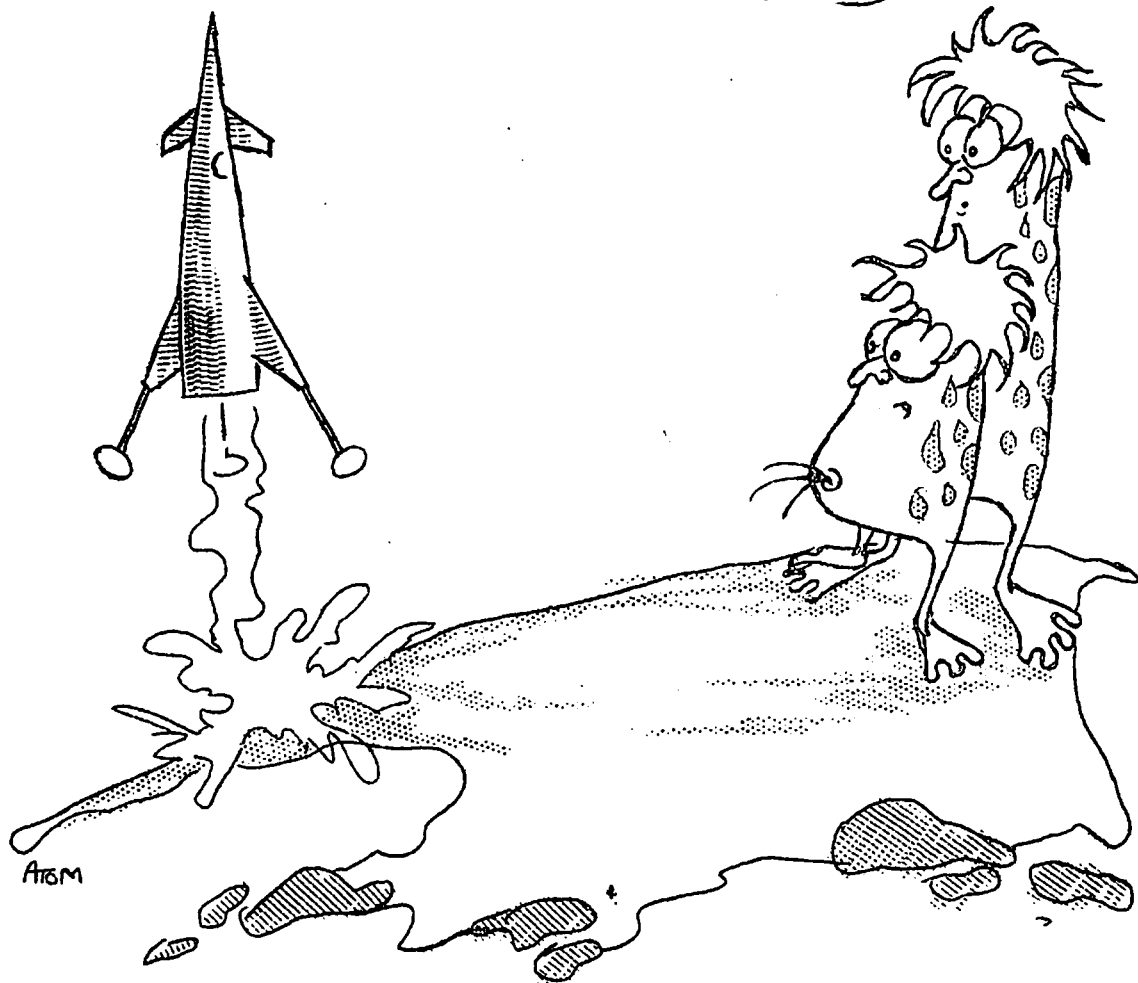
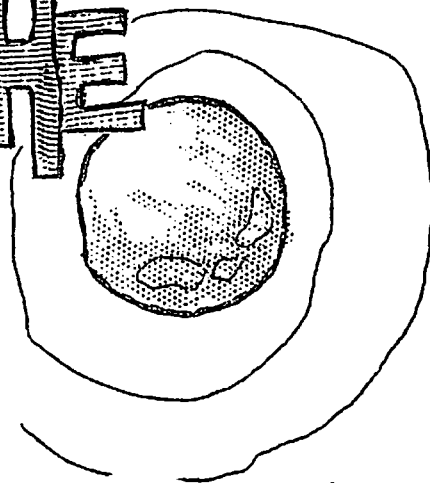


SCOTTISH



"Well here it all comes, colds, coughs, measles, chickenpox,
TV interviews, and that sickening 'Hail fellow, well met!
attitude.'"

