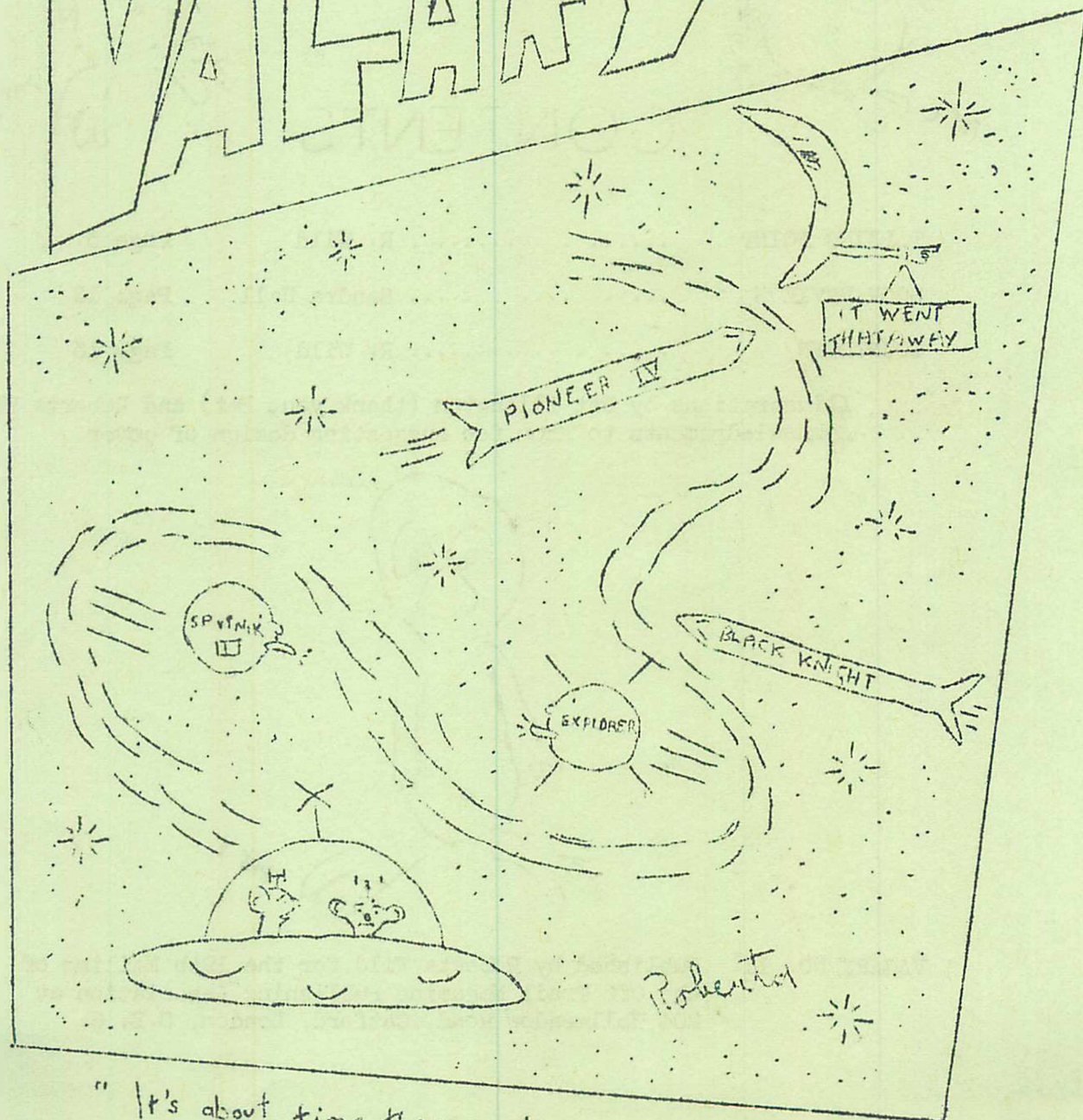
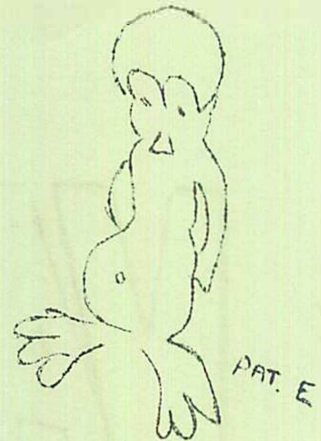


VAGARY

11



"It's about time they sent up some traffic cops."



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Illustrations by Pat Ellington (thank you, Pat) and Roberta Wild.
Acknowledgements to Atom for suggesting design of cover.



VAGARY NO. 11. Published by Roberta Wild for the 19th Mailing of
the Off Trail Magazine Publishing Association at
204 Wellmeadow Road, Catford, London, S.E. 6.

TALKING POINT

You know, one of the main temptations if one is associate editor is the desire to anticipate the mailing if you haven't got your own magazine collated by the time the magazines start rolling in. This time I have had great difficulty to restrain myself, but in one case I just can't. I am going to be very unfair and anticipate - I want to pick on Archie Mercer.

Oh, yes, Archie, you've been waiting for me to just that, haven't you? I hereby say that I take strong exception to a remark you made about me in your Ompazine. Yes, the comment on page 8 (fooled you - you thought I was going to say page 2, didn't you?) in the review of "Fanarchists of the World Unite" - where the hell did that come from? - you referred to me as a good lady. How dare you! Good? Lady? You're just trying to keep the wolves from my door and I won't have it. So there!

