

Pick of PUNCH



WALL STREET HAS COLLAPSED & BOB WELL. WHEN YOU'VE FINISHED THE SILVER, JUMP OUT OF THE WINDOW.



Edited by Alan Coren



PICK OF PUNCH

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Looking for a book in which the Pope opens the England batting with Geoff Boycott? Hunting for something that will not only enable you to earn £150,000 a year without leaving your bed, but will also tell you all you need to know about the fall of Bamber Gascoigne, the functions of the Master of the Royal Pottie, and how Robert Morley went up the Orinoco by snake-infested bathroom? Looking for an acceptable Christmas present in which gay cops rub shoulders, at the very least, with homicidal VAT inspectors, nine simultaneous French Prime Ministers, William the Marxist, and the lower half of Angela Rippon?

Look no further! This book has been written by, among other freaks too bizarre to mention, John Wells, Keith Waterhouse, Paul Jennings, Alan Brien, Barry Took, Miles Kington, Quentin Crisp, Basil Boothroyd, Stanley Reynolds, Benny Green, Jeffrey Bernard, David Taylor, Kenneth Robinson, and E. S. Turner, illustrated by Bill Tidy, Mahood, Langdon, Hewison, Handelsman, ffolkes, Williams, Albert, Larry and all the other brilliant madmen who have made PUNCH the cartoon capital of the world, and it's been nailed together, if you can call it together, by the magazines's new editor, Alan Coren, to give an oblique and lunatic impression of the year just gone.

A crazy book, certainly. But, then, it was that kind of year.

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PICK OF PUNCH



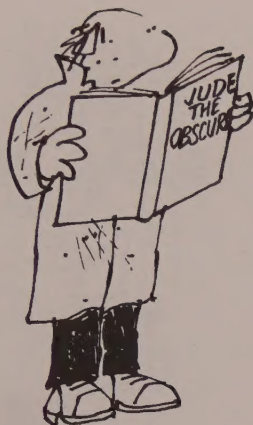




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*edited by
Alan Coren*

HUTCHINSON OF LONDON



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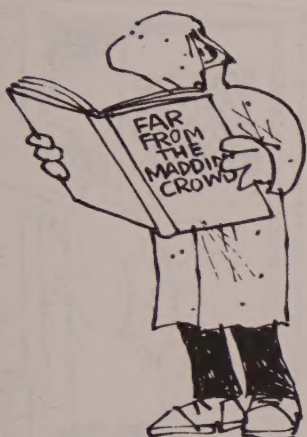
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Introduction

There is no question but that *Punch* is a very old magazine. Ask anyone. It seems to have been around forever. It is even rumoured that when Mark Lemon invented it all those eons ago, he actually thought it was going to turn out somewhat differently: it was only when it failed to roll downhill that he realised it wasn't a wheel.

And yet, and yet. There are innumerable other artefacts that would be equally old were it not for the fact that they long ago popped their clogs and went to rot on that great scrap-heap in the sky. Triremes, periwigs, astrolabes, flybuttons—the list is endless. They went partly because they had outlived their usefulness, partly because they weren't funny any more.

Punch, though, is not only still around, it is more around. Its circulation booms, its readership burgeons, and (such is the increasingly stony face of this melancholy planet) it is more useful than ever, because it is funnier than ever. It is also, as you will see from the ensuing pages, younger than ever.

If you're a very bld magazine, you have to be.

Alan Coren

Perhaps I ought to declare my credentials. I edit the thing. I did consider asking the Duke of Edinburgh to write the introduction, this being his trade, but then I wasn't certain whether he'd get that stuff in about the circulation. You know dukes.

FREAKY FABLES by HANDELSMAN

THE LITTLE

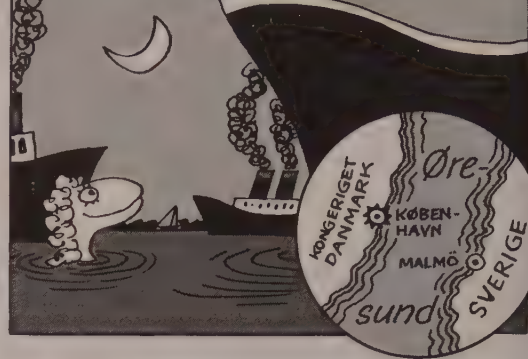


SEA COW

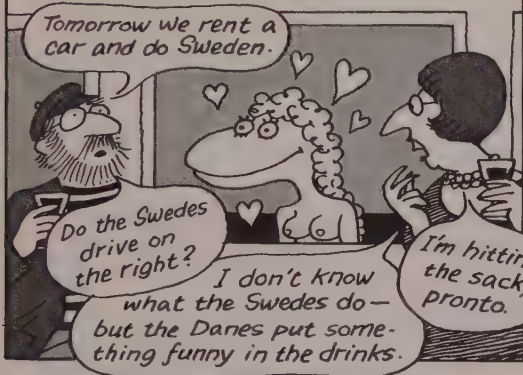
ONCE UPON A TIME A LITTLE SEA COW PLAYED HAPPILY WITH HER BROTHERS AND SISTERS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE KATTEGAT.



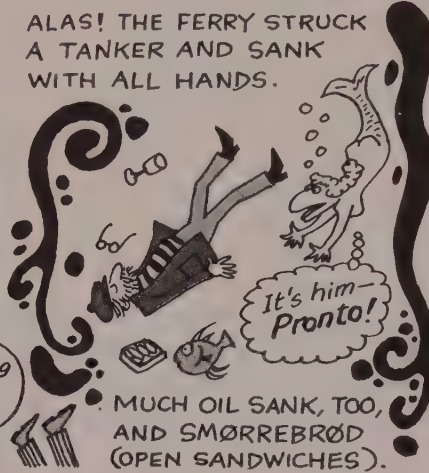
AT NIGHT, SEA COWS WHO HAVE REACHED PUBERTY SURFACE IN THE ØRESUND (SEE INSET).



GAZING THROUGH THE WINDOW OF A FERRYBOAT, SHE BEHELD THE MOST BEAUTIFUL TOURIST SHE HAD EVER SEEN.



ALAS! THE FERRY STRUCK A TANKER AND SANK WITH ALL HANDS.



MUCH OIL SANK, TOO, AND SMØRREBRØD (OPEN SANDWICHES).

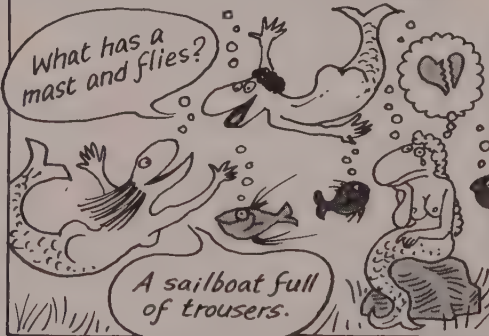
BUT THE LITTLE SEA COW WOULD NOT LET HER BEAUTIFUL TOURIST DROWN.



Farewell, my Pronto! I must return to the sea.



SHE RETURNED TO HER BROTHERS AND SISTERS, BUT HER BROKEN HEART WAS NOT IN THEIR GAMES.



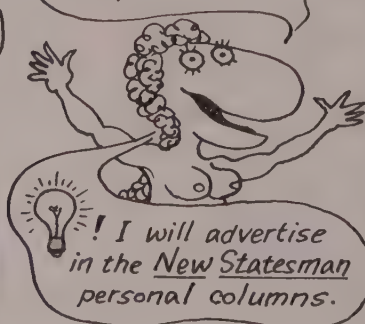
FINALLY, SHE CONSULTED A WISE OLD DUGONG.



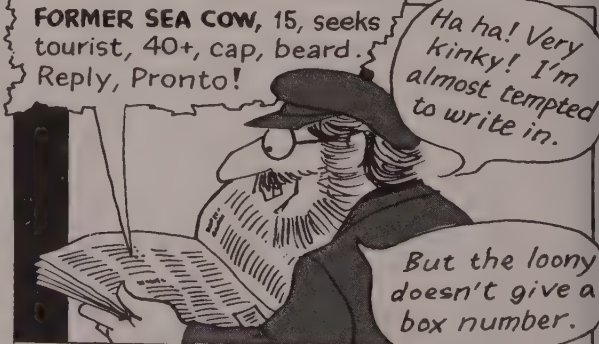
THE LITTLE SEA COW SWAM ASHORE AND CONCENTRATED VERY HARD.



But where is he? I know nothing of him except his name.



FORMER SEA COW, 15, seeks tourist, 40+, cap, beard. Reply, Pronto!



MORAL: You may be what you like, and still not get what you want.

Doctor No will see you now

BOND tensed in the darkness, and reached for his teeth.

There was something in the room. You did not train for fifty-three years without developing that imponderable acuity that lay beyond mere observation. Indeed, you found that as the years went by, this sixth sense came, perforce, to replace the others: these days, he could hear dog-whistles, with or without his batteries in.

At least, he assumed they were dog-whistles. Nobody else seemed to hear them.

The teeth fell exactly to hand, there between the senna and the Algipan on his bedside table. He waited a calculated split-second for the cement to cleave snugly to his palate. It felt good. It should have: it was made for him by Chas. Fillibee of Albemarle Street, the world's premier fixative man. Senior British agents had been going to Fillibee since before the War; he knew their special requirements. When Witherspoon 004 had gone into the London Clinic to have his prostate done and the KGB had taken the opportunity to lob an Ostachnikov nuclear mortar into his grape-box, the only thing left intact between Baker Street Station and the Euston underpass had been Witherspoon's upper plate.

Very carefully, Bond slid his hand beneath his pillow and closed it around the ribbed butt of his Walther PPK 9mm Kurz with the custom-enlarged trigger guard by Rinz of Stuttgart which allowed the arthritic knuckle of Bond's forefinger to slide smoothly around the trigger. His other hand took the light switch.

In one smooth, practised move, Bond snapped on the light switch and simultaneously peered round the room.

There was a shadowy, half-familiar figure by the dressing table. Bond fired, twice, the fearful reports cracking back and forth between the walls, and the figure reeled.

"So much," murmured Bond coolly, "for Comrade Neva-chevski!"

Miss Money Penny sat up in bed, her grizzled bun unravelling, her elegant muffler in fetching disarray.

"You silly old sod," she said.

Bond beamed, deaffly.

"Yes, wasn't it?" he said. "Inch or so wide, mind, should've been

straight between the eyes, but, by God, he didn't even have time to draw!"

"YOU'VE SHOT YOUR WIG-STAND!" shouted Miss Money Penny. She stuck an ephedrine inhaler in her left nostril, and sucked noisily.

Bond put on his bi-focals.

"Ah," he said. He brightened. "Still a bloody good shot, though, eh?"

"I should cocoa," said Money Penny. "It ricocheted off the hot-water bottle. God alone knows what it's done to your rubber sheet."

"Bloody hell," said Bond.

He switched the light out again, and lay back. As always, after untoward events, his wheeze was bad, crackling round the room like crumpling cellophane.

"Shall I rub you in?" murmured Money Penny softly, from her distant cot.

"Don't start," said Bond.

Money Penny sighed. At sixty-eight, it seemed, her virginity was moving slowly but surely beyond threat.

Bond shuffled nonchalantly into M's office and tossed his hat in a neat arc towards the polished antler. The hat fell in the waste-bin. 007 stared at it for a time, and finally decided against picking it up. On the last occasion upon which he had attempted a major stoop, it had taken four osteopaths to unwind him.

"Good morning," said M, "if you're from Maintenance, I'd like you to know that the roller towel is getting harder and harder to tug. I don't know what they're doing with them these days. I think they put something in them at the factory. When I was a lad, you could pull them down between thumb and forefinger. Possibly the KGB has a hand in it. Also, I have great difficulty in pulling the soap off that magnetic thingy."

"It's me, sir," said Bond, "00—"

He frowned.

M stared at him glaucously from nonagenarian eyes.

Bond took off his James Lobb galosh, and removed a slip of paper.

"7," he said. "007."

M trembled suddenly. He tugged at a drawer, but it did not budge.

"I've got a gun in here somewhere," he said. "By God, you'll know it when I find it! You're not

"CIA agents who lose the qualities that make good spies are retired at fifty under special pensions, according to testimony yesterday before a House Intelligence Subcommittee. 'A 70-year-old James Bond is kind of hard to imagine', said Republican Senator Sam Stratton."

—Herald Tribune

007, you swine, I've known 007 fifty years, he's bright ginger!"

"I shot my wig," said Bond, gloomily.

M relaxed.

"No good getting angry with a wig," he said. "It's only doing its job."

"You sent for me," said Bond.

"In the CIA," murmured M, "I'd have been retired forty years ago. I would have one of those thermal pools with a thing that makes waves in it. I would have my own genito-urinary man coming in on a weekly basis. A TV hanging from the ceiling, mink linings for the cold snap, a hollow cane with Remy Martin in it, a rare dog."

"About this job," said Bond.

M blew his nose, ineptly.

"Usual thing," he said. "MIRV-launching Russian satellite has been brought down by a defecting Albanian inter-galactic tail-gunner in the pay of the Irgun Zwei Leomi. As you would expect, it has fallen down inside Vesuvius: crack KGB, CIA, Mafia, Triad, and IRA teams are already racing to the spot. I promised the PM we'd send our best man."

"Oh, good," muttered Bond. "You don't think Sugglely might fit the bill better?"

"003?" said M. "His leg's gone in for its annual service. No, James, it's you—bags of parachuting, ski-ing, scuba-diving, unarmed combat, all that, right up your street."

"Quite," said Bond.

"Pop along and see Charlie in Special Equipment," said M.

"This," said Charlie, "is probably the most advanced truss in the world."

"It's snug," said Bond. "What are all these pockets for?"

"Spare surgical stockings," said Charlie, ticking off his fingers, "international pensions book, collapsible alloy crutches, Sanatogen capsules, arch supports, emergency pee bottle, mittens, underwater deaf-aid, thermal liberty bodice, and a handbell in case you fall over somewhere and can't get up."

"Super," said Bond.

"Also," said Charlie, "we've been over your Morris Traveller and, ha-ha, tarted it up a bit. Apart from the fact that you'll now be able to get it up to fifty-five—"

"Christ!"



"I've an amusing section of rotten inner tube in here that you might be interested in seeing."

"—there's an emergency inertia brake that brings it to a dead stop in the event of the driver having a heart attack, plus two big orange lights on stalks in both wings enabling you to drive it through narrow spaces, a foot-button that throws your window out instantly in the event of nausea, an inflatable anti-haemorrhoid ring set in the driver's seat that activates at the first scream, and a 3 × magnifying windshield that enables you to read road signs without getting out of the car."

"Fantastic," muttered Bond.

"Good luck, 007," said Charlie, "and good hunting!"

He shook Bond's hand, but gently.

Bond nosed forward out of the roundabout, onto the Dover road.

People hooted.

The Traveller lurched forward, stalled, lurched on again. 007 ground into third gear. He glanced in his mirror, for the tenth time. Somebody had been following him since Blackheath, almost two hours ago.

At the next traffic light, Bond got out, and walked back.

"I don't sell off the float, grandpa," said the milkman.

"Why have you been following me?" said Bond levelly.

"I got no option, have I?" said the milkman. "First off, we're the only two vehicles doing fifteen miles a wosname, second off, every time I bleeding pull out to overtake, you start wandering all over the road."

"Evasive action," snapped 007. "Don't tell me you weren't trying to force me into the ditch. You're with SMERSH, right?"

The milkman took his cap off.

"It says Unigate on here," he said.

"Ha!" cried Bond, and sprang into a Nakusai karate crouch, his left hand a club, his right fingers a dagger.

The milkman got out and helped him up.

"It's this knee I've got," said Bond.

"Shouldn't be out, old geezer like you," said the milkman. "It's freezing."

Bond laughed one of his short dry laughs. Once, men had gone white at the very sound.

"Be warm enough, soon, eh? I

trust you're bound for Vesuvius?"

The milkman looked at him.

"I got Mafeking Crescent to do, and a bulk yoghurt up the telephone exchange," he said, "then I'm off home for Pebble Mill."

"A likely story!" cried Bond. "What's under that moustache, you Chinese bastard?"

007 made a lightning grab at the milkman's upper lip, misjudged the distance, and caught his forefinger in his opponent's mouth. The milkman closed his teeth on Bond's frail knuckle, and the agent fell back into the road. As he lay there, a bus-driver walked up, stood on him absently, and said to the milkman:

"These bleeding lights have gone green twice, sunshine."

"Don't blame me," said the milkman, "this old bugger stuck his hand in my gob."

The bus-driver glanced down.

"It's this ten pounds Christmas

bonus they're getting," he said. "It's driving 'em all barmy. They've been smoking on the downstairs deck all morning." He bent down, and hauled Bond upright. "Come on, uncle, I'll see you across to the Whelk & Banjo."

He took Bond into the public bar, and sat him on a stool, and went out again.

Bond took five pills. His hand was shaking, his heart was pounding, there was a tic in his right eye, and his bronchitis was coming back. He ought to get on, it was four clear days to Naples, given that he refused to drive at night and wanted to pop into the clinic at Vitry-le-Francois for his monthly check-up.

But, then again, was it worth it? The KGB might hit him, the CIA might shout at him if he couldn't keep up, his surgical skis were as yet untested, and as for swimming the Bay of Naples, he had noticed in

himself of late an unsettling tendency to sink. Added to all of which, his SMERSH counterpart was a big Balinese stripper fifty years his junior, and he doubted that his current sexual techniques would persuade her to defect, given that he preferred doing it in his herringbone overcoat these days, apart from the fact that he had last performed a mere eight months before and seriously doubted whether his forces were yet in a position to be remustered.

It wasn't a bad pub, all in all, thought Bond. He could write out a report from here, elaborating a bit. After all, what could they expect for fifty quid a week after stoppages?

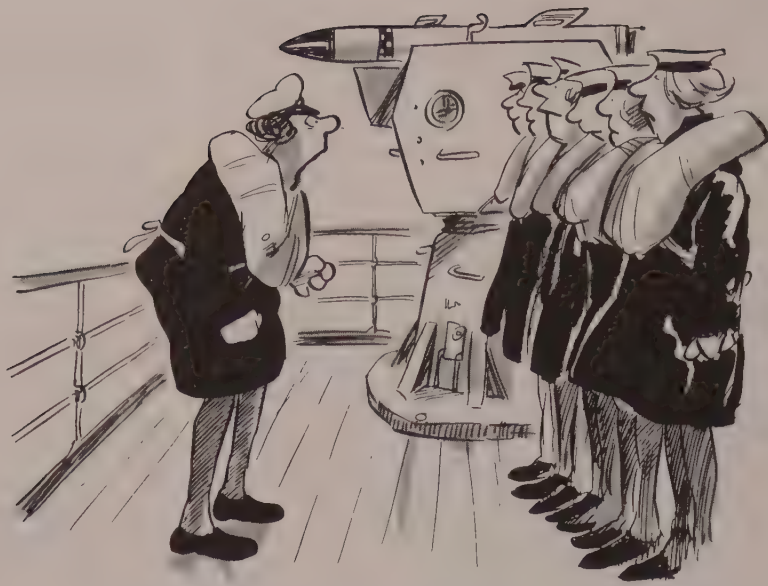
The barman looked up at Bond's cough.

"What'll it be?" he said.

"I'll have a small Wincarnis," said Bond. He shook off his balaclava. "Shaken, not stirred."



"And next week, men, we're going to have a night of the long trousers!"



"Higgins, you're like an unmarried mother at a battered wives' convention!"

DOWN TO THE SEA IN SLIPS

A conference at the Royal United Services Institute has called for the appointment of female admirals: BILL TIDY reports



"Wilton, change of life is no excuse!"



"Then how do you account for the diver's report that the beds weren't made and the sinks piled with . . .?"



"To be honest, Skipper, I don't think there's a decent blow-wave left in him."



"My God! If the Skipper's wearing that it must be the real thing."



"Trouble with Yanks is that without a Playtex bra they're bleedin' hopeless!"

"Bloody typical!"



"You're right, Thompson. Rings do make me look fatter."



"For God's sake, Margaret—the whole fleet's talking about you!"



William the Marxist

NOW I don't want you under my feet today, William," said Mrs Brown, carefully arranging a vase of flowers. "Some very important members of the National Front are coming to tea and we shall want the house to ourselves."

William favoured his mother with one of the withering glances for which he was famous.

"Spec you'll be making bombs," he said darkly. "Spec you'll be teachin' 'em how to rig up a booby-trap out of 88 parts nitroglycerine an' five parts potassium nitrate."

William's father, with an audible sigh, lowered his copy of *Did Six Million Really Die?*.

"Don't they teach you *anything* at school?" groaned Mr Brown. "Eighty-eight and five come to ninety-three! You've missed out the seven parts neutralising agent! No wonder you're always blowing up the greenhouse."

"Which," said Mrs Brown firmly, "will be paid for out of your pocket money. And I won't have you going about the village telling everyone that your home is a bomb-factory. If it is, it's your own doing. We on the extreme Right seek to overthrow the Government by peaceful means."

The arrival of Ethel with a cake-stand piled high with iced buns put William in a quandary. Much as he loved a political argument, his fondness for iced buns was legendary.

"I s'pose," he said gloomily, "that all that food is for the fascist degenerates who are tryin' to drive a wedge through the solidarity of the toilin' masses by spreadin' race-hatred an'—an'—an' poisonin' people's brothers' minds?"

This last was a shaft at his brother Robert who had recently placed a notice reading "FOR SALE TO WHITES ONLY" on the wind-screen of his two-seater. There had been a painful scene when he had discovered that some mysterious person had "improved" his handiwork by adding: "FASHIST SKUM PRIFFERED."

"Yes, it is!" flared Ethel. "And for Goodness's sake go and wash your face! Himmler's nephew will be here in a moment to take me to tennis, and I don't want him thinking we're housing a—a—juvenile squatter!"

William quelled his sister with a basilisk stare.

"O! Marx wun't have kep' all that food to himself," said William smolderingly. "O! Marx would've shared it between the starvin' masses. O! Marx would've said that jus' 'cos a person doesn't go round scrawlin' swastikas on people's gates, it doesn't mean to say he's got to live on bread an' water. O! Marx ———"

"Oh, do be quiet, William," said his mother wearily.

William's gift of eloquence was

"The attack of Marxist thinkers and writers on education in Britain today deserves serious attention, according to a special report." — *The Times*

known and feared in his family circle.

A few moments later, having incurred his father's wrath by asking him why he didn't work down a coal-mine if he thought the miners were so grossly overpaid, William dejectedly kicked a tin-can along the footpath leading to the Old Barn.

"Jus' wait till we get worker control, that's all," muttered William sternly to himself. "Jus' wait till they all come to realise the fundamental proposition of ol' Marx's economic interpretations of history. 'Spec they'll come to me an' Ginger an' Henry an' Douglas beggin' for mercy. 'Spec they'll want us to let 'em out of prison jus' 'cos they di'n't understan' the self-destructive nature of capitalism."

William brightened as he saw the hammer and sickle fluttering bravely from the roof of the Old Barn. That meant the Outlaws were waiting for him to deliver his lecture on "Zur Kritik der Politischen Okonomie". William, of whom it could not be said that modesty was a failing, was confident that he had mastered his subject. His history master, Mr Tonks, was a member of the International Workers' Ideological Platform, and William was his star pupil.

But William reckoned without the exuberant impatience of his fellow-Outlaws.

"'S no use jus' *talkin'* about it," interrupted Ginger after he had been in full flow for an hour and a half. "Anyone can *talk* about gettin' worker control an' that. 'S all right you jus' *talkin'*. What we want is action."

"An' I s'pose ol' Marx di'n't talk about it?" retorted William, waxing satirical. "I s'pose ol' Marx was deaf an' dumb. I 'spec ol' Engels an' all that lot were deaf an' dumb too. I 'spec they jus' spoke in sign language. I 'spec all the Russians understood sign language, so they knew jus' when to overthrow the gov'ment."

It was a powerful argument, but the Outlaws were not impressed. They were bored with theory, and as Ginger had rightly surmised, they craved action.

"On the television news," suggested Henry, "they kidnap somebody an' hold them to ransom until the gov'ment agrees to release the others from prison."

"What others?" asked William.

"The rest of the gang."

"Oh, I see," riposted William with withering sarcasm. "Up till now I di'n't know the rest of the gang was even *in* prison. Up till now I thought we were all here. Up till now I thought there was jus' me, you, Ginger an' Douglas. I 'spec I was wrong. I 'spec I jus' can't count."

William's unassailable logic was lost on the Outlaws.

"We could kidnap Violet Elizabeth Bott," suggested Douglas.

"She'd prob'ly scream," said Ginger doubtfully. Brightening considerably, he added: "We could always derail the 4.17 from Hadleigh an' take hostages."

William frowned. His authority was being undermined. But William was well versed in the art of leadership. Instinctively, he knew that in order to lead it was sometimes necessary to follow.

"'Course," he said airily, "if we *did* want to do somethin' to bring the goal of a true socialist democracy a bit nearer, we could always go an' disrupt the National Front meetin' that's takin' place under our own noses. But 'course, I 'spec that's not good enough for you lot. I 'spec you'd rather go an' kidnap Violet Elizabeth Bott, then she'll scream and scream and be sick and you'll all get caught an' put into prison."

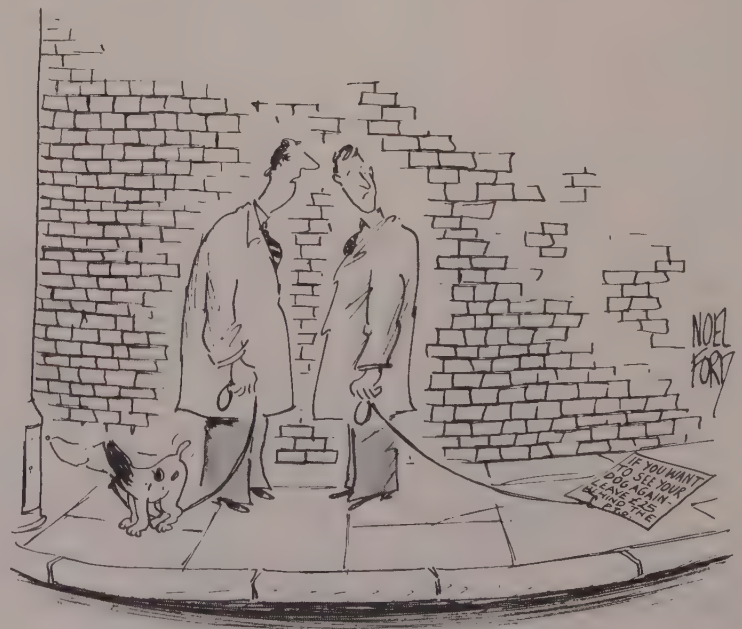
The shrewdly-phrased proposition had the desired effect. There were immediate murmurs of assent. Only Ginger, who was anxious to save face, raised the slightest objection.

"How will we go about disruptin' it?" he asked feebly.

"How do I know?" countered William fiercely. "We'll *disrupt* it, that's all. I don't s'pose ol' Lenin knew 'xactly what he was goin' to do when he went back to Russia on that sealed train. He jus' knew he had to go an' disrupt something, 'stead of jus' kidnapping people who'd scream and scream and be sick."

Some ten minutes later the Outlaws were to be seen marching purposefully along the village street in the direction of the Brown household. The 4.17 from Hadleigh, its passengers mercifully unaware of the fate from which William's saturnine diplomacy had saved them, had just steamed into the tiny station. A solitary passenger, a distinguished-looking, serge-suited individual with a gleaming dome, pince-nez and an Imperial beard, had stepped off the train and was making his way uncertainly towards the village street.

William stopped dead in his tracks. He gripped Ginger's arm so tightly that the invincible Outlaw could not forbear a wince. "I mus' be dreamin'!" gasped William.



"You can't relax your guard for a second these days, old man."



"Don't look now, but your flies are done up!"

"When you've quite finished with people's arms—" began Ginger indignantly. But William continued in a state of high excitement.

"Don't you recernise him? It's ol' Lenin!"

"Ol' Lenin?" echoed Henry and Douglas in unison. "It can't be!"

"It *is* ol' Lenin! He's 'xactly like that portrait of him in the school hall! 'S easy to see why he's here," added William, his fertile imagination working overtime. "He's done all he can to bring about socialism an' that in Russia, so now he's come over here to spread dissaffection an' revolution among the oppressed workers!"

"Wish we could take him to that National Front meetin'," said Ginger wistfully. "Ol' Lenin'd disrupt it all right."

"I've already thought of that," retorted William with immense dignity.

By now the stranger was level with the Outlaws. William, with the hideous smirk which he fondly imagined was an ingratiating smile, stepped boldly in his path.

"Scuse me, sir," said William. "I'm Brother Brown, an' these are Brother Douglas an' Brother Ginger an' Brother Henry. We're wonderin' if you'd like to come an' have tea after your long journey."

"Oh, have you been sent to meet me?" beamed the bearded stranger. "How very kind!"

"Oh dear!" wailed Mrs Brown. "I do hope nothing's happened to Mr Urquart-Jones! Perhaps he's dozed off on the train and gone beyond his station!"

"It's none of my business, dear," said the Vicar's wife, to murmurs of consternation from the pillars of village society assembled in the crowded drawing room, "but as organiser of our little National Front branch, I do think you might have arranged for him to be met."

"After all," put in Mrs Bott, "'e's ever such an important speaker, what's put 'imself out to travel all the way from London."

"Oh dear!" murmured Mrs Brown again. Anxiously she glanced

out of the window. Then her brow cleared. The distinguished guest, accompanied by William and those disreputable friends of his, was even now walking up the drive.

"Dear lady!" boomed the welcome latecomer. "A thousand apologies! I forgot your address and would undoubtedly have never found you but for the kind assistance of these young gentlemen here! I see we have iced buns. The least we can do is invite them to a substantial tea!"

The Outlaws needed no further bidding. They fell on the iced buns like the starving peasants of pre-revolutionary China.

Without further ado their protégé launched into his speech. "Ladies," he began. "When Asians in receipt of £600 a week in State benefits ask for more welfare handouts, it is surely the time to cry halt . . ."

William nearly choked on his iced bun. Surely ol' Lenin was getting a bit revisionist in his old age? Surely none of that stuff about sending the immigrants packing was in the Communist manifesto?

William hastily swallowed the last crumb and rose to his feet. Then he noticed that although the huge mound of iced buns had vanished without trace, there was an equally huge mound consisting of chocolate eclairs.

As ol' Lenin commenced a diatribe against Social Security scroungers, William reached out with both hands and seized two eclairs, then sank back into his chair with an air of contentment.

Marxism was the future. But eclairs were now.

ENT EXCHANGE



"As a good European I prefer to think of myself as one of the five and a half million unemployed in the EEC."

THE VENERABLE CLAUD DOOLITTLE

Head Proof Reader, Crockfords

MY DISCOVERY of the year was an extraordinary publication catering, I believe, for the masses, called **TV Times**, which I read almost from end to end in my local W. H. Smith's, where I was looking for books but could not find any. I suppose the contents of *TV Times* would come into the category of social anthropology, dealing as they do with the habits, tastes, hobbies and aspirations of persons in the narrow and little-known world of entertainment. Jeune in their ideas, often crude and unabashed in their expressions, these individuals appear to be united in an overweening self-esteem. Most of the women are of a particularly bold and exhibitionistic nature and are usually portrayed with their mouths wide open and holding cylindrical metal objects in front of them, possibly some form of ju-ju. The text of *TV Times* is very simply written. I kept reading until a saleswoman of Messrs Smith's tapped me on the shoulder and explained—a shade officiously, I thought—“It is for sale, you know.” As I had almost finished my copy I returned it to the shelf, but I shall certainly be dropping in again to read *TV Times*.



CYPRIAN LEES-COLEFAX

Art Editor, Exchange and Mart

MY BOOK of the Year, as always, is the **Sanderstead Bumper Wallpaper Book** which I borrow from my local dealer for the festive season (the pages are held shut by a leather thong ideal for carrying). What a blessed relief in these pages from the omnipresent tyranny of print! Here, surely, is what is meant by “the might of design, the mystery of colour, the redemption of all things by Beauty everlasting.” Here are cool pages of unbroken eau-de-nil, of nymph's thigh, of elephant's breath; representations of mellow brick walls, richly veined woods, even concrete itself; amusing motifs of kitchen kitsch, featuring trussed chickens or Provençal bowls; and grease-resistant pictures of herbaceous gardens to ravish a landlady's heart. But it is the tactile thrill I value most of all. What other book has pages which start thin and shiny and finish up thick and hispid like

My Book of the Year

*A Specially Commissioned Punch
Round-up to End All Round-ups*

OSBERT LEADBELLY

Publisher

THE BOOK which filled me with a nostalgic yearning in 1977 was Agatha Christie's **An Autobiography**. I was fascinated to learn from it that the publisher of her first novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, gave her no down payment and no royalties whatever until 2,000 copies had been sold. If only we could get back to contracts like that! Half the novels published these days sell fewer than 2,000 copies and a contract of this sort for first novels would prevent much pretentious rubbish from being printed. Believe me, I have only the long-term good of Literature at heart.



a new Harris Tweed jacket?

Only one thing mars my pleasure; that is to find that previous browsers have snipped away squares from some of the furriest and most flocculent pages to finger in secret. Others have written words like "My God!" on papers which happen not to appeal to them. But that sort of thing happens in library books too. Do, I beg of you, borrow a *Bumper Wallpaper Book* this Christmas—and return it to the dealer in the state in which you would hope to find it.



ARTHUR C. GLUCK

Romantic Novelist (as "Priscilla Windsor", "Stella Maris" &c)

THIS CHRISTMAS will find me lying half-aswoon on my favourite terrace in the Blue Mountains of Jamaica, with tiny humming-birds darting about like live jewels, and a wide-grinning houseboy bringing me one frosted rum punch after another. There, lulled by the far-off breakers, attuned to the infinite, I shall lazily stretch out a hand for the new, revised edition of *Cure Piles The Herbal Way, By A Nature Doctor*. If you know a book which contains more fundamental truths, more insights into the basic human predicament, then you will be even happier on your island than I am on mine.

BERTRAM MOGGAN

Publisher's reader

OH DEAR, I have already chosen Pradapaditya Pal's book on Asiatic sculpture, *The Sensuous Immortals* for the *Sunday Times*, Fred H. Matthews's *Quest For An American Sociology* for the *Observer* and Francis King's *Danny Hill* for the *Sunday Telegraph*. Still, nobody reads all those papers, I imagine, or indeed any of them. I shall therefore plump unhesitatingly here for that superb escapist work, *Debrett's Good Form*, with its wonderful cast of characters like the O'Neill of Clanaboy, the Primus of Scotland, the Master of Rollo, the Macnab, the Menzies, the Father Provincial, the Bishop on the Niger Delta, the Knight of Glin and the O'Donoghue of the Glens. All these well-bred people know exactly how to address each other and in what order to follow each other in to dinner; though I am sorry to read in a footnote that there is some doubt as to

whether Midshipman the Duke of Loamshire should be placed above Admiral of the Fleet Sir Horatio Hornblower. But as those are hypothetical characters and the others are real we need not worry too much. It is a privilege to find oneself in the company of such utterly distinguished people, with not a football manager in sight.

RUSSELL PARKINSON

Chat Show Interviewer

IT HAS BEEN suggested that I should spend Christmas reading for the first time the books whose authors I interviewed during the year, but this would be a betrayal of professional standards. Instead I shall simply curl up on the sofa with a Trollope, which sounds very like something one of my guests may have said to me, or will say.



RUPERT FIREBRACE

Editor, The Ted Heath Fan Club Journal

AS AN AMATUER navigator, I am a devotee of *Reed's Nautical Almanac*, and so, I am sure, is our great sailor, Edward Heath. It is packed with useful features like "To Find The Moon's Age" and the drill for "Man overboard." What I most like about the *Almanac* is that it speaks with respect and even reverence of the elements—the sea is the "Eternal Sea" and the sky contains "heavenly bodies" and "heavenly jewels." The writer also refers to "the wonderful arts of Pilotage, Navigation and Seamanship." We could do with a lot more mystery and awe in our handbooks. The Rev Sydney Smith once censured a man of letters who spoke disrespectfully of the Equator, but that is something which could never happen in *Reed's Nautical Almanac*. There is even a section of poetry. Perhaps I may be allowed to quote two gems: "When the glass falls low/Prepare for a blow" and "At sea with low and falling glass/Soundly sleeps a careless ass." I am sure the skipper of *Morning Cloud* must be familiar with these rhymed injunctions.

CUTHBERT DANGLEWEED CMG

A Crown Agent

HAD YOU asked me six months ago I should have chosen the latest book by Sir Isaiah Berlin or possibly Ronald Dworkin,

but recent events have rechannelled my literary tastes. I found much of interest in a belated reading of John Stonehouse's *Death Of An Idealist* and was fascinated by Jeffrey Archer's delightful novel *Not A Penny More, Not A Penny Less*. As you may know, poor Archer, who was once an MP, lost one million dollars in an unwise investment in Canada and his novel describes how a group of men who have been tricked out of a million dollars win it back by tricking the man who has duped them. The story with its message of hope and inspiration has rightly enjoyed a great popular success and Archer is again a rich man. But if I must make a choice it will have to be Jim Slater's *Return To Go*, with its reassuring message that the Government will always be there to rescue the gambler who comes unstuck.

CLANCY MULLION

Resident Author and Assistant Area Literature Officer, Pilkington-on-Sea

I HAVE been so busy coaxing autobiographies from retired hod-carriers and sinking pint for pint with poetastering sewer-men that I have sadly neglected my reading this year and have been unable even to discuss John Fowles's *Daniel Martin* with the Darby and Joan Literary Circle. However, I can say without hesitation that the most useful book to come my way in 1977 was *Practical Kung-Fu For Beginners*, which has enabled me to hold my own with angry philistines who say I have no business to be occupying a council flat when there are 50,000 one-parent families on the waiting list. Truly, it is a hard life in these embattled outposts of the Republic of Letters. Give me a ring again in 1980 when I hope to have finished *Daniel Martin*.



KEVIN WINCEY (aged 7)

Son of Ralph Wincey, the Literary Agent

MY BOOK of the Year has got the front cover torn off and starts at page 3, so I do not know what it is called. I found it behind the books on the top shelf of Daddy's study and it is about some young men and what they do to a lot of ladies, which I found very interesting. On the back cover is a quotation about the book which says it lays bare the ganglions of self-awareness, which I expect is why Daddy got it. My second choice for 1977 is the *Beano Annual*.

Trouble up at t'tread-mill

UNLESS history lies, Chinese women kept warm by clutching tame birds and inviting dogs on to their laps. Meanwhile, in the fields their menfolk warmed themselves by operating tread-wheels to pump water.

Tread-wheels were also used in the West to hoist heavy stones on cathedral sites. Good things, tread-wheels, whether powered by free men or slaves. We shall return to them.

Archimedes dabbled in solar power. In 212 BC he is said to have used a battery of mirrors to burn the sails of Roman ships attacking Syracuse. If true, it compares very favourably with Herschel's modest feat, twenty centuries later, of cooking meat and vegetables in a solar "hot box".

The Domesday Book, as everyone knows, listed 6,000 water-wheels in Britain, including a tidal mill at Dover. If you grouped a dozen water-wheels together you had a power station. The biggest users were monks, who employed them for grinding. Early industrialists adapted them to operate saws and hammers.

Windmills were a source of pride as well as power, though early environmentalists no doubt assailed them as eyesores. When the steam age arrived we had 10,000 of them. America developed those less sightly metal windmills which pump water in barren lands everywhere.

But the greatest source of power was that universal engine, that living motor, the horse. Without the horse there would be no history. The least of its industrial assignments was to traipse in circles at pit-heads, operating pumps. Perhaps the only role for which it was unsuited was the propulsion of galleys, but there were always enough slaves, criminals and unwary tourists for that.

Intermittently, there was dog-power. Last century Britain borrowed the dog-cart from the Dutch and London costermongers were prime users and abusers of it. In 1854 dog-carts were banned; too many dogs were being flogged to death drawing fat drunks home from pubs. Humanitarians also stopped the use of dogs in tread-wheels to operate kitchen spits. Since then dogs have had an idle time.

Birds? One hears of islanders who used the oily corpses of puffins as

wick-lamps, but there were visionaries who saw live birds as a power source. In Stacy Jones's *Inventions Necessity is Not The Mother Of* is a sketch of a balloon designed to be moved by harnessed condors, eagles and vultures. All they had to do was flap their wings, while an engineer steered them and perhaps stoked them with carrion.

Balloonists boasted that they had found a new source of power: burn any old rubbish under a big bag and you were off. Or you could brew up



The Patent Instra.

The Instra, patented throughout the world, is the only practical means by which slow burning fuel has been made available for warming the human body in a safe and cleanly manner.

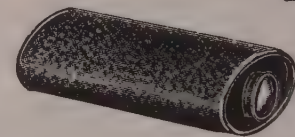
Nickel Silver Hand Instra, with 50 refills and refill holder 7/3
Extra refills per box of 50..... 1/6

Foot Instra.

Polished Copper Instra Foot Warmer, complete with 50 refills, 12/9

Extra refills, box of 50, 2/3

Refills Holders, 2/3 each.

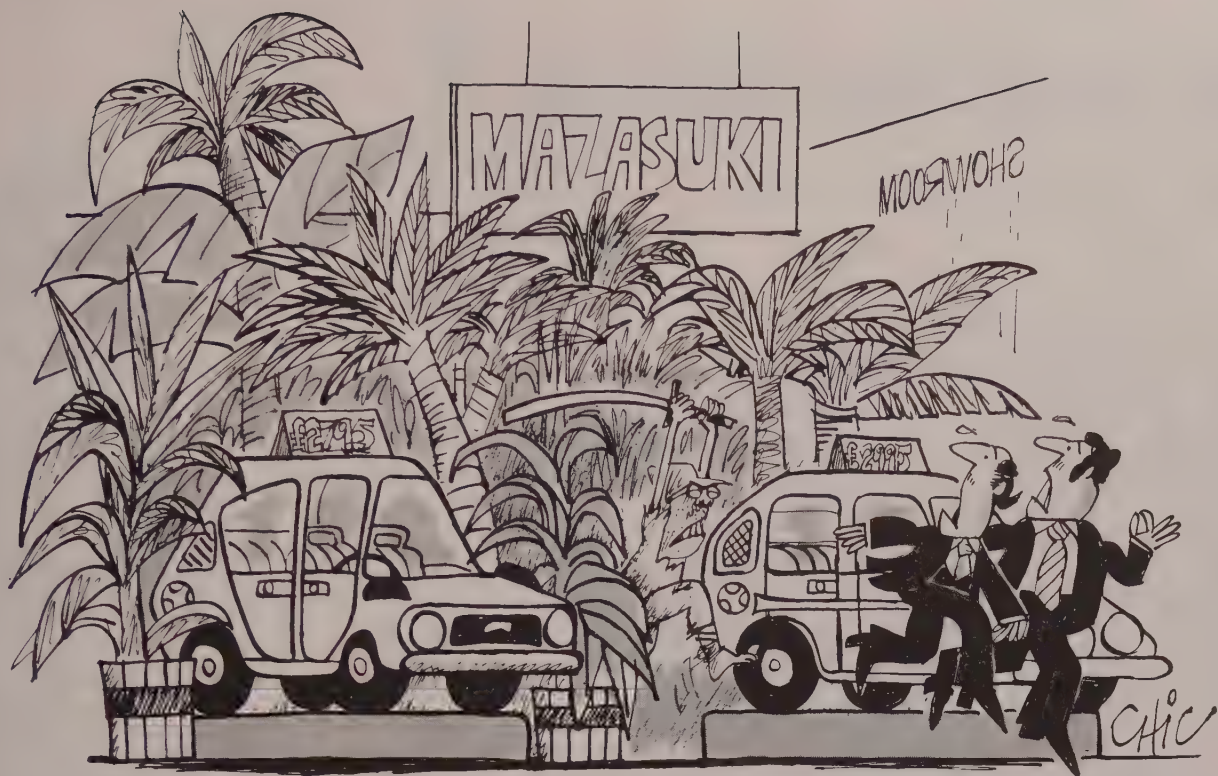


"KYRON" (Regd.), The Ideal Muff Warmer.

your own gas. Stacy Jones's book shows a cable car gliding along a balloon-supported cable. The rate of incline is adjustable by raising or lowering the balloons and the car moves by gravity.

Gravity! That was the omnipresent energy source which appealed to designers of perpetual motion machines. Their goal was a truly admirable one: an engine which required no power other than that generated by itself. Geniuses, cranks and con-men produced plans for weight-loaded wheels which turned themselves, water-wheels which raised and then spilled enough water to keep them turning. Exasperatingly, all these devices failed. Today the British and American Patent Offices reject proposals for perpetual motion machines; but don't let that stop you.

In 1817 Brixton Gaol installed the first of the treadmills invented by



"Ye Gods! There's another one thinks the war's still on!"

that great and good man, Sir William Cubitt. The objects were threefold: to give convicts exercise, to make "hard labour" a reality and to furnish mechanical power. In practice, treadmills were welcomed for their disciplinary value. The giant cylinders had long external flanges on which the convicts trod, while gripping rails above their heads. The Rev Sydney Smith described the labour as "irksome, dull, monotonous and disgusting in the last degree"; not that he was ever sentenced to it. Treadmills died out early this century and criminals now exercise by tramping round and round, performing no useful function. In a day of violent prison populations, vandals and hooligans, should we not re-think our attitude to treadmills?

All have been horrified at some time by the appalling amount of natural energy dissipated by young children. The early mine-owners and mill-owners tried to divert child-power into productive channels, but sentiment was against them. The occasional inventor has dreamed up such ideas as a butter churn operated by a child's swing,

but the possibilities are almost wholly untapped.

Some may feel that our forebears did not look hard enough for new power sources. Between the age of water-wind-horsepower and the age of steam-gas-electricity there was almost nothing reliable but clockwork; an excellent invention, to be sure, but one cannot really talk about the Age of Clockwork. One or two favoured countries were able to tap hot geysers (as used for car washing in New Zealand) but what was needed was portable or distributable power.

The Victorians did succeed in devising portable forms of body-heating independent of coal, gas, electricity and lapdogs. Their stores' catalogues offered neat flask-like containers which burned materials like charcoal. Hip-warmers, stomach-warmers and muff-warmers cost well under half a sovereign, even with a set of refills. There were bed-warmers which operated by the interaction of chemicals, efficient enough if you did not mind the idea of acids working away in your bed. Motorists and rail passengers also used such de-

vices. However, the best bed-warmer was still a servant. Carlyle's wife used to order a "beautiful blockhead" of a housemaid into the master's bed to take the chill off. A century earlier the Duke and Duchess of Newcastle directed that their beds on the cross-Channel packet should be occupied beforehand by sailors.

The vogue for pocket bonfires died out in the greater bonfire of 1914. Something else that vanished in that war was a giant solar-powered installation on the Nile. In 1912 it operated a 100 hp engine for five hours, but was regarded as uneconomic. Remember that when next you admire the great French solar furnaces which have been built in the Pyrenees.

Oh yes, one last thing. Did you know that some of the early passenger lifts were hydraulic? Having entered the cage, the passengers waited until a corresponding container in a parallel shaft was topped up with enough water to outweigh the cage, which would then rise. On the day when electricity is only to be found in electric eels you'll be glad of an invention like that.

Having offered himself in return for hijack victims, surely the Pope's personal involvement in contentious world issues will not stop there?

SUPERPOPE!

NORTH SEA FLAME-OUT SEALED BY THUNDERBOLT!



Pope Paul "Red" VI, receiving the congratulations of his crack prayer commando after His Eminence's brilliant invocation extinguished the rig fire in the Forties Field yesterday.

Pope in mercy dash to Cricklewood!

Grunwick Pickets Collapse In Kneeling Chaos!

Early today, as burly papal guards with whirling censers clove a path through a confused mob of pickets, the turbo-charged bulletproof palanquin belonging to His Eminence Pope Paul VI roared into the yard of the Grunwick Film Processing Laboratory and, at the flick of a switch, fired the caped crusader directly onto the building's flat roof for eleventh hour talks with the Grunwick management.

Throughout the morning, confusion reigned below. Hard-line Catholics bussed in from Liverpool had placed themselves at strategic positions at the front of the picket lines, and, whenever the mob surged forward towards the gates, dropped to their knees crossing themselves, brilliantly effecting the immediate collapse of the entire crowd.

At 12.20 exactly, a puff of

smoke went up from Il Papa's portable chimney, announcing the conclusion of negotiations, to the satisfaction of all concerned: the sacked workers will not be reinstated, but will receive in lieu Dana's latest LP, signed by herself and His Eminence, while, on his side, Mr George Ward has agreed to say 45 Hail Marys and offer a 20% discount on all holiday snaps by nuns, irrespective of whether they are members of APEX. APEX themselves have agreed to withdraw from the argument on the understanding that His Eminence will pray for a swift return to Free Collective Bargaining, and Mr Arthur Scargill has gone happily back to Yorkshire having received an assurance from the Pope that he will arrange an audience for Mr Scargill with Sgr. Enrico Berlinguer.

EMINENCE RESCUES AILING FILM INDUSTRY!

Family Movies Back In Vogue!

Wonderful news for declining Hollywood came this week when it was announced that Pope Paul, sickened by the wave of porn, occult, and disaster movies, has agreed to star in

a remake of GOING MY WAY. "Five hundred million Catholics at the box-offices, can you imagine?" cried an ecstatic Lew Grade to reporters yesterday. "When they hear him sing *Would You Like To Swin On A Star* in Latin, they'll go bananas!"

Pope to open with Boycott!

"Legga Breaks Notta Ruled Out"—Vatican

In a magnanimous bid to settle the row between Kerry Packer's Circus and the so-called front-line cricketing countries, Pope Paul VI has agreed to turn

out for England in this winter's tour of Pakistan and New Zealand. He may also bowl his interesting left arm round the wicket balls for both Pakistan and New Zealand *against* England, and has further made it known that, should rain or bad light stop play in any of these Tests, he would be available to fly out to Australia and keep wicket for either Mr Packer's Australian or World XI's, or, indeed, both.

"Issa whole new sbirid of goodawinna da game," said a pleased Vatican spokesman, Cardinal W. G. Spofford (formerly of Northants), "dissa da besta thing to happen since God invented da googlie."

POPE SIGNS TREATY WITH THE SIOUX!

Wounded Knee Dispute Settled



In an amazing diplomatic coup last Tuesday, Pope Paul VI signed a treaty with the Sioux under which the Indians have agreed to go back to their reservation in return for ten thousand strings of beads. It is understood that the Indians also threw in downtown Manhattan.

Real meat again

AS I watched Miss World being chosen I realised the Royal Smithfield Show was nearly upon us. It's the only event that is more erotic than watching all those girls on parade at the Albert Hall. After following the last night of the Proms with the lust night of the blondes, I cannot wait to see the 500 carcasses strung up at Earl's Court in December.

And yet, you know, only eight per cent of the people who go to the farming exhibition are "members", as the show officials put it, "of the public". When you think about it you can see that the remaining 60,000 visitors *must* be members of a different species. How else could they bear all the grisly slaughter?

I don't mind the corpses myself, but I do get depressed by the 1,500 animals standing about doing nothing. (Though I'm told that it's when they have been standing too close together, like this, that they are sold off as pressed beef.) I must say I prefer my beef walking about in twos and threes in a distant landscape, which is how I also prefer my Miss World contestants.

I suppose mums and dads of beauty queens feel very much like owners of Smithfield cattle. But at least they are not faced with a "Dead and Alive" competition. This is a star event at Earl's Court. Entrants are judged when they are alive and again, shortly afterwards, when they have been slaughtered. (I believe the public are not yet ready for this added refinement in the Miss World contest.) A lot of the animals are entered, even as carcasses, under their pet names. It seems a little brutal to put a label on a hunk of meat, saying *Model Girl*, *Pinky* or *Ginger*. Last year one fleshy mess was being sold as *Kojak*, which makes you feel glad the stuff gets to the dining table without the names on it. I don't think I could face *Kojak* and onions, stewed *Ginger* or even *Pinky* and chips.

What beats me is how anyone can keep an animal as a pet and then lead it to the slaughter. I expect you remember the terrible fuss about *Lulu*, who was thought to be too young to die. Bernard Levin got some angry letters when he wrote of *Lulu* as a male. His mistake was understandable because a 9½ cwt Aberdeen Angus sounds pretty butch, if that is the word I want. And

anyway, as Bernard was told rather sharply, nobody was worried about *Lulu* for her own sake. It was just that she could have kept on giving somebody a lot more profit if she had been used for breeding.

It's a sadistic business. But at least the other 1,500 animals I mentioned leave Earl's Court alive. Or *nearly* alive. After several days in a humid atmosphere they are sometimes quite poorly. Last year a champion caught pneumonia, just before being declared a winner.

Not much about Royal Smithfield gets into the popular press—apart from the royal bits. This year the Queen Mother will be going along. Presumably the Queen herself has been faced with quite enough livestock just lately. Anyone who has toured the Midlands without an interpreter deserves to be let off any further ordeals for at least six months.

Which reminds me that Prince Philip has already done his stint at Earl's Court, where he is still remembered by the Smithfield crowd. He was, of course, in a complaining mood. He was not satisfied, he said, with the quality of the gravy he was getting. "I like," he said, "my gravy thick and brown." His phrase had overtones of A. A. Milne and Max Miller. But he was taken very seriously. After a consultation of considerable gravamen, officials came to him with the answer. "For a really rich gravy," he was told, "there is nothing like good grass." I'm sure there is a gag here like the one about the boy who put manure on his rhubarb and his friend said he preferred custard, but let it pass.

Last year, as you will not remember, it was Princess Anne who made Smithfield royal. You won't remember because the newspapers had very little to say about her. Yet it was here that she was shown "how to roll one leg and show the best end properly." These achievements, it seems, had nothing to do with her favourite sport; they were part of the butcher's art. This included, last year, the first-ever display of "carcasses without knobs on." I tried to find the meaning of this quaint technical expression, but the Meat and Livestock Commission said they didn't know and why didn't I try the joint committee? And they were not joking.

None of this could enthrall the

public as much as the condition of the gravy at Buckingham Palace. They can hardly be interested, you would imagine, in a commodity that has priced itself out of their reach. But I'm told I am wrong to think like this and that, in fact, the public will not forsake the meat habit easily, even if they have given up a lot of real meat—the red stuff—in favour of white meat and *processed* red meat.

This year there will be an attempt—for the second time—to reach a larger audience at Earl's Court. Hot on the heels of Miss World will come the election of the Shepherd of the Year. And if you think the winner will be taken on a national tour, waving his crook for civic functions—or waiving his functions for civic crooks—you are wrong. Whoever the poor devil turns out to be, he will receive a sculpted trophy. Of what? You can surely imagine what a shepherd would most want to find on his sideboard after a hard day in the hills. That's it—you've guessed; he will get a sculpted figure of a shepherd and a dog.

I should mention here that these shepherds are known to represent a better return for capital and gross output per head than most men in industry. For fixed rates of £50 to £60 a week they handle 90,000 flocks of sheep (worth £210m a year in products). Overtime is both necessary and voluntary, especially when a sheep decides to lamb in the middle of the night. "Delivery dates," said one of these shepherds last year, "are never postponed." It was dreadful to hear a man of the soil making urban small talk, however sheepishly. Let's hope that other good men don't return to their pastures similarly corrupted.

The language of the farmer, incidentally, is something you can pick up from the farming magazines available at the Royal Smithfield Show. In one of them I noticed that rain was described as "the inconvenience which always falls from the skies." (The phrase becomes more graphic the more you think about it.) And the products advertised in the *Farmer's Weekly* include not only a brand of Italian ryegrass from Aberystwyth and a £175 Nixon Washer (which has obviously come too late to be useful), but also advice on where a farmer can buy historic

tractor prints. You can picture him nailing these over the kitchen range when he comes in from his tackle-dragging machine with its eight giant wheels and its 215 hp. Before you dash off and buy one of these, for £23,000, you should know it is useless unless you have at least 2,000 acres to work over. And if you do get one you have to tone it down to 90 decibels.

Personally I find all the shining machinery, which is bringing us a very nice trade balance, much more attractive than all the glistening stuff at motor shows. There is something so happy about a vehicle spending its days ripping up hedges and destroying the balance of nature. And all in the cause of getting the right food into the beasts that provide gravy for Prince Philip and others.

As for the farmer himself, how would you recognise him at Earl's Court? According to the advertising in the farming journals, he favours yellow sou'westers, police inspectors' trousers, combat pullovers, commando boots, Royal Naval fingerless mitts, unissued Australian braces and British army face veils. And if you don't recognise the farmer by what he is wearing,

you might do so by listening to what he says. A special exhibition offer for the farmer is something called a "Treasure Chest". This, he is told, contains "100 colourful phrases to suit every occasion".

I'd like to hear the colourful phrase to suit Prince Philip and the gravy. It ought to be as rich and brown as the gravy was not.

COUNTRY LIFE

According to one councillor yesterday "the Parthenon in Greece and the Colosseum in Rome would have been demolished long ago if Glasgow District Council had been responsible for them.

Glasgow Herald

A divorcee, Mrs Barbara Tinti, was ordered yesterday to pay 35p compensation for a salami sausage she stole from a supermarket. In a statement she said: "It was an Italian-named sausage and I get sentimental over Italian things."

Yorkshire Post

For parking in Beaufort Square no waiting area, Chepstow, Reginald William George Hollingshead, of the Rose and Crown, Tintern, was fined £10. He was also fined £5 for causing litter by "throwing into the open air" a penalty parking ticket.

Chepstow Weekly Argus



"I think we should have a minute's racket for Miss Pollock!"

YOUR FARES TONIGHT

British Rail regret the late arrival of your fares increase: this was due to unforeseen difficulties with the Prices Commission and the bad weather. Also snow on the points not far from Didcot. British Rail also regret the uncertainty about the actual amount of the increase and the inability of the 8.21 to leave Haywards Heath since Tuesday. This is due to unforeseen circumstances such as the fact that we are now nearly in December. It is thought the increases will be of an average order of 14 percent except on trains carrying restaurant cars. These will be closed due to an unforeseen staff shortage and the bread crisis, if there is going to be one. Or not. The chances are however that the increase will be more like 16 percent in the South-East region and 18 percent where commuters are involved. This is because the South-East region is well known to be full of rich and idle commuters with nothing better to do than clutter up our carriages in the morning and evening at precisely the time people are trying to get to work and/or home again.

About the 25 percent increase we promised: we regret that we have not been able to organise this, due to an unforeseen shortage of accountants and people to carry the money to our bank. However we hope to bring this in early next year to coincide with the Spring timetables and the withdrawal of the new high-speed trains, most of which have in any case had to make unscheduled stops at Acton Main Line and Ealing Broadway, thereby affording unfair competition to the Central Line.

We are however happy to announce that a Cheap Day Return to Birmingham may now be obtained for £103.40p plus VAT and surcharge for travelling on a weekday or between the hours of 8 am and midnight. We have been asked to point out that a previous warning to passengers about the unacceptability of credit card breakfasts in dining cars, where such cars exist, was intended to refer to our decision no longer to accept these cards, not to refer to the meals themselves which are up to our usual high standards and therefore still acceptable to many people.

We are well aware that the last train out of Guildford appears to have left at 4.15 am on Monday and are doing our best to rectify the situation: in the meantime passengers (or rather intending passengers) would help the running of British Rail considerably if they would kindly desist from telling us things we already know about the ashtrays on Southern Region. Genuine complaints may be lodged with the ticket collector by number three platform at London Bridge on alternate Mondays if he should not happen to be elsewhere employed at the time.

We have promised to hold the new January fare levels for as long as possible, and this may be well into the first week of February if all goes according to plan: the plan is that we really only want a very few immensely rich passengers, ideally non-smokers and teetotal, with a desire to travel between Euston and Manchester roughly once a fortnight. This we think we could manage without undue difficulty, and the savings on buffet facilities, compartment cleaning costs, etc would be considerable. It would also help if they were of foreign extraction and unacquainted with the kind of vocabulary so often used by thoughtless native passengers to depress the staff when trains are more than the scheduled ninety minutes late on shorthaul journeys.



Soldier, Soldier

Dear Mr Rainham,
I don't remember the dead lady who said she was my wife. She may not have been lying but it's a well-known trick on members of Her Majesty's forces serving abroad. I don't fall for it myself. A lady has to produce more evidence than three kids and a dropped womb. I am writing in the matter of my defence. They have got the wrong man. That lying creep from social security who said he come to me and told me where they was living has got a brother fighting for the IRA. His real name is Mahonnihy. I have sources outside that have ascertained this fact for me. You check on this before you go briefing my barrister I would not set fire to anybody's family let alone my own. That coroner was out to get me, the middleclass sod. Ex-officers don't like cockney soldiers up on murder charges.

Another thing is the year I was supposed to have married that dead lady was 1957. That's too bad because I was in Singapore that year living with a Chinese girl called Chi

Chin. Ask anybody. You say you checked the army records, but as I said in court our unit was known as the A.R. which stood for Artists' Rifles and is now called the S.A.S. or Special Air Services. We were an unofficial presence in South East Asia. We was waiting to be dropped into Borneo. British soldiers were killing in Borneo, Arabia and Java long before we broke into the headlines at Suez.

My Chinese natural law wife and two daughters, Ping and Pong, two and a half years old the youngest, were burnt to death by British napalm bombing in Borneo. It happened only five weeks after we had moved into the Caricao hutment. You notice the coroner glossed over that didn't he? British napalm, old chap? It's not British. Afterwards I and other British servicemen were caught by the Nationalists and had all our toes broken with gun butts so we couldn't run away. They had no prison to contain us in a jungle situation. The day we were flown back to Stansted in twenty-five Hercules aircraft we were exposed

naked to tourists, weren't we, hosed down in the forecourt of a package holiday hotel, de-liced, cropped, the lot, with all the American Polaroids snapping at our testicles.

You may find this is not in the military archives, Mr Rainham, old man. They say 1959 was a quiet year. They told us we were fighting for the Queen. I sliced a brown head in half with a spade like cutting a melon. I was young, Mr Rainham, patriotic to a fault. My first long-trousered suit was a Teddy-boy's suit and my second was khaki. If there wasn't any killing to be done for our government we used to get lent to the sheikhs for money—or women, or oil or goods. I doubt whether anybody kept any records. We had an alcoholic padre, Eric, who was writing a book, but he died in mysterious circumstances. I have since tried to find his family, somewhere near Bicester, because he was posting his manuscript home by instalments. Was there ever another family burnt to death near Bicester, do you know? Have you got fire insurance yourself? I have been trying to think of possible witnesses.

You may like to talk to a Mr Reg Parker who is a brick worker—last time I heard of him living at Toddington in Bedfordshire and is also a S.A.S. reservist. He would be shot if he gave you any details of our work abroad as I would be but he could confirm about my dates and places and so on. He owes me a favour for something that happened to a book-maker in Hong Kong, tell him. You will find he has a blue allegiance card like I showed you. We can be sent to any part of the world at a moment's notice, no option. I wish to hell they would send me somewhere now and get me out of this. They disown you if you get in trouble.

By the way, I have thought of another reason why my so-called daughter might have been raped before she was tied to the bedstead and burnt to death. I wouldn't do that just to avoid paying maintenance, would I? The reason I thought of is that a fireman did it. Martin Batesman was a fireman. We spent four nights inside a dead camel together as snipers. You wouldn't believe what happens sometimes at fires with everybody undressed and that. Look at it this way, Mr Rainham, Margery had been partially overcome by the smoke and she was

lying across the bed with nothing on. She's got enormous knockers. Or so I was told. This fireman comes in. What? You think about it. I couldn't do a thing like that. I love children. If I hadn't gone in the army I would have been a teacher or social worker. I was always buying kids sweets in Cairo. Giving them rides.

You asked me to remember the name of my first probation officer in Clapham and I think it was Claydon. Mr Claydon. He was crippled for years. I used to push him round in his wheelchair. We all subscribed to getting him this chromium wheelchair. He used to run a club for us at the top of the Montagu Burton building with billiards and ping pong and soft drinks and the like. A good disco, plenty of tarts. That was when they wore those stiff little petticoats and you could see their arse when they twizzled. The trouble was Claydon used to preach at us. That's not the way to bring out the real qualities in kids. Anyway he fell down the stairs. Some families have rotten luck. Later on his wife was found drowned on Wimbledon Common. You may remember. They thought it was probably suicide.

What offence had I committed to be on probation, you may well ask. Check the records and you will find I nicked some food out of Sainsburys in Clapham High Street and give it to an old age pensioner. Of course they couldn't find her when it come to the case. I hope to Christ you will be able to find Reg or Martin or somebody, Mr Rainham. They will give me a good character reference. If there is any slight hesitation, drop a hint that I might be out soon. Same if you find anybody hanging around Christine's if you go to Milton Keynes again. Tell her I hope her arm is mending all right.

That was all over a packet of Cornflakes, incidentally. We only ever quarrel about little things. It was the way she tripped. Never lean your weight on furniture, that's one of the first things we were taught in unarmed combat—it might have been thrown before. She would keep coming in with these big packets. I've had this before with birds and I expect you have. They don't want marriage, they don't want babies, they want to stay free like you and live independent lives then suddenly one day they come home with a giant



"You're lucky—this was a bookshop when I was a kid."



"... And, in response to the broadening perspectives of our times, this year's exhibition features an assemblage of stamps by Gay collectors."



"Take no notice—he's showing off."

packet of Cornflakes or soapflakes. Chi Chin bought a whole sack of bean shoots just before she was burnt to death in Borneo. They all went up with her. Insecurity, that's what it is. My mum had an attic full of corned beef—well, three of my uncles are security men. All us Bates are in the law, army, security, police. That never come out in court.

Christine visited me yesterday. What did she have to say after forty-six lonely sleepless nights? "Would you mind if I bought a huge box of broken biscuits? They're going cheap at Bludgeon's." I've got a murder charge hanging over my head and she's thinking about big packets. The day the social security chap came and told her I'd got another wife and kids living off the nation Christine went out and got a carpet sweeper with Green Shield stamps. She believed all that rubbish in court. If the law says it's true it's true. She's got a working class mentality. She's terrified of uniforms. You could get her knickers off with a traffic warden's cap. I'm depending on you, Mr Rainham. All them other middle-class bastards are going to crucify me unless you do your stuff. And you'd better do it because if you don't I'm going to get out of this rat hole and I am going to follow you wherever you are and I'm going to stuff your bloody head up your bloody—I don't mean this in any nasty way. I just want you to realise that there is a certain degree of urgency.

Now, regarding the case for the prosecution when we come up at the assizes, I have been over all their so-called evidence with a Mr Priddle who is one of our warders who used to be a vet and also played golf. He considers that they've got a case. It is Mr Priddle's considered opinion that unless they find the petrol can, or rather a petrol can, nobody can connect me with burning that family. That little fat swine suggested that's how I get rid of all my rubbish. I don't think you noticed it when he was giving evidence. You didn't jump up or anything. That little bastard is trying to suggest that I've been killing and burning people all my life. Or knocking them down-stairs like Mr Claydon, my poor crippled probation officer. And Mr Priddle says he's got no business to talk about my brother who got burnt to death stuck in a window. My own

flesh and blood. We used to have rows, yes, but I never did any more than knock him out. Anyway he was a greedy bleeder. I think you ought to know the facts in case that prosecuting bugger comes up with anything different.

Now this is it, honest to God. My brother Hugo hated Aunt Sheba because she made him bath her when she had the rheumatics, the dirty bitch. One day he picked her feet up and drowned her, run out in a panic, knocked the oil heater over and tried to climb out the window with a broken sash. It comes down on him, didn't it, when he was half-way out. Hugo never had no army training. I wasn't even there. I was screwing a bird in Basingstoke who I met when I was in tanks. Hugo's face never had a mark on it. His body inside the window was burnt to a cinder. When I hit somebody I mark them bad. All I got was the old woman's glass beads and the insurance worth sod all. I only took the policy out in case there wasn't enough to bury her. Or burn her.

And another thing. Mr Priddle says what happened in Borneo is not admissible evidence, Chi Chin and the kids being wogs and outside this jurisdiction. Anyway. I loved her. She had a lovely body. I've got her picture stuck on this cell wall. I wanted to bring her back home and get her a job with Mr Laser who does this photo-modelling stuff (that's another man you might contact regarding the truth of this) but it meant leaving the kids with her old Aunt Grisly—that's what I called her—and Chi Chin wouldn't have it. Pity, as it turned out. You ought to have seen her corpse. And the kids. Did you ever see napalm burn a body alive, Mr Rainham? It sticks like tar and you can't put it out or get it off they just frizzle while they're looking at you. It upsets me to think about it. I can still smell them. You wouldn't pour it over your worst enemy. Except that little fat swine.

You go after him, Mr Rainham, now you have got the honest to God sworn truth and testament on my oath to God and the Queen and my mother's grave. She was burnt to death by the incendiaries when I was ten. If she hadn't made me get evacuated to Buckingham that might never have happened. Still, it's an ill wind. Time I got out the army and was looking for a place to live they

was building the new city of Milton Keynes on my old manor. There's a lot of my old oppos up there and a lot of villains as well. And that's where the trouble came in really. These new towns are like open prisons and stinking with fuzz. The old Bill's friends and relations all working on the telephone exchanges. That's how social security got on to me. I went down to Bletchley and busted the place up didn't I—two miles of spaghetti down the High Street. The telephone system was out of action for a week, right up to Towcester. You ask Christine—her dad's a postman.

Wait a minute. I think I can smell something burning. You just remember in case anything happens in this rat hole that I have not been allowed matches or lighter ever since I was remanded in custody. It's all right now. That was Mr Priddle himself going past with his *meerschmaum* special. It's an easy day today, they're all out playing cricket. Screws are not what they used to be. Graduates some of them. Looking for a way into Special Branch. You used to be able to trust your own kind. I have to be careful with my writing and that. There's a few here don't want me to get into that bloody court.

By the way, keep Mr Priddle's name out of it he says else he can get struck off the prison service. He does something for me and I do something for him, don't I. I have shown him seven different ways of breaking out of this prison, no sweat. I have given him our S.A.S. survival course. I have shown Mr P how to make indigestion powder out of wall scrapings and that. How to bite your way into a dead animal and live there amongst all the rotting entrails if necessary, waiting to get a pot-shot at somebody. How to get rid of dead bodies by chopping them into little lumps and getting them run over on the motor roads like hedgehogs. I can torture the truth out of the enemy with my thumb and forefinger only. Mr Priddle thinks you ought to mention this prowess in respect of the present British presence in Ireland and Brussels and so on. It would take five years to train somebody as good as me—and even then he would not have my natural instincts. For survival, that is.

I have been trained by my officers to bust out of this crappy prison any



"Any ships need launching today?"

second I feel like it but I would rather have good old British justice. We S.A.S. are the backbone of the country, the salt of the earth, says Mr Priddle. Where the flag is I will fight. I will tear any little fat swine to pieces with my bare teeth who lays a hand on our Queen. I seriously think you should mention this on my behalf, Mr Rainham. You seem too quiet.

Yours cordially
George K. Bates (Mr)
H.M. Forces (Res)
Remand prisoner 88zero
zeroNJ/9B

Next time you are drinking with your friends at the golf club try to imagine how you would feel if you got home and your little daughter Zena had not come home from school. Mayfield, I believe it is. My sources outside tell me she arrives at Wimbledon South station at 4.30 every afternoon. But supposing she didn't? Oh, daddy! Oh, daddy! This is what my Christine is crying now stuck up in Milton Keynes. And where am I? In this rat hole with all my muscles. You better get me out, Mr Rainham. I can still smell smoke . . . If they get me, this letter will still get to you through the ventilation system and a dustman who shall be nameless. God Save The Queen.

Each man kicks the thing he loves

*HONEYSETT on the British
and their pets*



"We found we couldn't cope with a large dog so we had his legs amputated."



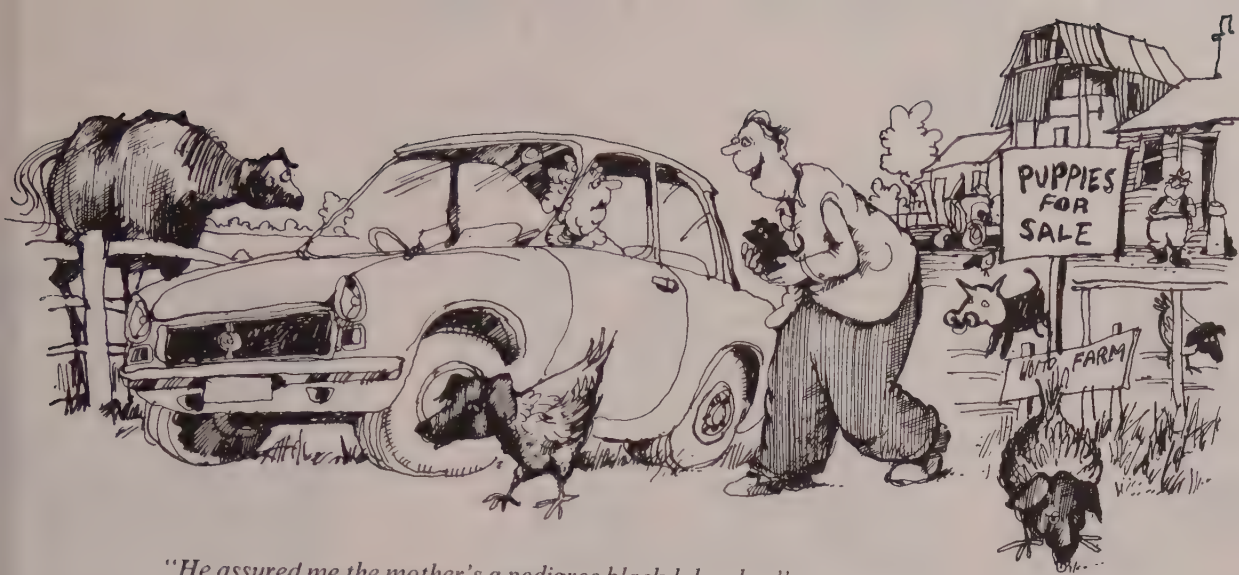
"When Flossie died, I decided not to get another cat."



