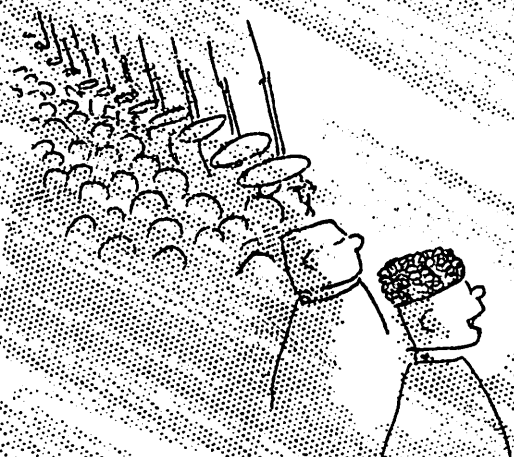
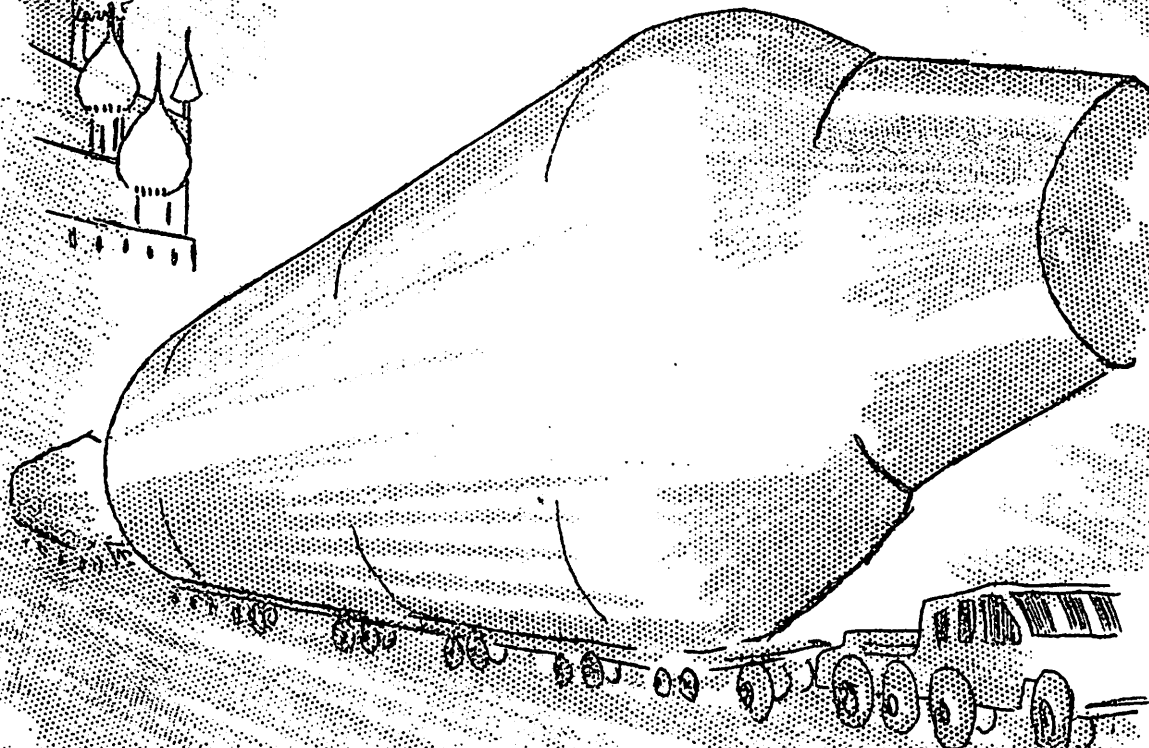


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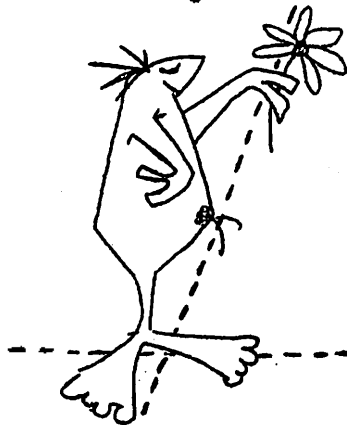


Atom

"Actually, this one is a Samovar made by students of the Greater Gorky technical factory number 4"

Scottishie

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NIBBLINGS

In this country, death duties are something that worry only rich people. The rest of us are likely to shrug and figure out that it is only fair that the rich should be forced to share with the poor. Of course, death duties **have been** the prime cause of the break-up of many large estates, some very ancient. We have all seen the stately homes open to the public in an effort to get enough money to keep them running. Few owners disdain this practise and some, like the Duke of Bedford, have made it really big business.

To all of us, however, giving out money to the Government is unpopular. Just listen to anyone - no matter how modest their means - talking about their income tax! In this we are all ambivalent, I know I am. I do not really grudge the taxes I pay; I know that when taxes were low we had a Poor Law system that was a disgrace, yet I groan like everyone else about my income tax.

No doubt it is this ambivalent feeling that makes me so thoroughly enjoy the book POKER AND I by John Coates. For this describes a family which has always evaded "doing their duty"; and Poker himself is a man with a purpose in life that is to preserve his estate of Milestones in spite of death duties, estate duties, income and surtax. He hopes to pass his estate on in the condition in which he received it--"in spite of those who would have it otherwise, and whom, irrespective of name or party, he has long since identified with his supreme arch-enemy, Ruddy Lloyd George! Part of his success lies in the various sets of accounts Smarty Davis keeps under lock and key and some of which he occasionally produces for inspection. Another part lies in the attics. But the main part lies in Poker himself, who is tall, rather plump, a simple-looking man, with a very red face, startled blue eyes and a quite absurd blonde moustache. To complete the picture you should add a battered straw hat of a type that has long ago gone out of fashion."

