. I can just see me conducting an eternal argument with myself."

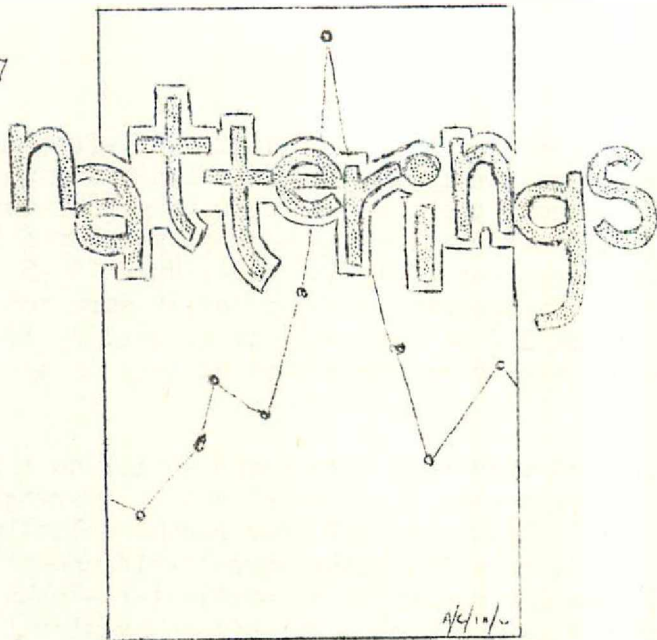
+++Machiavarley is Brian Varley one of my two best friends(his wife is the other one) both fans(though very inactive of late years)but gradually taking an interest again...You don't really see the patients at first- too scared for one thing, and too busy for another...I direct your attention to Betty's letter...+++

Don Geldart
Sgts..Mess
3rd.Carabiniers
(POWDG)
Aliwal Bks.
Tidworth.Hants.

"I may by many, be considered as a schizophreniac, for I lead two lives and as far as possible, keep them apart. I never mention fandom to associates in the Army and don't talk about the Army to fans. You say that you "would like to know what makes a man join the regular armies of the world." For my part I can't tell you, there isn't anything I could point to-and say that is the reason I joined. At the time I was young and immature, and to be quite honest I didn't know what I was letting myself in for. I still cannot find a reason why the majority join. The nearest I can fix on as an attraction to the life is that it is a lazy man's easiest means of security for himself and his family. For the normal man that is, and here I exclude fans. Should a man tend towards a life in which not very much in the way of work or initiative is expected of him; what more could he want than the army! Most army and ex-army people who have told you of the disadvantages probably were in the higher intelligence groups. To them and yourself many army ways are undoubtedly unbearable, but to the average man in the army these things aren't the horrors they seem to you. Let me point out some of the advantages that make people stay in the army long after the effect of those glory-seeking posters has worn off.

A sergeant who has signed on for twelve years now earns just over ten pounds per week, after deductions for tax etc. If he is married with, say, two children, he will earn about sixteen pounds. Whilst his family's clothes will be as would a civilians; his own clothing bill will be negligible. Most sergeants I know have no more than one suit of clothes, all their clothes for work are provided free. His rent is little: a five-roomed house, fully furnished, washing machine and spin dryer included, costs only 26/- per week. Working day-8-5pm. Rarely weekend work. One afternoon off for sport."

+++In other words a life that tends to make a lazy man lazier!+++
CONTRIBUTERS SEE YOUR COMMENTS ON THEIR WORK AND APPRECIATE WHEN YOU WRITE.
AS I DO TOO! Ethel.



Training School Days...

Our three months in the Preliminary Training School drew gradually to a close: now loomed the exams, these we must pass or else! So we all swotted madly. There was a rich assortment of bones kept in the lecture room as well as a full size skeleton. We had to be able to identify any bone handed to us and then go on to name each notch in it, the bone it was attached to and the name of the muscle which attached it. We bandied about terms like the Glenoid cavity, the Acromion process and the Axillary border until we were dizzy.

What I chiefly remember about the exam was my first face to face encounter with the dreaded Senior Sister Tutor "Emma"; as she gave us our orals. She probed mercilessly at my knowledge of the calculation of drug dosages - she always scented your weakness - and mental arithmetic was mine. We all passed however and, smiting each other mightily on the back, we packed our bags ready to move out of the shelter of the School.