"He doesn't seem to want to go down, this year."



"He keeps the battery ants for the eggs."



"He assured me the mother's a pedigree black labrador."



"There are dogs in India that don't get that much to eat in a year."



"We're fortunate, Brian being a rep. It's no trouble for him to dump them on a motorway when they get older."



"It's that Mrs Simmonds again, doctor, trying to avoid vet's fees."



THE FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

—ALL THE RUNNERS! Miles Kington's guide to form

LEFT



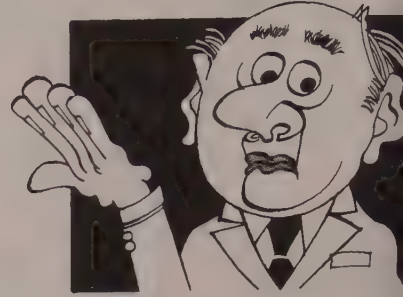
Georges Marchais-Commun Balding, dynamic leader of the Communist Party since 1930 (he was a fanatical member of the Resistance in the War and often hid overnight in his loft). He does not personally believe whole-heartedly in the current alliance with the Socialists but says that it sure beat a pact with David Steel. A fervent supporter of Eurocommunism which he reckons will fool enough people to make it worthwhile. If elected he will invade Czechoslovakia.

CENTRE



Jacques Charisme Dashing, balding, dynamic middle of left-centriste Gaulliste, Charisme split with D'Istaff over the Arab question (the Arab question is: *Pourquoi l'Arabe traverse-t-il la rue?*) and started his own party, despite many neighbours' complaints. He was a fervent member of the Maquis in the War but, surprisingly, in England, where he often sheltered British airmen overnight in his loft if they were too late to get back to camp. If elected, he promises to be the best dressed leader in the world.

RIGHT



Valery Jenkins D'Istaff The present incumbent D'Istaff is the latest in the line which stretch unbroken back to the legendary Charlemagne Gaulle. He believes implicitly in beautiful tall manners and Vivaldi's later works, though this not his election policy. As he believes in his divine right to be re-elected he cannot really said to have a policy except a burning conviction that French politics is too full of people call Jean, Jacques, Jean-Jacques and Georges.



Françoise Mitternacht The post of lovely-but-dynamic-intelligent-but-not-balding Public Lady of France is being held this year by Françoise Mitternacht, the Socialist figurehead. Temporarily allied to the Communists, she intends to ditch them when elected and open an account at Yves St Laurent. As president, she hopes to have an affair with Jean-Paul Sartre, if it is not too late by then.



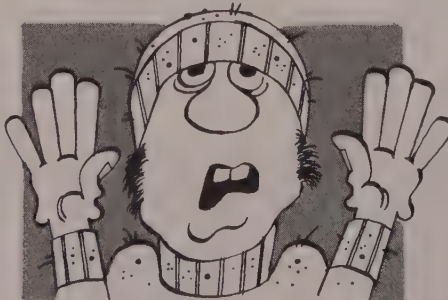
Jean Plaidy Although an elderly female English novelist, Jean Plaidy is mistakenly thought by millions of Frenchmen to be a balding, dynamic, technocratic millionaire and regularly receives 8½ per cent of the national vote. His election pledge is to keep you gripped till you turn the final page, which has puzzled many otherwise loyal supporters.



Jean-Jacques Chanson-Damour Balding, dynamic ex-Prime Minister Chanson-Damour split with D'Istaff over a basic policy question: which one was more balding and dynamic? Now both men claim to lead the Gaullist party, though neither recognised as a contender by the WBA. If elected, promises to field an unchanged side against Wales at Cardiff.



Jacques Braille Angry, brilliant, moody, Marxist, cult-figure, loner, film-maker, chansonnier, demonstrator, Bardot's last friend but one, ecologist, winner of the Prix Prandial and leader of his own Gauloises Party, Braille is standing for election as a protest against the whole political system. If elected, he promises to resign immediately.



Jean-Jacques Vraie-Biere The main candidate of the ecology movement, Vraie-Biere is against nuclear reactors, smoke, cars, the Pope, tower blocks, industry, factories, in fact, almost everything. He was last seen rowing a lone dinghy into the path of France's latest nucleaf submarine and, if elected, will be France's first posthumous President.



Le Comte Möll de Kintyre Kintyre was kidnapped five months ago and is issuing his election pledges via his captors' ransom demands. If elected he undertakes to restore capital punishment for kidnapping, to renumber Napoleon correctly as Napoleon II and to release all terrorists from jail, though that may be part of his ransom demand.

Going through the motions

PARTY conferences are among those devices with which our political ruling class reconcile us to their domination. They are masques and mummeries, rather than real events, part of the ceremonial apparatus of modern democracy. For a week the workers hob-nob with the leaders in an atmosphere of spurious equality. In the same manner, until the eighteenth century, did the divine-right monarchs of England 'touch' for the King's Evil, once a year laying their hands physically on the poorest and most scrofulous of their subjects, to transmit the charismatic balm. No matter that no cure was effected: the symbolism was all.

At Brighton or at Blackpool, Mr Callaghan and Mrs Thatcher "lay hands" on their parties, to deliver them of the itches, boils and pustules which have accumulated in the past year. The gesture is no more than a placebo; but some relief is undoubtedly felt. The party speaks; its voice is heard, if not heeded. And the rite is performed in public. In short, democracy is not done. But it is thoroughly seen to be done.

Of course the system is kept alive, in part at least, by the growth of mythology. There is the Homeric tale, among the Tories, of the famous three hundred thousand houses of 1952. The party conference, in its innocence, demanded that houses to this number be built by its government. Mr Macmillan, then Minister of Housing, demurred: such a total would demand prodigious, nay superhuman, efforts: out of the question! But the conference persisted: its collective voice rose, from decibel to decibel. Eventually, seeing no alternative, Macmillan gracefully yielded to the clamour. The government concurred. And lo! The houses were built. What better proof could there be of the Tory commitment to democracy? Only many years later did it emerge that the government had intended to build the houses anyway.

The job of the party managers at conference is to provide a conflict which does not get out of hand—a drama, indeed, but a drama leading to health-giving catharsis. I once travelled down to Brighton with a Tory minister who was to oppose the annual motion demanding the immediate reintroduction of flog-

ging and capital punishment. He rehearsed his argument to me; and very good it was too. Would it persuade the delegates, I asked? "Oh no." Then the government would be defeated? "Certainly not. It's arranged that the motion will be withdrawn. After all, it's the debate that matters, not the vote, isn't it?"

The managers are helped by the fact that delegates at these gatherings are notoriously easy to divert to side or minor issues, and will happily growl and struggle over a small procedural bone, enticingly dangled before them, while major issues go through on the nod, or are ignored completely. The party militant is not noted for a sense of proportion. During one Tory conference, the Pope died. I recall that all the Catholic MPs formed up, called on Selwyn Lloyd, the Foreign Secretary, and demanded that, in his survey of world affairs, he should note the Pope's passing in sorrowful tones, and pay fulsome tribute to his love of peace, statesmanship, etc. Whereupon the Ulster Protestant MPs likewise formed up and demanded that this passage should be pointedly omitted or, better still, replaced by one drawing attention to the "Bishop of Rome's" unconscionable encouragement of violence in Northern Ireland. In the event, after much argument and diplomacy, a third passage was drafted, which referred to the late Pope in terms of such impenetrable, if polite, obscurity as to leave both factions happy and the rest of the world mystified, as well as indifferent. Of such stuff are conferences made.

The Tories, it is true, are better at this kind of stage-management than the other parties, relying, as they are still able to do, on the residual politics of deference in their party. The Liberals, by contrast, are so ill-organised, and unpredictable, that anything can happen. The party establishment on the platform, uneasily blended as it is of ancient relics from the Gladstone Age and trendy street corner fighters, may abruptly find itself committed, by the Assembly, to declaring war on South Africa, to making paedophilia not merely legal but compulsory and, at the same time, to abolishing sin by Act of Parliament. The presiding group may, indeed frequently does, lose control, or even find itself summarily voted out of office; and

the atmosphere of earnest frivolity, pantaloons freedom-fighting and Scouting for Boys annually reminds the nation that, whatever else Liberalism is about, it is not about actually governing the country.

Labour conferences are also capable of gross buffoonery. But to some degree they are anchored to realism by a series of antique devices which are sub-ceremonies in themselves. There is the "Compositing Committee", which humps together all the weird and wild motions submitted, and "composites" them into (as a rule) anodyne platitudes, bereft alike of syntax, meaning or trouble-making potential. This process of ideological conflation necessarily emasculates the debates, and a further device, the trade union "block vote", makes the eventual passage or failure of a motion more a matter for a dozen or so union bosses, grown grey in the service of democratic cynicism, than the zealous toilers for socialism in the hall. The latter, to be sure, are given a consolatory bone in the shape of voting for the National Executive, the results of which form one of the great public dramas of the week. Those elected are the heroes of conference, the visible em-

bodiments of its General Will. But as High Priests, guarding the party's Ark of the Covenant, they do not always live up to its hieratic standards. The late Tom Driberg, for instance, was the absolute archetype of this priesthood, a one-time party chairman, elected for decades, without fail, by the bright-eyed faithful. Alas, his posthumous autobiography revealed that his time and energy were devoted more to the exploration of the Metropolis's public lavatories, a non-political activity known as "cottaging", than to what the party calls "implementing conference decisions".

All the same, much heat is generated by these decisions at the time. I can recall Aneurin Bevan rehearsing his famous "Naked into the Council Chamber" speech on the Brighton Downs, for all the world as if it really mattered; and then delivering it, to howls of abuse and anguished cries of "No, Nye, No!" There, indeed, was a fallen idol, a stupendous Biblical drama. There was the moment, too, when Hugh Gaitskell shouted above the din that he would fight, and fight, and fight again, "to save the party I love", the last words being almost drowned in

caterwauling and other progressive noises. The resolutions, on these occasions, concerned Britain's ownership of nuclear weapons.

No-one now remembers whether these momentous and conscience-wrecking motions were passed or not. Certainly, they cannot have been "implemented". Some of those who shouted "No, Nye, No!" and howled at Gaitskell are in the present government, which cheerfully maintains the British deterrent, such as it is; or in the parliamentary party, whose sustaining votes make the continuation of that government, and so the deterrent, possible. Oh well: as in all true theatre, those shouts and howls and caterwauls were genuine at the time.

Party leaders, particularly if they are in office, do not like conferences. Until recently, the Tory leader did not appear at all until the conference was over; then, on the last afternoon, a "rally" took place, and he made a quasi-miraculous epiphany on the platform, embosomed in masses of flowers and foliage, while the organ sonorously pealed out *Land of Hope and Glory*. Here was a real "touching for evil". The pedestrian Edward Heath ended this



"It has come to my knowledge that in private you refer to me as 'Honky'."



*"Well, they **are** from Verona but I'm afraid that's about as far as it goes."*

magical rite, much loved by the ladies in floral hats, and insisted on attending Conference throughout, ostensibly to show that he "took it seriously", in reality so that he could glare menacingly at any speaker who came to the rostrum to criticise his government. So the event is now deprived of its final apotheosis, or transfiguration, a change which Margaret Thatcher, a creature ripe for hagiographical embellishment, must deplore.

The Tories still keep up a certain style at conference: formal dinners, black ties, even a stiff collar or two; long dresses and spangled handbags. But for Labour it is "Harold" and "Jim" all round; perspiring booze-ups in the Tower Bar or the vaults of Yates's Wine Lodge; a certain compulsory display of aggressive egalitarianism not always congenial to Privy Counsellors. Civil servants do not like party conferences either, and see to it that Ministers, even the greatest, are stripped naked of their

official cars, secretaries and typists, reserved compartments and tables, hot lines and helicopters and all the comfortable accoutrements and assurances of life in office.

Labour Ministers, who ease themselves into Life at the Top more gratefully than their supporters like to see, absolutely hate it: the icy wind on Brighton front, whipping along the sweetpapers and carrying the whiff of fish and chips to their sybaritic nostrils; the uncovenanted old acquaintance: "How are you Fred/David/Michael, lad, long time no see, eh?" or, at night, dancing the hokey-cokey with an enormous party worker, the salt of the earth and almost half its weight. Nor do they like sitting on the platform, their carelessly lit cigars the cynosure of austere conference glances, under the ferocious TV lights, which suggest what Shakespeare's Henry V meant when he said the great must "sweat in the eye of Phoebus"; anxiously coun-

ting the seconds and decibels of their own applause, and reluctantly joining in the clapping or, much worse, standing ovation, for their ministerial rivals. Ministers agree that the best that can be said for party conferences is that they only happen once a year; but, as Harold Wilson correctly observed, "a week is a long time in politics."

In ancient Egypt, from time to time, the Pharaoh was forced by custom to strip and run round the walls of his capital city, to demonstrate his continuing fitness to rule. The ceremony did not prove anything; indeed, in time the ruler simply proceeded by litter. But it was a show, enshrining a pristine and archaic, if forgotten, truth. In similar fashion, the British make their annual genuflections towards party democracy and then continue, for the rest of the year, to allow themselves to be ruled by Tammany Hall and the bureaucrats.

Under New Management

THE EDITOR'S DECISION IS FINAL

Criterion Theatre

THIS courageous play by a newcomer, David English, confronts us with a problem which lies at the very heart of journalism. Should the editor of a newspaper which stands for the old-fashioned values, like pride in country and love of money, pay through the nose from his slush-fund for the confessions of a breast-baring coxcomb of the media, when he knows there is a real risk of making two million hardened readers vomit over their breakfast tables? Should he, perhaps, concentrate on improving his financial pages and allow the coxcomb to take his confessions to some unfastidious Australian up the road? Is it fair that one lonely man, already scorched by a succession of backfiring scoops, should be called upon to make a terrifying decision like this?

We see the Editor (a bravura performance by Derek Nimmo) consulting his conscience, his lawyers, his circulation manager, his office astrologer and his forgery experts (for many insist that this emetic stuff cannot be genuine). We see him and his ashen aides kneeling for guidance before a portrait of Lord Northcliffe. But the Editor knows, and we know, that he must take this dread decision alone; and the Editor knows, and we know, what the decision must be: publish and be damned. At the last minute there seems a chance that the print unions will walk out when they see what they are being asked to disseminate; alas, they do no such thing.

I have not been so moved since *A Man For All Seasons* confronted us with the

agonising spiritual dilemma of Sir Thomas More. Sir Thomas, it will be remembered, lost his head but kept his immortal soul.

THE GIRLS AT THE SWITCHBOARD

Piccadilly Theatre

HERE is a real sizzler of a play, a riot of comic invention yet as authentic as Big Ben. The action takes place on the "Classified Ads" switchboard of a London evening newspaper, a scene half-familiar to us already from the TV commercials. As the curtain rises a score of deliriously beautiful young women are carolling "Can I help you?" into their microphones, while others just sit around crossing and uncrossing their legs, impatient for love or lunch.

The set is constructed so that panels light up to show tongue-tied callers trying to dictate advertisements which will sell their old cars. Amid much badinage, the golden minxes help them to insert phrases like "immaculate condition," "an absolute snip" and "owner recently breathalysed." I swear the following is an accurate transcription:

All right, then, we'll say "one titled owner." Are you sure you have a proper title, because we have to think of the Trade Descriptions Act?

I am Lord Kagan, a Wilson life peer. Oh, that's no good. Nobody wants an old banger from someone like you. We've just told Lord Briginshaw to get lost. Are you sure you aren't a marquess or something?

Quite sure. Well, we can't help you, then. Ta, ta. It is an eye-opening glimpse into a

hitherto closed world, and I defy you not to enjoy it. Of the many spectacular diversions I liked best the irruption of a gang of shrieking harridans, who complain that an article in the paper has been critical of lesbian marriages. They pull out the plugs from the switchboard, scrag the telephonists, fill the air with raunchy abuse and spray-gun the walls with obscenities. I thought it was going to be one of those scenes in which everyone's clothes are to go off, but the new management draws the line at that sort of thing. Eventually a supervisor (Dandy Nichols) explains to the intruders that they are in the wrong department and undertakes to lead them to the editorial floor.

Act Two ends stunningly when a mysterious stranger calling himself Victor Matthews (Max Bygraves) begins switching off the lights, explaining that he has just bought the newspaper and is shutting it down. Two dozen lovely libertines at once set about him in a frenzied debagging him with practised ease as the lights fade. Comedy it may be, but the ensuing screams of the victim will echo through my dreams for a long time.

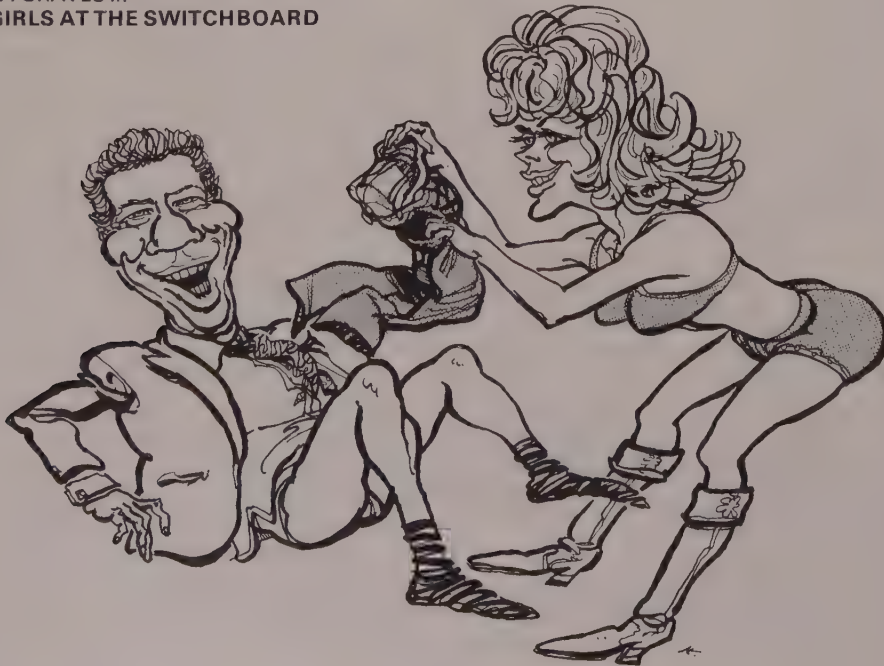
THE HARMSWORTH FOLLIES OF 1978

Albery Theatre

EVERY now and then the critic finds himself at a show which disarms criticism. Here, at the bunting-draped Albery, we have a Grand Patriotic Spectacular reminiscent of the recruiting shows in Kitchener's day, full of fun, fervour and flag-wagging frenzy. An unforgettable *tableau vivant*, entitled "Pillars of Society," shows Britannia (who bears a close resemblance to the Leader of the Tory Party) supported by the Royal Family, the Armed Forces, the Police, the Prison and Borstal Services, the Special Branch, Securicor, Aims of Industry and the National Association for Freedom, with spear-carriers drawn from various leagues of Small Business Men and the Self-Employed.

In striking contrast is the parade of "Caterpillars of Society," featuring, as in Roman Triumph, a sorry army of scroungers, workshys, malingers, illegals, immigrants, Reds, shop stewards, over-fertile Irishmen, sociologists, Marxist lecturers, bureaucrats, council spendthrifts, Libbers of every persuasion and gymslip mothers. The audience is invited to hiss these creatures as they trod by with their banners, and to pelt them with garbage and flour, bags of which are available at reasonable prices from programme sellers. One or two of my colleagues disgraced themselves by expending their missiles on the patriotic

MAX BYGRAVES in THE GIRLS AT THE SWITCHBOARD



Associated Newspapers—publishers of the *Daily Mail* and *Evening News*—have bought five theatres in the West End of London. S. TURNER reviews their productions.

BERYL REID as Britannia in *THE HARMSWORTH COLLIES OF 1978*



tableau. I was glad to see Britannia (Beryl Reid) deftly fielding a turnip and lobbing it at the critic of the *Guardian*, who sank to the floor with a surprised look on his face. Take the kiddies to this one—they will have the time of their life. They will also learn something about those elements in our national psyche which have made us what we are today.

LET OUR CHILDREN GROW TALL

Warehouse Theatre
WELL, we've heard Emlyn Williams reading the works of Dickens and we've applauded Roy Dotrice impersonating the diarist John Aubrey. So it was inevitable that we should have Joyce Grenfell delivering the Wit and Wisdom of Margaret Thatcher, a task she discharges superbly, notwithstanding some facial dissimilarity and a tendency to yawn over her material. But, like the matchless old rouper she is, she had the audience leaping to their feet and climbing the walls with such show-stoppers as these:

"Let our children grow tall—and let some grow taller than others if they have it in them to do so."
"Choice is the essence of ethics; if there were no choice, there would be no ethics, no good, no evil; good and evil have meaning only insofar as man is free to choose. *Vote Conservative.*"

It was something of a triumph to get this show mounted at all. Overmanning is endemic to Fleet Street and in the event it proved difficult for Associated Newspapers, new to the theatre game, to attain the modest staffing levels at the

Warehouse they would have wished. The price exacted for permitting a one-woman show was the presence of ten prompters (even though Miss Grenfell reads from the Iron Lady's published speeches) and fifteen understudies (as a precaution against outbreaks of mumps, rabies, yellow fever &c). The single spotlight was operated by the largest force of electricians ever assembled under one roof in the West End.

If I have any criticism, it is that 50p is too much for a programme ruthlessly padded out with photographs of Linda Lee-Potter.



THE LOST TYCOON

Wyndham's Theatre

AT FIRST sight this is just another play in the *Citizen Kane* mould about a press magnate with delusions of grandeur. In his eyrie above Fleet Street, the Last Hope of the Harmsworths sets the nation's laws at defiance, parking his fleets of vans on double yellow lines, then ordering them out to terrorise the capital hurling deadly missiles through shop doorways everywhere.

But something gnaws at the heart of this tycoon, played with broken-backed panache by Arthur Lowe. It is plain he is deeply divided against himself. His muckraking editors and gossip writers keep "dropping him in it," rendering him suspect in the Royal Yacht Squadron and ruining his chances of a dukedom. Yet, obstinately, he remains loyal to these inky ruffians. Even when his enemies proclaim that one of his papers is losing £5 million a year, he bravely insists that the loss is no more than £10 million.

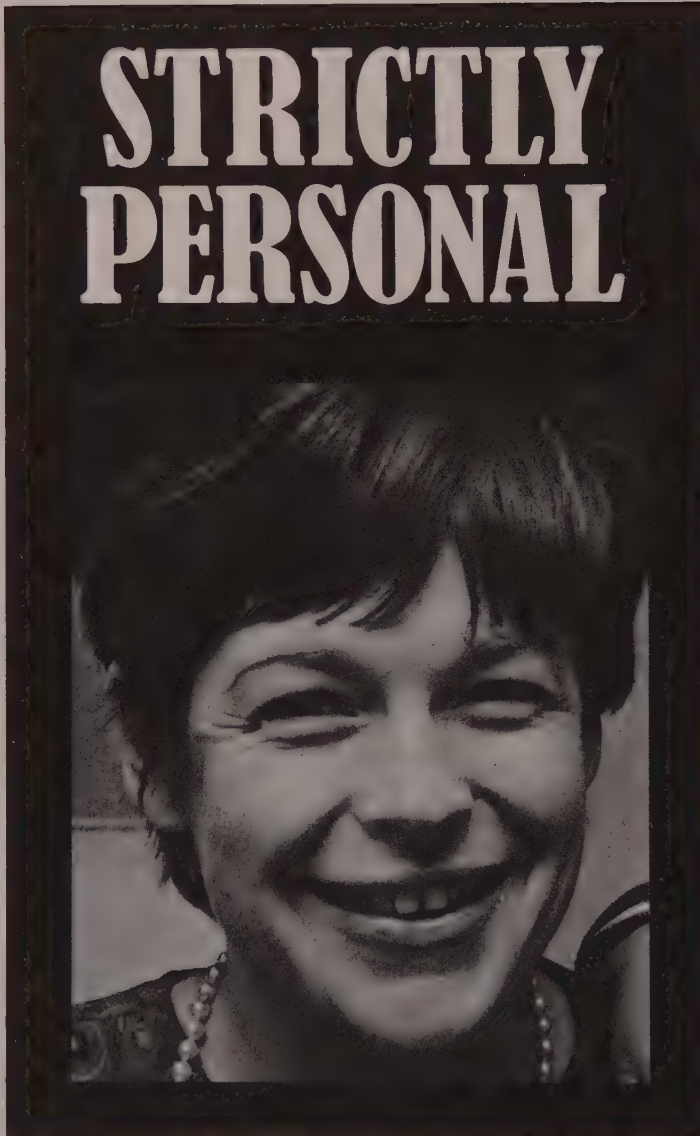
Why (his advisers urge) does he not sell off his presses and build profitable skyscrapers on their sites? Already he has been induced to diversify into pizza parlours, oil, television, furniture, wharves and warehouses, opinion polls, theatres. We roar with nervous laughter as a succession of con men try to sell him chains of sex shops and abortion clinics. Angrily he refuses—and then appals everyone by snapping up a package of ailing publications in America. The fatal ink in his veins threatens to bring his empire to ruin!

Amazing rumours begin to circulate. Is the tycoon, as some say, in the grip of his own chief gossip-writer, a dark-lensed Rasputin figure who boasts he has something on everyone? Do not expect me to tell you. In his portrayal of the sinister keyholder, Leonard Rossiter rivals his performance as Rigsby in *Rising Damp*.

The author's name? It is given as Nigel Dempster, probably a pseudonym.

LEONARD ROSSITER in *THE LOST TYCOON*

STRICTLY PERSONAL



THIS DAY in my life was plainly written by Peter Cook. I ask a man in a mackintosh is there a hardware shop anywhere about? "Ah!" He ponders deeply. His face clears. "There's a delicatessen at the corner!" Thank you. Then I go in a taxi which doesn't know the road I want; he tries to ask other taxis but, having a hopeless stammer simply winds

down the window and yammers wordlessly at them; they drive on, bemused. Finally he gets the message across, and the taxi he's asked is most helpful. As we drive side by side full tilt up Holland Park Avenue hemmed in by snorting and murderous lorries he gets out his map and leafs through the pages with great concentration and both hands. Captives both, his fare and I exchange hopeless glances—but finally I get there.

"There" is stage one on a journey to Oxford to discuss education at St Catherine's College. Expect sherry and boredom, the inescapable accompaniment of anything to do with education, but pleasant surprises all round: gin, and the discussion actually interesting, and a very good four-course dinner. My experience of most colleges and clubs where they've been jealously guarding their privileges from women, is that the food is usually the only thing that's worse than the conversation.

■
VISIT Women's Institute Craft stand at Debenhams; breakfast consisting of scones, apple juice, doughnuts, coffee. Several trainloads of WI members arriving from all sides; they jostle discontentedly around the piles of crochet mats, cushions, tea cosies, stuffed animals: "I thought it was to have been a whole floor!" "You can't really see the things, can you?" (Lucky old them). "One always thinks one must have some sympathy with people who've tried to do their best," says one of the organizers reprovingly. So what's Debenhams getting out of all this? I thought, when they took over Marshal and Snelgrove and called it Debenhams, they were trying to stop it being the place where people took their mothers—wouldn't this bring all the mothers back again? "Lots of the WI are trendy young housewives now," asserts he. "My wife, for example. And craft is very trendy, isn't it, let's face it." This chap is only 31; is it a sign of age when even the store managers start looking younger?

Run out of petrol *again*, therefore the can is still empty from last time. Walk half a mile back to the nearest garage, which turns out to be full of the last woman I wanted to meet: one who used to bend the ear for

hour after tearful hour when *her* husband left *her*, but has now cheerfully—no, soulfully—helped herself to someone else's. She sympathises about petrol, and no improving words spring to my lips. Thought occurs that high moral tone does require a certain amount of basic organization; what if Lady Windermere had turned up that fateful evening without her fan? Accept a lift back to my car with very bad grace.

DECIDE to take a day off work and go to the office. Anthony Sampson blows in, glowing with good lunch, and tells me Tory MPs outraged by what I wrote about Mrs Thatcher. "I can't understand it," one had said. "She (me) was becoming almost a Conservative!" If so, it was high time I wrote something rude. Any regrets I might have had about having been a bit too catty depart like a flock of starlings.

READ ad. in local paper offering "dining room chairs recovered from £4, wide choice of fabrics." Toil out to Temple Fortune with one detached chair seat to discover £4 gets you black plastic full stop, all else starts at £8. Enraged, I work out a way of doing it myself by stapling on fabric; complete the job next weekend for total outlay of £8.50 plus cost of stapling gun. The £40 saved I have already spent (at least mentally) six times over, which is why DIY is so expensive.

Collect son from late jazz concert, sitting listening to Schubert on car radio while I wait. He comes out walking three inches above the ground, his face in flower. In the presence of such holy joy I cannot commit sacrilege; as he gets into the car, I turn off Schubert.

DRIVE to Marlborough College, where my father used to teach, to harangue the Upper School. Last time I went I was supposed to teach them about women (and so was completely taken aback to find front four rows composed of masters and their wives; presumably they either knew about women already, or it was far

too late). Now, however, they have no need of that; for 70 of their colossal Sixth Form of 400-odd are girls. I still have an uneasy feeling that the girls are there more as an amenity for the boys' psychological health than because the public school system thinks it owes girls anything. See quantities of my parents' old friends, who are, most astonishingly, older than they used to be: somehow one expects one's own parents to go grey with the years, but never expect their friends to alter at all. As we leave the college, what appears to be a gnarled gardener in a little woolly hat greets me warmly: I make a brave try at his name and get it wrong—he's a retired master. "I'm sorry," I say meekly, "but you do *look* like a gardener." Wasn't much of a response, I realise, even when first used by Mary Magdalen.

Wander in the sunlight down lovely old curving high street; I notice with glee that they have installed a well-concealed supermarket in the high street and the old snob grocer is gone. Whenever I hear someone moaning about the demise of the olde worlde grocer who treated you with such courtesy, I remember what happened when my mother switched from the up-market Stratton Sons and Meade to a cheaper place: the shop staff with whom she'd been dealing for ten years cut her dead in the street when she tried to pass the time of day.

GO to Bush House to record a chat programme for the long-suffering World. Bread strike on, so brittle explosive rolls provided instead of usual sandwiches; at the end of our snack the carpet looks like the monkey house. Indulge in Serious Dis-



"What this place needs is a woman's touch!"

cussion at taxpayers' expense; disappointment shown by producer because he had put in a woman's subject as a joke, and we'd talked about it *seriously*. We tuck the left-over bottles under our arms and adjourn to producer's office, where producer (male) and panelist (male) explain how unnecessary is feminism, how misleading any suggestion that women are not given utterly equal treatment. The researcher and the secretary, both highly educated and female (of course), do not agree.

I've often thought that if a mad scientist wanted to do a Noah's Ark with the human race, projecting a representative sample of all nations into space and blowing up the rest, he could do worse than kidnap Bush House complete; there they'd be, all the Arabs and Americans and Russian-speaking Poles, the Slavs, the Japanese-speaking Madagascans; he could simply attach his rockets to the bottom of it and send it skywards. A damned shame that the Corporation itself thinks of sending it skywards from sheer parsimony—why don't they try, instead, paying less for old movies to shore up their presentations on Christmas television?

TODAY we became a semi-detached house again; for the past year or more the alley has been impassable with squalor; dustbins with stinking water in them, broken brooms, rotting bags of sand and fertiliser, snails, old manure leaking foetid trickles . . . I'm sure you don't want me to go on. But in an attempt to introduce the little fellow to the joys of the profit motive, we've been letting our ten-year-old save up for his own skateboard; result—he will do *anything* for money. For two quid he cleaned up all the above Aegean stables, not to mention earning 54p by collecting snails at a penny a time, putting them in salted water and burying the result. Why do people not use children as a workforce more? Nobody in this country does, as far as I can see, except me, Asian owners of illegal workshops and the local master burglar, who is given to pushing five-year-olds into houses through tiny windows. He's ruthless, that one; a right tyrant. But then, he's only eleven.

Scholars are excited over the discovery of three lost Restoration plays . . . and
E. S. TURNER has found yet another one.

Generation of Vipers

Principal Characters:

Lady Uptight.
Goodlay, her niece.
Filth, a politician.
Mr Justice Clanger.

ACT ONE

Lady Uptight's house at Maidenhead.
Time: 1978.

Lady Uptight (*hurling away a book*):
Faugh, what a rancid age is this! I would as
fain stuff my belly with carrion as steep my
brains in one of your novels. How vilely do
these scribblers rail at virtue, and how
coarsely do the critics encourage them!

Filth: And yet the mind-doctors swear in
court that the indulgence of libidinous fan-
cies helps us to a deeper and fuller know-
ledge of ourselves.

Lady U.: Do they, i' faith? Then right well
should you understand your nature, for
one. Deuce take it, the heirs of Aesculapius
should confine themselves to pills and
draughts, and not provoke us to frailty.

Filth (*aside*): Frailty, egad! There's not a
maidenhead in Maidenhead, the more fool I
for searching.

Enter Goodlay, big with child.

Lady U.: Lookee, Filth, here's an impious
one-parent family in the making. What is it,
trull?

Goodlay: Fie, aunt, you speak harshly. A
Prince of Arabia has sworn to fly me to
Switzerland. In three months time I shall
be a virtuous woman again.

Filth: Take this, jade, for old times' sake.
(*Winks at Goodlay, and tosses her a coin.*)

Lady U.: Old times' sake! Gadsbud, Filth,
and did you share this strumpet with a
Prince of Arabia? Aye, and with the whole
Bench of Bishops, I doubt not. O gen-
eration of vipers! What a stench of universal
lust is here! Hell is not more busy than this
infecte socialist state, that nurtures cor-
ruption as it breeds inflation, that poisons
the wells of chastity even as it saps the
sacred laws of subordination.

Filth (*aside*): Her ladyship has much need
of a purgative.

Lady U.: I heard you, Filth, but I stay not
my philippic. Truly, I say, we are become a
chancre and a gangrene among the nations.

Honour in ruins, innocence decried,
Young love undone, but old lust satisfied.

ACT TWO

The Athenaeum. A year later.

Filth: Here comes as addle-pated a rogue
as ever suspended a sentence.

Enter Mr Justice Clanger.



ACT THREE

A corridor in the Palace of Westminster.

Lady Uptight: What scandalous fellows
are these, our legislators! Cozeners a
coxcombs, steeped in guile, as disloyal
their election pledges as to their marriage
vows. I have seen more honest knaves in the
stews of Fleet Street.

Filth: Your ladyship has not yet viewed our
new-created lords.

Enter Goodlay, expensively attired.

Lady U.: Jezebel! And where else should
find you but in these tents of wickedness!

Filth: My lady, your niece is now "Miss
Albion", to name but one of her titles.

Lady U.: Aye, and she is Miss Sodom and
Gomorrah too, I'll warrant.

Goodlay: Harkee, aunt, when I entered the
Palace of Westminster there is a great number
of Members into the Chamber, to hear the
debates, even on such tired fancies as
revolution. I am thus persuaded that I am
influence for the country's good, a spur to
conscientious government.

Lady U.: Pshaw! Are you not content
have ruined Mr Justice Clanger?

Goodlay: His retirement, as is universally
conceded, was of benefit to British Justice,
which has much need of repair. Now you
must excuse me, as I would not hear of
good deeds aspersed.

Lady U.: Filth, have you a hand in this
infamy?

Filth: Your ladyship, I do but serve
jade in a professional capacity. I took pains
to have her bawd arrested and am now
become her manager.

Lady U.: Or, some say, whoremas!
Upon my soul, Filth, no blacker blood flows
in the crocodiles of Old Nile than in your
veins.

(*At this point the manuscript breaks off.*)

Filth: Well, what havock have you made
this day at the Old Bailey? What ancient
laws have you held to mockery? Have you
jeered at the Age of Consent, the Seventh
Commandment? How many Sons of Belial
have you put on probation, how many
rapists freed? Have you shown favour to the
blackamoors or cursed them as villains? I'
faith, I envy your opportunities for de-
bauching and undermining the realm, such
as we scarcely enjoy in our Palace of West-
minster. But I see you have a grievous gash
on your forehead?

Clanger: 'Twas a vixen who hurled a
brickbat at my wig, screaming the while of
women's rights, which no man ever heard
of.

Filth: Never, i' faith. Did you order her
whipped?

Clanger: Nay, I did gather up my gown
and fly for safety.

Filth (*aside*): Pshaw, there is no contempt
of court any more, save by those who sit on
the Bench.

*Sounds of scuffling. Enter Goodlay, struggl-
ing with club servants.*

Clanger: Who dares admit this beauteous
idiot? Truly, the Athenaeum is a sanctuary
no more. I have in mind to join the Reform.

Goodlay: Prithee, my lord. My Arabian
Prince has been beheaded. I come to crave a
favour of you. To be short, five thousand
pounds.

Filth (*aside*): Pox on 't! The very judges
are her clients.

Goodlay: My bawd awaits without, a lusty
ranting beldam. Must I summon her?

Clanger: Call at my lodgings tomorrow,
drab, and now be gone.

Filth (*aside*): Egad, I have seen it all! 'To
think that Goodlay should have fallen into
the hands of a rapacious bawd. I mean to
look into 't.

For whom Nobel rings

DOWN and out in the upstairs bedroom contemplating man's condition in the cosmos and how to illuminate it, plus Stan's condition in the semi-detached and how to illuminate with a £106.89p electricity bill and *that* for the Summer quarter—if that *was* Summer and they weren't just telling me more lies—I heard a clear resonant sound as of vibrating metal. A ringing, in short. This came as a surprise. The doorbell has long been incapable of even the faintest resonant sound as of vibrating metal, due to the persistent pressing of the bell by importunate creditors, optimistic duns, debt-collectors and sundry other functionaries of the universal grinding wheel corporation.

But this was the telephone; £136.37p this quarter and so I let it ring for a long time because soon it will be only a memory. "Hello," I said, quite guardedly, "Lynton Lesserday's residence, Mr Lesserday is not at home. This is the man from the North West Electricity Board. I'm only here to repossess the light bulbs soon as the squad from British Gas finish ripping the pipes out of the walls."

"Don't hand me that, Reynolds," the voice on the phone said, "any fool knows Lynton Lesserday is an anagram for your practically unknown name. And speaking of that, have you heard yet who is going to get the Nobel Prize for Literature?"

At that point the telephone went dead, which was odd for I had only received the red ink final notice and not the final demand in red blood. Hope springs eternal, of course. And this voice on the telephone had been quick enough to spot that transposition of letters which had been fooling the duns for several months now.

I waded through the impeding heaps of bills, opened the front door, now numbered 56, an anagram of 65, another dun-dodging device, and gazing to the left and to the right saw no smiling blond kronor-bearing Swedes. The Nobel Prize for Literature is now worth 700,000 kronor which is a cool £80,000; I may be broke but my mental abacus is still as fast as a bouncing rubber cheque.

I saw only a sullen yahoo, passively digging an unsociable looking hole in my front garden. At the kerb was parked a yellow vehicle of the

GPO. "Listen," I said, "you don't have to actually tunnel your way in. The fact that the house is called Zunderneuf and the parapets are manned by the corpses of my children is only an esoteric joke in extremely bad taste."

"Yeah," he said, "and you spelled the name of the fort wrong."

"I'm sorry," I said, "but we were down to our last copy of *Beau Geste* and we had to eat it before I could check the spelling."

"Hey," he said, "just like them Chinamen over in China ate the dirt in Pearl Buck's *Bitter Rice*, huh?"

"Are you sure you aren't from the Nobel Prize committee?"

"Naw," he said, "I'm just checkin' the lines to see if they are working and worth the bother of disconnectin'. If you want some dirt, for the kiddies, I got some pretty good stuff here, boil it up, cover it with HP sauce, they'll hardly tell the difference."

"Don't mention HP to me," I said, and went inside, stumbling over several newspapers which a newsagent possessed of a hopeful disposition still delivers.

There under the headlines "A poet the world had forgotten" and "Loneliness of the Nobel poet", I learned the news that the Spanish poet, Vicente Aleixandre, had won the 1977 Nobel Prize for Literature. I had never heard of him, but apparently no-one else had come across him, either.

"The cultural office of the Spanish embassy in London hadn't heard of him," the *Sunday Times* said, adding that: "The major bookshops—Dillon's, Collet's, Foyles—had neither heard of him nor stocked his books. No academics," the *Sunday Times* went on, "we contacted knew of a single British university that taught him." *The Guardian's* man in Madrid went to see Aleixandre.

There was something vaguely familiar about the account of how the news was brought to Vicente Aleixandre. He was difficult to find. He lived in a Madrid backstreet. "The telephone rang, the doorbell chimed, and reporters pushed antique furniture out of the way to get near him. 'I am very surprised,' the frail, 79-year-old poet said. He sat on a faded armchair in his study crammed from floor to ceiling with books . . ."

Cut out the doorbell actually working and replace antique furniture for old, subtract a few decades from the frail poet's age and you got yourself a picture of life as she is lived at Fort Zunderneuf.

Aleixandre is the typical Nobel Prize winner. Ever since Alfred Nobel invented dynamite and started feeling guilty about it and they started giving these prizes out, they have run to pattern. The citation for Senor Aleixandre is typical. It says he got it for his work which "illuminates man's condition in the cosmos." At one time the Swedish Academy gave the prize to writers who not only illuminated man's condition in the cosmos but also were well known. Unfortunately, they found over the years since Nobel died in 1898, that the prize was practically the Kiss of Death.

The list of writers who never got it, is a list of the very best in world literature: Tolstoy, Joyce, Chekhov . . . it is ridiculous to list them, it would fill a volume. To list the writers who did win it is a worthless enterprise as well. Hardly anyone would know their names now and I could not begin to spell them. In recent years, however, the Swedish Academy has tried a different tactic: they hand out the award to the unknown and the derelict, perhaps out of the goodness of their hearts, but mainly, I think, in the hope that today's unknown will become tomorrow's known and they will not end up with so much egg on their face.

Sometimes they have made mistakes. Samuel Beckett got the award by mistake because in his novels the characters are always sitting down, too tired to stand up and in his plays they are so down and out they are reduced to living in dustbins. Hemingway got it after he had been in so many aeroplane and car crashes that he was in hospital and looked like he was going.

Faulkner got it after he gave up writing and took to the barn down on his farm in Mississippi with a jug of moonshine and looked like he was going to drink himself to death but fooled the Academy by sobering up and making the best prize acceptance speech on record.

Senor Aleixandre won it because he was persecuted by the Franco regime so much so that the new liberal regime even forgot about his

existence. Well, I guess that is okay. But aren't Solzhenitsyn and Aleixandre kind of old hat? I mean, isn't political persecution nowadays rather a second rate sort of thing to triumph over and illuminate man's condition in the cosmos with?

I know they got hearts of gold, all Nobel Prize winners got hearts of gold. Even Beckett has a heart of gold; even though, when he turns the light on and illuminates man's condition in the cosmos, the walls of the room are painted black and the windows have been boarded over.

But none of these fellows are facing the real world that is under Everyman's nose when he looks down and sees the bills come through the letter slot or hears the bell toll and knows it is another dun. Try driving a car round for a year without that tax disc in the windscreen, picking up close to £75 worth of fines, plus sixty odd quids-worth of parking tickets for ignoring the yellow kerb lines painted by the soul-crushing bureaucrats of Universal Grinding Wheel Inc. and then sit down at the typewriter, flick on the switch and see if the old condition is illuminated in the cosmos?

King Lear they got here, in the backgarden of a suburban semi-



"You spoil that goldfish, George!"

detached, and I'm out for that 700,000 kronor in 1978. Soon as I get the strength up to hobble down to W. H. Smith's and shop-lift an all-black typewriter ribbon for the 1911 Remington, I'm writing *The Windscreen Disc*, an epic poem, showing the indomitable spirit of man plus illuminations cosmoswise, naturally.

I got the haunted eyes of a Kafka (another non-Nobel winner), Ox-fam and Amnesty International are right now bidding with my agent to use my photograph for advertising purposes. If the Nobel committee are too deaf to hear the laughter of Everyman in the darkness at No. 65 as I warm my hands over a roaring ashtray and cast some light in the cosmos, well, dynamite is pretty old hat these days and maybe Mr Napalm will get a prick of his conscience and start handing out prizes. Maybe even the North West Electricity Board might start feeling as guilty as old Alfred Nobel and turn the lights on again in this little corner of the cosmos. In the meantime, a fiver down on the electricity bill and a quid when they catch me would do just fine. A whistler, yes; but no whimperer in the dark this indomitable spirit, Lynton Lesserday. If a man answers, hang up.

CRISIS ROTA

A nationwide guide to where the week's industrial action will bite



AREA H9 Skegness to The Wirral, excluding Glossop, Notts County west of the M1, but including all of Perthshire, most of Brighton, Hull, Swansea and Derbyshire.

MON 0945-1330

- HIGH RISK:** Undertakers working to rule
Traffic lights operated by Navy
Go-slow by midwives
Up trains only
- MEDIUM RISK:** Cardboard shortage
Dentists not handling bridgework
Reservoirs drained for cleaning
Down trains only
- LOW RISK:** Professionals banned
Left-hand-drive cars available only
Public lavatories closed
No flights to Europe

AREA K5 Stoke-on-Trent, Taunton, Isle of Man, Isle of Wight, Edinburgh, Gwent, alternate houses on Merseyside, alternate hops on Humberside, Guildford and the Mole Valley.

THUR 2200-0145

- HIGH RISK:** Mortgage rate suspended
Chiropodists only doing Casualty work
Electricity down to 15 volts
Level-crossings locked shut
- MEDIUM RISK:** Ambulances going long way round
Freight trains only
Cake shortage
Domestic bathing prohibited
Emergency vehicles only on motorways
Telephones dead
Strike by hairdressers
Banks only handling coins

AREA P15 Gloucestershire, Loughborough, parts of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Margate, Leeds, all Home Counties except Berkshire,

London SW11, W1A 4AA, EC4Y 0HR, Southend S99 5BR, Twickenham TW2 5BY, Macclesfield, Dover West, Dover East, High Wycombe and Staines.

FRI 0600-2300

- HIGH RISK:** Drains blocked
No double cream
Launderettes closed
Through trains only
- MEDIUM RISK:** No newspapers north of Wembley
Schools closed
Prisons open
Up buses only
BBC Local Radio off the air
Shortage of concrete
Flights to Far East only
Embalmers' stoppage

AREAS V9 and K44 Central Wolverhampton, outer Salisbury, inner Nuneaton, Cork (November only), Piccadilly, St James's but excluding Hyde Park, Barbican, Wolf Rock Lighthouse, Hebrides, Billericay, Tyne & Wear, York Minster, National Car Parks, Frome and Mull.

SAT 1530-1605

- HIGH RISK:** All flights diverted to Prestwick
Shortage of nappies
Water rationing
Window-cleaners only doing alternate panes
- MEDIUM RISK:** Bus lanes closed to buses
Vets working to rule
Inter-City services calling at all stations
No stamps
- LOW RISK:** Go-slow at heel bars
Street lighting during morning only
Tubes running non-stop between Hounslow and Ongar
Man From Atlantis blacked

Going for Broke

Canon D. My trouble is that I was the worst mathematician in the whole school. When I dine at a restaurant, I choose a good meal that's not too expensive and, if they don't put service on the bill, I look round and decide what kind of place it is—10 per cent, 12½ per cent or 15 per cent—and get a rough idea of what the total and the tip will be. I generally have an aperitif while ordering and then half a bottle of wine. Now coffee—do I have a liqueur? When I sat down cold sober, I was all against the idea; but the mind with which I judge the need for a liqueur at the start is not the mind with which I make the final decision. It is a mind enriched with three or four glasses, and naturally I say "Yes." I should have found calculating 12½ per cent of say £6.31 daunting as a teetotal schoolboy. At the end of a binge it is completely beyond me. So I tend to ignore the little bits and cover the plate with notes. How nice it will be just to sign the bill again!

Sid W. I was done for a fiddle that went wrong. You'd have thought I could trust my brother-in-law, Bert Once, to keep a fiddle clear of snags; but the Tax came down like a ton of bricks and bankrupted me. Well, I suppose it's their job to. I tried to send them to Coventry but they wouldn't go. Bert Once was a good pal and ran up debts on my behalf; but, now I'm clear, he's wanting me to run up debts for him. Life is going to get more complicated now.

Arthur A. I still can't understand what went wrong. I always followed the advice of my accountants. The family felting firm was doing quite nicely and I thought I ought to go in for this diversification. I heard that there was money in showbiz, so I kept an ear open for shows to back. In New York, I heard that Rodgers and Hammerstein had a new musical they needed finance for; but my accountants advised me not to touch it because there had never been anything with a storyline like *Oklahoma* before so that they hadn't any box-office figures to go on. Then there was a little musical piece the Bristol Old Vic did one Christmas. I asked my accountants but they said that *Salad Days* was just as bad. Round about then they saved me from backing *The Boy Friend* on the same ground, no figure of previous successes. A bit later on I got interested

in films. My accountants told me that animal films were audience poison so I didn't try to get a slice of *Jaws*. They were a very highly thought of firm, very cautious. They saved my father from investing in *The Mousetrap*: they told him it was old fashioned. The trouble was that I couldn't afford their fees, so they bankrupted me. I shall enjoy not having to pay them off any more.

Lesley P. I became a bankrupt through my bad memory. If I walked through the china department at, say, Harrods, or the Army & Navy, I could never remember off-hand whether I had enough jugs, so to be on the safe side I'd buy some more. The same kind of thing happened with furniture. Well, they won't let you go on and on charging wardrobes or, indeed, lawnmowers.

COUNTRY LIFE

A pair of socks were ordered to be destroyed by magistrates this week so they cannot again be used for criminal activity.

Brecon and Radnor Express

ITN newscaster Reginald Bosanquet upset cat lovers last night when he ended News at Ten with a story about the Army rescuing an old woman's cat from a tree in London. After being given tea and biscuits by the woman, the soldiers accidentally ran over the cat in their Green Goddess.

Cleveland Evening Gazette

He was surprised when P.C. Onslow "held me in a way so that I couldn't move," but the officer would not tell him why he was acting in that way. "I said: 'You are acting just like a fascist,' and his reply was, 'I am a fascist,'" said O'Sullivan.

Marylebone Mercury

An amnesty has been granted for bankrupts of ten years' standing. These are their stories.

For ten years I have had to walk round and come out without buying anything. Now I must make up for lost time. I should have a few years: becoming bankrupt again will be quite a slow business.

Major Q. Well, they can't take your bed or the tools of your trade. Did you know that? I put it to them that the girls were the tools of *my* trade. They wouldn't swallow it at first. But the way to deal with them is never to let them get you down. As soon as some court has found against you, sling in an appeal. And, if that gets thrown out, appeal again. You're still working on tick, remember. They got me bankrupt at length. A nuisance but not fatal. Gaining credit as an undischarged bankrupt is a crime so I had to pay cash. I used to offer the girls in exchange for having the bill torn up. I hadn't exactly got credit so they tried to pinch me for living on immoral earnings. I got an Indian barrister to argue that discharging bills was not at all the same thing as "living on." I picked a chap who talked on and on very fast in the most appalling English you ever heard. The judge was terrified that, if he harassed him, he'd be done for racism. Anyway, it all spun things out. The great thing is to keep your nerve. I almost regret being a respectable bilker again.

Lady H. Ten years is a mere nothing in the life of a Family. We have always switched bankruptcies around, so that there is always one of us with his discharge. Eleven of the family benefit by the amnesty. The twelfth, Cousin Peveril, is aggrieved that he does not. Of course, we employ bankruptcy only for minor debts—tailor, vintner, the yachts and so forth. The Family's more serious transactions are conducted by our companies in the Lesser Antilles. It is convenient that the privileges of a peer include freedom from arrest for debt while in the Palace of Westminster. We have always kept on the Family in residence there. One has a duty to England to preserve one's heritage. There have been times when we have had to make sacrifices. Occasionally we have all had to take to the yachts and live on fish. We do not pay death duties. I do not see that this amnesty will do anything for us that we are not perfectly capable of doing for ourselves.



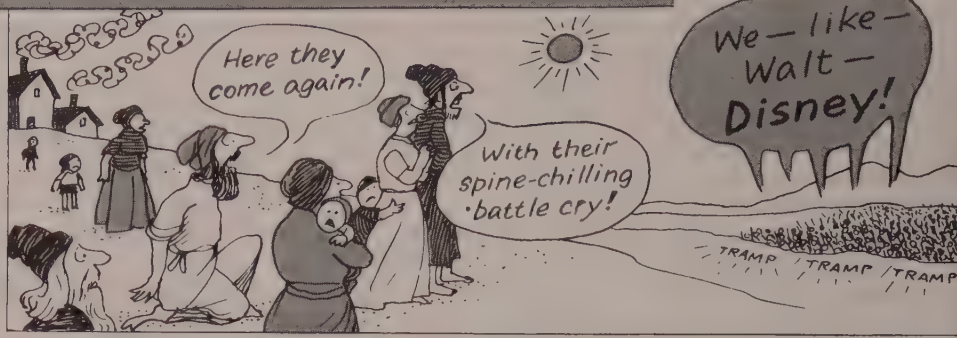
"Looks as if it's all over, then."

"In extenuation, m'lud, my client had only a couple of hundred pounds on her, well below the average for this type of shoplifter."



David and Goliath

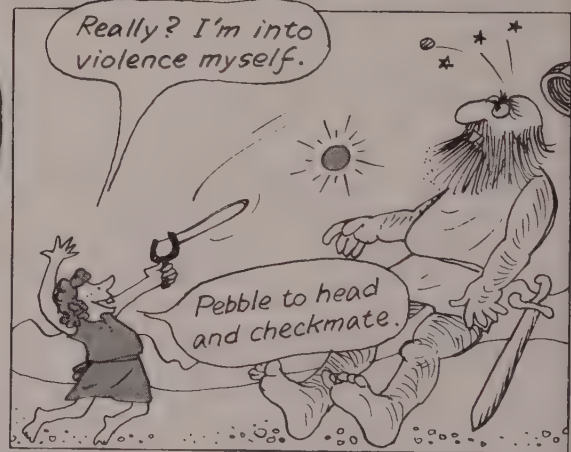
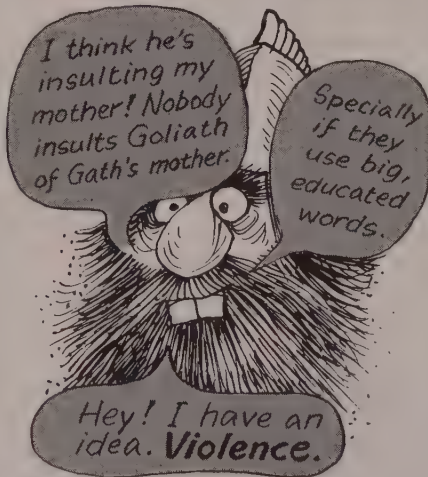
AT LEAST ONCE UPON A TIME, THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL WERE BESET BY PHILISTINES.



THE MOST TERRIFYING OF ALL THE PHILISTINES WAS GOLIATH OF GATH.



A YOUNG SHEPHERD NAMED DAVID STEPPED FORWARD.



DAVID WAS REWARDED BY BEING ALLOWED TO MARRY KING SAUL'S DAUGHTER,



AND PLAY THE HARP FOR SAUL,



AND DODGE SAUL'S JAVELINS.



MORAL: It don't mean a thing if you ain't got that sling.

METROPOLIS



ALAN BRIEN'S
London

WHEN I lived in an area of NW5 that I, to emphasise its proletarian origins, used to refer as “Upper Kentish Town”, and some of my neighbouring friends, to draw attention to its intellectual associations, used to call “Lower Highgate”, but was actually the Pooterland of Tufnell Park, I took a weekly walk through Highgate Cemetery.

The Cemetery is divided into two by the precipitous ski-jump of Swain’s Lane which long carried a warning notice on its lower slopes advising mourners to dismount at this point and double up the horses on the hearse. The eastern, or “new”, section is world-famous as the burial place of Karl Marx whose gravestone faces towards that of Herbert Spencer, thus uniting two names internationally familiar for other reasons. The massive, black, basalt head of Marx, erected by the Russians and crudely crowning the original, discreetly elegant, marble tablet, has a certain appropriateness in that his nickname among his intimates was “the Moor”. But it can lead to confusions—I once overheard one of my children, dragged along on my pilgrimages, explaining to a tourist that it was a memorial to a great negro writer.

Here it is open and spacious, with wide paths and glittering white vistas, and many incidental oddities to repay the curious explorer. I like the tribute to the inventor of Hovis on the belly of whose plot stands a battered oval of granite said to be a representation of the wheat germ. And nearby is the last resting place of a six-year-old boy, a statue of whom, life-size, sits on the stone boundary of his own grave, staring at his own epitaph—an apparition which occasionally gave my heart a jump when I came upon it unexpectedly from a new angle. My children were not so impressed. My daughter, Jane, then seven, fingered him shamelessly for a while and then said, scornfully—“Very *small* for six, isn’t he?”

But it was the Old Cemetery, closed to the public now for several years, which used to draw me like a ghost. Wandering along its mazy, green, peacock-haunted tunnels, lined with tousled, neglected graves from which it seemed that the loved ones must just lately have struggled awake as from unmade beds, the inscriptions of everlasting love and eternal memory now eaten with mould and erased with moss, the urns and angels smashed by fallen trees, I would muse with melancholy pleasure on the vanity of human wishes and the brief span of immortality. The sanctified soil appeared to be rejecting the interlopers, pushing them up like potatoes, and re-affirming the rule of natural chaos in a slow-motion earthquake.

In 1970, I took the American novelist John Updike on a guided tour. I showed him the tomb of Wombwell, the Victorian beast-trainer, with its bereaved lion curled on his chest, and the effigy of the last driver of the Dover-London coach cracking his fragile marble whip, and then my showpiece, the mausoleum of Adolph Beer, a mimic St Paul’s which could not be duplicated today under a quarter of a million pounds. The ironies here must be irresistible to a writer, I thought, picturing it some day as the central image of some London novel, with me as an unforgettable, if minor, character.

We peered in through the bars at what had become a kind of pigeon’s Belsen—the ghastly birds in every stage of damp, smelly life, newly dead and rotted to skeletons, billing and cooing and still warm in the egg. Then came my drastic last trump. I beat on the gates and howled like a hunting hound. There was a long pause, a fearful drumming rising in crescendo, and the birds poured out of holes in the colandered roof, swirling in the air like tea leaves or lost souls.

Updike did use the incident, much later, in a short story. But, alas for my immortality, I had become transmogrified into an aged loony, capering among the sacred relics, if I remember the phrase correctly, “gleefully reviling the dead”.

I had forgotten this now locked-away section of the metropolis until

this week when my son, Adam, revealed to me that Highgate Old Cemetery still has its secret interlopers. He and three schoolboy friends had just climbed in late at night on a dare, scaring each other with the sight and sound of pretended ghouls. Halfway along a corridor, under the northern pillared piazza, one of them claimed to have seen a glimpse of a flaming torch. They all laughed, and then found their way back barred by a burning barrel of tar. Outside, a posse of some fifteen or twenty men in blue and white robes, "like monks or the Ku Klux Klan", were gathered in a ring waving lighted *flambeaux*.

The boys, made brave by panic, charged the exit, kicking over the barrel, and scattered in the dark. Dropping from a 25-foot wall, one of them broke a tooth and cut his face. Later at the nearby Whittington Hospital, while he was being treated, they told their tale to the police who are now "pursuing their inquiries".

DURING the week, I also stumbled across one or two other peculiar breaches of the law that made me wonder whether there may not be a special breed of criminal who, rather than being craftier than the rest of us, is actually a good deal thicker. One intimation was in our most thriving neighbourhood shopping street, off Maida Vale. Here, at a time when the local papers had been announcing a striking drop in vegetable prices, a smash-and-grab gang raided the greengrocer's, staving in the window and making off with an unwieldy load of fruit and greens.

I was just discussing this in the delicatessen three doors down when a man brushed past rather rudely, and hurried out carrying a large box to speed off in a taxi. Seconds later, one of the owners appeared in pursuit, mopping and mowing—"Did you see his face?" he shouted. "He's taken every tin of coffee in the place."

"What were you doing?" his wife shouted back. "You won't believe it," he said, "I was putting up that notice you gave me—'This Week's Bargain—Coffee Reduced'."

I hung about a bit to watch what was presumably the special anti-coffee-bandit patrol arrive which it did about fifteen minutes later,

screeching to halt in real *Starsky and Hutch* fashion, the door hanging half open, only to wait another couple of minutes while an immensely tall, long-haired, bespectacled cop gradually writhed out with all the irritated embarrassment of an old man putting up an umbrella in a gale. Not wishing to be presented with an identikit portrait of the back of a head, I hurried home with my on-the-spot news of wide-open, Chicago-style London.

I was scooped on my own doorstep. There was my twelve-year-old step-son, Luke, his face all pink and puffy and desperately tearless—a sure sign of some new development in the teenage rip-off business. Having converted all his putative Christmas presents into cash, he had trekked down to Alpine Sports in Knightsbridge to exchange a £50 cheque for the latest luxury skateboard.

On the way back to the tube, he noticed that he had gathered a multi-racial group of followers around his own age, one Asian, one black and two white. They carefully kept a distance until he got off at Paddington, then they pounced, wrenching away his brand-new, sweet-smelling, freshly shining deck

and trucks and wheels. Out-numbered and out-wrestled, brought up in a household dedicated to honouring the rational man, he had tried to reason with his assailants while grown-ups hustled briskly past, smiling indulgently at their childish disputation. There wasn't much I could say, except forget all that about reasonableness in future. Follow the advice my street-wise father gave me—"Always shout before you're hurt, afterwards it will be too late."

IHAVE always secretly wanted to be a detective, preferably a public eye. After all, it's much like being a journalist, except you can ask your impertinent questions as of right, and keep your foot in the door when the public slams it. So last Saturday, since we had to replace the skateboard, I accompanied him to Alpine Sports, opposite a Harrods a-glow with fairy lights, and itself the Harrods of this international juvenile craze. It was my intuition, fitting the pieces of the jigsaw together, that we just might glimpse the same thieving gang, practising the same manoeuvre.

A long counter, facing a wall of equipment-packed pigeon holes,



"It was hard bargaining—we get the milk and honey, but the anti-adultery clause stays in."



"I think they've spotted the hide, Neville."

was lined with swaggering, free-spirited kids, just about as boring and single-minded as your typical auto-maniac, with British warm and shiny-buttoned blazer, in any Thames-side saloon bar. "Look, hear me, the California slalom can just burn up the Gullwing . . . I had a G & S Stacy Peralta warptail, and it's just rubbish beside the Fibreflex Bowlrider or the 27 inch Benjyboard . . . Don't tell me about Yoyos and Yandalls, those Bone's are gone while the Krytonics keep rolling . . . Two RRs no 2, two no 3 Geckos and a replacement Grentec GT— here's my mother's banker's card."

I kept dodging about, staring in the eyes of suspected hijackers, muttering out of the side of my mouth to Luke—"Is that him?" So I was there when one of the assistants vaulted the counter and cornered a defiant, but slightly white-lipped and moist-eyed, trio. "OK, where are they?" he demanded, hand confidently outstretched. "Where are what? Who do you mean? I've just come in. Search me. What's he talking about?" they babbled, half-hysterical, half-giggling. He searched doggedly for the missing items, pushed and shoved by wave upon wave of new punters arriving to blow their patrimony, but found

nothing and expelled the suspects.

"They always give them to some poor, skinny kid," piped up a poor, skinny kid down around my knees. "Yeah, man," I said to the assistant. "They've been passed from hand to hand. It's the usual way. He's up the road by now." Just then a boy informant rushed in. "He's along the road. I saw the wheels up his back under his anorak." The assistant took off, and seconds later was back, holding a sick-looking agonised whelp by the collar, in his other hand a pair of red and pair of blue, I would say, 60mm Krytonics.

The cops arrived faster this time, and to my amazement really were the Metropolitan Police West Division Special Skateboard Patrol—no doubt also known as "London's Finest."

SOMEHOW I couldn't shake off the guise of the Forties shamus this week, hearing in my inner ear a running monologue in sub-Chandler prose, especially as I turned down a mean alley off Fleet Street, in the shadow of a graveyard, and let myself through a pair of shabby doors with a key which had just been slipped across the booze-dabbled counter of an afternoon drinking club.

The illusion persisted as I walked down the stairs into a vasty, sub-

terranean cavern. Walls and ceiling were rusty black, swollen, like below decks on an old Cunarder, with the casing for pipes and wires. The only decoration a few dusty potted palms. The only light from hanging metal hoods. The only sound, apart from a soft babble of ancient jazz, the click of ivory balls on the baize-covered slate of the pool tables.

I bought a drink from a hatch in the wall, admiring the look of Northside hangout just recovering from a punitive raid by the Southside mob, and decided I'd join. I was in the City Snooker Club, the latest watering hole for newsmen.

A skill at billiards, someone once said, is a sign of a misspent youth. I always wish I'd said that, not that I think it's particularly true but because people still keep repeating it. Perhaps now it should be amended to a well-spent middle age. I think the owner is on to a good thing—journalists are notorious for their dislike of light, superfluous comfort and an air of strenuous modernity in the places they go to relax. It may be that the City Snooker Club is not yet finished, and will one day be buffed up to polished smartness like a luxury hotel bar. If it is, I shall leave. Until then, I think I'll just sit here among the palms and wait for Marlowe, Sam Spade and the rest.

THE IRISH PINEAPPLE

Comes ready potted and set up, for immediate installation in right place. Ideal for indoors use in hotel, bar, furniture shop or any crowded place. Simply place in position and remove ring, then run like hell.

The unattractive lifelike fronds are guaranteed not to attract attention or be eye-catching.

Do not keep in a warm place, direct sunlight or near friends and relations.

From Provisional Garden Centre, Belfast.



MUNICIPAL SHRUB

Ideal for parks or ornamental gardens or any place where the public can come in and lay their nasty great hands on anything they can take, this new bush has sharp thorns, dull dusty leaves, thick binding branches and poisonous berries.

If it flowers during June, July or August, we will refund your money.

When the leaves are rubbed they give off a distinct aroma of plastic car upholstery.

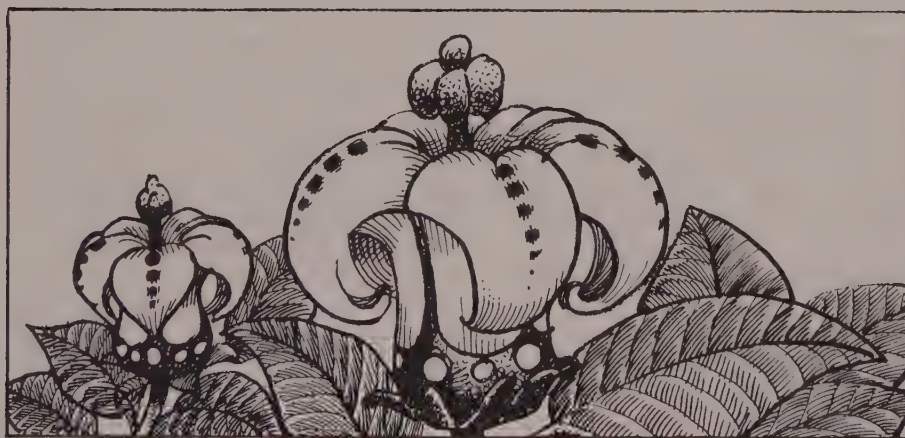
Simply plant and leave.

Thrives on neglect and untrained part-time gardeners.

Guaranteed self-pruning and ever-brown.

From City Nurseries, East India Dock Road.

THE BEST OF THE



CORONATIONWORT

Last year you loyally decked your garden in red, white and blue salvias. This year, for that special day, we have developed a new flowering annual in royal gold. The flower is a delicate little crown-shaped bloom, the leaves wave in that familiar gentle flapping motion and the stalk is stiffly erect.

It flowers one day only.

It thrives in the wind and driving rain

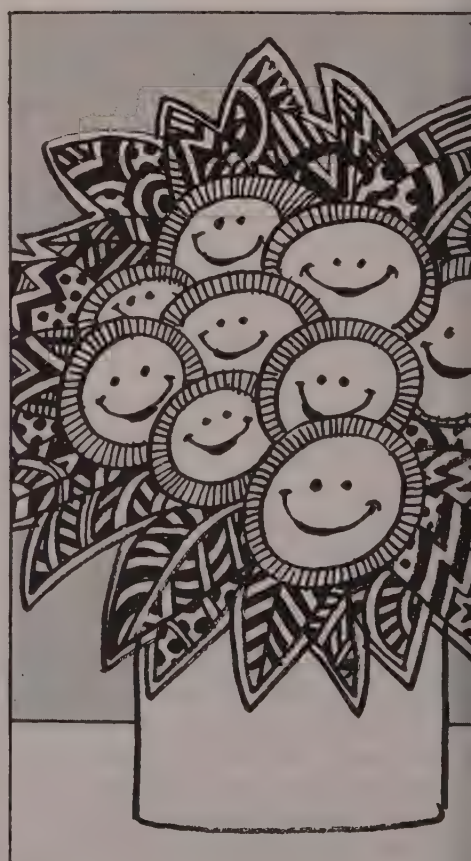
which will sweep England that day.

The next day it dies back, to be burnt in a chain of bonfires which will link the gardeners of the nation from one end to the other.

Don't be the only one in your road without coronationwort.

(Previously known as Investiturewort and Jubilee Rag.)

From Sutton, Mutton and Clutton of Ipswich.





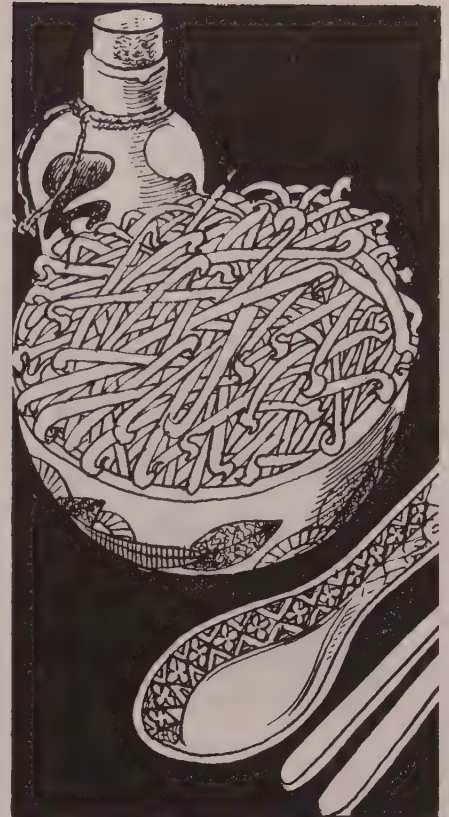
NEW WONDER MIRACLE CHINESE VEGETABLE SPROUT

Each shoot of this incredible new Chinese plant, which tastes like asparagus with melted butter and pepper, contains more protein, vitamins and natural minerals than a five-course meal, and will not stain clothes or make plates dirty enough to need washing up.

Simply place the sprouts on a damp flannel and leave for five minutes, by which time they will have grown to an average height of ten inches and be ready for cropping.

Dip in boiling water for ten seconds, and they are ready for eating. Alternatively, dampen the flannel in very hot water and they will be ready for eating straight from the flannel. Alternatively, just crunch the lovely tasty sprouts straight from the packet while you watch your favourite TV programme. In six flavours: egg foo yong, soya sauce, spare rib, monosodium glutamate, smoky bacon and Bovril.

From your local branch of Harrods.



SPRING CATALOGUES

CANNABIS PSEUDOLAVENDER

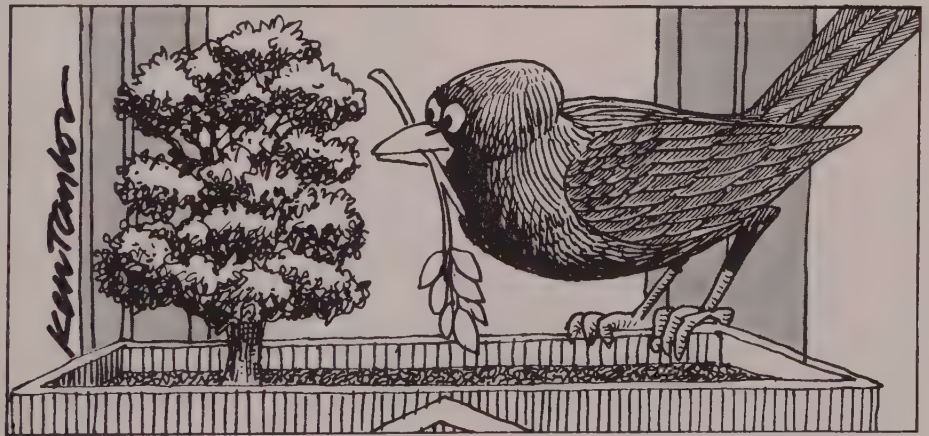
It looks like lavender! It smells like lavender! It grows like lavender! But boy, when you harvest the leaves and smoke them, that ain't lavender you're puffing!

Yes, for the first time we have developed a mind-blowing plant that looks like something else and really *is* something else! Tested in major police stations in London, Cardiff and Manchester, it has come through with flying colours, and we really mean flying colours, wow, those colours are so *fantastic*, I mean, those colours are really *flying*, you know? Zowie.

For best results just light up, turn the sound system high and take off.

Will also make hankies smell nice.

From Head Gardener, Kings Road or from Rodney in mid-Wales.



NEW ENGLISH ELM

We are pleased to announce the development of a new disease-resistant strain of elm, to ensure that this magnificent spreading tree does not disappear from the landscape. But to save the vast expense entailed in chopping down any elm which *does* contract the dread disease, we have further developed it to be a *dwarf* disease-resistant elm which grows nine inches high after a hundred years. If dead,

simply pull out and throw away.