Poker is the twenty-sixth Baron Bowling and eighteenth Earl of Tintagel. Up till the time of death duties his family had a rather simple prescription for their survival. Throughout the chequered British history they always had a Bowling on each side of every faction. At the end of any current trouble

Nibblings 2

the surviving Bowling took over the estate. "There were families that were Yorkist or Lancastrian, Royalist or Parliamentarian, Whig or Tory, the Bowlings were not among them. They were always both at the same time."

The line stumbled once, however, at the time of the Wars of the Roses. All the male Bowlings got killed at the same time, even the one who was supposed to stay quietly at home. "This was a moment of crisis in which the women of the family showed what they were made of. The widow of the eldest Bowling announced that she was pregnant, and nine months later produced a son. A French prisoner was then sent home loaded with presents. But the next three Earls had to marry their cousins to make them proper Bowlings again."

Just as death duties appeared on the horizon as the latest threat..the family produced Edward who was a miser(he started the attics)and who lived till he was 102. As his son, Mark, died before him, by the time Poker took over there had been no death duties levied on the family for over 80 years. And Edward left about five million pounds!

The reason that the family tree under Poker began to look as incredible as that of Zeus is, first, because of his efforts to get an heir, and then his decision that he couldn't afford one. What he meant was that the family could not afford three sets of death duties in ten years. "Being a simple man he decided that the best method of avoiding this possibility was to space out the legitimate generations to their extreme limit. He used to prove it sometimes with paper and pencil. 'I was born in 1880,' he would say, 'If my heir is born in 1950, and his heir in 2020, we'll only have to pay death duties once every seventy years."

Poker married six times. First there was Alice, who only produced a daughter and, as this was whilst Poker still wanted an heir, disenchantment crept in. When Alice maintained that it might be Poker's fault, he went off with a Gaiety Girl, Connie, and proved twice that he could too supply sons. When Alice, providentially died, he married Connie, much to her grateful surprise. Connie produced a second daughter.

Total now--1 girl legit. 2 males illegit. 1 girl legit.

Poker then fell in love with Mary. Connie, still grateful, gave him a divorce. Poker took Mary off on a long honeymoon to avoid explaining that he had promised Connie she could stay on at Milestones. Mary miscarried her son. When the war came Poker went off leaving Connie, Mary and the children. After his first leave, both Connie and Mary were pregnant. Result of that--one boy illegit. 1 girl legit. Mary was peeved and divorced him--but like Connie stayed on.

Then came Patricia, she had two daughters legit and was bribed by Poker to become divorced so that the son was illegit, as by this time Poker had figured out they couldn't afford a son legit yet. Of course, if anything had happened to Poker, it would always have been possible to find some documents to prove that this latest son was legit after all. Poker then figures out that if he had twin sons, one of them might live as long as his grandfather

Nibblings 3

had. The twin that lived longest would be treated as Poker's heir, even if he hadn't started life as that. Being Poker, he marries again ('look for a woman with twins in the family')..and does have twin sons. This leaves only the minor detail of ironing out some prior agreement with the son's wives, one day, in case of a possible switch!

That, briefly, is the family history. What I cannot convey is the highly entertaining characters with which this book abounds from Poker on down. It is told by Lesbia, a daughter who was illegit(due to the fact that Poker thought she was going to be a boy), and whose Mother was Patricia. If you cannot imagine a man, who has in his house by the end of the book -1 wife, 3 ex-wives(2 died)and who has sired 5 daughters legit, 4 daughters illegit, six sons illegit, and twin sons legit, then John Coates certainly could. And a more entertaining lot it would be hard to find in any book. I can only give you something of the flavour..but here is Lesbia describing the opening scene.

"...a lot was happening that day--too much even for Milestones, where a lot happened frequently, to take in its stride. Among the things that were happening were these. My half-sister Alison was leaving home, trying to take with her all the possessions that had belonged to her mother(Aunt Alice, the first Countess of Tintagel). Smarty Davis, Poker's private secretary, was trying to stop her, chiefly by claiming each piece of furniture as Poker's when it was brought into the hall. Major Fullerton, Poker's agent, was trying to stop her, chiefly by sending away the lorries each time they drove up to the door. The hall, consequently, was becoming more and more cluttered up with trunks and furniture. Somewhere out of sight Aunt Mary(third Countess of Tintagel) was having a baby. Also out of sight, but on the ground floor this time, my mother(Aunt Pat, the fourth and as it were current Countess of Tintagel) was visibly mastering a temptation to go into hysterics. My mother had a public school education. She is quite different from Aunt Connie(the second Countess of Tintagel), who was a Gaiety Girl, and from Aunt Mary(the third)whose father was a duke, neither of whose reactions in emotional stress can be confidently predicted. The last thing that was happening that day, and which was in a way responsible for the others, was that Poker was arriving back after an 8 months absence in Beluc. Nor alone either. The newspapers read 'A Fifth Countess? Poker Brings Back A Princess!' 'Asked if he was going to marry the lovely Princess Mazina from his brother-in-law's kingdom, Lord Tintagel replied:Marry her? What are you talking about! I married her months ago'.

