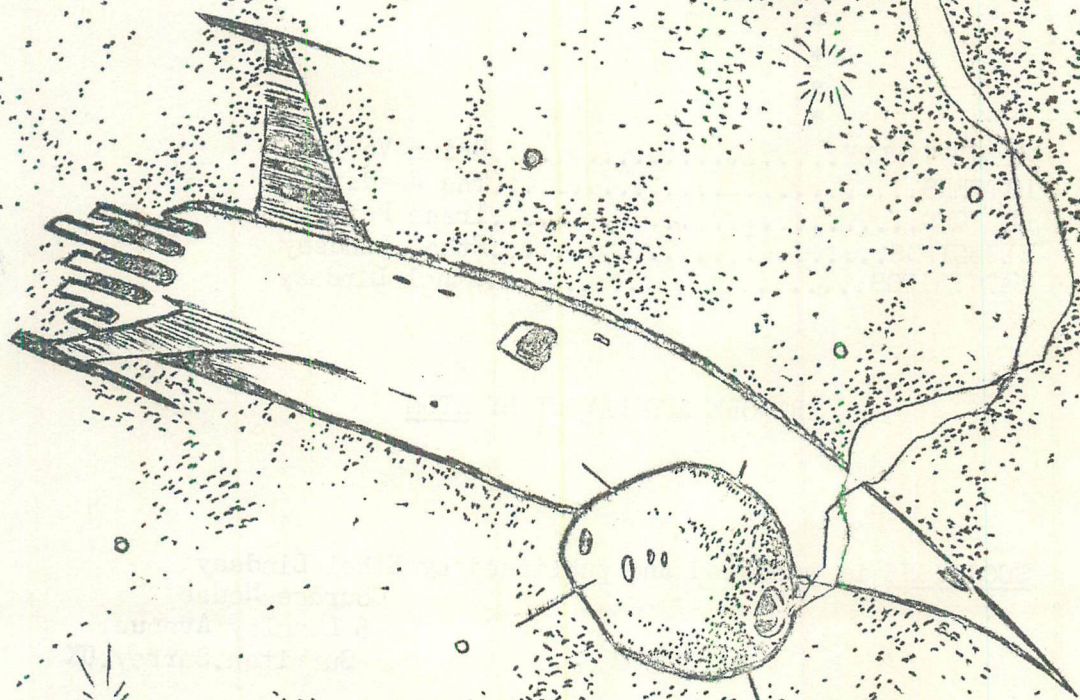


Scotch



Atom

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APRIL 1966 SCOTTISHE No 40

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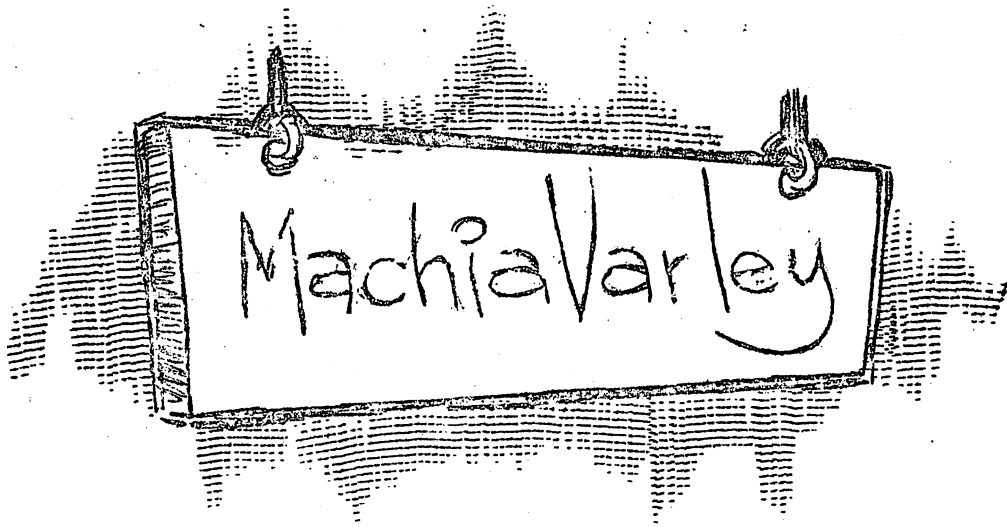
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A house is not a house without a name. The steady, dull crawl to bourgeois respectability receives the final accolade with the erection of the name plaque on your mass produced, Type 41AB/6 Wimpey slum-of-the-future. Such are the creaking, teetering status symbols with which plebian souls prop up their self-esteem. There appears to be an unwritten law that one can only make the postman's job utterly frustrating by ignoring the number of ones house when it is semi or fully detached. One never hears of a "Chez-nous" or "Dunrovin" in Coronation Street, thus the change from number to name signifies to all, relatives, friends, acquaintances, Littlewoods or Vernons that another maggot has elevated itself fractionally above the roiling surface of the cheese.

I suppose I might be fortunate to have achieved a measure of cynicism at an early age. Once indeed I took pride in living at "Calumet" and not No 6; but on reflection it was ill-named for conflict between my brother, sister and I was continuous. "Ypres" or "Mars" would have been much more appropriate for the sniping never ceased. Thus I now feel that Frances and I would have more chance of happiness in Flat 43, Peabody Buildings, than in "The Nest".

For many years, living in London in flats or hostels the question never arose. Admittedly during a stroll round the suburbs in a low frame of mind, micturition was induced, and prevented with a supreme effort of will, by the sight of "Mon Repos" or (oh strike ye gods) "Luvslair".

Again, to name a house can in time, lead from grandeur to irony. A relative of mine lives at "Moorland View", now the hillock opposite is being converted to an estate with a view of smoking chimneys and television aerials. "The Laurels" now only advertise the Hardy-ness of the occupants, "The Paddock" overlooks a Bingo Hall car-park. Thus the cup is snatched away.