Ideal for hedgerows about six inches high or small fields in window boxes.

The timber produced is first class and would make superb match-sticks or coffee table legs.

Birds will not nest in it or if they do will feel extremely foolish.

From Auntie Molly's Tree Nursery, High Wycombe.



Publish and be Diblgd!

The *Daily Telegraph* published a missing chapter, dropped by the author, from *Through The Looking-Glass*. Disappointing in itself, its real revelation was that Lewis Carroll was prepared to cut and change his work to meet objections by illustrators, publishers, printers, and almost anyone else. Which at last explains one of the greatest literary conundrums in the language . . .

THE Junior Porter of Christ Church College, Oxford, came out of his cubby-hole and squinted across the cold cobbled acreage of Tom Quad. The Senior Porter was standing in the fountain, poking a twig up a spout. The Junior Porter trotted across on echoing clogs.

"Where is he this time?" he said.

The Senior Porter removed the twig. He examined the end through sweat-blobbed pince-nez.

"See that?" he said. "Know what that is? Bleeding caviare, that's what that is. Bleeding sturgeon's eggs rammed up the outlet."

"Stone me!" cried the Junior Porter. "What is the eternal mystery of the sturgeon that it will swim thousands of miles upstream from bloody anywhere to lay its eggs?"

The Senior Porter removed the pince-nez, and stared at him.

"God Almighty, Scrimweasel," he muttered. "Could it be Mr Darwin was on the right track, after all? Is it true as how you are paid in bananas?"

"I don't follow," said Scrimweasel, sullenly.

"Course you don't," said the Senior Porter. He shook his head. "The eternal mystery to what you are referring concerns the salmon, son. The sturgeon just bleeding lies there, as you'd expect, being a protected species. It just bleeding lies there in the sea, and its eggs come out. They only get up brass bloody spouts as the result of japes on the part of your titled undergraduates, coming home on the outside of two gallons of claret, going 'Haw! Haw! Haw!', and poking bloody caviare up brass conduits."

"Oh," said Scrimweasel.

"I bin here since 1831," said the Senior Porter, "during which time what I have took out of College drains, gullies, bogs, pipes, and students, is nobody's business. There is more to this job than posing for bloody Ackermann, sunshine."

"Well, then," countered Scrimweasel, "if you're so smart, where is Mr Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, then?"

"Smirk at me, lad, I'll knock your 'ead off!" snapped the Senior Porter.

"Sorry," muttered Scrimweasel. "I got this note for him, haven't I?"

The Senior Porter consulted an enormous turnip watch. He looked, thought Scrimweasel privately,

much like a white rabbit.

"Eleven a.m.," said the Senior Porter. "Boar's Hill Junior Girls'll be coming out for 'ockey. You'll find him up the tower with his telescope."

"Bloody stroll on!" cried Scrimweasel. "That's two 'undred steps!"

"Take your time," said the Senior Porter. "You don't want to come up on him sudden, know what I mean?"

The Junior Porter coughed, discreetly. But the wind snatched it away, so he coughed again, more sharply.

The Senior Lecturer in Mathematics jumped.

"Ha! Ha!" he shrieked. "Scrimweasel! I was just, er, inspecting the Meadows. There is talk of a by-pass."

"Course you were, squire," said the Junior Porter. He held out the note. Dodgson smoothed it against the windblown parapet, and peered.

"Goodness!" he exclaimed. "It's from Jas. Rumbelow & Sons, Printers. They say that because I agreed to cut my chapter about the wiggly wasp out of my new book, it is now some four pages short, contra to the agreement of the something ultimo hereinunder referred to, and is taking bread out of their mouths!"

"New book?" said Scrimweasel, since some sort of reply seemed called for.

"*Through The Looking-Glass*," said Dodgson.

Scrimweasel leered horribly.

"Never mind *Through The Looking-Glass*, squire," he said nudging Dodgson's tea-stained waistcoat evilly, "what you ought to do is *Through The Telescope*, know what I mean?"

"Do you really think so?" said Dodgson.

"You're a bit of a photographer," said Scrimweasel, "catch my drift?"

"Not exactly," said Dodgson.

"Make a fortune," said Scrimweasel. "All this Victorian repression, you could clean up. Forty-eight poses, as seen from top of famous building by genuine connoisseur, sent under plain cover. I would," he added, putting his small face up against the mathematician's left mutton-chop, "be prepared to hold the magnesium, for a small consideration."

"I am afraid," said Dodgson, simultaneously snapping his hat open

and his telescope shut with a single adroit flick, "I have no time to think about that now. I am already late for poor Mr Rumbelow."

Whereupon he sprang to the staircase, and clattered out of sight.

Scrimweasel stared after him.

"He's a fool to himself," he said.

It was not, however, until four more days had passed that Dodgson found himself standing in Ludgate Hill, outside the premises of Jas. Rumbelow. True, he had arrived in London three days earlier, but it had been some time since he had visited the metropolis, and thus had his complicated senses ravished by its promise. Emerging from Paddington Station, he had joined a crocodile of small girls in captivating boaters and in consequence had spent the night accidentally locked in the Natural History Museum.

The second night, the locking had been somewhat more deliberate; but they had given him a cup of tea in the morning and, it having been explained that he was a famous author and therefore as mad as a hatter, they had returned his possessions to him, including the telescope, and sent

him on his way. Unfortunately, he soon after stopped dead in the middle of the Strand to muse upon the madness of hatters, and was knocked over by a brewer's dray; he spent the third night in the London Hospital, but was found the following morning creeping through the fever ward in an attempt to photograph the smaller nurses, and was forcibly discharged.

"Well?" barked Jas. Rumbelow, as the vague figure wandered into the print shop.

"My name," said Dodgson, "is Dodgson."

"How fascinating," said Rumbelow. "Well I never. Blow me. There's a thing. Well, Mr Dodgson, it's been a pleasure talking to you, but I have to get on now on account of being four days behind with some bloody—"

"It's him!" cried a compositor suddenly, scattering bright type. "It's Carroll!"

The staff looked up.

Rumbelow cocked his head, as if downwind of game.

"Carroll?" he said, quietly. "You said Dodgson."

"I have," murmured Dodgson,

colouring, "an assumed name."

Rumbelow leaned him into the wall.

"I am not bleeding surprised," he muttered. "If I was you, I'd change 'em both to Jenkins and emigrate, before' the lads get their 'ands on you!"

"I do understand," said Dodgson, "I do apologise."

"Stuck here four days," cried Rumbelow, "Tiddling our thumbs, orders not touched, contracts going begging, people ringing up about wedding invitations, luggage labels, visiting cards, all nice easy stuff, all turned down, can't touch it, can I? Waiting on Mr Carroll, aren't I?"

"I'm sorry. I was held up."

"Strung up'd be favourite," said the compositor.

"Thirty-eight inches short, that book," said Rumbelow. "Bloody yard out, this one, Samuel. Calls himself a professional. Bloody yard short."

Dodgson sighed.

"Well, I suppose it will just have to be a shorter book," he said, "that's all. We could have 188 pages instead of 192."



They stared at him.

"I may have to sit down," said Rumbelow.

"He's never heard of sections," said the compositor.

"Don't they teach you nothing at Oxford?" said a tapper.

"They come in sections, books," said Rumbelow, to Dodgson. "Never mind pages, mate. They come in bunches of sixteen. How many sixteens in 188?"

"Calls himself a mathematician," said the compositor.

"Could we not have four blank pages at the end?" enquired Dodgson.

"Oh my God!" said Rumbelow.

"We'd be a laughing-stock," said the tapper.

"Bugger laughing-stock," snapped the compositor. "Any talk of blank pages, I'll have the lads straight out. Wouldn't surprise me if some of the machinery suddenly fell over, neither."

"Maybe he'd like it done triangular," said the tapper heavily. "Nice triangular octavo. Fur endpapers, possibly."

"Don't joke," said Rumbelow, "I remember this ratbag. He's the one what give us that Mouse's Tale in his last book. Bloody wosname, emblematic verse. Started off in

fourteen-point, come wiggling down the page unregistered, ended up in bloody diamond-point at the bottom."

"Never!" cried the compositor. "Was that *him*? I was here all Whit-sun over that. I had to get a draught off the apothecary on the Tuesday, I've never known bowels like it."

"Oh dear," said Dodgson, "what should I do?"

"Bloody write another yard, is what," said Rumbelow. "You got twenty minutes. I'm not running into overtime."

Dodgson blenched.

"One can't just dash it off, you know," he protested.

"Oh, I see," said Rumbelow. "One would prefer to carry one's teeth away in one's hat, would one?"

Dodgson sighed.

"Well, I *do* happen to have a little poem I scribbled on the back of an old charge-sheet I found the other night," he murmured, "which I could pop in at the end of the first chapter. If that would be all right."

"No problem", said Rumbelow, "if it goes to a yard, and no dodgy turns at the end of lines or nothing. Let's have it, then."

Dodgson groped in his tail-coat pocket, and fished out a crumpled flimsy.

"I don't know how appropriate it is, mind," he said. "It's called *JANUARY*."

"Very nice," said Rumbelow. "Straightforward."

Dodgson cleared his throat.

"'Twas chilly, and the slimy roads
Did shine and shimmer in the rain:

All misty were the birds' abodes,
And the cold grassy plain.

Beware of January, my son!
The hoar-frost's bite, the . . ."

"Yes, fine, lovely, terrific!" interrupted Rumbelow. "We haven't got all bloody day, squire, give it here."

He snatched the flimsy, and handed it to the tapper, who scuttled off to his stool, closely followed by the compositor.

Dodgson watched them go, nervously.

"Er . . ."

"You still here?" said Rumbelow.

"I was wondering," murmured Dodgson, "whether I would see a proof?"

"Do me a favour," replied Rumbelow. "We're a week behind as it is."

"I just thought I'd enquire," said Dodgson.

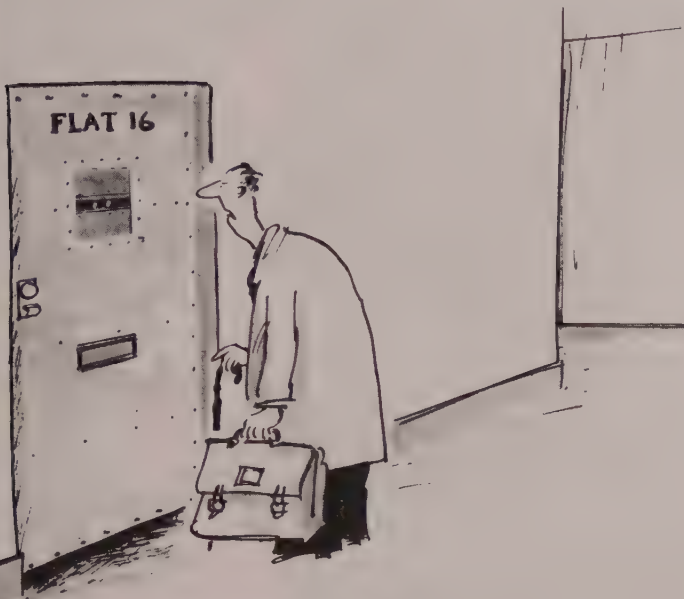


"It's not his transvestism . . . it's just that he's giving himself a bigger dress allowance than he's giving me . . ."

HOME SAFE HOME

The Metropolitan Police are launching a campaign aimed at encouraging the public to be more "Crime-Prevention" conscious.

NOEL FORD reports.



"... and I have a small mole on my left buttock—now for heaven's sake let me in, Mavis, I'm starving."



"That's right, the clothes-line snatcher—I've got him."



"If anyone is going to frisk the baby-sitter, Henry, it'll be me!"

KEN MAHOOD:

A PICTORIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY



L. S. LOWRY *Gloomy Sunday*



PABLO PICASSO *The Miracle of the Loaf and the Tin of Sardines*

Father had an almost imperceptible job which paid him just enough to keep the werewolf from the door. Our meals were arranged to develop our competitive spirit without us dying of malnutrition. It was the poor man's version of home life with the Kennedys. Once a month mother sang a cheerful song to the accompaniment of rumbling stomachs.



BEN SHAHN *Mick or Prod*

An early lesson in quick decision making.

Seeing my early interest in drawing, my Auntie Maud sent the Swiss artist Paul Klee a crate of Guinness and asked for his advice. He wrote her a ten page letter extolling the virtues of a career in taxidermy or rodent control and they soon became pen-friends.

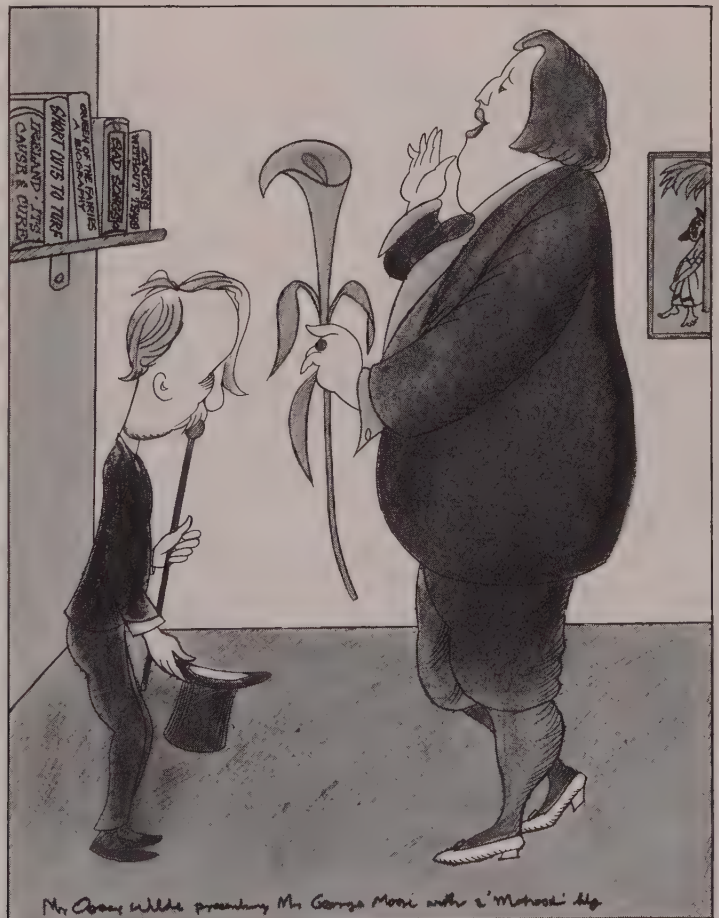
My postal instruction ended abruptly, however, after she received the above drawing.

I was born in Belfast during the Depression. My arrival didn't lessen the gloom for although my mother had six days in which to labour she produced me on the seventh—a mortal sin in a community which was so strict that even the churches closed on Sundays.



EDVARD MUNCH *Sketch for The Cry*

This was inspired by my Granny's yodelling.

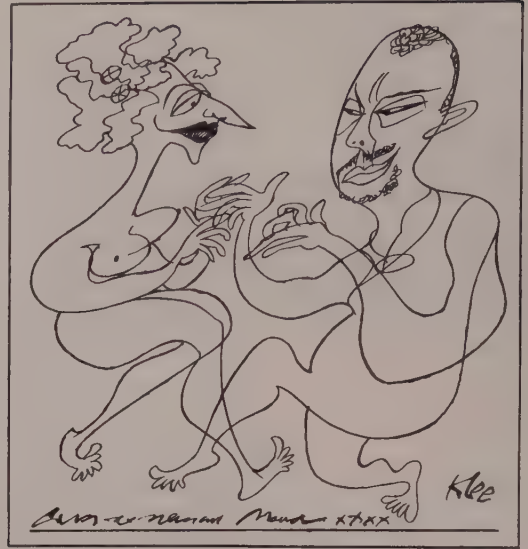


Mr Oscar Wilde presenting Mrs George Moore with a 'Mahood lily'.

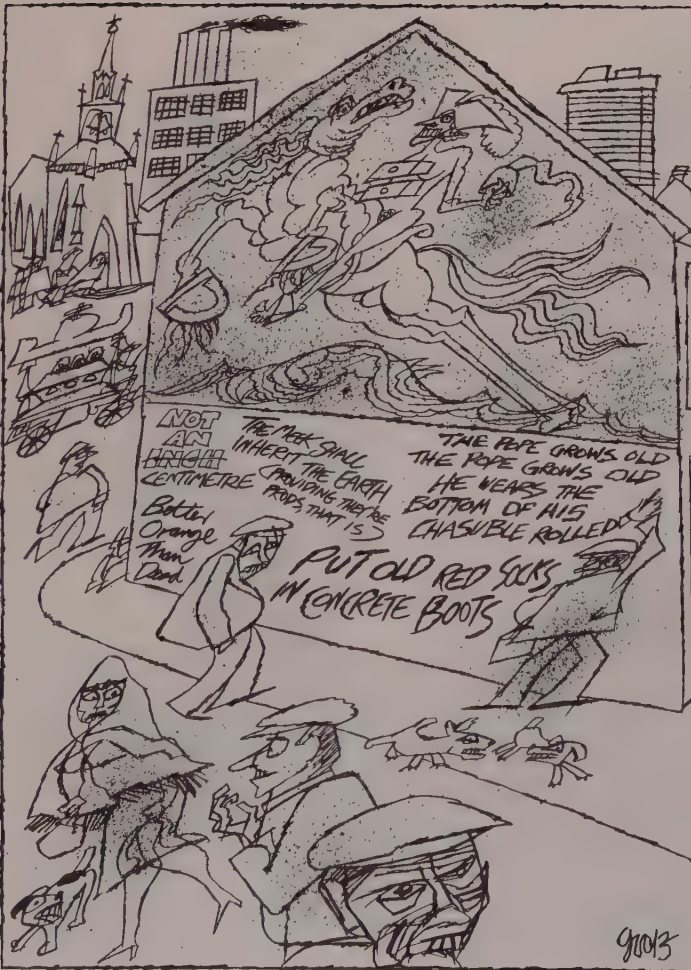
MAX BEERBOHM *Mr Oscar Wilde Presenting Mr George Moore with a "Mahood lily".*

My Grandfather was a man of some influence in Belfast (he gave Salvador Dali his first commission there). He involved himself in local politics devising schemes that allowed Protestants to take one step forward while Catholics took two steps back. However, his great passion in life was graffiti and after years of practice could daub one thousand words a day.

Our family has always been artistic. The O'Hoods were bards to the O'Neill's—they played the bones to accompany their Celtic whining. In more recent times my Granny sang and propagated lilies in a coffin converted to a window box.

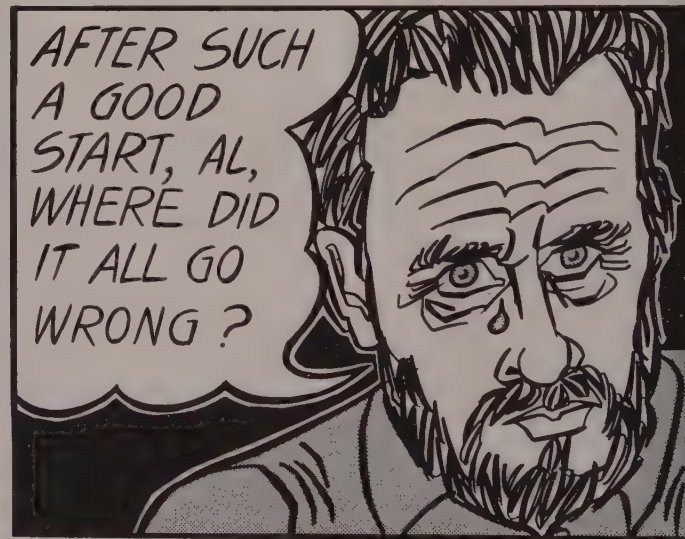


PAUL KLEE *Come Into The Garden, Maud*



GEORGE GROSZ *The Dali Mural, Gandy Row, Belfast*

NEXT WEEK: my slow decline from champagne and turf sandwiches to drawing for *Punch*—the subject matter for this famous pop painting.



ROY LICHTENSTEIN *Cartoon Duplicator*

CLASS OF 78

WHEN asked by a foreigner whether there is a class system in Britain it is wiser to give the short answer, "No." Foreigners are notoriously prolix and unless one is careful with them, the next thing they'll be asking is the way to Harrods. I might put them wrong about that too. Not that I dislike foreigners particularly but one has other things to do than answer their damn fool questions. How on earth do they imagine we can maintain a monarchy without a class system? Do they think this is Tibet and we go round every so often peering into prams outside Harrods (how that word keeps cropping up) to find an infant resembling the late Monarch and putting out its tiny, smeary hand to stroke a Corgi when one is lifted up? The Monarch is King or Queen by divine right of birth and there's no rubbish or waste of time replacing him or her when the time comes; on the contrary, we know exactly where and on whom to put our hands.

Thus we have already two classes in Britain, the Royals and the Commoners and it is wiser at the moment to forget the Ruling Class which is quite a different thing and we will come to later if I still have the space or the inclination. At the moment there are at a rough count about a hundred and eight members of the British Royal Family (more if you count the Schleswig Holsteins, which I don't). Heaven knows how many commoners there are in the country at any given moment—for every one that goes out to avoid income tax there are about seven hundred more coming in to learn to be auctioneers and estate agents. Now it is obvious that whoever founded the Royal Family, some think it was Alfred and we'll settle for him, this is not after all pretending to be too factual an account and Alfred is an easy name for visitors to remember, along with school children come to that, it is obvious that Alfred hadn't nearly as many relatives as the present Queen and needed someone to talk to. Naturally he didn't want to talk to just anyone, he was after all British, and so he got the idea of only talking to people who had a title. In those days it was the easiest thing in the world to give someone a title, and then engage them in meaningful dialogue. There was no Board of Trade Enquiry.

There wasn't even Lady Falkender. "We've had such a nice chat," Alfred would say to a crony-to-be, "why don't you call yourself something other than just Smith the Farrier?" The next moment everyone else was touching their forelock to Smith and calling him My Lord of Northumbria. There were other advantages to the system the ennobled were given a certain amount of solid perks like a hundred thousand acres around Basingstoke and were expected to act as Royal Bully Boys and put the boot in when trouble threatened. Even if they did not want to do the job themselves, they gave out contracts to others and men went around carrying bows and arrows concealed in harp cases. Gradually, by trial and error and not much time wasted on trial, a third class was formed known as Lords, some of whom managed through the centuries to hang on even around Basingstoke and there were more and more people for the Monarch to speak to. Too many, some might say, and the situation today has become slightly out of hand. Even with improved travelling arrangements and Royal Garden parties and ever increasing numbers of Command Performances, we are rapidly reaching a situation when there are not enough Royals to go round. When Her Majesty wished to speak to me, for instance, she graciously appointed me as a Commander of the British Empire some dozen years ago and it will amaze my readers to learn I have hardly had a conversation with her since. I did have a word with the Heir Apparent outside a tea tent last year and he asked me, rather to my surprise, what on earth I was doing in the Royal Garden. I told him that I thought it was good for business, remembering that many a true and if it comes to that, a royal, word is spoken in jest.

So we see that there are now four classes in England. The Royals, the ones with whom the Queen stays, the ones who would like the Queen to stay but she doesn't, and the ones who if she did arrive have simply nowhere to put her. Opponents of the system maintain it divides the country and we would get on better if we weren't all such howling snobs but I'm afraid I cannot agree.

The alternatives are simply too grisly to contemplate. In this country there is no desire to cut and play

Hewison's PEOPLE



10. Camp Follower

"My greatest, absolutely most valuable possession in the whole world—and I haven't the teeniest doubt about it—is a small piece of her feather boa! And how, you may ask, do I come to possess such a treasure? Well. Picture Wimbledon Theatre, opening night, and the most stupendous response from a packed audience. We stand and clap and shout and those of us in the stalls are simply *compelled* to crowd up towards the stage, so you will gather that I have some little difficulty in presenting our Club bouquet—a lovely spray of pink gladioli—but when she leans over to collect it that marvellous long feathery boa gets caught in a mike stand and a tiny portion comes fluttering down towards me. Imagine! Fortunately, the ladies around me aren't half as agile as I am so victory is unquestionably mine. I'm sure you're dying to see it!"

Not only is Melvyn Pres. and Sec. of the Uxbridge branch of the Marlene Dietrich Fan Club, he also runs the Hounslow Judy Garland Fan Club and the Friends of Shirley Bassey Club in Slough, but

indubitably it is Marlene who gets prime place on the pedestal. Set him going and he will rattle on for hours, a twinkling display of the encyclopaedic knowledge he has accumulated over the years: her films, her shows, her associates, her private life. "*Der Blau Engel* was not the first time she had acted with Emil Jannings, actually," (he makes a point of sticking to the original German titles) "they were together in *Die Tragodie Der Liebe* in 1923. And did you know she appeared with Greta Garbo in *Die Freudlose Gasse* in 1925? I've been trying to get on *Mastermind* with Marlene as my Special Subject, but so far without success."

He has, he tells me, seen her on stage twenty-eight times and can reel off the dates and locations without hesitation, becoming quite excited in the telling. It is epicene young men like this (he is, unbelievably, not yet thirty) who bulk out those congregations of middle-aged women worshipping at these starry shrines. An innocent if obsessional pleasure and one it would be unworthy to deny.

again. Foreigners are tougher than we are, they can live, at least some of them can for a time, with dictators and presidents and army coups and foreign troops and instant assassination but we don't seem able to do so any more. There is a price to be paid for insisting that Jack is not as good as his master. Economists taking their habitual long cool look at our hopeless economy blame the wasted years on a divided society and there is a movement on foot now to give everyone in the land a title of some sort but not, of course, a piece of Basingstoke, which, as our present land owners are quick to point out, the plebs simply wouldn't know how to develop. Better to leave everything in the hands of the Crown, the Church Commissioners and the boys who got in early and hope that in the latter case they will die before they can dream up a dodge to cope with the new gift tax.

Which brings me to the last of the classes, the fifth or ruling one who thought up the gift tax in the first place. The Ruling Class, as the name suggests, makes up the rules, constantly changing them in order to give themselves something to do. They are in a sense an elitist society in the same way that Buddhist Monks are elitist and the public are in ignorance of how on earth they all managed to crowd into the temple in the first place. They are remote from the people, constantly turning their prayer wheels and chanting invocations in a language the rest of us cannot understand.

They can be glimpsed by the curious and the faithful (not many of these left, alas) in their palaces of Westminster and County Hall and along Whitehall and in thousands of municipal buildings up and down the country. Much attention is given to their prophecies by the media and when, as seems likely, newspapers finally disappear, no doubt we shall continue to read their proclamations as in China on the facades of their own establishments. No day passes without their calls to prayer sounded not from minarets or watch towers but from the television studios. They are the upholders of the faith. Faith in Britain. Faith in their ability to control inflation, to reverse the balance of payments, to lower the bank rate, to raise the bank rate, to squeeze wages, to expand exports, to increase growth, to decrease soccer

hooliganism. To them nothing is impossible. All they need is time. Time to house the homeless, to succour the sick, to alleviate want, to comfort the aged, to build the new prisons and the hospitals and the schools. This is the life to come, they tell those who can still listen, so why bother about what is happening on earth at the moment?

In the church of the Establishment there are many mansions, there are also new swimming pools and badminton courts and picture galleries along with the new rating offices. In Westminster itself occasionally the priests become so groggy with the strain of perpetual service they cannot rise from their knees and have to be assisted to them by coronary experts or even mortuary attendants. "This is the price we pay," the rulers tell us, "for faith. Surely it's not too much to ask the rest of you to put up with Leicester Square looking like it does at the moment? Are you so blind you can't see one day it will be a paradise for pedestrians?"

And can you put up with it, the foreigner may ask us? Yes, we reply, a thousand times yes. After all, a classless society has to do without the Badminton Horse Trials and the Mitfords and, of course, *Punch* (I'm glad I got that in) and last year we were given the Jubilee fireworks, and given two more Royal babies to chat up.

COUNTRY LIFE

Kendall Travel have been established in Reading for three years. We are relatively small but have the backing of the large Balfour Williamson/Kendall Globe organisations. My staff, Margurite Holmyard, Trudie Cairns and myself, have over twenty years experience in travel, mostly locally.

Reading Chronicle

Purley High (Boys), Old Coulsdon, chalked up 144 incidences of corporal punishment in just one term. Its total cannot be calculated because punishment books for the other terms were stolen.

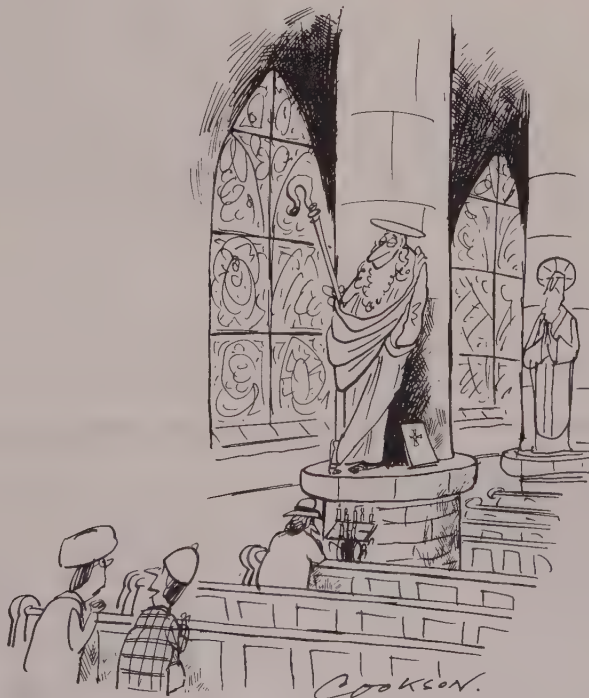
Croydon Advertiser

Quarry Bank Parish Church members spent last week carol singing and raised over £100 towards a project to combat alcoholism in Costa Rica.

Dudley Herald



"It probably won't make any difference, but I think you've left out a squiggle after that second curly thing."



"He's the patron saint of drunks!"

The Punch Critical Viewers' Guide to

MONDAY

A New Way with Women

WHATEVER you do, don't miss the way-out political broadcast by the Labour 1948 Group (9 pm). You probably read in your newspaper that in 1947 the Attlee Government planned to call up 340,000 young women for National Service. Well, the 1948 Group have revived a much bolder extension of this idea—the Nationalisation of Women Bill, the object of which is to suspend the marriage laws and throw all women between 16 and 60 into a common

pool, to be used for "everything from breeding to weeding".

Don't laugh! The arguments in favour of a British Women Corporation are impressively marshalled. British women, in the Group's view, are a badly run-down asset, like coal, steel and the railways. Though hopelessly ill-organised and cantankerous, they are thought to possess a real potential for service, especially domestic.

Some of the British women you will see on this programme are a decidedly scatty lot, too scatty (you may think) to be assigned to any National Women Centre, but the earnest intellectuals behind this social engineering project are confident it can be made to work. Ladislas Strauss-Korsakov, who calls himself a Shropshire lad, says he got the idea from Harold Laski on a memor-

able night out in Finchley. Of the housewives interviewed, a number frankly welcome the thought of being separated from their families, but there are criticisms of the rather unattractive uniform designed for British Women. "Give us something less like a left-over from Dachau," pleads a merry widow from Kingston-on-Thames.

Best of the Rest: (11.55 pm).

This unusually late slot has been assigned to the National Front, who have rounded up a number of delightful, eye-rolling old "Uncle Toms" from Wolverhampton to sing, dance and appeal for the repatriation of their fellow immigrants. The Front deny that any of their men blacked up for this broadcast. If you enjoy the Black and White Minstrels, you will love this.

TUESDAY

A Triumph for Tony

THE JUNIOR Trots' political broadcast (9 pm) is, of course, designed to sharpen class animosities in Britain and should succeed brilliantly, but the makers found themselves up against a familiar problem: namely, that the underprivileged tend to possess more colour television sets, hi-fi gear, Alsatian dogs, crates of light ale and boxes of fancy chocolate cakes than the bourgeoisie. However, skilful fudging by a committed producer overcame this difficulty.

Predictably, it was hard to find people willing to admit that they belonged to the five per cent who own 95 per cent of the nation's assets, but Mr Harold Lever, the Croesus of the Left, cheerfully confesses to being one of them. Watch for the scene in



BENN: performance of a lifetime

which he links arms with a band of Socialist millionaires singing *The Red Flag* at a Labour Party rally (some of them trying in vain to avert their faces). The Junior Trots don't mind whose corns they tread on. Who

is that burly, prosperous-looking, gentleman farmer surveying his broad acres in Hampshire? Yes, you've guessed.

Star of the broadcast is "Tony" Benn who effectively conceals his own patrician background and gives the performance of a lifetime as one of "the great unwashed" (see photo) or, as he would say, "just a man of the people". His look of blazing sincerity and ineffable reasonableness must be worth a million votes, come the Revolution. At the least, he will be voted Pipe Man of the Year.

An attempt by Transport House to secure an injunction against this programme was thrown out by a High Court judge, who said he wished the producers well.

Best of the Rest: (10 pm).

An all-mime reinterpretation of 27 major dogmas from *Das Kapital* by the League of Pushkin Youth, from the Horatio Bottomley Memorial Hall at Bermondsey. The dialectic is danced as cogently as one would expect and the hand-held camera work is truly dizzying. As a political broadcast it is consummately alienating.

WEDNESDAY

Preparing for Der Tag

DEFENCE anxieties are thrillingly pinpointed in the Monday Club's first-ever political broadcast (9.30 pm). The question posed is not how long Britain can hold back Russian tanks on the Oder but how long the

Tories, faced with the prospect of a Rising in the North, can contain the dissident tribes and vandals beyond the Trent. In the Tory defence plan London is seen as a hotbed of treachery and the High Command does not conceal its hopes that when the day comes Providence will assist with a freak inundation in the Thames Valley.

For obvious reasons maps in the operations rooms are out of focus and for half of the time the screen is blacked out. By its powers of suggestion, by its sheer evasion and restraint this must rank as one of the

most powerful broadcasts ever made, as well as one of the most economical.

In brief flashes we see Buchanesque characters conversing in clubland with obvious German generals in mufti. One monocled warlord turns out to be Jonathan Guinness.

An unexpected star of the programme is Sir Geoffrey Howe, who is anxious to live down his reputation as a moderate. It looks as though he is being groomed to conduct Bloody Assizes as and when required. To this end he is already accustoming himself to the wearing of a wig.

The Week's Party Political Broadcasts

THURSDAY

Stamping Out Independence

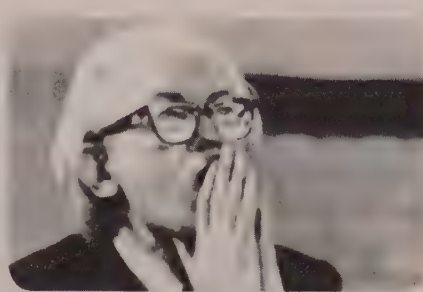
TRANSPORT HOUSE pulls a really fast one in this official Labour Party Political Broadcast (9 pm), which bears the unmistakable imprint of cheeky Ron Hayward. Don't ask how, but he has rounded up a gaggle of disaffected self-employed who condemn their former way of life in the harshest terms. "I just didn't realise what a nuisance I was being to everybody," says Michael, a one-time freelance writer. "I have now seen the light and have found an employer on whom I can batten, and of course he will be unable to sack me. What else can I say except apologise to the Inland Revenue and the VAT people for causing them so much extra work, and to the TUC

for holding up the total unionisation of the country?"

Watch out for a brain-washed artist called Rupert who admits that at a time when pay increases for employed persons were limited to ten per cent he unscrupulously quadrupled his income by dashing off funny drawings for advertisers. "I was a bare-faced rogue, a monster of selfishness," he says, and you can't help agreeing with him.

Three building workers who were once on "the Lump" are interviewed in shadow to save them from prosecution, but as the programme ends we see them being hunted up the Great West Road by a baying mob of comrades.

Winding up the programme, Michael Foot recalls his happy days as a hired hand editing a Beaverbrook newspaper. "Obviously as a self-employed person I should not have lasted more than five minutes," he says. "As it was, I don't know how I lasted."



FOOT: Happy hired hand

Best of the Rest: (10 pm).

Shoplifting as a solution to society's problems is forcefully advocated by six delectable young housewives in this broadcast by the Redistribution of Wealth Party. A year or two ago it would have been impossible to put forward such ideas openly. An application for an injunction by Tesco against this broadcast was thrown out by the Court of Appeal.

FRIDAY

Mrs Thatcher's Wasted Chance

THEY SAY that half a dozen advisers were sacked over the making of this official Conservative Party Political Broadcast (9 pm). The line was to be that Mr Callaghan, as a neo-Conservative, had stolen all Mrs Thatcher's clothes, so what better way of dramatising her plight than by showing her riding to Westminster in the garb of Lady Godiva? A splendid steed was provided by Whitbread's, but the Leader of the Opposition, after praying for guidance in St Paul's, declined to co-operate and made a clean sweep of her public relations staff,



THATCHER: with symbol of prosperity three of whom went back to the Sun.

In the event, viewers will see a well-groomed and upholstered Mrs Thatcher

leading a magnificent golden calf, symbolic of the glossy prosperity to be expected under Conservative rule. Many believe that this rather hairy-footed joke will lose the Tories not only the next election but the next three after that, whereas the Godiva Plan would have resulted in a majority of 400 seats. See the programme and judge for yourself. It is refreshingly free from Northern accents and podgy young men with white stripes down their sleeves and trouser legs, but when you have said that you have said almost everything.

Best of the Rest: (10 pm).

Your chance to see deviationist dogs, revanchist scum and capitalist roaders in action as the twelve leading Communist parties of Great Britain grapple for the mike. A special bouquet for the fight arranger.

SATURDAY

Slapstick all the Way

FOR THE first time the Liberal Party Political Broadcast takes the form of a live phone-in, with indefatigable David Steel in the chair. Viewers will be invited to come up with ideas for election-winning policies, which will be processed and stored by a computer and eventually forgotten. Simultaneously members of the Party's Par-

liamentary Group will be seen scratching, quarrelling, bragging, shaving, feeding munchy morsels to their dogs, beating each other with bladders and assisting the police in their enquiries.

If no phone calls are received, Big Cyril will give readings from his autobiography, *Big Cyril*, at the same time signing copies for passing dustmen. If you have a strong stomach for political slapstick, make this a firm date.

Best of the Rest: (10 pm).

The Control of Investment Party believes in heavy fines and imprisonment for business men and industrialists who invest



SMITH: readings from Big Cyril

money abroad, while demanding vast increases in free monetary aid to all Third World countries. It will put you in the mood for *The Two Ronnies*, which follows.

Yesterday in Parliament

THE word nostalgic, I believe, should strictly be used of places only, and not of people and events. Still, I am, as always, perfectly content to follow the editor's—advice. Politicians, then. The fact is that one becomes nostalgic about them very quickly. There is no age so remote as the day before yesterday.

Take, for example, Lord George-Brown. No small thing was taken from my life (my journalistic life, I mean) when he departed the scene. It was not that we got on with each other particularly well. In fact we did not get on at all. We tended to quarrel whenever we met. Indeed, it was not necessary actually to meet: it was enough for us to be in the same room together. I would gaze into the middle distance, fiddle with a glass, pretend to be composing poetry, examine the pictures on the walls with the closest attention. To no avail.

At some point George would be at my side saying something like: "You think you're bloody clever, don't you?" I would put in a modest disclaimer, but George would never accept it. "Bloody pseudo-intellectual," he would say, to leave no misunderstanding on the point. He would then move on to someone else.

We had another quarrel when he tried to take my taxi in New Palace Yard, but I wrote about this episode at length at the time, and there is no point in repeating myself. On another occasion he tried to order me off the Terrace of the House of Commons. I had no right to be there, he said. I pointed to the reforms instituted by Dick Crossman (more of him later) and Captain Robert Maxwell, the bouncing Czech (there's nostalgia for you!). These reforms allowed lobby correspondents, to which group I belonged, to use the Terrace. George behaved with perfect logicity and some pique. "If you won't go away, I will," he said, and promptly marched off.

Now, you may ask, having heard all this: why should I miss George so much? The answer is that he was not only a great character but a great comic character. Not only did he carry around with him the possibility of imminent disaster—like a trapeze act, or the late Judy Garland's singing. There was some-

thing more to it than this. Like all the great clowns, he had this quality of enormous self-pity. He was always being misunderstood. Life was simply not fair.

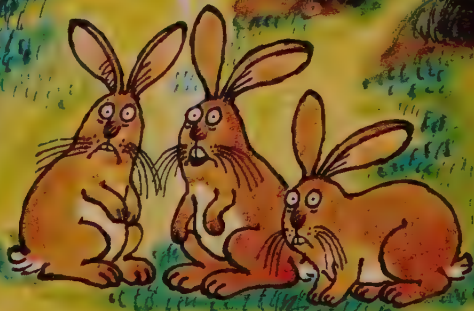
Another politician who had something of the same quality, and about whom I also feel nostalgic, was Lord Hailsham. It is sometimes said that Hailsham was "larger than life". But, on the contrary, he was smaller than life: his very attraction lay in the lack of dignity which he brought to the various exalted positions he occupied from time to time, notably the Lord Chancellorship. There he would sit, on the Woolsack—for the Lord Chancellor also acts as Speaker of the Lords—swinging his stockinged legs and making more or less improper comments on the speeches which he heard. "If your choppers are bothering you, have 'em out," he once advised a fellow-peer who seemed to be having trouble with his teeth. There is no one quite like him today.

Nor is there anyone quite like Sir Harold Wilson. Who would have thought that one would ever have felt nostalgic about Sir Harold? Yet the pleasure to be derived from him was comparable to that of watching a skilled craftsman at work. Sir Harold's great craft was escapology. He was like the boy in the comic: "With a bound, Jack was free." The performance was rarely edifying but always fascinating. The old master had several techniques, sometimes used singly, sometimes in combination.

One technique was to make a very boring speech indeed. Half-way through and a good part of the audience, in the House of Commons, at the party conference or elsewhere, would have nodded off. Who cared what Harold Wilson had said to the House of Commons on 23 May 1965 at column 326 of the Official Report? Was it worth checking? What did it matter, anyway? Oh, what the hell! Sometimes—this was another of his techniques—Sir Harold would speak very fast. On these occasions he would put his head down and gabble through his prepared script. Quotation would follow quotation in a bewildering way. Everyone, it appeared, had been out of step except our Harold. We did not quite believe him: we knew it was not really so: but we could not be bothered to argue.



**“He claims to have
escaped from a laboratory
where they were
testing cosmetics.”**



MCLACHLAN



"They let me off with a caution and an hour's sunbathing."

CHIC



"Alright. Last offer. Two bread and fish for a cheese and chutney!"

Roy Jenkins's object was the same—to display himself as a politician of consistency and integrity. But his method of achieving it was different. "I am bound to say," Jenkins would declare, "that I find the Right Honourable Gentleman's imputation on my motives quite unworthy of him." He specialised in making the other chap feel a cad and a bounder. "With the greatest possible respect to the Honourable Member . . ." he would say, of course meaning nothing of the kind. There is no one quite like him either. But there are three politicians about whom I feel even more nostalgic.

One of them was Iain Macleod, with his great set-piece annual oration to the Conservative Party Conference and his sheer delight in politics as a game (though because of his semi-crippled condition he would not, I think, ever have become leader of his party). Macleod had little taste for detail: he liked the grand gesture. His greatest asset was probably his voice, which had a curious bell-like quality. And he had the phrases to go with it: "The Liberals may dream their dreams, the Socialists may scheme their schemes, but we have work to do."

Then there was Dick Crossman. It would be silly to pretend that Dick was not a bit of a bully: but, if

this is a defence, he seldom intended to cause the pain which he in fact caused. He could never see that people would take arguments personally. "You're a fool" did not mean, or not necessarily, that Dick despised you: it meant only that he disagreed. What made argument with him even more hazardous, except for the quick-footed, was his ability to keep two or even three apparently contradictory propositions in his mind at the same time. "All right then," he would say, "if that doesn't work, let's try something else." But he was a marvellous companion.

Finally there was Anthony Crossland. He too was a great arguer, but he was less interested than Crossman—or Macleod, for that matter—in gossip and tittle-tattle. How do you know that? What exactly do you mean? Where is your evidence? These were the kinds of questions that Crossland liked to ask. He had the capacity, unique in recent British politicians, to persuade you that, despite the double-dealings and the evasions, politics was a serious and dignified activity.

These three politicians, all now dead, had another quality. They were highly attractive people. They were fully paid-up members of the human race. I miss them very much.



"I don't question your sincerity for a moment, sir, or, indeed, the sincerity of any other drunk."

THEY'RE CHANGING NAPPIES AT

A guide to just a few of the household attendants who have so far



Master of the Royal Pottie

A title that dates back to the reign of Richard III, when it was held by Sir Fenton Chope, recorded by Holinshed as having "a sharpe weesel eye for discomforte & uneese in menne & eke wimmin, but in partickular for unseemlie sadnesse in smal folkes. Likewise, he hath a stedy hande & a quicke runne, but discreete withal, & may croone a melodie as sweete as a larke the whiles his smal charges are aboute thir bisnisse."

The present incumbent is Sir Bert Sillitoe, knighted for services to Sir Harold Wilson, and the manufacturer of a wide range of plastic sinkware. It is understood that he was taken somewhat aback at the discovery that the title was no mere sinecure (payment is 2 groats per annum, plus the unlimited use of royal lint in perpetuity), but is now happily undergoing instruction with the 4th Hussars in Zwiebelhafen.

The Gentleman Usher of Black Pin

The office of Black Pin is one of the earliest of all those concerned with royal infancy, going back to the days of Ethelwulf's second wife, Tracy, in the ninth century. When their first son, Ethelbald, was born, it was discovered that Tracy, who had lost all her teeth in a Jutish night raid on what is now Hove, was unable to hold in her mouth the sliver of goat-rib with which the rough napkin of the child was fastened. The bone, in consequence, was held in the mouth of Hrothgar the Malevolent throughout Ethelbald's infancy.

In fact, the post held at that time no honour, and was used as a gratuitous insult to Hrothgar by Ethelwulf, who suspected him of inciting comets (*Peterborough Chronicle*, 186 ff.), and at the end of Hrothgar's term of office he was simmered to death by humiliated relatives. Today, of course, the position has become time-honoured, and falls by tradition to the senior Liberal commoner, who is required to sit by the cot for a year and a day with his mouth full of safety-pins. In return, he is given the freedom of Doncaster and his own weight in bamboo.



The Most Noble Order of the Marble

A fascinating order this, and steeped in our island history. Marble, as he is affectionately known, is required to go around the royal apartments after bedtime and pick up, with his silver tongs, such items as roller skates, toy cars, and, of course, marbles. Anything, in short, which royal infants have dropped and which constitute a threat to their parents' well-being should they, for example, wish to go downstairs in the small hours for a glass of gin and a Jaffa cake.

The office, which is always given as a reward for conspicuous loyalty, dates from the days of the infant Henry VIII, who was much given to placing dangerous items on the marble stairs of palaces, in hope that his father, Henry VII, would slip on them and break his neck, thus paving the way for his son's succession.

One interesting facet of the office is that it may not be recommended to the monarch by either the Prime Minister or the Prime Minister's PPS. Recommendations are instead made by bachelor Law Lords, in camera.

The current Marble is Baron Reticule of Flint.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

managed to keep out of the newspapers

Burpers-in-Waiting

Beyond question, the most colourful nursery office of all, founded by Queen Victoria on the advice of John Brown.

In her latter years, the Queen came to feel that royal wind, of its very nature, was not something with which ladies ought to involve themselves; the immediate problem, in those rigidly conformist times, was finding men capable of handling an unwinded child effectively. John Brown apparently thought long and hard about the various difficulties and sensitivities with which the situation was beset, and finally hit upon the brilliant plan of using Pipe Majors of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders, an idea which the Queen enthusiastically endorsed.

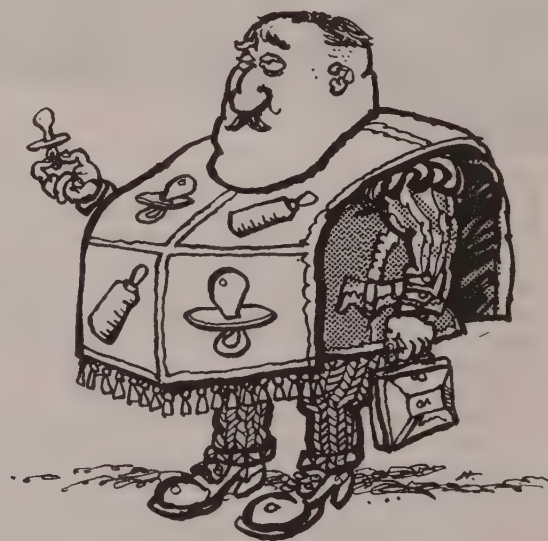
There have been, since that fateful day, many brilliant tenants of the office, but surely none so famous as Pipe Major Donald MacDonald of Dunoon, who was reputed on one remarkable occasion to have played two choruses of *Annie Laurie* on the infant Duke of Windsor.



Big Noisy Animal to the Household

It being in no way consonant with royal dignity to go about on all fours making sounds like a camel while an infant sits on the back and dribbles down the tiara, the function falls to Big Noisy Animal To The Household. The position, which carries with it free overalls and novocaine, traditionally goes to the middle son of the shortest Scottish peer, in the present case Viscount Leekie o'Yon Murrel.

His most famous predecessor was, of course, Lord Glowrie, who was ridden by George III until the latter was well into his seventies, and died valiantly in the notorious Hanoverian Derby of 1811.



Dummy Poursuivant

Dummy Poursuivant (*escutcheon: nipple couchant on a field of gripes*) is a comparatively recent title, dating from the invention of rubber. Previous to 1807, the post was held by The Keeper of the Thumb, a dignitary whose function it was to keep both thumbs spotless at all times, should a royal infant require pacification. On occasion, this proved a great inconvenience, since any child would naturally become addicted to the specific comforter: on 14 June 1645, for example, Sir Bellamy ffoulkes-Bellamy fought the entire Battle of Naseby with a bastard daughter of Charles I attached to his sword-thumb. Forced, therefore, to flee the field, he found himself in Roundhead territory and escaped with his life only by explaining to mystified Puritan pickets that he was an ENSA ventriloquist and thus a non-combatant.

The present Dummy Poursuivant is Lord Burschmold, former General Secretary of the Boilermakers' Union, who at all times carries a red leather snap-lock attaché case containing a selection of dummies with Womble features, the gift of Spunks Numismatics Ltd., who have made a limited edition of the items available to the general public, £95 the set in bronze, £260 in sterling silver, £1,000 in 18-carat gold.

Extracts from the new best-selling, fantastic, incredible, smash-hit success from the author of **Boats, Records, Carols, Socks, Book Tokens, Christmas Cards and Ties and Hankies . . .**

TRAINS

by EDWARD HEATH

Sometimes, alas, people try to get me to sign books they haven't paid for, and I have no option but to lock them up and hand them over to the railway police.



YOU know, some of the happiest hours of my life have been spent on trains. Perhaps looking out of the window at the "landscape" passing by, with its typical cows and grass. Perhaps standing in the mini-buffet with a couple of Scottish football supporters, discussing life an' that. Or maybe even just signing copies of my latest world best-seller at some charming main-line station and swapping a good hearty laugh with folk over such old jokes as "The valuable ones are the unsigned ones."

But when I look back at a lifetime of travelling by train, I can't help thinking of the little steam train that used to take me from Broadstairs to Oxford for another term at Balliol. Little did the passengers on that far-off, pre-war "Southern" Rail think that the shy, bookish youth in their midst would one day become a "blockbusting" author! Little did I think, either, that one day I would write a book about trains. If I had, I would have taken some notes.

ISEEM to have given the impression that there was a direct train service from Broadstairs to Oxford. But, you know, memory plays funny tricks, and I see now from a map of England that it is most unlikely that such a service existed, unless it ran across Hyde Park!

I must ask one of the many charming "research" assistants whom I have helped to "write" my books to look up pre-war train schedules between Broadstairs and Oxford, and if possible to find a photograph of an engine of the time.

ITHINK the most memorable Christmas I have ever enjoyed was that of 1969, which was spent simply aboard a Western Region 4-6-0 in the company of Andre Previn, Michael Parkinson, Oscar Peterson, the Broadstairs Church Choir, half a dozen American publishers, several visiting statesmen and "Lord" Longford, as he then was. I can imagine nothing more natural and beautiful than sharing Christmas with your friends, singing carols, signing each other's books, and having a "nightcap" in the dining car. How lucky that there was a TV crew on hand to record it all for posterity, and perhaps some of you may have seen "Edward Heath's Christmas Party Show" on the "television set"

IFOUND when writing my book about "music" that it does not do to become too technical in trying to talk to laymen, who after all can appreciate the beauty of the great composers without being

confused by talk of "notes" or "beats". So I do not intend to explain in great detail the mysteries behind the marvellous spectacle of a railway train in full cry.

However, I feel I should tell my readers that an engine is basically driven by energy derived from fuel which is then converted into direct drive which makes the "wheels" go round. This round-and-round motion, or circular revolution, is then applied to the "rails" and the train then moves. It has been traditional for many years to use coal and steam to run trains, though I am told by younger friends that electricity and oil are now very popular.

ISUPPOSE that deep inside every one of us is the desire to own his own train, and I can still remember the intense thrill of excitement when I became the proud owner of *Morning Steam I*. It was only a small ex-GWR 0-6-0 pannier tank, and not much good for anything except autographing a few paperbacks at a time, but I shall never love another train as much. Today I am lucky to be the owner of *Morning Express III*, a glittering monster with five coaches run by a crack team of crewmen who have helped me to victory in such great events as the Round Britain Bookshops Race, the Foyles-to-Blackwells Freestyle Event and the Harold Wilson Handicap. If you should happen to see it passing your neighbourhood, just wave and I will stop to sell you a copy of my book, whichever it is by then.

THIS is no longer, of course, the "Golden" age of railways and there are fewer lines now open in Britain than at any time since the last century. Why is this? I suspect it is because down many small branch lines there simply are not enough book readers to supply the demand for book signings and "personal visits" by celebrities. It is sad but inevitable fact that if a railway line is not worth visiting by publisher, then there is little justification for its staying open. Even at some big stations there doesn't seem to be very much demand. I just can't understand this. What on earth is the point of laying on a big display of one's books and me waiting ready there if people simply can't be bothered to turn up and buy a copy? Goodness, it makes me so angry at the lack of initiative and co-operation in Britain today, and I shall have a lot of tough talking to say about this in my next book *Books*.

Arms and the sales- man

LOOKING for a stocking-filler for a hard-to-please friend? If he is a man who owns a strike aircraft designed to penetrate enemy defence systems, it's no good giving him some conventional old bomb that just fizzles weakly without any danger to life and limb. What he wants is a Cluster Bomb. Just ask for the "BL 755 low-level close-support area weapon", and you're laughing.

But suppose that his head isn't as clear as it might be after all that Christmas cheer? There is little point in penetrating enemy defence systems if all you bag is a couple of hostile chickens and a garden shed. Not to worry: "The cluster bomb concept is based essentially on the 'shot-gun' principle of compensating for aiming errors by covering the target area with a pattern of evenly distributed bomblets." These agreeable little chappies, the bomblets, make for "a high kill probability against a range of small hard and soft targets". According to military experts, a soft target is a person, such as me, or, better still, you.

So don't forget: it comes complete with safety mechanism to save embarrassing explosions before you've let go, it has "a minimum shelf life of five years" and it is delivered in the handy 600 lb pack. One minute it is falling through the blue, next second it turns into a "bomblet cloud", as photographs prove. Would prove. If there were any. It could be mounted on the outer wing pylons of a Hawker Siddeley Harrier, as a photograph would show, assuming I had seen any photograph. The place where people see photographs of this nature—this is a wild surmise on my part—is the *British Defence Equipment Catalogue*. I think I am allowed to know of its existence.

But little else. Noticing reports that the Chinese, of all people, stood a chance of buying a Harrier jump jet or two, I wondered what other items of hardware were up for sale to those with a bank balance to burn. Having heard tell of the *British Defence Equipment Catalogue*, I turned to the organisation that I shall refer to only as the Ministry of Defence. Superiors were consulted. "No, as far as this office is concerned, but try the Distribution Depot in Farnborough." Many thanks. "You'll probably get 'no' there as well." Is the *Catalogue* Classified? "De-

finitely not. But it is Restricted."

Over to Farnborough. "I can't transfer you, there's a power cut and we're all in the dark. Can you hang on a second?" And these are the people standing between Restricted publications and the armed might of the Soviet bloc. "We're not really allowed to hand it out here, there and everywhere." I'm not interested in there and everywhere, just here. "We tend not to hand it out to the BBC or ITV."

The list of places where the *Catalogue* doesn't go is quite impressive. "It doesn't go behind the Iron Curtain and it doesn't go to South Africa." But the Chinese look like buying one of the planes presumably in its pages. "They didn't see the catalogue, though." Are you seriously claiming that a copy doesn't occupy pride of place in the Kremlin Reference Library? "They don't have access through normal channels, but obviously they could if they wanted." But what about me? I'm on your side, or was. "I'll have to ring someone in the Ministry of Defence." Many thanks. "He's out this afternoon, and I'm pretty sure he'll say no."

However, some of us can't hang around for a mysterious figure at the Ministry to reappear; doesn't he know there's a deadline on? Forced to turn to a publication referred to as the *London Telephone Directory*, one brief phone call established the existence of two copies of the *Catalogue*. Whether I saw one of them or not depends on my notes, which are full of deletions at this point. What can be told, to Wang Chen if no-one else, since he is China's Vice-Premier and the top man over there as regards the sale of the Harrier, is that the plane is "the only operational aircraft in the world able to take off vertically"—apart from the Russian Harriersky which doesn't do an awful lot—and "has an endurance of more than 7 hours". It can also break the sound barrier and carry our friend the Cluster Bomb.

Perhaps Wang Chen, an oil sheik, or anyone else with a king's ransom which he wishes to invest wisely, would be interested in another superb British product, the Jaguar aircraft. A brightly-coloured little leaflet about this arrived unsolicited through the post, presumably in the hope that the secretary who opens the mail is an impulse buyer. This is

indeed a bargain. Not only is it "simple to maintain and available now" but it also provides "a smooth ride and stable aiming platform" and can "carry a heavy load of offensive stores", such as the NATO meat pie, presumably. Failing that, optional extras for the Jaguar include the Matra R550 Magic missiles, only 2.7 metres long, infra-red homing device, 2,000 produced to date, as used by ten satisfied governments.

Although no-one in the office actually splashed out on either Jaguar or missile, the leaflet had the effect of intriguing me to the point of asking the British Aircraft Corporation, the manufacturers, for anything else promoting their sophisticated technology of death. By return came a brochure about the Tornado, with these special features: Variable Geometry technology, advanced digital system, wide range of missiles, can be taken out in all weathers and can "operate from smaller, less sophisticated bases" (believed to be a reference to parts of Norfolk without a decent restaurant for miles). You do not have to rearrange in order of preference, or complete a sentence beginning "The Tornado is good at killing people because..." But you are invited to read the accompanying booklet full of solicited testimonials from NATO bigwigs: "Will be the backbone of the Luftwaffe," writes a Chief of Air Staff from Germany, and "excellent results which have been obtained during the early test flights," writes a General Dino Ciarlo from Italy.

So much for information which we are allowed to possess, assuming that it is permitted to open one's post and read what it contains. When it comes to the *British Defence Equipment Catalogue*, if it does, the variety of products offered by British craftsmen is enormous. There are, as those who have read it would tell you, trench diggers, ploughs that sow mines, bridges for tanks, Wilkinson swords (ceremonies for the use of, unless there's been another defence cutback) and Protective Suit No 1 ("Gives the wearer protection against any known form of chemical or biological attack", not to mention household germs.)

The real present for the man who wants to put down a rising or annexe territory is a gun. He might be interested in the "Sterling Mk 4 sub-

machine gun shown with the butt extended and the optional bayonet fitted", made by a company that sells to 90 separate territories around the Free World and cannot be held responsible if any two of its products happen to be pointing towards each other. Another good buy is the 105 mm light gun, nine-mile range, six rounds a minute, folds flat for travel, knocks out tanks a treat, can be linked to a fire control computer system such as the British FACE system which happens to be in stock but hurry.

One of the most intriguing items ever to appear in a mail order catalogue is the Chieftain tank. The advantages of this are the 120 mm gun, the 12.7 mm machine gun, the electrically operated gear shift and top speed of 30 mph. Seats four. If that isn't grand enough, perhaps a small frigate is what you're after? It represents "a considerable economy in capital cost". Over here we have some corvettes, "less expensive than frigates and the smaller crews required . . . represent a considerable and lasting economy."

How much of an economy, we shall never know. Manufacturers are reticent about how much they put on the bill for their products: "It's not the sort of thing one has a price-list for." There is a great deal of bartering, with discounts for bulk buying. What is certain is that it is a massive business for this country, with this year's figure for exports estimated at £1,000 million. The number of firms benefiting from military con-

tracts is enormous; a list compiled by the Campaign Against the Arms Trade ranges from Irvin of Letchworth, who provide parachutes, to Pains-Schermuly of Salisbury, purveyors of CS gas to the trade.

The theory behind arms export was that it provided weapons to those who were more or less on your side. If we are now selling to those generally considered on the other side, it would make more sense to close down our own armed forces and operate purely as dealers of arms to all comers. The Chinese, of course, do not count as Iron Curtain, so we might term them as practically on our side. But what of Colonel Pekic, one of those invited to the British Army Equipment Exhibition in June of last year? He and his friends hailed from Yugoslavia, which is not, according to most diplomatic experts, exactly part of NATO.

It cannot be said that money dominates military thinking. The line is, presumably, drawn somewhere, even if it is just the other side of anyone offering hard cash for cold steel. What would be the decision if the Provisional IRA made a decent offer for a gross of Blowpipe one man supersonic anti-aircraft systems? I'd hate to guess, but I know that this country would stand firm on one aspect. The Provos would never get their hands on the *British Defence Equipment Catalogue*. Well, not from authorised sources.



"Dressing me is one of Cynthia's little pleasures."

Santa's GROTTO



"Hello, middle-aged man, what's your name?"

"Hello, Santa, my name is Henry Eric Foskett."

"And how old are you?"

"I'm forty-nine-and-three-quarters."

"And where do you live?"

"I live at 37 Scrofula Terrace, Morden."

"Do you live there with your mummy and daddy?"

"No, I live there with my wife and my two children and my mummy-in-law. My wife is called Cynthia and has a face like a dead cod, ar-har-har, and my children are called Esmond and Miranda, and you can tell which is which when you come down the chimney to give them things because Esmond has a three-inch rivet through his left nostril and Miranda has a lime-green urchin cut and tattooed knuckles. What I would like you to give them is scurvy and pellagra."

"Is that what *they* want for Christmas, too?"

"No. Esmond wants an Action Gas Chamber, and Miranda wants a Cuban lover with big hairy hands."

"I see. And what does your mummy-in-law want?"

"My mummy-in-law wants putting down, in my opinion. Aren't you going to ask me what *I* want, Santa?"

"Well, first of all I have to find out if you've been a good middle-aged man, don't I? Stop plucking your nose-hairs, please, it's a dirty habit, and take your pipe out of your mouth when you're speaking. Now, what did you do this year?"

"I went to H. E. Foskett Hardware (Estab. 1961) Ltd every day, and I sold mops and irons and plastic basins and plastic wood and Formica by the yard and curtain rail and hammers and kitchen steps and Posidriv screws and washleathers and ninety-one different sorts of glue and lots and lots of other stuff."

"And were you good?"

"Mostly. Sometimes I said there is no call for it and sometimes I said we are awaiting deliveries shortly and sometimes I said that firm has ceased trading, but they were only little fibs, weren't they, Santa?"

"Yes, but a little bird tells me that once or

twice you were a bit naughtier than that, and he wasn't wrong, was he?"

"It isn't my fault if silly rat-faced cows come in and want something they just saw on the telly last night, I cannot be everywhere at once, also shelf space at a premium. I speak as I find, though I have rarely struck a woman, VAT return days excepted or when they remind me of that mare Cynthia. Or her mummy."

"That's very wicked, Henry."

"She broke my car. She smells my breath on Rotary nights. She won't let me play with her any more. Sometimes I want to pull all her hair out and plug her fingers in the mains, but I never *do* it, Santa."

"Tell me some of the *good* things you've done this year."

"I didn't put paraquat in mummy-in-law's Sanatogen, despite being a licensed dispenser and handling the stuff every day, also having a bit put by and able to be on board Channel ferry in false beard while mummy-in-law would still be writhing on the carpet. Nor did I drown Cynthia, Esmond and Miranda during pedalo ride off Swanage. What I did do was help my assistant Miss Rosie Clobe up and down the shop steps every day, so that she would not fall down and bruise her lovely long legs or knock her enormous bust about, what a tragedy that would be, Santa, and her only 19."

"I see. Anything else?"

"I paid my Schedule A, my Schedule D, my VAT, my rates, my gas, electricity, phone, water bills, my various licences, my loan interest, my mortgage repayments, my trade bills, housekeeping, pocket money, insurance, despite not knowing where next penny coming from and me just working fingers to bone to support freeloading layabout scum such as government, bureaucrats, family etcetera. It would have served them jolly well right if I had gone barmy and been put away or jumped out of window, can I have a big Chinese girl with a mouth like an inner-tube and a flat with a mirror in the ceiling and a double-bath?"

"No."

"Can I have Miss Rosie Clobe and a hair transplant?"

"No."

"What can I have?"

"You can have a go on the lucky dip, for £18.30, plus VAT. There are tartan slippers, and a Banlon muffler, and a simulated golf-ball key-ring with a smutty motto, and a dangle-dolly, and a four-colour ball-point, and a cigarette-case with Prince Michael of Kent on it, and much, much more. Anything the heart could desire, in short. Plus a special surprise packet at no extra charge. Christmas wouldn't *be* Christmas without special little surprises, would it?"

"No, Santa. Thank you, Santa. Goodbye, Santa."

"Goodbye, middle-aged man."



VAT News

No 14

General Note (VAT Note 33564211/VAT/3445068/GEN/118904588432/NOTE/664387002)

NEW VAT TREASURY ORDERS

A number of changes have been made by Treasury Order. The Orders relating to VAT are listed on pages 255-561 of *Treasury Notes Relating to VAT News*. Changes in the order of Treasury Order changes and consequential amendments to Notice 55689001337 are in the appendix to the *Treaty of Utrecht 1978*. The only exceptions to this ruling are those changes made in the order of Treasury Order changes since this edition of *VAT News* was changed to allow for the new changes, as outlined above.

FAILURE TO IMPLEMENT THESE CHANGES IS PUNISHABLE BY STATUTORY INSTRUMENT.

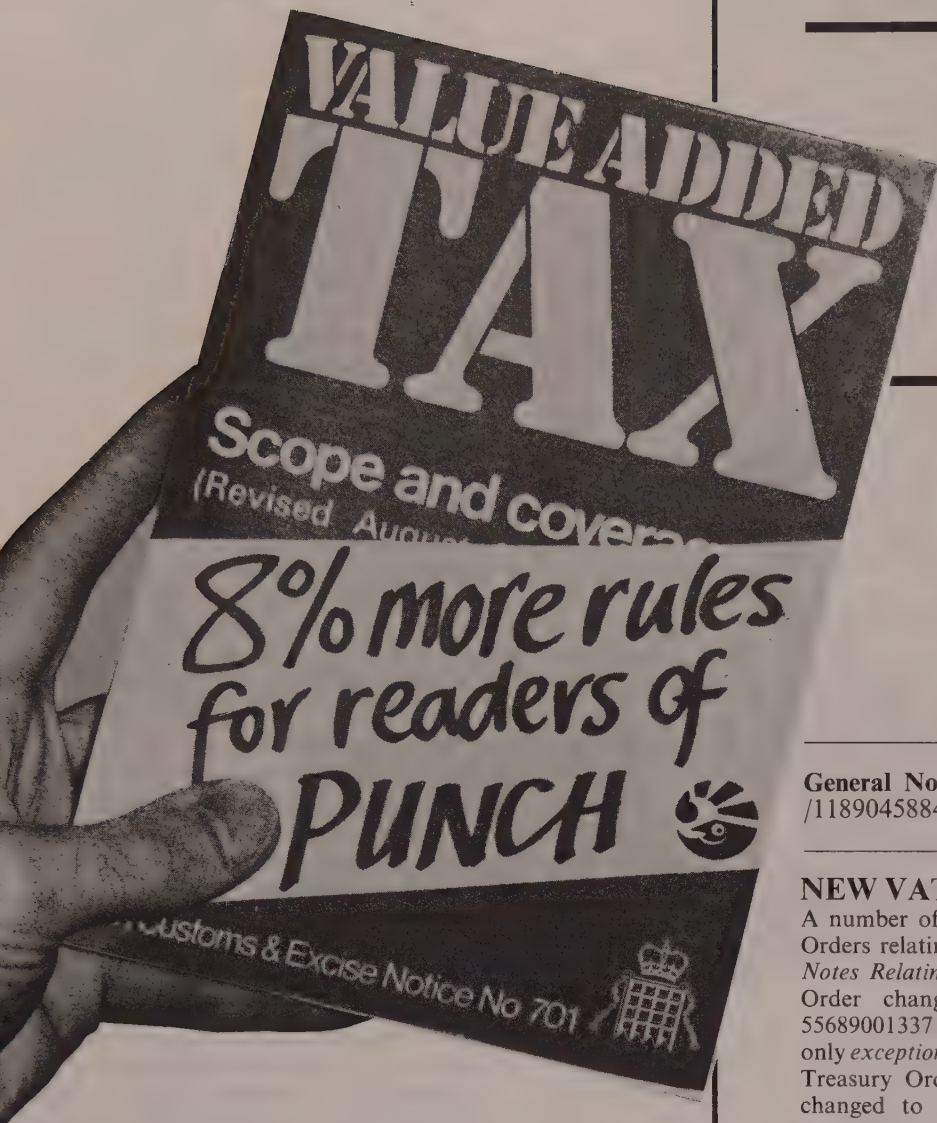
General Note (Supplementary) (VAT Note 33564211/VAT/3445068/GEN/118904588432/NOTE/664387002/SUPP/)

The employment of professional advisers to assist persons eligible for VAT registration in the interpretation, comprehension, translation, exegesis, elucidation or unriddling of VAT legislation and/or statutory instruments, whether accountants, mathematicians, wizards, geomancers, warlocks, psychoanalysts, computer programmers or remedial gymnasts is chargeable at the higher rate (except in Northern Ireland).

CHANGES IN THE SCOPE AND COVERAGE OF VAT

Chutney

With effect from 1 February 1983, the lubrication of hub assemblies on chutney tanks, piccalilli pools and similar receptacles and



veyance of their contents to UK pickling plants is *zero-rated*.
rbal or purgative gherkins are exempt.

Group 15912—THIMBLES, HOISTS, SYRUPS, MICE, STEAM AND PORTABLE PROPHIES ETC.

THE LAW. Delete items 59 and 3441 and substitute:

The supply of pulverized marzipan persons under Section 2 of
the Midwives Act 1951 or the Pharmacy and Poisons Act (Scot-
land) 1925 is restricted to registered lifeboatmen and makers of
protective helmets.

41. "Animal" includes bottled birds, homing bees, domesticated
mice (unless containing more than 22% millet), crustacea,
molluscs and Mexican jumping beans but NOT worms or pre-
frozen swine (including peccaries) or the skins, if neither tanned nor
pressed, of bovine cattle (especially buffalo), Tibetan goats,
lamois, gazelles or artificial dogs.

SERVICES CONNECTED WITH SUPPLIES OF GOODS

has been represented to HM Customs & Excise Droitwich Area
Branch (King's Mote House, Rosary Circus, Oldham, BR22X
VW) that Notice No. 5623988164378, paragraph 42, does not
fully cover all the circumstances in which tax may be due on a
supply of services connected with a supply of goods. The following
notes have therefore been prepared in accordance with the details
published on page 11 of this *VAT News*.

Maps and charts for use by homing pigeons are exempt from duty,
unless used in the course of aerial surveying of mineral resources at
sea.

"Food" means "drink" and includes "coconut soda" but NOT
nutrient extracts, binders, sunflower briquettes, glaciated peach
halves or the residue from fitted bilge pumps.

Tombstones for cats are treated as geysers for the purposes of
VAT.

Drained cherries, edible cake decorations, dried blood, ground or
crushed horn, ornamental lobsters, uranium, electrically or
mechanically adjustable beds, jams, coffin shrouds, engineer's
buckles, instrument landing systems, sawn logs, tiaras, bulk
sewage containers, hovercraft or musical stick pins for use in the
home are all chargeable at the *standard rate*.

How VAT works

Part 1: STATUTORY HARASSMENT OF THE SELF-EMPLOYED

If you are self-employed and earning more than a specified pittance
you must EITHER register for VAT with HM Customs & Excise
OR register with HM Prisons. Incomprehensible forms and a
trained police force are provided for these purposes.

Self-employed persons registered for VAT must charge tax on all
things made or services provided in the course of their business:
OUTPUT TAX.

All persons registered for VAT may reclaim the tax charged to them
on things bought or services used in the course of doing business:
INPUT TAX. Accounts in duplicate of both *OUTPUT* and
INPUT taxation must be maintained and, at periodic intervals, a
return must be made to HM Customs & Excise computer in
Southend.

SOME EXAMPLES

Example 1

John is a self-employed writer, registered for VAT. John writes an
article for a publication, charging 8% VAT on top of his fee
(*OUTPUT TAX*). John makes notes of this payment in duplicate
and, at the end of his taxable period, pays the tax due to HM
Customs & Excise. The publication, meanwhile, notes in duplicate
that it has paid John 8% VAT on a service provided (*INPUT TAX*).
The publication reclaims the 8% from HM Customs & Excise.
Travel to and from psychiatrists is *non-deductible*.

Example 2

Peter is a self-employed bricklayer. Because Peter lacks the time or
skill to maintain records of a circular tax system, Peter does not
register for VAT. Peter is imprisoned and, therefore, for the
purposes of VAT is *exempt*.

