

29 March 53

Scottishe



SCOTTISH

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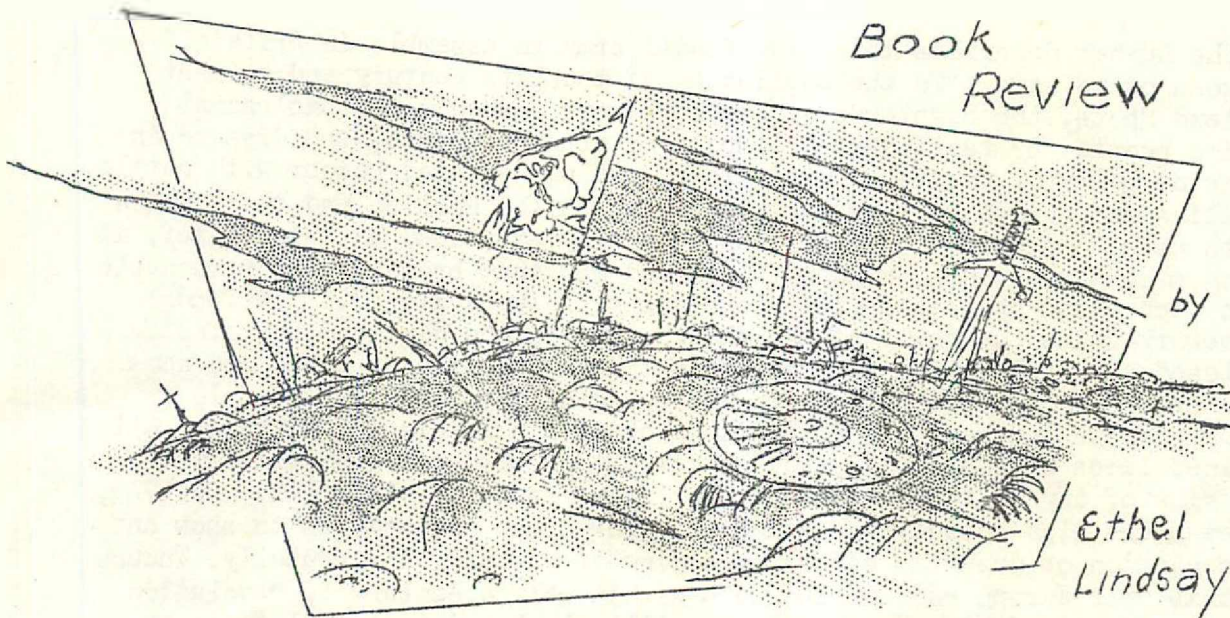
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Credits

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Book Review



Culloden: by John Prebble. Secker and Warburg. 30s.

This is not another book about Bonnie Prince Charlie. It is the story of a battle, what followed, the persecution of a people, and the destruction of a way of life. It is a book about people; taken from letters and from memoirs, regimental order-books, and contemporary newspapers. It is not a partisan book, its feeling is for the common man on both sides. It begins in the rain at five o'clock when the Royal Army marched out of Nairn to fight the clans on Culloden Moor.

The author says: "It is an attempt to tell the story of the ordinary men and women who were involved in the last Jacobite Rising, often against their will. For too long, I believe the truth of this unhappy affair has been obscured by the over-romanticised figure of the Prince. He appears in this book where he is relevant to the theme, and I make no apology for ignoring him at other times. The book begins with Culloden because then began a sickness from which Scotland, and the Highlands in particular, never recovered. It is a sickness of the emotions, and its symptoms can be seen on the labels of whisky bottles. Long ago this sickness and its economic consequences emptied the Highlands of people."

He describes the Royal Army first: twelve battalions of Foot, three regiments of Horse, and a Train of Artillery. There were also eight companies of kilted militia from the glens of Argyll, Campbells mostly. It was a cold rainy morning, the men had nothing but loaf and water for food that day. The Commander was the 25 year old Duke of Cumberland, son to the King. In those days soldiers received sixpence a day as pay - and had the price of his uniform deducted from that. The food was poor and flogging was a monotonous commonplace. The men had often been pressed into the Army, but many had entered for the food and security - for bad as the Army was - outside could be worse.

The Author describes the "last feudal army to assemble in Britain." He goes on to say: "To the Englishman of the 18th century and to most Lowland Scots, the Highlands of Scotland were a remote and unpleasant region peopled by barbarians who spoke an obscure tongue, who dressed in skins or bolts of parti-coloured cloth, and who equated honour with cattle-stealing and murder. The savagery with which the English and the Lowland Scots were to suppress the Rebellion is partly explained by this belief, it being a common assumption among civilised men that brutality is pardonable when exercised upon those they consider to be uncivilised. The feudal framework which the power of the chiefs gave to the Highland way of life enclosed a tribal system much older in time. The ties of blood and name were strong among the people, and the pride of race meant as much to a humbly in his sod house as it did to a chieftain in his island keep. All claimed lines of gentility, and the meanest of them believed himself the superior of any soft-breeched creature living south of his hills. By 1746, however the clan society was dying and, for once, history was to show an appreciation of dramatic effect by ending it abruptly and brutally. Though in this year Europe and America were within half a century of revolution and the Rights of Man, North Britain still slumbered in tribal twilight four hundred miles from London."