Our rooms were now at the top of the hospital where there were long corridors of them, the nearer the roof the more junior your grade (you moved down on your way up.) I was assigned to the Children's Surgical Ward as were three others of my set. The Sister was a small woman and a nagging one, who darted and flew at everything. Her Staff Nurse was tall and rather handsome; she stalked disdainfully about the ward as she and Sister 'did not get on'. We pros were all convinced that Sister had a special dislike for us alone. I know that it seemed to me her voice calling "Nurse Lindsay" rang in my ears all day long; but the others complained of the same. She always acted as if you were deliberately lazy, stupid and useless. One day I heard the crash of crockery in another room, and then her voice saying "I suppose that's Nurse Lindsay!". When I looked out and met her eye, she realised her wrong assumption. She had the grace to blush faintly; but I took no heart from that, feeling instead that I would never be able to please her.

She it was who first proclaimed the cry that wafted its way after me throughout my early days - "Oh yes, you can look, Nurse!" When you were being reprimanded (whether fairly or not) there was no answering back and all you could do was stand and look. The alternative was to cast your eyes down, and then came the cry - "Can't you even look me in the face, Nurse?" So I looked, and it must have been in a very speaking fashion for it sure got me into lots of trouble. For long it puzzled me just what it was I did, till I was forced to realise that I was showing my thoughts very clearly in my eyes ...I had to learn to mask them.

As this was a children's surgical ward they were never so ill as those in the medical end. Mostly broken bones came our way and nearly every child wore a plaster cast. After the first shock wore off they became a lively lot and the shrill of their voices used to make the night nurses stir uneasily in their sleep three stories up. I remember one child in particular - Johnnie - who came to us periodically to have a new cast made for his tubercular leg. He normally stayed in a sanatorium on the outskirts of Dundee. He was typical of the children in sanatoria in those days..before the finding of drugs to cure the disease. They lived there for years with everyone feeling sorry for them so that they were given everything their hearts could desire. Once, when I had to go with a patient to this sanatorium I had been appalled at the noise, it sounded more like a zoo than a place where little children lived. The children's pent up spirits rapidly sent them wild, they learnt to use the tantrum as a weapon. The many toys they were given did not make them happy, they were usually in bits before the end of the visiting hour.

Six year old Johnnie had tantrums galore and one could rarely discover a reason for them beyond his roaring resentment at the world, when he really got going he was a sight to behold. His favourite opening gambit was to throw everything out of his cot, even the very mattress went. He was a patient, so could not be spanked; anyway, after all this time spanking was no answer. It would merely have made him more frenzied. Once or twice he had been calmed by having his cot wheeled out of the ward into the sluice, he quietened when there was no audience. Unfortunately on one occasion a trolley had been left too near his cot; on this lay a roll of adhesive tape, with this he proceeded to decorate the walls. So comical was his glee at having got the better of the staff that they all had to laugh - much to his gratification.

Whilst the others were at supper one night, I was on duty alone, when to my horror I spied Matron coming along the corridor to do a round. Johnnie's cot was in the middle of the ward where he was jumping up and down happily on the bedsprings: his bedclothes lay in a heap on the floor with his mattress stuck madly on top. I had been told to leave him be, but would Matron believe that? As I dived for my cuffs which had to be worn during a round, I fervently prayed. Matron went round every child except Johnnie and after saying "Thank you, Nurse" walked away without glancing in his direction. I suppose she knew all about him, but at the time it seemed as if my prayers had been answered and Johnnie rendered invisible.

We were now under Emma's sway: we walked fearfully into the classroom, said "Present, Miss Henderson" and awaited the worst. She looked us over

believably and said: "All lectures and tutorials must be attended; no excuse for being absent will be accepted. Don't bother to come and ask off for any purpose from your sister's wedding to your Grandmother's funeral - that is of no consequence here. You are going to pass your State Finals; you are going to work..I don't care how stupid or lazy you are, I will knock the knowledge into your heads! There has not been one failure in the State exams from this hospital for the last five years, and your set are not going to be the ones to break this record. Understood?" "Yes, Miss Henderson," we sighed.

She was true to her word - she almost literally did knock knowledge into our heads; some of us were stupid and some of us were lazy, but that didn't stop her. She had the uncanniest knack of knowing your weak points. She must have smelt that I did not understand the lymphatic system for she returned to that question again and again, until one day she made me go through the system from head to toe. Then at last, it made sense to me.