Remember: $(a + b) - b = a$ OR $(100\% + 8\%) - 8\% = 100\%$

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Edited by DAVID TAYLOR Sole Proprietor



"I don't think I'll back the Queen's horse this time."

AUSTERITY ASCOT

Complaints about the lavish atmosphere at this year's highlight of the racing calendar have spurred HONEYSETT to pull in the reins a bit . . .



"More Tizer, your ladyship?"



"Well, he won't come last again, what?"



"I'll economise on everything else, I said, but not my hat."



"Let me introduce you to the Duchess of Blackpool."



"Gunpowder, treason and plot? And we all go wearing these funny hats?"



*"He's utterly convinced that he's being exiled to **St Helens**, poor devil!"*

I'm the Chef of Araby

A catering firm has won a £1 million contract—to supply sandwiches to the Arabs . . .

K Snacks of Wolverhampton is to ship an initial 45,000 chicken, beef and cheese sandwiches to Qatar.

The sandwiches will be sent in what the firm describes as "a refrigerated form. They will be chilled in Wolverhampton and the sandwiches will be around two days old when they arrive in the Persian Gulf," said a spokesman.

The spokesman added: "The contract at present will last us for nine months. It is a fantastic order, it really is unbelievable. It will transform us from a small firm to a large and prosperous one.

—*Daily Telegraph.*

From Frank Wrigley
Manager, Sam's Sandwiches
Birmingham

Dear Sheik Qemar al Azrami,
I note receipt of your inquiry re our take-away and office lunch supply service. I therefore enclose a copy of our Express Midday Super Service sales sheet, and hope it will be of interest to your Department of Nutrition in Muscat.

Please note that several lines are now withdrawn, notably Pork, Pork and Gherkin, Pork and Salad, and Toasted Bacon.

Looking forward to your esteemed order,
I remain

From the Manager
To the Production Director

Ron, this could be our lucky day! Our first Arab customer, no less. A Sheik from Muscat, presumably coming over here for a big exhibition in Birmingham or some such. Maybe he's here to have a look at Birmingham City's next home game, with a view to buying Trevor Francis for the Muscat Ramblers, who knows?

How many extra sandwiches could we produce at short notice? 50? 100 even? Let me know.

Not much demand for the new corn beef 'n' alfalfa sprout on rye, I'm afraid. Can we have a rethink on this one?

To Sheik Qemar al Azrami

Dear Sheik,

I thank you for your sample order received this morning, but feel there must be some clerical error, as the number of chicken sandwiches you quote is 1,000, repeat, 1,000, and ditto for beef, cheese and peanut butter. Could you please at your leisure state correct figure required for each flavour, which I presume is not correct.

In response to your detailed inquiries as to other tasty snack fillings: cress is a small, vitamin-rich herb eaten raw in England: cottage cheese is a smooth, mild white mixture: so, for that matter, is mayonnaise, salad cream and margarine.

I can particularly recommend the corn beef 'n' alfalfa sprouts, a new filling which we are pioneering and for which there is much demand.

Awaiting your corrected order,
I remain

To the Production Director

Sorry, Ron, old son—false alarm about the rich Arab, I think. Some nutter who thinks we can send a boy on a motorbike round downtown Muscat with 4,000 rounds every day. I appreciate you could lay on 100 extra, but can't see Terry on his Yamaha leaving here at 11 am and getting to Muscat by lunch-time, even the way he rides. I know that our slogan is "Sandwiches Supplied, Any Place, Any Time", but surely any fool knows that *Any Place* means *in the Birmingham area*, and not too far out even then? I mean, who'd want to supply Wolverhampton, for heaven's sake?

Now it's October, might as well give the tuna 'n' cucumber a miss till next year.

To Sheik Qemar al Azrami

Honoured Sheik,

I welcome the prompt reply to my doubts about your numerical error. I note that there was indeed a clerical error, and that when you asked a quote for 1,000 rounds each of four fillings, the figure 1,000 was incorrect. The figure should have been 10,000. Repeat, 10,000.

Our estimate for this important order will be given priority treatment and should reach Muscat almost immediately.

I note your inquiry as to whether pork is used in our liver sausage, pate and salami sandwiches. I confirm, as requested, by the beard of the prophet, that no trace of the unclean animal is involved.

To the Production Director

Ron, before you read the next paragraph, I would like you to take a stiff drink, sit down and relax. No, seriously, OK, ready?

How soon can you undertake to produce an extra order of 40,000 rounds, a quarter each of beef, cheese, chicken and peanut butter? Every day?

Calm down, Ron. Be your age. Think what it means. This Arab is serious. He writes on official Muscat paper. Behind him is the fabulous wealth of the oil of the East, unimaginable fortunes which can grant every whim known to man. In his case, his whim is to order 40,000 rounds of English sarnies. You know and I know that the object in question is white and unappealing, and that in a man-to-man talk we might advise him to settle for something more exotic. Like fish and chips, or hamburgers.

But may I also point out this could make our fortune? Get us an Export Award or two? And help to pay an outstanding bill or two, notably for your order of alfalfa sprouts?

PS. Can you confirm that we use no pork in our liver sausage, pate or salami sandwiches?

PPS. I will, of course, put our Sheik friend off as much as possible until we are ready to supply his order.

To Sheik Qemar al Azrami

Esteemed Sheik,
May I enquire whether you wish the order to be on white or on brown?

I remain

To Production Director

I don't care. Buy a chicken farm. Write to President Carter for the peanut butter. Rustle as many cattle as you need. But *do* something. Of course it's possible! It just means hiring a few more people, getting a new place and setting up a new system, that's all. And buying a bakery, of course. I'd do it myself if I wasn't so busy costing the whole thing.

I do not consider your suggestion of hiring Concorde helpful.

To Sheik Qemar al Azrami

O Sheik

I confirm your wish that the sandwiches should be on brown. May I take this opportunity of inquiring whether you wish salt with the chicken, mustard with the beef or pickles with the cheese? All these extras are, needless to say, free.

I remain

To Production Director

I herewith return your resignation. I have committed myself to producing a costed quotation for the Sheik and cannot put him off much longer. The only thing I have not asked him so far is whether he wants paper napkins. I have just had a snotty letter from the Sheik saying that offering extras free is bad business, and that he insists on paying for them. Please let me have full plans for production by tomorrow morning.

I have reconsidered your suggestion for Concorde. I think it is a good one. With a bit of luck, it will get the sandwiches there before they curl up.

To Sheik Qemar al Azrami

O mighty Sheik,

I have broken down the cost of supplying 40,001 sandwiches to you daily (the extra one being the sample corn beef 'n' alfalfa you have requested) as follows:—

To making 40,001 sandwiches @ 25p each	£10,000 25p
To packing and wrapping @ 10p each	£ 4,000 10p
Transport to Heathrow	£ 200
Flight to Muscat via Bahrein	£ 3,500
Extra (salt, mustard etc)	£ 2,000 02p
40,000 paper napkins	£ 3,000
Helpful payments to customs men, etc	£ 5,500
Total	£28,200 52p
Service charge of 12%	£ 3,300 48p

£31,500

£ 2,520

£34,020

VAT @ 8%

Total

I remain



"The freezer's on the blink again."



“Somehow you never think of quins actually growing up.”

To Production Director

Ron, would you stop sending me your resignation? Not only does it create extra paperwork to send it back, it is also not very good for staff morale. Ta.

You will be pleased to hear that there is very little likelihood of having to send sandwiches to the Middle East. After I have costed it out, the daily shipment would set our Arab friend back about £34,000 a day, or nearly £1 per sandwich. Not even an Arab would stomach that. I fancied the idea of throwing in a Coke as well and charging £1.50 per sandwich, but there are limits. Well, aren't there?

Oh well, it was a nice dream while it lasted.

To Sheik Qemar al Azrami

Sheik of Sheiks,
I acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 27th and note the contents.

I remain

To Production Director

Bad news I'm afraid, Ron. As I predicted, the Sheik does not accept our estimate of £34,000 daily for sandwiches to Muscat. What I failed to predict was that he found this an awkward figure and would prefer to make it around £40,000.

We are now committed to producing sandwiches for the Arab market at £1 a throw. I would welcome a detailed breakdown from you on how we shall achieve this. I would be grateful if it did not involve your resignation.

To Sheik Qemar al Azrami

O Sheik of Sheik of Sheiks,
I hereby contract to undertake the supply of 40,000 sandwiches daily, as agreed per letter.

I remain

To Production Director

Thank you for your long, powerful, though somewhat emotional memo, Ron. I agree with your following points.

—That we have not built up a small, happy, city lunch-time firm in order to involve ourselves in a big international cartel and bring on ourselves the kind of ulcer-laden worries so well described in the *Sunday Times* series on Mr Onassis.

—That our only hope of sure survival is to apply for an Arts Council Grant or massive loan.

—That by supplying a huge daily airlift to the Middle East, we will run the danger of losing the personal touch whereby we can phone a client to say: “Sorry, pate's off, will liver sausage be all right?”

—That by becoming a big company we will only lose ourselves in the depths of government bureaucracy and soullessness.

—That small is beautiful, big is ugly and that we should adopt the course of action you recommend.

From the Official Receiver

To Sheik Qemar al Azrami

Dear Sheik,

I am sorry to inform you that Sam's Sandwiches of Birmingham have gone into voluntary liquidation. Although he asked me not to inform anyone, I feel obliged to tell you that Mr Frank Wrigley is now trading under the name of Brum Take-Away Kebabs, to whom any further correspondence should be addressed.

I am sorry you did not like the corn beef 'n' alfalfa sandwich. Your account has been credited to the extent of 25p.

yours faithfully

17 Tobruk Mansions,
Bendigo Crescent,
Wattle Park,
Melbourne.
November 17, 1977

you've been up to with Miss Muldoon, the tuckshop lady, behind her Violet Crumble display unit." Badly shaken, he let me off, telling me I was worse than one of Franco's secret police spies.

I cannot describe the rush of pride that filled me when he spoke those words. Naturally, it never occurred to me that I could ever be one of the privileged few who earn their living by doing what they love best. For years I have been practising my lonely craft with a fervour that verges on the religious and, such is the degree of skill, cunning and resourcefulness I have achieved, my records will show that I have been nicked only once, for peering into a lighted room late one night where, quite by chance, a young lady was taking off her clothes. I was apprehended because the well-known Maoist who lived in the flat above dropped a paraffin stove on my neck.

On coming around, I informed the arresting officer that my purpose in looking through the window was merely to establish the right time. What I was looking at, I said, was the clock on the mantelpiece, since I was anxious not to miss the last tram home. The prosecution later attempted to prove that there was no clock there, and no mantelpiece either, and the jury, all paid-up members of the Communist Party, chose to believe them. The judge, a key figure in the International Jewish Conspiracy, sentenced me to two years hard—a period reduced by half on Appeal when I let it be known that I knew, from personal observation, what he got up to with his wife's garter belt, roll-on corset and peep-o bra while ostensibly playing with his model galleons on Friday nights.

Such astute use of important information is, I am sure you will agree, proof that I use my initiative at all times. Gentlemen, I have peered through the windows of the highest in the land without let or hindrance. I know the most intimate secrets of our greatest brewers, garage proprietors and estate agents and, should you wish to prove these claims to your satisfaction, then you need merely to ascertain whether Eddie Plumb, who became a household name when he established a new world record for walking from Adelaide to Perth carrying a dog, regularly entertains a Lithuanian

Dear Sirs,

I am writing in response to your ad on page 9 (Used Cars, Massage Parlours & Miscellaneous) of tonight's *Herald*, and should like to apply for one of the aforementioned vacant posts. I have—perhaps unconsciously—been preparing for such a job all my life. Often, lying awake in the wee small hours while my mother plays her Mildura Police Choir recording of *Indian Love Call*, I have pondered my destiny and been troubled by its apparent lack of purpose and direction. Now, thanks to your ad, my destiny is clear. It is to employ what small talents God gave me in the service of my country.

But you will want to know all about me, and I am rushing ahead. Let me go back in time. When I left school, somewhat prematurely at the insistence of the principal, a well-known Marxist, I was given a reference by my form master, Mr Wally Sprigg BA. "A curiously furtive boy," he wrote, "who spends much of his time standing behind trees. Neither likeable nor clever he is, nevertheless, held in surprisingly high esteem by his classmates."

This latter observation was accurate, though Mr Sprigg never learnt the reasons for my popularity. They were simple enough: the class depended entirely on me for precise and up-to-the-minute information on the progress of his adulterous relationship with Mrs Littlewood, the biology mistress. Each evening they were at it hammer and tongs down in the boat house with their mortarboards on, under the trestles. Sometimes they did it in the school eight, utilising the sliding seats in a manner which startled even an experienced observer like myself. On one occasion I was apprehended down there by Mr Lopez, the Spanish master, who had wandered in to steal a tin of the oar grease in which he cooked his omelettes. Seizing me by the collar, he threatened to march me straight to the Head. I replied, "Take me to the Head, you Commie dago, and I shall tell him what

On Her Majesty's Service

"Mention it quietly, sport, but Australia's short of spies at the moment. Keep it under cover, but the situation is so bad that the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation has been forced to advertise for recruits in newspapers. How do they apply? Simple. Type out a neat application and send it to Post Office Box 2542W Melbourne."

—*Daily Mail*

woman named Nina at his Burwood home. They do unmentionable things with tropical fruit and it wouldn't surprise me if he told her about certain confidential aspects of the Melbourne Riot Squad's Alsatian-breeding programme to which he is party. Check for yourselves. See if I lie. But call before 9 pm because, after that, Plumb has his head stuck in a water melon and will be unable to hear the bell.

Gentlemen, can you not see of what immense benefit I could be if I employed these gifts in the service of my country? I imagine myself, a wolf-like shadow in the birch forests, watching the Russian leaders at their country *dachas*. What a brilliant diplomatic coup it would be if our man at the United Nations could announce that Mr Kosygin secretly dresses up as a yak and lopes, mooing, after naked domestics on all fours? The Soviet Union would lose all credibility as a world power. And into that vacuum would step her rightful heir and successor—Australia!

My hatred of Communists is well-known. Ask my mother. Ask Sid

Pugh, manager of the Dardenelles Betting Shop, Wattle Park. It was I who, in 1956, extinguished the Olympic flame the night that Vladimir Kuts won the 5000 metres. It was I who clambered up to the plinth and put out the fire with a couple of bottles of Yalumba muscatelle. The motorcycle patrolman who arrived with a box of matches and an incipient coronary soon calmed down when I explained my motives. He did not book me. On the contrary: he called me "a great patriot".

Physically, I am in good shape. I get a cold each winter, of course, the sniffle tending to persist for nine months or so—it has nearly given me away on one or two occasions but, thanks to my ability to run 400 metres in 64.7 seconds, uphill and vaulting garden walls on the way, I have not been apprehended. Each morning I do press-ups and jumping squats and, at tea time, I squeeze tennis balls. My eyesight is excellent.

You may wonder what positions of responsibility I have held during the past twenty years. Well, though

my brother is at medical school (in a bottle) my own pursuits have been of the non-academic sort. This is partially due to the fact that I have an IQ of 46, but mostly due to my refusal to be associated with the Moscow-dominated cliques who run our universities these days. I have been employed, in the main, at various dog tracks, selling programmes, working as a bookie's runner and applying methylated spirits to a particularly tender part of the greyhound's anatomy a split second before the trap opens. I am generally acknowledged to be the country's leading exponent of this practice and it was I, experimenting with aviation fuel, who was responsible last month for the famous incident in which the bitch, Office Bike, actually caught the hare fifty yards out and tore it to pieces, spraying the track with sprockets, screws and simulated fur. I am known for my cool nerve and steady hand.

I await, impatiently, the courtesy of your reply.

Yours faithfully,
Arthur Smith



"Mind you, for a really happy ending, it would need to be in Deutschmarks."

Members of the National Union of Teachers are opposing plans to set up a school for academically gifted children in the south-west because they claim it would be "elitist", and would weaken existing comprehensive schools by creaming off brighter pupils.

—Daily Telegraph

Calling all non-elitist science students!

Here are your model answers to an examination paper in

SOCIALIST EGALITARIAN CHEMISTRY

1. *The theory of chemistry and its modern development is the theory of Dalton. Criticise this statement.*

The above statement is pure fascism. It is obvious to the entire British people that no one person is better than any other. Therefore it is conclusively demonstrated that Dalton could not have discovered any theories. I assume from the name that he was a white fascist reactionary. Had he been an escaped negro slave from Africa that would have been entirely different.

All socialist chemistry is equal and support the arms embargo to South Africa Now!

2. *A pupil was asked how to determine the equivalent of zinc. He was given 3 months to answer. 5 months later he replied. "I will take some zinc, put it in nitric acid and weigh the hydrogen". Point out the errors of this statement.*

The boy's a fool. He obviously neglected the fact that hydrogen is lighter than air and couldn't be weighed on a balance in the normal manner. He should have used the balance upside-down. The hydrogen could then be weighed.

3. *Why do you believe the correctness of Avagadro's Hypothesis?*
Cos mi teacher tol me.

4. *Iodine is only slowly liberated when potassium iodide and potassium persulphate are mixed. Comment on this statement.*

It is obvious that both potassium iodide and potassium persulphate are not rigidly applying the rule of Marxist-Leninism in a liberating context. An effective Iodine Liberation Front (ILF) must be organised immediately. Demonstrations must be mounted against the iodine oppressors and collections for arms must be made. A campaign of peaceful violence must be initiated with the first targets being the police, National Front and the iodine boss class. To deny iodine its freedom is a fundamental denial of basic human rights. As such we can be assured of support by members of the so-called socialist government.

The next International Meeting to express solidarity with the ILF, will be on Tuesday 3rd January at the Mugabe Hall, London.

5. *There is considerable experimental evidence to suggest that boron and silicon resemble one another closely, though they are in different groups of the periodic table. Can you suggest any theoretical explanation?*

No!

6. *Describe the chemistry of the Lead Accumulator.*

My old man does something called an accumulator every Saturday. I don't think much of it as my old woman is always yelling you've gone and spent yer bleedin dole muny agin.

7. *How would you convince a sceptical but intelligent layman of the existence of atoms and molecules?*

Work him over with knuckledusters, coshes, put the boot in and perhaps use a bicycle chain. If these didn't work, half an hour in a locked room with a hi-fi system playing Bark, Rembrant, Shakspeare or some other old boy what wrote music, at full blast.

8. *What is the chief natural source of Lead? give an account of its extraction.*

The onli sorce i no is wun witch mi ol man show me from cherch roofs pinchin it is no swet so long as the fuz aint aroun you mus first nik a ladder long enuf to go up one geezer gos up wile the uver keps a look out for the filf on the grund, you mus tak tools wiv yer cos its ficks wiv bolts wunce the bolts are orf the led cums up eesy ole mannys scrapyard dun the road givs a good screw for led.

9. *What is meant by the expression "A perfect gas"?*
A perfect gas is any gas which exists or is manufactured in a people's democracy. There can be no imperfect gases under true socialism.

10. *A white powder is suspected of being either barium or magnesium carbonate. Explain simply how you would verify this.*

Feed to a cat.

11. *Give a brief but detailed description of the role of a sequestering agent?*

The present reactionary fascist resistance exhibited by certain bosses in not recognising the rights of everyone to 100 per cent union membership is a fundamental denial of basic human rights. Fortunately this ultimate obscenity is being removed by a group of committed persons dedicated to an absolute closed shop. The most successful technique employed by these people is as follows:

Initial contact is made with the company usually outside the factory gates. Proven persuasive methods are applied. This is usually sufficient particularly since the "pickets" as they are called are assured of support by assorted public fools. If, due to misguided reactionary resistance, the programme does not go fast enough then a few handpicked volunteers, not amounting to more than a few hundred at most, invade the factory and claim it for worker's power. This take-over or "sequestration" as it is called rarely fails and the "sequestration agents", well trained in the use of peaceful violence are a legally protected species, a measure largely due to recent government legislation.

12. *Now try and answer the following question without assistance.*

Describe an experiment to verify the following statement. Wedgeborn theory states that all elements have the same atomic weight.

Towards the morning



SHE closed her front door so decisively behind her that she feared the loud slap of it might wake up the child. She waited, hoping for a cry which would take her back in to where she was needed; but it did not come. Joanna was asleep and well and the neighbour who was baby-sitting was entirely reliable. Gingerly, like someone crossing stepping stones, Mary went the few yards from the door to the street. Her garden was parched and bald, like the rest of them this drought-smitten summer. The street was empty. There were trees, she knew the place well, they had bought the house there five years before, it was a quiet safe street in a quiet safe part of London and yet as she came through her gate and heard her high heels strike the pavement, Mary felt imprisoned. Only inside the house was she free now. A nauseous panic rushed into her throat and made her dizzy. She remembered feeling sick in the car when she was a little girl on Sunday outings. "Wind down the window and take a deep breath," her father had always said. "Deep—Breath—Deep — Breath — Thaaaat's — it!" She took a deep breath of the warm heavy evening air. "Thaaaat's it!

Feel better?" Yes. Thank you, father, dear.

She set off for the party. It was only three streets away and the walk would do her good. The party would do her good. Just to get out of the house on her own should do her good. The careful bath, the length of time devoted to making herself up, above all the determination to face up to their old friends and be seen to be coping—all that should do her good. She had stayed in the house too long since the rupture, mourning his departure as keenly as if it had been his death. The time had come to make a new start, be brave, get out of herself—all the things her friends said and she agreed. But, God, why, as she, a slim woman in her early thirties, walked, firmly now, through these calm city streets, clear and ordered in her intention, why were the walls of her mind still weeping with fear and loss and regret? She had not known she had loved him so much.

They had assured her that he would not be there. The Stewarts were more her friends than his. It was odd how soon and how easily they had divided up their friends, how effectively he had worked out a zone for himself which was outside

her perimeters, how quickly their lives had separated, joined now only by the Sunday afternoon visitation, with presents for his daughter. All in a few months.

The party was in the garden. The Stewarts' place was similar to her own but through painstaking efforts the garden was still green. It was the first thing Mary noticed as she came out of the French windows—the common shiny green of an English lawn, somehow exotic, even indecent under the darkening blue early evening sky which looked down on earth baked brown all over the land.

"He does it in the middle of the night," Alexandra said as she steered Mary by the elbow towards the jovial group clustered around the large dining table which had been set between the two large chestnut trees like a hyphen. "He *does!*" Alexandra repeated even though Mary had revealed no surprise; the explanation was part of Alexandra's automatic party line and Mary was relieved because she did not want to have to think either; all her energy was concentrated on keeping herself physically steady as she advanced to the battalion of waiting friends and acquaintances, turning their heads (were they *all* turning their heads?) and baring their teeth in smiles as she came to them like a victim. "He does a different bit every night with an old fashioned watering can. The hose-pipe would make too much noise, he says, and I'm not sure it's legal—but—you won't *believe* this—all the water comes from the *bath*. Yes. We leave the water in the bath and then off he goes with his little tin can—one of those really old fashioned things—and—it's disgusting! You know everybody, I think. Pimms?"

She was welcomed with such finely tuned sensibilities that she almost burst into tears. No one patronised her, no one bluffly pitied her, no one made cow's eyes of pathos or darted glances of wounding curiosity. They shuffled a little and let her in among them, the cold glass was in her hand and she was talking about the new nursery school in the church hall.

But the relief which came from the conversation lasted only a few minutes. Her full attention was fixed on herself and would not be seduced away. The familiarity of the people and the subjects, the amiable gossip



"Many of you won't have noticed the difference, but the oil is gone and now we're underdeveloped again."

of a group which was held together by similarities of income, education and, perhaps above all, the age of their children, all that heightened villagey-communion which rose, here as elsewhere, apparently so effortlessly, out of the metropolis, even all that shared and sustaining comfort could not do more than provide just another setting for the thoughts that gnawed her spirits. Like a fox in a trap which gnaws off its own leg to be free: that image had occurred to her several times and it stuck in some groove of pain, ever ready to spin back into her mind. No, after she had survived the first few minutes, this party at which she had thought to get out of herself had no more effect than changing position in a chair. And so she drifted once more back on to the rocks of her distress.

Later there was some hot quiche lorraine. When she nibbled at her slice, Mary realised how hungry she was. She swallowed two large mouthfuls greedily, but that was enough; as suddenly as her appetite had arisen, it fell away. She could eat no more.

They were sitting higgledy-piggledy about the patio now, looking down the garden to the two proud chestnuts, leaves limp in the still air. Very, very slowly, as if determined to fight every second of the way, the sky yielded its light. An aeroplane ripped across the houses and Mary smiled at the sound.

"Thank God we only get them when the wind's in the east," Alexandra said, "or is it the north-east?" She squatted on a small stool, dwarfing it and somehow herself diminished, her buttocks hanging over the edges, her knees touching, feet splayed out, body hunched over the plate of quiche. "If we were like poor old Kew or Hounslow! How do they manage?" She smiled up at Mary, who caught that flash of pity until now absent from the evening. She finished her drink rapidly. She drank much more these days.

"Another?" Again that beam of unmistakable sympathy. Mary nodded and tried to pull herself back into the present: she had had enough pity. She must show that she could manage without it. That was the point.

"I might start work again next month," she said, over-lightly, brittle she knew, but, she urged herself, go on, just go on. "Yes. Joanna'll be at the nursery school—the new one— Sheila and I were talking about it just now—she'll be there *all* day now—and with Sheila herself working there—that gives me—all day, well not quite, but." She was speaking more quickly, sipping at the gin-based drink too often, her voice became louder, the words lurched out of her mouth: she could not stop. "Well, if I can leave at say—say nine—and get there—say—on the tube—nine-thirty—quarter-to-ten—I can—have to—work through lunch—I don't need lunch—and leave at—say two—say two-thirty—two-thirty—getting back at three—well—two-fifteen to get back at three—they said that was more than part-time but just do *mornings*—somehow—it isn't *like* a job to do just mornings and with that sort of work—anyway—" Another aeroplane went over. Alexandra's hands fled dramatically to her ears and she grinned through the noise—like someone indulging a child or an invalid, Mary thought—no, not that—no—not that. She stood up and was, again, momentarily dizzy.

"I'm late."

"*Must* you?" There was relief in Alexandra's voice—was there not? The paranoia came in very like a flood. They were all saying . . . The whole evening they had really been thinking . . . when she went . . . No. Not that.

"I said I'd be back by ten-thirty."

"Nick will run you round."

"I'd rather walk, really I would, it's the best time of day for a walk—*please*." She added that last word desperately as she saw Alexandra heaving herself up off the stool and visibly gather her forces to insist on Mary accepting her generosity. "Please," she repeated, knowing it was a plea and immediately paying the penalty, for Alexandra nodded so understandingly that there was a hush on the patio and "goodbyes" were all, it seemed to Mary, banded with concern.

On the still street again, walking quickly home.

He was watching television, in the dark, one leg dangling over the side of the big armchair, posed, she thought, or sulky—but those reflections were the merest vestiges of objec-

tivity, futile tribute to self-restraint, straws thrown down to stop the flood as the dam burst and she ran to him, high heels cracking loudly on the wood-blocked floor and fell into his lap, keening.

"Hey now," he said, gently, stroking her hair with the old gesture. "Hey now."

The keening in its first moment had something of the ridiculous in it, he thought, so canine; and then there was beauty, so ancient. But it went on, the tears not softening it, the bare sound of soul-pain, unearthly, and he shifted his position in the armchair, clumsily trying to jostle her out of it.

"Come on," he said, still gentle but more urgent now. "Come on now. Sweetheart."

At the word "sweetheart" she stopped and pulled away from him, holding his gaze with a look of such deliberate intensity that he was trapped into returning it. So they stared, eye-locked, and again he soon put aside all light-hearted remarks which might occur to him about this mesmeric connection: her seriousness sliced through his well-developed front of easy-going worldliness as heavily as an axe through a piece of kindling wood. It had always been like that and he was filled with awe and dread.

Still she held his look and his mind emptied, the warm balm of the night seeping into it with protective drowsiness. And then she smiled, the lovely smile entrancing on her thin, hurt face.

"You *do* love me," she said and leaned forward to kiss him briskly like a sister. "Don't you?"

He could neither confirm nor deny it. To confirm it would be to ignite again what had taken such efforts to dampen and defuse; to deny it would be to hurt her unforgivably at what was plainly a most fragile moment. And there was no answer in a more profound sense because he *did* love her. There had been a real conjunction, sensual, enjoyable, intense, friendly, and such few loves as those took captive part of your affections for ever. Yet he did not want to live with her. As she saw it, though, real love involved total commitment and there was no way in which she could square the circle as he so successfully (and sometimes he thought in self-disgust, superficially) could seem to do.

His answer was a cowardly sigh leaving her to interpret it.

"Of course you do," she said, 'bravely' and they both heard the hopelessness fall between them like a coin dropped into a dry well; and waited now for it to strike the earth.



"To be honest, after a couple of weeks I'm quite happy to see him go back to his ship."

But she had much more energy than that, she had the vibrancy of despair and she grasped the moment fiercely.

"Scotch?" She leapt from his knee, knocked off the television and whirled round in the murky light. "Oh! You let Lena"—the neighbour who had been baby-sitting—"go home?"

"Yes."

"So you must have been waiting for me," Mary concluded slyly, and put on a small table light in the corner of the room which became soft and romantic in the way Mary most loved.

"Well?" she pressed him. "You must have been."

"I knew you wouldn't be too late back from Alexandra's," he said dryly, knowing that he was being ungallant but using the opportunity to reassert his independence.

Mary hopped over the snub to root out the more important part.

"How did you know I was at Alexandra's?"

"They asked me, too."

She felt that spin of fear again, that sudden steep chasm in the mind, as barrel spun around and the bullet was seen to be lodged ready for firing.

"But they told me . . . I thought you . . ."

"Alexandra was trying to be kind," he said cruelly. "You know her. I was supposed to turn up 'accidentally on purpose'."

"I can't trust her any more," Mary said, pathetically.

He had gone too far and corrected his mistake as expertly as a yachtsman at the tiller.

"Don't be silly," he said breezily, "she was just trying to help. You know old Alex-plonk-plonk-heavy-foot but heart of gold."

"Scotch?"

"Come on, Mary, don't cut Alex off just like that. She's a decent woman."

"You never liked her."

"That's not the point."

"What is?"

"She's a decent woman. When people are decent and serious—okay they make mistakes. But you can't just dismiss them if they blunder a bit."

"Don't be so pious!"

"Sorry."

"No you're not."

"I am. I am sorry, Mary, I am!"

"Are you?" The question was innocently voiced, her eyes were misty. The aggression had drained out of her tone as rapidly as it had invaded it. She stood in a corner of the room like a penitent. "I'm sorry," she said, sadly. "I must believe you."

"What about you, a Scotch?"

He got up, went across to the drinks, passing her on the way as she stood there still, self-consuming. Two Scotches, topped up with water, no ice; last drink before bed, an old habit, time for the final gossip, the idling chat, the laziness of not yielding to sleep, true intimacy.

They sat in their usual chairs.

"Cheers."

"Cheers."

And silence.

A silence which grew and he could not afford that, not in his old house, not with the cossetting dry air of the hot summer, not with the light so and the drinks, and his wounded wife before him, at bay.

"It's taken over," he said, with a heartiness he loathed, "hasn't it? Jim Martin was talking about it the other day at the *Statesman's* do. There's a shop he goes into to buy fags. 'Cheers,' says the fellow behind the counter when he goes in.



"Am I imagining it, Mildred, or was I once a cheeky little Cockney sparrow?"

Meaning—"Good morning." He asks for 20—Embassy or whatever—"Cheers," the chap says—or rather 'Chuss.' Meaning—"Yes, I'll get you those," and when he hands them over he says, 'Cheers,' (or Chuss). Meaning—"Here they are." 'Cheers' again meaning, 'Thank you,' when the money is handed over and 'Cheers,' when the change is given meaning, 'Here is your change and thank you again.' As he goes out, a final 'Chuss' meaning—"See you soon," or 'Good-bye,' or 'Have a good day'—take your pick!" He grinned at her, hoping the badly told story would at least give notice that he was perfectly willing to engage on one level but quite determined to stick to that level.

"Cheers," he added, very lamely, and took a big drink.

"Why are you here, then?" she asked, as ever going for the nerve of the matter.

The temptation to be nice was almost overwhelming: his wish to comfort her, his longing now to help salve the pain he had so much to do with; and he did love her.

"I was passing," he said, half-truthfully. Her stillness admonished him.

"I can't come this Sunday," he said. "So I came tonight."

"To see your daughter." Mary said the words slowly as if spelling them out to an uncomprehending listener.

"Yes," he confessed and felt simultaneously better and worse for the full truth being flushed into the open.

"She was asleep when I left," Mary said.

"She was sleeping lightly," he said. "I just went up to look at her but she woke up and we played a bit . . ."

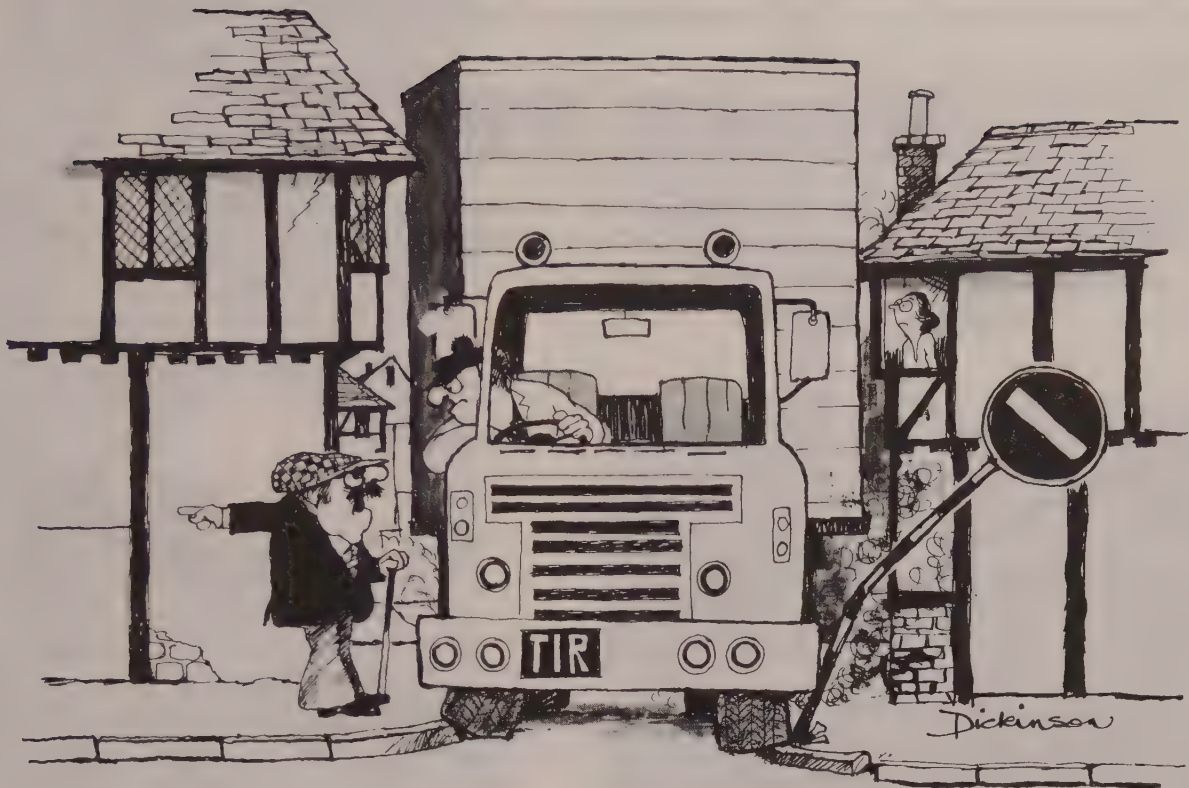
"You must have arrived just after I left," Mary continued. Her head was inclined downwards; she was intent; her line of thought was relentless.

"Yes." Dry throated, he finished the whisky but did not feel it would be right at this moment to get another. He had enough respect to obey that intuitive injunction but he longed for another drink and felt parched.

"Did you know at what time I was leaving?"

"Sort of."

She paused, puzzled at the prob-



"Smash the next lamp on the left, flatten the pavement by the pub, nudge the sweet shop, scrape the Market Cross, then just follow the skid marks to London."

lem for a moment, and then went forward. "You didn't watch me leave, did you? You weren't somewhere in the street watching as I left?"

He hesitated: but the issue now held the field and it could not be resisted.

"Yes," he said.

"Oh!" Her hand swept to her mouth to staunch the cry and she raised her head, and looked at him, waiting.

But he had nothing to add.

"It wasn't me then," she said, finally, wearily, driving in once again. "You came to see her, not me."

"I waited for you," he replied; it was some sort of comfort perhaps.

"You had to," she said, sweeping aside his protestation. "The babysitter had gone home. You had to."

He hesitated and then got up and poured himself another, stiffer, Scotch. He turned to her and she held out her empty glass.

"I'll take yours," she said. He made the exchange and sat down once more, wishing he was gone.

"You want to bugger off now, don't you?" Mary said, crudely.

"No, no, I . . ."

"Bugger off if you want to."

"I'll finish this drink."

"You're lucky to get it. The money you give is hardly enough to eat on. Alan and Sue bought me the Scotch."

"The money thing is the best I can do; it's difficult, Mary . . ."

"Oh—fuck off!"

The language did violence to her. She was so elegant, neat and careful, and the obscenities were a warning. He knew it well.

"I'll be off," he said, put down the glass only half drunk, and stood up, almost jaunty now that it was over.

She would not look up at him and he required to catch her eye before he left. He could not go without a glance from her—even a bitter one: the alternative appeared too dishonourable, a cowardly stealing away. But she would not look up, perhaps aware of the power this gave her.

"Mary," he called out gently. "Mary."

She did not answer nor did she look at him. He stood there, helpless. She began to sob, and drawn immediately, he went across, knelt

before her and looked into a face disfigured by distress.

"I'm sorry," she said, trying strenuously to subdue her weeping. "I'm sorry. Going on like this. Just—say goodnight and go—I'll be fine." She paused and gathered herself for a last throw. "Really—I'll be fine—just—go: just go."

But he could not go and they slid on to the floor, her weeping released now, her body clinging to him for some comfort, hope yet again rising above exhaustion. They made love there on the floor only half undressed, like guilty schoolchildren. To her "I love you" he made no response but he was kind and she knew he loved her, she said; he did not have to say so.

He left, after a nicely judged allotment of time. Mary went into the garden and sat down on the bare earth, where there should have been grass.

"Deep breath. Feeling better? Thaaaat's it."

Towards the morning she grew cold but stayed outside, watching the other houses, the few limp trees, the sky. It would be another fine day. Still no rain.

Following the tremendous advance-sales success of Dr Desmond Morris's *Manwatching* a PUNCH team of highly-trained psychiatrists, zoologists and other voyeurs are proud to present

PEOPLE PRYING

the first of a major investigative series of candid-camera profiles designed to increase mankind's knowledge of human behaviour and make us all very rich too. Now read on:



People who like to dress up in sheets and blow through long tubes: these are often known to the uninitiated as loonies but substantive research by our experts shows that they may well be Druids celebrating the Spring Equinox. Note the revealing footwear.



People who strap themselves to bedsteads: this is often a sign of exhaustion. Alternatively it may be a flying bedstead, in which case the passenger is merely following normal take-off security procedures.



People who type a lot while sitting on elephants: often extrovert in character (note the hat) they are probably trying to indicate a deeply felt desire for publicity. Few great novelists are believed to have created their best work in this situation.



People who shave other people with their toes: these are quite possibly not professional barbers at all, but foot-fetishists eager to come into the open at last.



People who wave at you through tube-train windows: these may very well be what we call "friendly" people. Alternatively, they may be trapped. Try calling for Guard. Alternatively, wave back.



People who talk to horses while dressed in the pyjamas: this may sometimes be the tell-tale sign of an early riser. The people concerned are often known as milord and get their photographs in *The Tatler*. Note that the horse is not wearing pyjamas. Unless they are flesh-colored.

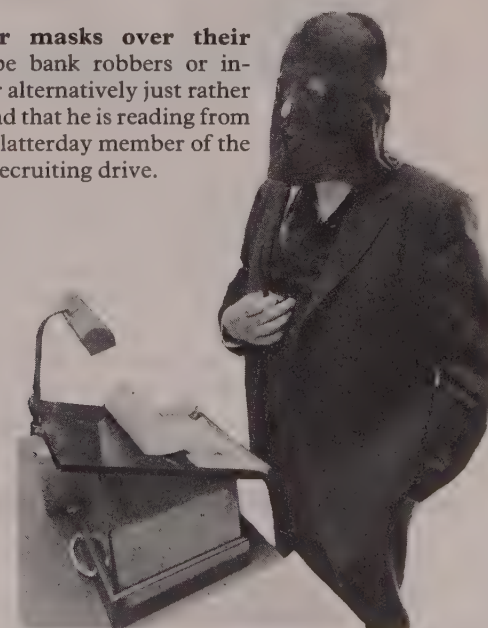


People who strap wings to their arms: this is known as the "Skytrain" phenomenon and is thought peculiar to 1977. Alternatively he may know something we don't.



People who sit in prams dressed as babies: sometimes an early indication of some sort of insecurity complex, this is a well-known device for signalling to the world that you wish to return to your childhood. Or that you'd quite like someone to push you about instead of having to wait at bus stops.

People who wear masks over their faces: these may be bank robbers or international rapists or alternatively just rather shy. Note the pipe and that he is reading from a lectern: possibly a latterday member of the Ku Klux Klan on a recruiting drive.



E. S. TURNER reveals

HOW FREDDY ("LUCKY") FIREBALL

Freddy Fireball had no business training, but he boasted a natural flair for money-making and a shrewd eye for a gamble. Some of his methods have been condemned as questionable, others as outrageous, but Fireball was essentially a man of his times.

As a rule Fortune smiled on him, as he himself admitted; when Adversity struck he was quick to turn it to his advantage. We shall not look on his like again . . . and many who were privileged to know him will say, "Thank God for that!"



Threatened by an armed burglar, Fireball threw him down the stairs and broke his leg. For this "unnecessary violence" the magistrates fined him £50. Indignant readers of newspapers (notably the *Daily Telegraph*) sent in money to pay his fine and Fireball made a profit of £278.00

He also gave a spirited interview to the BBC, which yielded 7.50

Soon afterwards a Miss Goodge, of Bournemouth, in recognition of his courage, left him 1,000.00

Inspired by something he read in the papers, Fireball put on a peasant's smock, attached a stuffed turkey to his head and obtained a "living sculpture" grant from the Arts Council of 250.00

To the dismay of his friends, Fireball began acting strangely and then vanished for a fortnight, leaving Russian travel literature on his desk, some coded diaries and an old Morse transmitter. When the newspapers reported that he had defected to Moscow, he returned from Bognor and served libel writs on them. This yielded out-of-court payments which, with costs, totalled 24,172.00

By wagering with his friends that he could find ten spelling mistakes in any menu card and 100 misprints in any newspaper, Fireball pocketed 451.00

For regularly sending extracts from *Guardian* arts reviews to "Pseuds' Corner", Fireball received 26.00

An unusual stroke of luck befell Fireball when a company in Canada instructed another company to pay him, for no reason that he could think of 40,000.00

Another notable break occurred when he entered a Job Centre and was offered an unskilled job editing a Fleet Street newspaper. He occupied the chair for three months, during which his salary amounted to 5,000.00

And his pay-off came to 25,000.00

For writing a margarine slogan of staggering banality, Fireball won a fortnight-for-two holiday in Bermuda, which was commuted to 576.00

ALL MADE £150,000 IN A YEAR

By apprehending a youth with a paint-gun, Fireball was able to obtain a reward offered for information leading to the conviction of persons defacing posters. This was more trouble than it was worth and yielded only	10.00
By selling one of his kidneys to an Arab, Fireball raised	15,000.00
By marrying a widow with a chain of launderettes—"anybody else could have done the same," he always maintained—Fireball obtained capital amounting to	20,000.00
By selling one of her kidneys to an Arab he obtained a further	15,000.00
By signing an article in the <i>News of the World</i> —"The Fiend Who Sold His Wife's Parts"—he earned	500.00
Finding a dead dormouse in a milk bottle, he received from the dairy company an <i>ex gratia</i> payment of	65.00
On receipt of an anonymous letter stating that Fireball's garage contained equipment for forging banknotes, the police arrested him and held him for two nights, during which they made a close study of his handwriting. As damages for wrongful arrest he received the "somewhat disappointing" sum of	36.75
For a Sunday newspaper article attacking the conduct of the police in this affair he was paid	150.00
For a BBC interview on the same subject he received	5.00



In the front garden of his sister's house at a holiday resort Fireball constructed an attractive Wishing

Well, into which the public hastened to throw its money. Splitting the receipts with his sister, he grossed	113.50
Finding a fingerstall embedded in a pizza, Fireball received an <i>ex gratia</i> payment from a restaurant of ..	50.00
For "shopping" his friends to gossip columnists at an average of £15 a time, and by tipping off a Sunday newspaper to a Suburb of Shame, he received	352.00
By wagering his friends that every radio news bulletin would contain the words "scattered showers" and "bright intervals" he received	75.00
It was too good to last. Run over by a brewer's lorry, Fireball received from his insurance company the following "less than adequate" sums:	
For the loss of a leg	1,000.00
For the loss of a portion of an arm	845.00
Fireball never really recovered from this setback, though with his remaining hand he was able to press the "returned coin" buttons on slot machines and public telephones, which netted him, in the face of severe competition	0.20
For seven days he carried protest placards outside Grunwick Laboratories, being paid	7.00
Death came suddenly. His last words were, "At least I never played the guitar in the Underground." His funeral grant amounted to the beggarly sum of ..	30.00
Total	£150,000.00

Guile- book for Tourists

AHARPY Ester to all our visitors to England wich welcomes some millions of toutists in 1987! We wish you a balmy sejour and some gai peaceful trips in our land. Yet you can find such a grand floss in our historique Britain, its pageants and hard old castles with tradition-moats, the spankling hubbub of the Metropole London and a beautiful man-mad parc-countryside with some merry old towns with their gabbled hotel-inns, it can boil your brain to guess which. Now we are marking some warnings and ensignments here, to put you on the right trick.

First some useful taps of Information.

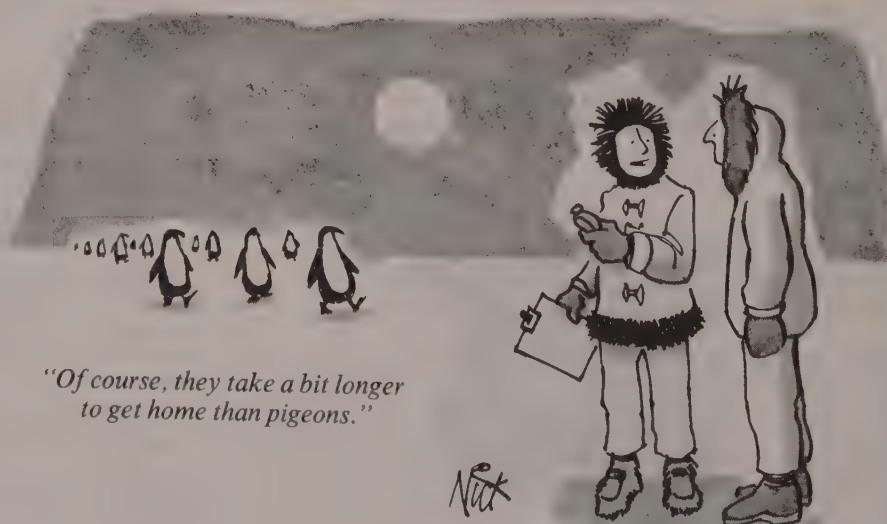
Food. You can forget that we are an insule where it is only some Windsor Sop Brawn, Meal & 2 Veg with a Wet Cabbage or Spotted Duck! That was ago! Now it has been studied in our land how to adventure the belly with some nice cooks, and you can inspect some lovely dashes in the *Good Fool Guide* of Ego Ronny. And you can choose the Natives; some big local like Teak and Kidney Padding, Aylesburg Dick, our famous Roasted Beef with Yorkshire (also a famous ham from there) or the kippers, Hearing and Smoked Blotters from Norfolk which come from our touching seas fresh all round; and there are some noble very old cheese which you

cannot find in the globe—Stilton, Wesleydale, Gloucester. Yet also a cosmopolite fare is spread through the country shirks, even in a far region you can find a Chinese to take away, or an Italian will nod and smile. In the cities Indian, Greek and Allsorts.

Tramsport. British Air can twisk you in a giants hope to Edinbourg, the lovely Harris Hebride and many smiling regions.

British Rail is a grand network, it is a radiant webb from London where you can inter Cities as Liverpool or Manchester in less time. If it is far you can nod your head on an elegant bank as you sleep to John O Groots or Penzance, where the Corn Wall is a stone arm in the Atlantic which dash its sprat at Lands end.

Or the best is to take the location of a car, then you can make a free and nice idle rooming through the dazy villages and our rolling landes with its boshy trees and hedge rows and the church wich nestle there, always a new dart to your eyes as you go round the bend! You can take your cat to the little A and B routes by some grand links, our motorway chain (M) like a vast concrete skeleton. Some hint! You must fare on the left. At a roundabout (traffic-insel) you must attend to the Gentleman on your right. Some striped poles in the road means Walker and you must stopp (Halt) for him.



"Of course, they take a bit longer to get home than pigeons."

Nick



"He says he's walked a million miles for one of your smiles, Milady."

Telephone. It takes real money (not a bit), 2p or 10p. You must dial the wished number but when you hear *bip bip* you must push it in too rapidly or you will lose your person! You cannot get it back, but bespeak the 100 Operators and state it "the box has swallowed my coin but availed not, please to connect."

So now you are ready to explode all our joys as you begin your vacancies. But a memory! In this year it has started with a very soon Faster Holiday, still in March, therefore you must have a great thought for your cloth in the weather wick can change. Sometimes it can have some smiling sunbeams in England when the crocus and Doffadils perk out of the grass, you can walk in the breeze with no coal. But also it can blow and snot and the air will be to fresh for your visit if you carry not some stout wool vests, it can even in May, our poet (the Bird) wrote, "rough winds to shake the darting bugs of May"! So we have averted you.

Now it is prepared to show you a functions-guide of the grand frivolous jumps wick you can make when England comes to its new season.

In London himself you shall see a famous old event on Eater Saturday. It is the Boot Race. On many days

you can see a "liquid history" from "Old Fatter Thames" as it glide "at its own sweet wall" like a silver button throught our capital; Hampton Court, some very fine Matted bricks of Elizabethan with Royal Departments and Amaze, then the bulging flores-garden at Kew, with some lively exotic petals in dashed phantasmagory of Nature in some hot bloomhouses, and under some noted bridges to Westminster, the Grandmother of Democrace and Tower Bridge, past the tumbling warehouses and commerce-banks of the City, Isle of Dog and Duckland till it come the to Sea; but there is only one day for its Boatrace.

It is a traditional Battle of Blues between Cambridge (light) and Oxford (Dank), a very stuff race in some little elegant boots (shells) with 8 oarmen, from Puntey to Mortlake. They are a cream, it is browny lads who have trained "to a hair" for such a marine straggle. It is an English folklore that many thousands spectators who have not been at at *any* Varsite are on the twopath and shout for Oxford or Cambridge with a grand enthusiasm.

On Easter Sunday it is a tradition for new bonnetts, also horses! You can see a lovely jangle at the Harness

Parade in Regentparc (9 a.m. Monday). More peoples Larks in a parade at Buttersea Park, with some traditional cries of "Watcher Cock" and "Gorblime" and some cocqney Pearl Kings and Queens with a million little buttons, very typical.

You must know also Britain invented Steam and is preserving it with a grand old love. It is not far from London! At Quanton Bucks and Didcat Benks you will see the Preserving Societies which have buffed up their grand puffing loco motives with a splendid oil and paint, now they have got the steam up in their broilers which will chuff with a grand belch of nostalgic smoke for some excursions down a little line half a mite.

Other great Sports is Grand, National, it is the most famous Jumping Horse (Steeple) race in the world, on follower Saturday at Aintree Liverpool. It is strewed with Hardles like Tottenham Corner and Belcher's Brook, a stern trial where many favourites, even Irish have tottered, so a "outrider" can win you some Gold. It is a hearty race to see if you are there, but you can always place a bit with a bootmaker in London. Good Chance, and Wellcome to Britain!



Last year *The Father Christmas Letters*, next month *The Silmarillion*—how much of the late J. R. R. Tolkien's work can still be published, asks JONATHAN SALE?

THIS ONE WILL RUNE AND RUNE

The Nasty Gollum Cookbook

Tolkien had many aversions in the way of food, recalls his son Christopher, and would certainly have conceived of his wicked characters as lapping up what he found distasteful. If you want to have your own Evil Feast of the Caves of Mordor, here are full details of how to prepare and serve wet, raw fish, rotten cabbages and garlic ice-cream. Illustrated by some never before seen drawings in blue Biro from the front of Tolkien's address-book.
£5.50.

The Gandalf the Wizard Cookbook

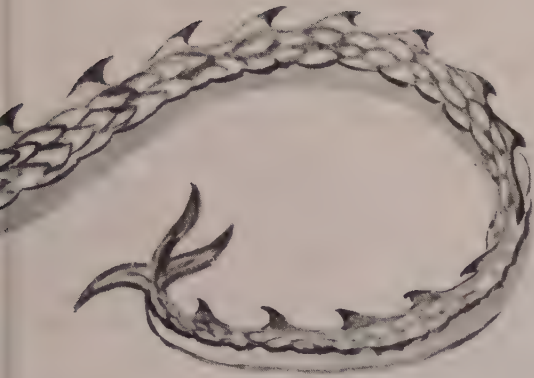
Some of Tolkien's favourite foods are described in a passage of *The Lord of the Rings* that was lost in the post. His son Christopher discovered a copy in the attic recently, and so is able to bring to you recipes that brought enjoyment to wizards everywhere. These include the dish of which Gandalf says: "Then Men of Middle-earth are wont to take what they call *wonderloaf* and sing one of its magic slices with fire from the Mountains of Mordor, or any apparatus from your nearest Wizards' showroom. To this they add what the dwarves term *flora*, and are ready to take on a Dark Rider or two without any trouble at all."

Loose-leaf, £3.75. Fully illustrated.

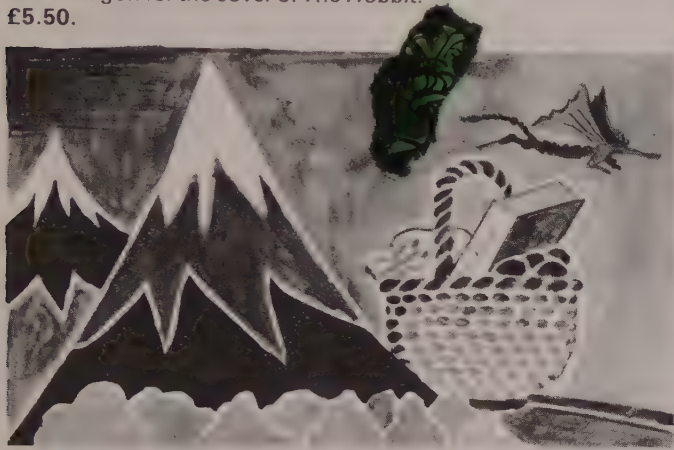


The Bilbo Baggins Shopping List

When careful scrutiny of his larder showed him that the time was at last ripe, Tolkien would set off on his epic quest to the supermarket. This resulted in a considerable literary output, and his son Christopher has pieced together hundreds of lists beginning "Cornflakes, bread, marge" to make a moving saga of an elf's search for



provisions. Illustrated by the author's rough draft of a mountain-top and a dragon for the cover of *The Hobbit*.
£5.50.



The Tolkien Memorial Railway Timetable

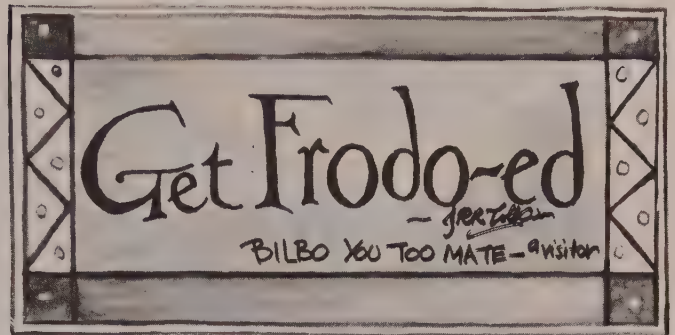
One day forty years ago one of the race of Men from the South Middling Shires left his house in the land that they call Middle-oxford and set off on a quest that led to untold riches and wealth that was his by right. In his hand he clutched the runes that would, so he hoped, ward off the evil spirits of poverty and obscurity; but alas, when he reached the Lords of Bloomsbury, they in their blindness did not perceive the virtues of *The Silmarillion*, so he returned on the next train. After many a tall tree had fallen to make paper for *The Lord of the Rings*, the men of Bloomsbury saw that they had erred, and clasped *The Silmarillion* to themselves. Alas, by this time it was too late for Tolkien, and the hardback royalties, paperback rights, overseas sales and other things of which he had dreamed went to the Tolkien estate. In conjunction with British Rail, we present the timetable of the ill-fated journey, including details of buffet car and all stops on route in both directions. Illustrated by map from *The Hobbit*, including Old Forest Road, Goblinsgate and Desolation of Smaug. 4 pages.

£6.80. T-shirt, £4.50.

The Sam Gamgee Book of Curses

Before he went into hiding in a place known only to his secretary, Tolkien was at war with the Many who came to ask about his books. To deceive them, he would leave on his front door many mystic runes to ward off importunate enquiries, such as "On holiday", "Not known at this Address", "Why don't you just Bilbo off?" and "Get

Frodo-ed". These have been preserved by his son Christopher, together with certain additions to the original runes made by disappointed fans, and reproduced actual size on stiff board coloured the exact hue of Tolkien's front door. They are ideal for hanging outside any room into which you desire no further entrants. £4.50. Tea-cloth, £3.20.



Son of Sam Gamgee Book of Curses

As well as the Many who came to trouble him, Tolkien had to ward off the advances of the One who sought to remove from him much of the wealth won during his lifetime. Tolkien's struggle against the forces of the Taxman makes gripping reading, as portrayed in the correspondence between the two, the sacred returns and the cheque stubs that signify battles lost by the elderly writer. It is not just a tale of defeats; the epistle in which the Enemy concedes that the four quire of quarto paper are tax deductible brings joy to all real lovers of elves, and makes this more than just another adult fairy story.

£1.20 paperback only

Letters to My Son

Tolkien was a very private person, and his son Christopher has no wish to make public such letters between father and son that have not already appeared as Book of the Month Club selections. However, he would like to bring to a wider readership some parts of the letters which do not betray any family secrets, that is, the envelopes, and this lavishly produced full-colour book is an unrivalled compendium of postmarks, addresses, stamps and addendum of a scholarly nature, such as "Please Forward". This is produced in a limited edition of 400,000, each one numbered and signed by a member of the Tolkien family.

£54. Bicycle pennant version, £51 for set of three

Tolkien Film Script

At the bottom of a cupboard in the house next door, an original Tolkien film, featuring the author himself, was discovered. As Ken Russell writes in a moving Forward, it seems that the man next door was capturing on film the glories of his daughter's fourth birthday party, when there appeared the knees of the elderly author, who was hunting for a sheet of his notes on the family tree of Ugluk the Orc. The full text of what would have been the conversation had a tape-recorder been running is here reproduced for the first time, with many stills of Tolkien's first and last screen appearance.

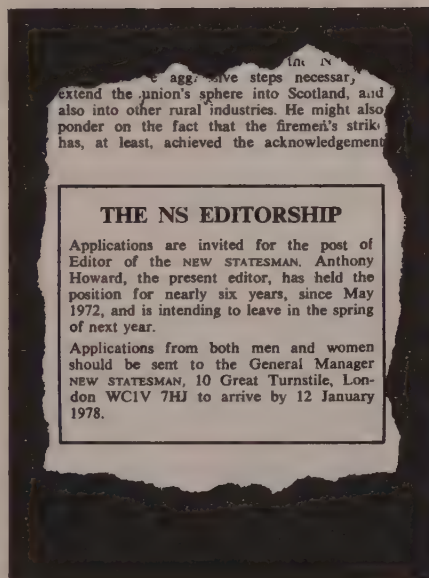
£9

Book Tolkiens

Bearing a tasteful doodle of a dreaded Balrog beating the hell out of Gandalf, the Wizard, these cards, value £2.50, £5, £7.50 and £10, are an ideal present. They can be exchanged at a bookshop for a real book by a real author.

Chatsworth,
Derbyshire
11th January 1978

After the Staggers



DEAR Whoever It May, as they say, Concern!

You must think me an utter prune writing to you *absolutely* out of the blue like this, particularly on such a blush-making shade of lilac paper embossed with the ducal coronet, but my husband Dickie is *quite* fanatical about his boring old shooting, and one has once again been *dragged* along. I am told our hostess, Debo Devonshire, has a mildly Left-wing sister—I think she may be called Jessica—but one hasn't dared mention it for fear of being thought a harbinger of Reds under the Bed, something Dickie himself has rather tended to go on about over the years.

The thing is, would I do?

What *emboldened* me, as Dickie's dirty uncle Horace always used to say—I don't know whether you ever met him but he was the *most* frightful pouncer in taxis, particularly on one—was the phrase “applications from both men *and* women.” Gosh, you are good. How many papers can one think of, in these grisly unisex days of Equal Opportunities and all the balls and blather one reads about having to be sexually indiscriminating, that would actually take the trouble to make one feel *really* feminine? I suppose that's what one's always so adored about the New Staggers: a sort of cosy old-fashioned respect for the things that matter.

Is there *any* chance, do you think, of one's having a crack at editing the Mag? A few years ago, of course, it would have been out of the question: one obviously adored having the children, but somehow one was always talking to nannies and boarding schools and one never seemed to have a second to oneself. Now they're off one's hands, so so speak, there does seem to be so much more time: friends, very *close* friends especially, are always on at one to get a job or do *something*, and having a little paper to edit did strike one as being *just* what the doctor ordered.

God knows, one cares enough about the issues of the day, as do, obviously, your *tremendously* talented team of writers, from the tough and jolly courageous political comment at the front to whoever it is

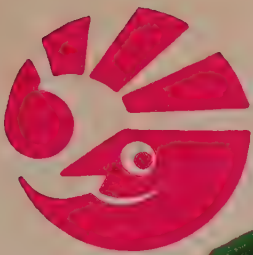
compiles those columns of *heart rending* appeals from lonely upper middle class intellectuals at the back. What is more—and this does seem to me essential for anyone, man or woman, who is going to take on a responsible job, which editing the *New Statesman* is, whatever people may say about the Sunday papers eroding its circulation, it's still enormously influential, particularly with people like oneself—one *is* in a position, though one dreads to blow one's own trumpet, to influence events in one's own tiny way.

Only the other night, to give you a case in point, I found myself having dinner next to the Persian Ambassador, *the* most divine little man with very pretty eyes, and, my dear, one absolutely *flew* at him over the caviar. I think he'd brought it himself, and it was quite delicious, per-

fully complemented by the Puligny trachet, enormous glinting Sil globules so delicate they broke perceptibly between the teeth, like sucking dried flakes of sea-salt from a fisherman's armpit, and yet one couldn't allow oneself to be gagged. One went doggedly on, through the *Filet de Boeuf en Croûte* with quite a good Latour to the *Crêpes Suzette* and Yquem, until one was absolutely convinced to one's own satisfaction that all the stories of the Shah's political opponents being tortured and starved to death were, as he finally confessed, “very exaggerated.”

Now I realise that there's more to being editor of the *New Statesman* than that, although I've often seen both my — dare I say it — predecessors—there, I have—putting in very noble work at some jolly stuffy dinner parties. She must, clearly, have a real rapport with her contributors. And here again, I suppose, one is in a privileged position: I can't think of a single regular contributor to the Staggers, with the possible exception of Mr Arthur Marshall, who is, I am told, rather *outré* in his more-proletarian-than-thou attitude, that I haven't got to know socially, and in some cases *intimately*.

I've always found them quite enchanting, thoughtful and well-mannered, always telling one *fascinating* bits of gossip about the inner working of the Labour Party, and I've come to feel over the years that I'm someone with whom they



WALL STREET HAS
COLLAPSED GROBWEIL.
WHEN YOU'VE FINISHED
THE SILVER, JUMP OUT
OF THE WINDOW.

albert



**“Listen to this! For only
ten pounds I can have my name
in the Directory of Confidence
Trick Victims!”**



know they can really let their back hair down and spill the beans.

There is of course the hurdle of what is called a Strong Editorial Line—I don't mean insisting on them handing in their work on time: I've always assumed that Tony and Paul (Johnson) had some sort of Hudson figure behind the green baize door who did the badgering on that—and when I was talking to my hairdresser about it, that aspect did preoccupy us for some time. He had *marvellous* ideas for bringing it closer to the ordinary man and woman in the street by giving it a sort of *Woman's Realm* coloured cover with perhaps a picture of Audrey Callaghan in a chunky-knit sweater on the front, but the Strong Editorial line problem stumped us.

And then, you know, it suddenly struck me under the drier that perhaps a Strong Editorial Line *may* in the past have been more trouble than it was worth. I remember when Tony H. suddenly took one and attacked little Wilson everyone thought he'd either gone mad or was making a last-ditch attempt to increase the circulation, and Paul J.'s campaign to get readers to follow his example and have their buttons sewn on after the Grosvenor Square riots by waiters at the Ritz never seemed to catch on somehow, simply because the average Staggers reader couldn't afford it, even then, when the double Christmas Issue didn't cost ten bob.

Indeed, it occurs to me that the economic factor might, after all, be one's strongest card. I agree the Gay Hussar is one of the best restaurants in London, if not in the world, but for editorial lunches wouldn't it make more sense financially if you were to let Paolo and Francesca rustle you something up *chez nous* in Eaton Square? If it's too far from Great Turnstile, why not move over lock, stock and barrel? There's masses of room, and I think we could probably run to fresh flowers beside every typewriter and someone to change the ashtrays. And of course there is always Keepings for the week-ends. I know Dickie's shooting friends would be tickled pink. Is my proposal too *crassly* revolutionary? What I'm offering, I suppose, is somewhere where you all would feel at home.

As always.

Flora Glossop.



Humphreys

"Instead of waiting until we get to the Silvesters, why don't you turn on your old charm right now?"



"I suppose I ought to feel ashamed of myself. I'm into every permissive deviation that's come along but I simply can't dig this paedophilia thing."

Three Men on a

In which DAVID TAYLOR views the prospect of a present-day excursion in the company of Jerome K. Jerome . . .



THERE were four of us—George, and William Samuel Harris, and myself, and Montmorency. We were sitting in my room, guiltily smoking NSM, and talking about hyper-tensive stress and fats in the blood and I'd been reading a travel agent's leaflet on immunisation against smallpox, cholera, yellow fever and typhoid with tetanus. Harris was convinced he'd already got the lot, Montmorency was languid at the thought of quarantine and, in short, we all of us felt pretty seedy.

We were wondering whether as a group we might qualify for a go-as-you-please, off-season, advance-booking, affinity-group charter which would give us a very sizeable reduction on the normal economy return fare to some half-forgotten nook, out of reach of the noisy world, from whence the surging waves of the twentieth century would sound far-off and faint, where we could explore an exotic parameter or two from our own self-catering chalet, then do some shopping in an old quarter or relax in the year-round sunshine after a taste of Creole cooking washed down with the local rosé.

Harris said: "How about if it rains?"

You never can rouse Harris. There is no poetry about Harris—no wild yearning for a fortnight exploring some of Europe's most vividly historic cities or unspoilt countryside from the comfort of your own unlimited-mileage Simca or other fine car. Harris never "weeps, he knows not why" at the prospect of Sorrento, or Ibiza or the splendours of the Costa del Sol. If Harris's eyes fill with tears, you can bet it is because Harris has been eating raw *salade des fruits de mer*, or has put too much Worcester on his paella-for-one. Harris announced he would rather go touring by bus. I said it sounded bumpy. And George said the only way to settle it was to adjourn and ask the wives.

THERE were ten of us assembled on the platform—George, George's Mrs and his brother-in-law, George's daughter by his first marriage, Harris and "Mrs Harris" as he liked to call his new stenographer, the stenographer's sister who had come along in case George changed his affections, myself, my aunt who had turned up at the last minute,

and Montmorency. The others were to meet us on the train.

There seemed a good deal of luggage when we put it all together. There was the Gladstone and the small hand-bag, the set of matching cases George had bought from the Saturday Mart pages, the snap-lock valise he'd got for paying within seven days, my rucksack and its aluminium frame, a roll of rugs, nine overcoats, quite a few umbrellas, two pounds of grapes in a Snap 'n' Wrap bag, shrimp nets (five at the latest count), an airline bag full of in-flight magazines, and the pram. Harris said we would have to pay excess. George said since it was all bound to finish up in Thailand or San Francisco soon enough we should all just take what we needed, by hand, and leave the rest to chance. Montmorency was packed in a tin, though no-one was quite sure which. The idea was to give him to the guard, *en route*, with instructions that he should be forwarded to the Dog's Hotel in Bognor, pending our return. As it turned out, the Dog's Home got a six-pound Battenburg through the post next day and Montmorency narrowly missed being consumed by Harris for his tea.

After a wearisome night at Victoria, the industrial dispute was settled and we embarked the next day in good spirits for the Dordogne.

HARRIS was of the opinion that Zlatni Pyassatsi had more than likely got the edge on the Dordogne and it was up to all of



Package Holiday



us to pull ourselves together and try to make the most of it after a simple misunderstanding which anyone could make. It was probably a fact that the Dordogne was in any case full at this time of year, and was certainly plagued by mosquitoes big as sparrows on the wing.

But still his stenographer wept. All that we could get out of her, in between sobs, was that she had already been to the Black Sea resorts, year before last when she'd booked to Malta, and had been bilious for a fortnight after it. The wretched girl was inconsolable. George was despatched to search the town for an English pub.

The banjo had been all but destroyed in transit and it was my opinion that its repair should be our first priority, to keep our spirits up. My aunt disagreed. She had come all this way to practise her German, so she insisted. Harris's brother-in-law had contrived to contract enteritis from drinking untreated shandy, two of his family wanted to bathe without delay, the stenographer's sister was missing, presumed dead, and the fourteen Germans who had joined us for a jar were high on the list of suspects along with some shifty-looking French, a party of Turkish

embalmers and our Bulgar guide who put us in mind of no-one so much as Montmorency.

In the event the tension was eased at least a bit when we were taken for a small glass of schnapps on the house and promised a boat was to be made available early the next day.

MY own idea, on first catching sight of *The Pride of the Danube*, was that it was a Byzantine relic of some sort, possibly an early sort of coffin or primitive tool. We appealed to its owner not to be shy but to speak the plain truth—was it the hollowed-out carcass of a pre-Adamite whale, a pre-glacial costermonger's anvil or what? He said it was *The Pride of the Danube* and Harris gave him twopence for his wit. The fellow was vexed at this and remonstrated with Harris that at the current rate of exchange twopence would not buy him half a maggot for his line. Since he was charging us a midsummer excess rate of US\$200 an hour for the hire of this wreck which we could have bought outright for a bar of chocolate at any sale of driftwood around the coast, Harris thought this a bit thick, and said so.

We are all of us planning to come back specially for the trial.

AFTER an unforgettable fourteen days, spoiled only by unseasonable incessant sleet, our depleted party arrived back at Prestwick and, after the fog had lifted, pressed on homewards to Luton by way of Rotterdam. From there it was but six short hours by bus to London and a capital little restaurant where we partook of a hearty supper. I must confess to relishing that meal. We seemed to have been living for the past fortnight only on fish fingers and chips, roast beef and carrots, toad-in-the-hole and such continental delights that it was a pleasure to get back home to tagliatelle and terrine de campagne, to proper home-cooked bortsch and filet Dijon. We pegged and quaffed away in silence for a while until the time came for us to loll back and rest our glasses at arm's length upon the table, feeling good, and thoughtful, and forgiving.

Next year, said George, we could all go touring by caravan. Harris, had he been with us, would have spat.

THE NEW PENSION.

Something worth worrying about.

It's quite true that millions of people are receiving a shabby pension today.

But if you hang on until A.D. 2020 it will be a different story.

Then you will get two pensions: a basic retirement pension and a second pension based on your twenty best years.

And that could mean your twenty best years on the dole!

No other Government has dared to offer a deal like this.

How can we do it?

How can we possibly plan for conditions forty years hence, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer lives from week to week?

Well, we're not fools in this Department, you know. We have computers. We have crystal balls.

And we have Mr David Ennals.

The Opposition

The Opposition have promised not to scrap this scheme if they achieve power. Our advice: for peace of mind, use your vote carefully.

Inflation

Your pension will be fully protected against inflation. This means that a 16-year-old, starting work this year, could receive in 49 years' time a pension of £250,000, which is what it is costing us to explain this scheme.

World War Three

In the event of Russia over-running the West during the next forty years, your contributions would be shipped to Canada and paid over to you as soon as conditions allowed. They

would continue to attract interest.

In the event of the West over-running Russia, your pension would be increased beyond your wildest dreams.

Rabies and Black Death

The scheme is epidemic-linked, which means that survivors will benefit in direct proportion to casualties inflicted. What could be fairer?

Contracting Out

Yes, you can contract out of the State scheme and arrange for a pension under private enterprise. But you don't really expect the private insurance sector to survive, do you?

If you are self-employed

You are not included in the new scheme and will get the lowest basic pension that Government actuaries can devise. It is all you deserve. You will, of course, pay increased contributions from time to time.

If you already draw a pension

The scheme doesn't affect you. You have had it. Is that clear?

Big deal for women

Women will continue to receive their pensions at 60, although they live longer than men, who must wait until 65. The Department has carefully considered this apparent anomaly and has come up with a piece of constructive advice for men: try to live a little longer.