Every tribe had its slogan, its rant and its badge. Whilst the chief had the right of life and death over his people, he was also responsible for their welfare. His power was the number of cattle on his braes and the number of fighting men in his tail. On one hip he carried a basket-hilted broadsword, on the other a dirk, and thrust into the top of his hose was a tiny black knife. "A savage man who might speak French and Latin, who could distinguish between a good claret and a bad, who believed in the blood feud and the Holy Trinity, who would bargain a profitable marriage for his daughter, who would sell his tenants to the plantations but who would touch his sword at the slightest reflection on his honour, an uncomfortable anachronism." The author adds to this description: "As with all barbaric peoples, there was something in his savagery that stirred the imagination of more civilised man, and would leave him restless until he could take it and turn it into sentimental romance. This is what he did with the parti-coloured cloth which the Highlanders wore and which they called the breacan."

It was inevitable that the exiled House of Stuart should turn to such a feudal and military society. The Stuarts had been Scottish Kings - Kings meant less than chiefs to most clansmen; but a Scottish King made more sense than a German one, and the Stuarts were Catholics. There were many other confused reasons - politics and religion, tribal loyalties and jealousies. The clansmen came out because their chiefs told them to do so, and many of them came unwillingly. Not to come out with your clan was to have the roof burnt over your head. Later at the trials when men pleaded that they had been forced out, their excuse was not accepted on the grounds that they should have run away. They never explained where a clansman could have run once he had disobeyed his chief! Later of course - "Romance would come lusting after fact; and lowland ladies would be writing sad songs thirty years after" Being forced onto Culloden field was a plight shared by men on both sides.

The battle, which is described in detail, was a complete victory for the Royal Army- when the clansmen fled the field was surrounded and all the wounded were killed. Soldiers ruthlessly scoured the surrounding countryside; it was a battle in which more people were killed after it than during it. Then came the time of persecution and plunder for the Highlands, though one must remember that in those days to plunder after a battle was a common thing, and often the only way the soldier was paid. The glens were burnt out, the Whig clans enjoyed themselves as much as the dragoons: eight hundred Campbells made the great raid into Lochabar. Each day that Cumberland stayed in Scotland his men were flogged for marauding, but the Army went on plundering. His Orders of the Day did not help the soldiers to understand..."No plundering on any account except by order and in the presence of an officer." Plundering was not the sin, being found out was.

The Highlanders were killed, they died in the gaols, in the hulks, they were transported to the Colonies. Many starved or emigrated because of starvation....."As May passed into June the green fields about Fort Augustus were blackened by herds of cattle, oxen, sheep and goats. Systematically the Highlanders cattle were driven down into England. Neither fire nor sword, bayonet nor hangman's hemp was to have so terrible an effect on the clan system as this vast robbery. His shaggy timid animals were to the Highlanders what the buffalo was to the North American Indian. He lived on them and by them and without them he was nothing. Cumberland knew as Gen. Sherman was to learn in the American West a century later, that a warlike people may be more easily starved than fought. By brutality the Highlands were subdued, the glens emptied, the clans destroyed and the Hanoverian dynasty made so secure that sixty years later the Prince Regent could indulge his romantic fancies by paying for a tomb for Prince Charlie."

Because the tartan was forbidden its wearing died in a generation, the old patterns were forgotten. Not till forty years later was there a beginning of the safe and sentimental Jacobitism that was to drench the Lowlands. "Walter Scott was hard at work creating his Gothic picture of the Highlands, helped by many Lowland gentlemen whose ancestors had regarded the clansmen as savages. Tartans were invented and ascribed to this clan or that, a religious devotion being paid to setts that would not have been recognised by any Highlander who charged at Culloden. When Victoria's humourless German consort designed a tartan that was used on carpets, furnishings and wallpaper at Balmoral all interest in the parti-coloured cloth should have been killed with a giggle." The book finishes.."From Glenadale, Macdonald took 150 men to fight. Within a century there was nothing but the lone shieling of the song. But a lost cause will always win a last victory in men's imaginations. And no British regiment now has Culloden among its battle honours."

It is indeed a very good book; and one which I can heartily recommend. Only in one thing am I disappointed - that the author did not go on to develop his theme at more length. I think he is trying to point out that Culloden explains a lot about Scotland today. When, forty years later, tartans and interest in the Highlands became a romantic fashion, there were many who took advantage of this fact to popularise the idea - for it was a

money-making proposition. Nowadays it is a roaring trade.

The Highlander was romanticised too; and it is ironic to think that what was once considered a savage by his fellow-countrymen - is now cited proudly as an illustrious forbear. Many people spend a great deal of time and money trying to trace that their ancestors were Highland. Only the other day I read in the newspaper that the Americans who are stationed in Scotland have invented a tartan for themselves!

After Culloden there was no tribalism, instead grew up a strong nationalism and a pride in Scottish ways. At school, in Scotland, the first history lessons we are taught are all about the battles between Scotland and England. We hear, in our early years, the stories of William Wallace, Robert the Bruce and Edward the 1st of England - Hammer of the Scots he was called. In all these the English are the villains - and the grim ending is always Culloden.

There runs through Scottish life a strange ambivalence to the English, a half-contemptuous, half-admiring attitude that baffles definition. "Englified" ways are often taken as a sign of higher status; and certainly the higher up the social scale the more noticeable they are. Among the ordinary people no such dilemma arose, for Scotland has always, been, and still is, the poorer country.

Even today there are Scots who talk of the English as if they wore horns. At the drop of a hat, you'll be told how all the strings of power have been taken down to London. Yet the Scottish National Party has never had a strong following. Exaggerated Scots nationalism evokes as much laughter in Scotland as anywhere else, and the man who habitually wears the kilt is looked upon as an eccentric.

On the surface most Scots assent cheerfully to being British, fight in British wars, cheer their British Queen, and pay their British taxes. Where the foreigner is deceived in thinking of us as one nation - Britain - is that he does not realise that the Scot abroad from his home is a different kettle of fish from the Scot at home, and the one lurks not far beneath the surface of the other.