SCOTTISHE No 42

Nibblings.....Ethel Lindsay
Letters.....The Readers
Natterings.....Ethel Lindsay

ARTWORK BY ATOM

Produced and Published by Ethel Lindsay
 Courage House
 6 Langley Avenue
 Surbiton, Surrey, UK

US Agent:Redd Boggs
Box 1111 Berkeley
Calif. 94701. USA

4 for 7/6d or \$1

Quarterly



nibblings

In which the editress nibbles away at the subject of books.....

When I lived in Glasgow, I was just around the corner from a branch of Boots the chemist and was a member of their large lending library. They had a very good selection of books which I remember fondly. This past year has seen the closing of many of these, and other, lending libraries. They had been badly hit by the boom in paper-back buying. Watching the closing of these libraries; I have wondered if Public Libraries have also felt a draught.

One of the joys of Boots Library was their habit of dividing books into an A and B system. New books were in A; you paid a higher fee to choose from them. After they had been on the A shelf for some time they were then moved to the B where the charge was cheaper. I paid for the A system as I

Nibblings 2

was impatient, but actually books only stayed on the A shelf for about 6 months. After a further 6 months on the B shelf; or longer if the book was very popular, these books were sold. Much more to the point: they were sold for the ridiculous price of one shilling!

I cannot think of anything more rewarding than my cautious stalk of a book I wanted to buy in these libraries. First I would watch it on the A shelf till, at last, it moved over onto the B shelf. After that an even more careful watch was needed. If it were taken out often and appeared popular, I knew I could relax for a good 8 months. However, if the poor thing sat on the shelves neglected by all but myself, then I knew it was liable to be moved out to the selling shelves any day. And how I watched for that! What a triumph when I eventually got my book and bore it off at such a bargain price. I do like a bargain!

One of these trophies is a book called THE BRAIN by Michael Harrison. It is one of those books that one might class as border-line SF. It is an odd book, that is the only way to describe it. I suppose I should have tried harder to find some other writings by this author so that I might better judge him. Yet, in point of fact, I have only ever seen one other book by him. I cannot now recall the title; but it also was rather odd. It was about a man who discovered that he could fly. The more he flew--secretly and at night--the less he felt a part of humanity. It is a rather chilling story of de-humanisation which ends when the man decides to set off for outer space.

Odd, I must reiterate, is the only way to describe THE BRAIN. For one thing the author has a very leisurely way with his plot; he thinks nothing of taking-off on a side issue for chapters at a time. As this book is about an atomic bomb cloud which does not disperse one would expect the sf element to be very central. Yet there are strong indications of religious philosophy also. The intertwining of these two factors is very fascinating.

Have you ever seen an atomic bomb cloud? Well, by now we all have at least seen photographs; but till I read this book it had not dawned upon me that the cloud looks like something. And I guess that is where the author got the idea for his story. The bomb cloud in this book looks like a brain just for a second; and in that second intelligence is formed. The first act of this Brain is to defend its shape; it then surveys the men watching it, reads their minds and decides it will need to defend itself. So it throws an impenetrable shell of force around itself. After that it speaks in the mind of one man and says: "Royal Mallison Eberhardy..would you like me to help you?"

As this book is written in the first person, we already know quite a lot about Royal. He is aged 29, is third generation American, has been working with the bomb by testing it in various places; and has been directly responsible for thinking up this latest testing-site - the bottom of an abandoned mine in Yucatan. We know that is he rather estranged from his wife without a clear idea as to just what is wrong between them. We know he is cynical about the Army of which he is a part. He says:

Nibblings 3

"Why if the Army thought that a job could be done with one small supply-launch, two bull-dozers, a truck and some ordinary lifting-tackle, they wouldn't think the job justified men's time...."

Hindsight(I have read this book many times)shows me that the author is always casually suggesting that perhaps things are not happening by chance as Royal might suppose. That Royal should pick the site he does(an old Maya mine); that he should think of a mine at all, that at the moment he does think of it there is an albino in 'Maps' who just happens to have looked out the very location wanted, is all told in a very diffuse manner with no hurry at all. Only a second reading showed me that the author is not just being verbose but has his reasons.