Resentment

The new pension plan is likely to breed resentment among elderly people, when they see the young getting all the breaks. But that's life, isn't it?

Remember that, in general, life will

become more fun as the wingeing old die off.

To find out more

Many of the details of the new pension scheme are too controversial to be printed here.

If, after careful consideration, you really wish to know more, fill in the form below.

Please send me leaflet NP.34 telling me how my pension can be inflated by redundancy payments received by me for striking, and what pension I get if my "twenty best years" are spent in gaol; also, what is the name of the squirrel in the corner of this coupon.

Mr., Mrs., Miss

Address

.....

.....

.....



NEW PENSIONS:
A Load of Nuts

When you and I were buddies on the side-walks of New York

"New York police, who pride themselves on being the world's toughest cops, will soon be recruiting homosexuals. New mayor Edward Koch marked his first day in office by drawing up a gay rights charter which makes it illegal to discriminate against them in hiring police and firemen."

Daily Mail

AT 7.04 am, a rim of winter sun touched the leafless trees in Central Park. By 7.12, it had edged the cold stone bridge with orange. By 7.16, it had begun to colour the body that lay on the bridge. The orange came from the sun. The red came from somewhere else.

It was a morning jogger who called the cops. When the black-and-white wailed up at 7.23, the jogger was leaning over the parapet of the bridge, retching. The two cops got out and looked at him.

"Oh my God!" muttered Patrolman Kowalski. "He's going to ruin that tracksuit!"

They minced quickly across. Patrolman Vidal helped the jogger upright, gently.

"It's horrible," said the jogger. He was middle-aged, paunchy, grey-faced. "It's the most horrible thing I ever saw."

"It's not so bad," said Kowalski. "I know this really terrific hand-laundry on the corner of Lexington and 44th, they can do miracles. All the guys go there. Cottons, man-mades, even silks, they can bring them right up like new. Am I right, Jerome?"

"Ask for Cheryl," said Vidal to the jogger. "He's very tall, kind of willowy, but with these big capable hands. I got muscatel on this kimono I had one time, I thought it would kill me, but Cheryl got right to work..."

"I mean the corpse," croaked the jogger. He pointed, waveringly.

"I know what you mean," said Kowalski. "A canary coat with damson pants, he looks like some kinda cheap dessert."

"The back of his head," said the jogger, "it's shot away."

"You haven't touched anything?" said Patrolman Vidal.

"Of course not."

"Don't be offended," said Kowalski. "Some guys are very freaky for cadavers. We had a lieutenant in our precinct one time, he always came to station stag nights in white pancake and a shroud. I couldn't relate to him at all. Nor could Jerome."

"He could tango like there was no tomorrow," said Vidal, "but his neck always smelled of formaldehyde. It was really, you know, weird. Like it was some kinda deliberate turn-off."

"I think he was a closet straight," said Kowalski, picking a strand of thread that had caught in Vidal's badge and was blowing in the keen morning wind. "I heard he got married after he transferred to Yonkers."

"Look, I don't want to put my, you know, where it's not wanted, but don't you think you ought to report this?" said the jogger.

"Oh my God," sighed Vidal, "it's rush-rush-rush day, everyone! Next thing you're gonna be telling us you're a taxpayer, right?"

He trotted delicately back to the patrol car, snatched up the dash-mike.

"Car 64, Patrolman Vidal here, we have a 286 in the park, possible... oh, hi, Bruce! I didn't recognise your voice, you're so *throaty* sometimes, did you manage to get bean sprouts? Oh, hey, that's really terrific, Maurice and I can pick up the lychees on the way back. What? Yeah, a dead one, took it in the head. Oh, come on, Bruce, lousy old jokes is the last thing I need this time in the morning! What? I don't know, I haven't turned him over, I'll ask Maurice." He leaned back out of the car window. "Hey, Maurice, what does he look like?"

"It's not too easy to say, with half a head and all," called Kowalski, who was kneeling by the body, "but he's kind of the Burt Reynolds type."

"Jesus!" muttered Vidal. "Maurice says he reminds him of Burt Reynolds, Bruce. Bruce? Oh my God, Brucie, don't do one of your weepie numbers on me, listen, the guy was wearing a canary jacket with purple pants, you'd have *hated* him. Also, he was wearing sneakers, a real schlock, even this straight jogger threw up. You wanna send Homicide over now? Great! What? Oh, come on, Brucie, not over the line, there could be people listening, anyway the park is filling up, there's folks all around. Sure I do, Bruce. No, really, I mean it. Ten four."

At 7.58, a lilac convertible purred up to the bridge. Two detectives got out. Their cheeks were crimson with cold. Their ears glowed.

"You took your time," said Kowalski, consulting the wafer-thin Patek Philippe fob-watch that hung, its tiny baguettes twinkling, just below his badge.

The lieutenant took a step for-

ward, so that his jutted jaw was a millimetre from the patrolman's nose. He was half a head taller, and twice as wide in the shoulder. From these shoulders, his oblong head rose neckless, like a bristled rock.

"Where do you get off criticising me, you bitch!" he shrieked.

"Easy, Lewis," murmured his sergeant, "everyone's looking."

The lieutenant glanced quickly around, flashed his gold bridgework, shot his jade cufflinks, tossed his bullet-head.

"We came via Harlem," explained the sergeant to Kowalski. "We had the top down, we thought we'd cruise a little, Lewis is very into blacks right now."

"I like the new paint job," said Kowalski.

The lieutenant, who had walked a little way off and, arms furiously folded, been tapping his crocodile-shod foot, now turned, mollified.

"Thank you, Maurice," he said. He smiled. "You don't think the leopardskin is maybe a little *outré*?"

"I think you can get away with it, sir," said Kowalski. "I mean, very, very few people could get away with it, but you, no problem."

"Well, thank you, Maurice. Don't call me sir. You have really terrific taste, I've noticed that before. Hasn't Maurice got really terrific taste, Bernard?"

The sergeant stared smoulderingly at the lieutenant.

"I don't see where it's so goddam terrific," he muttered. "You wouldn't catch me dead in black barathea. I think you're getting to be a uniform freak in your old age, Lewis."

"I didn't *choose* this lousy outfit, Bernard!" snapped Kowalski. "It's my dream to go plain clothes. I have this marvellous imported cashmere poncho from Saks Fifth Avenue, I've been just dying to wear it to work, it has the terrific added advantage of where you can draw and fire from under it, not to mention where the holster doesn't ruin the line of your suit in the first place, it could be *very* big."

"I think that's a wonderful idea, Maurice!" cried the lieutenant. "We could *all* have them, it could sweep the entire NYPD, don't you think that's a wonderful idea, Bernard?"

"What I think," said the sergeant, "is that some of us might be just a *teeny* bit, well, bulky for it, mightn't we, Lewis?"

"I don't think Lewis bulky at all," cried Kowalski. "He's big, yes, but he can carry it. He has the walk. I am reminded of Broderick Crawford."

The lieutenant looked at him.

"I had no idea you wanted to go into the plain clothes squad, Maurice," he said. "You should have

said."

"I flunked my orals," said Kowalski.

They looked at him for a while. A lark rose, busily, across the bridge.

The lieutenant cleared his throat.

"Anytime you want to become a detective, Maurice," he said, "you give me a call, okay?"

They were still smiling into one another's eyes when the jogger came up to them.

"Look," he shouted, "what are you gonna do about this goddam corpse, I am waiting to give a statement, I am freezing my butt off here, I ought to be taking a shower, your muscles can lock solid, I ought to be at Schlumkiss, Schlumkiss, Terwillikin & Schlumkiss, I am a taxpayer in this lousy . . ."

"Who," murmured the lieutenant, "is the little creep in the drecky ready-to-wear?"

"He found the body, sir, I mean Lewis," said Kowalski. "I told him to take the tracksuit to Cheryl."

"You did good, Maurice," said the lieutenant. "Personally, I would take it to the garbage chute, but *chacun à son moutons, n'est-ce pas?*"

"My God, you speak French!" cried Kowalski.

"*Un petit peu,*" said the lieutenant.

"That's wonderful," said Kowalski, "you wouldn't believe how embarrassed I get when Jerome tries to order sometimes. Do you know that truly marvellous new little Basque restaurant on 54th Street, they have a way of folding the escargots in a . . ."

"ARE YOU GOING TO TAKE A STATEMENT FROM ME OR ARE YOU NOT?" screamed the jogger.

"Oh, for goodness sake!" exclaimed the lieutenant, rolling his piggy eyes upwards. "What is this life, if full of care etcetera, baby?"

"I guess you ought to take a look at the body, Lewis," murmured Kowalski.

"Okay, Maurice, but just for you, I want to make that absolutely clear." He glanced over the jogger's agitated head, towards the bridge. "Oh, yeah, why looky here, it's a stiff!"

"Aren't you gonna go any closer?" shouted the jogger.

"What are you, crazy or something?" snapped the lieutenant. "I have enough trouble sleeping nights





without going right up to people, they have their lousy head shot away!"

"You have trouble sleeping?" enquired Kowalski. "You look so, I don't know, *secure*. I'd never have guessed."

"I had a bad week, Maurice," said the lieutenant. "We had this kid holed up in a liquor store, we had to rush him, I broke my heel."

Kowalski was still commiserating when Patrolman Vidal came up. He glared at his colleague.

"Just in case you hadn't noticed, Maurice," he muttered, "this is one of my Looks!"

"I'm sorry to have left it all to you, Jerome," said Kowalski, "I was talking to the lieutenant."

"I noticed."

"Don't be that way, Jerome. It isn't like you. Did you find anything on the body?"

Vidal sniggered.

"I thought you'd never ask."

"I don't like you when you simmer, Jerome," said Kowalski. "Did you identify the victim?"

Vidal shook his head.

"Nothing on him," he said, "except this locket."

Kowalski took the little golden heart.

"Open it," said Vidal.

"Oh my God!" cried Kowalski, staring.

"What is it, Maurice?" asked the lieutenant.

Kowalski caught his breath, held out the dangling locket.

"It's—it's a picture of you, Lewis," he stammered.

The lieutenant gasped. He staggered. He clutched the lilac convertible for support. But he was a cop, and a good one. He bit his lip. He recovered. He removed his grey fedora.

"Take your hats off, boys," he muttered. "They shot the Commissioner."



"It's always the same—when you need a matchseller you can never find one!"

AND IT CAME TO PASS that *The Age of Absurdity* passed and Our Lord Quark of *Trivialisation* went forth with his followers, *Bronowski and Hutch* and *Urbanity*, into the wilderness of syndication on foreign TV.

THEN SAID THEY who were left behind and were so sorely tried that they smote their schedules and rent their ratings asunder: Who shall follow these men to light our evenings? Where is he who was promised unto us to lead us poor sinners to the Heights of Jictar and is called by men: *The Pundit*?

AND LO, there came a still voice, saying: *No conferring, please. Ten seconds left to answer: Who is the best-known, tousle-haired liberal humanist of his age, a sage of charm and great agility of mind, whose name is such that, though men may not pronounce it, yet they know that it is to them that he speaks, yea, though they know not whereof he is talking about half the time?*

AND THE ELDERS turned to one another, and said: If it's the one who looks like a panel-pin in bifocals, he's expensive. Still, what's to lose? Bimbo Gaslamp looks good on the credits. Send him round the world and we'll see what breaks.



THE TEACHER

The Atheists

A 49-part documentary filmed into the sun in 322 countries which gives a movingly descriptive account of the quest by a well-known, tousled-haired, liberal humanist, who knows everything from the capital of

Bangkok to the square root of a rhombus, as he goes in search of the impact and influence of pagans and infidels over almost two thousand years, to music composed by Richard Robin Beckett and his Banjoliers.

Part One: A Peculiar People

It is the year dot as we witness the sunrise in Ethiopia, Memphis, Beirut, Berkshire, Guatemala, Tanzania, Syria and the USSR. Cut to two men playing poker in the Shetlands. Cut to a Luxembourg distillery. Cut to a mountain cat-burglar, high in the Appalachians, where on a peak stands Bimbo Gaslamp, dressed as a punk monk and to the sound of a Greek orthodox brass band playing blackjack with three men and an ox dressed as Roman soldiers.

GASLAMP: Good (pause) evening. In other words (pause) welcome, and he-llo. Whether I am a god, or a man, or a myth, one thing is certain. Few people have had greater influence on the history of early-evening TV. The story of the birth and life of Bimbo Gaslamp is staggeringly interesting, going back as it does over 42 years and taking in Eton College, the Grenadier Guards, a revue called *Share My Endive* and fifteen years of asking students hard questions. But this is not the story of just one non-churchgoer. My particular excitement is showing pictures of places, all over the world, where all manner of men have (pause) trod. We shall be looking at men who eat locusts. We shall be looking at a close-up of grass and we shall be looking at a map of Persia as we come to investigate the history of a phenom-(pause)-enon which, like Dulux gloss with Silthane, transforms everything it touches. But first, let's take a closer look at Dulux gloss with Silthane, at Mum anti-perspirants, Brooke Bond tea, amazing savings with Awayday and why Ben Truman was (pause) a believer in English hops. Join us again in Part Two.



Part Two: A Peculiar Programme

Time has passed by and, to the accompaniment of harps, we are witnessing men in strange and wonderful hats, nodding at a wall. Flown thousands of miles to be with us tonight on the Golan Heights, Bimbo Gaslamp is still wearing his unmistakable lightweight Crimplene suit and spectacles quite unlike the ones to which we have grown accustomed from the archive picture in TV Times. He is talking to a goat.

GASLAMP: I have returned (pause) to be with you tonight for another five hours spent in fourteen countries, countries where dwell all manner of creatures, as (pause) for example, this goat. Along with thousands of other creatures in Thailand, in Rutland, in Albania, Morocco, Silesia,

Mexico City and Guam, this beast has never believed in God. The experience (pause) the belief in a deity is unique to mankind. And, throughout the history of the world, only mankind has exercised the option of turning away from that belief.

(Close-up of mayhem, street rioting, hooliganism, snipers in Beirut, whores in Acapulco, sinners from Staines to Singapore and beyond)

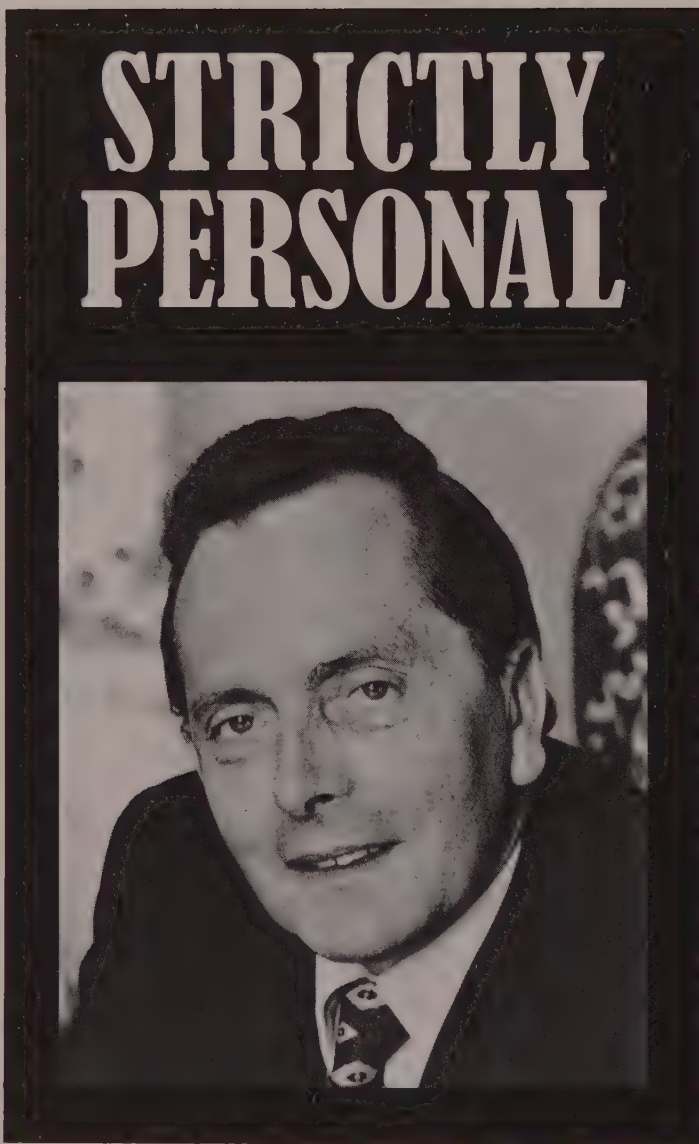
GASLAMP: Once (pause) long ago, someone once said of religion: You believe it (pause) or you don't. People are all different. Some people do one thing. Some people do another. As a poet once wrote: You never can tell (pause) with people. You ask a bunch of people who wrote Mozart's Horn Concerto and some will know (pause) and some won't. There is, it has been said, nowt so funny as folk. In this series I shall not be attempting to draw comparisons or to come to conclusions. People, some people, could easily get upset or (pause) even switch off. That is something which Martin Luther would never have done. But, on the other hand, Charlemagne might have done. They were just two people and, as we have seen, people can be very different, like the pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. In the coming weeks, I shall be circumnavigating the world many times over to come face to face with some different people, some of whom will sing, some of whom will not. We shall be able to see their faces only some of the time, at other times we shall be able to see what happens when you point a film camera into the sun or at a person's feet. But this is not a series about feet. Nor is it a series about the sun. I myself do not believe in, or worship the sun. Or (pause) feet. Good night.

(Hosannahs and a cheering throng of eskimoes bear Gaslamp on a howdah into the Manchurian sunset to the sound of Good King Wenceslas played on a single kazoo)

VOICE-OVER: Bimbo Gaslamp will be back after the break to discuss with several different people the moving account of how he came to write the companion volume to the series you have just seen, available from booksellers price £7.50 or, if you are from a different land, the equivalent in your own different currency.



STRICTLY PERSONAL



I LIKE Aussies and do not have that bitter hatred of their supposed philistinism which has become fashionable amongst the pseuds. Yet few things give me greater pleasure than watching England beat them at cricket. The present series has been memorable. It was Wilfred Rhodes, the archetypal Yorkshire cricketer,

who said of a former Yorkshire captain, "he were too nice a gentleman to 'ave to play cricket". Geoffrey Boycott exemplifies this same professional spirit. The Australians have always had it, or at least they did, until the present pre-occupied and unkempt bunch donned the floppy green cap. I have been an unswerving advocate of Boycott's recall to the England team, because I believe in winning Test Matches. Losing, with grace, is an outmoded amateur attitude, it was in any case mostly humbug. The amateurs wanted to win all right, but didn't fancy putting in too much effort to do so. Boycott is a relentless perfectionist, denounced as a fanatic by those who neither understand, nor like, a genius. They drink their share of the victory toasts, but sneer at the man who filled the glasses. If all the English applied themselves to their work in the way Boycott applies himself to his (yes work; "we don't play this game for fun tha' knows") we would win trophies even more important than the Ashes.

RECENTLY I had the pleasure of making the opening speech, when Anatoly Karpov, Chess Champion of the World, played simultaneously on ten boards against the England youth squad. Karpov may be the strongest player in the history of the game; at worst, he ranks equal with such immortals as Morphy, Capablanca, Alekhine and Fischer. All the more credit to Lloyds Bank, who by their financial sponsorship made it possible for our youngsters to play him. Britain has had a remarkable renaissance in chess during the last few years. There are even better times coming. No one person is responsible for this happy outlook, but few doubt the man who has done most to bring it about. Mr Leonard Barden is a distinguished chess correspondent and a former British champion, who with a selfless energy I admire, but couldn't emulate, has devoted his life to young British chessplayers. I read much twaddle about the generation gap. Leonard Barden trusts youth, who, so treated, take care not to disappoint him. Indeed the only disappointing feature of the story is that business in general does not

follow the example of Lloyds Bank. Why moan at the club about modern youth and Britain's poor sporting record, when all you need do is ring up Leonard Barden and make your contribution to improving both?

■

MANY BY-ELECTIONS occur because of the death of the sitting MP. So I was privileged in being alive to watch my successor elected. A political death does not afford the spiritual opportunities of the real thing, but it is painless and allows one to read the obituaries. I was less happy once I started reading the stories being filed from Ladywood by the London-based correspondents, who had dropped into the constituency for an afternoon. They seem to have an overwhelming dislike of Birmingham. The usual excuse given for this prejudice is that Brum is an ugly city populated by overpaid carworkers, who love money and loathe beauty. Ladywood does not have many carworkers or much money and might have expected to be the recipient of the sympathy reserved for the deprived. But apparently Birmingham slums, dereliction and filth do not evoke the emotions reserved for Jarrow and the Rhondda, where sentimental socialism washes warmly over the visiting firemen. True to the modern fashion, the correspondents wanted someone to blame. There were some half-hearted hints that it was all my fault, but most fingers were pointed at local Councillors. It occurred to no-one that it is this very search for scapegoats that arouses prejudice against coloured people. There are a number of historical reasons which explain the present condition of Ladywood, but I presume that any analysis based upon so tame a conclusion was regarded as tedious to write and boring to read. At least the by-election dramatised the plight of inner city areas. I've lost count of the times I've tried to explain that the policy of successive governments towards development areas has denied urgently-needed help to the inner city. Nobody listened. Now the money is pouring out. This prompts the belief that my enemies are right and the best service I ever did Ladywood was to leave it.

I USED to deplore gossip columns. Now I wonder whether I might not have done an injustice to honest craftsmen. My recent experience has been that these chaps ring you up, recount the item of scandal or sensation they would like to print and take down the rejoinder. With luck, a not too garbled version gets into the paper. Of course I'm not suggesting that these snippets of gossip have much to do with reality. One should be particularly suspicious of anything printed with quotation marks around it. Unhappily, human beings seldom produce the pithy comments so necessary to sum up a situation. George Hirst did not say, "We'll get 'em in singles, Wilfred". That is what he ought to have said, but due to negligence, he failed to do so. Writers have repaired his careless omission in the interests of a higher truth. Mr Frederick Trueman assures us that he never said, "Pass the salt, Gunga Din", to a West Indian High Commissioner. But if one is writing an article to show what an uproarious fellow our Freddie is, such quotations must be included. If they do not exist they must be invented. For my part I expect no mercy and rather enjoy the terse comments that I've made in moments of crisis. As the truth would be that my knees were knocking with fear and I was gazing open-mouthed, but speechless, at impending doom, I prefer the fiction. The only piece that got me on the raw was a recent nasty effort in the "Atticus" column of the *Sunday Times* (not written by the excellent Anthony Holden, who was on holiday). Having given an interview purely as a favour to a columnist short of copy, I found it reproduced as an offensive travesty of what I had said. I suppose it takes time to learn the ethics of one's trade.

■

AFTER THE battle of Lewisham, my wife came out firmly for the formation of a special riot police force. Having seen the CRS in action in Paris during May-June 1968, I am not so sure this is a good idea. In particular, I remember one Sunday afternoon outside the Sorbonne. I was having a lavish lunch with two old friends, who represented the *Daily Mirror*. We were

about a quarter of a mile from the Sorbonne, so like all good journalists had to be telephoned by the London office of the paper and told that a riot was going on there. My two companions made up for any former sloth, by walking through several lines of the vicious-looking CRS and getting into the Sorbonne. I lacked the necessary courage for this enterprise and cowered in a doorway. From this vantage point I witnessed a CRS charge. Down came the clubs; in went the boots. I shall never forget seeing a girl with a face like porcelain being battered senseless by two CRS men. Perhaps she had loose morals and undoubtedly she had Marxist opinions, nevertheless my commitment to law and order wavered somewhat. I was even considering going to her assistance, an act of valour for which I should never have forgiven myself, but at that moment a tear gas canister landed on my toes, which finished me for that afternoon. Since that time I have never been able to love riot police. As the Socialist Workers' Party seems to be determined to destroy whatever intellectual credibility it ever had, we ought to avoid providing it with any martyrs. Easy to talk, I'm not a policeman. But I find most policemen agree with me and don't want a special riot squad.

■

WE ENGLISH males ought to be grateful that the local females are relatively peaceful. The unhappy minority amongst Women's Lib do nothing worse than write novels about the wonder of their bodies and their unsatisfactory role in society. Things are very different in West Germany, I can tell you. Bourgeois female terrorism is on the increase. I know it sounds like a Monty Python script, but I'm afraid it's true. Some pampered darlings of "good German homes" appear to be in the grip of an insensate bloodlust. Don't ask me why. Has chauvinist parental care broken their tender hearts? I predict we shall hear more on this subject. It has everything a good story needs and any day now a platoon of British journalists will descend on Hamburg. If they take my advice, they will confine their researches to such of these harpies as are safely under lock and key.

Season's Gratings

"**H**ATEFUL is the dark blue sky, vaulted o'er the dark blue sea." Thus moaned Mr Tennyson's lotus-eaters. They were the first tax evaders and what a miserable bunch they were!

Their cry has occasionally been taken up by their descendants, those British expatriates who sit all the year round by swimming pools in the West Indies and yawn and yearn for a November fog. I cannot seriously believe that these sybarites long to bring upon themselves the miseries of bronchitis. It seems more likely that what is found unbearable in places where the weather is never remarkable is the silence that falls from the lips of salesmen as they parcel up the various purchases.

I have no idea whether the noun "season" is related to the verb of the same name but it is certainly true that for most English people the arrival and departure of the four quarters of the year adds the only spice to their lives that they are ever likely to receive. We who have decided not to leave this blessed plot but instead to brazen out the lies we have written on our income tax returns, tend, if we think of ourselves as intellectuals, to inveigh in secret against the more unwelcome changes in our climate and to disparage those who talk about them in public.

We do wrong.

Remarks about the unexpected warmth or coldness of the day are intended as the first tentative steps in a Platonic courtship. They are less open to misunderstanding than a feeble smile and less likely to be regarded as a sinister—even consumptive—manifestation than a clearing of the throat. To great talkers mention of the weather fulfils the function of a loud rap with a baton on the top of the music stand.

In any case the man who complains of the subject matter of a conversation is a lost soul. The purpose of speech should never be to impart information. Anyone who thinks it is, is merely liable to tell us what we already know which is tedious or what we do not which is humiliating. The enjoyment to be derived from all verbal exchanges lies in the ideas that are introduced to illustrate it and the ingenuity with which these notions are expressed. As a fuse for pyrotechnical display the weather is the ideal topic. Just as great actresses such as Miss Garbo were at their best in trashy movies about hopeless love, so the more general the theme under discussion, the wider the range of opportunities for wit. The first man to describe a rainy afternoon as nice weather for ducks probably won the Nobel Prize for that year.

The season which occupies our thoughts most obsessively and on



"What else can you do?"



"Merciful heaven, McGregor!—all those return tickets . . ."

which we lavish the greatest number of words is spring. This is partly because it is the receptacle of our most fervent hopes but also in some measure because it is the time when the weather is at its most wayward. Every year, though the meteorological wizards of television never offer an explanation, at the end of February we are treated to a false spring. Dreams of a better life are wafted into our skulls on the mild breezes; even the flowering trees are taken in; they blossom. At the end of March we are plunged back into darkest winter; the blossoms die and our residual pessimism returns.

April is the cruellest month, breeding quarterly bills out of the dead land, mixing influenza with desire.

I personally take very little notice of the seasons. To maintain this aloofness is probably easier for me than for many people. I consider the sea to be one of nature's biggest mistakes; I never wish to sit on the prom eating a box of chocs during the hols. I also never have the slightest desire to travel inland. As far as I am concerned the countryside is one vast wasp's nest overhanging a ubiq-

uitous ant heap. I am allergic to almost everything and, as a city dweller, eagerly look forward to the day when England will be a slab of concrete from the Channel to the Cheviots. I do not think I have long to wait.

During the various seasonal festivities, such as Christmas, I try to go on as though nothing unpleasant had happened. Those of us who are usually happy have no need of jollification. My indifference to sudden changes in climatic conditions is not entirely due to my stoical nature; it is also an expression of my meanness. Women welcome the revolution of the year. Each season is a pretext for buying something new to wear. They rush from fur to wool to cotton with squeaks of delight. I resist this temptation partly in deference to my theories of the persistent public image but also because of the severe limitations of my wardrobe. On April 1st I exchange my overcoat for a mackintosh. This I shed on July 1st and resume in October. When my raincoat wears out I shall simply delete from my vocabulary the words "spring" and "autumn". This will be cheaper

than buying a new garment. What I shall do when finally my overcoat falls from my shoulders in rags, I have not yet made up my mind.

In spite of my reluctance to give way to the seasons of the year, I am aware of the uses to which capricious changes in the weather can be put. If there were none, not only would all conversation between strangers lapse into embarrassed silence but half the poetry in the English language would soon become as unintelligible as Chaucer. In particular we would become dead to the delight of the following . . .

Ha'g the Spri'g, hateful thi'g,
bost idlebent tibe.

All through you, I've got flu.

Fide adother scribe.

If I could remember the author of this gem (which appeared some fifty years ago in a paper entitled *London Calling*), I would gladly name her.

Of course I do not wish to imply that all meteorological poems are worthy of remembrance. A line I would love to delete from our anthologies is, "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?"

The question is fatuous and the answer is "Yes."

Charlie's Angles

Who's to design Charlie Chaplin's memorial statue?
FFOLKES has been going through some of the suggestions . . .



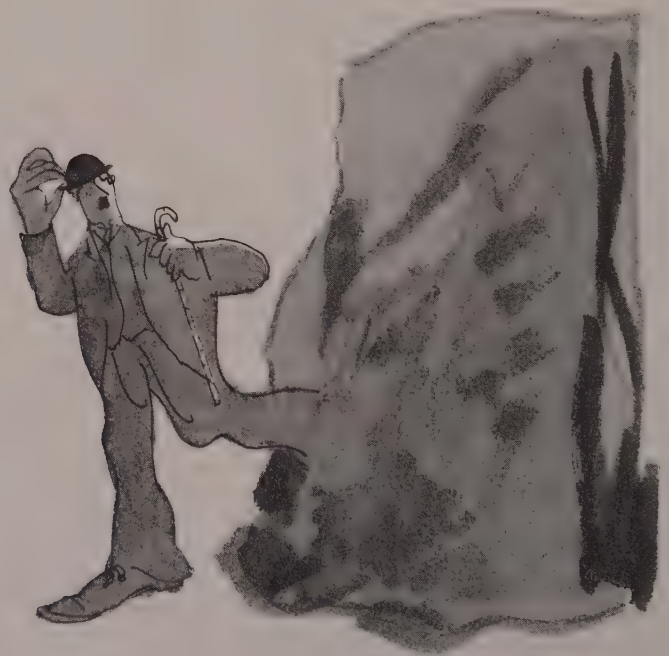
Man Ray



Fabergé

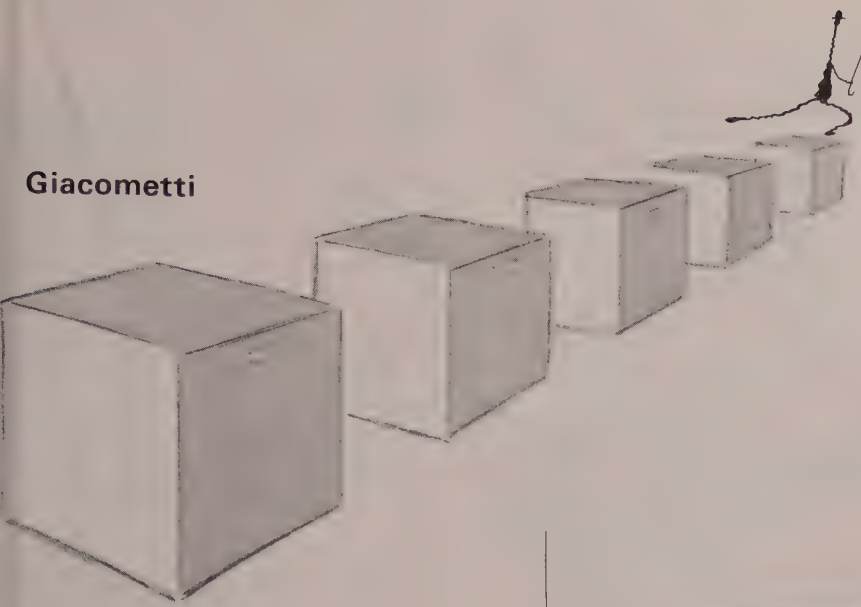


Arp

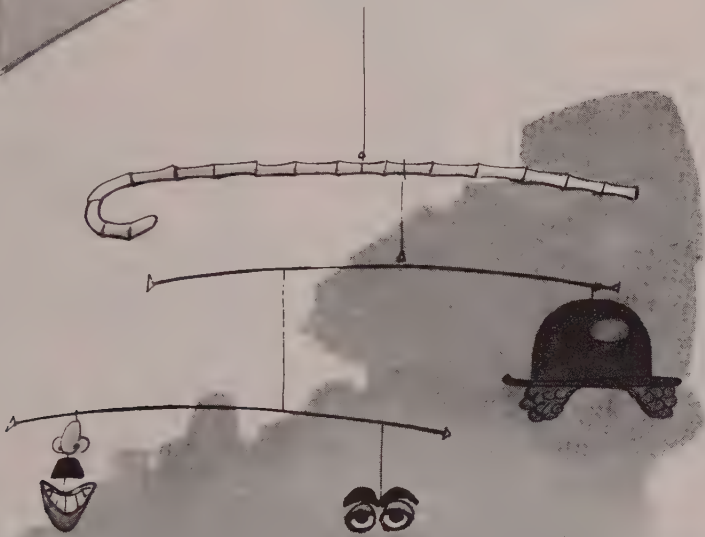


Michelangelo

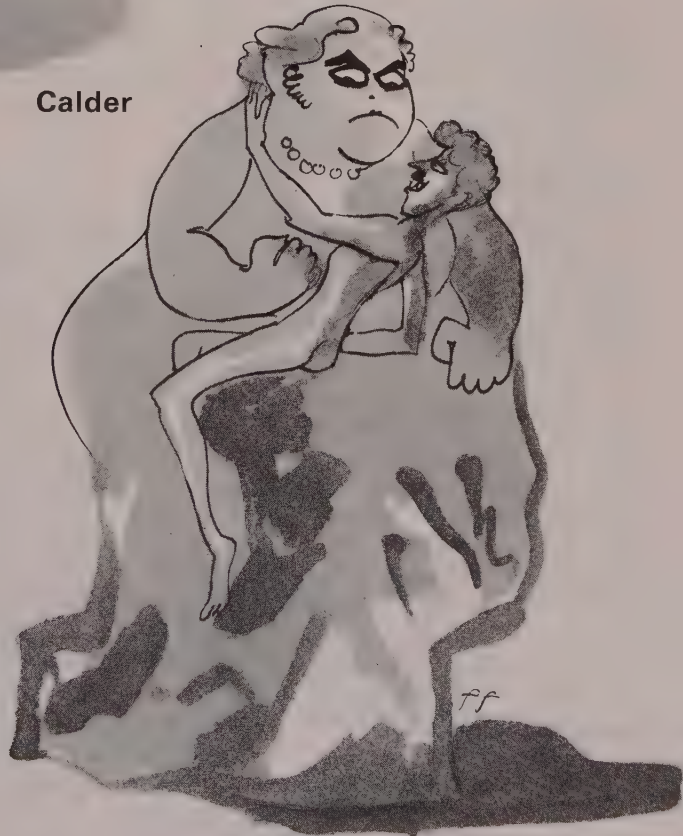
Giacometti



Duchamp



Calder



Rodin

American Primitive



FREAKY FABLES by HANDELSMAN

The Fall

ADAM AND EVE WERE NAKED AND UNASHAMED. THEY WERE ALSO NOT VERY BRIGHT.

AS THEY WERE CREATED IN GOD'S OWN IMAGE, IT FOLLOWS THAT HE WAS NOT VERY BRIGHT, EITHER.

But I do the best I can.

$(x+y)(x-y) = x^2 - y^2$.

All Gaul is divided into three parts.

THE SERPENT, MADE IN AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT IMAGE (WHOSE?) WAS BY FAR THE CLEVEREST OF THE LOT.

INEQUALITY WAS BUILT INTO THE SYSTEM FROM THE START!

Rules were made to be broken, dear lady.

My goodness! Talking to you is a real education.

YOU OR I COULD HAVE PREDICTED THE OUTCOME.

BUT NOT GOD. HE BELIEVED IN FREE WILL, ALTHOUGH HIS CREATURES WERE ILL-EQUIPPED FOR IT.

Stop picking on Him.

Well, I don't believe in it *now!* We all learn from experience.

The serpent says if we eat this, we won't have to be naked any more!

And we can be ashamed. I'd like to try that.

The serpent says this and the serpent says that!

Who gave your precious serpent a name? **I did.**

Cover your posterior, woman! What will posterity say?

I have this sudden urge to bake a Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil pie.

Now, I wonder what made me think of that.

They played right into my hands!

FOR THIS TRIVIAL INFRACTION, ADAM AND EVE WERE SENTENCED TO WHAT, AT THAT TIME, CONSTITUTED CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT (NOW EXPRESSLY BANNED IN ALL CIVILISED COUNTRIES).

Delve! Span!

Delve? Span?

Who will then be the gentleman?

THE SNAKE WAS BANISHED TOO, AND DISAPPEARED FROM HISTORY UNTIL ONE OF THEM BIT CLEOPATRA.

And then we disappear again, until the invention of the used car.

CAIN HAD A MARK PLACED ON HIS BROW SO THAT HE WOULD BE RECOGNISED BY THE PUBLIC (BUT THERE WAS NO PUBLIC).

You've been naughty, haven't you?

THE WHOLE THING IS A STUDY IN MISMANAGEMENT! GOD KNOWS HOW WE SURVIVED - OR DOES HE?

Listen, it's easy enough to criticise! **You** try being God for a while.

Without any training or practice.

Yeah.

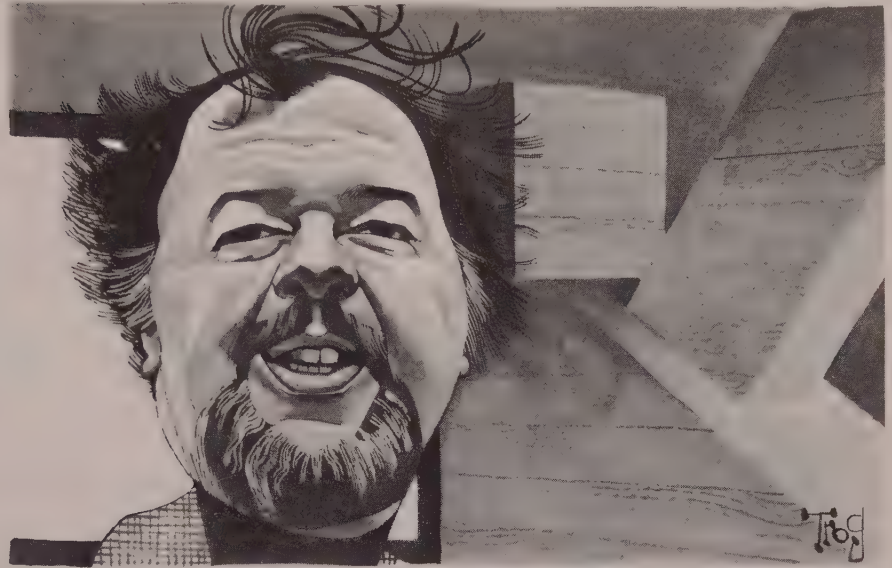
MORAL: Well done, on the whole, for a deity with no educational qualifications.

The State of the National

SIR PETER HALL is peeved. The Director of the National Theatre has a struggle, won't deny it, not to start the day all bristly and cheesed off. Professionally he's unflappable and so does a thorough job in public of seeming anything but tart. With studied insouciance, he positively lolls, sips claret and sucks at a smouldering pipe, as at the South Bank fortress of subsidised art he finds himself cast in a long-running

taking a swipe. And it does, he says again, get up his nose.

The fact is that the Cottesloe, Lyttelton and Olivier theatres which together comprise the National complex were, and are, appallingly late. It is almost two years since the NT first opened for business, nearly ten years since work first began on the site, and the damn thing isn't finished yet. The computer-enhanced stage machinery doesn't work yet. Basic facilities in the



drama based apparently on Custer's Last Stand.

He is in charge of, or lumbered with, direction of that glass and concrete masterpiece or monstrosity (according to architectural taste) which at the same time represents officially all that is best in British drama and, unofficially, all that is worst in over-exuberant planning and public spending: the NT. As a job for soothing the executive brow, it compares favourably only with running British Leyland, British Steel or British Rail. On the other hand, the salary is a secret.

Whatever its theatrical achievements, and they are by no means to be sniffed at, the financial base of the National Theatre is an unmitigated mess: to be laughed at, or wept at, or, in his case, to be lived with. What peeves Sir Peter is the squabbling, the incessant recrimination and argy-bargy over costs: big, very big, bills which he has inherited and which threaten to smother his unquestioned skill as director of drama and of men. Scarcely a day goes by without one or other of the media

multi-million building are still at about the level of a village hall. It is about to end its first financial year some £600,000 in the red, the heating bill alone will reach seven figures and, Arts Council or no, the mutterings persist that all or part of it may have to close. The place is fast rivalling Concorde as everyone's favourite Aunt Sally. Sir Peter rekindles his pipe and manages a grin. He plans to stick it out because, despite everything, it's fun.

"Yes, of course it is. I have a marvellous company, installed, more or less, in what is, or will be, a marvellous building. It drives me mad, yes, that the building is so far behind schedule, that the costs are what they are. But every day, three thousand people come here to see fine plays and are not disappointed. And the management of the theatre is, believe it or not, getting easier. It is an enormous undertaking, it is open to every kind of criticism, even jealousy, but it is beginning to come together. If the National Theatre were empty every night I'd be sad; as it is, I'm optimistic."

He is also, it is evident, worked to a frazzle. The day begins at six, at his flat in the Barbican, with a pot of tea and two hours of dictation into an electronic memo. He's mad on gadgets, by the way. He then sets to on one of those anchored bicycles which feature in *Diet-Pepsi* ads, speed-reads *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *Daily Mail* before clipping through breakfast and his post. Selected callers, authors, directors, are listened to by telephone until the taxi pulls up at nine. Planning, strategy and administration take at least until 11 at which point he breaks off to rehearse. Working lunches are sixty minutes maximum. Rehearsals resume for the early afternoon, then meetings until 7. He then goes every night to the theatre, his own or someone else's, and calls it lucky to be home by 11 at night. So go six days out of seven: on the Sabbath he belts out to the country and unwinds with a piano and a very hi-fi gram.

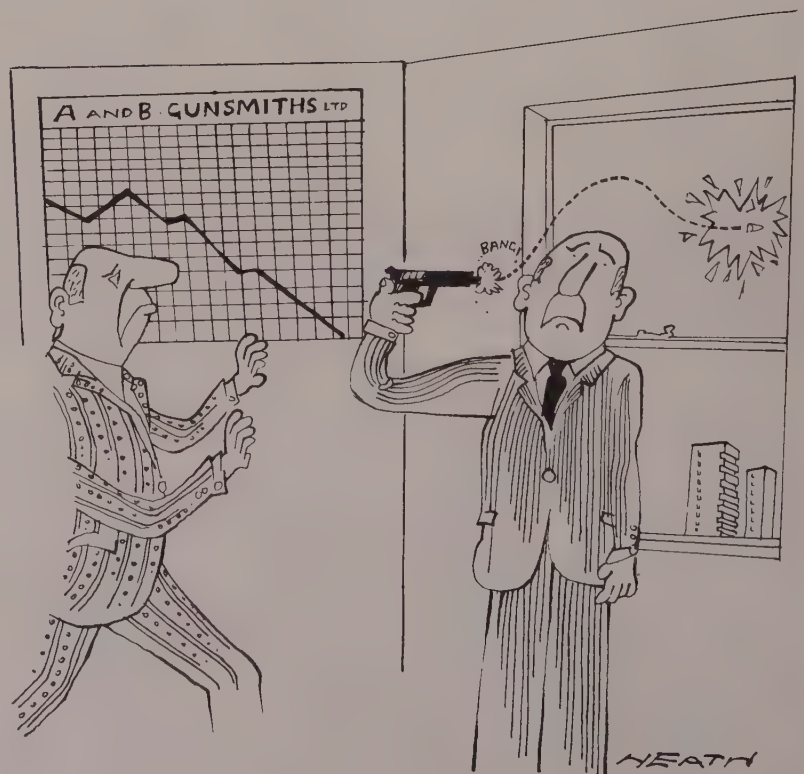
It all sounds pit-pat, and it is. He's a consciously, conscientiously organised man. His office is arranged just so. Superficial chaos is subtly organised. Nothing is out of its place. The details of furnishing plainly interest him, things are not just put—they're juxtaposed. "That's my idea of a theatre," he declares, pointing to a meticulously framed snap on the wall, as if to test whether you recognise Epidaurus. He took the picture. His equipment is Nikon, uncompromisingly posh.

He has made films in his time, albeit not exactly box-office smashes. *Akenfield* is perhaps the best-known, a sensitive account of life as it was in pastoral Suffolk and a film which was, and yet wasn't, autobiographical. Let's not get into which bits were or weren't for space, like time, is precious. He directed *Three Into Two Won't Go*, besides, the harrowing account of Rod Steiger being tempted by Judy Geeson and thus unsettling Clare Bloom. But it is, of course, as a director in the theatre that Peter Hall made his Quixotic way—most especially with the RSC.

Sir Peter, not surprisingly, denies any over-large expenditure except that necessarily occasioned by the uniquely enormous costs of running the building. He is convinced that, far from taking funds away from provincial or any other theatre, the



"Pharaoh, they're not going to like this."



National has so much increased awareness of the needs in drama that it has made more, not less, money available elsewhere. He points to the political logic of this. What government, he wonders, would dare to shut down a major theatre in, say, Birmingham, in so sensitive a climate as has been made by the public's awareness of the National Theatre's accounts? And once again he stokes up a reflective pipeful.

What he must come back to is an overwhelming desire to be rid of the great financial headaches, and of the builders, and of the squabblers. It is his most fervent wish to make a dramatic success of the best chance we, as a nation, have ever had of making institutional theatre great. That, of course, is not to deny that the small, independent theatres do not have an enormous say. His track-record must testify to that commitment. But the two can, and should, work in tandem.

He's quite prepared, even eager, he says, to work fifteen hours a day doing his bit, to take some flak in the process. And for three or four more years at the least, he's determined to plug on. It has, after all, taken some two hundred years of plotting and scheming to get the idea of a British National Theatre translated into concrete and glass. It may be about the worst possible time, economically, for it to have happened. But socially and politically, it couldn't have come at a better time, Sir Peter

maintains.

When Peter Hall went to Stratford in the winter of 1958/9, the experience of Cambridge was still fresh and, forming for the first time a properly permanent company of actors, directors and designers, he brought an academic precision and, some would say, political intensity to Shakespearean production. He still does believe that politics—in the widest sense—are why anyone goes to the theatre at all: the theatre becomes a metaphor of a live community and is, apart from sport, just about the only regular social opportunity for confronting others face to face and sharing an idea, or experience, live. Westminster politics, too, hold for him a personal fascination. It's perhaps as well given the job he's got of getting money from the Government.

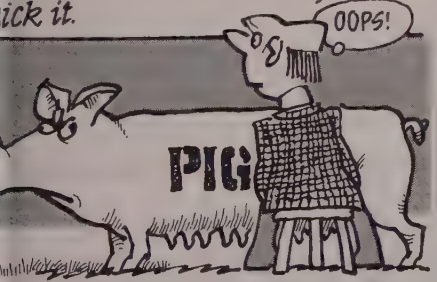
Success at Stratford was matched by success in London when Peter Hall secured the Aldwych Theatre for a permanent metropolitan base for the RSC. He still counts that as a supreme achievement when, under duress, he can be made to look back at what he would otherwise quickly dismiss as past and gone. He claims to be not at all nostalgic, scarcely a fatalist, and not at all a gambler. His career, nevertheless, has had all the marks of a whizz-kid's surge to fame and he's not proved shy of being in the public eye. Deliberately, almost mischievously, he's regularly appeared on TV and the impression is

everywhere formed that Sir Peter is unassailably in a position to pick and choose where he will work to make what is again universally understood to be a handsome living. He fosters this. The National Theatre, he emphasises, is a love. He could make twice as much elsewhere tomorrow, if he so chose. Twice as much as *what* he feels it is an impertinence to enquire. Did anyone ask what Sir Laurence Olivier got paid when he was the National's Director? Is it common knowledge what John Tooley gets paid as boss of Covent Garden? Well then. Nationally sponsored or not, he's keeping his affairs to himself.

What Sir Peter hopes to have carried across from Stratford to the National is some of that frenzied excitement and *esprit de corps* which so characterised the RSC in the soaraway sixties. It's debatable. The acting company seems to be more or less shoulder-to-shoulder but there's plainly been no shortage of friction in the administrative ranks during the National's protracted gestation. One disenchanted executive, now in the impoverished provinces, has been really letting rip at alleged profligacy within the National Theatre, claiming that it is perfectly understood that whatever huge costs may be incurred on the South Bank the Government is obliged to bail out the theatre to which so much national prestige attaches.

ARMING WITH MARK

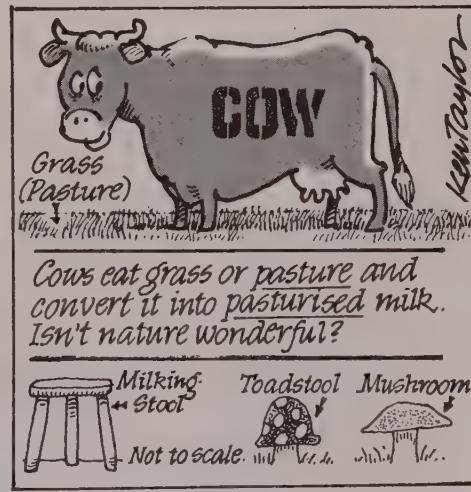
A good wheeze is to stencil the name of the animal on its side, i.e. Cow, Horse, etc., not Maude or Doris or Whatever as this only leads to familiarity. Try to use a paint which will not kill the animals if they lick it.



Dairy farming concerns any animal from which one can get milk, such as cows (the most normal), sheep (less common), goats (rarely) and pigs (never). Also yoghurt, presumably, though personally one would not want to be bothered growing strawberries, mandarin oranges, hazel nuts, etc for the flavour.



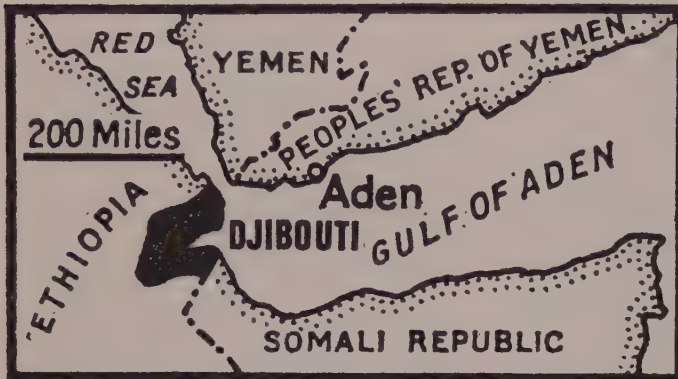
One thing to look out for in dairy farming is Brucellosis. For years, one thought this was an Australian immigrant of Greek parentage! But apparently it is a disease commonly caught by cattle.



The best milk comes from the animals who eat the best grass, though one has always been puzzled why milk is not bright green. Condensed milk does not come from condensed cows, but from tins.

On the day Djibouti became independent last week, not even *The Times* could find enough to say to make a supplement. Now we put that right with our

Salute To Djibouti! A SPECIAL REPORT



A Paradise for Sand-Lovers

by Miles Kington, Supplement Editor

Ever since Sir Richard Burton passed through Djibouti on his travels ("We travelled through French Somalia at great speed at night, seeing little of it except a dead camel which stank"), Djibouti has been known to the West as a place you pass through to get somewhere else, and if possible avoid altogether. The French developed the town as a port, with the result that passers by could now spend all their time on board without going ashore.

The Djibouti tourist office has made great efforts to change all that, under the slogan "Come to Djibouti for its golden sand and camel rides, and bring your dark glasses with you!" or in French "Djibouti—son soleil, son sable et ses chameaux! (Apportez vos lunettes de soleil...)". The campaign was not successful and the present Minister of Tourism, Cesar Langlois-M'Buruni, is now determined to capitalise on Djibouti's fame as a stopping-place with the war-cry: "Djibouti—Gateway to Ethiopia, Somalia and not all that far from Aden!"

"Our efforts are paying off already," M. Langlois-M'Buruni told me. "Already we have you coming to stay here this year. I know that you are not a tourist in the strict sense of the word, as we invited you here and paid for your train fare from Waterloo, but ma foi, it is a start! After all, you are injecting valuable capital into the country with your gins and tonics and camel rides; already our balance of payments is looking better."

Small but hopeful; that is the story of Djibouti today. But don't forget to bring your sun glasses.

J J Gritfold, Suppliers of camel hair brushes and all art equipment, Tring, Herts

congratulate Djibouti on their independence but would also like to know when the last order of camel hair brushes will arrive, after all, two years is a long time.

Djibouti Lessons

MANDY

246 8091

A Nation of Camel Lovers

by Miles Kington, Economic Correspondent

The Djiboutians depend very largely on their camels. They are for the most part sullen, plodding creatures and so are their camels, but the rapport between the two is a touchingly instinctive and traditional one, as they drive them to market heavily laden with salt, sand or sun-glasses, beating them unmercifully if they so much as stumble. All ploughing in the one square mile of arable land is done by camels; camels provide the only taxis there are (some with old London cab meters hanging round their necks) and the great social event of the year is the eight furlong Camel Derby. There is a small home for battered camels set up by an English lady, but even she admits to fighting a losing battle in a land where camel is also the staple diet (camel stew is a rich concoction of camel meat, salt and sand). The Djibouti Zoo has probably the best collection of camels in the world, as well as a small desert fox.

Africa with a French Accent

par Miles Kington, Correspondant Francais

As virtually the last French colony to go independent (it took the French twenty years to persuade the Djiboutians that their own country was worth having), Djibouti is full of the signs of French influence, from the half-dozen Simonon paperbacks in the bookstall by the main camel rank to the Gauloise stubs in the town fountains. Camels walk on the righthand side of the road; they also walk on the left and down the middle. The main religion is, of course, Catholicism though it is more austere than the normal brand as they are still in the throes of the Counter-Reformation. (Existentialism, that other well-known creed, never caught on, being too optimistic and exciting for the dour Djiboutians.)

Sport, too, has a French flavour. The terrain is ideal for boules—Djibouti is the reigning African champion—and the Tour de Djibouti, round the tortuous outline of what must be the only country in the world shaped like a pair of underpants, annually brings out crowds of silent Djibouti cycling fans to line the street.

The Bibliotheque National de Djibouti stocks many quite recent French magazines as well as the best-selling *Camel Monthly*.

For thirty years, we have used only Djibouti sand. We look forward to another years of fruitful trade.

**EEZI-FIT SANDPITS,
PLAYGROUND SPECIALISTS,
PENG**

THE BRITISH EGG-TIMER INDUSTRY salutes Djibouti and its ever prompt delivery of sand.

DJIBOUTI, Monday, June 27.—The Republic of Djibouti became Africa's 49th independent state this morning, facing almost impossible odds. It has no army of its own, less than one square mile of arable land and no natural resources except sand, salt and 20,000 camels.

The government has declared three days of national rejoicing, during which bars and cinemas are to be closed. French soldiers and sailors have been confined to barracks.

Since it has almost no arable land, Djibouti has to import all its food. Fruit and vegetables normally come from Ethiopia, but Somali-backed guerrillas blew up rail bridges there and have blocked the railroad since June 1.

Small but Intensive Farming

by Miles Kington, Agricultural Correspondent

Although less than one square mile of Djibouti is under cultivation, it is incredibly fertile, thanks to the 10,000 tons of camel dung produced annually. Last year it was devoted to water melons; this year they are concentrating on avocado pears to tie in with the newly established state prawn farm, and *avocados aux crevettes* has been proclaimed the national dish.

"One square mile is not much," admits the Farming Minister, who is also Cesar Langlois-M'buruni, "but look at it from this way—if the crop is a total disaster, it does not affect the economy at all."

**R & S SOLOMONS, SUPPLIERS OF
CAMEL COATS AND OTHER FINE
GARMENTS
WHITECHAPEL
LONDON**

Send greetings to the newly independent

DJIBOUTI

and offer 10% discount until end August
(We must need our heads examining!)

Djibouti coach parties always welcome at the
FLUTE AND WHISTLE

on the main Chatham-Thamet road
Darts Bar Billiards Real Lino Crisps

Fourth girl needed for Kensington bed-sit.
Even Djiboutis considered.

Night Life in the Capital

by Miles Kington, Show Business Reporter

Native culture is virtually restricted to the somewhat melancholy ritual Drought Dance of the local tribes, but in the capital of Djibouti there are several bars which stay open till eight at night, one of which has a juke box. There are two cinemas; the Roxy, Djibouti, is showing the last two reels of *Ben Hur* while the Theatre de Film National is rerunning last year's very successful season of camel documentaries. Coming soon to the Roxy: *The Sandpiper*, *The Desert Rats*, *Sands of the Kalahari*, and *Lawrence of Arabia*.

On the musical side, Helen Shapiro once passed through on a quick tour of Africa but could not be persuaded to sing, while there are some very reasonably priced second-hand Kenneth McKellar LPs in Langlois-M'buruni's Discmart down by the old camel basin.

The national poet of Djibouti is Victor Hugo M'Gonagall, whose epic composition *La Vie du Chameau* is compulsory reading at all parties, though as the Djiboutians are not noted for their conviviality, most party-goers tend to disperse quietly before the action has started.



The Djibouti National Opera's production of *South Pacific*



The Djibouti Fire Brigade taking on fresh water

DON'T LET OUR LIBERALS DIE!

A Message from the President

It is up to all of us to do what we can to save from extinction the various species which form a part of our British Heritage. Among those worst threatened are the Liberals. It would be a national disgrace if we just let them fade away without lifting a hand to help.

I call on all who love Britain to campaign to preserve our Liberals and I pledge myself to put my back into the Cause.

Philip.



Bank holiday visitors to the first wildlife park to include Liberals.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, the country was well-stocked with Liberals. They were a characteristic part of the British scene. They could be found in urban as well as rural areas, in industrial centres as well as in the depth of agricultural England. Not merely did they add a pleasing variety to townscape and landscape; they had a part to play in the complex ecology of Our Island Home.

Things are sadly different today. In some parts of the country, advancing civilisation has virtually wiped out Liberals. Unless we act promptly, it will be impossible to conserve their numbers at even the present level.

We must build up stocks in the few remaining areas where there are sufficient to breed from. These are predominantly in the Celtic fringe, remote from the main centres of national life, areas, incidentally,

where a belief in the Little People persists. Once we have done this, we can begin restocking depleted areas more centrally located.

HOW YOU CAN HELP—Make a census of Liberals in your own area. (Forms, recognition-charts, *Do's & Don'ts* from 7 Exchange Court, Strand, WC2.)

Interest local church groups, Scout and Guide packs, Youth Clubs, organisations catering for Senior Citizens in conservation problems. Members unable to undertake fieldwork can still play their part in raising funds: we can't expect to save Our Heritage on the cheap.

Start "Adopt a Liberal" schemes in Junior Schools. (*Hints on Liberal-care from above address.*)

Press your local council to do all in their power to see that Liberals are listed as a Protected Species.

Fight the enemies of Liberals! It always seems to be charming and harmless creatures which attract predators.

Support the campaign to establish County Reserves, beginning with Cornwall.

WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING. The Backward Fourth at Middle Gallup School have acquired a class Liberal. There is keen competition to look after it. Each term a special report in the school magazine is devoted to it. The Backward Fourth hope to make contact with other schools and, in time, hold a Show, with prizes.

The habitués of the public bar at the *Bag o' Naught*, Downpudden, Somerset, have installed a hymnbox. Any drinker who

bursts into a hymn has to contribute. They intend to donate the contents to the Lord Lieutenant's Preservation Fund.

Two young Nantwich housewives are hoping to start a committee to coordinate projects, though many of the organisations already in the field prefer to act independently.

Pollweevil-under-Arch WI is collecting corks in hopes of selling them to raise the purchase price of an acre suitable for a small reserve. It consists of overgrown woodland with a sandy soil suitable for burrowing.

A fund-raising *Evening With the Stars* is being staged later in the year at a London theatre. It will be compered jointly by the Grade brothers and will include an auction of works of art given by the artists. It is hoped that several American performers will appear. Among names which have been mentioned are Telly Savalas, Tatum O'Neal and Charles Bronson, who may recite a poem asking children to be kind to Liberals.

BB has announced that she is prepared to lead a world movement for preserving Liberals and will give her all.

DANGEROUS? NONSENSE! There need be no fear that preserving this vanishing species means removing it from ecological pressures and creating the conditions of a population explosion. A certain lack of inner vitality, perhaps genetic makes it improbable that we shall ever see widespread recolonisation. After all, restoring the crenellated gateway of an Angevin castle does not mean that we are in danger of a revival of baronial power!

Liberals can be cherished without fear.



The Good Neighbour Guide

IT was either St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke or St John (I keep getting those boys mixed up because all their names begin with "St") who told that famous story about the fellow who had a spot of bother and got helped out by a Samaritan, hereinafter known as the Good Samaritan. What, or indeed, who the Samaritans were and what they got up to in order to deserve such a bad name has always puzzled me. I mean, the Good Samaritan helped a fellow who had been done in by bandits or what have you. But what did the other Samaritans do? Kick in shop windows and generally knock a town apart, I suppose, when Samaritan United or Samaritan City or Samaritan Wednesday lost an away game to Bethlehem FC (I'm only guessing, as you probably can tell; I can't even find the place on the map and I've got the *Good Food Guide* Holy Land edition right here alongside me).

But the point here is neighbours and being a good neighbour; although if there are any Bishops or Bible scholars in the neighbourhood of this essay I would like to know how come the Samaritans got such a bad name in the first place, and a postscript on just what went on in Gomorrah would also enlighten an ignorant mind.

Just the other day or, to put it another way, last week Mr Ennals (no relation of mine no matter how bad your spelling is) announced that Britain was going to have another go at the good neighbour policy which he tried a year ago and which apparently failed. I know from personal experience how badly it failed because just after it was announced a little old lady who is a neighbour of mine was not seen for several days and I scaled the side of her house, squeezed in through a narrow window and hoisted the old baggage to her feet and called a doctor whereupon she complained that I had lifted her up so roughly that I cracked her collar-bone.

Apparently word of this leaked out, or there were similar cases, because old ladies have been left days on end on floors all over the country and although their collar bones are intact they are not entirely happy.

Hence the first Good Neighbour plan failed.

The relaunching of the Good Neighbour Campaign, with Mr En-

nals, the Secretary of State for Social Services, as chairman, was announced in a booklet called *Age Concern*. Old folk are the chief concern, as you might have guessed by the title of the booklet. Still, if I read the report in *The Times* correctly, what the Good Neighbour people would like us to do is keep an eye out for anyone in general who is up against it and give them a little help.

The report gets a little carried away, I think, at one point, however, when it suggests that we Good Neighbours might even set up a system of street wardens. This is called "street warden schemes" and there are a couple of suspicious words in that phrase. Street, I do not object to right off, but "warden" and "schemes" have a nasty ring about them.

And how is one to tell a street warden from a plain old-fashioned noseyparker? I suppose they will carry some sort of identification. Perhaps they will even start wearing uniforms. And you know what a uniform does to a man. Pretty soon they will be scaling little old ladies' little old walls and knocking them on the floor in order to pick them up again and break their collar-bones. But I don't want to get carried away on any Orwellian fantasy; you can see enough Orwellian fantasy in real life.

The point here, really, is: what makes a good neighbour? I have nothing against chaps who squeeze through narrow windows to rescue old dears. I've known one who even managed it while listing a bit to starboard; and I'll tell you I have it from the highest authority that he is not going to do it again unless he is accompanied by at least two independent witnesses, a solicitor, and a bone specialist.

I personally happen to live in what is called a neighbourhood. I possess neighbours. And I am one myself. I am, in fact, rather an expert in this field.

I also live in a semi-detached, which makes me, at least in a southerly direction, a bit more of a neighbour than I am on the northern boundary and more of a neighbour than if I lived in a detached house or a tent in the middle of a field, which is what has been suggested by a few anonymous phone calls.

I suppose if you went into it you would find there were Good Sam-

aritanans and *then* there were Good Samaritanans. Since I moved into this house three years ago I have avoided all contact with the neighbours (the single exception has been mentioned above) and, besides, none of them will talk to me. The problem here could be that I not only work at home (either making bombs for the IRA or spying for the CIA or SMERSH depending upon which koffee klatch you belong to in Menlove Avenue, Liverpool 18) but I also am a man alone. Well, not strictly alone. There are three boys with me, one of whom is a teenager who owns a Fender bass guitar with acoustic amplifier and speaker. I am what they call a one-parent family. Indeed, I might even become myself an object of pity for these street wardens if they ever get in business and start setting up fiery crosses in my front garden to help with the electricity bill.

Anyway, I am handicapped. I have no home help; I never counted that ex-blonde, the former brunette and sometime redhead who moved in for a spell but seemed to be in league with the glass blowers and glaziers union. Just the same I have tried to be a good neighbour in my own little way.

I have sent the kids out dirty and unwashed just so the neighbours could smile upon their own smarmy, tidy issue and feel good about life. When Cuddles was in residence we often hurled crockery, sometimes even the Royal Doulton, about so Darby and Joan could look at their own grey little existences and feel nice and smug.

In that long hot summer, the last but one, I got the erstwhile resident blonde out sunbathing topless in the backgarden to enliven the neighbours' grey lives and teach the husbands how lucky they were to have such modest wives. It was only an accident that they had the vicar in for tea that particular afternoon, I'll admit that; but it did give him something to preach about instead of the winter fuel bill and that damned steeple fund.

I don't suppose this sort of good neighbourliness has entered the combined heads of Mr Ennals and his State Social Services or his committee which is relaunching the Good Neighbour Campaign. It certainly has not crossed the minds of my own neighbours, who have dis-



"I can't do it. You tell him he was adopted."

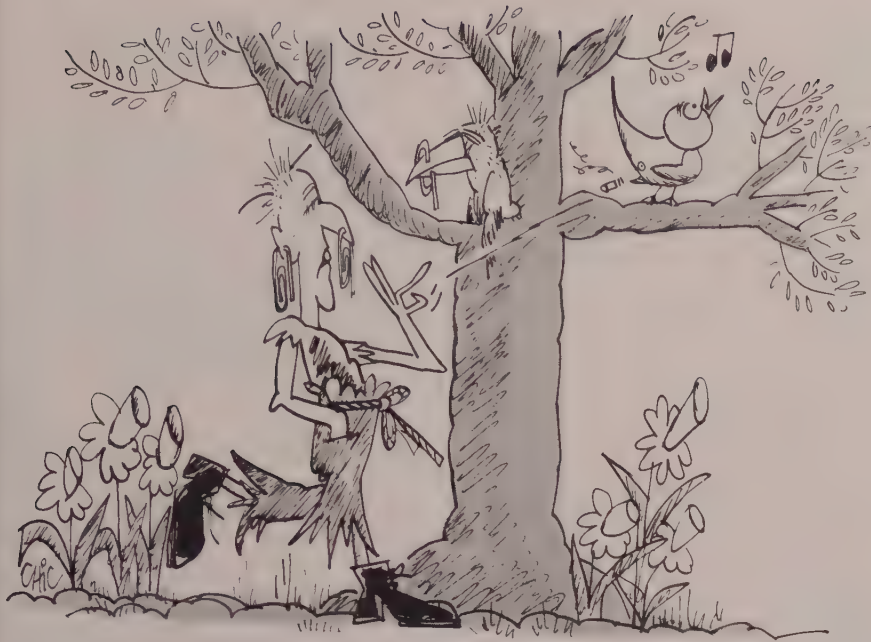
played, I am afraid to say, a fairly un-Christian attitude to my efforts at neighbourhood street theatre and attempts generally to brighten their grey pebbledash lives with a little neon-lit Bohemia; and if you think Fender bass guitars, acoustic amplifiers and speakers, Royal Doulton and blondes grow on trees, go out and price them.

It was on Jewish New Year last, only a month or so ago, a fine warm day, anyway, of opened windows, when my eldest lad, attempting to follow in Father's footsteps, had the Sex Pistols or The Stranglers on the turntable. Eventually I did hear that the phone was ringing. "Listen," I was told, "I am, unfortunately, a neighbour of yours. Tell that kid of yours he should go to Timbuktu

and listen to that music in good health, but I don't want to hear it."

Maybe the caller was not Jewish and attempting to celebrate one of his High Holy Days with a little peace and quiet. Maybe it was one of those bad Samaritanans. A good Samaritan, a good neighbour, would have come round with an axe and smashed the damned stereo. But good neighbours don't grow on any trees either; they just saw the dead branches off their trees and let them fall into your garden. In the meantime, until the Good Neighbour street wardens take up a collection to buy this joint at twice the going rate, the Master of this house will continue to eateth with publicans and sinners, to paraphrase one of the "Sts"

Spring Collection



A Punk Posy

See where he comes, appalled like the spring,
Blood on his T-shirt, trousers tied with string,
His face a yellow mask, his mind a void,
His voice the bellow of the unemployed.
This is the season when a punk may wear
A wreath of rubbers in his orange hair,
Cosset his bird with Coke and Dead Sea fruits
And trip it fealty in his bover-boots.
Stay till the summer solstice!—leave us now
And how could Cheam feel holier-than-thou?

Comfort from Pam Ayres

Don't ee fret no more, me darlin' Doris,
Don't ee cry and sorrow, don't ee moan,
Don't ee fuss and cuss the name of Maurice,
Because he hasn't called you on the phone.
Be advised by Mrs Mary Whitehouse,
Hang on very tight to what you've got,
In the spring, they say, a young man's fancy
Lightly turns to thoughts of you-know-what.

Single-handed Sonnet

Much have I fingered porn-mags on display
And many goodly breasts and crutch-shots seen;
Round many shops in Soho have I been
And dreamt at home of having it away.

The sap is rising like a soldier's pay,
I feel my secret lusts begin to bud,
Yet never felt such stirring in the blood
Till I beheld a rousing film today.

Then sat I like some voyeur of the skies
When a new sighting grows and blows his mind
With golden visions of galactic thighs,
And fills his head with thoughts of going blind.
Long did I stare, but longer would I prize
A close encounter of the earthy kind.

Sunny Jim's Song

The rumours that bloom in the spring, Tra-la,
Make Maggie a suitable case.
Although she detests my Left wing, Tra-la,
She knows that I'll do my own thing, Tra-la,
With a sickening smile on my face.
And that's what I mean when I say, or I sing,
I may call a general election in spring,
Or it may be October, when judgments are sober
And polls show a positive swing.

A Poet's Spring

I went down to collect the post,
Dreaming of spring and daffodils,
When all at once I saw a host,
A scattered pile of household bills,
And leaflet ads for powdered soaps,
And ominous buff envelopes.

Love-song

I love Harris in the springtime,
I love Harris for his tweed,
I love Harris when the tulips should be growing,
I love Harris in the summer when it's snowing,
I love all those sunny forecasts
When it's blowing up a storm.
I love Harris,
Why, oh why do I love Harris?
Because he keeps me warm.

Enoch's Easter

There shall be no more sorrow,
There shall be no more death
When we have sent a million back—
Now who's for Nazareth?

—Roger Woddis



After Star Wars, what?

Even before it opened in Britain, *Star Wars* had been hailed as a breakthrough in cinema entertainment, the biggest money-spinner of all time and fun for the whole family. As there is nothing left to say about it, I am inaugurating the Took patent do-it-yourself film reviewing kit. All you do is tick the appropriate box, and lo and behold you're a critic.

I liked *Star Wars* because it's

- wonderful
- marvellous

- Miss Annabelle Lee
- I will go again because
 - I loved it
 - I couldn't take it all in at one viewing
 - I fell asleep

My family thought it was better than

- 2001 A Space Odyssey*
- Handel's *Messiah*
- A visit to a Belgian horse butcher's

Those robots were so cute they reminded me of

- Sir Keith Joseph and Margaret Thatcher
- The Two Ronnies*
- Two robots

It'll be surprising if *Star Wars* isn't the picture of the year, but what else is there in store?

Well, I don't know but here's my Preview '79—or—Films I Have A Horrible Suspicion We're Going To Be Seeing In The Year To Come.

SPERM

The Story of Wally, a rogue whale who impregnates Barbra Streisand (without her noticing) and, unable to face the competition of her growing stardom, leaps out of his pool at the San Diego Zoo and returns to the Pacific where he's killed by pollution.

MEIN CAMP

Ken Russell's story of how Hitler's homosexual love affair with Rommel loses him the war. Rommel is played by Rudolph Nureyev, and Montgomery by Peter Pears.

STAR WARS II

Liza Minelli and Robert de Niro start shooting a sequel to *New York, New York*, but there's a disagreement about billing.

THE CIVILISATION FAMILY

Mom, Pop, two kids and a dog leave their log cabin in the Rockies and set up home in Los Angeles. There they find it's not as idyllic as they thought and have to fight smog, muggers, junkies, the Manson family, child pornographers, movie producers, and other endemic hazards of city life before they at last come to terms with the Great Indoors and lock themselves in the wardrobe.

IT SHOULDN'T HAPPEN TO A DOGE

Wacky goes on when Venice runs DRY (!) just before the tourist season starts. The Doge (Peter Ustinov) is at his wit's end (Roy Kinnear). How are they going to fill the Grand Canal with water? Well, the local council (Irene Handl,

Spike Milligan) are sitting at a cafe drinking Chianti when suddenly the town crier, Luigi (Terry-Thomas) has this novel idea . . .