When you call a Scotsman English - his rejection is instinctive and swift. There speaks a conditioning got from his childhood! When our present Queen came to the throne, she was proclaimed Elizabeth the 11. Now, if you recall, Elizabeth the 1st reigned over England alone, only on her death were the two countries reigned over jointly. So there was an immediate protest from all over Scotland; she was Elizabeth the 1st of Britain, they declared. Passions were fierce about this: mailboxes which had Elizabeth the 2nd signs painted on them were blown up with bombs! This was the first sign of violent Scottish feeling for many a long year - and it was heeded..the signs ceased. Notice however that the reaction was immediate.

There are many who say this is all very silly nowadays; not only should we be one nation, but we ought to be looking forward to internationalism. Yet we cannot leave our history behind and pretend it never happened. For one thing a tour of the Highlands will show you mile upon mile of wondrous but desolate scenery. Nor am I by any means sure that I would like to see a world that held one culture only. It might make for a more peaceful life but it could well be a deadly dull one.

an open letter
to Scottishe readers
from
frances Varley



Dear Readers,

Four times a year we go through the same old cycle. It generally starts with Ethel cooing at Brian. I mean, they are the best of friends so normally they insult each other all the time and argue like mad; but comes the day when she greets him lovingly and, as I said, starts cooing at him..positively laying it on with a trowel.

I raise a sardonic eyebrow at this realising full well what is coming, but Brian accepts it calmly as his due. She goes on in this way for about five minutes and then - comes the sting in the tail..the sixtyfour dollar question. "So you see, Brian love, everything is on stencil for my next issue. When can I have your article."

Without fail Brian then brings forth a list of jobs that just have to be done in the immediate future and the list does not include writing an article for SCOT. Sometimes though it includes jobs around the house or garden that have probably been forlornly waiting attention for months. I get terribly happy and excited when I hear they are going to be done immediately if not before.

Utterly undaunted, Ethel sweeps all these excuses aside as mere mundanity, unworthy of a moment's serious consideration and starts the second phase of her attack--

"Briiiaaan," she coos, "You don't love me anymore".

He, poor soul, tries manfully to refute this gross libel.

"Blacknail!" he cries. "You don't love me or you wouldn't be nagging this way!"

At this stage, I generally fold my tent and steal quietly away. If it is taking place at home, I go off into the kitchen to prepare food for the embattled protagonists. Conqueror or conquered - it never affects their appetites.

Acrimonious accusations continue to fly(though they are usually more dosultry) over the dinner table and all the way to the cinema or theatre we are

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patronising that night. Once inside all is peace. When the film or play is over, they are so busy discussing the acting, plot, camera work, direction etc.etc. that all else is forgotten, right up to the moment when we are putting Ethel on her train home.--

"Don't forget your article, Love." Ethel calls as the train pulls out.

"Yes! Alright!" Brian yells back amiably.

We wave her out of sight, start for home and then Brian puts his quarterly agonised question to me.--"Frances! What can I write about? For God's sake give me an idea!"

Well: it might be alright for you lot, but for me to produce ideas is sheer torture. However, 'Greater love hath no woman' and all that jazz; I sigh heavily, think a bit, then start trotting out my usually woolly and sometimes wild suggestions. Not once has he ever accepted one of them. Not once!

Once or twice I have produced something I have been convinced was dazzlingly witty, brilliant, satirical, clever and even downright intellectual. I expound it with enthusiasm then sink back exhausted by the unwonted mental exercise, waiting for his applause, his gratitude, his sense of wonder at something so magnificent.

He just looks at me, you know, that sort of look; or else he says, "Yes, go on."

"But it is finished" I cry frantically.

"Oh" he says.

And that's that.

A couple of days later, he produces an article with a flourish and asks me what I think of it. Still smarting under the callous rejection of my brain child, I read it grudgingly and tell him (but in polite critic's parlance) that it stinks.

"Good, good!" he chortles and sends it off to Ethel quite happily. The fact is that, as soon as I express a poor opinion of anything Brian writes, as sure as God made little apples (did He?) some fans write in saying "Machinvarley excels himself this time" or "Varley's piece is the best thing he has ever done." Heigh, ho, so I know but nothing about what the fans will or will not like.

Anyway to bring you up to date--we have just been through this cycle once again, but this time when he asked me for ideas, I started to object and say that it was about time I had some egoboo for this column of Machinvarleys. "After all," I said, "four times a year I have to think and though you never use my gorgeous ideas--and what opportunities you miss--" and so on and so forth.

He turned to me suddenly his eyes shining with unholy glee. "You've done it!" he said, "Frances, me old fruit, you've done it" (This is Brian at his most romantic.)

"Done what?" I wondered.

"That's it" he burred, "why there's enough material there for a serial let alone an article."

"What?" I said with exasperation.

"Why have I never thought of it before, I can keep the fans in stitches for years!"

"What on earth are you talking about?" I yelled, beginning to lose my temper.

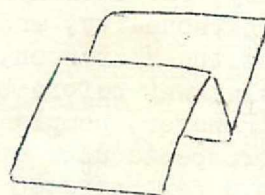
"My next article is going to be about you" he said, "Oh brother! There's enough screamingly funny material to see me through the next three year's issues" and on he went, laughing like a drain, a big dirty threatening laugh.

OPEN LETTER 3

So that's why I thought I had better get my word in first. I mean, I thought I ought to explain to all you readers about how nice I am. Honest, hard-working, truthful, early-rising, modest, gentle, kind..in a word..lovable! Anything Machiavarley tries to tell you to the contrary will merely be a product of his overworked imagination or an out and out lie.