I would advise you to try the Public Library to get a copy of this book. I can assure you that it is funny, witty, and audacious. It is not at all edifying.

Ethel Lindsay

Kiltie - Cauld-bum

and the Manchester Volunteers

Sid Birchby

Oh, yes, I comprehend the theme of last issue's cover by ATOM. Believe it or not, the Jacobite cause still raises nostalgia in Manchester, possibly because, in my opinion, it was here that Bonnie Prince Charlie's campaign went wrong, for the decisive time. It's been argued that the campaign was doomed from the start anyway, but my belief is that the really monumental foul-up took place right here.

You may ask what I know about it. Well, I'm interested in local history, and in Didsbury this means the '45 to some extent. A few hundred yards down the road is the place where Charles's engineers threw a new bridge across the Mersey, thus by-passing the Government troops waiting at the next bridge upstream. His commanders were lodged at my local pub. I was once told by a local historian scathingly that the only theme that interested local historians herabouts was the Jacobite cause. Not quite true; but the subject is hard to avoid. Folk memory is long.

Recently I came across a newspaper article published in the 1830's about an old lady who had been a little girl at the time of the '45. In 1744 she had been staying with the Mosleys of Ardwick and caught sight of a mysterious visitor, about whom she was told to say nothing. The next year she watched Charles ride through at the head of his troops and recognised him as the visitor. My belief is that Charles did indeed secretly visit the area in advance of the uprising. Ardwick was then a fashionable village outside Manchester. It was a place of wealthy pro-Catholics, Jacobite landowners and merchants, whereas Manchester was hungry, nonconformist and the first city in England, next century, to put up a statue to Cromwell.

Reilly's "History of Manchester" accepts this visit as a reality. Its purpose was to sound the feelings of the leading Jacobites of the district, Charles visited either Ancoats Hall or Mough End Hall, both Mosley mansions. Subsequently his supporters had many secret meetings and wrote to assure Charles that nearly all the district would rise as one man to support him.

At one such meeting, at a small inn near Didsbury adjoining Jackson's Boat (a ferry) the toast of "The King over the water" was drunk; that is the usual toast of "The King" was called, but glasses were raised over a bowl of water placed on the table, thus signifying not King George, but Prince Charles. The inn still exists on a remote stretch of the Mersey, although I do not care for the beer. It tastes of water.



A Guid New Year
to one and a
Ethel

I believe that Charles overestimated the support he might expect in Manchester. Certainly his triumphal entry into Manchester the following year met with glum responses. One reads of compulsory levies on the citizens rather than free-will offerings. Out of 40,000 population, only 300 men joined the Manchester Regiment. These, said the A.D.C. to Lord George Murray, the Jacobite commander, were "all the English who had declared themselves openly in favour of the Prince". They were marched, ill-equipped, to Macclesfield, 18 miles south of Manchester, where they joined the main column. By then many were already discontented and threatening to go back. When, on the 8th, the rebel vanguard did return to Manchester they were met with a volley of stones as they marched through Hanging Ditch.

Here, in Manchester, the first signs of indision appeared, differences of opinion among Charles and his commanders. There is evidence that he was profoundly dismayed at his lukewarm reception and made the fatal mistake of wasting time trying to win over influential local people.

As is well-known, he eventually advanced as far as Derby, with increasing jitters and actual desertions among his men. Ironically, as we now know, the country was at his feet had he only kept on. But at Derby he read a London newspaper report of the forces massing against him, and turned back. It is said that the decision was not his, but his commanders. In fact, the London report was bluff. The Government and Royal Family were preparing to duck out and within a week he could have been in power. Whether he could have stayed is debatable, of course. One of the fascinating might-have-beens of history.

The net result might not have been much different from the history we know. All the Stuarts were bad for the country, and Charles was no exception. There might not have been the Seven Years War, because Charles would hardly have lined up against France, which had sponsored the '45, in support of Hanover, as George the second did. And also no war against the French in Canada. But he would undoubtedly have exasperated the American colonists much more quickly than did George 3rd. Great believers in arbitrary taxation, the Stuarts. That's what first put the skids under Charles's.

However, the threat of 30,000 men between Derby and London (mostly hiding under their beds had Charles but known) was effective. The retreat began, King George unloaded his jewels from the ship waiting in the Thames to take him back to Hanover, and Culloden approached. And all, if I am right, from the rot that set in at Manchester. I think the theory of the 1744 visit explains why the rebels advanced down the West of England rather than the East, which would have been quicker and safer. Charles expected vast popular support. In fact, although Manchester was taken by "a sergeant, a drummer, and a girl" and a small regiment raised, he didn't get it.

The sergeant (some say a Corporal) was a young Scot named Dickson, "as brave and intrepid as a lion". He had been captured at the Battle of Prestonpans and gone over to the rebels. The girl was his sweetheart. The drummer was one of the rebels. At Preston, Dickson asked permission "to get one day's march ahead of the army and make sure of some recruits in Manchester". On being refused, he stole horses and blunderbuss, and rode overnight to Manchester, with his companions

S.L. Birchby

[illegible]