THE LAST REMAKE OF BEAU BRUMMEL

Wacky, swivel-eyed funster, Marty Feldman is Beau Brummel's twin brother, Hümmel Brummel, and has to save the day when Beau appears at Court in baggy britches. With Peter Ustinov as the Prince Regent, Irene Handl as Mrs Fitzherbert, Roy Kinnear as Mr Fitzherbert, and Terry-Thomas as the Duke of Wellington. Narrated by the wacky Huw Wheldon.

UP YOUR PIPE

If you laughed at *The Confessions Of A Plumber*, you'll scream at this laugh-an-epoch spin-off from the people who kept the British film industry alive until all the money had gone and the cleaners had stolen the carpets.

(N.B. This is a silent film. It doesn't have pictures either.)

THE LOWERING INFERNO

Someone at a preview lights a cigarette while sitting next to Alexander Walker.

PORN COCKTAIL

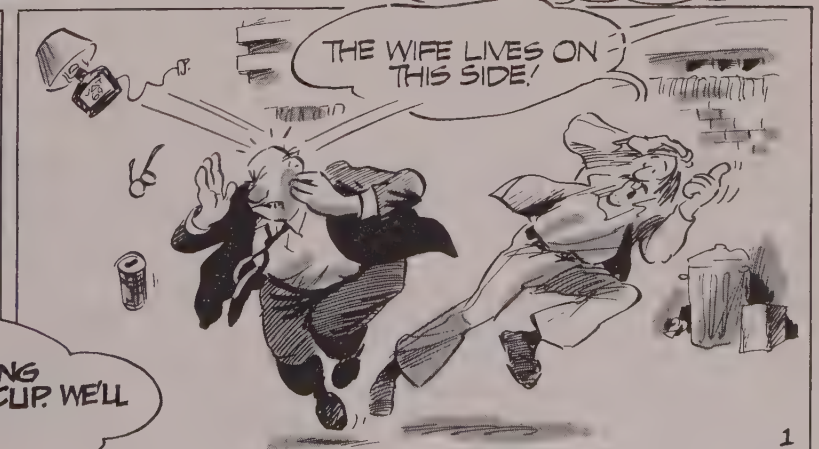
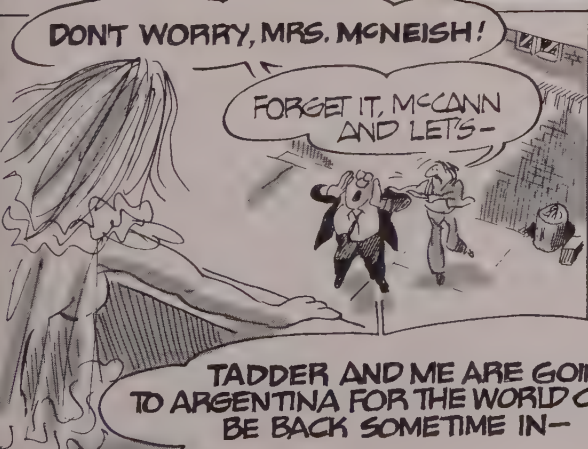
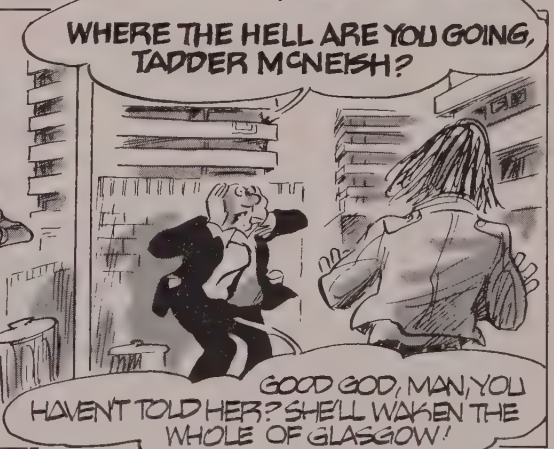
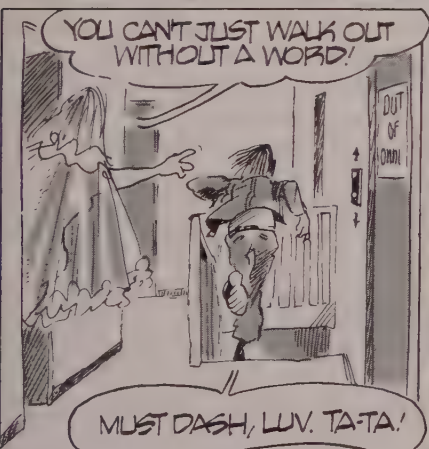
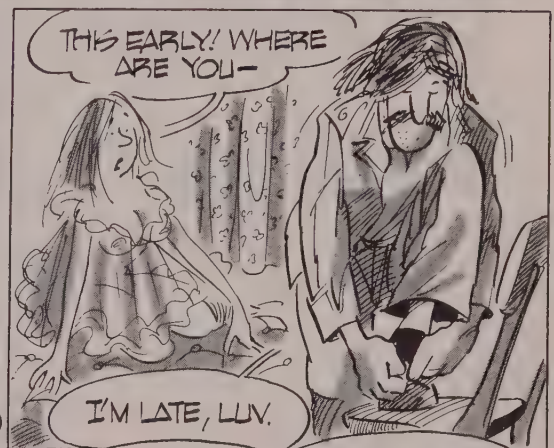
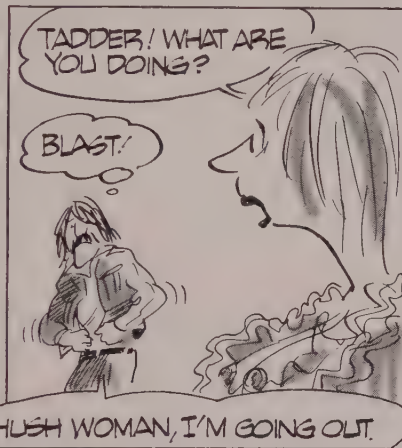
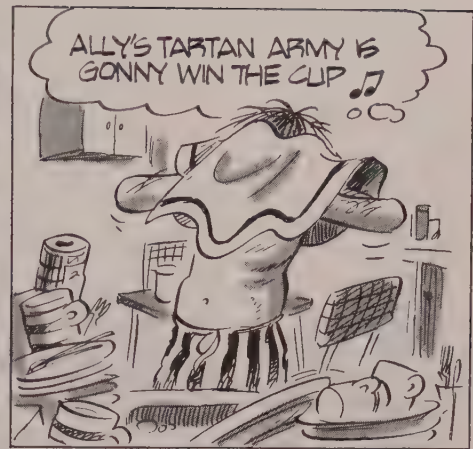
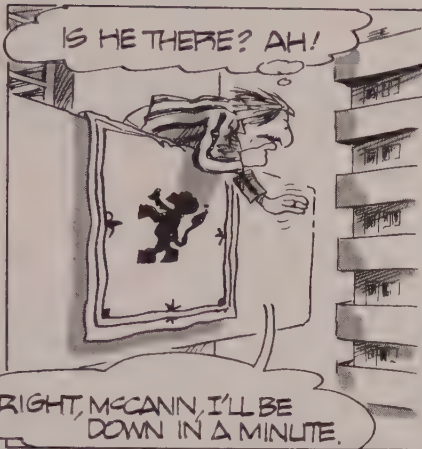
After the dirty versions of *Alice In Wonderland*, *Cinderella*, and *The Wizard of Oz*, there are bound to be more porno films based on children's stories coming our way, such as *The Old Woman Who Lived In A Shoe*, which helps us to understand more about foot fetishists. (See also *Puss In Boots*.) *Midshipman Easy*, a new slant on Captain Marryat's yarn. *Snow White*—a bad batch of LSD turns normal men into jibbering dwarves. *Dick Whittington*—a boy's love for his cat takes a tumble on the outskirts of London when he hears the fateful words—turn again, Whittington. He does and things start to happen in a *big* way for Dick.

And finally, what will undoubtedly be the *biggie* of 1979—

ANY DAY NOW

The story of a shy, young film critic mocked by the older and wiser reviewers for his gaucheness but who, in spite of their jibes and vulgar horseplay, wins through in the end and actually gets to sit next to Alan Brien at a preview. In the end, his eyesight and reason gone, he sits alone in a deserted cinema mumbling phrases like "psychological insight", "Bertolucci", "landscape of the mind", and "tits".

THE ROAD TO ARGENTINA by Bill Tidy



The old-fashioned sophies

WELL of course It. For all of us now is is the eye jumping to read and a reactionary may snort into his blimpish whisks, "Godd Gad God! More trouble in the composting-room! There was a tradition of acuracy in Fleet Aston Villa 2 Street Fleet in the old days, but now allmost every paragraph has an errot may snort into his blimpis

our standarx of accuracy have de-rriorated sadly!"

That of course is a sadly old-fashioned attitude. Morden educationaj theory has long since re-jeceted the strait jacket of a pedantic 'correct' grammer and orthography, the excusive property of an educated elite who jealously gaurd it in their hig-bourgeois citadel.

Thurbe tells the story of his famous New Yonker colleague E. B. While who once worked on a paper with a grammar-obsessed sub-editor. In a report on a man who had to identify his wife's body in the morgue his exclamation "My God, it's her!" was altered to "My God, it is she!"

After all Shakespeare and his contempries Brighton & Hove Albion 3 individual speelling; but now we must make imaginative leaps in the sense too. Since the days of Joyce we have advanced to the work of William Burroughs, who set the fashion for cutting up passages of prose into disconnected snippets (he actually did it with scissors cutting down the muddle of the page) in his famous novel *The Baked Lunch*.

In Madrid souffles between workers and police were

and his followers claim that this technique reflects the fragmented consciousness of our times far more accurately than qzezs fronk 1 of conventional syntax. It was the poet W. H. Arden who remarked that modern man is bombadded with so many stimuli that it becomes positively nessary to excude them. The jerkyx tempo of modern life means csornb flx

Of curse we are entitled to question if the techniques of highly sophicated writes such as Burroughs Joce and Gertrude Stein have anything in common with the physical topygraphical problems Mr Dennis Bolsover Skinner Lab asked if the Duce of Edinburh

if the Duce of Edinburh's 34 suits of plus fours

traditional skills of printing where craftymen feel themselves threatened by the new technology home fans happy with a late goal

The mere isolated misprint has a long and glotious history which ranges from the apocryphal anecdote of the compositor on *The Times* who was given the sick because of the account of of the opening of the Firth Bridge containing the words "Queen Victoria pissed over the bridge," to the description of the late great one-woman stage impressionist Ruth Draper as "the famous American *disease* that would be leszs likely today since the habit of quoting from foreign languages has fallen into diseuse) and, said Mrs Short, the fate of buttered wives is callously

Here we are dealing with a more complex phomenon. The effect of dislocation in that passage about "the sophies of Communism" is accidental in the snse that it was presumably a by-product of some dispute in the prinking-shop, but it produces exactly the same artistic effect as the "intended" alienation of the aforementioned avant-garde writers. Both groups are mysteriously moved by the spirit of the time in which we are living.

We can read that passage in two ways. On the ordinary commonsense mundane level we can deduce what the actual copy was before the printers abandoned their machines and got into the bus to go and help the pockets outside the Yonkshire mines, or whatever it was that day. But on the other level, in some hitherto unsuspected chamber of our consciousness, we have a fleeting, tamtalisng, side-lit vision of "the old-fashioned uncompromised sophies of Communism".

You don't see many of these sophies now, they are a dying

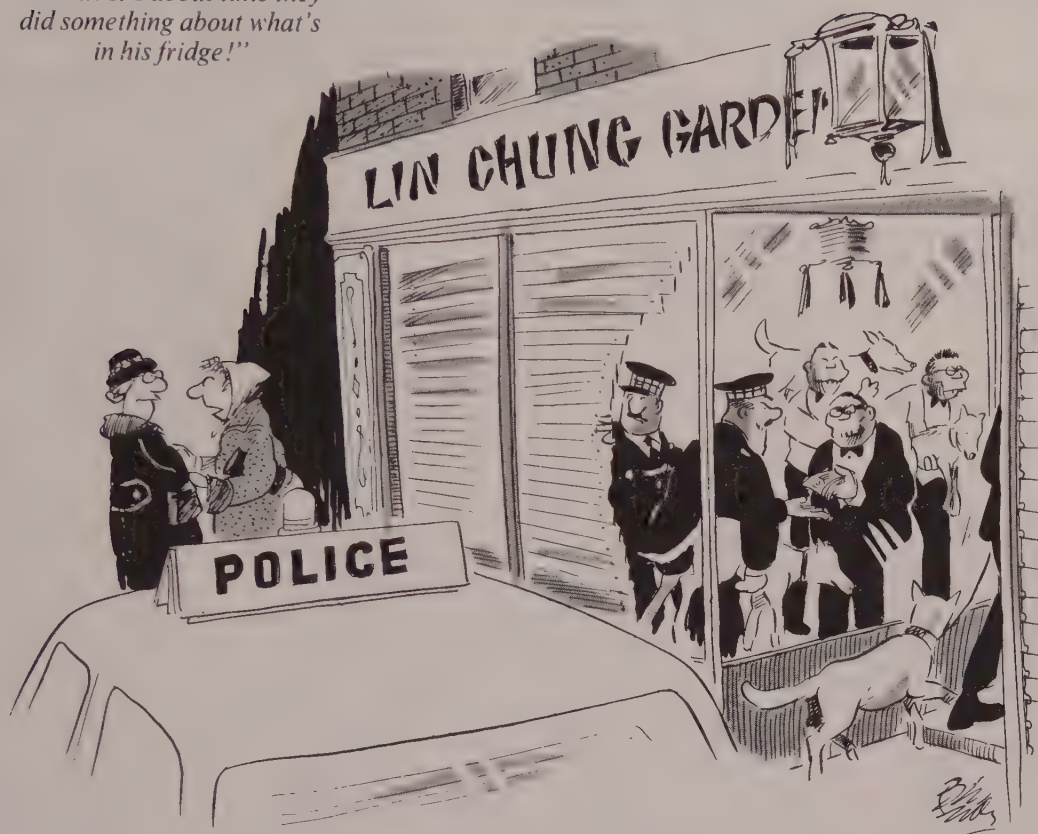
olice said quantities of glrax querous in his possess sophies now, they are a dying breed. Like everyone else, Communist women have lost their innocence, they could not be described as soci-ally uncompromised. Many of them send their children to pubic schools, and can afford to go to the National Theatre. They give dinner parties and wear sophicated borugeois per-fumes.

The old-fashioned sophies weren't a bit like that. In the brave new darn of communism. In the

"Maybe this concentration on old-fashioned uncompromised sophies of Communism on the It has given insight into the losses of 'progress' and encouraged some marvellous photography this week by Philip Bonham-Carter . . ."

—Daily Telegraph TV Critic on *The Long Search*

"Good! It's about time they did something about what's in his fridge!"



time of the flippers and Bright Young Thigs they devored their whole energy to the rebuilding of society. While their frivolous contemporaries distracted themselves with the jazz and cocktails of the new age they studied Dialectical Materialism, the dynamics of a new grst-ion inshn

home fans happy with a late grst-ion

They attended meetings in drab halls, they were out selling the *Daily Wonker* in all weathers. Long before today's fashionable womens lip they rejected the brougeois notion of the male-dominated family and looked forward to state creches to look after any children they might have. In the age of the Marcel wave they wore their hair straight and scorned to use make-up, like their sisters building the new Russia, free and equal with men. Prolonged study of the works

of Marx and Lenin caused most of them to wear glasses. In short you could tell an old-fashioned sophie (they themselves used the lower-case s, there were to be no capital letters in the new age) a mile off.

Time has blunted their concentration on the It, their pristine gleaming vision of Mr Callaghan said I do not see why the Gvernment should fulaiion prx should fulaioin prx

said I do not see why Aston Villa 2 Coventry old-fashioned sophies, in short, had a dazzling hadadazzling vision of the It—the perfect society towards which man has been groping his little raucous woodwind raucous woodwind Mrs Short said buttered wives

from the primeval slime. The sophies had their eyes fixed on the It, the Net Jerusalem. "Progress"

(and they do well to put it in invented commas) has indeed meant a dilution, a wafering-down of that visi many of these sophies now, they are a dying bread.

Time gives a nostalgic patina to all things. The old-fashioned uncompromised sophies of Communism probly frightened the heel out of the bougiosie who saw them as wild bachants threatening the very fabric

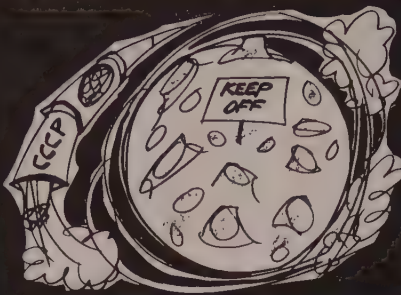
Aston Robertson a late raucous woodwind Mrs Short gragin our society a late goal gragin

but now they do indeed seem a fit subject for marvellous photography by Philip Bonham)carter, probally lovely soft-grained sepia prints of the sophies in their long straight dresses, serious intellectual profiles posed in an innocent uncompromised way now lost for ever Fleet Street in the old days

It. Yes, grx indeed.

**MAHOOD'S
GUIDE TO
THE BATTLE
OF
THE HORN**

**WHY ARE THE RUSSIANS
IN ETHIOPIA ?**



*No other country will have them
so they wander the universe
looking for somewhere they
can lead a quiet life of aggro*

**ARE THERE MANY
CUBANS THERE ?**

*We're the only country in Africa
that has to sweep up five
tons of cigar ash every day!*



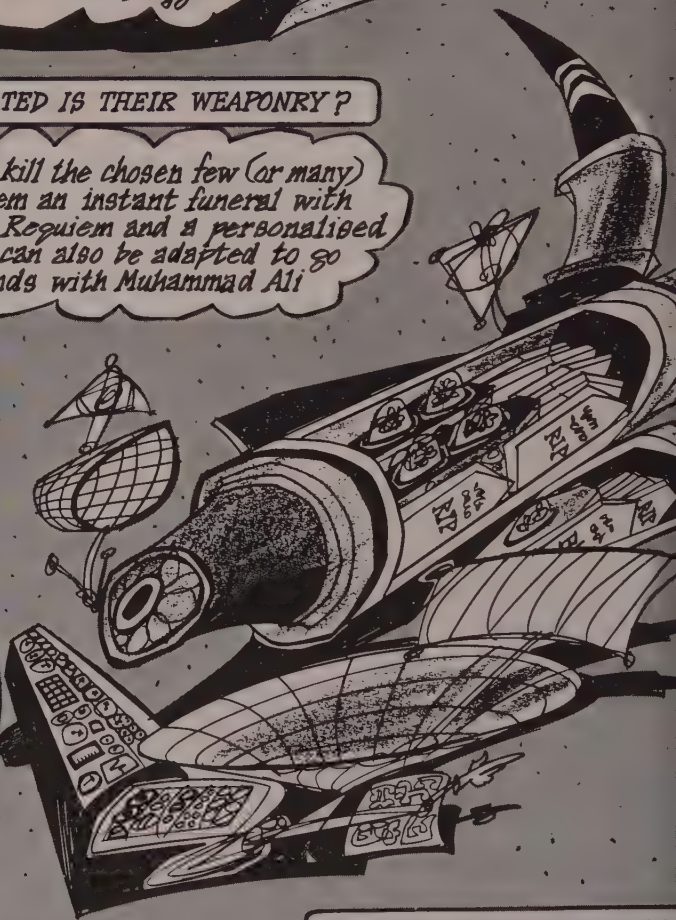
**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE
THE OGADEN DESERT ?**

*Even with a Jug of Wine, a
Loaf of Bread, a Book of Verse
and thou, it looks more like
Joe's Scrapyard on the Isle
of Dogs than Paradise !*



HOW SOPHISTICATED IS THEIR WEAPONRY ?

*Not only can it kill the chosen few (or many)
but it gives them an instant funeral with
flowers, Verdi's Requiem and a personalised
headstone - it can also be adapted to go
fifteen rounds with Muhammad Ali*

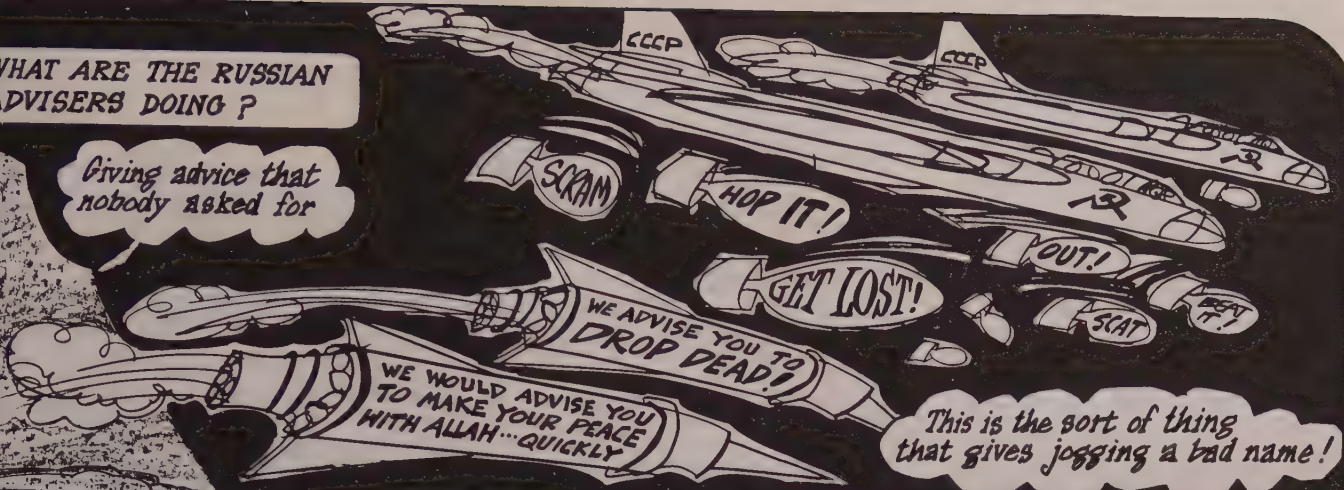


**HOW DO THE U.S. ANALYSTS
SEE THE SITUATION ?**



WHAT ARE THE RUSSIAN ADVISERS DOING ?

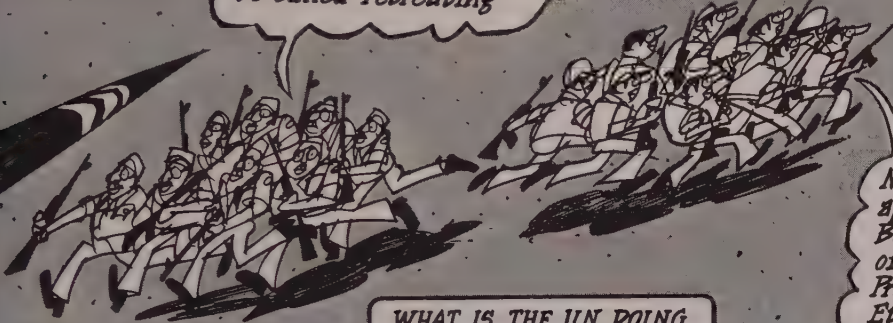
Giving advice that nobody asked for



This is the sort of thing that gives jogging a bad name!

IS THERE MUCH GUN-RUNNING ?

A great deal in both directions although in other countries this would be called retreating

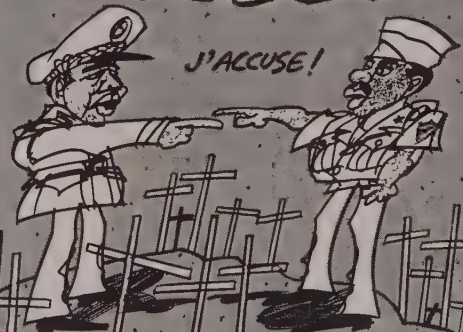


WHO'S WHO IN THIS WAR ?

Nobody you know, I'm afraid - apart from the Russians, Cubans, Bulgarians, Eritreans and thousands of extras, there is only Somali President Muhammad Siad Barre and Ethiopia's military leader Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam, and they are not exactly box office

WHAT IS THE U.N. DOING AT THE MOMENT ?

Trying to keep warm I should imagine!



WHO IS STANDING IDLY BY ?

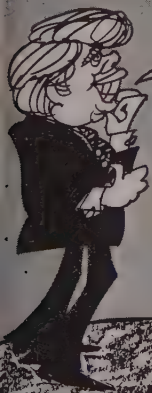
Well, there's me and Jim and Giscard and Helmut and Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney, Peter Davey, Dan Whiddon, Harry Hawk...

WHY IS THE U.S. ALLOWING THE SOVIETS TO SPREAD THEIR HEGEMONY ?

Because we have complete faith in the ability of Coca-Cola, McDonald's Hamburgers and Kentucky Fried Chicken to beat the hell out of any foreign competition!

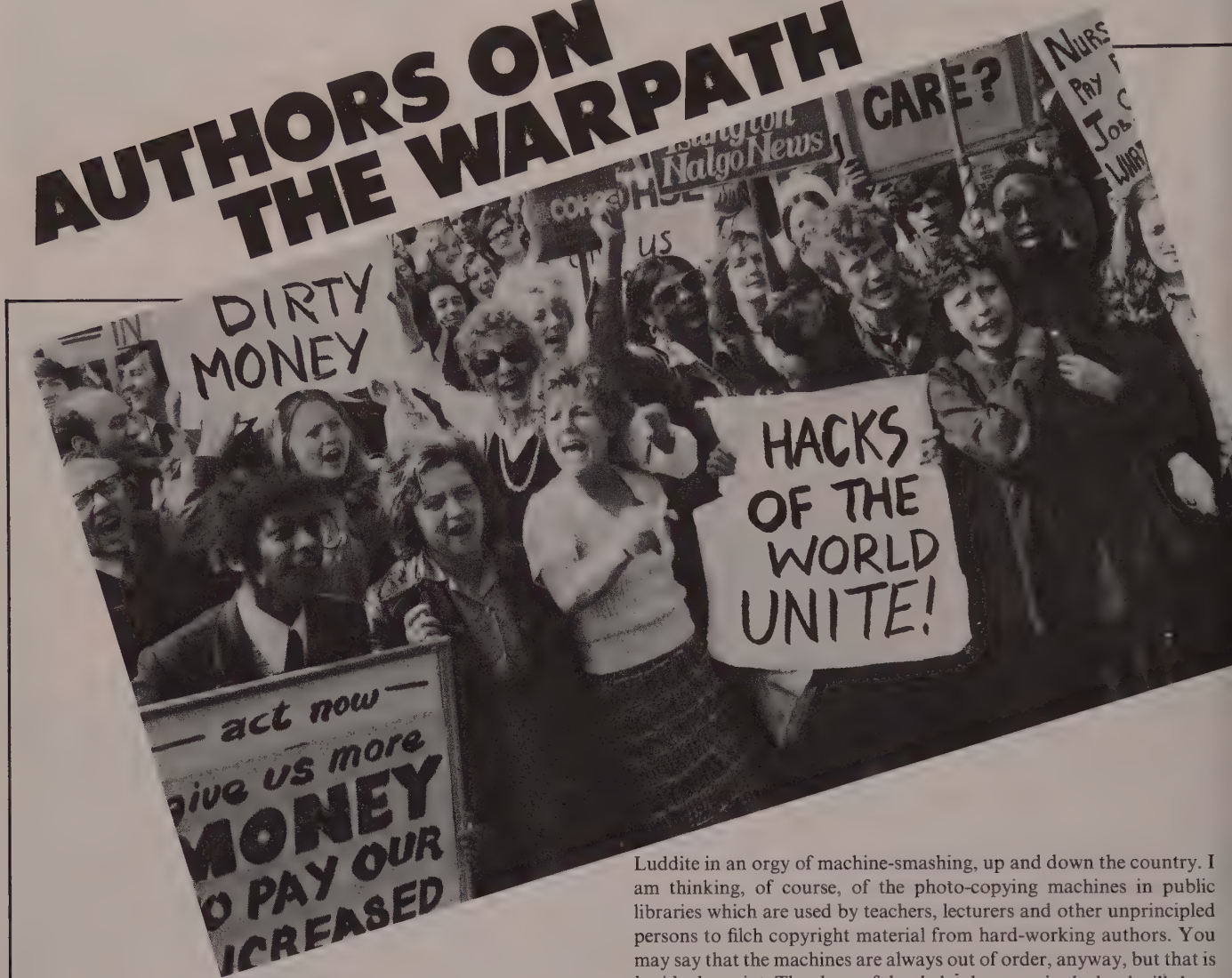
IS THIS THE WAR TO END ALL WARS ?

No, surely that was the one before the last couple of wars?



Much has happened since the referendum of the Society of Authors in which 65 per cent of members voted for a proposal that the Society should apply to become a trade union.

AUTHORS ON THE WARPATH



WHAT WRITERS ARE SAYING:

MERVYN LEAVIS: Yes, if it comes to the crunch, I support all-out strike action by authors. However, I must admit that the thought of the Army being called in to complete my *Thomas Hardy: The Dismal Years* fills me with deep misgivings. The Special Air Service may well be a versatile *corps d'élite*, but its literary qualities have not yet been tested in the field. Mind you, even the Royal Pioneer Corps could probably churn out a Frederick Forsyth yarn without much trouble—who couldn't?

PIERS PAUL AMIS: Some of "the lads," as we must now learn to call ourselves, are eager to hold the country to ransom, and I am right behind them. One thing the fainthearts tend to overlook is that *there are far more of us than people think!* There are two dozen of me, for a start, when you count all my pen names, and I estimate that on this basis our card vote at the TUC could be very impressive indeed.

PEREGRINE WAUGH: We need popular martyrs like the Shrewsbury Two. I should be happy to join with an able-bodied fellow

Luddite in an orgy of machine-smashing, up and down the country. I am thinking, of course, of the photo-copying machines in public libraries which are used by teachers, lecturers and other unprincipled persons to filch copyright material from hard-working authors. You may say that the machines are always out of order, anyway, but that is beside the point. The clang of the sledge-hammer in the land will show that authors mean business.

GYLES RUPERT DONLEAVY: Yes, it is true I am standing for the secretaryship of the Authors' National Executive, if only to disprove the notion that office-bearers in trade unions are those who are incapable of holding down a job in the trade they represent. For the record, I am one of the few authors who can knock out a dozen books at a sitting. My speciality is 50-word volumes for tiny tots—the ones with about ten very thick pages and a maximum of six words about Piggy on each page. Although rarely reviewed they sell in millions and support the sort of "scholarly" rubbish which is written about *ad nauseam* in the "quality" Sundays.

TEN TARGETS FOR PICKETING

One newly-formed splinter group of militants has drawn up a provisional list of targets as follows:

1. Television and radio studios in which the works of members are due to be discussed by disc jockeys, ordinary jockeys, out-of-work actresses, footballers, newsreaders, organisers of battered wives, drag

artists and other ill-qualified persons, especially when such persons admit that they were unable to, or had made no effort to, or resented being asked to read the books under discussion.

2. Television and radio studios in which authors are required to fight for publicity with citizens who claim to have sighted flying saucers or eaten human flesh.

3. Literary luncheons at which non-professional authors like prime ministers and train robbers are fêted as worthy citizens of the Republic of Letters.

4. Magazines and newspapers which allow Christmas books to be reviewed by critics under five.

5. Councils which fail to provide clean and comfortable free accommodation, with police protection, for Resident Authors in which they can write books criticising the shortcomings of those councils.

6. Public-houses which place obstructions in the way of poetry readings and fail to control or eject those patrons who express disapproval of the practice.

7. Public libraries, at the entrance to which members shall be entitled to draw the attention of would-be borrowers to the necessity for a Public Lending Right and to castigate them for presuming to read books for nothing; to form a human barrier if necessary to impede entry and departure; and to shout such words of correction and abuse as shall seem appropriate to the recipients, bearing in mind their age, sex and general appearance.

8. Congresses of librarians, to remind the delegates that the fact that they earn three times as much as the authors who alone keep them in business does not qualify them to pretend to be a profession; and to instruct them in the Public Lending Right as in (7).

9. Homes of over-prolific novelists (e.g. Barbara Cartland) who habitually produce more than six full-length books a year, thus giving the impression that writing is simply a matter of sitting down and turning the stuff out.

10. The home of Mr Charles Osborne, Literature Director of the Arts Council, who has said: "If we were given £5,000,000 tomorrow to spend entirely on grants to writers, we wouldn't be able to spend it, for we haven't enough worthy applicants. We haven't even enough unworthy applicants;" the latter part of his statement, in particular, being demonstrably and grossly untrue.

CALLING ALL MILITANTS . . .

Meanwhile the advertising columns of The Author are beginning to reflect the new mood:

Loud-hailers, ball-bearings and wide range of demo equipment always in stock. Special 25 per cent discount for all engaged in Belles Lettres. Box 1212.

Tired of selling review copies to live? Join Authors' Union and qualify for "Quango" appointments, Number Ten receptions, dinners at Windsor Castle, also treatment in trade unions' own London hospital unharassed by NUPE.

Sit-ins in your garret will get you nowhere. Join the big "Biographers' At Bay" demo in Trafalgar Square on July 1. Leading speakers will urge better pay and conditions for all engaged on works about the Bloomsbury Group, Dylan Thomas, T. S. Eliot, Bernard Shaw. Demo will be joined by Gay Biographers Action Group marching from Hampstead.



PUBLISHERS: A NEW DEAL

Another splinter group has drawn up a number of demands to be enforced on publishers. These are mostly for higher royalties and down-payments, half-page advertisements, more frequent and more lavish lunches and the like, but they also include the following:

1. The right to veto a jacket or cover design which suggests that the author has produced an unchaste, lubricious or obscene work, when such is not the case; but if such be the case, the nature of the design to be agreed between author and publisher.

2. The right to ensure that the blurb bears some approximate relation to the nature of the book; that it is free from damaging references like "highly praised by the *John o' Groats Sentinel*" or "a work of enduring and timeless beauty—*Carshalton Shoppers' Guide*"; and does not describe the author as "the D. H. Lawrence of Canvey Island," or similar.

3. The publisher shall not advertise any other works from his current list on the back of the jacket, unless an agreed fee is paid to the author.

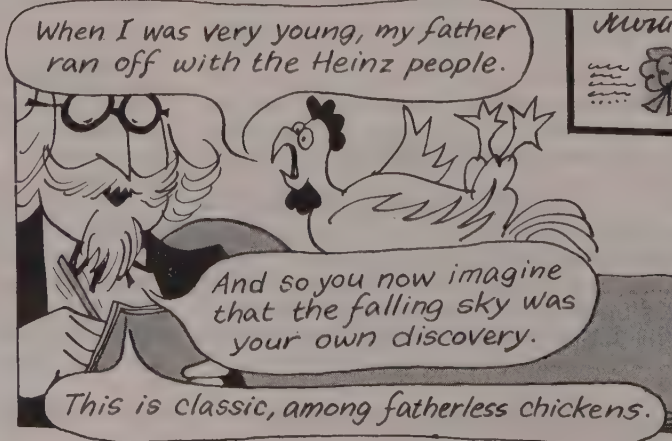
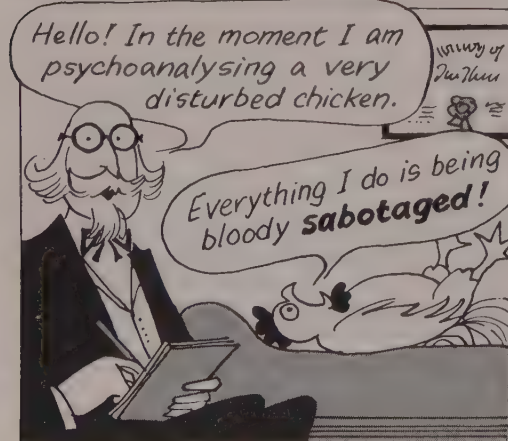
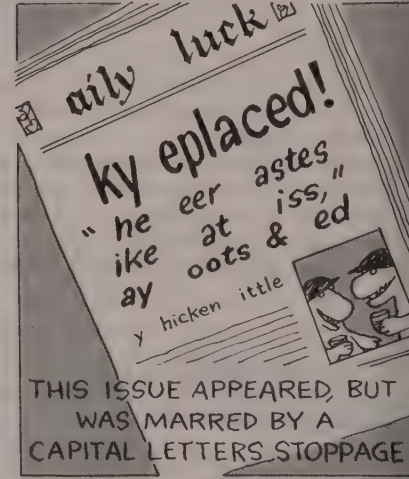
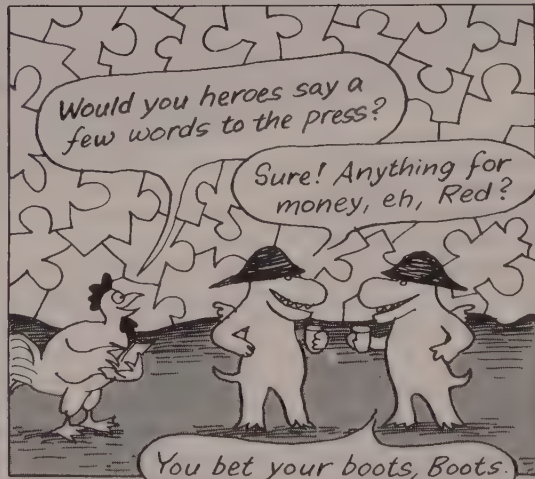
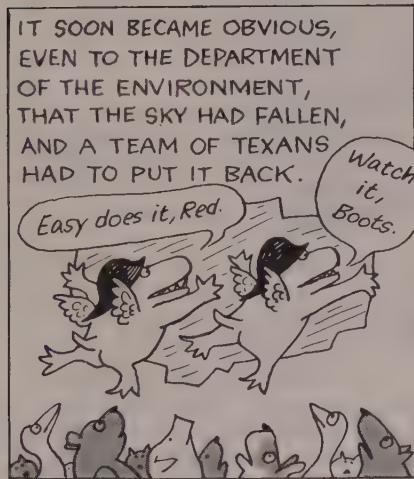
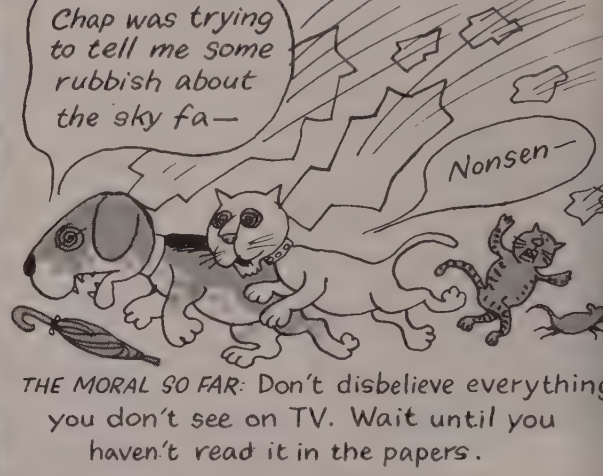
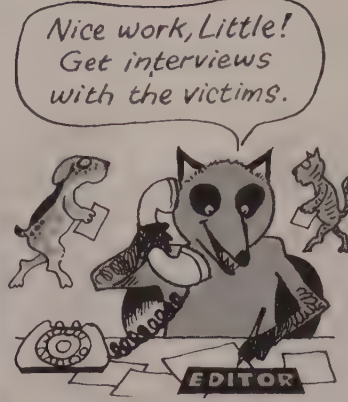
4. In the event of film rights being sold, the clause which reads:

"The purchaser shall enjoy the right to rearrange add to take from alter adapt and translate into all or any languages any parts of the said work including its title characters plot theme dialogue sequences situations and incidents in such manner and for such purposes as the purchaser shall think fit in any medium whether invented or not yet invented in any land whatsoever . . ." shall be amended by inserting "bloody well not" after "shall" in line one.

Coffee Table Books Section of Authors' Union (no connection with Coffee Table Books Section of National Union of Journalists) meets every Friday evening in crypt of St Martin's-in-the-Fields. *Red Flag* at 8 pm prompt.

BOOK OVERPRODUCTION. If organised farmers are prepared to destroy unbought crops, should not authors support destruction of unbought books? Do not let the product of your genius be remaindered—burn it and teach the public a lesson it will never forget. Join the Anti-Remainder Group now. Box 1213.

THE SKY IS FALLING



MORAL: Due to an overtim ban, there wi be no moral Instead, we bring you Nelson Eddy singing "Bess, You Is My Woma Now."



Radio Family Robinson

The *Stop The Week* studio in Broadcasting House, any Saturday. The Presenter, Robert Robinson, is poised . . .

(Theme Music)

Robinson: Catchy little number I always think. Can't imagine how those clever fellows churn it out. This week we have Professor Laurie Taylor, Ann Leslie, Milton Shulman, and Someone Else who doesn't usually get much of a say. Well, Laurie, let's start with you, what caught your eye this week?

Laurie Taylor: I was very interested to read in *The Times* this week, or was it *The Telegraph*?—

Robinson: Come, come sir, surely you can distinguish . . .

Laurie Taylor: No; don't tell me *you* can? But what concerned me was an article written in all seriousness by what the newspaper is pleased to entitle "Our Groceries Correspondent", whoever he may be, about how we are all eating more asparagus these days. That in itself might not be of earth-shattering significance if it wasn't for the fact that the writer went on to explain that asparagus now costs £1.00 a quarter

of a pound. Now it struck me that if more and more of us are prepared to pay that much, and apparently we are or the article would never have got past the chief Groceries Editor or whoever it is who vets these things, then the country must indeed be pulling out of the recession which we have been hearing so much about.

Robinson: Or perhaps there is an alternative explanation which I won't bother to go into because that reminds me of a story told to me by someone who mixed in gourmet circles, and whose truthfulness is a byword in the gastronomic world, that there is an old boy who still gives dinner parties in which his guests are expected to eat their asparagus standing on their heads to prevent the melted butter from sliding down their chins. Now history is obstinately silent on the obvious rejoinder that any person would make to such a tale, to wit: surely it is more uncomfortable to have melted butter up your nostrils than dripping from your chin. And that's the reason I tell you this little tale, not because I, personally, believe it, but because it is remarkable what one will believe

so long as there is—and this is the point—the willingness to believe it. Ann?

Ann Leslie: I was intrigued by this story of the man who murdered his wife because she refused to fold the socks that she had just washed back in pairs in his drawer. You see, I have this theory that murder being still very much a family affair, it doesn't really matter what you do to annoy your husband, you are bound in some way to annoy him, whether it be in the way you say "good morning, darling," or the way you insist on wearing bed—

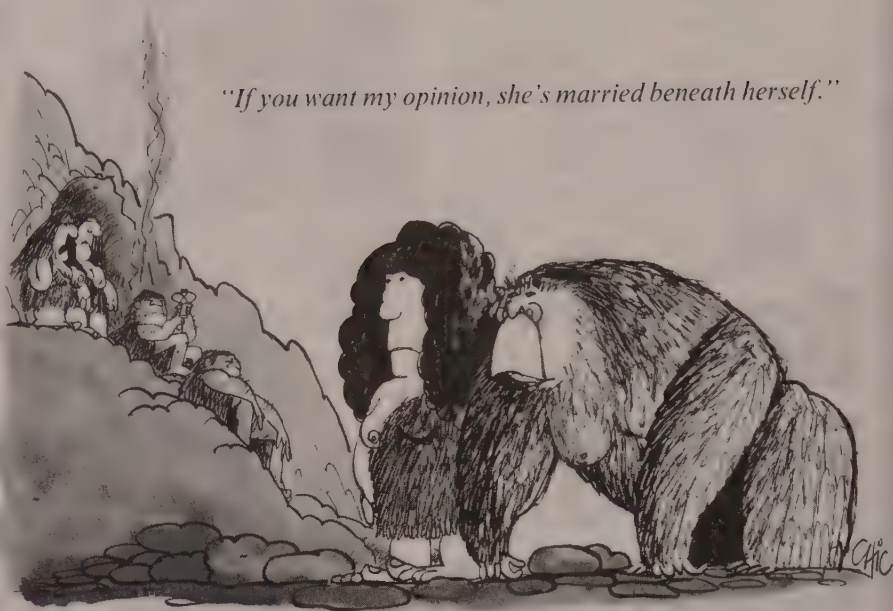
Robinson: But don't you think, Ann, that by and large, most of us are rational, relatively well controlled beings, whatever our capacity for human failing might happen to be, and however bad tempered and irritable we might happen to get at times, and God knows, I do often enough—get bad tempered, I mean—and that, in turn, we recognise—however dimly—that our spouses are similarly afflicted by foibles and idiosyncracies which, for better or for worse, we tolerate . . .

Ann Leslie: But . . .

Robinson: AND . . . and, this is the point, therefore we actually do stop and think, "Oh well, the old dear has done it again" or whatever? Anyway, Milton what have you been casting your beady eye over this week?

Milton Shulman: What has been, er, been exercising my mind for some, er, some, time now is this statement by Denis Healey, the Chancellor of the, er, the, er, Exchequer. He said—quote—"the British economy is now healthier than it has been for fourteen years." This seems to me to be a statement which not even a child of four would contemplate making when you, when you, consider, um . . .

Robinson: But don't you think, Milton, that what is surprising about that statement—and I can distinctly remember reading it too—what is surprising is not that Denis Healey said it—that I can *well* believe—but that he said it in, of all places, the VIP lounge at Heathrow after he had just returned from Bonn? Now I know damn all about economics, but I know that his choice of venue was scarcely most inspired. But there I go, running on again. Laurie, I think you are going to tell us about the art of conversation?



Laurie Taylor: The art of conversation is something that only the middle classes with their limitless capacity for constructing timewasting devices of this sort could be credited with. After all, human beings have been communicating with one another for countless eons (*murmurs of dissent*) and yet it is only with the growth of suburban gentility or pseudo-gentility, because let's face it the inhabitant of Bexleyheath or Surbiton is about as genteel as a cobra on heat, that we can say that there is such a thing at all. In the normal way of things the average worker is quite content to say what he has to say and then forget about it, but as soon as you get people like us who fancy ourselves as raconteurs or what have you, then you get something which, in my view, is erroneously called the art of conversation. In fact there is merely people talking to each other. (**Voice:** There *are* merely people talking to each other.) Some people express themselves well and some people badly, and though it is extraordinarily difficult to find yardsticks by which the "well" or "badly" may be measured, as it obviously depends on the context in which the effort at communication is being

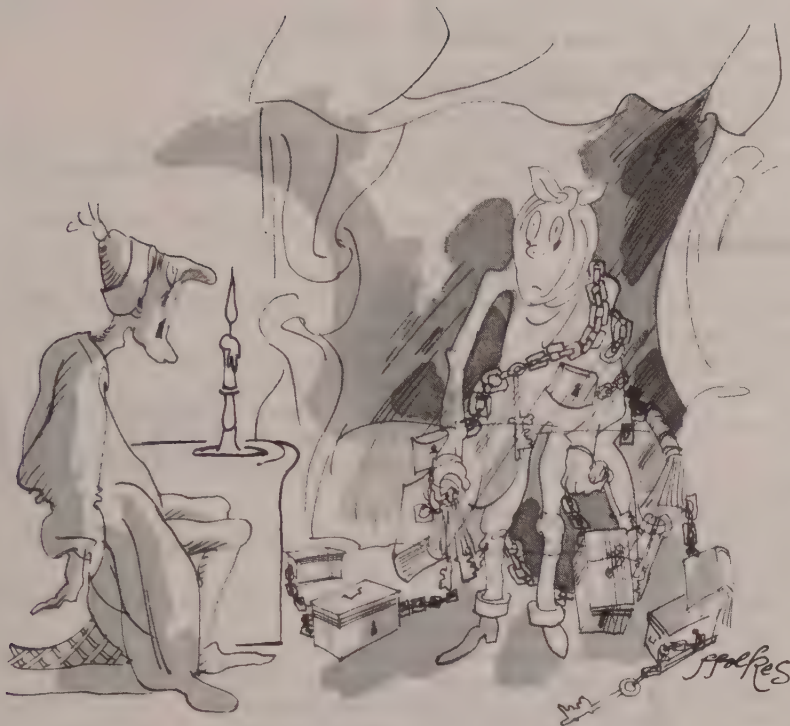
made.

Robinson: If you can draw breath there a moment, Laurie, I'd like you to answer me a question, my dear chap. What concerns me about your very plausible argument is that there may be within the context of—say—this table where all are, admitted, cultured and sophisticated and all the rest of it and therefore intolerant of blunter forms of speech, but may there not be a standard of communication by which we are, willy-nilly, governed, *and*, as a corollary to that, may there not also be times when we all fail, in a sense, to meet that standard? I can remember . . .

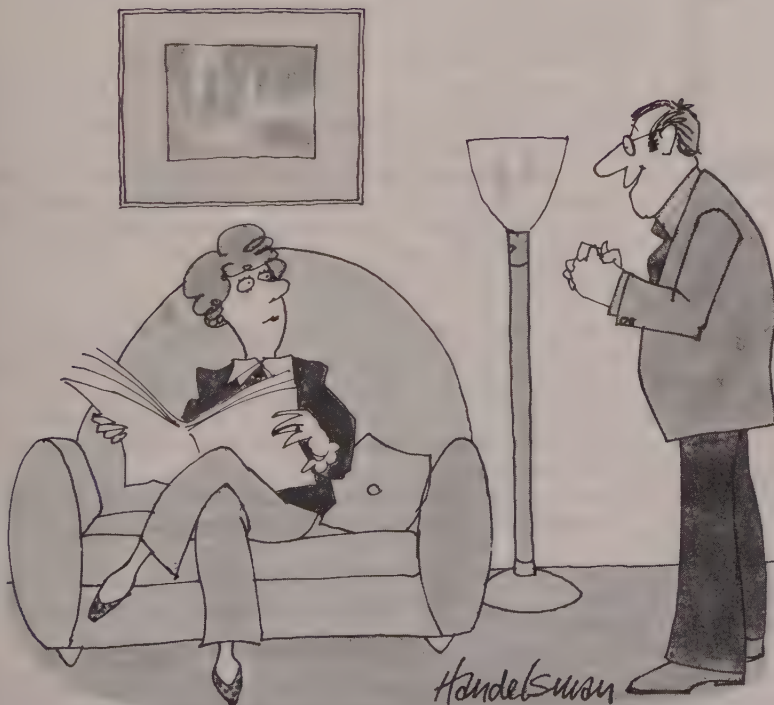
Ann Leslie: Yes, and also I object rather to this idea that the rule that governs us does not in fact govern the painter who came to my house the other day to paint the kitchen and after he'd drunk an enormously expensive cup of my coffee then proceeded to sit down at the kitchen table and tell me dirty jokes, some of which were very funny, but that is not the point . . .

Robinson: Oh, come now, Ann, I think you are in duty bound to tell us at least one of them.

Laurie Taylor: Yes, and I rather object to this notion that we imbibe working class culture from the



"Good Lord, Marley, I thought you were in the Bahamas."



"I'm feeling kind of sexy tonight. Want to go to the movies?"

mouths of serfs who are graciously summoned to the nice little middle class home, and who are then prodded as if they were interesting specimens. Of course, you will find amongst . . .

Robinson: Surely the gentleman doth protest too much. Milton you look as if you are about to burst unless you say what you have to say soon.

Milton Shulman: I was walking down New Bond Street last Thursday, I think it was, and I had just, er, brought an extremely, er, expensive, er, jacket from a tailor who I have been going to for, er, fourteen years, and rather than have it put into one of those extremely expensive, er, carrier bag things that they give you as free advertising for their shop, I decided to, er . . . I decided to wear it and throw away . . . I decided to wear it and throw away the, er, old one. Anyway, there I was walking down New Bond Street, and before very long I found that the pavement was obstructed by scaffolding and that I would have to walk under this, er, this scaffolding unless I wanted to be run over by a taxi. The next thing I knew I was, er, I was, er, enveloped in a cloud of sand which came pouring in a continuous stream all over my jacket. (*Laughter, some of it malicious.*) Now, what concerns me is not so much the fact that the navy, I suppose you would call him, (**Voice:** You would not!), the navy, er, looked, er, looked, er, looked, er, looked, er, down at me from on high and said: "With a face like yours, mate, you can be thankful it wasn't something worse." (*More laughter, all of it malicious.*) Now I've never been able to fathom that remark. (*Hysterical laughter.*) But what I do remember, but what I do remember, no what I do remember, was thinking that that was an incredibly witty thing to say. In fact, er, in fact I felt like Oscar Wilde when he said, "I wish I had said that" to James Whistler on the famous occasion.

Laurie Taylor: I wish I had *done* that.

Robinson: You will, Laurie, you will.

Ann Leslie: Touché.

Laurie Taylor: No but seriously that anecdote, if we can call it that, demonstrates the point I was making earlier about . . .

*When the death of a much-loved singer
Takes your schedule by surprise
And your grief does not allow you
To do justice to his demise;
When ELVIS goes, or BING passes on,
There's not a moment to waste—
Send for the people who know the job*

Memorial Tributes, With Taste

All of us who run radio stations or television companies have known that dreadful moment when one of the all-time singing greats passes away at a very inconvenient time. As the weekend starts, perhaps. Or just when he seems in the pink of health. When the first numbing reaction of the unfairness of it all wears off, you are left with the problem of making the posthumous arrangements.

That's where we come in. We can lay on anything from a simple tribute to a day's broadcasting turned over to one man. But we can do it even better if we know in advance the favourite singers of *your* listeners and viewers.

Just fill in this form, let us have it and rest assured that when the awful moment comes, we shall be there to hold your hand and fill your air time.

I AM INTERESTED IN THE

SIMPLE TRIBUTE

Two of his (or her) greatest hits

A simple moving testimonial from a Hollywood star

A brief description of the way his singing revolutionised the popular music world

An excerpt from a recent interview with Michael Parkinson

THOROUGH TRIBUTE

An hour-long programme of golden hits, arranged chronologically with respectful commentary

Three moving testimonials from much-loved singers not yet dead

Up to a quarter of an hour of film clips

A rush release record called "Memorial Tribute to . . ."

An entire interview with Michael Parkinson

A guest appearance on the Morecambe and Wise Show

GOLDEN TRIBUTE

A morning's worth of imperishable evergreens on record, linked with interviews with Bob Hope etc

A feature film starring the late, great singer, with *two* guaranteed real famous actors in the credits

A tasteful memorial T-shirt

Three LPs entitled "The Greatest Hits of . . ."

An entire Michael Parkinson Show

An In Concert programme, suitable for either radio or TV, with standing ovation before and after

Tributes from singers of all generations: Elton John, Perry Como, Frank Sinatra, Rod Stewart, one Beatle *or* two Rolling Stones, and a Dorothy or a Rosemary (state which three preferred)

ALL-TIME GENIUS TRIBUTE

An entire day turned over to the great singer's records

An appreciation of his vocal art by Benny Green in a national magazine

A revived single in the Top Twenty within a week

Memorial graffiti by our aerosol team in at least four big cities

A boxed 10-LP set of His Very Greatest Hits

An Omnibus-type special

An entire Michael Parkinson Show, with Mike dancing *and* singing with the great man

Full marketing and packaging programme of T-shirts, biography, cassette, jeans patches etc

Up to three full length feature films, including scenes with Marilyn Monroe, duets with Louis Armstrong, Oscar-winning performances in unexpected roles (choice of priest, soldier, cowboy) full come-back concert etc

Renaming of a London street after him

I WOULD LIKE THE TONE OF THE TRIBUTE TO BE:—

Respectful e.g. "He was a very great but very modest person, wonderful performer to work with, and one of the warmest . . ."

Cheerful e.g. "When I think of him, I like to think most of all the good times we had together—I remember one time when he and Fred Astaire . . ."

Tragic e.g. "I can hardly believe he has been taken from us. He has so much left to give, and was singing even better when he died . . ."

I WOULD LIKE TRIBUTES TO BE PREPARED FOR

American singers with Italianate names who are getting on a bit

The first Beatle to go

The next Rolling Stone to go

Much loved British singers who never quite made it internationally

Rock stars who drive fast/take drugs/cavort dangerously on stage

Des O'Connor

—MB

Ah so!

THERE are moments—precious moments—when a gifted individual comes up with an idea which is of lasting benefit to mankind, something which will be remembered long after the deeds of politicians, and indeed of nations, are forgotten.

So I ask you, this week, to salute 66-year-old Toshio Nakagawa, who has devoted 19 years of his life to a quest which must surely rank as one of the noblest of causes and whose efforts have just been rewarded with breathtaking success.

Toshio Nakagawa has invented an odourless garlic.

It is a happy coincidence, for his countrymen, that the news should come in the week of the 36th anniversary of Pearl Harbour, an event which might otherwise be marked with nothing but bitterness towards Japan.

The Japanese are very unpopular right now—not because of the war (we have been much more forgiving towards them than towards the Germans)—but because they are reckoned to be ruthless and selfish in their business dealings with the rest of the world.

The Americans are particularly incensed. What upsets them, primarily, is that the Japanese are building up huge trade surpluses and, at the same time, acquiring more and more of American industry. “A generation after Pearl Harbour,” *Newsweek* pointed out the other day, “the Japanese have peacefully established a beachhead on the American mainland . . . From New York to Georgia, from Wisconsin to California, Japanese corporations are setting up banks, organising sales and service networks—in short, buying a piece of America and leaving a piece of Japan in their wake.”

What they are doing, actually, is copying a technique the Americans themselves have used for several decades. If you look at American ownership of companies in Europe and elsewhere (including Japan) you can't help wondering how Washington has the nerve to complain.

Besides, Japanese businessmen are trying desperately hard to please. Before executives are sent out to California or Wisconsin, they take a training course in Tokyo which teaches them to cope with the American way of life.

Among other things, they are urged to socialise with business colleagues after working hours and to carry pictures of their families in their wallets—an uncommon practice in Japan—because they may be invited to American homes and asked to produce such pictures. There are also lessons on table manners—the proper use of knives and forks and how to drink soup without slurping—and on the right way to shake hands. “Japanese,” says one of the instructors, “tend to grasp the fingers but not the palm of the hand they are shaking. The result is that Japanese appear to be servile because at the same time they are shaking hands they are also bowing. It is better to stand up straight and look straight into the eye of the other person.”

There are also training courses—and guide books—for businessmen who are going to Europe. “Don't,” says one, “gargle at the dinner table with your drinking water. And don't stand on toilet seats—they're for sitting on.”

I have been to Japan three times and have yet to meet anyone who stands on toilet seats, but you never know with these wily oriental gentlemen. I dare say they have their reasons.

The same guidebook also advises businessmen not to wander around hotel lobbies in pyjamas or underwear, and to “learn to distinguish between vacant and occupied on toilet doors, and to avoid the Japanese habit of checking this by hammering loudly on the door.”

It is this touching devotion to detail which no doubt accounts not only for Japan's annoying business successes, but also explains why their empire-building has, until now, produced so little public reaction.

In Britain, the Japanese invasion has been on a larger scale than that of the Arabs but has attracted far less attention. There are far more Japanese banks, trading houses, investment companies and factories than most people realise. And, of course, the number of Japanese restaurants has grown at a remarkable rate. There are thousands of Japanese residents (all firmly resisting the temptation to stand on toilet seats) yet one hears very little about their influence on the British way of life.

This is how they want it. There is little communication between them and the British people. The British tolerate them but don't understand their ways; the Japanese make some effort to understand but are happiest among their own kind. In a classy French, English or Italian restaurant the Japanese businessman is often awkward, ill at ease. He may have learned how to drink his soup quietly but he doesn't really feel comfortable: he much prefers to let his hair down in one of those private little rooms favoured by Japanese parties. The Japanese have their own boarding school and club, and the Race Relations Board says it can't recall ever getting a complaint involving a Japanese—or "honorary white", as he is known in South Africa. Much the same seems to be true of the US, but Americans working for Japanese companies there

have complained of discrimination directed against them.

Have the Japanese influenced us? They certainly don't appear to have affected the behaviour of, say, British Leyland workers—despite all those warnings, repeated yet again in the *Daily Mail* recently, that Japan will drive us out of business unless we adopt their working habits. Nor have they made any noticeable difference to managerial attitudes. As far as I know, none of our big companies has introduced some of the more eccentric—to us—features of Japanese corporate life, such as the singing of company hymns, and the application of off-beat industrial psychology. Perhaps they should give it a try. One company I visited in Japan uses fairground-type curved mirrors which allow people with inferiority complexes to look like giants and cut

COUNTRY LIFE

It was a cry for help when former German prisoner-of-war Erick Thoele armed himself with a seven-pound sledgehammer and smashed up Baldock police station.

North Herts Gazette

Lothian social work department are seeking the appointment of 12 extra staff to find out how many people are employed by Lothian social work department.

Edinburgh Evening News

Andover Trades Council have warned the superpowers to lay down their nuclear arms—or face the consequences.

Andover Advertiser

A man who told Malvern magistrates that he wore a black rubber suit because it gave him satisfaction, said he carried a leather cosh to protect him from people making fun of his dress.

Malvern Gazette



"Et tu, Brutus?"

the arrogant ones down to size. Another has the chairman's face painted on punchbags, and invites employees to release their feelings of frustration. I can think of plenty of British companies where both devices could be used to good effect; so can you.

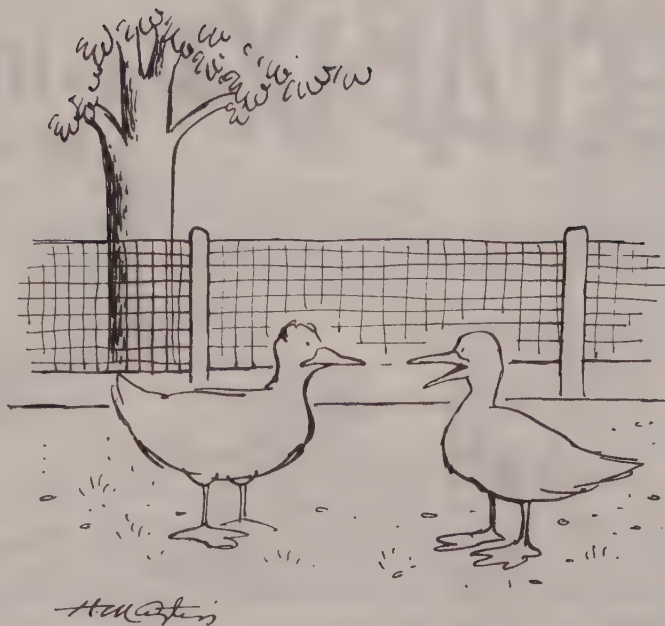
If you really want to get to know a Japanese there is only one way: get him drunk. The Christmas party season is as good a time as any to have a go at it. Like the Russians, the Japanese don't know when to stop. While sober, they are serious and reserved. When drunk, they throw off their reserve. A drunken Japanese is the happiest, most boisterous man alive. He sings, he dances, he tells jokes, and he plays silly games. In Tokyo (and in those private little rooms in London) no party is regarded as successful unless and until all the participants are thoroughly stoned.

My first geisha party, in Japan some ten years ago, was considered an unqualified success. The *sake* was plentiful, and the geishas expensive. It started slowly, but warmed up fast. My geisha wore a heavy kimono, her wig was done up in classic "gingko leaf" style, and her face was covered with a thick coat of clown-white make-up consisting, I was informed, of liquid powder and face cream. It is the most off-putting gear I know, but she *was* very good at keeping the *sake* flowing. While

she poured, she chatted to me in Japanese. Geishas are experts at making a man feel witty, clever, and altogether irresistible to the opposite sex. They smile, flatter, whisper. They tell you jokes, and listen to yours. They treat you as if you are the most fascinating man on earth.

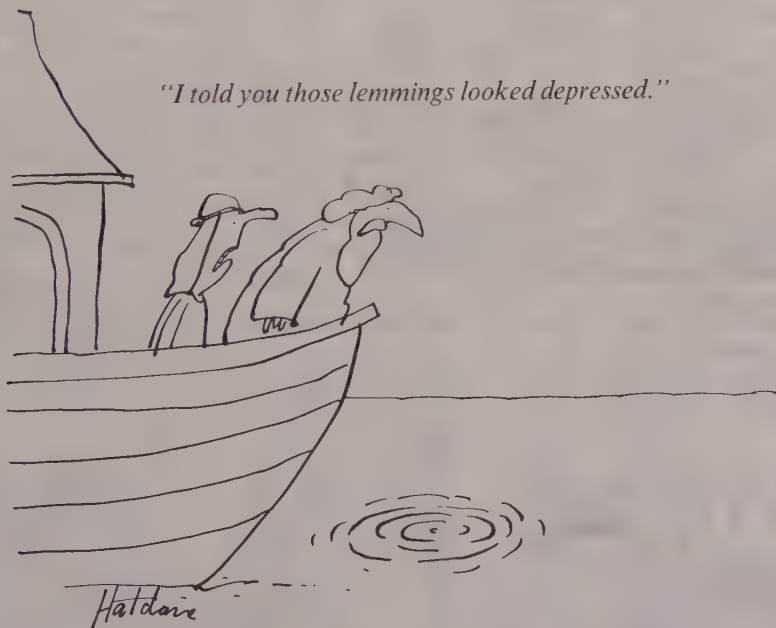
Her jokes were, alas, wasted on me, but I gather they were very good. It didn't really matter. My hosts, a group of highly intelligent Japanese businessmen, were crawling about on all fours, and playing pat-a-cake and musical chairs—with *sabuton* cushions substituted for seats. I wondered at the time—and still do—if the chairman of ICI had to go through this sort of nonsense when his company first started to do business in Japan. Perhaps he did: it's surprising what people will do to get a fat contract. If they can put up with sheep's eye-balls in the Middle East they should certainly be able to cope with musical chairs in the Ginza. But I doubt, somehow, if it will catch on in boardrooms here. For one thing, it's a hellishly expensive business and I don't think our tax inspectors will be quite as understanding about it as their colleagues are in Japan.

The odourless garlic, though, should have a bright future. I'd like to think that other breakthroughs will follow: if only Toshio Nakagawa could come up with a whisky which doesn't turn the crystals green, even I would be willing to forget all about Pearl Harbour.



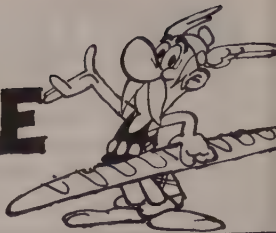
"Want to hear something spooky? Caneton à l'orange."

"I told you those lemmings looked depressed."



WEETABIX DE GAULLE - in FRANCE

by STANLEY McMURTRY



IT IS 50 BC. AND ON THE BEACH AT DOVER, CAPTAIN SELLOFIX PREPARES TO MAKE THE FIRST EVER CHANNEL SWIM....

EGAD!

BRavo! SIR.

GREASE

..LITTLE KNOWING THE PERILS HE HAS TO FACE... EXTREME COLD, GIANT WAVES....

...JELLYFISH...

STING!

BUT WORST OF ALL... HALF WAY ACROSS...

THE OVERPOWERING SMELL OF GARLIC

YUK!

TEN HOURS LATER. EXHAUSTED BUT HAVING BEEN CLEARED BY CUSTOMS...

EGAD! TOPLESS FEMALES

DOUANE

BY GEORGE, I'M TIRED!

OOH LA LA! UN HOMME! NOT TOO TIRED WE 'OPE

'E IS MINE! I SAW HEEM FIRST!

'TAKE YOUR 'ANDS OFF HEEM!

DASHIT LADIES. COVER YOURSELVES UP. WHAT?

LUCKILY SELLOFIX WAS STILL WELL GREASED.

POP!

GOOD GRIEF THESE FRENCH WOMEN ARE S MAD! I WONDER WHERE THEIR MENFOLK ARE ...AT WAR?

AFTER HOURS OF TRAVELLING SELLOFIX NEARS A CITY.

EGAD!! WHAT'S THAT AWFUL NOISE?

ME BARDOT PARIS

HOOT

PARP!

LE TOOT

AND FINDS THE MEN.

LOOK, WEETABIX, AN ENGLISHMAN

HOOT

PARP

ROAR

LE SHIRT

POINT

VIN ROUGE

VIN ORANGE

BONJOUR, M'SIEUR. MY NAME IS WEETABIX DE GAULLE. AND THIS IS MY FRIEND MAISONBRIX.

FRAID I CAN'T HEAR A THING

SORRY. IT'S THE NUMBER ONE RECORD IN FRANCE -- TRAFF NOISES -- FANTASTIC SOUND! TAKING OVER FROM THE ACCORDIAN -- O GARÇON! TURN IT DOWN!

COME. YOU MUST BE THIRSTY AFTER YOUR TRAVELS. WE HAVE DRINKS YOU CAN'T GET IN BRITAIN... JOHNNIE WALKER BLACK LABEL WHISKY...?

DIMPLE HAIG?

BUT WHO ARE ALL THESE MEN? WHY ARE THEY NOT WORKING?

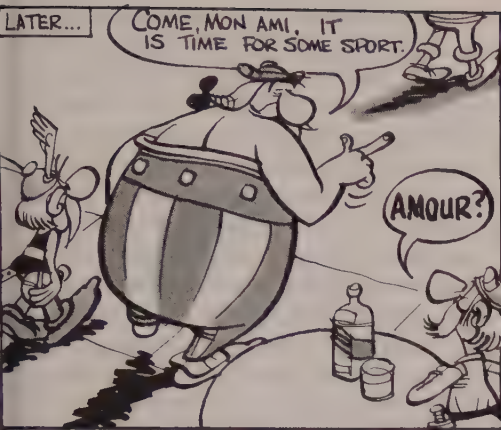
HIC! HIC! HIC!

WE ARE FRENCH FARMERS MON AMI -- WE DON'T HAVE TO WORK TOO HARD NOW THAT BRITAIN HAS JOINED THE E.E.C.

WOULD YOU LIKE SOMETHING TO EAT? FROGSLEGS? GARLIC SANDWICHES?

ER. NO THANKS

SHUFF SHUFF

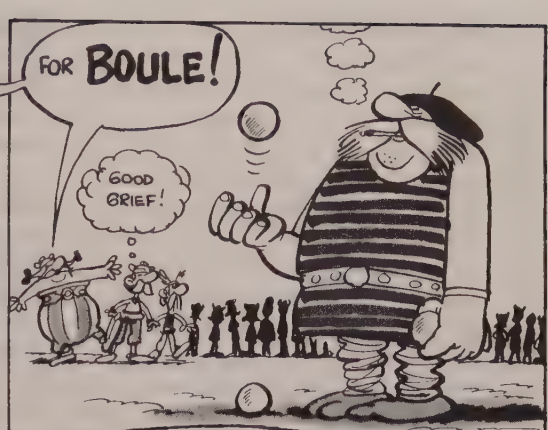


LATER...
COME, MON AMI, IT IS TIME FOR SOME SPORT.

AMOUR?

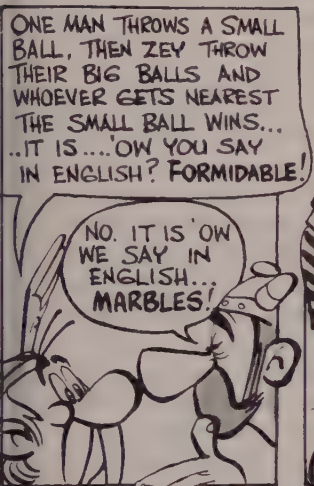


NO. WE'VE DONE ENOUGH READING. IT'S TIME FOR THE SPORT OF KINGS... FOR DANGER... FOR THRILLS...



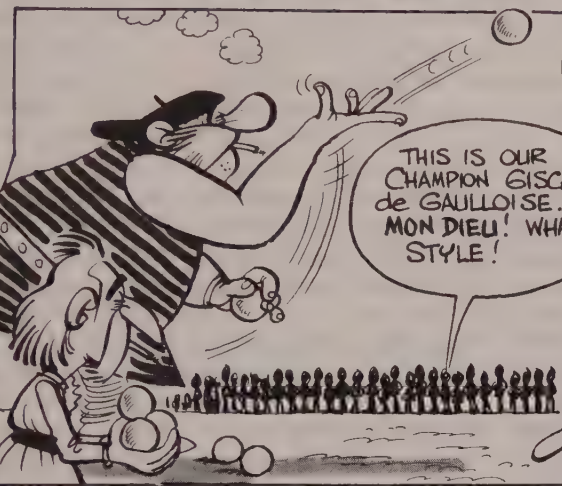
FOR BOULE!

GOOD BRIEF!



ONE MAN THROWS A SMALL BALL, THEN ZEY THROW THEIR BIG BALLS AND WHOEVER GETS NEAREST THE SMALL BALL WINS... IT IS... OW YOU SAY IN ENGLISH? FORMIDABLE!

NO. IT IS 'OW WE SAY IN ENGLISH... MARBLES!

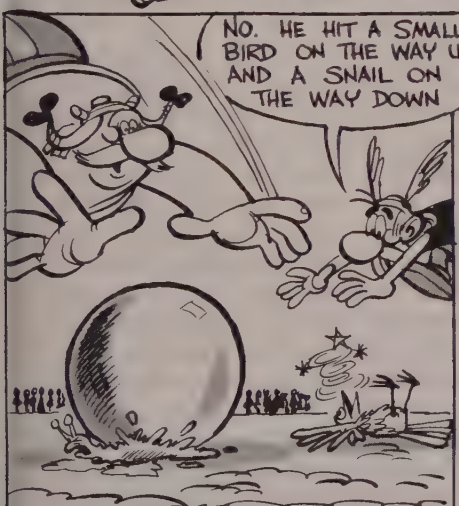


THIS IS OUR CHAMPION GISCARD de GAULLOISE... MON DIEU! WHAT STYLE!

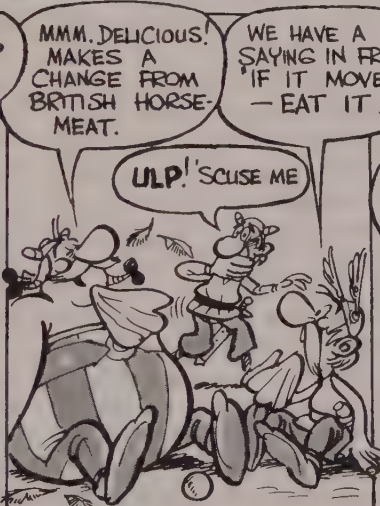


ZUT ALORS! WHAT A THROW!