Still on the mailing - last one this time - the mention of logic reminded me of a certain incident that occurred when I was in the W.R.A.F., in which the logic was right, but the answer wrong. I was stationed at the W.R.A.F. Depot at the time and the Sgts. Mess was all-female one (yes, it was terrible!) The Accounts sergeant had an irrational dislike for one of the WRAF officers and morning, noon and night she held forth about her dislike of this woman. It was very wearing for the rest of us and one lunch-time Lorna, the police flight sergeant, decided she had had enough of these diatribes. Now Lorna was a tall, thin woman with a severe face, but she had a very dry sense of humour and as soon as she said, "Now, Sergeant Johnson, I'd like to ask you a question", we all looked up in anticipation. "What question?" said Johnnie, pausing in mid-flight. "Let's put it this way," said Lorna. "Suppose you had a wonderful lover and a bitter enemy. Which of the two would you talk about the most?" "Why, my lover, of course," said the mystified Johnnie. "Then," said Lorna, who was nothing if not logical. "since you're always talking about this flight officer, you must love her very much." What could have been more logical and so completely wrong?

By the way, have many of you heard the Lonnie Donegan recording of "Puttin' on the Style"? (I still prefer the Carson Robison version I heard when I was a kid). Lonnie is rather unfair as he sings it is just the young folk who are putting on the style. It's natural when one is in the teens, I suppose, yet the biggest show-off I ever met was a man in his thirties. However, the song reminded me of a couple of young R.A.F. officers who were so sure they knew all the answers.

It was R.A.F. week at Bisley. The individual shooting competitions were over although the sweepstakes were still going, and the inter-command competitions had started. Those of us who had time to spare were on the three hundred yard range to watch these and I arrived just before the snap shooting started. For the benefit of those who don't know, to snap shoot

one lays in a prone position on the firing point and as soon as the range officer yells "Watch your front" the rifles are aimed at the buttes and the targets appear for six seconds and then come up again for six seconds. It used to be ten seconds up and five down but they changed it a few years ago. This goes on until the competitors have fired off ten shots - two for each exposure of the target.

Being in Technical Training Command I had gone along to watch the Command team go down for their shoot. There were a number of other Command shots there who had also come along to give our team their support. Just before the team arrived a "frightfully, frightfully, old man" sort of voice announced in loud tones - for the benefit of everyone within a half-a-mile, I think - "Can't understand why they've got old Squadron Leader Willets in in the Tech. Command team - the old boy must be getting past it now. Good shot in his day, of course, but he's getting too old to keep it up. They should have put a younger man in the team." "Quite so, old chap, couldn't agree with you more," came another dulcet voice. There was what I can only describe as a stunned silence and then those of us who were regulars at Bisley turned to find the source of these heretical opinions.

Two pilot-officers, who looked as though they might have been in the mid-twenties, were standing by the scoreboard. They were obviously just commissioned as they were in their very best uniforms and only a newly-commissioned type who was dying to show off would be daft enough to tramp over the Bisley ranges in a new uniform instead of a serviceable battle-dress. Aware they had caught our attention they continued to hold forth about age creeping up on Sqdn. Ldr. Willets. Obviously they were so new to Bisley that they had not heard our complaint that we wasted our time going in for sweepstakes as all we did was provide pocket money for the old blighter. I was feeling a little peeved with him myself because earlier in the day we had both been on the 200 yard sweepstake and had both scored 33 out of a possible 35. In a case like that the prize usually goes to the one who has the steadiest shooting and I had started and finished with an inner, but Willets had finished with a magpie. They gave him the lolly and as I felt that a hard-up WRAF sergeant needed it more than he did I was feeling somewhat irked.

However, while the two sprog officers were holding forth the Command team arrived and they did have the courtesy to keep their mouth shut when Sqdn. Ldr. Willets went down on the firing point. Sgt. Wilson was standing next to me and that man had the most astonishing eyesight. As soon as the yell went up "Watch you front" and the firing started Sgt. Wilson told me the scores in a whisper. He could actually see the shots going into the targets. There were one or two others like that also watching and very slowly we all started to edge towards the scoring board. The two sprog officers were still standing by it and did not realise that they were gradually being hemmed in. After the ten shots were away from each competitor, the officer doing the scoreboard picked up his field telephone and waited for the scores to be called through from the buttes. By this time the two pilot-officers were surrounded by a ring of RAF and WRAF Bisley regulars. The scorer started to write the scores down on the board and as he reached Willets' name one of the pilot-officers shook his head sadly. Then both

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their jaws dropped because there was one great yell when Willets' score went up. He had scored 50 out of a possible 50, and in snap shooting that was some going. "Didn't expect Willets to get any less," bellowed Tug Wilson. "It will be a few years before any young sprout knocks him out of his place in the team." Roared a warrant officer at the pitch of his lungs, "Funny, I could have sworn I heard someone say a little while ago that old Willets' was past it. Probably some big-headed clot who doesn't know a Lee-Enfield from a bow and arrow." This went on for some minutes and, of course, the two sprog officers couldn't get out of the ring. So there we were pretending we didn't know it was they who had said it and there they were trying to look as though they hadn't opened their mouths. Oh, well, they received their lesson early - no doubt, they are two very good officers by now.

Dick Ellington's mention of his cats reminded me of the pets we have had at home at various times. When I was a kid I remember being bitterly disappointed when it was explained to me that animals did not go to Heaven as we did because they had no souls. The result of this was buckets of tears every time a pet died because they had gone into the Awful Nothingness and just didn't exist anymore. Then I found out that Happy Hunting Ground of the American Indian was not a place where everyone hunted animals to death, but a heaven where humans and animals lived together in amity. I thought this a much nicer idea of heaven than the Christian one, with the result when I went to the kids' cinema matinées I was inclined to cheer the Indians and boo the cowboys. But I still think it's a nicer idea of an afterlife and I am convinced that animals do have personalities of their own. Take the three we had, for instance.