When Frances and I first moved into Tolverne Road our bourgeois spirits bubbled forth. I wanted to call it "The Bog", Frances

MachiaVarley 2

"The Sty". At one point we almost compromised on "The Bogsty", but the matter was still up for arbitration when we left, so No 47 it remained. Actually, any of these names would probably have knocked £200 off the price, which would have been an expensive whim. Our present house had a name, but some brave soul painted it out before we arrived, thus saving me a job. It will remain, I vow, at simple No 11 come hell, highwater, or the Conservative Party.

One of my friends, recently married, is the proud possessor of a Wimpey bungalow, newly erected amidst a sea of clay. The house across the way is owned by a jolly soul who works for Apollo Films, so with great ingenuity he has called his castle "Apollo Villa". This piece of utter yukkiness involved a desire to respond in my friends. He works for the Medical Insurance Agency so "MIA)CASA" seemed fairly appropriate. His wife, Joan, however being a school-teacher and a union member in good standing opted for "The Nut-house". This thing gets to be a drug..his name is Haslam, her maiden name is Tennant, so what could be more truly suited than "Hasten Home"? So the game goes on, perhaps the best solution is an ornate sign suspended in rustic woodwork proclaiming "44".

Enough for now, I must hurry to despatch this to "Courage House".

Brian Varley.

Notices.

For sale: Nineteen copies of THE LINDSAY REPORT. 7/6d or \$1 per copy
The Tale of a TAFF Trip. All proceeds to TAFF

A very few back copies of SCOT 38 and 39. 2/- each
A few back copies of HAVERINGS 21. 1/3d each

HAVERINGS is a fanzine of comment upon fanzines received.

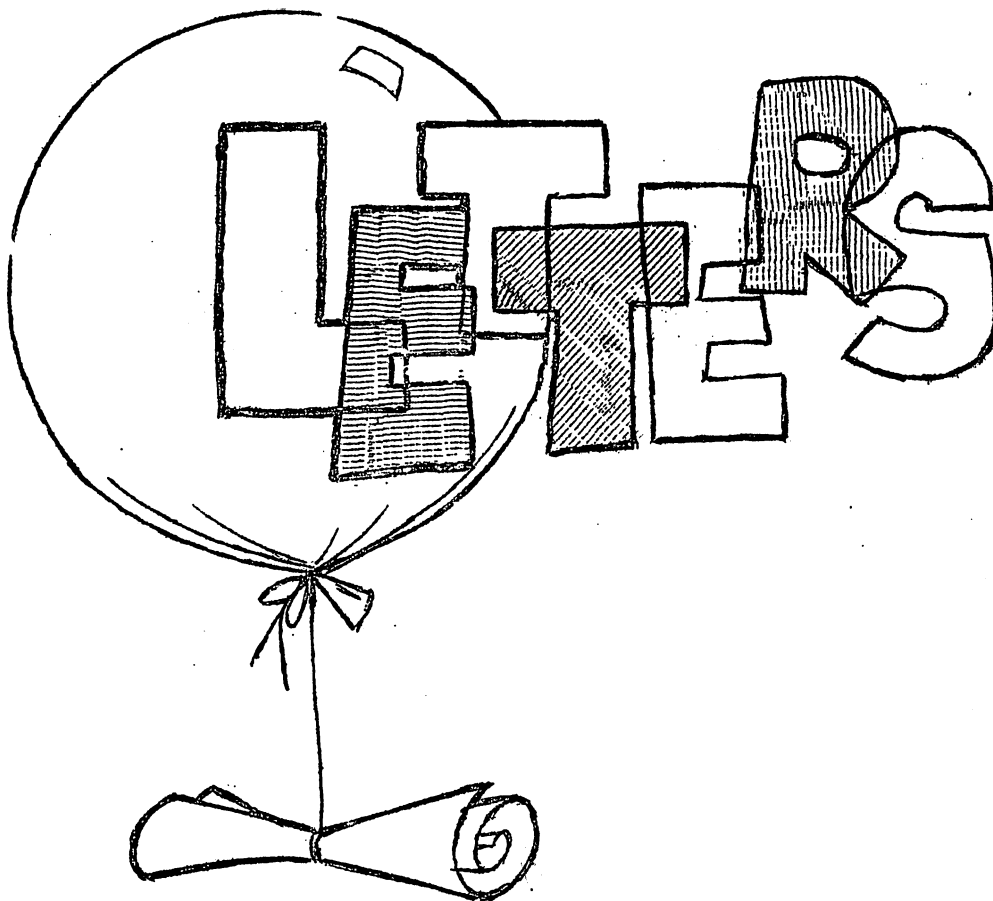
.....

WANTED

The following books are wanted by Ethel Lindsay. Please state your price..or swop can be negotiated..

Robert F.Kennedy by Gary Gordon. Monarch Books.
Bobby Kennedys New York. Avram Ducovny. Bantam Books

.....
The third book that I wanted and advertised for in the last issue was got for me by Dickini(who else?).



Robert Bloch: "So good to get SCOTTISHE and realise that you are settling back into normal pattern again. Soon, I promise you, everything will be alright; the Convention will seem like only a bad dream, a hideous nightmare half-remembered from the distant past. Believe me, I'm not just trying to soothe you -- it's true. I personally know at least two Convention Committee people here in the States who have made a complete recovery; a dozen or so years later, one would never so much as suspect that they'd once suffered the agonies of a full-scale Worldcon. Both of them are back at work, doing perfectly well, and leading respectable lives. So take heart! You may not believe me, but the day may yet come when you'll be able to walk past the Mount Royal Hotel without any reaction but a slight shudder. As for me, masochist that I am, I loved every minute of it -- Ellie and I don't ever expect to top the enjoyment of that experience. And we're eternally grateful to British Fandom for all that lovely hospitality and meat-pies. Of course we did get involved with Irish Fandom later on, but then one must take the bitter with the stout, as it were. And it certainly were."
+++It was receiving cheer-up letters like this that helped me through the post-Con period..and staved off Gafia.+++

Daphne Sewell: "They're a nice crowd aren't they? Although I feel like something alien, being the only Englander there, the rest seem to be composed of your countryfolk. Are you sure it's the London SF Club and not the Scotch SF Club?"
+++Careful dear, careful..it's Scottish..Scotch is what I drink if you

Letters 2

are buying.+++

Stan Woolston: "To Ivor Latto...newspapers and radio plus TV and mags in the US are drunk on the use of labels and so "conservatives" and "liberals" have a foothold in them all. It helps short-cut thought to use them so much--because who agrees on definitions? Our "liberals" aren't necessarily labor; they may include them, but also represent theoreticians and college folk who like to show how smart they are, perhaps...Well, Ethel, I understand your objection to calling a Scot an Englishman. I'm a Midwestern Californian."