We were given lectures by the senior Drs, each subject had a set of 12 to 18 lectures. We would go to a lecture on Monday and on Wednesday Emma would give us a tutorial on it. This consisted of her asking questions about the lecture and woe betide if you did not know the answer. She would usually start at either the front row or the back and work her way round the class, thus giving you a chance to gauge what question you might get, but she was hep to that! Every now and then she would pounce out of order and instinctively to the one least prepared. The minute she realised you knew the answer she lost interest, but hammered mercilessly at the luckless ones who did not know.

She was pernickity about the form of the answers. You would start to say .."The state of shock would be treated by-" She would interrupt. "Yes, Nurse and where is the patient whilst this is going on? Still lying on the cold pavement I take it, he will soon have pneumonia too won't he? I hope I never collapse when you are around. Begin at the beginning, nurse! Think! you stupid girl.." Painful though the effort might be..we thought.

In those first weeks, we all hated her for her seeming inhumanity but when we left, we were happy to show our gratitude by taking her out to dinner and a theatre, and now, when I look back, she and Cumming are the only ones I remember with affection.

These lectures and tutorials were given in our offduty. Should they be in the evening: it was just too bad if it was your only evening off in a fortnight. Just too bad if a lecture landed on your only day off for the month..when Emma said no excuses..she meant it. None of us missed out in all our four years there. The tutorials came on our mornings and afternoons off, and sometimes when we finished work at night-and we didn't finish work till 9pm. This was bad enough, but a worse torture was the tutorial that came from 9-10am after you had finished a night on duty. It was often hard work to stay awake whilst a lecturer droned on, but you had to be wideawake indeed at an Emma tutorial.

The next ward I was assigned to was a Female Surgical one and the Sister in charge was Sister Brummage who had since left Forfar. She tended to make a pet of me at first, she loved to have a 'favourite', but prickly type that I was I could not stand the atmosphere this entailed. It was here that I had my first glimpse of the operating theatre. The patient was to have a appendicectomy. My job was to hold the woman's hand whilst she was being given the anaesthetic, wheel the trolley in to the theatre and help the junior theatre nurse lift her onto the table. We then arranged the towels and lifted off the sterile towel from the operation site..and stood back. There was Sister Brummage beside me and she grabbed my hand to hold it. This I could not bear and shrugged her off. I rapidly became the former favourite.

Blood, I discovered did not worry me: the sight of the operation interested me but did not appall. This was just as well: it was considered a shocking disgrace to turn faint. This might distract the surgeon, and we were well warned that if we felt in the least faint to get out of the theatre fast. I never did see anyone faint till I went to take my midwifery when the medical students used to faint in droves. I once, in my third year felt faint, and it was a ghastly experience. I was on nightduty and had come on to find the ward roaring with casualties and was sent straight to the theatre. Four hours later I was still standing with my umpteenth case, when I felt the room beginning to spin around. I managed to stagger to a seat in the surgeons' changing room before I passed out and got my head down between my knees. I can remember sitting with my head in my hands as one of the surgeons came out and gave me an incurious glance. It was a busy night.

Falling out of favour with Sister did not cause me pain, I thought her a silly woman though a very capable nurse, but it meant I had to watch my step. I worked in a continually critical atmosphere and a fatal tendency to daydream was a continual source of danger to me. I also had to resign myself to never having more than one evening off in a fortnight, and that often had a lecture in it.

to be continued.

Book Natterings:

Lately I have been coming to the conclusion that if I am to continue to enjoy my reading of sf I shall have to change my ways. I have been reading five of the promags regularly for years, but lately I dropped Galaxy, thus leaving me with Analog, F&SF, and the two Nova publications. I think I have had a surfeit of short stories and plan shortly to drop the last two. I had offered to send them to any American fan who cared to bid on a year's supply and pay it to the Willis Fund; but there were no takers, so my last reason for retaining them has gone. The latest Science Fantasy contains another Moorcock story of the type which always reminds me that the author used to write for Tarzan comics. I wish I had the nerve to drop Analog and F&SF too but I would worry in case I were missing something good. It is possible - now and then.

When I read sf in book form my enjoyment increases, even an only fairish novel is of more value to me than half a dozen short stories. Thanks to Ted Forsyth, who lent them to me, I have just finished two books. The first was

by Paul Anderson - THE BROKEN SWORD. This I not only disliked, I never finished it properly, taking a swift look at the end, sniffing and saying - "not my cup of tea!". I can read the originals of these and the Greek myths but I cannot stomach a modern man writing in this way. Tolkien's Ring stories I can understand (although I am not a devotee) after all he invented a whole new world of his own, but re-hash-ugh! I suppose I like my fantasy with a dash of bitters as in the works of T.H. White. His fantastic worlds are real to me, but Anderson's world with its Elf-Kings, Witches, and Changelings just rings false. So I suppose it isn't really the re-hash I object to, for I must confess I revel in the tales of Greece re-told by Mary Renault. To those of you who enjoyed THE KING Must Die I gladly announce the issue this week of a sequel.