Our family has a weakness for tortoiseshell cats - we still have two at home. After my brother's cat and my mother's cat were accidentally killed and my black Persian cat was stolen, my stepfather brought home a tortoiseshell kitten as a present for my mother. This cat started out with the name of Bessie, but inevitably it was changed. When she was about a year old she produced a litter of kittens, two of which she kept. The tortoiseshell kitten my mother called Tessie and the ginger Persian kitten she named Jessie. I pointed out that all ginger cats are toms so why call it Jessie, but it didn't matter, anyway, as we either called it Marmy or Ginger afterwards. A few months after these two additions to our family of cats, a change came over the mother cat.

Now she was a very good hunter and one day my mother happened to look towards the end of the garden and saw the mother cat having a scrap with a rabbit as she thought. Bill, my stepfather, came in soon afterwards and it suddenly occurred to my mother that wild rabbits aren't black and white and they never stop to fight, either. "That's not a rabbit, that's a stoat," said Bill and was off down the garden. Now stoats are the most vicious of all the wild creatures of the countryside and quite often just kill for the hell of it. Bill reached the bottom of the garden expecting to find a dead cat - instead he found a dead stoat. This was a miracle and Bessie became quite famous in the district as The Cat Who Killed A Stoat. Now I don't know whether she suddenly became neurotic because we didn't make enough fuss of her for Killing A Stoat or whether she became jealous because her two

children were beautiful and she was merely pretty , but she began to walk around with a ferocious scowl on her face or a worried look, and every now and again she would bite the hands that fed her. This had the effect of making her look quite old and after a while we ceased to call her Bessie, but referred to her as Granny Cat (by my mother and myself) or Old Misery Guts (by my stepfather).

Tessie, the daughter cat, wasn't called Tessie for long. Because she didn't seem to grow much we got into the habit of calling her Tiny. And, oh, she was a vain little thing! She had a snow white front and was forever washing herself. She didn't mind us picking her up, but the moment we put her down again she used to sit and ostentatiously wash herself all over, as though to say, "I was just humouring you dirty humans, but now pardon me while I disinfect myself." She even walked with a swagger and I think nearly every tomcat in the district had fought over her. Oh, yes, a veritable Venus of the cat world was Tiny.

As for Ginger - he was exceedingly handsome for a tomcat. He was a large marmalade cat, with beautiful long silky hair - his mother and sister used to wash him and keep him tidy - and he used to let them! But Ginger was a cat without vanity. In fact, he was a cat without brains. Ginger, poor thing, was so dim that even up to the day he died he never realised he was a tomcat. He never went hunting as tomcats usually do and he never smelt as tomcats usually do. All he wanted was someone to make a fuss of him and he knew I was a soft touch. In fact, it was the only small sign of intelligence showed, because when I was on leave Ginger was always returning home - when I was away he used to push off to the Home Farm on Lord Northbrook's estate and all the female cats down there used to lay food offerings and themselves at his feet. Not that it ever did them any good.

However, his mother and sister made up for his lack of sex and wit. The day after I arrived home after being invalided from the W.R.A.F. Ginger, of course, turned up. He used to follow me everywhere and practically climbed up me at times to make sure that I hadn't forgotten he was there and was going to make a fuss of him. One day in the Spring, I was sitting in the garden with Ginger at my feet when Tiny came up to us. Old Granny cat had already been prancing about him, but he hadn't taken a bit of notice of her and she had stalked off looking more neurotic than ever. I must been a bit slow on the uptake that day as I thought she just wanted him to play. Tiny, however, was a very forward cat and much more blatant. First of all she laid a mouse under Ginger's nose. He just looked at it, not even bothering to toy with it. Since I can't bear to see a cat torment a mouse I picked it up and threw it into the field. (Tiny got wise to me afterwards and if she saw me coming when she was tormenting a mouse she used to kill it on the spot). She glared at me and sitting down in front of Ginger washed herself all over. He ignored her, so she took to swaggering up and down. He still ignored her and in desperation she suddenly stretched herself out in the most abandoned postures in front of him. At this point I realised she was inviting him to seduce her and also realised he was clot enough to take no notice of the invitation. "My God! A tomcat with morals!" I exclaimed in disbelief and, severely to Tiny, "I should think not! Go away, you incestuous little beast - he's your brother!" Tiny gave up and went away, presumably to the disreputable tom who lived up the road.

But Ginger just didn't have the sense to come in out of the rain. One day I realised that I hadn't seen him for hours and by nightfall I was worried about him. My stepfather suggested that perhaps he had gone back to Home Farm, but I knew Ginger would never go away while I was at home. Bill and I both went out looking for him and Bill took a look down Home Farm the following day, but we couldn't find him. At about this time Tiny got an attack of the fidgets and no sooner was she in the house than she wanted out again. She'd rush halfway across the field then come back again. We must have been very slow not to realise that she was trying to tell us something. Then one lunchtime my stepfather came in and it was obvious he had something on his mind. After half an hour he said "Ginger's in the barnyard." I could tell by the tone of his voice that Ginger was dead and that he just didn't have the heart to say so. I had looked in the barnyard but owing to Ginger's coloring he had merged with the straw. When I went over to the yard later and the two farmhands who had found him told me that they had noticed Ginger that morning and that by that time they couldn't tell how he had died, but that it was probably a stoat which got him. They had found a small cardboard box and lined it with straw and they put Ginger into this for me.

I think it was just as well that no traffic passed on the road that afternoon because if anyone had seen me they would have assumed I had taken leave of my senses. Maybe I did for a while. I buried Ginger near an oak tree not far from the road, and any passer by would have thought me mad because as I was digging I was swearing in seven or eight different languages - if I hadn't I would have probably cried instead. Both the other cats came up to me and I think that in cat fashion they were crying, too.