+++Sometimes I think you are all mad Lut There..how can you use the word "liberal" to describe a college person who thinks **he** is smart?"

Bill Temple: "Thought I'd written to just about every fan-ed announcing my retirement from fandom and pleading with them not to waste their brain-children on me in future. Not that I didn't appreciate them. On the contrary, the trouble was that I did, and always read them from cover to bacover, pile after pile of 'em. And would drift back to the here and now to find it was bedtime again and I hadn't written a word of my own stuff. So I had to give up fanzines, which turned out to be as tough as trying to give up smoking: both were habits of a lifetime. The guilty pleasure of sampling SCOTTISHE you sent me, damn you, brought on nostalgia. But after this, get thee behind me Satan. Please."
+++I'm gittin'+++

Rosemary Hickey: "Your story about blowing the first attempt at the exam reminds me of my sad attempt to study intensively for a final exam in American Lit. I liked the teacher very much and wanted to impress him with my grade A appreciation of him and his course. Also, there were so many kids around me who had different study habits than mine and who got good grades. I decided that their ways were better than mine and I tried every method. I reread all of the required reading starting the week before the exam. I reread all my notes. I borrowed notes from classmates to see where I had missed some nugget. The evening before the exam I sat up until 11.30pm in the lobby with two other classmates reading our notes to each other and then I went home and reread my notes until about 4am. I woke up easily and quickly (very much unlike my usual sluggish start) and reread my notes on the way to school. In the classroom, I felt so nonchalant, it was delicious. Absolutely not a twinge of concern. It was a kind of euphoria really. Picked up the exam book, and every question was so simple. I could have written that exam in 25mins. It took a little longer because I felt a need to show insight and implications in my answers. Each answer was pages long. And I walked out of that classroom feeling secure in my expectation of an A. Well, when the grades were passed out I was certain that someone had made a clerical error. It was an F which meant passing but barely. I talked with the instructor about this clerical error. He responded by digging out my exam book and showing it to me. First of all - the handwriting was barely like mine. The answers were ridiculous; they had little or no relationship to the questions. I had crammed myself the night before into some sort of an unrealistic state and was so disoriented the next morning that, although I knew the answers to every question, what I wrote down were not. I have

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never crammed again for anything. Never!"

Brian Varley: Thank you for SCOTTISHE which, as usual, was greatly enjoyed by us both, especially the cunning you display in using extracts from our letters to make up the MachiaVarley column. Howsoever I reckon you only did it because you already had a title page prepared.. Frances is busy studying hard, today she is hammering away at English Grammar. At the same time she is shattering my facade of knowledgability by asking ridiculous questions such as "What is a gerund?" and "Define a cognate object". To the first question she was not prepared to accept "an abbreviation for a German dachshound" or to the second "a flying saucer shaped like a cog-wheel." My dearly beloved also finds Geography a bit of a bind, especially map-drawing, and refuses to be consoled by the fact that she is, after all, not the worst map-drawer in England as you yourself hold that honour. However I'm pleased to say that she does thrive on History and Shakespear. I am regularly lulled to sleep by lengthy quotations from Macbeth. Retaliations from my limited poetic vocabulary (i.e Drakes Drum and Daffodils) wear very thin with constant use. I'm now reduced to misquoting like:-
"Duncan's in his graveyard

A Thousand yards away

Banquo art thou sleeping there below." or even, in desperation..

"A Pound of Flesh

Yea Yea!

A Pound of Flesh

Yea Yea!

With some meat like that, old Shylock will be fat..."

Dick Lupoff: "I'm delighted with Bill Donaho's "aping the Bitch Goddess Literature." It holds possibilities for all sorts of bizarre variations. If you can ape a bitch (how would you look doing that?) can you bitch an ape? Or..let's try some more:

--Dogging a cow (in a pasture)

--Cowing a dog (in a corner)

--Crabbing a hog (at the dinner-table)

--Worming a puppy (at the vet's)

--Puppying a worm (?????)

Which leads me to wonder how many names of animals have become words in another context. I don't just mean metaphor ("John Boardman is a silly ass") but real ideas, verbs in particular. You can monkey around or horse around, although you can be piggish or swinish. But I never heard of "Hoggish". (Not to mention annish.) You can worm your way which is quite different from working your pet. You can fish (for fish) but cowing isn't at all like fishing. And calving is something else again altogether. I never heard of bidding, but you can hawk, and every time I take a drink I swallow. However, I never sparrow, only golfers eagle (more often they shoot birdies, which I think is rather a cruel sport), and dove of course is a vulgarism. The correct word is dived. These monkeyshines have toadied about too long. I must pull in my horns now, and fly home to my little lamb of a wife. It's time to wolf down my dinner. We're having hot dogs tonight."

+++You dirty dog..it's a flock of years since you wrote to me; and now you produce this clutch of barnyard noises. Fox! +++

Letters 4

Rory Faulkner: "Say, what's with all the Robert Kennedy books - by and about same? I can't supply you with those - I never heard of them but if I could I'd gladly send you Bobby himself in person, and throw in Teddy for good measure. It would be a dirty trick on a friendly country however..."