Frances Varley.
47 Tolverne Rd
Raynes Park.
London. SW 20.

LETTERS



Roy Tackett
915 Green Valley Rd NW
Albuquerque
New Mexico.

"Of all the goodies in SCOT 30 I enjoyed most the poem by Brian Aldiss. I don't know how it stacks up as poetry but it well captures the spirit of SF. Isn't that what captures us? A dream, a hope, a leap beyond the mists of time? If only more of

the current crop of writers had that feel for stf, we'd be in a new golden age. Unfortunately too many of them merely look at stf as a way of projecting their ideas of social trends..most of them on the downbeat side. I think this is reflected too much in fandom. The items by Varley and Birchby, while good, are depressing. Sid's piece, of course has a bit of humor too but it is humor with an edge to it. It comes, one supposes, from Britain's unenviable position in the cold war. It is comforting to think that we are a bit further away-- we'll get 15 minutes warning. I'm an optimist, of course, and doubt that there will be a war between us and the USSR. The more I read and study the international situation the more I'm inclined to think that SIXTH COLUMN was a fine bit of prognostication. Do you recall the old "Tomorrow" series from ARGOSY? Written by Zagat, I believe. The big war will, I fear, be fought on racial lines. Pity. M.Charles deGaulle seems to have made all the discussion about Britain's entry into the Common Market somewhat superfluous. I think your answer to Wim Struyck's question was quite good, Ethel. As you point out too few Europeans have a conception of the sheer size of the US. This is the main thing that makes us so confusing since we have the room for so many different opinions and political shades. It is further from Boston to San Francisco than it is from Amsterdam to Omsk or Teheran or Timbuctu. Boston is further from Honolulu than London is from Calcutta. Put in that perspective I think Europeans could understand us a little better. Say, how do you suppose the remaining Picts, if any, feel about this argument between the Scots and the English?"

++Uh..I'll leave that last question to our Scottish expert Mr Ian Peters.. Yes, a sudden hushed silence has dropt upon my correspondants upon the CM question. I thought that at least Betty would write..maybe they are all thinking?+++

Letters 2

Sid Birchby
40 Parrs Wood Ave
Didsbury
Manchester 20

"By the way I've moved. I'd be obliged if you would pass the word round as far as possible."
++All this craze for copying American ways makes me shake my head sadly..after all..you've only been in that house 20 years!++

Harry Warner
423 Summit Ave
Hagerstown
Maryland. USA

"I hope that the Willis series gets reprinted as a one-shot some day, if only to circulate more widely the remarks about Chuck Harris. Someone ought to compile a list of similar testimonials, for use by fans in extreme emergencies like a visit from a postal inspector or an ultimatum from a parent. I know that there have been others: Dick Eney, for instance, has told me what a change for the better fandom made in his personality, and Alva Rogers recently delivered a paean along the same lines at the Westercon, and I'm pretty sure that nobody ever spelled paean in quite that way before but I'm too upset over postal inflation to look up the word. However, people tend to forget these favorable things about fandom and remember spectacular episodes, mostly the suicides by fans and the cases where fans have demonstrated highly unstable personalities in other matters."
+++I think Alva is right when he predicts a swing in fandom to count our good points. I guess a time comes when folks do think it is better to mention the many kindnesses and the friendliness in fandom rather than the silly feuds.+++

Stan Woolston
12832 Westlake St.
Garden Grove
Calif. USA

"Misinformation is not only between nations but also in the nation. We distrust one viewpoint so much here we split everything, including our government in state and nation, two houses, Presidential(executive I should say)and Judicial parts--and I'm glad because like our 'founding fathers' I distrust the oneryness in people too..And I might say to Wim Struyck that not only is Hollywood not the US but it isn't anything but a name and a point of view fostered on the world in the name of propagandising and industry. I'm tempted to send you a paperback(AMERICAN HUMOR)to confuse you about what America is like--a Doubleday Anchor book that it subtitles"A Study of the National Character". I didn't know we had a character but we sure have had lots of characters. The big liar may not be entirely American in origin but we have had our share, including that nut Crockett that became part of the Texas traditions and some hoaxers that must have inspired some of the traits of fandom. Laughing at ourselves and at politicians and others who might take themselves too seriously is a Way of Life.
++I've just finished reading THE SUPER AMERICANS..so I now know all about the Texans..Dear me, and I slept nearly all the time we were driving through there.

Seth Johnson
339 Stiles St
Vaux Hall.
N.J. USA

"Is there one book or author whom you would consider gives a true picture of England the way it really is in an objective but interesting way? A friend of mine was teaching at a boarding school for deaf mute children. She told me that some never got any post

By my mentioning this in letters there has been a tremendous response from

Letters 3

fans over here. As a result no children are reduced to tears at mail call. Which brings up another thought. How about British boarding schools for children? Might well be British fandom could start something of the same sort. Another thing you might be able to help on. Some of the neofans in N3F have been wondering about this deal where I trade my prozines for British prozines and books. Wonder if in an unofficial way we couldn't get some sort of trading service just to put British and American fans in touch with each other for trading purposes. Nothing elaborate but just possibly a list of Americans on leaflet for someone like you to distribute in England, and a similar list if British would-be traders for this side. Of course it would be much better if this could be an official project of BSFA and N3F. But in the meantime some small direct action might be instituted. Now understand the only thing I've done so far is kick the idea around in round robins and am now attempting to kick it around in Scottishe. If there is any reaction I'll undertake the corresponding end of it and mailing out of circulars this side of Atlantic."