That's the worst of getting attached to a pet. They are so short-lived that it can be quite upsetting when they die or disappear. Kipling was quite right when he wrote the poem "Don't Give Your Heart To A Dog To Tear." It can apply to any pet. There was the dog who attached himself to me in Germany, but I'll leave that story for another time, or I shall be accused of being overly sentimental again.

This is as good a place as any to talk about the mechanics of turning out a magazine. You will have noticed that the stencils are still cockeyed. They keep sticking on one side and although I have had new feed rolls put in, I suspect that the platen is distorted. I did suggest that to the mechanic, but he said no it was all right and then proceeded to jam the rod and cross thread a screw with the result that the free end is now useless and I have to turn the damned platen by hand. This is not conducive to concentration and if I had any back teeth I'd be fed up to them. Because the mailing is so near and I need the typer for Off Trails I can't get it sorted out yet, but I think I'll have a cork roller put on it. Quite frankly, I have had enough of the Anglo-Saxon thing. Some of this is also being run off on a new duplicator, which accounts for the faintness of the two previous pages, I think. I was too eager to play with my new toy and didn't wait for the ink to soak through the pad properly. For the past couple of years I have been using Daphne's duplicator which Ron is now going to give a major overhaul. Some sort of pin had got worn and the feeding roller would try to shove a load of paper through at once. This meant it took a long time

to run off a stencil as I had to flick one sheet up and hold the rest down. When running off a limited number of copies for an Ampazine it didn't matter too much that one stencil took a fair amount of time, but when running off Orion it was taking me up to an hour and an hour a half to run off a stencil. As the worn pin in the arm suddenly slipped just after I started it also meant that I had to push the sheets right up to the inking roller before I could persuade them to go through. Unfortunately I could not get into touch with Ron that week, either. He did fix it up when he came over here soon afterwards, but he wants to have a proper go at it. In any case, it has meant that when Daphne wanted to turn out a magazine she had to come over here, so it has been very good of them both to let me have the use of it for so long and I have now done what I should have done three years ago. Got a duplicator myself. Some of Vagary will probably be done on Daphne's duper as I have some stencils to use up and they won't fit on to the new machine. This page will, for instance.

But it's the typewriter that is irritating me - having to keep an eagle eye on the stencil and try to adjust it every few lines is liable to make typos, only half of which I spot before I run off the stencil and one day I would like to produce a reasonably tidy magazine..

Though why some fans get worked up over an occasional typo is beyond me. In a professional magazine I would take a dim view of them because there is an amount of checking and rechecking and by the time the prozine is ready to be made up there should have been time to have sorted out the errors. But most fans turn out their magazines in their spare time and quite often in a rush. Moreover, they have already done a full day's work and there is sure to be a tiredness and a resulting lack of concentration. No fan goes about his zine with the deliberate intention of making typos. Again not everyone can spell - I once knew a very brilliant woman doctor, but if she wanted a letter drafted she used to ask me to do it for her because my spelling was good but hers was hopeless. Yet she was far from illiterate and far from dim. I think that some people have the gift of being able to spell correctly and others are just unlucky enough to suffer from a form of word-blindness. With a pen I seldom misspell, but on a typewriter I quite often transpose a couple of letters, as you all have no doubt noticed. But as I have said fans don't often get the time to check thoroughly and in any case, fandom ceases to be fun when it is taken so dead seriously that a misspelt or transposed word can cause a lot of heartburning. Perfectionism is all very well, but there is a place for absolutely perfect people. It's called Heaven, I think, and it sounds frightfully dull.

My, didn't I spark some of you off in the last couple of mailings! I thought I might and it was all part of a scheme which didn't quite come off. Frankly, I just got sick to death of all the quarrelling over TAFF, WSFS and one or two other things so decided to try and get you going on something that was nothing to do with fandom. But it is the sort of argument that can go on forever, so in the last mailing I put out a quiet feeler to start you all off on something else, but I see by the current mailing only one member has mentioned it. No, you figure it out. You will also observe by this mailing that my scheme didn't come off so I may as well bring the subject up myself.

In this mailing you should each have two TAFF candidate leaflets. Both Ron Bennett and Dick Ellington sent me a packet of leaflets so you are receiving two each - one to use after you've lost the other one. There are three candidates named, Terry Carr, Ejo Wells, and Don Ford. A few issues back I pointed out that some fans seemed to have been too busy being rude to Don to have remembered that he had administered the TAFF fund without having a trip over here and that we could at least say thank you for all the hard work he put in on it. I suggested then he should be nominated for TAFF and as he has been nominated I think that it would be a nice way of saying thank you by voting for him. Now for God's sake don't leap to the conclusion that I am telling you all to vote as I do - I am expressing my own opinion and letting it be known that Don has my support. But whoever wins I hope there is not a repetition of the behaviour on the part of the losers' backers which followed the last campaign. And if anyone tells me I'm talking a load of bushwah I can only say f.l.a.s.w. to them. (You can work those initials out and the first initial belongs to a quite innocuous word. Dick Ellington, you keep quiet, you know what it means). And if anyone is rude I shall be rude right back and I won't have to resort to crude words, either.