But to get back to the Brain. This is quite a startling thing, there is that cloud hanging up there and not going away as usual. Here is a man who has heard a voice speaking to him from it - which apparently no-one else has. One would expect the author to then keep up the tension. But no...he now rambles off for a full chapter onto the subject of the effect of the energy released by these bombs. Only then does he have the Brain speak again - to inform Royal that all the Geiger counters have stopped ticking, because the Brain has dampened down the radiation.

Royal quickly gets himself under suspicion from the Higher Brass by mentioning the Geiger phenomena. So then we start off on another diversion describing the official mind at work, its natural suspicion of anyone different. There is quite a lot about that before Royal gets back to his room, can lie down on his bed and ask the Brain a question. When he eventually gets around to asking the Brain if it has an identity and a name..it answers.."My name is Royal Mallison Eberhardt, didn't you guess that?"

So he puts himself to sleep with four seconal and a bottle of whisky.

Now if you suddenly had the power that Royal now knows he has; what would you do? Well, Royal starts worrying about his safety! He finds out that the Brain can answer any question and that the enemy he should fear is a Major Hrosny. Hrosny suspects Royal and wants to use a lie detector upon him. With the aid of the Brain Royal blackmails Hrosny into leaving him alone. He does this so thoroughly that Hrosny commits suicide. So this is the first direct effect of the Brain - a man dies.

Gradually Royal finds out that the Brain must obey him. He is also in an agony of self-reproach after the suicide. He comes to believe that the Brain would make him become less human; that it would take away his natural human compassion. In the end he commands the Brain to cease to be. And it does.

Of course the truth is - this is more of a religious book than an sf one. I have to say it reluctantly, because the sf portion of it is such a wonderful feat of imagination. When I think of what an sf author could do with it! But the author here will have none of ~~that~~. He sets his characters around Royal with loving care. There is Hrosny himself..the man haunted by having to be a spy, who loves his adopted country and is

Nibblings 4

tortured at having to betray it. There is a journalist who does not advance the story one iota but whose stay in a nearby Indian village gives the author a chance to describe the villagers worshipping a image of the Brain. There is Father Merlozzo the Army chaplain who dispenses his religion in such a matter-of-fact and economical way. There is Wing, the man in maps, who possesses some ESP. Quite what he is meant to represent I never really figured out. All these characters are so highly individual however, they are unforgettable.

Wind and wend as the author will and does..the story comes out in the end --Father Merlozzo is the Good, the Brain is the Evil, the story has a moral--power corrupts. I guess C.S.Lewis would like this book for in it there really is a Devil.

Such wonderful writing though; on the one hand prosaic about modern man and his cynicism and pretensions; and with some very penetrating characterisations. On the other hand some passages are quite lyrical. At the end when the Brain tries deperately to prevent Royal from dispersing itself it gives him a vision:

"I saw the crystal towers of Cor-Arbennic rise from the pearl soft mist, and felt the gentle touch of the frond-men of a dark star beyond Perseus. I heard the voices of the thread-like beings, fillaria of a pastel tints unknown in our spectrum, who inhabit a planet a hundred galaxies from ours, and who live under a sky luminous with eighteen multi-coloured suns. I saw the strange flower which grows in the eternal night of the world, Aan-ongh, and whose fruit has powers that there are no thoughts in the human mind able to describe. I saw my hand outspread, and I saw the myriad galaxies clustered around it like a cloud of silver moths, and settle down into its palm like a heap of glittering dust"

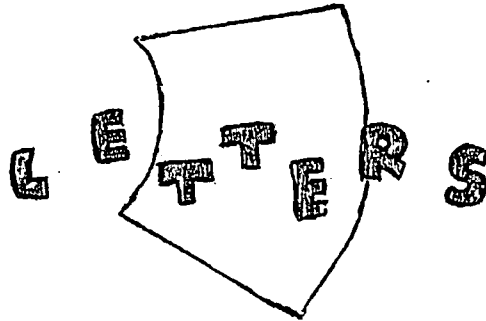
And when you have finished this book and sighed..you can dream a little of what you would have done if it had happened to you.

The Brain by Michael Harrison;Published 1953.Cassell & Co Ltd.

Filler..on the subject of writing..by J.B.Priestley.