The other book lent by Ted was my cup of tea, THE FOURTH R by Harold Mead. I like stories about the tribulations of gifted children; it is a subject that fascinates me. Which is why I have CHILDREN OF THE ATOM so high on my best sf list. This one by Mead opens with a child witnessing his parents' murder, done because the villain wanted to obtain the machine which had increased the child's knowledge. The child was a five year old with the education of a sixteen year old and his efforts to cope - first with getting away from the villain, and then to adjust to a way of living, makes absorbing reading. My criticism would be cast mostly at the characterisation which could have been deepened with improvement to the whole. The villain especially never really breathes life. Still, a good yarn and satisfying.

I also have been reading C.S. Lewis' AN EXPERIMENT IN CRITICISM. I have been under fire lately on the subject of criticism; so thought I ought to improve my knowledge of it. The blurb says: "Literary criticism is traditionally employed in judging books, and 'bad taste' is thought of as a taste for bad books. Prof. Lewis's experiment consists in reversing the process, and judging literature itself by the way men read it."

Lewis expounds on "the few, the many, the status seekers, the culture devotees, the furitan, and the true reader." The last realises that "we can never know that a piece of writing is bad unless we have begun by trying to read it as if it were good and ended by discovering that we were paying the author an undeserved compliment." He states "The sure mark of an unliterary man is that he considers 'I've read it already' to be a conclusive argument against reading a work." This is an enjoyable book if you are interested in reading at all; and you can also find out if you are - by the Professors ruling - a 'true reader'. And what has he to say about criticism? Much what other folks have been saying to me - that it achieves nothing but gives enjoyment to those who like to read it. So, unrepentantly in this at least, I will continue to enjoy reading criticism!

I had taken up the Ompa fashion of describing the books I own - and was halfway across the top shelf of the bookcase.....
HIGH PLACES: by Helen Todd. This is an ex-library book from Boots where I picked up a lot of my collection. They are sold at 1/6d and are a good buy as they are always clean and in good condition. I must have picked this out originally because the setting was American and the characters in the medical

profession. The main story is concerned with a man of high integrity who just cannot compromise; all the characters are well thought out and rounded. There is a very revealing portrait of a neurotic woman who both exasperates and obtains your sympathy at the same time.

THE PEAR TREE by Ellisa Landi. If you are old enough you will remember her on the screen. This tells of a young poetess who begins to probe into the death of her mentor. I think it is beautifully written; re-reading brings the reflection that the characters are rather 'precious', but on the whole the magic lingers and I can believe that this is how a poetess thinks.

STORIES AND EPISODES by Thomas Mann. The only book of his that I can afford to buy. This contains three short stories plus some excerpts from THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN and THE YOUNG JOSEPH. I bought it for the short story DEATH IN VENICE which is filled with the brooding atmosphere of tragedy. This story of the man who falls in love with a boy's face contains the moral that in the pursuit of Beauty one may lose sight of Life.

NO WIND OF BLAME by Georgette Heyer- one of her better detective stories.

THE GIFT AND THE GIVER by Nella Gardner White is the story of people told from a most unusual angle. It is from the viewpoint of an insensitive woman trying to understand the sensitive people who loved her. Like an onion, this story has layers.

THE LITTLE MINISTER by JM. Barrie. As an author, Barrie is out of favour with the critics who label him sentimental and accurately define his 'mother complex.' One rarely hears nowadays anyone admitting to liking his books. I read this first when I was very young, certainly young enough to be puzzled by the technique with which it was told. Like all the books you grow up with two things were liable to happen to this one - either I should out-grow it or the magic would stay with me. Fortunately (or unfortunately..it depends upon how you look at Barrie) the magic has stayed with me. When I re-read the book I am Gavin, I am Babbie and the streets of Thrums are real to me. Even the fact that I have visited the town on which Thrums was modelled has not altered my mental picture. And certainly in one thing Barrie wrote true: when he described the poverty, the stiff necked pride and the religious fervour of the people of Thrums.

That's the top shelf done..

Ethel.