What Price Bigotry? Or How to Lose Disciples in One Easy Lesson. No, no, this is nothing to do with the foregoing paragraph, but is about an incident which happened a little while ago. Sandra, the friend who writes the book reviews in Vagary, helps Michael Houghton to run the Atlantis bookshop. And I may as well say here that there is no truth in the tale that Alistair Crowley once owned that bookshop. Now Sandra has a younger sister who is at present at a convent school. When Ticqwas (or Tikki) returned to the school for the present term she borrowed a few of Sandra's book. Soon after the term started the school had a retreat. This means that everybody retires from the mundane world for a couple of days and reads uplifting literature. Tikki was caught reading the "Compassionate Buddha." Loud screams of horror and cries of "Idolatry!" (They did not seem to know that Buddha never thought up a new religion, but just advocated a good way of life). Anyway, Tikki's sin was considered so terrible that she wasn't sent to the school priest, but to another priest outside the school to be shriven, or whatever it is priests do. This priest wanted to know where Tikki had obtained the book. "From my sister," was the reply. "My dear child, we must pray for your sister's lost soul." this character had the crust to exclaim. "Where did she get it from?" "Oh, she works in the Atlantis bookshop," replied Tikki. More alarm and despondency on the part of the priest. "What? he shrieked. "But they have sacrifices in the cellar there!" "Do they really?" said the impenitent young monkey, suddenly interested. "Yes, they sacrifice white cocks and black cocks. We must start praying for your sister immediately." So Tikki rang up Sandra and asked her if she wanted her lost soul prayed for. "I didn't know I'd lost it," said Sandra. "Where did you find it and what the hell are you talking about?" So Tikki told her and the first reaction was a great amusement and then indignation. "Oh, well, tell the old fool to ask St. Martin to intercede for me - I don't care for St. Theresa." Sandra told Michael Houghton and his reaction was the same. First he was

gave up trying to figure it out a long time ago. The "Space Child's Mother Goose" sounds worth buying. Yes, 1958 was a sad year for S.F. prodom and fandom. Let's hope this one will be better

ESPRIT (Buckmaster). Where am I in my body? I don't know and I think one or two of my friends suspect that I am not in it^{at} all.// Why try to argue, Daphne? An argument is an illogical conversation that continually strays off the point. It's much better to discuss, because a discussion sticks to the main issue. (And a discussion is one of the most difficult things in the world to have). And what's the point in being logical when you are up against illogical emotion? I read somewhere that logic carried to its natural conclusion is fanaticism and who wants to be fanatical? Except fanatics. In any case, you are only logical on paper and not always then, so until you practise what you preach you can't tell anyone else to be logical. By the way, there is a very good editorial on logic in the December issue (American edition) of Astounding.// The world should never have been allowed to come to boiling point in the first place, but I agree with you that all the politicians are trying. Very trying.// As for being a leader myself, see Vagary 10 (and this time don't misread it - there will be more about^{that} in the next mailing) where I suggested that political leaders (or any other type of leader) should be people in absolutely tip-top health. Look what happened because Eden was a sick man. And if some of the leaders aren't in good physical condition, they should make sure that they have one - or two - men to take over their duties, thereby avoiding a world crisis if they do have a breakdown or an attack of indigestion. // You ask me why I don't go in for history and mythology. For one thing I haven't taken enough subjects for a University entrance (and history is one of them oddly enough) and one of the subjects I haven't taken is maths. It is one of the "musts" for an entry and I am no use at maths. In any case, if I did pass and read history at a University I would have to follow the orthodox line and I would find that rather difficult. Besides, if I followed that line I would have to make history and mythology my work - they wouldn't be hobbies any more and a lot of fun would be lost. And I can't possibly imagine myself having the patience to lecture to a dead beat generation who are too busy dreaming of the latest flatfooted rock-n-roll hero to listen. I'd end up thinking wistfully of the rifle cleaning rod that I found so useful when the R.A.F. apprentices raided the W.R.A.F. blocks after their finals. // I can see the point of your remarks about the Globe versus a clubroom - I think the ideal arrangement would be a pub with a large room which we could hire. // Adverts? I must be an advertiser's nightmare. I blithely ignore all adverts and buy whatever is handy, regardless of the brand. If I don't like it I just don't buy that brand any more. The only effect that adverts have on me is that if I think one is more than usually stupid I won't buy what is being advertised. I'm the same in shops. If someone says to me "I think you should have that, madam, it's you" that shop never sees me again. I like to make up my own mind and do my own thinking and no salesman - or philosopher - is going to do it for me. As I said an issue or two back, I may not always be right, but at least I've had the satisfaction of doing my own thinking. You know, a friend who swears she knew me in several previous lives, when asked by me what I was like retorted "Just as damned perverse as you are in this one." Huh?

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amused, then annoyed. He even offered to have photographs taken of the cellar which Tikki could give to the priest. My reaction was the same when Sandra told me - especially as I knew the cellar was kneedeep in about fifty years of dust and books.

Yet mark this. Tikki was accused of idolatry because she was reading about Buddha - and originally he didn't think up a religion. The priest, in front of a sixteen year girl, accused two people whom he did not know of taking part in black rites, and it was also obvious that he had never been in the Atlantis bookshop. Can bigotry go further? The priest may yet find himself answering some sticky questions in Rome, by the way.

One result of the incident was that Tikki asked, when she came home for the mid-term break, if she could work in the Atlantis bookshop when she left school, and returned for the rest of the term with a borrowed book called "How To Be A Werewolf". I'd like to know what will happen if they find that one on her.