+++I've been reading nothing but books about Americans so cannot answer your question; I trust that some other SCOT reader can? The project for children over here--well first we'd have to find out if there were children needing correspondants; as soon as I catch up with our Almoner, I'll ask. Only: most hospitals over here have a very efficient League of Friends. Lastly, the trading project sounds like a good idea, again perhaps some SCOT reader will be interested. As for myself: since I've come back from the States I have been inudated with requests to help projects and take official posts--and I can't do them all--that way none of them would get done right!+++

Wim Struyck

Wille Brordusstr 33 B
Rotterdam 11
Holland.

"If the only things you know about Holland come from a book I WILL MAINTAIN it can't be very much. Seeing that you are interested in politics(which I hate), and seeing the name of that book, I can about imagine what it is all about. And as I know that the majority of the Dutch people is not interested in politics, and does not even know the meaning of "I will maintain" (In Holland the motto is known only as the French version Je maintiendrai) I'm afraid you must have got wrong impressions. This brings me in a difficult position. If I tell you that there really exists windmills here, and that some people still wear wooden shoes, and that we have our tulip bulbs ready waiting in our garden for the coming of Spring, you will get wrong impressions again. The best thing to do, seems to me, to come and see for yourself.+++

Spring..ah yes..I've heard tell of that season seems to me..its the one that is long acoming..boy! is it long over here! It seems to me very silly to say that you "hate politics" in that sweeping fashion; are you sure you don't mean you never think about politics? The majority of people in any country do not think about politics. It is one of the most interesting, exasperating, frustrating, blood-pressure-raising, exciting, rewarding, and thought-provoking subjects in this world.+++

Colin Freeman

Ward 3
Scotton Banks Hosp.
Knaresborough.
Yorkshire

"First an explanation(but not an apology) to Ian Peters. I'm afraid I did make some inane remark about Scottish Independance, but this was because I didn't take his article seriously, and not because I missed the point. I have never given the subject

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much thought, mostly because I have never thought of the Scots as foreigners. I have never bothered to use "Britain" and "England" in their correct contexts as they are more or less synonymous to me. Scotland is just another part of the same country, like Lancashire or London. From the economic point of view my sympathy lies entirely with Scotland. Here in the north of England we are having exactly the same problem now, unemployment increasing fast, industry is moving south to the London area and we feel that Parliament is completely indifferent to our plight. Even from the emotional point of view I am on the side of the haggis. I would hate to see a world run on absolutely practical lines with no regard to national and racial character. If some degree of regional autonomy is going to help Scotland then I have nothing to say against it, but there are such a lot of good causes worthy of support- and surely Ian Peter's doesn't expect me to spend my life waving the banner for all of them. I now appreciate that it is a personal and touchy subject for him, but he has taken offence where none was intended. Sometimes we have to laugh and poke fun at serious things. I'm afraid that I must take up arms against you now Ethel. Just a little remark that you think my NHS article in PANIC BUTTON was misplaced humour and a poor show. May I suggest that perhaps you have taken it this way because the NHS is your personal pet subject and I have hit you on a sensitive spot. You are always defending the NHS against all criticism and you take this particular topic so seriously that you can't even bear to see fun poked at it."

+++As both Colin and I have found to our dismay (well sort of...) we are both compulsive letter-answerers. The amount of correspondence that has been winging between us -my goodness! So in the course of it we straightened this one out. I apologised for not making my point clearer which was: that I thought his article should not have appeared in that particular zine as it is sold to the general public over there and would act as ammunition to the folks who rave against what they persist in calling "socialised medicine". I had not meant to imply that I thought the NHS beyond criticism. Colin agreed with the point about PANIC BUTTON..so amiability reigns all around.+++ Colin finished up his four-page closely written letter with these words... "And you appealed for brevity. I should have looked the word up in the dictionary before I started this letter."

As there has been quite a dearth of letters this time round maybe it's just as well he forgot to consult the dictionary. Once again I must say that the fanzine editors who trade with me have nothing to worry about no matter how infrequent their schedule. But some of the others..I've got the chopper handy for the mailing list.

Ethel.

Warblings

Walt Willis

Unless I start to lead a more humdrum existence or I get a move on with these memoirs I'm going to start losing ground. I shall have to cover at least three months of the past each instalment.

So this time I'll try to polish off 1952. It's made easier by the fact that I have already written up six weeks of it in unremitting detail in the Harp Stateside. I left that account on the tender at Southampton at the last sight of the Neptunia because it was the nearest approach to a climax, or at least a natural termination. What happened afterwards was, until I got home, something of a let-down. I got the train for London with a minute to spare and no time to notify anyone of my arrival, and when I got to Waterloo there was no one there to meet me. I was a bit let down, because I thought there might have been. I said as much to Chuck in the first letter I wrote when I got home...

I haven't even read some of the letters here but I do gather you people were expecting to see me in London. I'm sorry to have dashed away like that, but by the time I got to Waterloo I was very browned off with lugging that luggage and with my travelling generally and when there was nobody there to meet me I thought what the hell and phoned BEA and made a reservation. I didn't fancy making the safari to Welling (where Vince Clarke lived then) without native bearers. If I'd been in Vince's place I'd at least have met the likeliest train--I got up at 6.30 one morning to meet the Liverpool boat that time we thought he might be coming--but that's Vince and I wouldn't have him different for the world. But I do think he might have given me a phone number to ring. As it was I sent him a telegram to meet me at Waterloo that afternoon and we had until then until the plane left at six. Anyway I wasn't so keen on going to the White Horse...I was very fed up with large aggregations of fans.