+++I can remember once in a fit of exasperation offering to trade the leaders of our three parties..at the time of SuperMac..for President Kennedy...+++

Harry Warner: "The Dalek is something new to me. Maybe it's ignorance or maybe it's confinement to the UK of that device that causes my mystification. I assume from the context that it's some kind of apparent robot that has been featured in a popular television programme over there. There really ought to be some guidebook somewhere that would list all the things that are known in the US but unknown in the UK and vice versa.

Remember how many fans thought John Berry was guilty of literary piracy, in this country, when they learned that the Goon was an airwaves institution before John began writing about a Goon, while everyone over on your side was so familiar with the situation that John hadn't bothered to mention the facts?...It's curious that this argument about names of nationalities should be going on without citing the obvious point that we we aren't exactly accurate when we refer to ourselves as Americans. Well, it's accurate but not specific enough to suit the people who live in Canada and Mexico and various other areas on two continents."

+++You've guessed right about the Daleks..it's a popular children's programme..Dr Who..who is a Time-Traveller+++

Sid Birchby: "The first article I read was Mr Boardman's one about Sir Oswald Mosley. This was because the Mosley family are very closely associated with Manchester, and have been for generations. One of the main streets in the city centre is called Mosley St. The Mosleys have long been the Lords of the Manor of Manchester, and perhaps still are. It was a Mosley who provided the first decent water supply for the city in 1775. And it was a Mosley, also named Sir Oswald, who struck a blow for freedom in 1732 by setting up his own malt mill in Hanging Ditch, in an attempt to break the Manchester Grammar School's monopoly of brewing. This, if nothing else should endear him to the fannish heart. I agree with your writer. It was high time that this family threw up a really great man, and in our Sir Oswald it nearly did. But he did have that certain flaw that made all fail. Here and there in Manchester over the years I have heard chance remarks that seemed to shew that still there lingers a faint allegiance..but whether it is to him as Fascist Leader or to the family, I really cannot say. There is an occasional Fascist candidate at by-elections; but no more so, and with little better luck than in London. One hears tales of So-and-So, a crypto-Fascist who held a high position until 1939, when he was suddenly hauled off to the Isle of Man for internment. But, again, no more so than in London, I suppose. On the whole, the local feeling seems to be one of lingering respect to a great family. On the whole, that is my feeling too. There is nothing inconsistent with my hatred of Fascism in declaring a regret that a promising career went so seriously askew. Today his books are tossed onto the street bookstalls, and find no buyers at sixpence each. In other circumstances, they might have sold in morocco boards."

Letters 5

Joe Gibson: "...you remarked that clothes are getting more like something out of science-fiction. I noticed something else. The universally-popular straight shifts are really knights' tunics from out of the PRINCE VALIANT comic strip! Stretchpants are medieval hose; checkerleg stockings are simply adapted from harlequin hose! And groups of young girls over here address their companions-in-knights'-hose as "you guys"!... I wonder if they're evolving a chivalric code as well? I could see why it might be happening. Equal rights for women is still more preached than practiced, but today it is an accepted concept in general society. I can remember when it wasn't. I've seen it become 'accepted' and watched its effect on women who didn't grow up thinking of it as an 'accepted' thing. Well, now perhaps we're seeing girls grow up who never knew a world that wouldn't even consider it. That's certainly a difference; it's bound to result in a different outlook. However I've observed no evidence in young girls' social behaviour that would indicate any such development. Not consciously, anyway. What I'm beginning to suspect, instead, is that these youngsters don't know what's happening to them. It seems conceivable that something like the PRINCE VALIANT strip could have a strong psychological appeal to these 'emancipated' generations of females who grew up in the past 30 years or so. And that they weren't consciously aware of it. And their subconsciously-motivated flirtation with medieval pageantry in clothing-styles today is more a symptom of a psychological need than of conscious intent. One thing Hal Foster has always played up in PRINCE VAL is that knighthood was the foundation of individualism as it's understood in our western culture. And it was at just the time that the 'lesson' could've made a deeper impression on young girls than young boys."

+++Well..that's one theory..mine is bound up in the fact that, thanks to our modern means of communications, we use up fashions much more quickly now. And the emphasis is all on finding something new, or trying to make something old look new. Nor should we forget the cynical fact that it is youth nowadays who has money to burn. Only the young (and rich) can afford to change as swiftly as the fashion does. In London young girls wear a new fashion the morning after it was announced. Sometimes I think they must stay up all night to whip it up! So naturally fashion caters to the young. The last skirt leap is going to sort out the gals from the women alright!+++

Irene Potter: "Thank you for sending us things. Here's an oddment for you - if you would like it - to fill in an odd corner."

+++It is a very odd thing about your oddment - it's the first thing written by a Potter that I haven't found very funny. I nearly sent it back to you and then I thought - no..let's wait and see what the reader's reaction will turn out to be. Maybe it's something I'm missing. But on the whole I think it would only be funny if one had sat round a table with the Potters and the Asworths and listened to the talk about Fred. Like: the first sentence of your letter.. "Thanks for sending us things" made me chuckle out loud. But that was because I could so clearly hear you saying it and knew so well how your voice would linger lovingly on the word 'things' I'll print the 'oddment' after the letter column+++

Don Wollheim: "The quote from Felice Rolfe from Yandro -(Some liberals aren't even loyal to their friends. Extremists of all kinds bug me, don't

they you?) -is indeed quite an indication of how utterly remote the average American is from reality. The politics of this country are really the utmost fantasy, fiction based upon fiction..Yes indeed, in the studied and repeated propaganda of the Birch Society(reflected more and more,even unconsciously, by saner people), a liberal is a dangerous sort of left-wing Communist Anarchist. "A word is what I mean it to be,"said Humpty Dumpty".
 +++Yes--that a member of the Birch Society would give that meaning to the word 'liberal' I could understand. What puzzles me is how people like Felice(and other fans I have noticed)use this meaning for the word too. I wonder if one could start a campaign in America to give back to the word 'liberal' its original meaning?+++

Many thanks to all the others who wrote. Your comments are appreciated and passed on to the contributors.