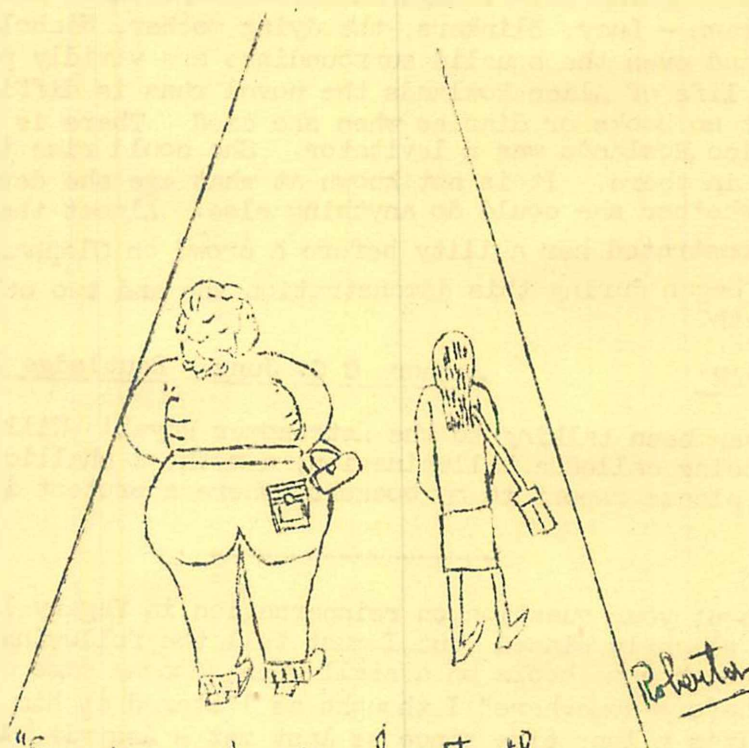
Three of us saw "The Flying Dutchman" at Sadlers Wells a few weeks back and a very fine production it was, too. The only quibble I had with it was that the prima donna was so badly made up that she looked a lot older than her twenty eight years. But the stage effects were about the best I've ever seen. Wisps of cloud were continually moving across the backdrop - they even had forked lightning - but the best effect of all was the way the ghost ship appeared in the distance and gradually approached the shore. The stage was suddenly bathed in dancing rays of green light and after a few seconds they disappeared to reveal the ship hove to and with ghostly lights dancing round its masts. In the third act it not only rocked, but disappeared in about two seconds flat when required to do so. Such care taken with the effects helps the suspension of disbelief tremendously and if that particular production comes back to Covent Garden - drat! - Sadlers Wells, it is well worth seeing. The producer also knew the value of silence and the silent meeting between Senta and the Dutchman was done so well one could actually feel the tension mounting in the audience.

You know, it's odd how thoroughly bemused one can get if something off trail happens when one has a filthy cold. At the beginning of January I was feeling like hell one night and switched on the radio to hear something interesting. The first thing I heard was the signature tune of Radio Newsreel. I wondered what a Light Programme feature was doing on the Home Service and wondered even more when I realised that the B.B.C. seemed to have got itself in some election riots in Paris. But when the announcer started reading out football results of matches that weren't being played until the following day, I checked with the newspaper and discovered that the programme was a take off of Radio Newsreel. The following morning the cold had really got a grip on me and the mail I received didn't help. Something arrived from New York called "Newspaper" and I still don't know what the hell it was all about. I opened a packet of Ompazines and suddenly found myself reading a review of Vagary in which I'd written an article on Robin Hood. This foxed me altogether as for some time I have had an article on Robin written in my mind, but I could have sworn I had not got it down on paper. First, I wondered if I had got on to another timetrack, then I decided I was delirious. It was ten minutes before it occurred to me that it was another take off.

But it seems to have gone on - or maybe it even started before I caught the cold. There was the night, for instance when I took Sandra from the Old Vic to Charing Cross via Blackfriars Bridge. And recently, we decided to book tickets for "MacBeth". I said I'd get the tickets, which I did and told Sandra we would be seeing MacBeth the following Wednesday. On the Tuesday, and I may say I was a bit fogged on the days anyway, it occurred to me we had not arranged a meeting place so I rang up Sandra. Her grandmother answered the telephone and told me she was at the theatre. "My God! What day is it?" I asked. "Tuesday - it's all right," said Honey, "Your tickets are for Wednesday." So we went to the Old Vic on Wednesday, but there seemed to be an error somewhere. It was not "MacBeth" we saw, but two Molière plays "Sganarelle" and "Tartuffe", both freely adapted by Miles Malleson. It wasn't a wasted evening as they were both very, very good. But as I guessed, when Sandra told her grandmother what had happened, Honey said "Well, if she didn't know what day it was, surely you didn't expect her to know what play it was."

Er - what time track are you on?

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



"Sometimes, dearie, I get the
strangest feeling we're not being
followed"

BOOK REVIEWS

"DAUGHTER OF ATLANTIS"Author J. Murray

Privately Published 15s.

This is the latest and, perhaps, the least important addition to the literature on Atlantis. It is, the writer claims, based on her own memories of life there when Atlantean civilisation was at its height. (Why doesn't someone write the story of a Red Indian cook for a change?). In spite of the fact that the writer claims to have been a qualified healer priest, she falls desperately in love with a black magician - which seems highly illogical! The book rambles unconvincingly and the characters are poorly drawn. The story shows traces of Phyllis Craddock's works on Atlantis. Even the names of people and places are derived from modern English - not from early Egyptian, Mayan or Tibetan, all of which bear a striking etymological resemblance to each other. Don't be attracted by the title, this is one book that even collectors can afford to be without.

"THE VET'S DAUGHTER"Author B. ComynsHeinemann 15s.

This novel belongs to the books of Charles Fort. It is based on the case of Alice Rowlands and surely she is one of the damned! - at least by orthodox. It is a moving tale though childishy written. The characters are skilfully drawn - Lucy, Blinkers, the dying mother, Nicholas the sailor all come alive and even the squalid surroundings are vividly portrayed. How true to the life of Alice Rowlands the novel runs is difficult to say as the girl left no books or diaries when she died. There is evidence of one thing - Alice Rowlands was a levitator. She could rise into the air at will and remain there. It is not known at what age she developed this wild talent or whether she could do anything else. Almost the only fact is that she demonstrated her ability before a crowd on Clapham Common. In the riots that began during this demonstration she and two others were trampled to death.