"Perhaps it would be better not to be a writer, but if you must be one - then, I say, write. You feel dull, you have a headache, nobody loves you--write. It all seems hopeless, that famous "inspiration" will not come--write. If you are a great genius, you will make your own rules; but if you are not--and the odds are heavily against it--go to your desk, no matter how high or low your mood, face the icy challenge of the paper --write. Sooner or later the goddess will recognise in this a devotional act, worthy of benison and grace. But if what I am saying seems nonsense do not attempt to write for a living. Try elsewhere, making sure the position carries a pension."

.....



Sid Birchby

40 Parrs Wood Avenue
Didsbury
Manchester 20

"I too enjoyed "The Daughter of Time". Mind you her attempts to prove that Richard 3rd did not murder the Princes in the Tower might well be taken with a grain of salt:-One is reminded of Jane Austen's comment in a similar context..."for if Perkin Warbeck was really the Duke of York, why, might not Lambert Simmet be the Widow of Richard?" All the same, it makes interesting speculation. And, goodness knows, how can we be sure about a historical who-done-it 500 years ago, when we don't seem to know who shot Kennedy just the other day? With patience, people can be brought to believe anything. Just at the moment, we in Britain are being fed with the idea that we have all been living too well and got the economy into a mess; the answer being the pay-freeze and sundry other attempts to grind the faces of the poor. Living too well! For the first time in history we've got the deficiency diseases down to a negligible percentage and we're living too well! Just because a lot of common old working men choose to buy cars instead of spending money on beer as they used to, they are irresponsible:- so the Govern ment creates chaos in the car industry:-about the only thriving export industry we have, apart from the mini-skirts. But let me not become heated; especially since I have deliberately falsified the issues just to show how twisted one's views of current affairs can become. I imagine that the above views are widely held; at least one hears them almost daily. But they could be refuted at every point. I haven't time to do so now, but, as an example, Britain is not spending less on beer but more. Also drinking more. Last year was a record: 20 gallons per head or about $\frac{1}{2}$ pint per head per day. Maybe you're drinking my share? P.S. I suppose you realise that de Gaulle is really only 3ft high...."

You cynical old Sid Birchby you..no I hate beer..so you can have my $\frac{1}{2}$ pt. I would believe the statistics on the drop in deficiency diseases though. I suppose you don't have them at your fingertips? Now Jimmy Groves could have found out for me. Bless the boy, I just knew we'd need him as soon as he had gone.

Letters 2

Keith Otter
149 High Rd
Willesden Green
London NW10

"About this name business. Outside fandom and my own circle of friends I rarely mention my Christian name. This probably started because of the habit at one time prevalent in the office where I work of introducing junior clerks by their Christian names and the senior clerks by their surnames; a piece of snobbery which has now been abandoned in favour of using surnames except among ourselves. For the last year or so I have been mainly working in the office, which has meant that most of my contact with clients has been over the telephone. For some reason people find it difficult to realise what my name is, and when they do they normally say "Is that an English name?" At first I found people addressing me as Otto. I tried to stop this by trilling the final "R", but only managed to get myself referred to as "Mr Otterr" and "Mr Ottre". I dropped the trill and tried to emphasise the "E", this brought forth "Mr Otta". The prize must go to the shorthand typist who, after working for us for two years, referred to me in a letter I dictated as "Mr Kotter".
I've just had a Christmas present handed in to Sister Linly.....

Mal Ashworth
Low Hall Cottage
Appletreewick
Nr Skipton.
Yorkshire

"We-e-e-ll, I don't know about Gafia being infectious and the Potters catching it from us. I wouldn't be immodest enough to think I have a monopoly on Gafia, or anything like that, **and sometimes I have even gone** so far as to consider that, as between the Potters and us, it might be a mutually regenerative process. But I have to admit - when I look at it in the cold, sober light of frigid sobriety - that it just might be a sort of one way mutually regenerative process. I mean, I can't deny that every once in a while when we go to visit them bearded Ken comes up to bearded me with an undisguised glint in his unglazed eyes and says something like "Hey, how about us getting together and publishing the finest fanzine the world has ever seen, huh?", or similar words amounting to a **roughly** equivalent sort of meaning. I usually say to him "Yeah, how about it, huh?" and look at him in a way that implies "How about you taking a prolonged course of narco-synthesis?", or else I communicate a vaguely parallel sort of implication to him by some other form of communication, say, perhaps, digital, or something like that. He usually wilts a bit at these times. His enthusiastic grin becomes sprt of slack and aplogetic; he looks at me with a look that seems to say "Er - Ha-ha??" He usually goes on to ask "How would you like something else to eat?" or "Would you like to go out for a drink?" or "Can I fix you up with a woman," or something light an inconsequential like that. Then, shaking himself a little and beginning to recover, he will enquire "What did you think of George Brown's latest statement in Scunthorpe?" or "Did you see yesterday's instalment of Andy Capp?" or "I never think that fish and chips in South-West Rochdale are quite as good as those in the North-East, do you?" and we gradually get back to a more rarified and star-begotten orientation. But as for me influencing him at all, well no I don't really think so."