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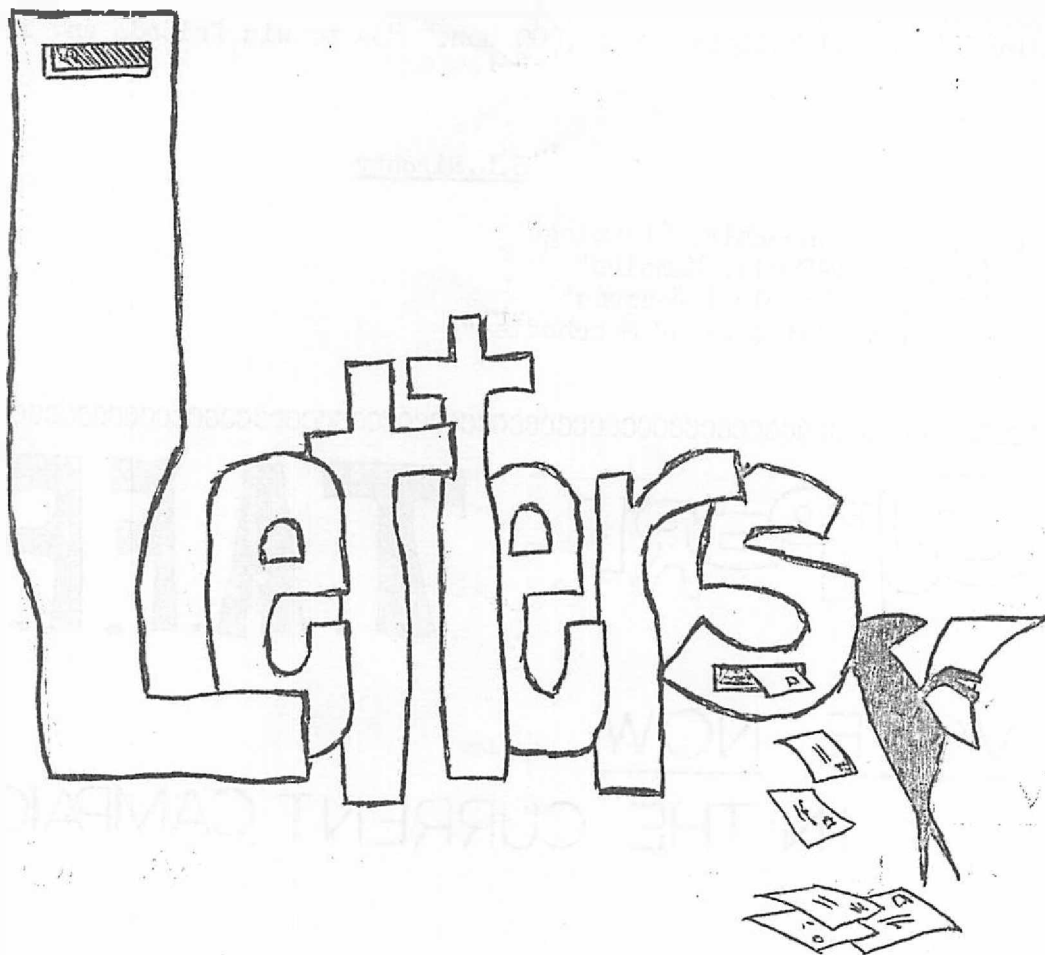
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Harry Warner:..Rob Wood's little item surprised me for the fact that phonographs or gramophones or whatever you want to call them are still an important part of the BBC's mechanics. Over here, I believe that most of the radio and television industry has converted so completely to tape that they must look into closets and basements to find a record-player on the rare occasion when it is needed...Incidentally, I didn't have any trouble at all with the generation gap at the worldcon. None of the youthful fans offered to help me across the street, when we met outside the hotel in search of edible food, and I in return didn't frown at anything I saw or heard them do. I must admit I raised my eyebrows one night, though, when a very small and young fan saw Leigh Brackett signing autographs, went up to her, and said: "I can't seem to remember if you've written anything, but maybe I'd better get an autograph, too.".....

I think I would have raised an eyebrow too..it's a good thing that Leigh has a sense of humour

Letters 2

Ian Peters: "I am relieved to read that Roy Tackett found John Boardman's letter smacked of prejudice. I certainly wonder why the latter is so down on a small ethnic group which surely demands respect and sympathy rather than antipathy. Many Americans feel guilty and ashamed about the treatment of the Indians and this can, of course, reveal itself in aggression towards them.

I should like to know more about Roy's view on "total integration" - to me this may imply a complete change of culture etc. resulting in a dark-skinned 'American' but it can also mean complete ability to adapt to the modern American socio-economic structure while still remaining Indian. Obviously I prefer the latter and that it is possible is proved by the Iroquois. The Mohawks are natural spiders and have helped to build the New York skyscrapers for several generations. At the Iroquois 'colony' in Brooklyn Christian Iroquois attend church services in their own language (in this case Seneca) and the pagans, followers of Handsome Lake's revision of their ancient faith, hold ceremonies in their apartments. All go home to the reservation at intervals to maintain contact with their tribes. The Bill to terminate the Seneca was due in August: at this writing (mid-Oct.) I am still ignorant of the outcome.

I do not know if this helps you, Ethel, to appreciate my "defense of tribal life". I do not think you appreciate the anthropological evidence "Primitive" tribal societies e.g. Amerindian, South American tribes, Australian aborigines etc., exist as an entity stretching from their primordial ancestor through the present into the future. The contact with the "spiritual" side of the tribe is maintained by religious rituals, taboos, etc. Destroy the spiritual integrity of the tribal community and the tribe dies. The little tribes in Brazil for instance cannot stand up to contact with white civilisation for this reason. Do we let them die and disappear or do we protect them? Do we let Nature take its course and lose a unique human society as important as a rare orchid or nearly extinct bird? The American authorities appear to have realised the precarious nature of these societies and, as I have mentioned, deliberately set out to use these methods to destroy them. I consider termination to be the present-day form of this policy but I am open to debate, so difficult is it to achieve a clear picture of contemporary happenings so many miles away in the face of censorship? apathy.