"THE FLYING SAUCER"Author C.G. JungRoutledge 14s

Dr. Jung has been talking to the Astronomer Royal! Will any Martian who objects to being called a hallucination, a myth, a phallic symbol, or a bit old bilge please report to my bookshop where a protest is being organised.

Bobbie, about your question on reincarnation in Vagary 10. I suppose my view is slightly biased, but I must tell the following story. I was glancing through some books on a stall when someone came up to me. "I've seen you before somewhere" I thought as I stared at him. Suddenly he said to me "It's a long time since we last met - Assyria, I think, about four thousand years ago"

"Do I look that old?" I asked him.

Sandra Hall.

COUNTDOWN

Comments on the 13th Mailing

This mailing was surprising for its smallness as the December mailing is usually the biggest of the year. However, although some members bemoan the smallness at least the quality was good and if it is to be a choice between quality and quantity I would rather have a small mailing of quality than a large one consisting mainly of activity fillers, regardless of the material. And so to the small offering.

AQOS SQUARED (Mercer). A wicked, wonderful parody you thought up, Archie.

UR (Mills). The best part of the zine was Bob Leman's Vinegar Press, but the Try-to-do-it Yourself piece was an honourable second. And oh, ye gods, I've read Bob's piece about half-a-dozen times and have only just seen the "synecdoche" of Aiken.

A L'ABANDON (Caughran). Damned if I can figure out New York fan politics, either - probably even less than you because I'm three thousand miles away, but come to think of it so are you. Quite frankly, I'm not even interested in the quarrels between the various factions. And OMPA is a British apa so I would rather they did not use it to hurl their misguided missals at each other. Do other Anglofen agree with this? // When you switch over from mailing comments I wish you'd use a heading. Your journey was interesting but after reading it I don't think I'd care to hitch-hike. Kindly return Cleopatra's Needle forthwith - I keep getting lost without that landmark.

PHENOTYPE (Ency). Ta for rushing with wild cries to the defence, but I think I am rather dissimilar to the lady in question (Archie, please note). GMC is a grandmother, for instance, and I am not even a mum yet. Also GMC is a Catholic theist and I am a cynical atheist. Nor do I take a masochistic pleasure in publishing any insulting letters which I receive. If I get them - which is rare - I reply privately and just as insultingly. Mind you, if someone insults me in public I will, if possible, be even more insulting right back, working on the theory that people who cannot observe the decencies in public deserve no consideration whatsoever // The trouble at Tooley Street was caused by a number of loud-mouthed, trouble making loafers too idle to do an honest day's work. The shipping department in which I work has a dock staff and when these men compared notes they all reached the same conclusion - the one I've already stated. But I did point out that there were honest hardworking men there, too. By now you must have read Vagary 10 and I should imagine you will now rush with wild cries to the attack.// John Roles will probably have something to say to you about your remarks on Eastern philosophies.// The Celts were of Indo-European stock and they had a magical alphabet. Two alphabets, in fact - the Boibel-Loth and the Beth-Luis Non. // So that's all the "vote-buying" amounted to! But you should have said so long before now, Dick. It might have saved a lot of needless recrimination.

MOVIE MUSIC (Linwood). Although I am not a jazz fan, I found this very interesting. You obviously care a great deal for your subject and you haven't used a lot of high-flown technical terms in order to show off. Furthermore, you don't have the attitude that people who do not care for jazz make you "sick to your stomach" and you are sensible enough not to let their opinions "stick in your craw". And talking of jazz the other day I was listening in a vague sort of way to "Morning Music" - ~~no~~ vocals, thank heaven - when I suddenly realised that some sort of wind instrument was doing a beautiful job on the song "The Day That The Rains Came Down." Whatever the instrument was, it was bland and as smooth as velvet. And if I noticed it even through my usual morning coma, it must have been very good indeed. But it was not long before the radio was broadcasting the crash, screech, bang type of stuff that puts my teeth on edge, so my conversion to jazz lasted about five minutes.

FIX (Potter) Ghod! Another one who likes making complicated puns. The material in this was very good, but I think I would have enjoyed it more if zine had not been put together so crummily. It's just fallen to pieces in my hand.

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST. (Evans) Yes, this is all very well, Bill, but when are we going to know something of you? This zine was rather like the curate's egg - good in parts, but some of the pseudo-Lovecraft-Merritt-Bradbury mishmash should have stayed decently interred.

SCOTTISHE (Lindsay) A wonderful article by Maciavarley, Ethel - keep on pestering him for more if you can. Still talking of typos, the other day I was typing a letter to Mauritius and when I typed the address discovered I'd put Port Lousi instead of Port Louis. // But, Ethel, Bre means British reprint edition and how can we be reprints when we are originals? I have always regarded you as highly intelligent, so don't tell me you are so violently nationalistic that you won't say Anglofandom. After all, the Belfasters say it. In any case, Scotland was Anglicized hundreds of years ago. The Angles and Saxons overran the Lowlands (the Brythonic Celts were penned up in Strathclyde and the Goidelic Celts took to the Highlands) and the Kingdom of Northumbria stretched way up past Edinburgh. // The character we have been discussing just loves to see his name in print - most of us like that, I suppose, but we don't make a thing about it - and for that reason I will not give him the satisfaction of publishing it. Anyway, a man who makes the stupid and quite untruthful boast that he has had every femme in the London Circle comes under my heading of people who deserve no consideration. And a silly boast like that only reveals his own doubts about his adequacy. // Scottishe was beautifully set out. When I can get this typewriter fixed up I hope I can get this zine as well set out as yours is.

SATAN'S CHILD (Ratigan). You know, Dorothy, either you weren't as argumentative as usual, or I don't feel like arguing. I can't find anything to disagree on and I quite enjoyed reading your zine.