Well, of course, if I had had my way, Mal Ashworth, you would have been slung off to Siberia years ago! Next time, for old time's sake, why don't you gently point out to Ken that he could write for SCOT? That he doesn't write at all, I can't believe.

Letters 3

Roy Tackett
915 Green Valley Rd
Albuquerque
New Mexico 87107

"I really can't comment with any authority on the works of Josephine Tey as I've never read any. I would like to get a few words, though, on something you said in your article --that there was a great deal of snobbery in Tey and you might excuse

it if you knew how old she was when she died. ~~Tsx~~ Ethel, Tey was born in 1896 and died in 1952(not 1922 as you had it in SCOT.Sheesh a 30 year typo) I found out this fascinating bit of information by simply ringing up the public library. Well, this tells us that Tey grew up and was educated during a period when snobbery was quite acceptable and, indeed, taught and encouraged. Particularly, I should think, in Europe(which is not completely free from it today--but then what is?)where a miscellaneous assortment of "royalty"(all related to each other) still sat on their thrones.

It seems to me that too many fen--and mundane critics, too, of course--tend to judge the writers(and people)of the first part of the century by our own standards; thus we find Tey accused of being a snob,Burroughs and Chambers of being racists, etc. Of course they were! Read the school-books that were in use before WWI--and to a great extent between WWI and WWII. Snobbery, racism, the whole bit was quite respectable. The great brotherhood of man movement really didn't get started until after WWII when the great mass of the uneducated began to get educated.(Consider that after WWII in this country there were in the neighbourhood of 10,000,000 men and women given the opportunity for a college education --and opportunity they wouldn't have had otherwise). The vast numbers of new people and new ideas flooding into the establishment changed the whole outlook of the age. The aristocrats found themselves competing with the newly arrived from the middle--and the lower--classes who insisted they were as good as the aristocrats and proved it. So now we have, in theory at least, the brotherhood of man and snobbery is out and racism is out and brotherhood and equality is in. But it wasn't always thus and before we point the finger of scorn at writers of the first third of this century we should try to put ourselves in their places....The thing that amazes me about names in fandom is the amount of coincidental, I hope, repetition. Willis is an Irish fan is a Missouri fan and there is a fan who lives on Willis Street. And it goes on and on. It would be an interesting study, I think, to tote them all up....The only way you can discuss politics with us is by spelling out what you mean. According to strict dictionary definition we find that US liberals are actually conservatives in that they are opposed to any change in the status quo and are working hard to strengthen and enlarge the current establishment. Our conservatives are something else..certainly not "liberals" by dictionary definition ..even though they are all in favor of change. But the changes they want to make are seemingly steps backward. In between there are a whole mass of people who are simply happy to keep marching forward at a reasonable rate and on the fringes there are people like me who'd just as soon tear the whole works down and start all over again."

Well, it is my honest opinion that this bit of starting all over again would be a good idea. Why you can't go back to using the word liberal as we would use it I dunno. Call a socialist a socialist and a liberal a liberal and then you might find it easier to define your conservative. Arguing about politics in the US must be a very wooly procedure! Yes.. that was a dreadful typo over the date of Tey's death. As for finding out the date of her birth..Jimmy Groves used to do that for us and I still haven't got used to having to do it for myself..