Ethel Lindsay

The Potter Oddment...El Fred (A True Story)

Fred staggered into my life one evening sometime late in the year '58 or thereabouts. In one hand he held a half-empty bottle of liquor - long since consumed - the other hand grappled wildly with the air. "Scuse me", he said gruffly, collapsed on a handy sofa and snored there till the gentle morning sun roused him from his deep slumbers. He's been ponping in every now and again for these past ten or eleven years. His visits were never what anyone might call frequent, but now they seem to have dwindled to a once a year blowout - our time-honoured Christmas parties. Just to be friendly he stays later than anyone else. Every time we visit Mal and Sheila Ashworth a time will come - perhaps over the biscuits and cheese - when one of them will say "And have you heard from Fred lately?". Our replies are usually very vague indeed, or they may contain snippets of information like this:

"One extremely lovely day in late summer, Fred, who at this time was employed to drive the passengerboats on Lake Windermere, made ready to cast off the "Queen of the Lake" from her moorings. A beautiful craft this, and the largest on Windermere. Her decks were filled with gaily laughing crowds. All were pleasant like. Well-to cut a long story short and not to be unduly sloppy about it all, - the boat set forth. All went well until they came to a very special part of the trip; special for Fred alone I might add, where it was his custom to wave energetically to his girl friend who taught in a school on the opposite shore. "There's your boy friend Miss", her pupils would chorus and she would wave back. This day she had gone to the window at the usual cry, only to discover a most distressing spectacle.

Fred and a panic-stricken load of passengers were slowly, but surely, sinking beneath the disturbed waters of the lake. One hysterical passenger grabbed a lifebelt and threw himself overboard. However this must have been one of the greatest disappointments of his life, as the lifebelt still being attached to the deck by means of a length of rope, enabled him to swing dryly with much surprise in midair, and later to dangle ludicrously. Fred had overstepped his mark and struck a rock!

At the first sign of trouble Fred opened up the space above the engine

El Fred 2

and shoved himself into it as far as possible. A short, fat man bounded up and tugged at his backside. "Damn it, man -we're sinking!", he bellowed. "Go away, go away", yelled Fred feverishly. Then a sudden thought struck him. He leapt up to the top deck, and hoisted his best sheepskin jacket to the highest available point - after all he didn't want that ruined! The fat man gave a wail of fear and bounded away again, and Fred stuck his head back in the sand, where he imagined he could hear "Nearer my God to Thee" sounding faintly on the breeze.

Succour however was at hand, and two other boats out from the shore and, after a little dillying here and dallying there, all passengers were safely taken off the sinking "Queen". The "Queen" did sink, and the owner wouldn't speak to Fred for two days. This silence was broken by "Don't do it again!"

"And what's Fred going to do now?", asked Sheila. "Well", said Ken, "He's very proud, you know, because he stayed with his ship. Gordon told us all this a few days ago, and he says Fred is thinking of sailing on board a Whaler".

There was a long silence while Mal thoughtfully crunched another biscuit.

Irene Potter.

+;+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+;*+*

Publishing Schedule of Scottishe.

The publishing schedule of SCOTTISHE is -JANUARY..PRIL.AUGUST.OCTOBER.
..bar any fannish or mundane catastrophbs.

Some sign of interest is required, monetary or otherwise, if you wish to continue to receive this zine. I send HAVERINGS out as a Trade item to all faends. The circulation of SCOT is less in this respect as it is more expensive.

Ethel Lindsay



When I was TAFF Delegate at Chicago I scrapped a speech I'd made as I'd been asked to be very brief. Being Scots I never like to waste anything and, although I can no longer remember the exact words, here is the gist of it. I'd been wondering how many people would be at the banquet who had never heard of me; and who would be asking what on earth I had in common with them. I wanted to reach these people--the actifans who knew me didn't need any speech to make them support TAFF. You might think that the obvious answer was SF; but a fair amount of fans at that time hardly read it any more..we talked a lot about the loss of our "sense of wonder". So - what had I in common with everyone else in that hall? My answer was that we were all lovers of reading. We were never so happy as when our heads were tucked between the covers of a book. And we all enjoyed enthusing about a book we liked. We didn't just read books; we wanted to talk about them too. Now if anyone is quick to say that other segments of humanity are like this too, I hasten to add that I don't mean to imply that we are the only ones who enjoy book discussion.

I'd been made vividly aware of just this very thing the night before the banquet when I sat talking to Elinor Busby and Marion Zimmer Bradley about the works of Mary Renault. We discovered we had read them all, not just the historical ones that are so well-known, but also RETURN TO NIGHT, NORTH FACE, and THE CHARIOTEERS. It was the first time I'd had the opportunity to enthuse like that over these books, which are particular

Nibblings 2

favourites of mine. and I suddenly felt very happy. Again, someone may rush to say that fandom is not the only place where I might have found this --of course not--but fandom was the place where it happened to me. Ever since then I have been meaning to start up a 'book talk' column in SCOT.

Usually SCOT starts by my handing ATOM a bunch of stencils. Once they come back to me suitably headed I can start stencil-cutting. Last time the bunch included the above heading with "Fanzine Revoos" written in as well. Arthur is always trying to nudge me into something else in the publishing line. As I am still bringing out HAVER, I've no intention of paying any attention to him. Still as MachiaVarley hints elsewhere, I'm not the gal to waste a heading. So I mean to use it for this 'book talk'. I don't mean reviews. I know what I like and dislike but have no intention of dignifying them by calling my opinions reviews.

Most of the classic plot lines are to be found in the fairy tales of our youth; and it is interesting to trace how a single idea can be expanded, re-worked and re-worked again. I am thinking now of the tale of a child who is stolen or taken away for some reason - brought up in a humble home and --tarah! is found to really be the Prince! He marries the Princess and lives happy ever after. A very simple idea..but how often has it been re-worked I wonder.