You assume that a tribal society precludes individuality. Some tribes believe that individuals are divisions of the main tribal soul and on death return to join it. But, certainly, in e.g. Plains Indian tribal society, the individual was supreme. Each individual had to attain a "spiritual" guidance as to his personal significance in life, using drugs, fasting, self torture etc., before he could even adopt his adult name. No one could be forced to fight, or could be stopped from going on the war path, by his chief, though, in national emergencies or the annual buffalo hunts, the Dog Soldier societies etc. acted as police and had disciplinary powers. But collaboration and co-operation meant security within the tribal unit - they developed in fact a genuine democracy.

I congratulate John Boardman on his comparison between the Red Indians and the Scottish Highlanders. The analogies are obvious and the similarities

Letters 3

become more profound the deeper one investigates the subject. I have long had in mind an article for OMPA on this very subject but difficult as it is to obtain reference books on Indians over here it appears to be even more difficult to find the type of material I need on the Highland clan system, at least here in England.

John's final paragraph reveals a peculiar outlook. Certainly many Scots fought in Cumberland's army (for religious and political reasons) though not as far as I can discover, any Peters. Even if they had, this would not prevent me from decrying the atrocities after the '45 or the much more recent atrocities after the Indian wars. This applies equally, of course, to descendants of Cumberland's English soldiers. Anyway, the present day injustices are more important, and I am grateful to wee Ethel for presenting this forum of opinion."

***You haven't convinced me that the tribal way of life is something worth saving. Names that require self-torture are not my idea of anything to be saved. I wonder that you would wish to see taboos, and religious rituals continue indefinitely. Who have I heard argue fiercer against the Roman Catholic religion than yourself? Who have I heard argue more fiercely against the taboos that surround birth control and abortion than yourself? No, you haven't convinced me that we should not allow Nature to take her course...As to the Scottish textbooks and reference works that you want.. any English public library will obtain for you any book that you ask for; if it is not in stock at the local branch it can be obtained from the large central libraries. There is also the British Museum library in London. As is well-known, people come from all over the world to study the books there

Archie Mercer: "The cover? Having seen in NATTERINGS that there was a front cover, I turned back and looked at it.-hitherto I'd simply failed to notice its existence. I tell you, good artwork is wasted on me. I pronounce the cover to be one of ATOM's better efforts. The significance of the '45? Wasn't there some local tribal disturbance up North somewhere in 1945 or 1445 or some such centenary year? The little bits of verse have their points, too, particularly the one about Burnt Aunt Annie. Your tame atomic artist is clearly in festive mood this time...Sid Birchby strikes a chord - I had to appeal pathetically in OMPA for Dick Eney to define "charismatic". As for "psychedelic", the connection with "psychosis" is only that of a fellow-derivative. The "psyche" is a psychological word, defined in my dictionary as "soul, spirit, mind". The word "psychology" itself is derived therefrom, as are many other words, but the meaning of a "psyche"-derived word does not necessarily have to be pejorative. (Are you with that yet?!!!) It means simply something pertaining to the mind. So much for the "psyche" half. The precise derivation of the suffix "delic" does not seem to be generally known. I'd be interested to learn it myself...To carry on my argument with Ian Peters: I said in my previous letter on the subject that individual integration would come sooner or later, so it would be best to try to make it as painless as possible all round. There are appealing aspects of the average tribal society, certainly but also an at least equal number of unappealing ones. I would suspect that "the wonderful free life on the Great Plains", the praises of which Ian sings, involved freedom more for the male Indian than for the female. "Pretty Redwing" may have "on the plains (she) galloped far away" - but that's a paleface's song. She's far more likely to have been in actual

Letters 4

helping her mother around the wigwam. In any case she wouldn't have been able to gallop before the white men came, because they brought The Horse with them. How did Redwing get into this argument anyway? The sad fact of the matter is that people do not like having an unintegrated, minority living among or near them. It's a trait of human nature that has led to inter-communal strife all over the globe and throughout history. Genuine tolerance is a very difficult thing to learn so long as the communities remain distinct. Ian's original article mentioned a certain piece of Indian tribal land that had been or was being compulsorily purchased by the authorities because it was the obvious place to build a much-needed reservoir, and the Indians' fundamental objection to having their ancestral territory encroached on at all. Whether or not "eternity" clause in so many white-Indian treaties should be absolutely unrepeatable (that's probably the wrong word) is a moot point. However, you can picture the average white (or black for that matter) American living in proximity to the Indians in question. He'd say: "Well, if they wanted my land for a reservoir they'd take it, whether or not I agreed that the compensation was fair. So why shouldn't they take Indians' land on similar terms? Red men are no better than I am." Reminded that red men had lived in America longer than had white and black men, he could well retort: "But I was born here, and that gives me as good a right to the land as anybody else who was born here." So long as any real or apparent privilege attaches to Indian blood and tribal membership, the average man of other colour will tend to resent it. And since he is in the majority, the Indian Indian minority will in the long run be the ones to suffer."