Letters 4

Harry Warner
433 Summit Ave
Hagerstown
Maryland. 21740

"Ken Potter's little slice of real life was fun to read and educational. A promoter is trying to organize a whole civilization of what you call caravans and we call mobile homes or trailers, a few miles west of Hagerstown. He is talking about such a large trailer city that he has even offered land to the school system in the area because he believes there will be so many hundreds of families there that it will require a new schoolhouse to serve their children. If this comes into existence, I'm afraid that I'll no longer be able to refrain from yielding to an impulse that comes over me every time I see a little cluster of the habitations. I've always inhibited myself up to now because I would be so easily spotted if I tried to do it around such a small group of caravans. In a really big trailer city it should be easy to act unobtrusively, taking my little electric can opener, plugging it into an electric outlet, holding it gently against a roof then letting go and see what happens... He Tey.. I like to see how much pleasure books can give when they break all the rigid rules that today's crop of writers have bound themselves with. Just think how horrified Jim Blish would be at finding characters who "cried" and "replied" and so forth instead of constantly following his dictum that they must "say" things. And a whole posse of contemporary detective story writers would be anguished to find this author describing characters in violation of the current taboo which seems to be based on the belief that this prevents the reader from identifying with characters whose physical characteristics don't match his own. These non-describers never explain how it is that fiction about beautiful women is popular with many men who look entirely different from the heroines.. Archie Mercer might like to know that my address will be Rose Hill, two words, eventually. The cemetery that holds the family burial lot has that name. The name has an odd history. When it was undeveloped empty land it was popularly referred to as Wroe's Hill, after the man who owned it for many years. Then he sold it for conversion to a cemetery and the cemetery corporation decided that a sort of pun was justified to permit continued verbal reference to the area while making the printed name look more cemetery-like... What can I say about ATOM that is adequate? He just goes on and on, always ringing some ingenious new change on subject matter that would be hopelessly hackneyed if treated by any other fan artist, never getting the egoboo that comes to a writer in letter sections when his words cause controversy*
Well, Harry, at least you gave ATOM his due in egoboo. I think this time his cover cartoon is one of his best.. but then they always make me laugh! He has always been kind to SCOT and not only because he has seen what I would do myself on a stencil...

Ed Cox
14524 Filmore St
Arleta
Calif. 91332

"Naturally I liked the ATOM cover. It is funny, well-done and the simplicity makes for an effective cover. But this is nothing new is it? I think he's the best practising fan-artist in fandom today and has been for a long time... re names... when I first became active in fandom in 1947, fans seemed to be set on having their own peculiar "fan-name". Like Ackerman was 4sj, Art Rapp was r-tRapp, Walter Coslett was CosWal and so on. So it became apparent that I had to have one, which was simply enough EdCo and you can't hardly shorten my name shorter than it already was! I've noticed over the years that this practise has worn

Letters 5

off to a large degree. Which is just as well, I guess, since active fans have grown hugely in number and it would be very confusing, ponderous and stupid to continue it."

"I've just wasted five minutes sitting here trying to think of a way to contract my own name. I haven't come up with anything that I would care to own so far. I guess some names are better for that purpose than others ..I've just had a new one given me though..Sister Linz.."

We also heard from.....Dick Lupoff, Ruth Berman and Rosemary Hickey..... many thanks folks..

Ethel.

Filler..from a small corner of THE GUARDIAN newspaper....

"About one-quarter of the population of Nagasaki still lives under a radioactive cloud of fear from the atom bomb dropped on the city. The municipal authorities recently reported that 87,866 people were still affected by radiation.

The complaints varied, according to doctors, from slight ailments to 40 serious cases confined to hospital. The serious cases usually contracted leukaemia or cancer, they said. Minor complaints could range from lung or liver disorders to skin diseases. The number of deaths attributed to radioactivity has also shown an increase.

Although 21,635 people had received treatment for radiation sickness, the majority of those affected led normal working lives. Medical authorities said one problem of radioactivity was that it weakened normal resistance to disease. As those who lived through the bombing grew older, they became more susceptible to sickness brought about primarily by a touch of radiation.

In many cases Japanese who visit doctors complaining of some sickness have no knowledge that radiation is the cause, and the fear and shame of radiation sickness has driven many to suicide."

Back copies are available of both SCOT and HAVER from the editress, who also points out that she is agent for

PAS TEL

the artist's fanzine that is of interest to all actifens.



.... On the current state of SCOTTISHE....

All this past year my feelings about SCOT have been very mixed. At one time I thought I might just fold it up; that was about the time that I got tired of pleading with Brain and Walt for their columns. At another time I thought of all the friends I have to whom I could apply for material. Only I wasn't sure that this was what I wanted either. For a female, I can change my mind as rapidly as any of my sex; and that is what I kept doing.