I have just finished reading THE CHINA GOVERNESS by Marjorie Allingham. which is what brought all that to my mind. I have been a devotee of hers since I was at the school. It is four years since she last had a book published and I had feared there were to be no more. In this latest she has returned to a favourite setting, that of London. She writes of the London of today with the big multi-storey flats going up where once there were the slums of the East End. She has a wonderful power to evoke atmosphere and she soon unveils a story that twists and turns to a surprise ending. Whodunit is well thought out. Craftily she gets today's London setting with that of the past intermingled. Where these flats stand was a part of the old East End that was flattened in the Blitz. Just before then there was the chaos of evacuation. Buses were coming round to take mothers and babies into the country; pink tickets were handed out to the mothers - one could not get on a bus without them. There was a mother dying in the maternity hospital who had not wanted to worry her soldier husband with the news that she was pregnant. There was a slut of a feeble-minded girl who wanted a pink ticket to safety. There was a child -taken to the country- abandoned-adopted. Now: leap to the present day again..here's Tim, the son of a rich 'county' family about to be married to an heiress. Is it to be a new twist to the old story; will the Prince turn out to be a commoner after all? As investigation delves into the past of that East End slum and violence erupts, it begins to look very like it. In fact all points very strongly to Tim trying to prevent the secret of his birth being discovered. But no--the twist is that the soldier husband is now a local Councillor who has for years been conned into thinking his son was a mentally retarded wastrel. When he discovers Tim is really his son he is too kind to abandon the wastrel who is being marched off to jail..and Tim is too kind to abandon the 'county' family who are unveiled as the dunnitwho.

Nibblings 3

Allingham's characters are always living and breathing; they are never made of cardboard with a plot strung around them. They are, even the minor characters, filled in with love. Here is the description of one from MORE WORK FOR THE UNDERTAKER ... "Pa Wilde would be interesting if he was only on the pictures," said Charlie Luke. "What a shop, eh? What an emporium! Ever heard of Old Ma Appleyard's Dynamite Cough Cure and Intestine Controller? Of course you haven't, but your grandpa used to bung himself up with it, I bet. And you can still buy it there if you want to, in the original wrapping. It may be a bit flyblown but there it is along with every other patent medicine that the world has ever known. He's got all the doings. Great jars of coloured water in the window, dozens of little drawers of muck, smell of an old lady's bedroom enough to knock you back, and old Pa Wilde in the middle of it looking like auntie's ruin with his dyed hair, collar like this' - he strained his chin upward and made his eyes bulge - 'little black tie threaded through a woman's ring with half the stones out, striped trousers, black cutaway all grey with the filth of years'."

This book is filled with lively characters (Jas Bowels and his son Rowley Boy, the Apron-street undertakers, Harry James the bank manager..) not least of which is the speaker in the above extract - Charlie Luke. He is the Divisional Detective Inspector in charge of a "patch" of London. "Charlie Luke spoke without syntax or noticeable coherence but he talked with his whole body. When he described Doctor Smith's back his own arched. When he mentioned the shop front he squared it in with his hands. His tremendous strength, which was physical rather than nervous, poured into the recital, forcing the facts home like a pile-driver"

Running through the Allingham books is the figure of Albert Campion. In the later books he takes more of a background figure, yet he ages in a convincing way; and to see him again in this latest book is to welcome back a known figure. In her early book he is described as a man who had a "certain vacuity in his expression which counteracted the pleasant angles of his face and lent his whole appearance an indefinable quality, so that those who knew him were apt to find him hard to recollect and impossible to describe" Very useful that was too.. Albert was supposed to be the younger son of a very aristocratic family (never defined) but Allingham must have quickly tired of this idea and only used it to emphasise his freedom from ordinary police routine. He is always very friendly with the police who turn to him when they feel he is likely to be especially useful. In these early books he has with him Mr Lugg, an ex-burglar, and he first meets his wife Amanda. We first see Amanda in SWEET DANGER as a young girl, intensely interested in engines (she becomes a design engineer) and delighted to join the derring do. Lugg, rather a comic character in the first books, ripens as the stories pile up. In the second book Campion falls in love with a married woman. It is not until the third book that Amanda makes a reappearance. She becomes engaged to Albert as part of a ruse.. which involves her having a blazing row with him and returning the ring. This tricks the villain into attempting murder and being caught. This engagement is never formally dismantled; which opens the way to the next book TRAITORS PURSE.

Nibblings 4

This is a very exciting story with the suspense well maintained. It opens with Campion suffering from severe amnesia caused by a blow. There is a beautiful description of how it might feel to wake up like that and overhear a conversation that implies you have just killed a policeman. The one thing Albert recognises right away is Amanda..but he doesn't recognise himself...."He had just caught sight of himself with Amanda standing beside him. He was older than he had thought. He saw a horrified man of thirty-five or so, tall and remarkably thin, with a lean wooden face on which there were far more lines than he had expected. She, on the other hand, might still have been at school." A book whose hero is suffering from amnesia for the major part of it; and who struggles to make sense out of the terrible feeling of urgency he has that something he has to do might effect the whole nation in wartime, is brought to a finish with all ends neatly tied in a way to really inspire admiration. At the same time we watch Amanda go through an infatuation that is believable.

In this book the three main characters Campion, Amanda, and Lugg become really rounded. Lugg, in particular, becomes someone you can believe in - cocky, cockney, sentimental and not stupid, not the comic foil only. His reaction when Campion tells him of Amanda's infatuation is..."I see that coming' he remarked brutally. 'It was your own fault for mucking about. Courting a woman's like cooking something. There comes a time when it's done. After that you ought to eat it. If you don't, and keep it simmering on the side so to speak, you're apt to forget it and when you do come to look for it all the goodness is gorn away and you're left with nothing but a bit o' skin. And it annoys the young woman too."

The villains in these early books are all rather large-sized. Of all the characters they are the most fantastic; although the one in TRAITORS PURSE is satisfactorily explained in a way...."The man was brilliant, able, and in his own limited sphere doubtless extremely useful, yet as he stood there, smiling faintly at them, his mistaken belief in his own superiority cut him off from reality as completely as if he were living in a coloured glass jar. The men who trusted and admired him remained looking at him and the same thought was in all their eyes: 'This is not even the stuff that dictators are made of, but this is the kind of madness which is often not found out until it is too late."