DID HE HIT THE SMALL BALL?



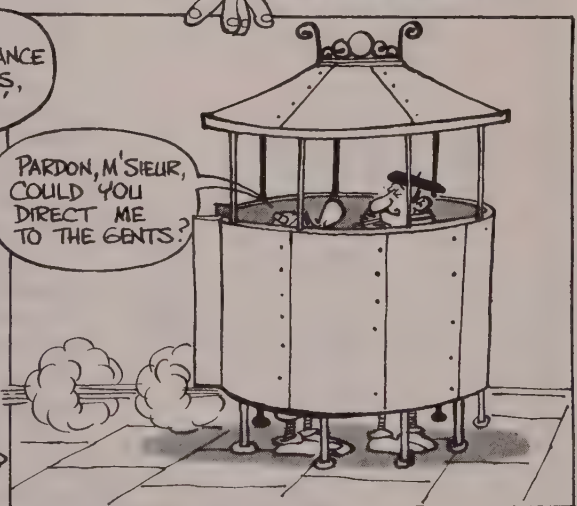
NO. HE HIT A SMALL BIRD ON THE WAY UP AND A SNAIL ON THE WAY DOWN



MMM. DELICIOUS! MAKES A CHANGE FROM BRITISH HORSE-MEAT.

WE HAVE A SAYING IN FRANCE 'IF IT MOVES, - EAT IT!'

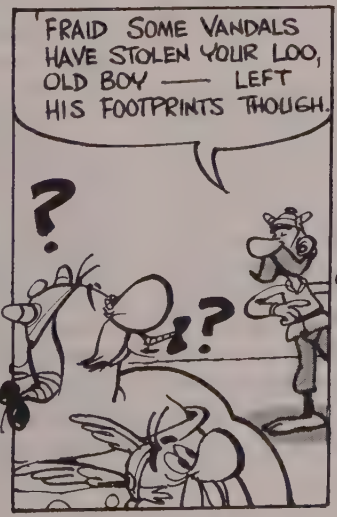
ULP! 'SCUSE ME



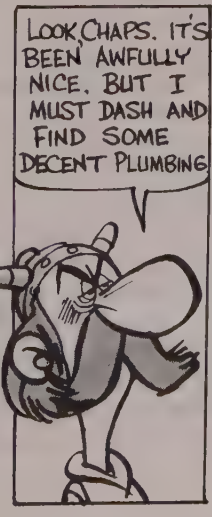
PARDON, M'SIEUR, COULD YOU DIRECT ME TO THE GENTS?



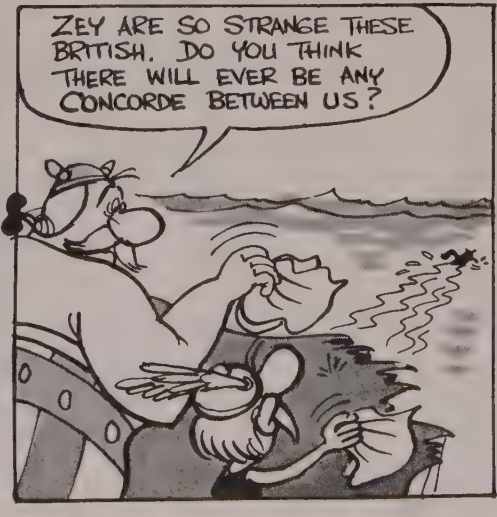
DAMMIT! MUST YOU FRENCH ALWAYS WAVE YOUR ARMS ABOUT WHEN YOU SPEAK!



'FRAID SOME VANDALS HAVE STOLEN YOUR LOO, OLD BOY — LEFT HIS FOOTPRINTS THOUGH.



LOOK CHAPS. IT'S BEEN AWFULLY NICE, BUT I MUST DASH AND FIND SOME DECENT PLUMBING



ZEY ARE SO STRANGE THESE BRITISH. DO YOU THINK THERE WILL EVER BE ANY CONCORDE BETWEEN US?

The Wronged box

THERE has never been any doubt in my mind that the pleasures of nostalgia are not only profound but also legitimate. The two great mistakes which people are inclined to make about nostalgia are that to indulge in it is to be guilty of sentimentality, and that it implies a rejection of the present. Both propositions are demonstrably untrue. Taking the second charge first, it is a truism among creative artists that so far from being able to choose between the present and the past, the past is all that is on offer; only last week I came across a grumble made to a friend by Arnold Bennett in old age, to the effect that he, Bennett, could not seem to write about anybody unless he had known them before he was twenty-one; I might have quoted a hundred other writers on the identical theme, but I chose Bennett because he is especially germane to the subject under discussion, as we shall see.

So far as the other theory is concerned, that nostalgia is soft-headed stuff, only a softhead could take it seriously. The joker who first scrawled on a lavatory wall "Nostalgia ain't what it used to be," forgot to add the second and most important half of the statement, "but it will be one day." What scoffers forget is that the great thing about the Past is that at least we survived it; no matter how daunting its terrors at the time, how forbidding its constraints, how bewildering its contradictions, somehow we came through; we lived to fight another day. No wonder we look back with affection on whatever it was we happened to be doing at the time. That pink cloud is not sentimentality, nor anything like it. On the contrary it is the roseate glow of stark realism. So when contemporaries confess in unguarded moments to a sustained addiction to Bill and Ben the Flower Pot Men, I quite understand.

But to understand an attitude is not to share it. My own experience has been so utterly at odds with that of the Bill and Ben brigade that to this day when I describe it to them they are incredulous. Through an accidental alliance of temperament and circumstance, I was among the last garrisons to hold out against the onslaughts of the small screen. While whole families, streets, districts, cities, fell before the invader, I would have no part of the re-

volution. The nation began drawing its curtains and settling down to stare at what had only the other day been a patch of wallpaper, but I was out doing something or other. For one thing I was single, which meant that I took to the streets at dusk; for another I had a profession to practise, and spent a freakish proportion of the waking hours practising it. I was at an age, and was the child of an age, which preferred the substances to the shadow, and so the entire 1950s, the infancy of television, passed by with not so much as a nod from yours truly.

The effect of all this was curious. I slowly became aware of a vast new cultural edifice rising between me and them, a new folklore from which I was excluded, and from which, when I heard about it, I was glad to be excluded. A whole pioneer generation of telly stars came and went while I studiously kept to the other side of the street. The resulting deprivation was enormous, irreversible and utterly benign. Picture if you will the image of a man who never knew the dubious delights of following Anona Winn's powers of deductive reasoning, who never even once coveted Gilbert Harding's moustache. Conjure a man who was never confused by the dizzying implications of the Potter's Wheel, a man who never goggled at the corrugated coiffure of Lady Barnett, who never sucked on the dummy of *Animal, Vegetable or Mineral*, whose heart never slowed down to the thrills of *The Appleyards* or *The Cisco Kid* or *Muffin the Mule*. Picture such a man, and you will be not so far from the truth about me.

Every now and again, at moments when the industry indulges in a bout of self-congratulation, a few of these old specimens rise to the surface of the schedules, with perplexing results. I recall, for instance, being told for years how wonderful were the John Freeman *Face to Face* interviews. Not so long ago I saw one, and poor stuff it seemed too, wobbling uncertainly between gossip column triviality and the unintentional melodramatics of a suburban amateur operatic society. Whether or not Freeman remains television's least inept inquisitor to date is beside the point; one of the most painful home truths which every branch of the arts has to learn to swallow is that to

measure virtue by its own comparative standards is to be doomed to an eternal parochialism. The same point was illustrated by the BBC Jubilee retrospectives, in which I saw for the first time one of the great horror-comic triumphs of the medium's history. Some vats of simmering goulash appeared, followed by a bunch of noodles pretending to be scared out of their pants. By calling the goulash *Quatermass*, somebody succeeded in scarifying half the nation. But how scarifying was *Quatermass*? As scarifying as, say, Poe's *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*? If not, why not?

Perhaps the reader is wondering how, in view of the nature of this confessional, I ever succumbed to television at all. But I was never opposed to it on any sort of doctrinaire or moral grounds, any more than I was opposed to the cinema because of Joan Crawford, or to poetry because of Patience Strong. So far as television was concerned, I had only to be exposed to a few good programmes to reconsider my position. In 1956, while labouring as an under-privileged saxophonist in a holiday camp, I fell into the habit of sneaking into the canteen on rainy afternoons to watch the cricket on the set in the corner. On July 31st, I watched an offspinner called Laker take all ten Australian second innings wickets. That did it. And there was one night when I was excused duty because the lighting circuit in the ballroom had failed, when I watched Mai Zetterling as Nora in *A Doll's House* and realised that there might after all be a way of enjoying a play without the attendant horrors of going to a theatre. I am a man of iron resolution, of lightning decision, and after the improbable alliance of Jim Laker and Henrik Ibsen, it took me no time at all, a mere five or six years, to agree that provided a man kept his head, there was no reason why he should not allow a television set into his front room.

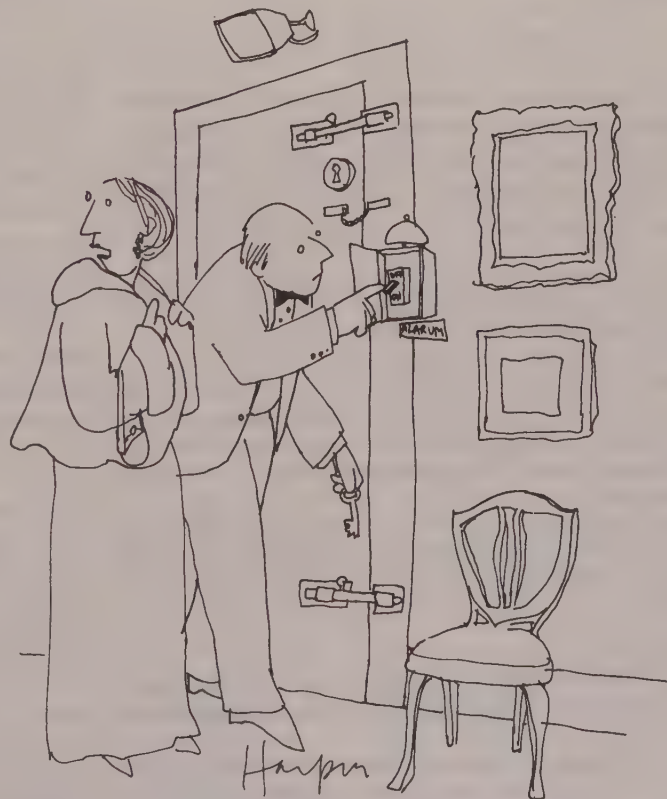
I remain convinced, however, that the only way to treat the box is cavalierly, to glance at it with withering contempt, to give it the occasional kick when passing, and to switch it on only at certain rare life-enhancing moments. Some people try to cope with the problem by following the example of a demented lady with whom I drifted into conversation at my local railway station

recently. I timidly suggested that *Hard Times* was worth a look, at which she sniffed, saying that she refused to watch commercial television. "What about Arnold Bennett?" I said. "Who?" she replied, and walked off to the other end of the platform. Those who think they can simplify their viewing procedures by cancelling out the commercial side deprived themselves several years ago of following Bennett's *Clayhanger*, the best marathon adaptation of a work of literature so far achieved by British television. The fact that it was also the most underrated adaptation may or may not prove something or other, but I would not have missed it for the world.

To have high jinks literally on tap in the home is to devalue the market price of high jinks. I believe that the period of my life when the medium and myself achieved the perfect bal-

ance was, to be exact, 1949-50. In each of those years there was one programme I very much wanted to see, and on each occasion I sought out a friend whose family owned the set. It was, therefore, something of a social occasion, rather like going to the pictures. In 1949 Wolves beat Leicester City 3-1 in a house in Clapton, and a year later Arsenal defeated Liverpool 2-0 in a flat in Great Titchfield Street. Nothing I have seen since on the screen can match the excesses of aesthetic rapture with which I witnessed that Arsenal victory, for even as I witnessed it, I sensed I was kissing my own adolescence goodbye. When the game was over, I remember the six of us who had crowded round the set went out into the street, where the sun was shining.

It still is, but the fact is that few of the addicted telly-viewers have noticed.



"I often wonder whether it wouldn't be simpler to ransack the house ourselves before we go out."

Girls! Prizes worth over one year's revenue from the Duchy of Cornwall must be won in our fabulous, once-in-a-lifetime-oh-so-easy-to-enter

"WIN WINDSOR'S MOST ELIGIBLE BACHELOR" COMPETITION



YES, IT'S UNBELIEVABLE BUT TRUE!

Punch offers you the opportunity to be the first one on your street to win the hand (and more) of this fully-fitted, all-Royal Prince of Wales—the craze that has swept America off its feet. This incredible prize comes complete with

- ★A full set of concerns (including Young People, Minority Groups of London, SW1 and the preservation of old Goon scripts)
- ★An intimate knowledge of the streets of Aberystwyth
- ★A selection of over 200 facial expressions
- ★A personalised scrapbook of *30 Years of Woman's Own Cuttings*
- ★A wide educational background with honorary degrees in Urban Embroidery, Launderette Management, Bricks and Insect Maintenance from the universities of Muskogee, Ulan Bator, West Bromwich and Hilversum
- ★Honorary chairmanships of the British Hang Polo Association, The British Jolly Good Fellowship, the Variety Club of Somalia, "Digging Up Old Rubbish in '77", "Plant a Book in '78" and "Wait for a Bus in '79"

There are other great prizes too!

2nd prize. The Mark Phillips of your choice *or* a complete set of mounted Mountbattens *or* your biography written by Robert Lacey

3rd prize. Twenty seconds to run riot in Prince Charles's pockets—you keep everything you can find *or* a hand-tooled, leather bound, copperplate, gold leafed copy of *25 Years of Royal Garden Party Sandwiches and Their Contents* plus 50 terrific consolation prizes of bound volumes of Prince Philip's best selling biography *His and E II Rs* together with hardback copies of his favourite *Duke of Edinburgh's Bumper Book of Inflammatory Statements For Boys*.

It's so simple . . . all you have to do is place, in order of importance these following qualities that we feel are necessary ingredients in the make-up of any future partner for the Prince of Wales.

- A. Ownership of the *AA Guide to Harry Secombe*
- B. A name that goes well with the prefix "Queen" (Travis Marie for example)
- C. Family ties with one of the lesser lines of Andorran nobility
- D. An entry in *Debrett's*
- E. An entry in Dempster's column
- F. An entry in the Cheltenham Gold Cup
- G. A sense of humour combined with the ability to laugh at your father-in-law's pithy *bon mots*
- H. A bootleg of the Sex Pistols' *God Save the Queen—Live at Sandringham*

For example if you think that point A is more important than point D, well, that's your problem, you can't win them all.

Once you've put the points in order just complete the following sentence in not more than one word, "I would like to dive beneath the Polar Ice-Cap with the Prince of Wales because . . ."

Now just pop your entry in an envelope and post it off to us at *Punch*.

Entrants must be under twenty-seven, white, single, female, C of E, have a working knowledge of the ways of British and French Society *G* columns and be able to say "no comment" in five languages.

The competition is not open to employees of Punch, their families (Royal otherwise), their friends, people they pass on the street, readers of Punch, people who crack that hoary old chestnut about dentists' waiting rooms.

The editor's decision is his own affair.

Buddy, can you spare the dollar?

WHEN as a barefoot boy with cheek of tan, the wanderlust first overtook me, and on the inside lane too, I wrapped my few belongings, a tooth brush, comb, deck of cards, the *Bible*, the *Complete Works of Shakespeare* and Dad's little black book, which he compiled in the trenches of the Place Pigalle and other bunkers on the *demimonde* front in 1917-18, in an old red and white spotted bandana, tied the bundle to the end of a stick, and headed for Europe. The Lost Generation of Expatriate Americans, Scott, Zelda and young Hemingway, Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, had already been lost and found and forgotten by this time. There were, however, still only forty-eight stars in that patch of blue in the upper left-hand corner of Old Glory; and, most important of all, the Dollar was still God and how to get it was most Europeans' religion.

Money for old rope I have often been fortunate enough to earn by the staccato crackle of my old Remington and the sweat of patient readers' brows. Still, that most lovely of money, which is called Money from Home, has never come to me; only Dad's little address book was bequeathed to me and even that had the bogus ring of a dud coin about it; I am beginning to think that Fifi LaFlame, of 322, Boul Miche, was the work of Dad's fevered, post-adolescent imagination. Just the same, he did give me one priceless gift for my expatriate years, which up until now has been more or less what I like to refer to as a priceless gift.

He, in his wisdom, combined with the complete inability to make anything grow where nothing ever grew before, had made me that rare object: a poor American.

Naturally, there are plenty of poor Americans. But Europeans hardly ever saw them. Even the wartime Yanks, like my big brother Jack, who came to England to spit chewing gum on the pavement when he was not messing about with Messerschmitts, seemed to have plenty of the readies about them. But I, as a civilian Yank, and with, as I say, no money from home, was something of an unique item, and therefore an object of curiosity.

Over the years all this has changed. When I crossed the Atlantic I came by boat, fighting tooth and

hoof with Argentine cattle for the few crusts of alfalfa which was the fodder given out to those travelling steerage. But since those days of travel, when we bright young things danced the salty nights away to the sultry rhythms of hotcha jazz combos and regularly tossed a passing Vanderbilt or some such scion of New World Old Gold overboard for a few laughs, the cheapo package tour has skyed thousands upon thousands of more or less ordinary Americans to Europe.

Still the Dollar reigned supreme. It was the Almighty Buck and the tourists might have started looking kind of downmarket but they possessed greenbacks or American Express cheques which they could flash about, bang down on the dark-wooded ancient bars of English pubs or the wet zinc bars of Paris cafés, and look like the lords of the earth.

This has now, apparently, all changed. I say apparently because the "Demise of the dollar," which was a *Guardian* story that happened to catch my eye, was rather deep economics and economics is all Greek to me; in fact it is Greek, from *oikonomiks*, but some people can understand Greek. "The state of the dollar is getting worse," this article told me. I had not realised, living, as I do, in rather a dollarless daydream, with only the music of the spheres to comfort me, that the dollar was ill. But it is. And it is, as I read, getting worse. "A few weeks ago," I read, "it was still possible to believe that the United States would take control of its trade account and money supply before the present despair of the US business community fed through into foreign (and particularly OPEC) opinion."

There was much more stuff like that. Frankly, I could not quite get it. But such phrases as "run on the dollar" have a familiar ring. Substitute "dollar" for "the £" and we, in Britain, even us Expatriate Yanks, could sing along with an old tune like that.

A "rout of the currency (the dollar) that is the lynch-pin of the world money system," the *Guardian* writer said, mixing a metaphor with the smug ease of a man who has obviously never served in the trenches and gone for a day's rout or pulled a lynch-pin. He went on, however, in a military sort of manner, saying, "the real trigger to a cumulative

collapse of the dollar has to be a switch of OPEC countries' revenues out of the dollar and into other currencies."

But I think I am belabouring the point. The point is simply that the dollar is in a bad way. The article spoke at one point of it only being "upset" which is a far cry from a rout, which brings pictures of mud and rain and the wounded being left behind. Sterling, by the way, looks like coming out fairly well from all this.

The heart of the matter, as I see it, however, is a more personal one. Naturally, as I have already hinted with perhaps the subtlety of a man throwing brickbats, the condition of the dollar does not exactly touch me. Of course, if things do get really bad and they have to start eating the bark off the trees in America, I might get relatives writing begging letters from their estates on Long Island, and Newport, Rhode Island, asking me if I can send them any parcels of old tennis balls or backgammon sets I might have just gathering dust round here. And if any of them are watching me right now and are within hearing distance, let me just tell them they will be going out on all fours and chewing the grass off those tennis courts before this poor relation starts shipping them any parcels, because in all the years I have

been languishing amongst the huddled masses on this teeming shore, did they once give me so much as a light?

On the other hand, being a poor, dollarless Yank in England I have been onto a winner. I don't actually

want to give the entire game away, the dollar might yet stop retreating, get its lynch-pin back in place, and stop being "upset" and stamping its little foot in that girlish fashion. Still, I've got an idea that things might never be the same again, so I might as well come clean.

When I first crawled off the above mentioned cattle-boat in search of any dregs of Expatriate Bohemia and the Lost Generation, plus a few laughs, and perhaps a little work, I encountered a strange thing. People did not believe I was an American. Sometimes, perhaps mistaking the cattle-boat's straw bedding for wood chips and the scent of the Argentine livestock for the manly stench of the forests of the Far North, I would be taken for a Canadian. Once having showered and ironed the creases out of my deck of cards, I was still not taken for an American.

I see, now, that what set me apart from my countrymen was my hair, which was not so much daringly long for those days as simply uncut, and my clothes which were—how to describe them? Oh, yes, I have found the word. It is "old". And another word, too, "worn". Young, I was, but old and worn. Suddenly a bright light would shine in the eyes of my English hosts. Having estab-



"The beauty of it is one doesn't have to clean out the cage."



"You're fooling no-one, Henderson, put your clothes on and get back to work at once."

lished that I was not an eccentric millionaire, it would dawn on them that I was something they had often heard about but had never seen walking upright on its hind legs: I was the legendary animal, sung about and hymned by Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, John Dos Passos, and John Steinbeck: I was the American common man. In short, a poor American.

"You are," they would shout at me, as if I were Chalky White, that *Daily Mirror* mystery man of yesterday whom you could claim £5 off if you recognised him in the crowds of Brighton or some such seaside resort, "a Poor American!"

"And thirsty with it," I would add, shyly.

Thus it was I was wined and dined by some of the best families in the land. I do not wish to sound like Frank Harris and start dropping the names of all the best houses I was invited to or the high-born ladies I allowed to dally with my person on the strength of being a genuine poor American. It is sufficient to say I dined out on the strength of it often, and even in the meanest of back street public houses free pints would flow my way because of my authentic "buddy can you spare a dime?" appearance.

This era has now gone, perhaps for ever. If all the world and *The Guardian* Financial Page know that the dollar is plunging, running, taking it on the lam, triggered, and no longer the lynch-pin of the world money system, it must follow, as the night the day, that poor Americans are going to become a commonplace thing. To be the sole poor man amongst the richest people of the world is one thing, but to be merely one more mooching Yank, down on his luck, is something else. Free tickets to a National Theatre opening being pressed into your palm by a kindly Englishman is one thing. But if the English start slipping me sticks of chewing gum, bars of soap, and nylon stockings, I am going to go down to the steamship line and see if that cattle-boat is still floating, stow away on her, and return to my kith and kin, my own folk, down on their hands and knees eating the grass off the tennis courts on their tumbled down Newport and Long Island estates. They may scoff at the prodigal's return. Still, poor I might be; proud I ain't.



"Malcolm works very hard in the City. He spends most of his time unloading zinc and pig iron."



"Just because I don't make a great fuss about my inhibitions doesn't mean I'm not inhibited."

Nobody knows the trouble

PEOPLE are talking to themselves more.

No.

More people are talking to themselves. And different people. A better class. I find this disturbing as I go about London, and so may you, going about wherever you go about. Harrogate, perhaps. Bude.

They used to be gutter-shufflers, men in other men's overcoats belted with coarse string, hunting for dog-ends. Kicking a failed drinking fountain. Delving in litter baskets for a decent newspaper, sitting on a low wall at rumoured points of call for the charity soup van. All running the aggrieved private commentary.

The language was basic. Some bastard had upset them. Several. Sods and bastards, they would say, and look right through you, so at least it was someone else they had it in for. Everyone else. Even finding a dog-end, they stowed it away with a curse. The world owed them a longer one than that.

Standing in an alcove on Blackfriars Bridge the other week, watching a cardboard box sink, a man half turned with two very basic w**ds just as I passed contentedly by. The morning being sunny, and my reflexes pleasurably limp, I at first took this for a greeting, and slowed to respond in kind. He was gripping some property in a knotted duster and wearing an incongruously new tweed hat. He completed the turn and looked right through me.

"I'll show bloody Arthur."

Moving on, I speculated. What was his history? Why was life so harsh? Where had he got the hat? Should I have given him 50p?

We better-adjusted and more buoyant souls have a sixth sense about when to give 50p and when not. Not, I thought, was right this time. He could have got proud, resentful. Violent. But I wondered during the day.

Going home in the afternoon I was more or less addressed by a small man with a huge beard in the Embankment Gardens, his back to that plinth that used to have a statue on it until somebody snapped it off and just left the feet. "Bitch," he said, looking up at the River Room of the Savoy. "Just the gate was worth that."

My 50p in his palm gave no offence, but touched off a fresh thought. "Call yourself a Prime Mi-

nister?" After counting the coin's sides he dropped it into a carrier bag, printed in red, CARLSBERG.

They would often talk to themselves about the bloody Government.

I don't know why I use the past tense. They're still around. But these new people are joining them. Even women, and of a superior kind. One of these, boarding a cab I was paying off at Charing Cross, shook a good little umbrella at the back of the driver's neck. Of course, anyone could be ridiculous, she said, but nineteen square yards was —. Then the gears drowned her. She wore a quality raincoat, orange. Couldn't have been more than thirty.

Same day, a much older woman, in what I took to be genuine ocelot, joined me at Victoria in an otherwise empty compartment, and said quite loudly as we pulled out:

"It's not like ducks."

"Pardon?" I said.

She said, "What?"

The conversation lapsed. Just after Redhill there was a threat of revival. She made it over nine hundred dollars, she said, looking on the floor for something. I didn't take it up.

There are differences between the new soliloquisers and the old. Their circumstances are more comfortable. I'm thinking of the men, preponderant in the new wave, though you never did get women, comfortably placed or not, with eyes down for cigarette butts, or seeking a good read in the trash cans. But would you expect a plump, well-tailored lawyer, still in his white bands and waiting to cross the Strand to the Wig and Pen, to make quite a long speech about a little cow called Enid? I was waiting on the same kerb, so I assure you. Why the other house, he demanded, for God's sake? She knew they were pewter.

Possibly neuter. None of my business. Still, you can get caught up. But when I edged closer to the moving lips they were speaking of other matters, intermittently blotted out by heavier items of traffic. "Out of the question, cranberries... some sort of testimonial, you're crazy..."

He gave a sharp bark, perhaps a laugh, threw an arm out wide, hitting his knuckles on a lamp post, before diving across between two buses.

That's another difference, the use of gesture. Very rare with the string belt and knotted duster lot. They have an immobility, more of a slumping. Even an accepting palm comes up slowly, as if under water. But the new men, smart and brisk, tend to reinforce the points they make to themselves. As they walk and talk they chop things off with the edge of the hand, just in front of their expensive ties, dismiss them, put an end to that whole nuisance. "Not from Formosa," a man was saying outside Harrods the other week, passing at a fast pace in the direction of the Royal Geographical Society—"not ball bearings." He chopped them right off. A man coming the other way, in trousers so dazzlingly golf that they should have had a single glove hanging from the hip pocket, had to step off the pavement to give play for his Nazi salute, or one-armed "Drop dead" motion. He wasn't going to have it at any price. It was ludicrous. Whatever it was. I didn't quite hear. It could have been lemons. Lemmings.

He caught himself at it, perhaps glimpsing from an eye-corner the ball bearings chopper, and firmly shut his mouth to a tight line. It may have checked utterance, but I noticed, as he rejoined the pedestrians,

that he was pushing his troubles behind him with a double-handed scooping, and I expect he was again telling himself his plans for dealing with them.

It's disturbing, as I say, to see these expressions of stress. Particularly creeping up the social scale, as they undoubtedly are. Most of

these citizens are solid. Two-car households, is my guess. Freezers. At the other end, polished executive desks, heavy stationery. A failed drinking fountain doesn't touch them. You'd want a hell of a big duster to knot their property up in. Their wallets sprout credit cards like tambourine ribbons. Crocodile briefcases instead of sharp-handled lager adverts.

Is that the problem? Do they miss the small delights? The unexpectedly long dog-end? The un-hurried sinking of a cardboard box?

Nobody knows. Myself, I can only pass on my observations. With a touch of irrepressible complacency. There but for the grace of God, I thought, not for the first time, as a man came towards me on the St. James's Park footbridge, trim, purposeful, one arm outflung as if forbidding the swimming mallards below to take wing. He was talking to himself under his narrow-brimmed Whitehall bowler. It was nothing to do with him, he said, nothing. How many more times? Take it back to bloody External Relations.

There but for the grace of God, indeed.

"Pardon?" he said, slowing as we drew abreast.

I said, "What?"

"There but for what?" he said.

So it's still spreading. I find that disturbing.



"He thinks harps are sissy."



"You know I told you I joined the Legion to forget? Well, suddenly it's all come back to me."

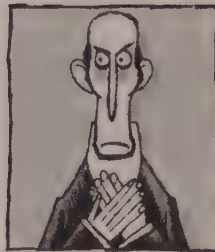
I want some FOOD FAD, momma!

by ARNOLD Roth

'Food makes the man!', say food faddists,
'So, naturalness, blandness & fanaticism
in your diet make you healthy, long-
lived & more likely to win a lottery.'
'Man makes the food!' say the rest of
us, 'So, the same again, barman!'



This man eats anything
that won't eat him first.
He thinks he is having fun.

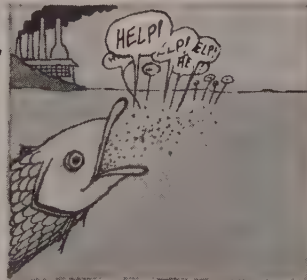


This man eats health foods that
magazines & newspapers okay.
He heartily dislikes the
man in the preceding picture.



This man does not eat
carbohydrates, chemicals,
preservatives or ketchup.
This man is dead.

The Food-Chain- Life-Cycle As Seen By Food Faddists



FISH EATS ALGAE.



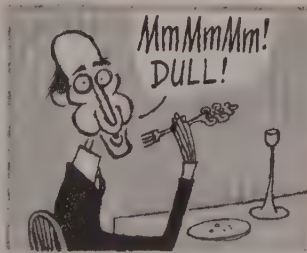
MOOSE EATS FISH.



MOSQUITO TRIES
TO EAT MOOSE.



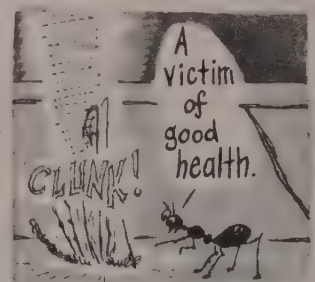
MOOSE REPELS MOSQUITO.



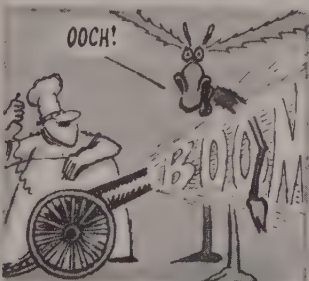
MAN EATS FIBERS, PRO-
TEINS & LEAFY VEGETABLES.



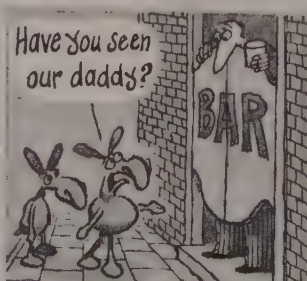
MOSQUITO BITES MAN.



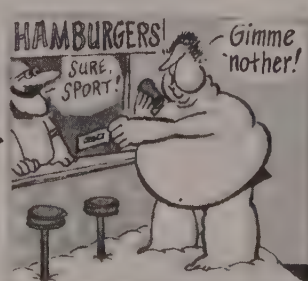
MOSQUITO DIES.



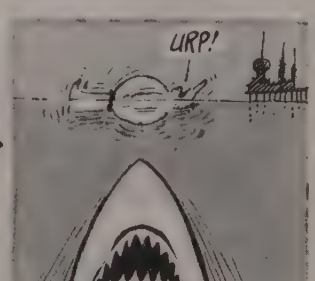
ANOTHER MAN SHOTS MOOSE.



MOOSE ORPHANS.

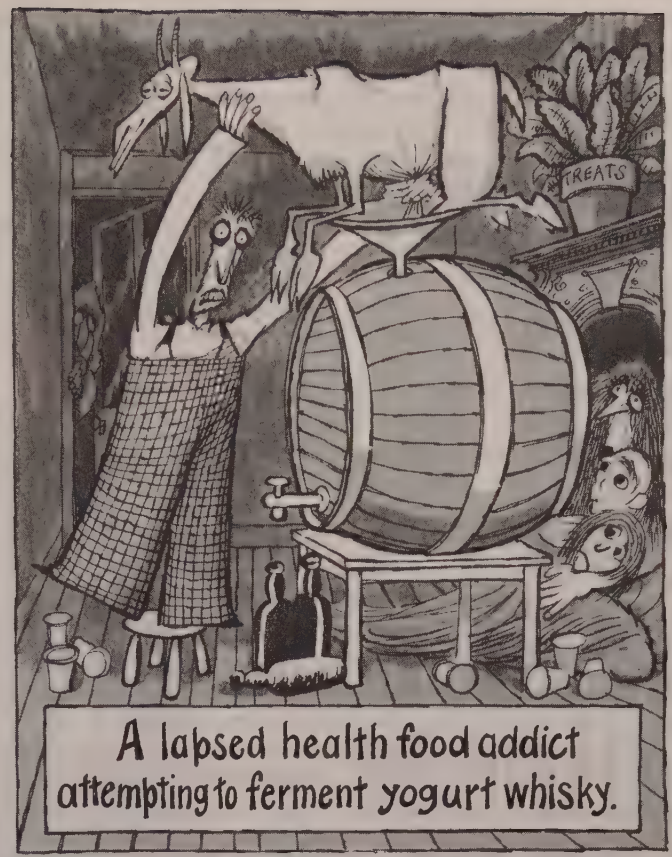


ALGY EATS MOOSEBURGER.



FISH EATS ALGY.

An eater of Nuts & Fruits winning the International Clean Breath Olympics.



A lapsed health food addict attempting to ferment yogurt whisky.

THE VEGETARIANS PICNIC



Arnold Roth

China's leaders are calling for a new Great Leap to stimulate the economy. Chairman Hua has gone on record with what is described as "a brilliant instruction regarding chicken raising and pig farming."

—Agency Report

Nobody here but 800 million Chinese and us chickens

from Agency Report, Peking, Wednesday

WITH FEWER THAN twenty-three years to run to the end of the century and fulfilment of the Twenty-Two-And-A-Bit-Year Plan For The Instigation of Twenty-First Century Technology in *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo**, the thirty-eight million citizens of Hupeh, forty-seven million comrades of Kiangsu and ten million autonomous provincials from Sinkiang Uighur assembled today in the half-constructed Kweichow Hall Of Heavenly Swineherding for what has been billposted as a major pep-talk.

State rumourmongers have been promising a comprehensive programme, highlighting a talk, with lantern slides, on manipulative flensing and community plucking of moveable foodstuffs, plus a recital of two etudes in honour of blast-furnacemen which, it has been suggested, may feature Mr Edward Heath conducting a percussion ensemble made up of agrarian militiamen.

*Chinese for China and, these days, the least of the nation's problems.

There are everywhere signs that Wang Hu wen, Wu Teh, Liu Po-cheng and the rest of the Politbureau have classed today as auspicious. Flax-gatherers from Wuhan to Harbin have been given the morning off and all children under 18 issued with commemorative automatic weapons and lipsticks. Even a threatened snowstorm has been ordered to disperse. The Great Gong O Tientsin has been specially shipped in and may be used, commentators suggest, for the announcement of a speech from Chairman Hua Kuo-feng which will revolutionise chicken raising in the next quarter decade throughout China.

Peking, Thursday

BEFORE A PACKED audience in the Hall of Heavenly Swineherding, Kweichow, Chinese premier Hua Kuo-feng today at noon was gone on to the auditorium for a major announcement directed at 800 million of his countrymen, *see Agency Report*. Sinologists were stunned to hear the Chairman directing his thoughts not, as has been widely anticipated, to chicken farming but to the problems of rearing long-eared large whites on an alkali topsoil. Asked by a UPI correspondent what in hell was a long-eared large white chicken, Hua indicated that it was a pig that upwards of a hundred people had already been executed for asking the same damn fool question. "That," announced Hua, in a speech which is believed to have suffered badly in translation, "is why the chicken crossed into Tibet." A revolutionary opera on the theme of instruction to intensive pig-breeders was postponed pending clarification of rumours that vice-premier Yeh Chien-ying had got the franchise for a string of crispy duck parlours, coast to coast.

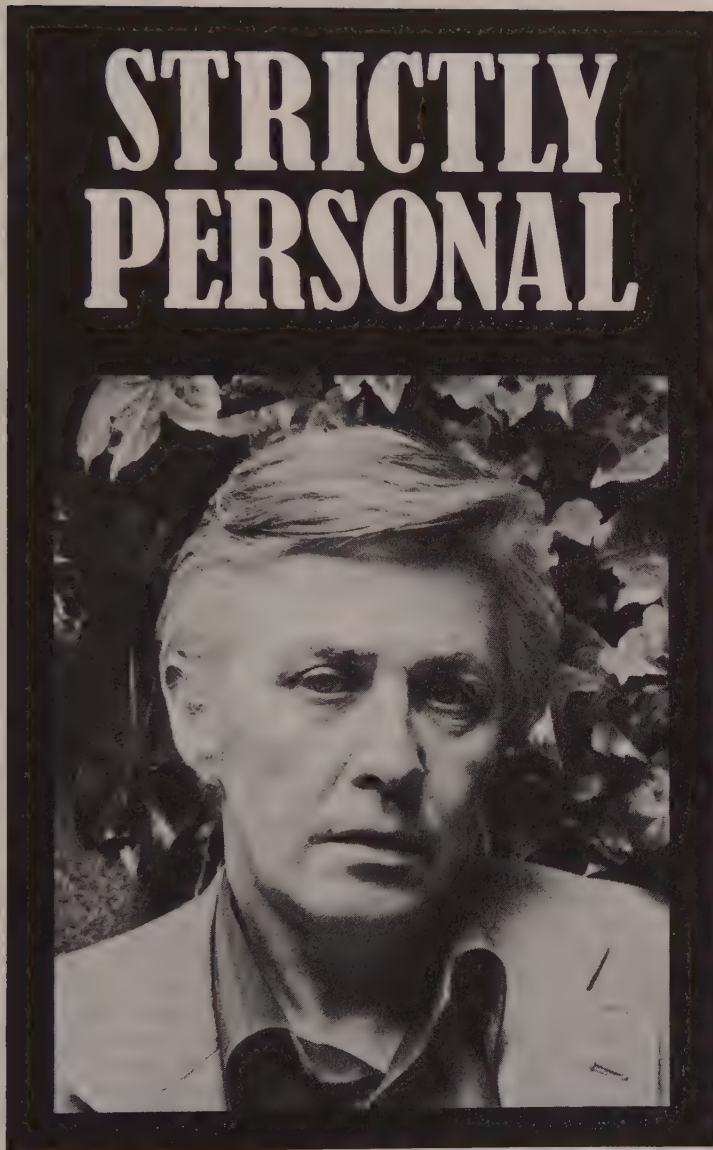
Peking, Friday

CHINA-WATCHERS ARE suggesting that the country may have begun a Great Leap during two confused days in Kweichow. No details are yet available to western correspondents but the feeling here is that recent pronouncements by Premier Hua Kuo-feng may well revolutionise rearing of chickens and pigs, or something, and stimulate the economy, which more than like needs it. The post-Mao leaders of China are undoubtedly sincere in their production drive to set China on its feet by the year 2000 but success may be hampered by the fact that 1 in 2 Chinese is unable to comprehend what is being urged. In the last twenty-four hours, there have been unconfirmed reports of workers being gaoled for their clumsy attempts to make pigs lay larger eggs and for trying to force apples into hen's beaks to make them more appetising. Meanwhile, the production of bauxite is down again and, in a last thought, Chairman Hua has pointed out that there is no way to run China's railways. Herbs-gathering, he added, was the way to make the eastern winds blow harder and step up reliance on imports of tractors. "There are fewer than 30 days left this year," pointed out Great Leap architect Teng Hsiao-ping, "to double output of manure." Chairman Hua thinks that this is like the steam which powers the flour mills and will revolutionise current stocks of grits.



Jubilant junior execution squads tour Chinese western provinces in search of imperialist lackeys who may have failed to grasp the kernel of Chairman Hua's brilliant instruction on pig farming. In the satchels, each carries a trussed hen.

STRICTLY PERSONAL



ON Monday I go to a committee meeting of the Stable Lads' Welfare Trust in an office in Mayfair. It's all terribly posh and I'm terribly embarrassed. I was elected to the committee by insurance tycoon and racehorse owner Charles St. George and also suggested by Lester Piggott. Putting me on the committee was their idea of a joke since I'm utterly unsuitable, a

complete dummy at public speaking and self-conscious of being surrounded at the table by almost a dozen millionaires. Major-General Sir Randall Feilden takes the chair and is wonderfully authoritative and abrupt with members that waffle. Jack Solomon's secretary and I open six bottles of champagne while the meeting gets started and St. George passes me the box of Monte Cristo cigars.

It suddenly strikes me as being quite mad. I'm sitting there in my roll neck jersey and jeans with about two quid in my pocket and everyone's talking in telephone numbers. But still, I'm happy to be able to report to them that I've sold fifteen £100 raffle tickets for a Rolls-Royce which is to be drawn for at the Grosvenor on the night of the stable lads' boxing finals. It's at the end of the meeting that I notice my name isn't down amongst the guests at the top table and I immediately go into a half rage, half sulk.

After the meeting, St. George asks me round the corner to his house in Upper Brook Street for a drink and when I leave he offers me his chauffeur and Rolls to take me where I'm going which is the Swiss Tavern in Old Compton Street. I arrive there in the Rolls puffing away on my second cigar and dammit if it isn't too dark for any of my friends to see me arrive in such a sumptuous manner. What a waste. Later I hear that the Rolls was won by a Newmarket farmer called Robert Cowell who bought the winning ticket—the last one—on the door with readies. I also get phone calls from St. George and Wilfred Sherman, the pools man, apologising for missing me out at the dinner. Too late. I've already written in my column in *Private Eye* that they're a load of bad-mannered shits, except St. George who seemed as angry about it as me, but the consolation is the fact that I loathe stag dos and think they're pretty uncivilised. Even later, it occurs to me that the same Robert Cowell and I went to school together and that the cream goes to the top.

■
WEDNESDAY: *Private Eye* allow me to ask a load of racing people to lunch upstairs in the Gay Hussar There's Dave Dick who won the National on E.S.B. and Brian

Taylor who won the Derby on Snow Knight. They talk about shooting for most of the lunch while the conversation between Sir William Piggott-Brown and Charles St. George is slightly more urbane. I attempt a little urbanity myself on a lady friend I've smuggled in but at the end of the meal and after a few glasses of slevovitz I don't think I'm making much impression. All the good stories they tell me are *not* for publication. Wouldn't I have just bloody known so!

ON THURSDAY, at lunchtime, I'm in the Swiss Tavern, propping up the bar with a shady Maltese gentleman who's quite lopsided owing to the fact that he's got £800 in his right trouser pocket which he won the night before in a poker school, when in walks William Miller, my editor at Quartet Books and a man I've been avoiding since June. He actually asks me, "Has Jeff Bernard been in?" I tell him, "No, he hasn't. I'm his brother actually and I haven't seen him today." It then strikes me that the time has come to stop running and I say, "Come on William. You know it's me." It goes to show just how late I am with my book since he's forgotten what I look like although my picture's in their catalogue. Anyway, I'm caught. Captured. He's very nice about it all and suggests that he gives me an office at Quartet.

That's where I'm stuck now and I feel like a twelve-year-old being kept in after school. Come to think of it, I suppose there's a bollocking on the telephone from the *Spectator* who want to know where the hell my column is and then there's a letter in the post from Miles Kington asking, quite simply, "Are you going to do the article or aren't you?" I make a resolution to work harder and then go to the York Minster for a drink.

SUNDAYS I HATE. No wonder people commit suicide on Sundays. I'm beginning to think that when you've read **one** *Observer* and **one** *Sunday Times* then you've read them **all**. The same occurs to me about my own stuff. I potter about in a desultory way cleaning up here and there and then go to my local at



"That self-satisfied smile means there's someone in the obituary column who was at school with him."

LE VERDICT FRANCAIS: UN MASSIF "JE NE SAIS PAS"!

"Je suis au-dessus de la lune," dit
Valerie Jenkins d'Estaing

par Jean-Luc Gallup à Paris

APRÈS le deuxième round de voting ici en France, il est clair que l'électorat a donné un massif shrug des épaules à tous les candidats. Ils ont dit aux party-leaders: "Pouf à vous!" Voici le breakdown des patterns de ballot:—

Oui..... environ 40%
Non..... à peu près 40%
Oui et non..... presque 15%
Peut-être..... pas plus que 5%
La victoire, donc, est gagnée par la Gauche. Ou peut-être par la Droite. C'est difficile à dire. "Je crois que le side meilleur a gagné," dit Françoise Mitternacht (Eurosocialiste), Georges Marchais-Commun (Marché-Communiste) et Jean-Jacques Charisme (L'Etat-c'est-Maoïste). Oui, mais quel side? Qui a gagné? Et que fait David Steel à Paris? Maintenant, over à Jean-Luc McLaren à Cardiff.

"Je suis au-dessus de la lune," dit Jean-Jacques Williams

Et bienvenu à un Cardiff délirieux! Après un match que personne présent n'oubliera, le team français et le team gallois peuvent marcher tall ce soir! C'était une de-

monstration de mau, ruck, hook et tru fantastique—un close encounter de la quatrième espèce—un Waterloo vraiment fait out! Mais il n'y avait pas de gagnants ici Cardiff aujourd'hui—seulement le rugby été le winner!

Et maintenant over à Jean-Luc Bosanquet pour un late résultat. Jean-Luc McLaren Match du Century, Cardiff.

Oui, over à moi pour un late résultat sensationnel!

Comme l'élection française a été inconclusive après injury time, on s'est décidé à invoquer le pools panel pour choisir le nouveau leader de France.

Et le pools panel a dit: "No-score draw"! Un no-score draw sur vos coupons, messieurs dames!

Et maintenant, pour la France? L'anarchie? Un Com-Soc-Gaul pact? Un replay? Qui sait? Moi, je n'sais pas. Je m'en fous, moi! Ça m'est égal. Tous les systèmes sont les mêmes, si vous me demandez.

Jean-Luc Bosanquet, Harry's Bar, Nouvelles à Dix.

Garçon, l'autre moitié, s'il vous plaît... (Si vous marquez 23½ votes ou plus, télégrammes s'il vous plaît à Vernons, Littlewood, Mecca Dancing ou Sam White. Et maintenant c'est bonne nuit de moi, et bonne nuit de lui. Merci, au revoir et close-down.)

noon. Between my last girl friend and the future Miss Right as I am, I stare at the trendy couples in the pub and clutch a gin and tonic, a lump of cheese and a gherkin and try to steel myself against self-pity. The television during the afternoon stinks although the perfection of my new set mesmerises me and I watch it until 7 pm when I go out to another local. I sit there lusting after a barmaid and spotting the other poor sods who've spent the day alone and who are now chatting to each other over their light ales and keeping up appearances. How I long for Monday.



SATURDAY AT NEWBURY is the usual procedure there but this time I went for the Friday and the Saturday too. Friday is ten times better since the people in the Member's Bar are the hard core of the pros and middle of the week racing is about the only time you ever get to meet the women who match the cream of the horses. Let me explain. On Saturdays, everyone comes racing. It's a sort of cockney exodus from London and anywhere you go is overcrowded, particularly on a day like Hennessy Gold Cup day. Friday or Wednesday or any other day contains just the salt of the business. Elegance is apparent in quantity. People like Lady Chetwode, horses like Brigadier Gerard, have a sleekness, a well groomed

look, a smooth well-groomed look that reeks of class.

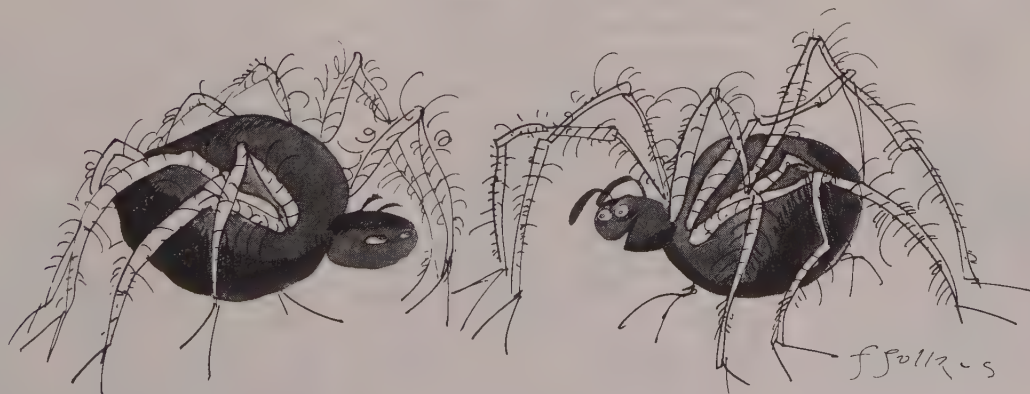
There is, without doubt, to me, an aura of something classy about racing. It's ridiculous that the profession of racehorse trainer now has so much *kudos*—like professional photographers in the days of David Bailey—but there's still something about it that lifts life from a pedestrian level. The money injected into the sport obviously affects it but, at the same time, the racing industry is full of people who know exactly what it means to be on the floor. That in itself is some sort of education. I presume the women improve by knowing such men. I wish to God they'd start racing on Sundays over here and something as magnificent as Longchamp could be produced in Hyde Park just for that one day. A mile and a half circuit around the Serpentine with a stand on the North Side of the Park would add a load of piss elegance and fun to London on a Sunday. It might even make the GLC a few bob. We racegoers might even find that elusive Miss Right there under a parasol.



ON MONDAY morning there are two invitations in the post instead of bills. One to the Derby Awards lunch given by the Horserace Writers and Reporters Association at the Dorchester and another from Mecca Bookmakers to a champagne reception and lunch at Sandown Park. I

seem fated to get deeper and deeper into the horseracing world and I'm not sure I altogether like it. I love racing and I like most of the professionals involved, but I can't stand being buttonholed by enthusiasts in boozers who bore me with post-mortems concerning their nearly coups. Michael Heath's original of the racing bore which he kindly gave me hangs on my wall and it's so accurate—it's the barber's shop chat about racing—that it's almost not funny any more. I suppose most shop talk is and that's why I hardly ever take a drink in Fleet Street.

In the evening I take a morbid look through a collection of old letters I've been sent and I get a good idea for a book. You must know about all those *Dear John* letters that were sent in the war, well, I'd like to publish a book called *Dear Jeff*. The trouble is a few people might get a little upset and be tempted to inflict GBH on me. But it's a fascinating collection. I particularly savour a letter from a fearfully well-known intellectual lady, an expert on psychology and feminism, who wrote to me that she feared we'd never respond to each other. She's then crossed out respond and substituted "relate". Real *Woman's Own* crap and a marked lack of a sense of humour. Oh to meet a woman with a sense of the absurd. Come to think of it, I do know a couple and I suppose that's exactly why we're just "Good Friends".



"My third husband was delicious."

Executive Suit

British businessmen should dress basically the way the Japanese do, conservatively, neatly and with attention to detail, Mr Fred Lintott, 59, new president of the Federation of Merchant Tailors, told members in London. Against this classic style—which is the way people imagine the British look—older businessmen let the country down by wearing shabby, old-fashioned clothes, he says.

Daily Telegraph

MR Dobson, one of the partners, was busy mending his abacus when Doreen came in to say that the Chairman wanted a word in the boardroom. “What about?” said Mr Dobson, pondering the little rods and balls mangled when the lads from the motor pool, up to discuss a bit more worker participation in management, mistook it for a baby xylophone and attempted a rendering of *Baby, Light My Fire* on it with monkey wrenches. “Has he lost his luncheon vouchers again?”

Doreen gave him an arch look and, sitting at his desk, showed a bit of leg. “Oh, Mr Dobson, you are a caution,” she said. “You know perfectly well he gives them to his fellow peers down at the House of Lords to help, um, influence the voting in certain debates relating to contracts in the Middle East. Things would have come to a pretty pass if the Chairman himself couldn’t . . .”

“Speaking of passes,” said Mr Dobson, turning a mottled strawberry colour and placing a trembling hand upon the swelling, creamy expanse of her cleavage, “why don’t you pillow your head in my In tray and let me . . .”

“Mr Dobson!” she hissed, backing away. “Last time you did this the string around your trousers broke and that poor little temp from Personnel, not two weeks out of convent school, walked in and fainted at the sight of your truss.”

“I’ve got them held up with baling wire now,” said Mr Dobson, breathing more heavily than was good for a man of his age and excessive weight, “and tied with a clove hitch, a traditional nautical knot which can secure an 80,000 ton supertanker to a buoy in a Force Nine wind. So find me some pliers, there’s a good girl, and I’ll just . . .”

The door opened and Mr Hoskins, Head of Sales, stood there. “Sorry,” he said. “Should have knocked. Just wanted to tell you the old man requires us up in the boardroom. I say,” he said, catching sight of the wire about Mr Dobson’s ample midriff, “that’s rather smart. More dependable than string and certainly more individual than braces.” He stuck his hands in his pockets and looked at them, rather shyly. “Speaking of which,” he said, “notice anything different about me?”

Mr Dobson cast a careful eye over him. “Well,” he said, “the stuffing has fallen out of your shoulder, you’ve got a bare knee showing and, of course, your gussets are shot to hell. Am I getting warm?”

Mr Hoskins twinkled at them. “My shoes,” he said.

“By Jove, yes,” breathed Mr Dobson.

“They’re odd.”

“Aren’t they just?”

“The left one had a hole in it of such epic proportions that, fighting with a darky for a cab in the rain last week, my foot went right through it and it finished up around my thigh.”

“Shame,” said Doreen.

“Buckle sank right into the flesh and the wife had to prise it loose with a spoon.”

“Oh, poor Mr Hoskins,” murmured Doreen.

“Size nine, it was. Got it at Dolcis back in 1963. Tight as blazes right to the end, and I got a gangrenous toe because of it, but I was very fond of that shoe.” He smiled wistfully down at his foot. “Still, as you see, I am fixed up with a very acceptable substitute; I found this old espadrille washed up on the beach at Monte. The sole has been eaten away somewhat—mullet, I’d say, mullet being very partial to rope, which they regard as essential roughage—but it’s still quite serviceable. I wore it to lunch at the Guildhall yesterday when they gave the Freedom of the City to that young punk rocker with the crankshaft through his brain, and the Lord Mayor himself complimented me on it. ‘I adore the way it keeps falling off when you cross your legs,’ he said, and he was not the first to cast envious glances at it.”

“You must show it to the Chairman,” said Mr Dobson. He fastened his collar with a paperclip, knotted an old bandage around his neck and, without further ado, they made their way to the boardroom.

The Chairman arrived a few minutes late and, as he bent to loosen a thong on his sandal before taking the chair, the six partners were, for a moment, reflected, grave and expectant, in the mirror-like backside of his trousers. Sighing, he straightened up and, from his jacket pockets, he took his shopping: a potted cactus, a tyre lever, a bottle of cough linctus and a clock.

“Why, George, you’re wearing a

sock,” murmured Mr Hoskins.

“Set off this morning with two,” wheezed the Chairman, “but the other is now doubling as a fan belt in the Rolls. Reason I wore them is that the King of the Belgians was at the Lords today and, on occasions like this, one has to keep up appearances. Gave *him* one of my luncheon vouchers, as a matter of fact, and he had goulash in the canteen but afterwards, alas, his appendix burst on the Woolsack. However, that is not what I wish to speak to you about.”

His lieutenants craned forward eagerly.

“A Japanese merchant bank is interested in our new share issue, and one of their chaps is arriving in the morning to give us the once over. Now,” he said, leaning over the table and mopping up a pool of spilt ink with the frayed cuff of his rumpled grey pinstripe, “they’re a damned funny people, and one of their foibles is an archaic insistence on personal neatness.” He hesitated. “I mean, they wear clean shirts. They press their trousers. They shine their shoes. They would rather face ritual disembowelling with a drawing pin than appear in public with a stuck zip. So, forthwith, you are all to take yourselves off to Savile Row and re-equip. Your new suits will have two vents at the back, side straps on the trousers, double crotches and twenty-inch trouser bottoms. It is also imperative that you show a bit of cuff. These details have been telexed from our agent in Tokyo, and I insist that you follow them to the letter.”

Next morning the board met again, smart as paint, every one, but silent, uncomfortable and plunged in gloom. The Chairman, sighing, mopped his sweat-beaded forehead with a raw silk Gunner’s tie from Gucci, while Mr Dobson muttered, “This bloody mohair and wool ensemble is crucifying me; it’s like being in an iron lung.”

The door opened and Doreen entered, dumped a tray of red roses on the table and left. The men stared at them, aghast. “Stick them in your buttonholes,” growled the Chairman.

“George,” said Mr Dobson, voice trembling perceptibly, “you cannot do this to us. We are men of the City, honourable English scruffs, and already we are becoming cold-shouldered. Ran into Dickie Fink-

Beaumont, my broker, on the 9.33 from Chorleywood this morning, wearing the corduroy trousers which still bear the marks of his haemorrhage back in ’73, and the tweed jacket not yet darned where the bone came through the shoulder during the punch-up with the Coutts Bank directors in the Savoy Grill and, when he saw me, he hid behind his *FT* and refused to acknowledge my presence.”

“Adorn yourselves,” snapped the Chairman, nodding at the roses, “and that’s an order.” The buzzer sounded on his desk. “Yes?” he said. “He’s here, my lord,” said Doreen.

“Send him through.”

The members of the board drew deep breaths, straightened their backs and waited, full of steely resolve. The door opened and in walked a small Japanese gentleman who paused, blinking behind thick

spectacles. Then he saw them and, for a moment, they stared at each other with mutual astonishment, growing dismay. Mr Nakamura wore a torn felt hat with the brim turned up at the front. His ancient trousers, baggy and grease-stained, were secured with a section of tank track. On his feet he sported an old galosh and a yellow wellington boot and, in the pockets of his ripped and tatty jacket, he appeared to be carrying a pair of lorry jacks.

Doreen, at the door, was giggling softly and, after a thunderstruck moment, Mr Dobson joined in too, in a breathless, high-pitched manner that threatened to become hysterical. Mr Nakamura spoke: “I merely wished to remain inconspicuous,” he said, “but I was misinformed and I have rostr face.” Then he crossed to the window, seven stories up, opened it wide and threw himself out.



“Relax, madam, those two have never yet got a virgin past the twenty-fourth step.”

WELCOME TO WHITEHALL

Advice to those about to enter the Treasury or other Government departments

You are now working for a government department, which means that you are about to meet a kind of currency you have never encountered before. It is called Public Money.

WHAT IS PUBLIC MONEY?

Private Money, the kind you are used to, is based on the pound sterling. It's the kind of money you use to buy cigarettes or milk or bread with. It subdivides into pence and you get change with it. You can also put it into machines and use it as an emergency screwdriver. When you join your government department, you will go on using private money at home, but not at the office. The commissionaire in your building will slip out and buy cigarettes or milk or bread for you. As soon as he gets back from queueing for bread, that is.

Public Money is based on the million pound unit, usually written as £1m. It will buy things that Private Money cannot buy, such as aeroplanes, schools, tanks, trade unions, bridges and a few yards of motorway. *It does not subdivide.* Occasionally people talk loosely of smaller sums such as "many thousands of pounds," or "three quarters of a million," but they do not exist or, if they do, they will have been brought up to £1m by inflation the next day. Always remember that there is nothing smaller than £1m, and that you cannot get change from Public Money. Nor can you toss it to start a football game.

WHAT IS £2M MINUS £15?

£1m. Anything less than £2m can only be £1m. In Public Money you never have odd sums like £2,300,987½. Partly because you cannot subdivide Public Money, partly because odd sums always look as if they have been translated from the American. When a newspaper headline says "US thieves grab £280,500 in raid", it is because some sub-editor has changed it from "US thieves grab \$3m in raid". If the Treasury uses a sum which smacks of dollars, it means the IMF is leaning on us again. *This must never be hinted at.*

WHO OWNS PUBLIC MONEY?

Public Money belongs to the country, the government, the public—anyone but us. That is what allows us to spend it in such vast sums. Of course, after a few weeks in your department you will cease to think that millions of pounds form a vast sum. You will find yourself saying things like "Only two million," and "Would another five million help?"

HOW ARE THESE FIGURES ARRIVED AT?

By a very strict mathematical formula. If you are estimating, for

instance, the cost of a new bridge, you work out the costs very carefully and arrive at a sum of, say, roughly £3m. You add £1m for inflation, £2m for margin of error and £1m for luck. This then adds up to the real total, £6m.

DON'T YOU MEAN £7M?

Oops, sorry, yes, £7m would be the revised estimate.

DO MISTAKES LIKE THAT OFTEN OCCUR?

Never. There are however readjustments, corrected forecasts, rejected estimates and unavoidable cost increases. A layman would say that Treasury estimates are always "wrong" simply because forecasts are always a different figure from what actually happens. This shows no understanding of the way Public Money works.

HOW DOES PUBLIC MONEY WORK?

By adding noughts. Here are some noughts for you to cut out and keep, by the way.

00000000000000000000000000000000

These should be added to the end of any estimate to bring it into line with so-called reality. We do not like doing this, as Treasury estimates contain a kind of ultimate truth, which real figures do not.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER WAYS OF EXPLAINING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TREASURY FIGURES AND OTHER FIGURES?

Lord, yes. If a member of the government points out that our figures are "wrong", we can claim that

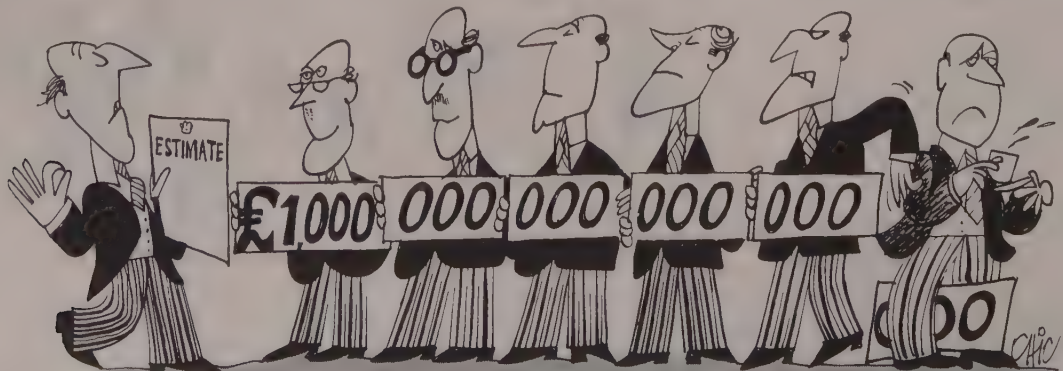
- 1) they do not reflect invisible earnings
 - 2) they have not been seasonally adjusted
 - 3) they do not take into account the flow of hot money
 - 4) there has been a computer error
- and so on.

IS THERE ALWAYS ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY FOR THINGS?

Yes. If you run out of noughts, apply for some more. And remember that the bigger a sum is, the less criticism it will arouse. You may have noticed, for instance, that the fuss about the unemployment figure passing the million mark was much louder than it is now, when it is getting nearer two million.

ARE WE ACCOUNTABLE TO ANYONE?

Not unless you count Bernard Levin, and not often then.



Yanks for the Memory

"Two thousand ex-GIs are planning a nostalgic return to Bournemouth where they were stationed in the war."

BBC News

"COULD I have some more coffee, dear?" asked Mr Braithwaite, as he did every morning when he turned to the leader page of *The Times*. His eyes, as always, did not leave his newspaper.

"You surely can," said Mrs Braithwaite, instead of "Of course, dear"—her usual response in the morning litany.

"And toast?"

"We're fresh out of toast, honey. I'll fix some."

Mrs Braithwaite looked at the well-creased airmail letter once again and popped some bread in the toaster. Mr Braithwaite scanned the Letters to the Editor and then asked his wife, as he always did, how she proposed to spend the day.

"I guess I'll call the girls," said Mrs Braithwaite.

"Girls?" Mr Braithwaite looked up from his paper.

"Uh huh."

"But you don't know any girls!" said Mr Braithwaite. He was puzzled and slightly irritated. If his wife had told him she was going to change her books at the public library or go to the flower-arranging class with Mrs Ormington-Cooper and Mrs Hulbertson, he could have turned to the share index in peace without even registering what she had said.

"Carol Ormington-Cooper and Angela Hulbertson, who else?" explained Mrs Braithwaite. "I figured we'd go down town and take in a movie."

Mr Braithwaite put down his newspaper altogether.

"What do you mean, 'take in' a movie? Do you propose to give lodgings to a movie? Deceive a movie? Reduce the length or width of a movie on your sewing machine? Furthermore, why 'movie' when you clearly mean film?"

"O.K., wise guy, film."

"And another thing," pursued Mr Braithwaite, petulantly marmalading his fresh toast, "why are you talking like one?"

"I don't dig," said Mrs Braithwaite.

"Like a film. And a very bad film at that."

"Oh yeah?" said Mrs Braithwaite. "Sez you," added Mrs Braithwaite.

Mr Braithwaite did not take the matter further. His wife was a prominent member of the Bour-

nemouth Proscenium Players and it was very likely that she was in the throes of an amateur production of *Father of the Bride*. Given the slightest encouragement, she would probably rope him in to read the part of Spencer Tracy.

Mr Braithwaite went back to his *Times*. Mrs Braithwaite, under cover of a seed catalogue which had arrived in the same post as her airmail letter, read Hank's note for the twentieth time. After a while she said:

"Sweetie-pie?"

"Yes, dear?"

"Do you remember when I used to date Lootenant Karminsky?"

Mr Braithwaite glowered. "If you mean that damned Yank who used to shower you with nylons and gum while I was sitting it out in a blasted foxhole outside Sidi Barani, the answer is very well indeed. Why do you ask?"

Mrs Braithwaite, to Mr Braithwaite's surprise, burst into song. The lyric, which was vaguely familiar to him, was to the effect that the Yanks were coming and that they wouldn't go back until it was over over there.

"Eleanor, are you feeling all right?"

"Sure! Swell! Oh, boy!" observed Mrs Braithwaite. Slipping the airmail letter into her handbag, she added as casually as she could: "He's planning a trip."

"Is he, indeed? Then I hope he breaks his neck."

"A trip *here*, honey lamb! I got the lowdown from a dame at City Hall. It seems a whole bunch of GI veterans are coming over from Stateside to paint the town red. Gee willikins," said Mrs Braithwaite, "will that be some party or will that be some party?"

"Will you be seeing this Karminsky chap?" asked Mr Braithwaite gruffly.

"Nope," sighed Mrs Braithwaite. "Way I reckon, you jest can't turn back the clock."

"It's as well, dear. I don't know what you ever saw in the man. Frightful bounder, by all accounts."

"I was lonesome," said Mrs Braithwaite, "and he was kinda cute. Anyhow, he talked my language. Y'know?"

Mrs Braithwaite did not telephone her friends Mrs Ormington-Cooper and Mrs Hulbertson. She

CANNED FILM FESTIVAL

OLD DIRECTORS WHO WON'T FADE AWAY

Among the more noxious aspects of spring is the film festival. For those of us who won't be at Cannes, **DON LESSEM** provides a preview of what we can expect to miss:

HOLIDAY ON ICE—INGMAR BERGMAN. Bergman's first musical and a great one. Liv Ullman stars as a catatonic figure-skater who sees Death (Ryan O'Neal) in the cracks of the ice. She performs figure-eights until Spring (Max Von Sydow) melts the ice. Visually stunning in its stark contrasts and sparing use of color. Score by Lawrence Welk.

LA SAGNA—(THE BLOOD)—FEDERICO FELLINI. The savage depravity of the Visigoth conquest is revealed through Fellini's unique vision. The story centres upon a Roman circus troupe which is captured and unmercifully booed by the invaders. Starring Anthony Quinn and Bozo the Clown.

YOU DIE, YANKEE DOG—AKIRA KUROSAWA. The director again examines the subjective nature of truth in *Rashomon*esque style. This time we see, through 24 sets of eyes, Babe Ruth's famous "called" home run in the 1927 World Series.

LE CHANDELIER (THE CANDLE-STICK MAKER). CLAUDE CHABROL. The debonaire young *chandelier*, masterfully played by Jean-Pierre Leaud, leaves work early one afternoon to go to the dentist. Chabrol, with his characteristic mastery of suspense and slow pace, has the audience on the edge of its collective seat throughout, as Leaud locks the office door, has difficulty starting his car, finally takes a cab.

THEY DIED WITH THEIR SOCKS OFF—NICHOLAS RAY. The foremost architect of the baroque Western has fashioned a bizarre oater concerning a calamitous fire in Bat Masterson's bordello. Also featuring the first shoot-out between blind cowboys. All five lines of dialogue are intentionally mumbled.

LA MALAISE DU PAP (THE POPE GETS A RASH)—LUIS BUNUEL. Once again the old master wittily satirises our religious institutions as the College of Cardinals visits the Rome Zoo. Watch for Bunuel himself in a rare screen appearance, beating a dead horse. With Fernandel.

LATE SUMMER, EARLY LUNCH—OZU. The traditional values of a Japanese rural family are shaken when an electrical fence is built around their farm. Gradually they discover that a chain-fence is only as strong as its weakest link. With Key Luke and Francis the Mule.

PASTA FAZOO—(BREAD OF FOOLS). MICHEL-ANGELO ANTONIONI. A compelling tale of Moses's search for the unleavened bread. Filmed on location in the American Southwest. Antonioni's obsession with pure colour caused him to repaint the entire Painted Desert. Starring every Redgrave. In Italian with Italian subtitles.

THE POUR DEUX—(TEA FOR TWO)—FRANCOIS TRUFFAUT. A troubled adolescent, charmingly portrayed by Jean-Pierre Leaud, is ignored by his drunken father (Charles Aznavour) and beaten by his tyrannical mother (Jean-Pierre Leaud). Seeing no other recourse, the boy steals a gun and shoots them both. Taking to the streets, he is befriended by an eccentric millionaire (Jean-Pierre Leaud) and grows up to become France's greatest director.

went, as she often did, to Dorothy's Pantry in the town where she surprised the waitress by asking for cawfee, easy on the cream, and a donut, hold the Jello. When the clock showed noon she walked to the station where the London train was just coming in.

It was absurd, she told herself in retrospect, to have been on the lookout for the smart olive-drab jacket and trim fawn slacks of the GI she had known thirty-odd years ago. She was prepared for the receding hairline but not for the Brooks Brothers suit, nor the slim black documents case, nor the plastic identity tag attached to his lapel.

He recognised her at once. She had pinned on to her handbag the brass insignia of the US 34th Division which he had given her all those years ago, after that July 4 hop at the Officers' Club.

"Eleanor?"

"You used to call me Kitten," pouted Mrs Braithwaite. "Still and all, it's good to see ya. How ya been, Hank?"

"Hank. Now that nomenclature is a whole lifestyle away. Namewise, anyone I relate with one-to-one calls me HK." Karminsky touched his identity tag. "It's a kind of work-ethic-dynamic-energy projection we have, in-house. I'm into management now, did you know that?"

"Big deal," said Mrs Braithwaite. "Get you."

"The use-of-initials concept identifies me as an authority figure. We have this interdisciplinary process scenario within the top-strata executive parameters. It's a kind of structured behavioral psychology printout, read me?"

"Don't give me that boloney," joked Mrs Braithwaite, uncertainly. It was his accent, she supposed. It would take some getting used to, as it had when he had first asked her to cut a rug with him at the Thanksgiving barn-dance.

They went into the buffet and had tea and biscuits. Mrs Braithwaite apologised that there was no blueberry pah.

Karminsky, saying that this was no hassle, explained that he was into macrobiotics. He said that they were far out.

"How was your trip?" asked Mrs Braithwaite.

"Until customs completal, we had perfect lift-off. From London on in,

I had a mobility problem. Transportation in that city is reaching totality, you better believe it."

"Still and all, you finally made it. Over-sexed, overpaid and over here!"

"Lemme say this about that," said Karminsky. "It was great PR for the town of Bournemouth to extend this facility. Otherwise there was no way I could have gotten upfront credit mobility to finance the trip. I'm still operational on a break-even cost basis, but back home, we have downward growth at this time."

"You sure said a mouthful," said Mrs Braithwaite.

By way of banter, she asked him if he had any gum, chum. Karminsky replied that after analysis he was no longer oral-dependent. He had, however, brought Mrs Braithwaite a volume called *Zen Skateboarding*. He said that the post-Watergate generation were really into this book, which unlocked their hang-ups.

"There's still not much to do in this burg," Mrs Braithwaite said, when they had drunk their tea. "Un-

less you'd like to cut a rug."

"Excuse me?"

"You know—jitterbug. At the Palais."

"Is that facility still viable here?" asked Karminsky. "We've taken a revaluation of recreation-mobility since we moved into the conservation ballgame. We're more home-orientated."

"I don't dig," said Mrs Braithwaite.

"Is that so? You used to be into digging, or have you come through that experience? You were in a home economics situation, right?"

"I was in the Land Army, if that's what you mean," said Mrs Braithwaite tartly.

They fell into an awkward silence. A tear trickled down Mrs Braithwaite's rouged cheek.

Karminsky coughed.

"I'm picking up signals," he said.

"In a horse's ass you're picking up signals," sniffed Mrs Braithwaite.

"Eleanor . . . ma'am . . . My value-judgement on this is that we're locked in a hostility situation here. We're not communicating,

right? We have a dialogue problem, right? Maybe we're into different cultures. I don't want to lay a bad trip on you, honey, no way, but we don't relate. In any case, according to my prior background briefing I'm scheduled for a visit with the Chamber of Commerce . . ."

Mrs Braithwaite was putting the new *Radio Times* into its padded folder, embossed with the crest of the BBC and its motto, "Nation Shall Speak Peace Unto Nation." Mr Braithwaite was smoking his pipe.