So why, you may ask, is SCOT still coming out? I suppose the truth

Natterings 2

is there are still some things I want to write about for my own pleasure, also I hate not to finish things properly. Just to fold SCOT without some definite plan in mind was something I couldn't do. Truth to tell, I am a compulsive finisher something half-done drives me crazy; which is why I am pretty cagy about starting anything! It is the same with New Year Resolutions: if I make them I have to keep them or I am downright uncomfortable. Rather dreary of me, I know. Just another form of superstition I know. However, that's the way I am and I am stuck with it, and so you are stuck with this SCOT.

You may ask what happened to Brian and Walt? I told you about Walt in the last issue; he is far too wrapt up in his new house to have time for anything else. Then Brian has a house and garden too. He is to be found at all hours contemplating the garden with a brooding expression whilst he plans for the next season. Both these gentlemen have wives who aid and abet them in these things.

George Locke has a large stack of fanzines (they almost fill one room) which is he selling off to a fan overseas for a large sum of money. Well it seems large to me. This fan plans to finance this transaction by selling his postage stamp collection. In other words, he is selling one hobby to finance another. George is selling his zines in order to also finance another hobby--that of gliding. In much the same way the Varleys and the Willises are selling their fannish time to finance the time for their present hobbies--their houses!

Like, it takes all kinds of nuts to make up a happy world. I'll make a New Year Resolution not to make snide remarks about other people's hobbies..and hope they do the same for me. Anyway, in the past the Varleys and the Willises have done right well by SCOT. So this is an appropriate moment to vote them a hearty heap of thanks.

To finish off this sad subject on a light note, I will quote a poem that I have just unearthed from my SCOT file. It was written a few years ago on a quiet Sunday afternoon when the Varleys had descended upon me. Frances had been scribbling for a while when she suddenly handed it to me...here 'tis....

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 1 | "John is doing doodles
Brian's reading "Punch"
And I'm just sitting wishing
I'd had a bigger lunch. | 2 | John is getting fatter
But I am getting thinner
Soon I'll simply waste away
Just waiting for my dinner |
| 3 | Brian's broad around the beam
And I'm fat in the head
If I don't get my dinner soon
You'll find me lying dead | 4 | Ethel's busy chattering
When will she draw a breath?
Oh God! I'm getting hungry
Where is thy sting Oh Death? |

Frances Varley

Natterings 3

on Taff....

It is almost time to be thinking of TAFF again. Let's see--our representatives are now Terry Carr and Thomas Schlueck. I know that ATOM has his Trip Report all on stencil now; and that it is gradually being run off--you should see that fairly early in 1967. I don't know how Terry is getting on or even if he is contemplating a Report. It isn't obligatory of course.

Publicity on TAFF has been dropping sharply again. No doubt Arthur will let out a wail when he reads this. He will say that he has been too busy getting his Trip Report on stencil to do anything else. Terry, I'm sure, would plead being too busy also; after all he is a professional writer. Yet this has meant a deathly silence about TAFF for some time now.

Really, what TAFF needs is someone to look after the publicity whilst the current delegate gets on with the essentials. I do feel that some sort of an acknowledgement sheet sent to the voters listing the voting results is essential to keep up interest in TAFF. I don't think it is enough just to distribute the results through the fan newszines. Many people who vote do not subscribe to any fanzines.

An excellent series of flyers was inaugurated by Ron Ellick which I know pleased many people. Perhaps the time has come for TAFF delegates to forget about providing a Trip Report and concentrate upon a series of such flyers. One might find that the fans preferred the latter. Certainly there has never been a Trip Report that has been fully sold out.

It is also time for folks to be thinking of the coming campaign in which a fan from the US should be chosen to attend an Overseas con. Now is the time for putting names forward, now is the time for flying a few kites. So far the only name I have heard mentioned was that of Ed Cox.

om Life in Hospital contd....

I stayed in Bangour Hospital for two years. My Mother agitated against this all the time I was there; and breathed a sigh of relief when I left. She was always expecting me to contract tuberculosis. In those days there was no cure for the disease. Had I stayed I should have worked myself out of a job. Thanks to the new treatments..many sanatorias are closing down for lack of patients.

The war was over and all the Sisters with whom I was friendly were dispersing--there seemed no reason not to make a move. I knew I was settling into a dreadful rut--a great tendency of mine.. So, at last I applied for a post in Glasgow and headed for a city without a backward glance at the countryside. Fields are fine..but those two years among them will last me till the end of my life.