Only in one more book does Allingham use madness to explain her villain - DEATH OF A GHOST. Even here she draws a very fine picture of a man who starts off with what seems like only conceited cleverness and an ability to get his own way..who ends up in drooling mania when he is finally caught.

In her later books, however, she studies evil as it is found in the ordinary human heart. She understands well how there is a little of it in us all and what a fine line is drawn between the criminal and the 'ordinary' man. As she points out the criminal has an exalted idea of his own importance..."They honestly think that a bit of their cash or a bit of their convenience is worth someone else's life." She can draw a classic picture of how our emotions can use us. In HIDE MY EYES she tells not only of a ruthless young man who kills for profit; but of the woman who thought of him as a son, and who will forgive him even as he is hanged. Luke describes her well....'She'll forgive him without question, whatever he's done to her and

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and however high we hang him. And he knows it. It's no use blaming her. She can't help herself. She's only a vehicle. That's Disinterested Love, chum, a force, like nuclear energy. It's absolute."

In between the detecting she tosses off many penetrating observations about women.... "Val was struggling between the very feminine desire to remove any misapprehension under which he might be suffering and the instinctive conviction that it would be wiser to leave the subject altogether...." Most women were alarming in that way, he reflected again. They muddled through to truth in the most dangerous and infuriating fashion. All the same they were not quite so clever as they thought they were.. It was astonishing how the simple, direct reactions of the ordinary male eluded them. In many cases he was their main interest and yet they invariably boggled over him, approaching a machine of the relative size and simplicity of a bicycle with an outfit which one might expect to need to take a watch to pieces."..... "Byron, who knew something about ladies if little enough about poetry, once threw off the whole shameful truth about the sex, and, like most staggeringly enlightening remarks, it degenerated into a truism and became discountenanced when it was no longer witty.

'Love really can rot any woman up,' Georgia observed contentedly, 'Isn't it funny?'

'Dear God, isn't it dangerous!' said Val."

.....Ethel Lindsay.

Books by Marjorie Allingham:

Black Plumes

Mystery Mile

Crime at Black Dudley

Flowers for the Judge

The Case of the Late Pig

Sweet Danger

Dancers in Mourning

The Fashion in Shrouds

Traitor's Purse

Death of a Ghost

More Work for the Undertaker

The Beckoning Lady

Coroners Pidgeon

Hide my Eyes

Tiger in the Smoke

The China Governess

They are nearly all available in Penguin.

natterings

You'll remember in the last issue..I was off to Edinburgh.....

My Mother never liked Edinburgh."It's a cold hole" she always said firmly. As I stood in Princes Street and the wind whistled by me, I had to agree with her. Still it is an interesting street with all those lovely shops and the view of Edinburgh Castle with the Gardens below. I sat in these Gardens whilst I wrote home a dutiful postcard to tell them I had arrived safely. Then I caught a bus for Bangour Village Hospital.

Bangour stands in Mid Lothian a quarter of the way between Edinburgh and Glasgow. It was right out in the country; and had been originally a mental hospital. The mental patients were dispersed at the beginning of the war and it had been turned into a Civil Nursing Reserve Hospital. It now housed an odd assortment of patients. In the main unit was a surgery block under the care of Mr Dott, a brain specialist. Furtherup the huge grounds was a self-contained Fever Hospital evacuated, staff and all, from Glasgow. Further up still were large blocks of huts. They were divided in two. One half held service patients with Army staff and this was mainly a special Burns unit. The other half held tubercular patients evacuated from Glasgow.

I was met by a Red Cross officer which startled me more than somewhat as at my parting interview with Matron she had sounded off to me that we would have to be careful that the war had not allowed untrained Red Cross people into places of power! This woman turned out to be Matron's secretary. She addressed me as Sister; and I was too dumbfounded by the

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discovery that all trained staff in the CNR were Sisters to do more than follow her meekly to collect my uniform. The caps were big square tents and I struggled to fold these for ages before collaring a passing nurse and getting her to show me how they were worn.

First of all I was sent to Mr Dott's unit..no doubt to find out what my capabilities were. The ordinary routine work of a ward soon closed over my head. All the patients were servicemen mostly with head wounds; and they all needed a lot of careful nursing. After an operation they had to be 'specialled' - that is have one nurse looking after them continually, often for days. They required blood and plasma drips constantly watched; their pulse chart was vital..the rate and strength having to be charted every 15 minutes.

The men who were convalescent were a gay lot however; they all seemed to have a passion for tea. At meal-times they had an enormous pot; they liked to sit round the table with this and drink till it was empty. They would then walk down to the shop and sit there drinking more tea! Bangour really was a village in many ways; and this shop in the heart of it was a gathering place for staff and patients alike. Here, too, one met the few mental patients who had been left..the ones who worked about the grounds out in the kitchen. No doubt they could hardly be done without.

Work in this unit was interesting as many of the cases Mr Dott tackled were difficult and out of the ordinary. He himself was no ordinary man; he had been a bank clerk but, due to a crippled leg, had become interested in medicine and eventually took his medical degree and went on the the highly skilled branch of medicine that is brain surgery. I found it odd being among so many nurses from Edinburgh Royal; it was rather like being a new girl all over again. I also thought them very snobbish, they did little to make me feel welcome. The only one who was really friendly was a Canadian Sister there to get brain surgery experience. I found too that Edinburgh Royal nurses had not been allowed to do many of the practical things that I had - like taking specimens of blood. This was probably because ER was primarily a medical training school; the nurses got what the medical students left sort of thing. Whereas in my hospital the nurses practical training came first and medical students were given less to do. I was there a month - which was enough for me -and then was shifted to the other end of the hospital as a Relief Night Sister.