Ann Chamberlain: "Explanation: A salesman, or a con man, or just someone who wants to find out how naive you are, tells you something wildly exaggerated. Discovering that you don't go for it, and feeling a little sheepish, he offers something more within reason, beginning "Would you believe---?"...I could be wrong, but I imagine that it should have really been spelled psychoDelphic, and that would be self-explanatory. I will not use a word I can't find in my Webster's - however popular it is."
Now that's as neat an explanation as I've ever heard!

Ken Cheslin: "This business of "Would you believe ten million miles?". I can only conclude that no-one in the SCOT readership watches GET SMART on ITV...because the phrase is very familiar to me, and I got the point right away. There is this character called Smart you see. Who works for super-duper anti-oriental organisation like UNCLE. But the whole thing is carried to its logical hilarious extreme. Mad inventions, crazy crooks, fumbling agents (Smart) who win through in the end, by sheer luck. Smart is conceited, self assured, dim. He carries a secret radio in his shoe which has a bell attached...which, of course, always rings at an inconvenient moment...like in the cinema or when he is trying to hide from the crooks. Anyhoo. When Smart gets into a tight situation he tries to bluff his way out by saying, with a bold face, "Ha! would you believe it, at this moment we are surrounded by the United States Army and" (triumphantly), "they are closing in!" Crook says, "I don't believe it". Smart replies "....er... would you believe a regiment of paratroopers?" "No" "...or a boy scout with a pea shooter?" - at which point he is usually bundled off to some horrid doom."

Doomed because of his jokes, I take it?

John Bangsund: "Many thanks for SCOT '45 - and if the cover's import escapes your readers I can only suggest they stop reading that rubbishy sf stuff for a bit and swot up some basic British history...Sid Birchby asks who said youth is too good to be wasted on the young, and of course it was George Bernard Shaw. I have a slightly similar feeling: I feel people should have the option of retiring at about 25 and then going back to work for the rest of their lives at, say 40. And 'psychedelic' means, simply, clarity of soul - from psukhē, soul, and dêlos, clear. Dêlos also carries the senses of visible, manifest, evident, certain, plain. One could, however, be forgiven for deriving the word from the Latin delere, to do mischief....I hate people who write letters of comment explaining things...Archie Mercer gathers that Thomas Hardy "is renowned for his ultra-pessimism." Yes, this is his label. Hardy, pessimism; Browning, optimism; Kipling, white man's burden; Lawrence, sex; Ballard, obscurity; ad nauseum. But you have to go beyond the label; it means nothing by itself. To get to Hardy you have to go beyond his novels; even, bound as they are, to a large extent, by Victorian tastes and forms. You have to read his poetry.

"Let me enjoy the earth no less
Because the all-enacting light
That fashioned forth its loveliness
Had other aims than my delight."

Hardy rejected the idea that Man is the lord of creation, that the universe centres on him. Rather, Man is a life-form that just happens to be in the ascendant on this planet, but certainly neither controls the universe nor his own destiny. But, so what? There are so many beautiful and interesting things going on that one does not despair. This is what is called "constructive nihilism" - what Albert Camus called "the absurd".... "...if way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst..." I think there are better, less inadequate labels for that kind of a view of life than "ultra-pessimism." For example "existentialism". Concerning labels: There was a beauty on THE FROST REPORT last week; someone was described as "an anarchist without a cause".

It is rather odd the labels you can pin on to an author whom you have never read. Hardy I have never tackled..having the vague idea that he wrote a lot about country scenes. I like being in the country (on a nice day and with good friends) but I bore easy reading about it. I guess that idea has been reinforced by all the publicity I have been reading for the filmic FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD. From your sample, I should like the poems though.

Rick Sneary: "Gone to LASFS and felt very strange. They are meeting in new slan-shack, called The Hill, much like the old Fan Hilton--with 7? fans renting this big house, in which the club meets, and then stands around and talks and plays cards for hours afterwards. But, excepting for Don Simpson they are all relatively new fans, so that my first night there I found I didn't know--even by sight--the Director or Treasurer. I felt like I'd gotten into a College fraternity house by mistake, and only a few old faces made me feel at home. Then, three weeks ago I was there and got another shock. As far as I could tell, out of about 25 members, I was the second oldest person there. I'm not only becoming part of the Old Guard in the fannish sense, but in the actual sense as well. The friendly spirit of the Hilton days may return, but as yet there isn't the productive spirit, that got so much done. The current

Letters 6

crew are more interested in games, both cards and the active ones like bowling and swimming. More healthful, mayhap, but not much interest to one set in his ways...I thought up some questions I would like answers to, and you might even write them up for others....What has happened to the Teddy boys? Did they grow up and conform, or are they the new Mods the same only in different cloths? Ten years ago there seemed some real worry about them, with the formal style and wild activities. Question - do British nurses wear mini-skirts? I might mention that I'm not very fond of the style. It isn't that I mind looking at a pair of pretty legs but the style is unfortunately not limited to just the girls with pretty legs. And many a girl who looks good in shorts does not in a mini skirt. And..as a nurse and a person of insight into feelings and physical health - and knowing London climate, which would you say was the most uncomfortable; the over-dressed ladies of the Victorian era, or the under dressed girls of today? One must have roasted in Summer, and the other freeze in all seasons. And who do you think would have been the one with more colds? ..I should like to answer Birchby's question as to why there should be TAFF trip reports. To me the idea is like an open letter to one's friends to tell them what you did. All the recent TAFF delegates have been friends of mine; especially after a few days of partying and sight-seeing together out here--so I really am interested to hear what they did next. As Willis has said, and as anyone who has written a trip report can tell you, it is one way of re-living the adventure yourself. This is the reason for the reports as I see it. No one should "owe" Fandom a report, or do it just to raise money. It should be a communication between friends and when it isn't -either from the writer's or reader's side--it loses purpose and meaning...The first day of the Con, the membership (counting those who had joined, but not shown up) was 1,300+. This suggests we may have to change some of our ways of doing things. Conventions might have to start limiting membership..and there might have to be more sub-groups, such as First Fandom, St. Panthony, or local groups, who are not in conflict with other groups, but who band together and in some manner limit their membership. Certainly the day of the Universal Fan, who knew every one and was 'in' everything is just about gone.***
Mmm..I think I'll answer your questions in MATTERINGS; else this letter column will never get finished! **