While waiting until it was time to meet Vince who at that time was out of work, I wandered about London, feeling very anonymous and sophisticated. Anonymous because I was surrounded by fans who didn't know I was there, and sophisticated because suddenly London was so commonplace. Only six weeks ago it had been to me a distant and glamorous metropolis, attainable only after weeks of preparation and a whole days journey. But to a world traveller, familiar with New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, and about to fly home that evening, it was like my own backyard. Both feelings were curiously sad and pleasant.

Back at Waterloo and I met Vince and reclaimed my suitcases from the Left Luggage Office, and we made our way to the Air Terminal talking all the way. There was so much to talk about I didn't find out until I got home why he hadn't been at Waterloo in the first place. He had written to me care of the Shipping Company and they hadn't delivered his letter: it reached me eventually in Belfast and I wrote to Vince explaining this and various other things, such as:

After a suitable interval I hauled Madeleine over the coals for not passing you on the gen from the letters I wrote her, intended for the SFNEWS. I told her she should be a member of the London Circle. (Her lawyers tell her this is grounds for divorce)...I don't right now feel like writing anything about the trip---I'm in a sort of deep spiritual exhaustion...by the way, thanks for passing on the quote from Shelby's letter. I've been wondering what the reaction was---I'm afraid to open fmz that come in nowadays..... Lee and I are going to start a whispering campaign in fandom that Burbee and Ianey are That Way. Have already started by making James change an inscription mentioned in his current pro story to "CB loves FTL". ...the main impression I took home from the Chicon is that we in Britain won't really know what a convention is until we engage a hotel for it. The only thing that prevents our conventions from being the mad and glorious affairs that the US ones are is that we give up at 11pm, when the Convention should only be starting...With their set-up the Convention attains very soon the sort of organic unity we know only in the closing sessions. It gathers momentum from day to day instead of, as with ours, being merely a couple of desultory lecture sessions.

It seems strange to think that British conventions used to be like that. But then how familiar some of the rest of this is. Isn't it a strange coincidence that this period in my memoirs should come up at a time when I'm re-on-acting it. And that our editor should have a fellow-feeling now too for that weary WAIT of ten years ago.

The quote from Shelby was a complimentary reference to me. He wrote direct, too, his letter starting..

...and what do you say after you say "It's over?"

9.29.October 10th 1952

Suppose I just try saying: "Hi, Walt----"

Now that it's gone and finished, what do we do; pick up like nothing has happened. Start over again? Pretend we don't know one another? Try to ignore the whole thing? Awccl.

But then he reverted to his usual cheerful self and went on for another four pages about his plans for Confusion and everything.

But I wasn't the only one in the house getting letters from Americans now. Madeleine had an unexpected one from one Robert Bloch.

Dear Madeleine,

The other day a man named Chuck Harris requested that I do a piece on Walt's visit. I turned it out for him in short order..having some difficulty, as I had previously done a number of similar items for fanzines in this country and was running out of foolishness on the subject.

I sent it off and thought no more about it until last night.

Then I got to thinking that I have been a damned fool and I had better write to you.

Fan humor, so-called, has always been pretty rough...through the years I have more or less fallen unconsciously into a pattern of acceptance, and have gone

along with perpetrating some rather outrageous libels more as a matter of course than anything else. This based on the feeling that fandom as a whole can dish it out and take it without being too serious about the matter.

Knowing Walt as I do, I had(at the time)no hesitancy or guilty restraint in laying it on pretty thick.

Quite suddenly I realize that someone else is involved..viz, you..and I might have unthinkingly embarrassed you by depicting Walt as a crude, libidinous, besotted monster. Even though you probably realise it's all a gag, still the repetition of such japeries may have irked or upset you. If that's the case..please accept my sincere and humble apologies along with this explanation. I want you to know despite my libels, that I (along with a couple of dozen of other pros and Americo fans who have recently corresponded with me on the subject) hold WAW in the highest esteem. But oddly enough, our way of showing our esteem usually takes this negative, backhanded method of humorous slander and calumny.

Now my conscience is somewhat clearer..and the next time I concoct some vile slur about your husband I'll do so with the feeling that you know it and there's no truth in it!

Only hope that some day you will be able to accompany Walt on a joint expedition to the colonies here..if you're half as nice as he says you are, American fandom is missing something.

You needn't show this note to Walt if you don't want to..it might be just as well for him to go on thinking of me as a complete stinker. After all, the poor guy is entitled to have a few illusions!

Believe me to be,

yours most sincerely,

Robert Bloch.

I don't suppose I need have quoted that letter, because most of you already know what sort of guy Robert Bloch is. But I don't like to see a man do so many good deeds by stealth without being from time to time exposed. Early in 1953 I had a closely-typed 11-page letter from Richard Elsberry and I wrote him a six page reply. We had only the most desultory contact before and after, and it was as if we had discharged a whole lifetime of correspondence in one great spasm. Looking back on it, that huge flashover illuminated a watershed in fannish history, and I'll keep some of it for the next instalment, which will deal with so-called Seventh Fandom. But there are parts of it which seem too appropriate for this present mood of mine not to quote here...

One of the things I've noticed since I got back is that it's harder to write letters to some people. It's like those stereoscopic viewers. The first time you look through them the eye persists in seeing two separate images, until your brain makes the adjustment. Before I went over I had perfectly clear mental pictures of the people I met. Now I have another perfectly clear mental picture, but just slightly different. Not much more different than the two pictures in the storeoscopic viewer, but still different enough so that you're not quite sure which one to concentrate on...
...I wasn't offended by anything you said in your con report. In fact I guess I got off lightly. I feel rather as if I had passed my finals. I expect you can imagine how I feel about this whole thing, how important it was to me that this Fund affair wouldn't appear to posterity as a dismal misguided flop. And it's not what happens at the Convention that matters

as far as that's concerned, but what happens in the conreports.