MORPH (Roles) As far as I can recall, John, I didn't equate Communism with Russia - I believe I was careful to say the Russian brand of Communism. //

Rollings as interesting as ever, but I'd dearly love to know what those signal letters mean. It may surprise you, John, but I am in agreement with the last sentence of your review of Fijagh, except I would add that the man must also care for and look after the woman. I think the whole basis of success is a sense of humour on both sides and a willingness to give and take equally. I'm also in agreement with your comment on the so-called Shaver mystery. My reaction on reading that particular issue of *Amazing* was "Surely nobody believes this godawful, ill-written balderdash!"

VERITAS (Berry). A rather sad front cover wasn't it? I remember the magazines to which Sanderson refers and have been trying to recall their titles. I believe one was called "Tales of Wonder" and another "Stories of the Spaceways" and the material in them was appalling. As for quote cards - well, I don't hang on to them intentionally, but I have got a habit of mislaying them and it's sometimes ages before I find them again. When found I do send them off, but I suppose I'm not a very safe person to send them to, really. I usually look at the illos after I've read a story but with *Galaxy* I try to avoid looking at the illos at all. In any case, I would not allow an illo to put me off a story - I think it most unfair on the author. Percy Bradley's poem - a little strained in places - I found mildly amusing, Dottie Hansen's I wouldn't call poetry at all, but poetic prose. Does she read Kipling at all? Now there was a man who could write verse about machinery.

PEALS (Dietz) But I always thought a Bronx cheer was your equivalent of our "raspberry", which is sticking out the tongue and making a vulgar noise with it - I think. Chris shows a slight tendency to lecture, but her Corner was quite interesting. And I thought it was only the English who took their hobbies seriously! However, I should imagine that in a year or two Chris will regard fandom as what it should be - fun!// I've read "*A Mirror For Observers*" and was reminded of it by a rather curious coincidence several months back. You remember the scene in the book where the boy paints a picture of a stallion? I happened to be looking at a display of children's art in Hulton's window in Fleet Street and there, painted by a twelve year old girl was a rearing stallion who had scented a mare in the distance. My reaction was the same the Martian's to Angelo's picture. It was wonderful, it was genius, it shouted of life and the sheer joy of living and, like Angelo, that girl should have been paddled.

DJELLABA (Schaeffer). Ray, I don't know if you write professionally, but if you don't, you should. That piece on your childhood memories sparkled.

FIJAGH (Ellington) H'm, One or two of the words you use are only just scraping through, my lad. Berry gets everywhere, doesn't he? Quite amusing, though. I was tickled by George Gordon's piece, too. To use one of your own phrases, although we disagree to a fare-you-well, I found Fijagh very interesting.

GROUND ZERO (Raybin). From which I gather there is still a W.S.F.S., but no longer incorporated. I got so confused over all that uproar that I

gave up trying to figure it out a long time ago. The "Space Child's Mother Goose" sounds worth buying. Yes, 1958 was a sad year for S.F. prodom and fandom. Let's hope this one will be better

ESPRIT (Buckmaster). Where am I in my body? I don't know and I think one or two of my friends suspect that I am not in it^{at}all.// Why try to argue, Daphne? An argument is an illogical conversation that continually strays off the point. It's much better to discuss, because a discussion sticks to the main issue. (And a discussion is one of the most difficult things in the world to have). And what's the point in being logical when you are up against illogical emotion? I read somewhere that logic carried to its natural conclusion is fanaticism and who wants to be fanatical? Except fanatics. In any case, you are only logical on paper and not always then, so until you practise what you preach you can't tell anyone else to be logical. By the way, there is a very good editorial on logic in the December issue (American edition) of Astounding.// The world should never have been allowed to come to boiling point in the first place, but I agree with you that all the politicians are trying. Very trying.// As for being a leader myself, see Vagary 10 (and this time don't misread it - there will be more about^{at} in the next mailing) where I suggested that political leaders (or any other type of leader) should be people in absolutely tip-top health. Look what happened because Eden was a sick man. And if some of the leaders aren't in good physical condition, they should make sure that they have one - or two- men to take over their duties, thereby avoiding a world crisis if they do have a breakdown or an attack of indigestion. // You ask me why I don't go in for history and mythology. For one thing I haven't taken enough subjects for a University entrance (and history is one of them oddly enough) and one of the subjects I haven't taken is maths. It is one of the "musts" for an entry and I am no use at maths. In any case, if I did pass and read history at a University I would have to follow the orthodox line and I would find that rather difficult. Besides, if I followed that line I would have to make history and mythology my work - they wouldn't be hobbies any more and a lot of fun would be lost. And I can't possibly imagine myself having the patience to lecture to a dead beat generation who are too busy dreaming of the latest flatfooted rock-n-roll hero to listen. I'd end up thinking wistfully of the rifle cleaning rod that I found so useful when the R.A.F. apprentices raided the W.R.A.F. blocks after their finals. // I can see the point of your remarks about the Globe versus a clubroom - I think the ideal arrangement would be a pub with a large room which we could hire. // Adverts? I must be an advertiser's nightmare. I blithely ignore all adverts and buy whatever is handy, regardless of the brand. If I don't like it I just don't buy that brand any more. The only effect that adverts have on me is that if I think one is more than usually stupid I won't buy what is being advertised. I'm the same in shops. If someone says to me "I think you should have that, madam, it's you" that shop never sees me again. I like to make up my own mind and do my own thinking and no salesman -or philosopher - is going to do it for me. As I said an issue or two back, I may not always be right, but at least I've had the satisfaction of doing my own thinking. You know, a friend who swears she knew me in several previous lives, when asked by me what I was like retorted "Just as damned perverse as you are in this one." Huh?