Robert Coulson: "A few comments on SCOT: Seeing John Boardman attacked as a reactionary racist has renewed my sense of wonder for the next year or so. Ian, of course, is generally correct--about the Indians, not about Boardman--but judging from past statements by him I would say that if the day ever comes that he is proved wrong about the Indians, he'll research vigorously until he finds something else to dislike about America. He typifies, far more explicitly than ever I could hope to, the Englishman who is more interested in criticizing other countries than in improving his own...I wonder at Chris Priest's chain of thought. He jumps from a comment about his concentrating on British fandom to a statement that he doesn't consider IF foreign. Since it is foreign, whether he considers it so or not, and since it isn't a fanzine anyway, I don't quite get the connection...unless he's talking about a different IF. I don't understand what he means by "comparisons of roots", either...how can he compare British fandom to anything if he doesn't have any examples to compare it to? Or was he jumping to another train of thought with no connection to fandom again?" ***As I was puzzled by Chris' train of thought also, guess

Letters 7

I can't answer your questions. As to your calling Ian a typical Englishman - that did something for my sense of wonder too! Man! man! do ye no' ken he's a Scotsman? Ye wad never find an Englishman as thrawn as 'oor Ian!***

John Boardman: "Yes, I got the joke about the '45. The '45 seems to have had about the same place in British history as the Rebellion of 1861-65 did in American history - the last military struggle for a way of life belonging to the past. The rebellion of 1745 in Britain represented the same thing as the rebellion of 1861 here - an attempt to preserve a way of life properly belonging to the feudal era, when lords and gentry ruled over an acquiescent peasantry with little or no influence from the national government. The average foreigner, when he thinks of Scotland, gets a mental image of kilted Highlanders, the clan organisation, home-made tweeds from the Outer Hebrides, and whisky distilled by the side of lochs out of which, at intervals, it conjures various tricephalous monsters. This is largely a Highland picture - and the Highlands of the past, to a great extent. Yet the Highlands account for only about 10% of the population of Scotland, I believe. The Scotland which has made solid contributions to human history in the form of the world's first public school system, the textile and heavy manufacturing industries, and the merchant shipping tradition which has made Scottish maritime engineer almost a stereotype - this Scotland is of the Lowlands; and, while not so romantic, has been far more valuable...When you strip it of its romanticism about "rightful king" and "honor of the clans", what was the '45? It was an attempt to restore the British thrones to a dynasty thoroughly repudiated for its tyranny, an attempt to preserve petty regional privileges which made every Highland laird a kinglet with his own right to wage wars of extermination on his neighbours, and an attempt to restore feudal economies to a nation well into the capitalist system. The people who wander over the Highlands visiting places where Bonnie Prince Charlie ran for his life, or who enthuse over an empty bottle drained by his ain lips, have their counterpart here in the latter-day rebels who weep over ante bellum South of moonlight, crinolines, and docile slaves. And didn't both the Young Pretender and Jefferson Davis, at the end, disguise themselves in woman's clothes to flee?....If "liberal" means "far left" in the US sense, no one has bothered explaining it to far leftists in the US. "Liberal" is as much a word of opprobrium among them as it was in the "red '30's". In the socialist and communist press, "liberal" refers to someone like President Johnson who kills Asians with all the refinement of modern technology while palliating Americans with promises of integration and social welfare programs which are never carried into effect. Derek's repudiation of moral values in politics establishes a curious dichotomy. I've met Derek, and I've found him, as an individual, very pleasant company, and I would testify to his absolute reliability. But this apparently extends no further than his immediate circle. If he were to apply in his daily life the moral standards, or lack of them, which he advocates in international relations, he'd be in jail within a week....As Roy Tackett points out, a sort of reverse natural selection is being practised on Indian reservations. Young men and women who resent the control of tribal land, funds, and policies by their elders go to large cities, thoroughly assimilate themselves into the mainstream of American life, and forget their Indian identity. The ones left on the reservation after 3 or 4 generations of this sort of thing are the second-raters, the dull, the stodgy, and the lazy.