I felt more at home with this! I was very used to plunging into a ward, grasping quickly which were the ill patients to watch, where the Sister kept the tea, coaxing the maids into getting on with their work, and how to jolly the patients out of bed in the morning. In a short while I had been round all the surgical wards and had got to know everyone. Christmas came whilst I was still on this duty and I found that every ward had been saving up for months to have one great burst-up. I had an invitation to a different party for every night for over a fortnight and had to give up long before I had worked my way through them all. Never saw so much turkey in all my life!

Then came day duty and I was placed in the Tubercular unit. The wards

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were really long huts running up from a middle ramp. Women to the right men to the left, each ward holding about 40 beds. On the female end was Sister Willocks and I was in charge of the male end. We relieved each other's offduty. My ward was staffed completely with male nurses who were members of the Friends Aid Unit. I discovered they were all Quakers, concienious objectors who had chosen this work rather than go into the Army. Most people used the initials and called them Faus.

Sister Willocks was only interested in the female ward and so the male ward had been left entirely to the Faus. They were very kind to the men but they'd had little training and had been left too much on their own. When I first saw the ward I was frankly appalled. It was dirty, and the men slopped about dirty, unshaven, and grumbling constantly..mainly about the food. I realised in the first hour that I should be very unpopular and probably achieve nothing if I tried suddenly to produce some sort of discipline..but a start had to be made somewhere! So I looked round for the dirtiest place..and that was the lavatories.

I shall not describe to you the sight that met my eyes when I ventured into these rows of lavatories as you might be about to eat a meal. I rolled up my sleeves, put on a rubber apron and, armed with a bucket, a mop, a scrubbing brush, and an enormous jar of disinfectant..got to work. It took me hours but in the end it was clean and I was able to turn around to the Faus(who had been hovering distractedly about)and demand that it be kept that way.

By this method, bit by bit, I got the ward clean. Next, I turned my attention to the patients. The uncared for ward had no doubt added to the gloomy atmosphere; but these men, of all ages,had no hope in sight. These were the days when there was no cure for tuberculosis. They had been evacuated from Glasgow and so their visitors could only come once a week. There was very little in the way of amusement for them a cinema show came round once a month only. Beyond that they played cards incessantly, spent hours deciding which horse to bet upon, and made various things like rugs and jewellery for sale. No wonder they could see little point in smartening themselves up. They used to shave once a week - a half hour before their visitors were due.

I had to coax them and one card I played strongly was that I had to look at them. I used my femininity without scruple to cajole, wheedle and kid them into smartening up. Soon they were all shaving every day all, that is except one! Eddie sat in his bed glowering at me..he hadn't shaved before I came and he didn't see why he should now. Still even Eddie gave in eventually.

Why did I want them all to smarten up anyway,you may ask, what difference could it possibly make? Well - there was the fact that I did have to look at them. Also, there was the psychological advantage gained when the men began to take an interest in their appearance. They were more comfortable too, with their beds made properly, their dressings changed regularly, their food served hot, and all the various touches that they had not noticed doing without for so long. I figured they

owed it to me; and they did too.

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"There it is on the programme, "The Anniversary by Bill MacIlwraith". He was christened William (which is why I call him William), but apparently he wants all the world, full of strangers as it is, to call him Bill. But he must accustom himself to the fact that we are not all of this degree of friendship; we are merely people who know nothing about him (except that his name is William) and whom he doesn't know. When he has absorbed this discouraging platitude he may...write a really tough play"

This caught my eye and caused me to think; because a fan has been complaining plaintively to me that I always write Peter when he prefers to be known as Pete. Not that the critic's remarks (Harold Hobson in the Sunday Times) were entirely relevant to Pete; but they reminded me of his complaint.

There are all those fans who like to have their name spelt without a capital letter. There are the fans who are not content with a name, but want a nickname added as well. In brackets. And just to make things real difficult there is Ted Johnstone(not Johnson)who turns out to be David McDaniel and who I'll never be able to think of as anything but Ted. A nice guy, Ted, but that's no way to Go On..life's difficult enough.

A name is a name is a name..and it's not a thing that bothers me personally. Half the time, down here in England, they spell my name Lindsey, but I never bother to correct them. After all, I'm still me whether under an a or an e. Yet my name of Ethel was picked because it was short; and my Mother thought it couldn't be shortened. Her own name is Elizabeth and she was always called Lizzie - she was real bitter about the subject! My brother David had to be called after his Grand-Father..but Mother never allowed it to be shortened at home. Of course there were two boys in the street where we grew up who sang as we passed --"Ethyl Petrol and Stane Dyke"; but this only amused me(I thought it was rather clever)and let's

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hope my Mother never heard them.

It is well-known that the savage believed that there was great power in the name that he carried. So, I suppose I should not be surprised that even civilised people still think of their correct name as something very important. My name..who can take that away from me? Yet, surely it is odd that fans are so affected by it. Fans nearly all know as much and more about Semantics as I do..and surely never mistake the name for the thing or the map for the territory. I would like to be very honest here and admit that this is all I know about Semantics.

Which reminds me - I watched David McCallum give an interview on the BBC when he passed through London recently. He was asked if he was contemplating taking out American citizenship papers. He sounded defensive. Roughly what he said in reply was -- "I am a Scot; and I was taught at school to be proud of that, and to think myself better than the English. Then I came to school in England; and I can remember hitting a boy who called me a "dirty Scot". Now I think that no matter what my nationality --I am me--David McCallum--and this is what I always will be no matter what my nationality. If I become an American citizen, I am not implying that I think Americans are better than Britons...although this will be said of me. I will be doing it because I think that it is my duty to take an interest in the place where I live and make my money and pay my taxes. I also want to have my vote; and I cannot vote if I am not a citizen. I think this involvement is what is important..not my nationality."

In the same way - I am me no matter how you call me. Call me rough; call me kindly; look right through me,...I am still me and there is not anyone who can really know me - except me.

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I have, drawn by ATOM, a heading for WERBELINGS by Walter A. Willis. Only the dear bhoys are busy rebuilding his house and can't stop for this issue. Next time, I hope.

Ethel Lindsay



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