...as for the Hoffman angle, I was expecting some talk about that. It's rather peculiar the way this happened. People had been assuring me that I'd be surrounded by crowds of neofen and I'd finally come to believe they might actually be so very different from English fans. Of course at the time I actually believed that the younger fen wore helicopter beanies. So I just naturally waited for them to come to me. Everything was so hectic that it wasn't until the con was nearly over and I totted up mentally the list of fans I'd met against those I hadn't, that I realised people weren't thrusting themselves forward. I was being accompanied by a train of a few like Ish and Beale and Mitchell who had little backwardness, while dozens of people I'd really wanted to meet were staying tactfully away. I'm not accustomed to being a social lion and it was really hard for me to accept that if I wasn't seeing much of Shelby it wasn't because Shelby had other things he preferred doing, but because he thought I mightn't want to see him. By the time this possibility had dawned on me the convention was nearly over...But if I didn't see as much as I wanted to of some people the fault was theirs or mine, not someone else's. Certainly I don't think anyone should blame Lee or Max. Curious that no one criticises Max, with whom I spent as much time as with Lee.

...You have some real complex stuff in that Pogo thing. Vince Clarke would love it and I must pass it on to him when I get my energy back. Right now I can't even get interested in psycho-analysing Su Roser; though there was a time when I thought about her a lot. She really shook me that time. I had my guard completely down, full of bonhomie and vague amiability, and a type like that was the last thing I expected to bump up against. I'd known people like that when I used to knock about with the arty crew in the local Bohemia but I never expected to find one in fandom...and so young too. Extraordinary. I kept wondering why she behaved like that. I mean, where's her percentage? It's a useful act in a highbrow set, where the idea is to get a reputation for eccentric genius without actually doing anything, and you get invited to parties as a sort of turn, but in fandom where most intercourse is on paper it doesn't seem to me it should work out so well...Maybe she's trying too hard, not realising that in fandom any girl with looks is bound to be a big hit anyway. The nymphomaniac act was just piling Pelleas on Melisande. I really did like America. I felt absolutely at home there. The people knew what I was saying, I knew from the movies how to get about in it, and after the first few days it didn't feel like a foreign country at all.... Thought the postal service was poor, as if the US was so deeply committed to private enterprise that they were reluctant to have a public one, and couldn't get used to not being able to send a telegram from a post office.. The average nonfan citizen seemed pleasant and amiable, though with maybe a higher percentage of ignorant louts. Though maybe that's only because where people are less inhibited in expressing themselves you recognise bores sooner...It would be better if your cinemas would allow smoking and ban popcorn. You drive twice as fast and twice as well...You have an irritating habit of disguising your tv sets as 18th century commodes...Your food is more plentiful than ours, but no better cooked, and in most households not treated with proper respect. The American kitchen not only looks like a snack bar, it often actually is...I thought your newspapers dull and unweildy. I resented being a captive audience for commercials in Public transport. I think drug stores are wonderful..The story about there being

no class distinction isn't cant , it's true and wonderful.
The supposedly unpleasant features of the AWof L one reads about, like low educational standards, crime, corruption, greed and conformity, I didn't have personal experience of. The climate didn't affect my health I felt sort of dull and mentally anaesthetised much of the time, that I think was the absorption of too many new impressions, and the heat.

It's curious how little of this letter I would change if I was writing it again today. Of course being so much older and wiser I didn't make the same mistakes at the Convention: I made a whole different set of new ones. The bit about Sue Rosen is put in because it will be of intense interest to those of you who knew her later. She has for years been living a strange secret existence in the shadows of fandom, a sort of Dark Lady of the DNQ's As far as I know she has been mentioned only twice in public, once in the Harp Stateside and once in an outrageous letter from Ray Nelson in Hyphen, which I couldn't resist printing. You must remember the episode it recounted - the punch-line was "And tell Harlan Ellison our engagement is off!"

Walt Willis.

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....and the next one will be?

The above TAFF reports can be purchased through Ron Ellick or myself. Our addresses are on the enclosed or on forms.

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hatterings

I did not write any mailing comments for the mailing before last, but there are two outstanding items that I would like to take up. First is from John Roles MORPH 28. In this John refers to my remark to Betty Kujawa that "the old wealth of England is not nearly bled dry." John says I am quite wrong and goes on to say that the Death Duties Act is "criminal robbery of the rich" John asks me if I think "it right and fitting" that if a man leaves two million pounds, his heirs get £400,000 and the tax collector £1,600,000. Well, dear John and the rest of OMPA ...I am not about to weep into my tea over it. After all: I pay taxes too, and they are quite large for the size of my income. A person being left £400,000 is getting more money than I will ever see in my life, and it's doubtful that he will be a more useful citizen. I just cannot, with my background, feel sorry for the taxes the rich have to pay. If vast estates are broken up, I am not broken-hearted. How could I be when I think myself fortunate to have a bed-sittingroom to myself? And, indeed, know that I am fortunate compared to the wife of an unemployed man in the north.

Well you may ask..what is this background that makes you so heartless to the rich? Even if you don't ask - I'm gonna tell you!