When I started these reminiscences I only meant to write about my early days as a nurse, for those days are gone forever. The conditions under which I trained would sound fantastic to our young nurses now. Somehow I seem to have gone on much longer than I had meant. I think a letter from Lloyd C.Bingle was what alerted me to what was happening. He pointed out to me that I should make my writing more personal, include more details,

Natterings 4

and so make it all more interesting. No doubt, but I am not about to write my life story, that's private. Soon too I realised I would be writing about people with whom I am still working, with colleagues who are still very much in evidence. I can't write about them in the same objective way that I could write about Sister Willocks. I felt then, that it was about time to stop.

Still, now and then I meet with some curiosity about just what it is that I am now; and just what it is that I do. I answer that I am an Administrative Sister Grade 2. This covers a person who is in charge of a hospital in the absence of the Matron or Assistant Matron. Our Matron is in the London branch of this hospital. The Assistant Matron and I are on our own except for occasional visits from Matron.

Once, ATOM said to me "But what is it that you do?" He listened intently whilst I stumbled through some sort of explanation. Suddenly light dawned upon his face..."I know", he said happily, "you are a troubleshooter!" Trust ATOM to be the one to wrap it up in a nutshell. As soon as I thought about it, I realised it was the perfect explanation.

I have little to do with the patients in the wards; the Ward Sister looks after them. I only know about them and become involved if there is any difficulty - they are very ill or require something special - or they have a complaint. I'm happy to say the last happens very rarely. I am sometimes the only Sister on duty with Staff Nurses in charge of the Wards and Outpatient Dept. Yet all I have to do is pop my head in--ask is everything is alright--and get an affirmative answer.

I remember Frances Varley once saying that "of course, Ethel isn't domesticated". At the time I didn't contradict her; for off duty I certainly am not. But on duty!

Most of my time is spent making sure the "hotel services" of the hospital are running smoothly. I spend a lot of my time chasing the domestic staff, if need be I roll up my sleeves and do it myself. Catering requires supervision and if the evening cook doesn't turn up..then I'll cook the evening meal for the hospital.

I get involved in staff problems. I could walk into a personnel office tomorrow and feel at home. In the past year I have had the lot..even a maid who required to be mentally committed..the last problem was an alcoholic. One could, of course, get rid of these problems by giving these people the sack. Only I feel that there are enough employers in the country who discharge people in this way instead of trying to help. That a hospital ought to do better. So I get involved.

The Nurses Home is my province. This means I have to think about things like when the curtains need cleaning, the blankets washed, the allocation of rooms...all the chores of a housewife. For weeks on end this past year I had no maids for the Home. You can see that there is little danger of my taking to having a house as a hobby!

Natterings 5

Various things are my special concern - the linen, the sewing room, the mending, the replacement of worn articles, the ordering of stores, the typing of menus, repairs that must be pointed out to the handyman, all dealings with the laundry, staff uniform, the calculation of the weekly paid nursing staffs, the maids off duty schedule (complicated enough to require a computer), and the soothing of disgruntled staff. The last can take up hours of one's time.

My morning might be spent discussing work with a maid, discussing a new type of linen issue with ward sister, discussing a maid's hours with the clerical assistant, discussing the menu with the cook, a point about a requisition with the store-keeper. The dispenser demands to know if the Theatre Sister really needs the latest piece of equipment with which she has fallen in love. The new doctor is faddy about his food and tells me all about it. Ward Sister is back to tell me her opinion of the new ward orderly. A nurse hasn't had her laundry sent back. Another has lost her keys. I've a nurse sick in quarters to see yet and it is nearly dinner-time...

In short, if anything goes wrong in the hospital anywhere..it's probably my responsibility.

All this can be said too of my colleague, the Assistant Matron, we spell one another. All that is required for the job is a calm temperament and strong feet. One day, when I retire, if I still feel like writing about it all, I'll fill in the details. Till then, this is the end of the nursing saga. I seem to have started it such a long time ago.

~~~~~  
In the fifth line from the top of this page, after the words "nursing staffs..you should mentally insert the word "wages". Then it makes sense - I think.  
~~~~~

The next issue of SCOT, due out early in 1967, will feature a long article by Ian Peters on the subject of the American Red Indian. When I asked Ian what sort of a blurb I should write for this he replied --- "It tells of the shocking record of America as a Colonial Power".

Till then, A Happy New Year to You All

Ethel Lindsay.