Letters 8

Ian Peters is understandably bothered about the immorality of white dealings towards the Indians in the 3 centuries of European settlement in this country. Why, then, doesn't his indignation extend back to the slaughter perpetrated by the Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Norman invaders of Britain? Is there some kind of Statute of Limitations on morality? Were deeds which were wrong in the 19th-century become right if they were done in the 6th century? Will Ian Peter's descendants grant us whites legal title to the US in 3167? The answer is that, without exception, every boundary line in the world was drawn by force or the threat of force, from the ancient Pyrean frontier to the latest truce line between Israel and Egypt. Unless we are forever to argue over old rights and wrongs, and seek revisions of conquests centuries back, the only thing to do is draw a moratorium across the whole sorry business and accept the de facto lines of the present as a basis for peace. The solution as I see it, is a country where no man is less or more than a full citizen because of his color. The US has no obligation to keep going as historical curiosities tribal cultures irrelevant to a 20th century mixed economy. The Indian slum in N. Dakota, like the Negro slum in Harlem or the white slum in S. Boston, is a national disgrace. But it will not be cured by re-establishing the Lakota hunting culture, shipping the Negros back to Ghana, or dumping the the South Bostonians back in Kerry. It will be settled by assimilating these slum cultures into American life. Peter's enthusiasm for the preservation of Indian culture is particularly chilling when he attempts to excuse such Indian practices as torture of war prisoners. Presumably we are not only to re-establish the Iroquois on their traditional lands in central New York, but we are to grant them free raiding rights among the Mingoes and Lenni-Lenape, possibly modernising their tribal folkways to the extent that torture will be televised."

It wouldn't really be in my interest to settle the arguments between yourself and Ian..for my letter column would then suffer mightily! Still: I do feel I ought to mention that having met you both, and got to know you both; I am aware that you have a lot in common..for one thing you are both very concerned in today's events. I may not wholly agree with either of you on particular points--but I have to admire the way you care. So often, I find, sf fans, take little interest in the politics and mores of today. Let it be a truism that says.."Unless you can understand the past, you cannot understand the present, and unless you can understand the present, you cannot possibly guess the future."



on Teddy boys, mini skirts and such.....Rick was asking what happened to the Teddy boys--and I suppose the answer is that they were the start of the various and rapid change of fashions that has taken place among the younger folk. In an effort to keep up with the latest, there must be a tremendous amount of money being spent. It is fascinating to watch, nowadays, how rapidly a fashion spreads. When the Beatles, for instance, appeared wearing gear that featured bells; it took only a week for me to spot these bells on sale at every corner of Oxford Street. Selling like hot cakes too! I felt sad for the kids who, wanting to be 'with-it', were playing right into the hands of the commercial world.

As to the mini skirt; and do nurses wear them? Well, of course they do, off-duty their skirts are as mini as anyone's; on duty they keep putting up another hem and hoping that it won't be noticed. As long as it is not too outrageous, authority is turning a blind eye on this one. Particularly as the younger sisters have been hiking up their hems. My own uniform dress is just at the knee; and I can remember when it was almost down to my ankles!

Rick's other question -- which would be more uncomfortable, over or under-dressed, makes me pick on the over-dressed. After all, one can become accustomed to a degree of cold, and the device of boots with mini skirts and colourful woolen stockings, is a nifty one. Whereas in the days of Victoria the amount of clothing that a poor woman had to haul around was pretty staggering. It was unhealthy from every point of view.

Natterings 2

It led to clothes heavy with perspiration; it was a major factor in uncleanliness; and undoubtedly the cause (with the heavy corseting) of the many fainting attacks for which Victorian women were famous.

on The Death of UNCLE.... I was very sad to learn that THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E. was coming to an end after a run of $3\frac{1}{2}$ years. Yet I cannot say that I am surprised. I have been thinking for quite some time that its possibilities were being very much overlooked. In fact, it was a classic case of how to ruin a good idea!

One of the major faults was -too much plot, not enough characterisation. It was idiotic to concentrate on the plot too much; for they all had to be highly improbable in the first place. By doing so some of the things that had made the series popular were lost. In the beginning one of the delights of this show was the tongue in cheek humour. Lately this has been stressed less and less; very few ironic asides are left, sad to say. It became rather formula-ridden too, with very few surprises.

The dearth of characterisation was particularly irritating as there was so much scope for it. To shroud the identity of Illya was a good idea, to allow him to remain undeveloped was daft. Just think of the possibilities! A Russian in America with a sardonic eye upon its ways...the interplay of character with his American counterpart..and how did he get into UNCLE in the first place? All left untouched...maddeningly! One could watch a whole episode without realising that this character was Russian.

In particular the dialogue became very pedestrian. One has only to contrast it with I SPY to see the difference. Yet I SPY is basically a much more humdrum affair. The agents in this are usually working against 'them' which is a very thin disguise for the communists. It is also a series chock-full of American patriotism; the humorous exchanges between the characters is what saves this from being boring. UNCLE had a much wider view; the notion that THRUSH was big enough to have a Russian and an American working together was a brilliant stroke. And then they hardly used it..grr!

I have read all the books that came out about UNCLE and it is easy to see how the writing improved as the poorer writers were discarded. It does seem as if the reverse process was involved in the TV writing. The last two UNCLE books that I read were THE MIND TWISTERS AFFAIR by Thomas Stratton and THE CORFU AFFAIR by John Phillifent. Both were capably written, both had interesting plots, but Phillifent won hands down with me because he did concentrate more on the characters. I wish it were not too late to turn him on to writing a script that would do the show justice.

on Two Cultures Anyone?.... How could I tell a guy who is a physicist that he is illiterate? Och..I have the nerve for anything. Anyway, I felt justified in saying this when I discovered that he never read anything but technical books and science fiction. He seemed vaguely surprised that he had been lured onto the fiction side by even sf. It's odd to meet the phenomena of the two cultures face to face. But how would you describe the joys of reading fiction to such a fellow?

"I call them friends those quiet books and well the title they may claim
Who always gave me cheerful looks (What living friend has done the same?)
And for companionship, how few, as these, my cronies ever present,
Of all the friends I ever knew, have been so useful and so pleasant?"

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