I was born in Dundee, Scotland in 1921. Three years after the so-called Great War and bang in the middle of the great depression. Dundee was hard hit; in those days there was only one source of work-the jute factories - and the orders were hardly coming in at all. Among my childish prattle were the words "short-time" and to anyone who grew up in Dundee then these were words of dread. To hear your Father come home and say "We're on short-time" was to see your Mother turn pale. When I look back I cannot quite understand how my parents managed, my brother and I were always warmly clad and we were never hungry. Yet I do remember coming home from school and being told we were having toast for tea, of being pleased for I loved the job of toasting large quantities of bread which my brother spread with margarine. It didn't occur to me then, though it does now, that it wasn't much of a meal for a man to come home to. I can remember that my Mother took in sewing; she had to do it secretly, if the 'authorities' found out the money she made would be deducted from my Father's 'dole' money. Night after night I would see her repairing sheets and piles of linen for a nursing home. She would fill a large basket with this, and at night when it was dark, we would carry this round all the back-streets till we reached the nursing home. I can remember seeing many children bare-feet with ragged clothes. I can remember seeing men queuing up outside the Labour Exchange. But most of all I can remember the story that went round Dundee like wildfire..this story.....

There was a large queue of men outside the Labour Exchange for word had gone out there were some jobs going. Sure enough, the doors opened and the queue began to move forward. There was, however, only a certain amount of jobs, and the time came when there were no more and the doors were closed. The man in whose face these doors shut had been standing for hours, no doubt praying that this very thing would not happen. Perhaps he came out without breakfast, I do not know, I have thought of him often, but I do not know his name or his circumstances. What I do know is that he burst into tears, and was in such a state that the doors were opened again, and they took him in. I must have been about seven when I heard the story; I can clearly recall the awe I felt at the idea of a grown-up crying. Well, I'm grown-up too now and I know, alas, grown-ups do cry and often with good reason. That my parents never shed tears (where I could see) says a lot for them when I realise now the years of heart-break they had-the endless trying to make ends meet, the never being able to save, the constant plans frustrated for lack of money. When better days came..they came too late for the things they would have liked to do for my brother and I.

"Criminal robbery of the rich"! Get away, man! If I were in charge they'd maybe not even get that £400,000. There are plenty families in the north right now to whom even a particle of that would be a godsend.

The other point I must touch on is Bill Donaho's remarks in VIPER 6 - else he might think I was chicken. Bill writes that he meant to be provocative - and that's just what he is....provoking! I have a good mind to go back there and (if I could reach that far, I could always stand on a chair) biff him on the nose. I won't be called Scotch.

Josephine Tey was born in the Highlands, her real name was Elizabeth Macintosh. She died, unfortunately, in 1952, and left in her will that all profits from her book should go to the National Trust. So if Bill had really been getting his knowledge of Scotland from her; he would have been getting it from a Highlander with her tongue in her cheek. It takes a Scots person to know where to poke fun at us properly; the sort of thing that Tey tossed off so cleverly is really far more enjoyable to another Scots than it ever could be to an American or Englishman. THE SINGING SANDS, her last book, is full of things of delight to me. Such as "When Pat was 'not speaking' to you he was always not speaking in the best English." The description of the Scots revolutionary who was born in Liverpool is truly inspired. And listen to the sheer conceit of the highland tones when Tey writes of the possibility of being ruled from Glasgow as a fate worse than death. There speaks the Highlander of the latter days..who walks from the highland home to London with a whisk of the skirts aside from the lowlands. Man, you don't know the half of the jokes in this one! You think we are daft saying that the Scots and the English are a different nation...why even Scotland isn't one.

Don't you know that up in the Islands and Highlands they are all a wee bit touched?

Did you say something up there in Lerwick?

I'll be interested to know if you folks Out There think Frances Varley's letter as hilariously funny as I do. Honest..I wiped tears of laughter from my eyes. But then, I know that this is the way it happens, every time. I do not present my contributors to you, dear reader, without much trial and tribulation. Of course Walt is further away from me; I have to think up other cajolments. I'd tell you all about them but I think he reads my column. ATOM? Ooh he thinks he is the zine.

NATTERINGS 3

I have been busy since before Xmas writing up my TAFF trip report. This is now on stencil--all 60 of them. Because I kept my head down and slogged on I have had to neglect a great deal of ordinary fanac. Letters have piled up and been answered only slowly. Fanzines have shoaled in, been read and filed but not commented upon. I feel very guilty about the latter for there has been such a wealth of good zines. A SENSE OF FAPA, WARHOON, CRY, SHAGGY, and YANDRO spring immediately to mind; but there have been many other zines that tempted me to comment. Bear with me please, faneditors, I hope to restart my zine of comment HAVERINGS soon. You will understand, I am sure, that for the moment TAFF must come first.

Speaking of TAFF...I learn from Ron Bennett that he still has over 100 copies left of COLONIAL EXCURSION. This represents almost £40. Ron takes a great loss in money and TAFF gains not at all. Won't you help out? Many of you cannot have a copy of this very entertaining account of Ron's TAFF trip. Knowing this had happened to Ron is what decided me to send out order forms so that I might have some idea of the amount of copies to run off. If you will all rally round with this I promise that all proceeds will go to TAFF. I do not grudge a penny of what goes to TAFF; but I would grudge a stack of zines gathering dust in a corner. Please help!

I wonder if it happens to every returning TAFF delegate? The sudden rush of mail, the constant pleas to help with this or that project, the many offers of official posts? This I believe could lead to the sudden gaffiation of a returning delegate. On behalf of those who will follow me I would say --please folks--take it easy--that's rather a stunning experience they have just gone through--they are bound to be bone tired--the trip report should be started as soon as possible--what the TAFFee needs is a little less fanac for a while, not more.

Ethel