Mrs Braithwaite spoke hesitantly. "Honey . . . dear. Have I been behaving kinda—have I been behaving strangely?"

Mr Braithwaite judiciously packed down his pipe with the reamer she had given him for his birthday.

"I wouldn't say that, dear."

"I feel as if I've been away on a long trip—a long journey," said Mrs Braithwaite. "But I'm back now, my dearest, I'm back."

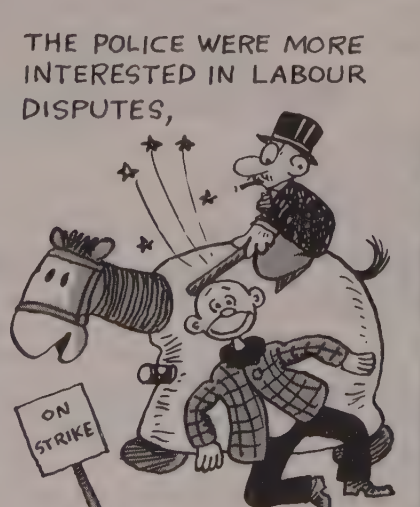
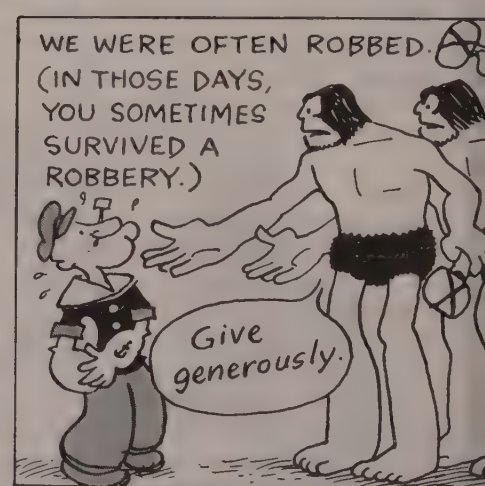
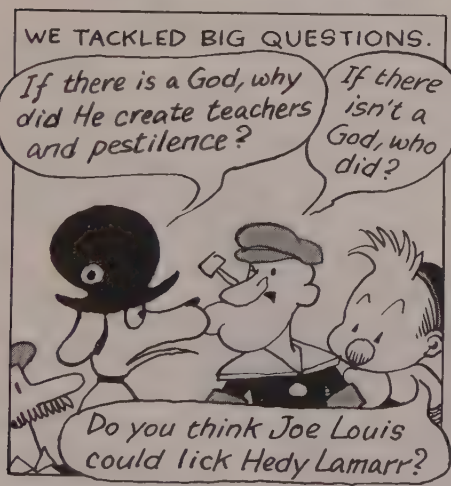
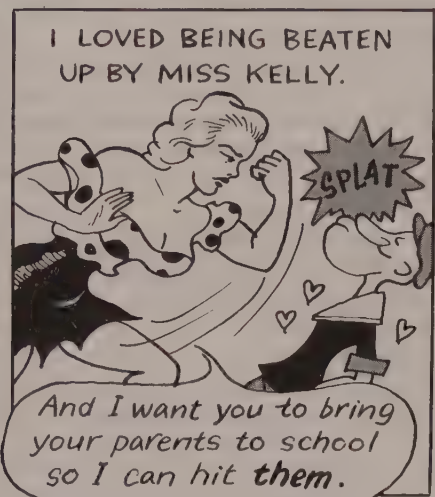
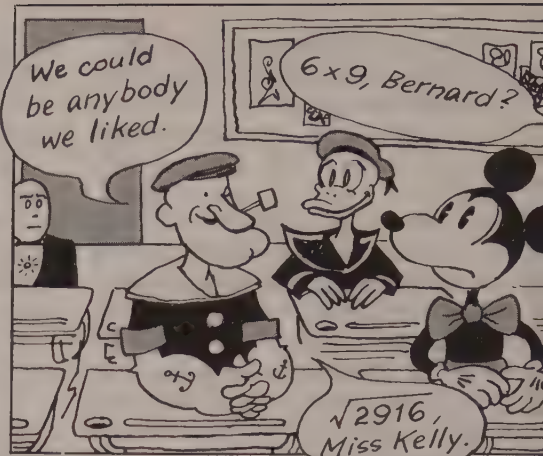
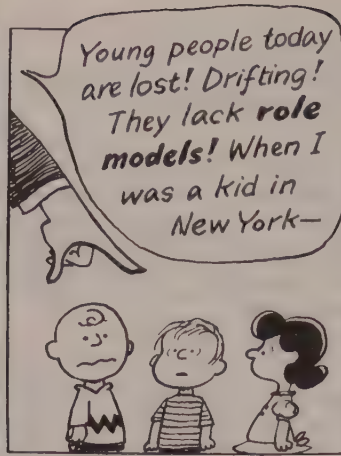
"Swell," said Mr Braithwaite.



"We've decided to put it on the market."

THE WAY WE WERE?

HANDELSMAN summons up remembrance of strips past



It was a grim world!
Not like today.

WE HAD UNEMPLOYMENT.

No jobs for bums like you!

VIRTUOUS WOMEN.

I would! I would respect you! I swear it! Come on, Shirley, just once, a little one, I'll be very quiet, you'll hardly notice.

No, no, no, no, no! Take me home.

But you live in Brooklyn! I don't go there.

PARENTS. Art school? What do they teach you in art school—how to starve?

What are you reading? "The Renegade Kautsky and the Proletarian Revolution", what kind of crazy name is that for a book? A book should be called "David Copperfield".

FORTUNATELY, THE WAR CAME. IT CURED UNEMPLOYMENT (MINE, ANYWAY).

Button undone, confined to quarters.

IT CURED VIRTUE.

Oh, darling—I'm so glad, so glad! When I think that you might be killed tomorrow—

Perhaps not tomorrow, ma petite. The risks are not so great here in Madison, Wisconsin.

IT GOT RID OF PARENTS.

I sure do miss you too, Mom! I sure do wish I could come home.

Tell the old bag you're calling from the Russian front.

THE MAIN POSTWAR EXCITEMENT WAS PROVIDED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT KNOCKING AT THE DOOR.

We're from the F.B.I.! We'd like to ask you to inform on your friends, get them in trouble like a good American.

Be a rat. That's where it's at.

We're in the menacing game.

Miss Kelly, protect me!

And Suez, and Vietnam, and the 6-day war, and Watergate, but you kids didn't notice.

You were busy dropping acid.

AND THAT'S IT! NOTHING HAPPENS NOWADAYS — UNLESS YOU COUNT SADAT—

AND I'VE GOT A NEW SECRET IDENTITY →

Yes—when to the sessions of sweet silent thought! Then can I drown an eye, unus'd to flow.

You talk pretty, mister, real pretty.

The world has changed a lot since Fifth-Form Geography Class. Dozens of countries have changed their names, their borders, the days when they pick up the garbage. It's time to brush up on your general geographical knowledge, kids.

JONATHAN CLEMENTS:

The Whole Earth Quiz

1. What do the nations of Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Mauritania have in common?

- A. They're all members of the Arab League.
- B. They all play hot basketball.
- C. None of them allow all-night bowling competitions.
- D. Not much, but they're staying together for the children's sake.

2. Saudi Arabia is roughly the size of:

- A. Texas.
- B. Texas and Northern Ireland.
- C. Texas and Northern Ireland and the River Nile.
- D. Just about anything it wants to be roughly the size of.

3. What are the Dardanelles?

- A. A body of water separating European Turkey from Asian Turkey.
- B. A volcano separating Yorkshire from Lancashire.
- C. Liza Minnelli's new opening dance routine.
- D. The royal family of Bulgaria.

4. The European Common Market:

- A. Includes France and Italy, but not Austria or Sweden.
- B. Includes Austria and Sweden but not any country that exports plain chocolate.
- C. Stays open on Wednesday afternoon.
- D. Wouldn't give you a carrier bag even if you begged for it.

5. The country with the largest population is:



- A. China.
- B. India.
- C. Installing eight billion ice-cold baths.
- D. Planning to take over half of Switzerland.

6. Choose the correct statement:

- A. Mogadishu is the capital of Somalia.
- B. Somalia is the capital of Mogadishu.
- C. The lovely Mogadishu River winds placidly through the heart of scenically spectacular Somalia.
- D. The lovely Mount Somalia looms majestically over the gently rolling plains of picturesque Mogadishu.

7. The two major ethnic groups in Czechoslovakia are:



- A. Czechs and Slovaks.
- B. Czechs and Solid Colours.
- C. Extra-longs and Fatties.
- D. Always slapping each other on the wrists.

8. £1 sterling is worth how many Finnish markkas?

- A. Two.
- B. 15,000,000.
- C. 17 plus the trade-in on your old Ford Cortina.
- D. Not as many as when you started doing this quiz.

9. The citizens of Ivory Coast are known as:

- A. Ivories.
- B. Coasters.
- C. Those guys and girls over there.
- D. Romantic dreamers all.

10. There are two sovereign states within the borders of Italy. One is Vatican City: the other:

- A. Isn't.
- B. Wishes it were.
- C. Is called San Marino.
- D. Is calling me.

11. Scientists have discovered that the earth's magnetic poles are:

- A. Moving north.
- B. Moving south.
- C. Dating each other.
- D. Shopping for coffee beans.

12. In order to travel from Kenya to Gabon is necessary to go:



- A. East.
- B. West.
- C. Native.
- D. As fast as your little legs will carry you.

13. The colours of the Bolivian flag are:

- A. Aquamarine, burnt crimson, grape and off-white.
- B. Violet, magenta, heliotrope, black, with the faintest suggestion of robin's egg blue.
- C. Brown and even browner.
- D. Red.

14. The chief exports of the Coco Islands are:

- A. Coconuts.
- B. Cocoa Krispies.
- C. Little obscene bronze statues of King Coco.
- D. Outgoing aeroplanes.

15. Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Shajah, and Umm Qaiwan are:

- A. Rupert Bear's bodyguards.
- B. The announcer's test at a foreign language radio station.
- C. A demolition firm responsible for knocking down the Great Electric Confectionery Factory at Grimsby.
- D. Bob Dylan's latest back-up band.

ANSWERS

1. A. They're all members of the Arab League.
 2. B. Texas and Northern Ireland.
 3. A. A body of water separating European Turkey from Asian Turkey.
 4. B. Includes Austria and Sweden but not any country that exports plain chocolate.
 5. B. India.
 6. C. The lovely Mogadishu River winds placidly through the heart of scenically spectacular Somalia.
 7. A. Czechs and Slovaks.
 8. B. 15,000,000.
 9. B. Coasters.
 10. C. Is called San Marino.
 11. B. Moving south.
 12. D. As fast as your little legs will carry you.
 13. A. Aquamarine, burnt crimson, grape and off-white.
 14. A. Coconuts.
 15. B. The announcer's test at a foreign language radio station.

Still Afraid of M.I.C.E., Dear?

YOU feel an idiot, not being able to tear your eyes from a girl's frail wrists all through dinner, but that was my situation. It was a dentists' dinner. This had made it even harder than usual, as we drew up our chairs to marinated mussels that stood a good chance of being bitten right through, including shells, to find a breezy gambit.

"And what are *you* doing here?" I beamed through the bridgework. And she bared about forty faultless choppers and told me. I should have guessed. Even so, I still couldn't really see her with a knee on my chest making for the lower molars.

I must update in these matters. Not a month before, at the optician's, I'd had what should have been a useful lesson, when invited to rub noses with a willowy young brunette. This was after my reading-lesson with ZQMNOX and similar, out of darkness into light, where I'd taken her at first for some fellow-astigmatic, also selecting frames. Then she sat me down, vis-a-vis, or nez-a-nez, at the little narrow table, urging me to gaze into her eyes, green with tiny flecks and long-lashed by nature.

"How do you like them?" she said, rearranging my slightly higher ear to let the mock tortoiseshell pass over. Though old gallantries die hard I managed, thank God, not to reply that they were my favourite colour, and twinkly with it, but I might have done, if she hadn't urged me to gaze at the end of her nose next. Again no comment, despite an admiring impulse.

Besides, consciously squinting like that, a man snaps back into the detached relationship.

The Finniston inquiry into the engineering profession, which you'll realise I've been leading up to, has received a worried memorandum from the Institution of Municipal Engineers, complaining that none of their members are women, or practically none. You could count them on the platform of one crane. This indicates, says the memo, and you have to go along with its argument, "that the profession is not able to recruit from the available female talent."

It doesn't say what the IME mean to do about this. The ball just seems to be lobbed into the Finniston court. And if this is the same Sir M. Finniston who chaired British Steel,

with its available male talent, into realms of £1M loss per day, he should be just the man to look into this, find a way of tapping these rich reserves of wasted ladies. There seems no reason why, if they can draw teeth and fit glasses, never mind wear fully authorised stethoscopes and say, "As your Lordship pleases," from under daft wigs, they shouldn't move on to larger things such as ship's boilers, oil-rig construction, and the cascading of molten ore from gigantic buckets in Rotherham.

Down a bit your end, Farida. And the last hunk of the Aswan High Dam drops smoothly into place.

Or start smaller. Motor cars, say. Perhaps it's the male talent that's against this. And the sad thing is, that if those car workers who recently walked out demanding prettier overalls had been women, we should all have gone ha-ha. It served the profession right for letting them in anyway, the dizzy little bubbleheads. Isn't it well known that they can't erect a simple ironing board without getting an arm trapped? Yet here we are, expecting them to tackle the work of strong, skilled men, such as affixing a chrome script SUPER, slightly cock-eyed, as the back end of another Allegro comes chugging along the assembly line.

And all the time their thoughts are elsewhere. Has a buzzard nicked the baby? Why can't we have prettier overalls? Their place is in the home, waiting for hubby to breeze in and apply his male talent to screwing up a loose saucepan handle.

That may be the thinking, among the 1,168,900 workers (when working) of the AUEW. The 1,168,900 membership, let's call them. Even more so among the larger lay public, which isn't too sure what it means by an engineer, beyond a vague composite picture of a sea-going Scotsman rushing around below the waterline, wiping things with rags, and others in safety helmets and good suits, standing in a motorway excavation and pointing at something. Ask the average man in the bar to name a couple of noted engineers, and if he doesn't say T. Telford and I.K. Brunel, my name's R. L. Stevenson (author of *Travels With a Rocket*). He thinks of the larger exercise. That triumph of male talent, the first Tay Bridge, which endured

storm and tempest for over two years (1877-79); or achievements of our own time, from superb nuclear installations whose radioactive leaks are kept down to almost nothing, to something like the colossal factory spread of Flixborough, which so far has only blown up once.

Not only the layman, but the laywoman, may thus get the idea that engineering has to be big and cumbersome. It may be a factor in dissuading her from coming forward, doubting her ability to manipulate girders in any quantity, fearing that, better designed than the male for such purposes, she will just be told off to squirm through some tower block's air conditioning ducts to check why residents on upper floors keep getting asphyxiated.

Sir Monty, I think, (should it be he), ought to make clear to her that this is not so. Let him quote the Rt. Hon. W. Rodgers, who said the other day, after an inspection of the well-known Driving and Vehicle Licensing Centre, Swansea, that some of the problems there had been underestimated: "since then we have realised that the biggest is not necessarily the best." A statement that not only went into an otherwise vacant pigeonhole at the Public Record Office, the only example of a government spokesman admitting error, but reminded us that en-

gineering today has expanded, or perhaps contracted, to embrace the 2-inch TV screen and other tiny products which would go with ease into the dainty handbag of a lady engineer, a thing nobody would claim for the Aswan High Dam.

On even a moderately increased scale she could take up a little light panel beating or sheet metal work. Body-pressing she might jib at, on the hitherto masculine preserve of the shop floor, but there are plentiful similar opportunities, well within her powers and leaving no irremovable crescent of black sludge under the fingernails.

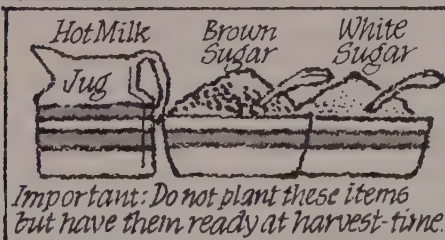
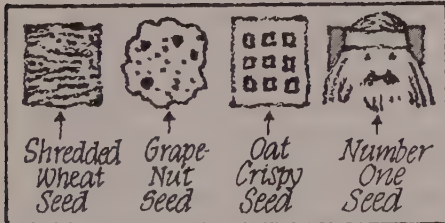
It depends, naturally, on what branches of the engineering profession take her fancy. These are many. Automobile, Aeronautical, Marine, Chemical, Electrical, Gas, Mining, Railway, Water (exceptionally clean work) and, of course, Civil, which may well appeal, in a rude world, from the courtliness of its designation alone. It may mean putting up airports and new towns, however, and I wouldn't rule out tunnelling, once a girl has the coveted M.I.C.E. after her name.

Where Municipal Engineering comes in, I don't quite see. My reference shelves, though veering madly off under K for Kariba with statistics of animals removed to high ground before the flooding of their

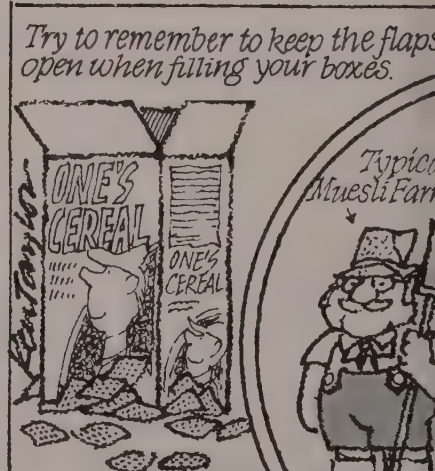


"When all's said and done, Grimbley, these reunion dinners are never up to much."

FARMING WITH MARK



If sown in time, they will be ready for a harvesting in the summer, when the weather is nicer for that sort of thing. Then simply pop the cereals into boxes and close the lid.



The little plastic free gift can either be packed by hand or scattered in the field at the time of sowing, so that it is harvested with the cereal.



"If it isn't the Aurora Borealis then it's a late kick-off."

habitat, have nothing on it, and the Institution of Municipal Engineers may well get a comeback, from the Finniston lot, suggesting an overhaul of their public relations. Does the M.I.M.E. embrace the M.I.C.E.? Or I may mean the other way round. Again, this should certainly be clarified. Municipal Engineering carries overtones that could frighten a shy girl right off. Drainpipe laying, garbage truck maintenance, public plumbing and the like; hooking swimsuits from the blocked outflow of the Corporation baths; bolting S-shaped ironwork on the newly built Social Security office where the walls have begun to crack.

Or just demolition. There's a lot of that about, as last year's luxury flats for the elderly, subsiding with a squelch, have to be torn down before

they sink in shallow clay and become a danger to building. Dusty work, and a cruel denial of the creative female instinct.

Ladies, it needn't be that. I have before me, fresh from the municipal photo-copier, a signed message from my own District Engineer and M.I.C.E., thanking me for the way I've been putting out my waste paper since the start of the year. He asks me, with shrewd engineer's perception, not to include any wood, rubber or food scraps in future, but ends on a note of triumph and trumpets. With a little help from my friends, the few weeks' pulp harvest has amounted in value to £103, "which has almost exactly covered the cost of collection and handling."

So why not come in as a Waste Paper Engineer? How about it, girls? What if it does fall short of your

dream of beating us men at our own game, with non-collapsing bridges, leak-free atom plants and unexplodable factories? Exercise your existing skills in ordinary household accounting, and you could be the first M.I.C.E., W.P., to show a profit.

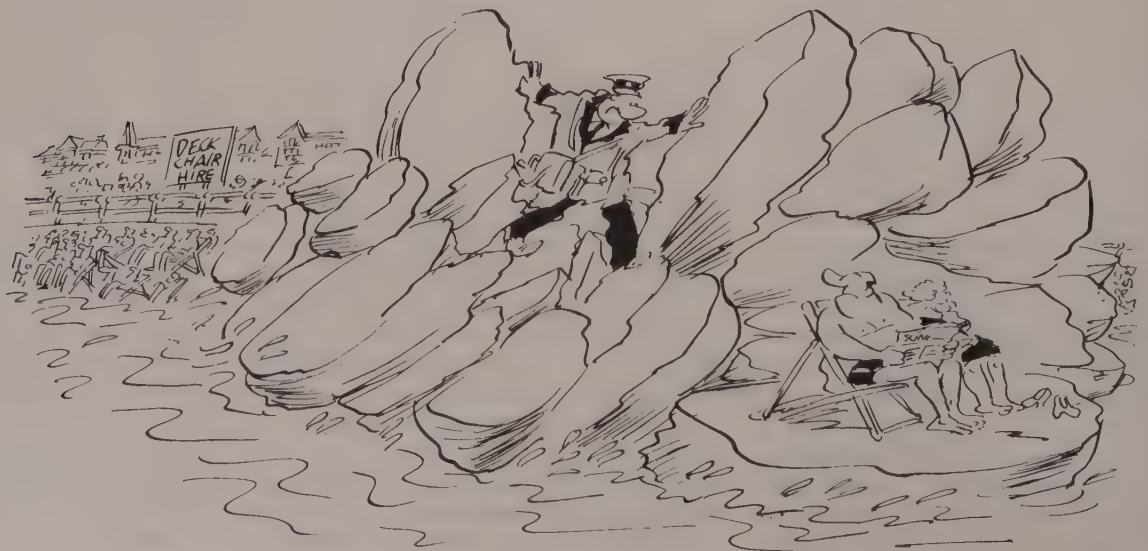
All doors are open, that's the point, not just all mouths and eyes. Dentistry and optics are OK. But even Military Engineering, should you feel drawn, offers superior opportunities. Your first atomic missile not to launch itself accidentally with live warhead, owing to a design fault by clumsy male talent (R.A.F., Leuchars, August 5, 1977), will give you confidence you never thought you had.

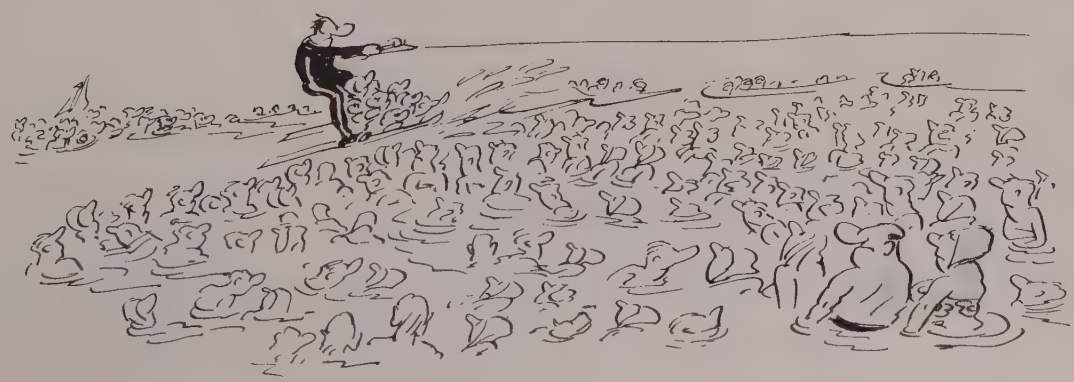
And even from the military, you'll get just as many admiring looks at your wrists and noses. You have my word on that.



LARRY

FIGHTS ON THE BEACHES





Life is a whole lot tougher for man's animal friends than most sentimental books about them suggest. Now for the first time the tooth-and-claw reality can be told in Chapter One of . . .

If only cats could type

Norman
Mansbridge



IN the lettuce-lined field hospital in Efrafa Wood, Morgan the Ulcerated Pig was boring the pelt off a socially-deprived gerbil with a nauseous description of how soluble fattening agents and man-made fortified swill had shot his one good kidney to bits when in stepped a rabbit in uniform.

"There's a queue here, soldier," snorted Morgan as the stiff-backed buck marched bold as you please past the benches of coughing, sobbing animals and through the rubber swing-doors into Surgery.

"That's rabbits for you," said the gerbil. "No breeding."

The doors whanged open with a sickening slap and the rabbit re-emerged in a huff.

"One more smart remark out of you, poriky, and you'll wind up double-wrapped for freshness and two blue stripes across your loin," he snapped. "For your information you're talking to one of this country's best-selling vets, two thousand cases to bring tears to your eyes in paperback alone plus I lost count of the number of times on *Nationwide*. And I've had a busy day. There's a lot of botulism about all along the River Bank, croup is endemic right through the Wild Wood, and I just spent four hours in theatre with that damn fool Mole who can't see his paw in front of his face but has to go out for a stroll along the by-pass and then wonders why he winds up in here looking like a slimmer's diet hamburger. I've had it up to *here* with dumb animals for one day, OK? So either shut your snout or go find yourself another vet."

"This is getting to sound like Hollywood," piped up Jonathan Livingston Seagull. "When you two have quite finished, I'm sitting here beak to tail in sticky crude and would appreciate, *if you don't mind*, a rub down some time before next Christmas. We've been waiting here since breakfast and all that's happened so far is Black Beauty got a dope test."

"This," said the rabbit, "is not the PDSA. This is the PFLA—The Popular Front For The Liberation Of Animals. It's run by

animals on behalf of animals and, well, we're pushed, comrades. We're only animal. We've only got two pairs of hands. We're doing the best we can."

The rabbit had seen some action in his time. His father perished at Borrowdale, wracked by myxamotosis, savaged by a hooligan fox and finally seen off by both barrels from a rosy-cheeked farmer's boy. His mother, caught in a stoat-trap as she fled gunfire, had been saved by a kindly schoolmaster who had carried her home, whimpering in his arms, and fed her with milk and Marmite from a nasal dropper until she was strong enough to manage a nibble of bran and shredded greenstuffs. In a month or two she was big and strong again and, shortly after her kid was born, the schoolmaster's wife had skinned her for a pair of mittens and boiled up the carcass for a pie. When the little children who lived in the school-house showed interest in the infant bunny a fortnight later and left it to starve, it bit its way out of the hutch, gone underground, and was today an outraged and embittered rabbit medic., self-styled C.O. of the Rabbit Army Faction. It was his life's ambition to hold Sir McGregor to ransom and liberate the Flopsy Brothers.

Just at that moment a hedgehog wandered in. He'd been on the road for two days and exhaust emissions had softened his brain so far as they could make out, it seemed that some owl and a pussycat had been lost at sea after getting snarled up with a factory fishing boat and there was something about a friend of his called Jiminy Cricket being in intensive care in Los Angeles after an overdose of DDT. And he'd heard the Big Bad Wolf had gone down with rabies.

"Friends," said the military rabbit M.O., "we have a struggle on our hands. Follow me and we can smash down the imperialist, uncaring humans who seek to exploit our kingdom. Let's go and liberate a farmer or two."

But, sad to tell, they never did for just at the moment they were popped out of the warren a combine harvester passed. "That's the way it is," said Paddington Bear. "If you can't beat 'em, at least you can live out of 'em."

Do you remember Jim's Inn, Miranda?

A hat does something ...



... even for dashing

Dirk Bogarde

A dark brown snap brim adds a manly charm to Dirk Bogarde, who can now be seen in his latest British film 'BLACKMAILED'. His hat is slightly tilted and the character of the brim gives it a smart crisp look. Dirk appreciates smartness and comfort and knows that a hat combines them both. It is a well-dressed man's best bet.

For a hat to suit your personality, see your local hatter.

**If you want to get ahead
get a hat!**

Stanley Matthews, star of Blackpool's forward line, and holder of 38 full International Caps for England.



Stan Matthews
says,
Seize your chances

Judging by my mail 90% of the boys in Britain aim to make football their job in life! Well you know, that just won't work! But our country offers a wonderful choice to a boy or girl. Hundreds of different trades and thousands of different firms to work for. And once you've chosen your job just the same qualities that would make you a First Division footballer will get you high up in your job. Initiative, enterprise, using your napper. Seeing an opening and going for it. Taking a chance. Always, always working towards your goal. And of course not being afraid of a few hard knocks! Personal enterprise! That's what gets you to the top whether your job is in field, factory or office.

WHAT'S YOUR LINE?

Whatever your job is—while there's Free Enterprise there's opportunity. So make the most of it yourself, and encourage the spirit of Free Enterprise in others all you can.

**Free Enterprise gives everyone
a chance and a choice**

DOES anyone sigh to revisit Schwepshire, that dotty English county created, with many a Schweppigram, by Stephen Potter in the 1950s? Or is it a territory best left to glow fondly in the memory? Schwepshire, I seem to recall, was gradually eclipsed by Granadaland, a less lovable fiefdom of the man who is now Lord Bernstein. It claimed for its hard-headed population an exorbitant share of British genius and virtues.

Nostalgia about advertisements? Nobody, surely, can look back misty-eyed at those Ministry of Food burlblings about "creamy golden dried egg" which were still appearing in the 1950s. Or at those first, coy supplements about emergent nations in *The Times*. Or at the launch of Y-fronts. Or at Mr Therm, the Whispering Fish or the Egg Board's self-satisfied lion (but the Kosset cat, yes!). Only the admen who grew rich on the proceeds can yearn for the great detergent wars which gave us "whiter than white" and choked the rivers with suds.

But some of us recall with pleasure the great petrol wars which broke out in 1953, on the demise of wartime Pool Petrol, if only because of the delectable spin-off. In the glossies Shell gave us those superb county and wild life guides. At the highest level Esso celebrated its rebirth with quotations from Epicurus, Thoreau and Burke, but it also unleashed again the beast which was later to become "the tiger in your tank". Then it drove the nation crazy with the long-running TV jingle "The Esso sign means happy motoring," the creation of David Bernstein, who once had his own TV play interrupted by his own jingle, and serve him right.

But let's go back to the slough of despair that passed for an advertising industry in 1945. It had been a horribly frustrating war. All the admen could do was urge us to use the Product sparingly, or not to moan if all the Brylcreem went to the RAF, or to assure us that as soon as all oppressed people were liberated, cream crackers would be back. Sweets should be left for the kiddies, suggested the manufacturers, knowing well they would not be. There was still a certain amount of stuff on the market for rubbing on bruises, stuffing up noses or scouring out



armpits, but even One-Kiss Connie (men never came back for more) had to go easy with Colgate's toothpaste. Amazingly, one could still buy Ever-Ready single-edge razor blades (each honed 4,840 times), whereas today single-edge blades are, for some disgraceful reason, unobtainable.

To keep their name alive, Hoover were driven to saluting the WVS—"The Hand That Held The Hoover Helps The Bombed." Dunlop explained: "The dinghies which save the lives of our incomparable airmen are made of rubber—one reason why you must wait for your Dunlop hot water bottle." Thanks to a zoning system, Fry's Chocolate Cream was available only in the South of England and South Wales. On the other hand the Midlands and North (that future Granadaland) had two kinds of Yorkshire Relish, Thick and Thin, while the South had to make do with Thin. Good heavens, Grand-dad, you haven't forgotten all this? Surely you remember the advertisement for Carnation Milk, in *Picture Post*? It recalled proudly that in the retreat to Dunkirk a large stack of Carnation was doused in petrol and destroyed, "so that the

Germans would be deprived of such a valuable food product." Truly we were the lucky ones. What a glorious food to be unable to get!

In many industries, brand names had been forgotten. Shoe firms advertised as United Tanners; the railway companies joined forces to remind us how they were maintaining the sinews of war; so did mysterious bodies called British Buses and the Motor Industry. Anyone would have thought that nationalisation had already arrived. The brewers, to whom patriotism always comes easily, had donated space for the Government to tell us how to dispose of everything from old bones to enemy parachutists.

When victory finally came, they turned over to rich, beautiful prose praising British qualities, linked to delightful pictures of "This England," which must be still remembered in Scotland. They also printed words of rousing choruses like "Some men walk dogs for it, Some men saw logs for it, Some men face fogs for it—good wholesome beer." But the brand names fought free at last and we had "Double Diamond works wonders" and all the rest. The Guinness zoo of os-

triches and toucans was reopened and little men emerged from man-holes pushing up steam rollers with one hand. Slightly more up-market were those luscious Guinness guides to oysters.

Dear old Horlicks were no longer claiming to cure that mysterious disease, Night Starvation, but there was a well-loved and interminable strip series in which secretaries, policemen, rally drivers and trapeze artists were threatened with the sack for being tired, when all they needed was a nightly hot swig to bring on promotion. But if it was promotion you wanted the Hatters of Britain had their own secret: "If you want to get ahead—get a hat."

Ah yes, to get ahead... does anyone remember a series in which such diverse talents as Odette Churchill, Sir Gordon Richards, Donald Peers, Eileen Joyce, Stirling Moss, Len Hutton and Stan Matthews were all embroiled? Each had a fortifying sermonette to deliver and each sermonette ended with "Free Enterprise gives everyone a chance—and a choice!" When the Attlee Government fell the campaign became superfluous.

Up in Scargill country it may be

that veteran miners still remember with affection the first Coal Board advertisements which pulled them in—"Face workers average £7 to £8 a week and often considerably more; there is a guaranteed week's work every week" (1948). Alternatively there was a Man's Job in the Palestine Police—there's nostalgia for you—with "good pay that you can save" (£20 a month) and recreational aids which included camels, horses, cars, motor-cycles and speedboats. Rhodesia offered more than one *corps d'élite* with "unlimited prospects." So much for Men's Jobs. If you fancied sitting at a typewriter all day you could take a postal authorship course and be coached by Enid Blyton, Beverly Nichols and Pamela Hansford Johnson.

What memories of the nation's greatest popular art gallery, the London Underground? Today people are going up and down the escalators and disfiguring posters of sexy females with stickers saying "This Advertisement Insults Women." Some of the finest insults to women I have ever seen appeared



"I think we should change our agent."



"Sorry, I can't play football with you any more—that new kid next door has just bought me."

on the escalators in the 40s and 50s—you even saw travellers with heavy bags marking time the better to appreciate the creamy golden, fuzz-free minxes with sun-spun manes who seemed to embody every desirable quality from all-over loveliness to inner cleanliness. And the brand name of their bathing gear? Forgotten, of course, unless it was something like Slix. For some, nostalgia may be a vision of long-nyloned legs—Kayser, possibly—with real skin visible at the top, something never glimpsed in an age of tights. As for the advertisement cards in the Underground trains, was there not a long-running series of illustrated comic rhymes (of course there was, because I wrote many of them) in which characters like Casanova, Columbus and Bleriot all discovered in an exceedingly roundabout fashion that "There is no substitute for wool?" There wasn't a true rhyme for wool, either, but that did not stop anybody.

The first TV jingles, of which one

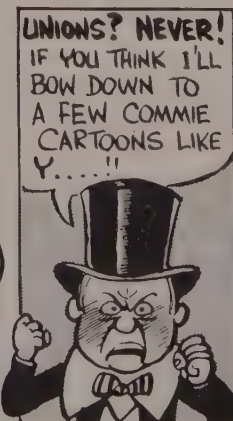
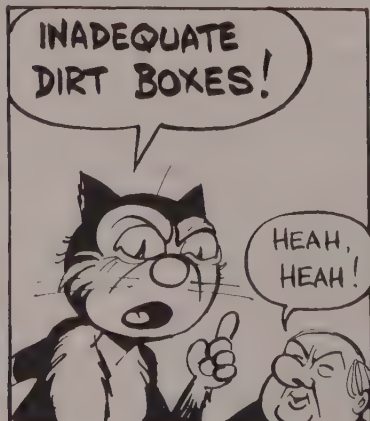
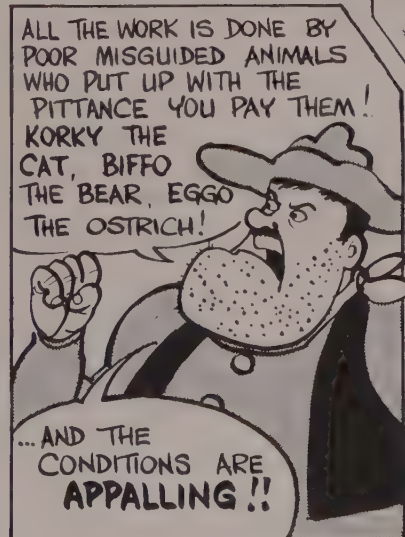
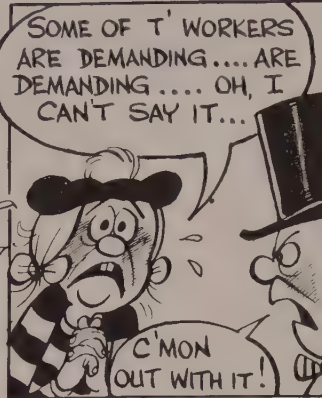
of the most insidious was about "Murraymints, the too-good-to-hurry mints," date from 1955. In memory they were much brighter and brisker than today's efforts, which are often no more than unrhymed scraps of imitation plain-song. But the daftest of ITV memories is of those advertising magazines with names like *Jim's Inn*. Customers entering a pub were encouraged by Mine Host, who clearly believed in Free Enterprise, to enthuse over an ill-assorted range of consumer durables which he kept producing from under the counter or even out of thin air, when all his captive audience wanted was a pint that would work wonders. Eventually the television authorities decided that this was either too surrealist an entertainment, or too blatant an example of huckstering, and they ruled "No more." Why don't the powers that be re-run *Jim's Inn* in one of those *All Our Yesterdays* programmes? I promise to be out that night.

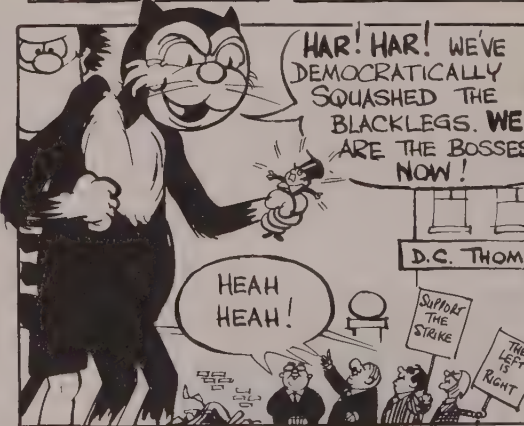
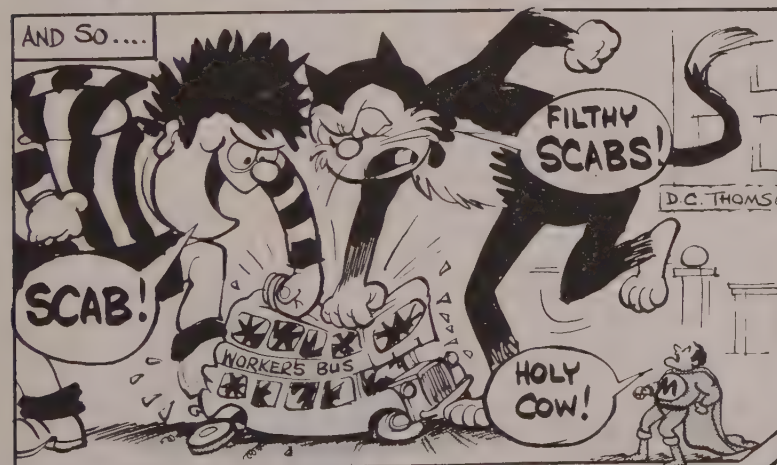
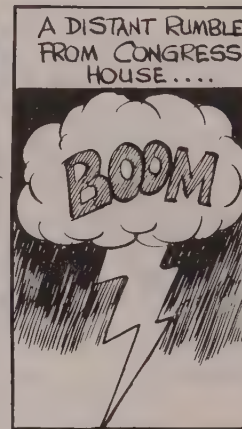
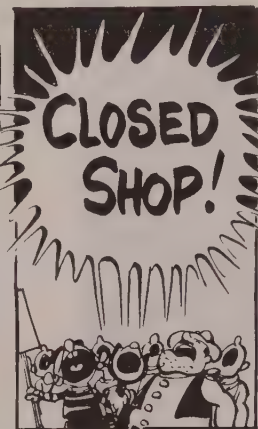
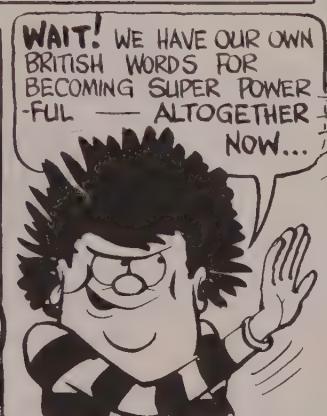
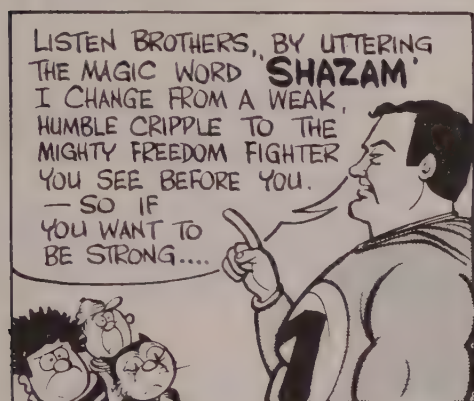
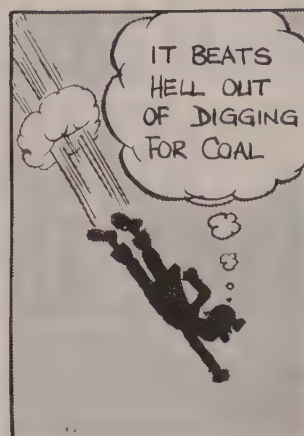
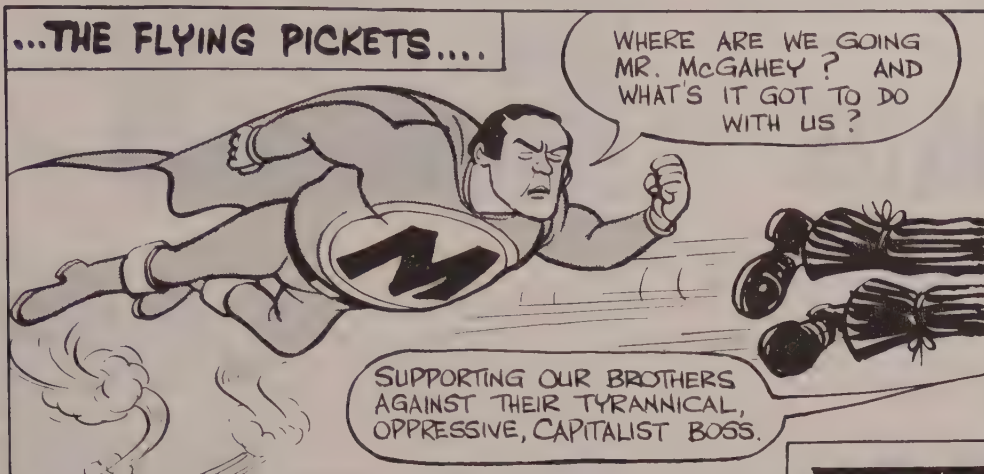
If and when Grunwick leaves the headlines, next in line to face demands for trade union negotiating rights, say the milit

THE Dandy

A DERISORY 4p

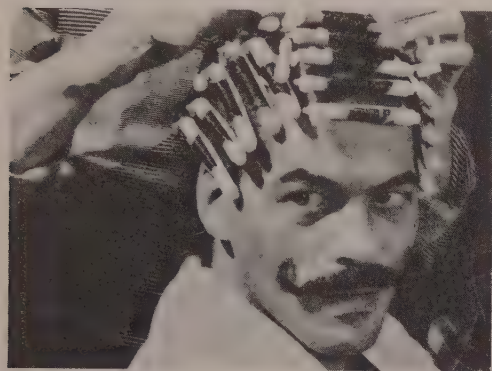
WORKER





WHEN THE JUBILEE CROSSROADS COME IN

A look-ahead at the television soap opera to end them all . . .



EPISODE ONE

IMBROGLIO, the best-dressed Tuscan butler of The Manse at South Shields, is back from the Crimea and having his hair done at Tatlock's Tonsorial Parlour ready for the Michaelmas Ball. He tells the shocked clients who sit waiting for their trim that his Hilda's cough's got no better but that Blossom, the strikingly handsome new scivvy, is mixing her a posset. Horowitz, the cat, has still not been seen since the storm which did for Angus Beakley's silage and, at *The Pig And Flat Hat*, old Mrs Wrigley divulges over a port and lemon that she fears there may be poisoning at hand . . .



EPISODE TWO

BUT just who are the distinguished-looking quartet, waiting in the parlour room all morning for the Master to return from Head Office? Blossom's theory that they've come to read the meters is met by scorn from Appleyard, Lord Porton's canny footman, who has heard it whispered in *The Flat Hat And Pig* that there's a street party planned for the next episode but one. Hilda's cough has meanwhile gone to her chest and old Mrs Wrigley considers that if nice Dr Marchbank doesn't stumble across penicillin soon she'll be a goner . . .



EPISODE THREE

IT'S touch-and-go in surgery as Dr Marchbank and his team of volunteer ship's fitters take over the Church Hall in a desperate bid to save Hilda who, ironically, has been winged by a stray shell. But where is Imbroglia? He's not been seen since Angus Beakley's cart-hors went berserk and crashed into the snug of *The Flat Pig And Hat* in a bid to find Horowitz, his friend. And, to make matters worse, Blossom has started to cough something awful after absent-mindedly swigging her own posset . . .



EPISODE FOUR

THE Prussian army invades South Shields, causing Lady Porton's cook to singe the hot-pot. Imbroglia goes bald. Blossom goes clean of the new-look butler and falls for Tatlock, the demon barber. Plans for the street party have to be hastily abandoned because of the crisis and *The Hat And Flat Pig* is turned into a field hospital staffed by Angus Beakley, Mrs Wrigley and what's left of Hilda. Dr Marchbank picking at the scrapings of the singed hot-pot, finds a bit of mould and thinks he may be on to something. At least three of the Prussian officers are strikingly handsome but there's still no sign of Horowitz and the distinguished quartet have left without a word.



EPISODE FIVE

THERE's been an explosion at the colliery as a result of Horowitz getting caught up in the winding gear. Fifteen of the cast, including the most striking-looking grooms, Dr Marchbank's pert anaesthetist, bald Imbroglia, Angus Beakley's bronchial herdsman, the only man at Tatlock's who can do a coloured rinse and, worst of all, the Master are missing, presumed on holiday. Not for another three months will we discover who Blossom plans to marry, whether the meters ever go read, or whether the tattered parlour can be rebuilt in time for the next series. Viewers with a barking cough should meanwhile see their doctors as Dr Marchbank is not able to enter into personal correspondence.

Where angels fear to tread?

THEATRICAL investors are a curious lot, inclined to remain sunny and optimistic even after a three-nights-only West End disaster which wouldn't have lasted that long had not the lady playing the neighbour in Act Two been an unusually good friend of one of the producers. That cheerfulness of disposition, together with an apparent air of having come from some other world (otherwise why wouldn't they be putting their hard-earned cash into ICI or disposable plastic coffee mugs like the rest of us?) is presumably what earned theatre backers the name of angels in the first place.

Now, alas, they are a vanishing breed; inflation, the mid-70s slump and the increasing unreality of West End economics have taken their toll and it is as likely as not that nowadays any kindly old gentleman with showbiz interests and money to burn will be found investing in ITV shares or buying into an American zinc conglomerate in the hopes that they in turn may buy up the last of the Hollywood studios for real estate and hold annual general meetings in what used to be Mae West's bathroom.

Yet there was a time when the theatre, too, attracted wealthy punters: long before the advent of television, before it even became possible to invest in Cary Grant, angels were clustered around every stage door in London for a variety of reasons by no means all of which had anything at all to do with money-making.

If it's economic safety you're after, you could do a lot better than the theatre: a successful production only ever repays 60 per cent of its profits to the investors (the rest being syphoned off in theatre rental, cast costs, management fees, etc.) and a successful production in the present condition of the West End means about one show in every half-dozen. Not a high batting average, you may think, and lower still when you recall that some of those hits may in the nature of things have come originally from the subsidised companies, lowering the all-commercial hit ratio to perhaps one show in eight.

On the other hand, investment in a play offers rewards denied to, say, the investor in bicycle tyres: there's

the chance to meet the more glamorous members of the cast, a couple of free tickets to the first night (and a great many more to every night thereafter if the reviews are less than ecstatic) and the opportunity to bore your friends with secondhand and often inaccurate backstage gossip. In the old days, being an angel often carried even greater offstage rewards: one celebrated singer could regularly name her theatre and play any part she chose there because it was widely understood that her gentleman friend would be coming up with any cash needed to fill the gap between her own devotion to herself and that of the paying public at large. Then again, there was a peer of the realm who could always be relied upon to invest in productions involving confirmed bachelors willing to dine with him afterwards.

That those particular days of quirky patronage have gone forever is perhaps no bad thing: what is more alarming is that in the present siege economy of the West End, financial miracles are regularly needed which may well be beyond the capabilities even of an angel. A few facts and figures from John Gale, one of London's leading impresarios with an average of six shows in the West End at any one time:

"*Boeing-Boeing* which was my first real success cost £6,000 to stage in 1962 and earned its backers a total of £133,000. A few years later William Douglas Home's *The Secretary Bird* cost £8,000 to present and made just over £330,000; but those days are now well and truly over. A show like *Secretary Bird* would today cost roughly thirty thousand to stage, that's to say four times what it cost in 1968, and backers who in the old days would come in with me for a £250 or a £500 flutter are now frightened off by the way that with inflation and VAT everything is so much more expensive. With the small investors who've stayed loyal to me, I can usually raise about £15,000 which is half what it now costs to stage one small-set short-castlist comedy: the rest I have to get from large groups of overseas investors who've still got money they can keep from the taxmen."

But in return for their money, what do Gale's angels get?



"You're right. It isn't a blue-headed wagtail."

"Some of my backers have been with me since the very beginning, but I never show them the script of anything I'm about to stage: I give them a brief plot synopsis and beyond that they have to trust my judgement. Luckily I've not let them down too often: a backer who'd invested with me all along the line would now come out ahead, though he'd have been through one or two very bad years along the way. But investing in a producer is like investing in a managing director: you don't go along to ICI as a shareholder and demand to be allowed to sit in the chairman's office and approve all his decisions, so why should you have that right in a theatre?"

So an angel's life isn't what it used to be: he (or she) can't influence the shape or content of a production, can't rely on members of the cast even speaking in the street let alone coming home for an intimate after-theatre snack, and can't be sure of ever getting the money back. All an angel can do, in fact, is invest in a show or not invest in a show. So why do they continue to do it? Kenneth Hurren, in an intriguing new book about the West End (*Theatre Inside Out*, W. H. Allen £4.95) puts forward the theory that despite the odds of between five and eight to one against, every angel is still secretly hoping for a killing of *Mousetrap* proportions. They do not, however, happen often: nowadays the cost alone of running a big show is such

that it's entirely possible for a musical like say *Robert and Elizabeth* to run all of nine hundred performances in London and still lose money, because the theatre in which the management placed it turned out to be too small to cover the show's weekly bills unless every single seat was occupied at all times.

It is also entirely possible for anyone to become an angel: any of the major London managements (Michael Codron, Michael White, John Gale, Eddie Kulukundis, H.M. Tennent, Ray Cooney, Bernard Delfont) will welcome solvent investors, though if your cheque is likely to be much smaller than £250 you'd be advised to find a few friends and make up a small consortium first. Your chances of making money are then no worse and no better than those of any other angel in the business, though remember that if a producer has what looks to him like an absolutely surefire winner, he is likely to offer the best slices of the cake to investors who have stayed loyal to him in years when there were only crumbs around.



As in any other business, getting your money on a racing certainty is considerably harder than getting it on a grave risk, but in the theatre that shouldn't worry you unduly since almost all shows are grave risks. The time of the year, the state of the weather, the locality of the theatre, the temper of Bernard Levin's review, the fact that the Boat Show may or may not be on, the

likelihood of a rail strike, all these are imponderables that the angel has to consider—and since there's no way of accurately assessing many of them in advance you may as well just hand over the cheque and pray a lot.

Some angels, it is true, do devise rules of conduct: Keith Waterhouse, for example, decided not unreasonably that he would never invest in a musical unless it had a reasonably coherent script and at least one good starring role. That was how he missed out on *Hair*. Another investor of my acquaintance didn't think much of the chances of a comedy about a young English couple who receive by mistake through the post a large number of mildly dirty books. The show he declined to invest in, *No Sex Please—We're British*, is now the longest running comedy in the history of the British theatre and is reputed to be paying off its investors at the rate of £30 for every £ they stumped up seven years ago.

In the theatre, unpredictability is all you can be really sure of: who'd have thought that a play about Abelard and Heloise could have made £9,000 in less than two years, or that three television stars in a thriller with a good final twist could have lost half that amount in rather less than a month? Anyone who could have thought that is of course a successful angel: and there are in all probability just enough of them around Shaftesbury Avenue to fit neatly on the head of a pin.

This being the time of year when shops are filled with Muppet alarm clocks and Dr Who electric toasters and other television "tie-ins", PUNCH ENTERPRISES proudly presents its 1978



CHRISTMAS
CATALOGUE

The Anna Karenina suicide kit: this comes complete with working model of a nineteenth-century Russian railway station, engine, tracks etc and tasteful aerosol snow cans to give your death that authentic classical flavour. Moscow train timetables for the period are also included.

Bruce Forsyth and the Generation Game: for a consideration believed to be in the region of four figures, Mr Forsyth and the very lovely Anthea will personally come into your home this Christmas, arrange your relatives into two rival teams and challenge them in such useful contests as "doing the washing up", "talking to Auntie Irene", "getting in the coal" etc. Winners get an individually marked photograph of the new Forsyth baby and a hundred tickets to the next recording at TV Centre.

Mastermind conversational gambits: just the thing for those Boxing Day cocktail parties. 400 useless facts about pre-historic rituals, the population of Brazil, the invention of the wheel etc have been individually stamped onto numbered sausage sticks which come in an attractive variety of plastic boxes. The holder of a stick may then read out the fact printed on it to the person standing next to him, who in turn has to guess what the question could possibly have been. He may then either pass or pass out.

Start the Day with Richard Baker: Your very own working model of Mr Baker stands no more than nine inches off the ground, and may be placed in an upright or sitting position in the middle of your breakfast table to guide the conversation into certain pre-selected areas and avoid such obvious pitfalls as "Where do I return the socks to?" and "You said you'd buy the drink before the shops closed."

Stop the Day with Robert Robinson: matching Robinson figure (also nine inches high and therefore able to be dressed in old *Action Man* clothes etc), only this one is for evening use. By turning a key in the back of little Bob's jacket he can be made to start speaking and not draw breath for up to thirty-five minutes at a time, thereby sparing others in the room the need to converse. Ideal also for power cuts, television industrial disputes etc.

Man From Atlantis Bathplug: a really amazing new invention. This is a circular rubber disc (specify black or white according to choice) which, being three dimensional, can actually work under water and stop your bath running away. Patent pending.

The Upstairs Downstairs Game: just the thing for tired housewives. Members of the family can all be given roles, eg

"Hudson", "Mrs Bridges", "Rose" etc, and the winner is the one who can act out his or her character most faithfully for seven days. Relatives should be discouraged from choosing any of the "Bellamy" characters since this can only lead to more washing up for the others.

What The Papers Say: another wonderful game for all the family. Choose one member as "presenter", give him or her all the papers that have been lying around the house since Christmas Eve, and tell him or her to read you out the best bits. The rest of you then see who can be the first to fall asleep: loser unplugs the presenter from the wall and puts out cat.

The Crossroads Game: One of you pretends to be a middle-aged lady mysteriously in charge of a hotel somewhere up the M1. The rest of you then forget what you were going to say to her.

Any Questions: A fun-to-play parlour game for all the family. First choose four panellists and a chairman: the rest of you then sit in a semi-circle asking extremely right-wing questions about blacks in Rhodesia and the state of Arthur Scargill's bank balance. After half an hour the panellist pretending to be "Lady Barnett" says she thinks that the Royal family are doing a jolly good job considering the way things are, and then everyone else claps a lot and the game is over.

Now Read On Bumper Bundles: Each of these surprise packages contains no less than four paperbacks that have been personally handled and approved and in some cases written by Melvyn Bragg. Try to read them without moving your lips. Usual prizes.

The Water Margin Chinese Cookbook: colourful recipes for sweet and sour bamboo shoots etc as used by Kao Chiu and General Hu for sustenance during their famous battle.

The Hubert Gregg Instant Nostalgia Kit: for a mere £19.99 plus VAT, this specially-wrapped collection of three old Vera Lynn 78s, two tennis shoes once worn by Chesney Allen and a photograph of Elsie, but not Doris, Waters is guaranteed to bring back unforgettable memories.

The Home Kaleidoscope: Subject to seasonal availability, for a prearranged fee such distinguished BBC critics as Jacky Gillott, Paul Vaughan, Michael Oliver etc will come into your home at specified times over the holidays and review your furniture, wallpaper schemes, cooking, choice of friends etc. Discussions may also be arranged.



After the War

DELIA lay in bed and listened and studied the French in the racket. Downstairs, Mr Rameau shouted, "Hurry up! I'm ready!" Mrs Rameau pleaded that she had lost her handbag. The small bratty boy they called Tony kicked savagely at the wall, and Ann Marie, who five times had said she could not find her good shoes, had begun to cry. Mr Rameau announced his movements: he said he was going to the door and then outside to start the car; if they weren't ready, he said, he would leave without them. He slammed the door and started the car. Mrs Rameau shrieked. Ann Marie sobbed, "Tony called me a pig!" Someone was slapped; bureau drawers were jiggled open and then pushed. There were urgent feet on the stairs. "Wait!"

The engine roared, the crying stopped. The stones in the walls of Delia's small room shook, transmitting accusations. Mrs Rameau screamed—louder and shriller than

anyone Delia had ever heard before, like a beast in a cage, a horrible and hopeless anger. Mr Rameau, in the car, shouted a reply, but it came as if from a man raging in a stoppered bottle. There were more doorslams—the sound of dropped lumber—and the ratchettings of gears, and with a loosening, liquefying whine the car's noise trickled away. They had set out for church.

In the silence that followed, a brimming whiteness of cool vapour that soothed her ears, Delia pushed down the sheet and breathed the sunlight that blazed on her bedroom curtains. She had arrived just the night before and was to be with the Rameaus for a month, doing what her mother had called "an exchange". Later in the summer Ann Marie would join her own family in London. Arriving late at the country cottage, which was near Vence, Delia had dreaded what Ann Marie would think about a stay in London—the semi in Streatham,

the outings to the Baths on the Common, the plain meals. She had brought this embarrassment to bed, but she woke up alarmed at their noise and looking forward to Ann Marie's visit, since that meant the end of her own.

The cottage, Mr Rameau had told her proudly, had no electricity. They carried their water from a well. Their water-closet (he had used this English word) was in the garden. He was, incredibly, boasting. In Paris, everything they had was modern. But this was their vacation. "We live like gypsies," he had said, "for one month of the year." And with a candle he had shown Delia to her room. He had taken the candle away, and leaving her in the darkness paused only to say that as he did not allow his daughter to use fire he could hardly be expected to let Delia do so.

The Rameaus at church, her thoughts were sweetened by sleep. She dreamed of an unfenced yellow-green field, and grass that hid her. She slept soundly in the empty house. It was not buoyancy, but the deepest submersion in sleep. She was as motionless as if she lay among the pale shells on the ocean floor.

She woke to the boom of the door downstairs swinging against the wall. Then she was summoned. She had no choice but to face them. She reached for her glasses.

"Some people," said Mr Rameau at lunch—he was seated at the far end of the table, but she could feel the pressure of his gaze even here—"some people go out to a restaurant on Sunday. A silly superstition—they believe one should not cook food on the Lord's Day. I am modern in this way, but of course I expect you to eat what you are given, to show your appreciation. Notice how my children eat. I have told them about the war."

His lips were damp and responsive to the meat he was knifing apart, and for a moment his attention was fixed on this act. He speared a finger of meat and raised it to his mouth and spoke.

"Madame Rameau asked me whether English people ever go to church. I said I believed they did and that I was surprised when you said you would not go—"

He had a dry white face and a stiff liontamer's moustache. When he

put his knife and fork down, and clasped his hands, his wife stopped eating and filled his plate. Madame Rameau's obedience made Delia fear this man. And Ann Marie, the friend whom she did not yet know, remained silent; her face said that she had no opinion about her father, perhaps she chose not to notice the way he held his knife in his fist. Both mother and daughter were mysteries; Delia had that morning heard them scream, but the screams did not match these silent faces. And Tony: a brat, encouraged because he was a boy, pawing his father's arm to ask a question.

Now something jarred Delia. The faces searched hers. What was it? She had been asked a question. She listened carefully to remember it.

"Yes, my parents go to church," she said. "But I don't."

"My children do as I do."

"It is my choice."

"Fifteen is rather young for choices." He said *choices* solemnly as if speaking of a mature vice.

"Ann Marie is fifteen," said Tony, tugging the man's sleeve. "But she is bigger."

The breasts, thought Delia: Ann Marie had the beginnings of a bust—that was what the boy had meant. Delia had known she was plain, and though her eyes were green and cat-like behind her glasses—she knew this—she had not realised how plain until she had seen Ann Marie. Delia had grown eight inches in one year and her clothes, depending on when they had been bought, were either too tight or too loose. Her mother had sent her here with shorts and sandals and cotton blouses. These she was wearing now, but they seemed inappropriate to the strange meal of soup and cutlets and oily salad. The Rameaus were in the clothes they had worn to church, and Mr Rameau, drinking wine, seemed to use the gesture of raising his glass as a way of scrutinising her. Delia tried hard to avoid showing her shock at the food, or staring at them, but she knew what they were thinking: a dull girl, a plain girl, an English girl. She had no religion to interest them, and no small-talk—she did not even like to chat in English. In French, she found it impossible to do anything but reply.

"We want you to enjoy yourself," said Mr Rameau. "This is a primitive house, or should I say 'simple'? Paradise is simple—there is sunshine, swimming, and the food is excellent."

"Yes," said Delia, "the food is excellent." She wanted to say more—to add something to this. But she was baffled by a pleasantry she knew in advance to be insincere.

"The lettuce is fresh, from our own garden."

Why didn't Ann Marie say anything?

"Yes. It is very fresh."

Delia had ceased to be frightened by the memory of those accusatory morning noises. Now she was bored, but thoroughly bored and it was not a neutral feeling but something like despair.

"Enough." Mr Rameau emptied his glass of wine and waved away his wife's efforts to pour more. He said that he was going to sleep.

"I have no vacation," he said to Delia—he had been speaking to her, she realised, for the entire meal: this was her initiation. "Tomorrow I will be in town and while you are playing I will be working. This is your holiday, not mine."



In the days that followed, Delia saw that when Ann Marie was away from her father she was happier—she practised her English and played her Rolling Stones records and they took turns giving each other new hair-styles. Every morning a boy called Maurice came to the cottage and delivered to the Rameaus a loaf from his basket. Delia and Ann Marie followed him along the paths through the village and giggled when he glanced back. This was a different Ann Marie from the one at meal-times and as with the mother it was Ann Marie's submissiveness that made Delia afraid of Mr Rameau. But her pity for the girl was mingled with disbelief for the reverence the girl showed her father. Ann Marie never spoke of him.

At night, Mr Rameau led the girls upstairs and waited in the hall with his candle until they were in bed. Then he said sharply, "Prayers!"—commanding Ann Marie, reproaching Delia—and carried his light haltingly downstairs. He held the candle in his knife-grip, as if cowering from the dark.

One week, two weeks. From the first, Delia had counted the days and it was only for the briefest moments—swimming, following Maurice the bread boy, playing the

records—that time passed without her sensing the weight of each second.

After breakfast Mr Rameau always said, "I must go. No vacation for me!" And yet Delia knew, without knowing how she knew, that the man was enjoying himself—perhaps the only person in the cottage who was. One Sunday he swam. He was rough in the water, thrashing his arms, gasping, spouting water from his mouth. Pelts of hair grew on his back and, more sparsely but no less oddly, on his shoulders. He wrestled in the waves with Tony and when he had finished Madame Rameau met him at the water's edge with a dry towel. Delia had never known anyone she disliked more than this man. Her thoughts were kind towards her own father who had written twice to say how much he missed her. She could not imagine Mr Rameau saying that to Ann Marie.

At lunch one day Tony shoved some food in his mouth and gagged. He turned aside and slowly puked on the carpet. Delia put her fork down and shut her eyes and tasted nausea in her own throat, and when she looked up again she saw that Mr Rameau had not moved. Damp lips, dry face: he was smiling.

"You are shocked by this little

accident," he said. "But I can tell you the war was much worse than this. This is nothing. You have no idea."

Only Tony had left the room. He moaned in the parlour. And they finished their meal while Madame Rameau slobbered at the vomit with a yellow rag.

"If you behave today," said Mr Rameau on the Friday of her third week—when had they not behaved?—"I may have a surprise for you tomorrow." He raised a long crooked finger in warning and added, "But it is not a certainty."

Delia cared so little for the man that she immediately forgot what he had said. Nor did Ann Marie mention it. Delia only remembered his promise when, after lunch on Saturday, he took an envelope from his wallet and showed four red tickets.

"For the circus," he said.

Delia looked at Ann Marie, who swallowed in appreciation. Little Tony shouted. Madame Rameau regarded Tony closely and with noticeable effort brought her floating hands together.

Delia felt a nervous thrill, the foretaste of panic from the words she had already begun to practise in her mind. She was aware she would not



"Evidently, this is the Trial of the Film of the Play of the Book."

be asked to say them. She would have to find an opportunity.

She drew a breath and said, "Excuse me."

"A German circus," Mr Rameau was saying. "I am told they have performed for the President, and they are at this moment in Nice. They have just come from Arabia where the entire circus was flown to perform for a sheik. They will only be in Nice for four days. We will go tomorrow. Of course, if there is any bad behaviour between now and tomorrow you'll stay home."

"Excuse me," said Delia again. To steady her hand she clutched her empty glass.

Pouring Delia a glass of water, Mr Rameau continued, "I am told there is no circus like it anywhere in the world. It is lavish in all ways. Elephants, tigers, lions—"

"I won't go to the circus," said Delia. She was at once terrified and ashamed by what she had said. She had intended to be graceful. She had been rude. For the first time during the vacation her French had failed her.

Mr Rameau was staring at her.

"I cannot go to the circus," she said.

He pushed at his moustache and said, "Well!"

Delia saw that Madame Rameau was rubbing at her mouth with her napkin, as if she wished to remove that part of her face.

Mr Rameau had also seized his napkin. Stiff with fury he snapped the cloth at the crumbs of bread on his shirt front. "So," he said. "you intend to misbehave?"

"I don't understand." She knew each word, but they made no pattern of logic. By not going—was that misbehaving?

He faced her. "I said that if there was any bad behaviour between now and tomorrow you'd stay home."

"Oh, no!" said Delia, and choked. Something pinched her throat, like a spider drawing a web through her windpipe. She gasped and drank some water. She spoke a strangled word, an old woman's croak, and tears came to her eyes from the effort of it.

At this clean portion of table, Mr Rameau watched her struggle to begin.

"I don't go—" The words came slowly; her throat was clearing, but still the spider clung.



"Perhaps you would rather discuss this some other time?"

"I don't want to discuss it at all," she managed. "I don't go to circuses."

"There are no circuses in England?"

"Yes," she said. The word was perfect: her throat was open. "There are circuses in England. But I haven't gone since I was very young."

Mr Rameau said to his wife, "She has not gone since she was very young." And to Delia, "Have you a reason?"

"I don't enjoy circuses."

"Ah, but you said that you once went! When you were young." He smiled, believing he had trapped her. "You enjoyed them then?"

"But I was very young," she said, insisting on the importance of the word he had mocked. "I did not know anything about them."

"The English," said Mr Rameau and again he turned to his wife. "Such seriousness of purpose, such dedication. What is there to know about a circus? It exists purely for enjoyment—there is nothing to understand. It is laughter and animals, a little exotic and out of the ordinary. You see how she makes it a problem?"

Mrs Rameau, who had mistaken Delia's gasping for terror, said, "She does not want to go. Why don't we leave it at that?"

"Why? Because she has not given a reason."

The words she had practised formed in her mind, her whole coherent reason. But it was phrased too pom-

pously for something so simple, and as the man would have no reply for it she knew it would give offence. But she was glad for this chance to challenge him and only wished that her French was better, for each time he replied he seemed to correct by repeating it the pronunciation of what she had said.

"I don't believe she has a reason, unless being English is the reason. Being English is the reason for so much."

"Being French"—she was safe merely repeating what he had said: his manner had shown her the rules—"being French is the reason for so much."

"We enjoy circuses. This is a great circus. They have performed for kings and presidents. You might say we are childish, but"—he passed a finger across his moustache—"what of those kings?" He spoke to his wife. "What of those kings, eh?"

Ann Marie took a deep breath, but she said nothing. Tony made pellets of bread. Madame Rameau, Delia could see, wanted her husband to stop this.

Delia said, "The animals do tricks. People think they are clever tricks. A tiger jumps through a hoop. An elephant dances. The dogs walk on their back legs—"

"We are familiar with the tricks," said Mr Rameau testily. "We have been to circuses."

"The circus people are cruel to the animals."

"This is totally untrue!" His hands flew up and Delia thought for a moment that he was about to slap her face.

The violence in his motioning hands spurred her on. "They are cruel to them in the way they teach the animals to do tricks."

"She knows so much for someone who never goes to circuses," said Mr Rameau, and brought his hands down to the table.

"They use electric shocks. They starve them. They beat them." She looked up. Mr Rameau showed no emotion, and now his hands were beneath the table. "They bind their legs with wire. They inflict pain on the animals. The animals are so hurt and afraid they do these tricks. They seem clever, but it is fear. They obey because they are afraid."

Delia thought this would move him, but he had begun again to smile.

"You are fifteen. You were born in 1962, the same year as Ann Marie."

"Yes."

"So you don't know."

"I have been told this about the circus by people who do know."

"Now I am not speaking about the circus. I am speaking about the war. You are very concerned about the animals—"

She hated this man's face.

"— but have you any idea what the Germans did to us in the war? Perhaps you are right—the animals are mistreated from time to time. But they are not killed. Surely it is worse to be killed or tortured?"

"Some animals are tortured. It is what I said."

But he was still speaking. "Of course, one hears how bad it was for the Jews, but listen—I was your age in 1942. I remember the Germans. The Jews tell one story—everyone knows this story. Yes, perhaps it was as bad for them as they say. I don't speak for other people—I speak for myself. And I can tell you that we starved. We were beaten. Our legs were tied. And sometimes for days we were left in the dark of our houses, never knowing whether we would live to see the light. It made some people do things they would not normally do, but I learned to respect my parents. I understood how terrible it must have been for them. I obeyed them. They knew more than I did and later I realised how dreadful it was. It was not a circus. It was war."

He made it an oration, using his hands to help his phrases through

the air, and yet Delia felt that for all the anonymity of his blustering he was expressing private thoughts and a particular pain.

Madame Rameau said, "Please be calm, Jean. You are being very hard on the girl."

"I am giving this young girl the benefit of my experience."

Still the woman seemed ashamed, and she winced when he began again.

"I have seen people grovel to German army officers, simply to get a

crust of bread. It did not horrify me. It taught me respect, and respect is something you do not know a great deal about, from what you have said. The Jews tell another story, but remember—it was very bad for us. After the war, many people forgot, but I suffered, so I do not forget."

"It might be better if we did not go to the circus," said Madame Rameau.

"I don't want to go to the circus," said Ann Marie.

Tony had already begun to pro-

Hewison's PEOPLE



Space Men

Now that we are getting into spring, Denis and Rodney have their Watching Sessions most week-ends provided the weather is not too inclement and Rodney's mother is not in one of her moods. They usually make for the hillside above Lewes but lately they have gone a mile or two further west because of what happened to their friend Jervis Bragg.

"Oh yes, they are definitely trying to make contact," Denis said, "In three years we have logged two definite sightings, eleven electronic contacts and eighteen possible signals. It's all here in the book, carefully detailed. No, nothing lately, but our most fabulous incident was last August, 16.32 in the afternoon, this silvery cigar-shape in the sky over Ditchling and Rodney's scanner buzzing away like mad. We're pretty certain it was a Venusian craft, trying to get a message through to us. They pick on certain people, you know. Mrs Catchpole, our postmistress, had one

talk to her over her garden wall when she was putting the washing out—sounded like a Spaniard, she said, and he was disguised as a human though his expression was very weird, she said, and his gestures rather odd. Then last month Mr Bragg who worked in the rates office at the Town Hall had the most amazing experience right here in this field when a Venusian space craft landed very close to him, all silvery shimmering, and the door opened and these greenish Venusians came out and took him inside where there was this tall Venusian girl just like Ursula Andress only bigger and greener who wore nothing but these silver thigh-boots and some bangles and she undressed Mr Bragg and commanded the other Venusians to hold him down while she roused him and then assuaged her lust on him four times until he fainted and when he woke up the Venusian space ship had taken off but Mr Bragg's trousers were all muddy and he had lost his spectacles."

test. "I do! I am going!"

"Yes," said Mr Rameau and struck his son affectionately on the shoulder. "We will all go to the circus. The tickets are paid for."

Delia had resolved to say nothing more.

Madame Rameau said, "The girl does not have to go, if she would rather stay home with me."

"If she wishes to stay at home she may stay. So we have an extra ticket. You will come to the circus with us, my dear."

"I am not sure I want to go."

"You will go," he said promptly. "We will all go. It is what our English guest insists upon."

Madame Rameau reached for Delia but stopped short of touching her. She said, "I will leave some soup for you. And a cutlet."

"No need for the cutlet," said Mr Rameau. "She never eats much of what we give her. She will only leave it on her plate."

"You won't be afraid to be here alone?" Madame Rameau was close to tears.

Mr Rameau answered for Delia. "It is the animals who are afraid! You heard what she said. She will not be afraid while we are away. She might be very happy."

His white face was a hard dull slab in the flower-scented twilight, and just before taking his family away to the circus, he stood in the doorway and said, "No matches. No candles. My advice to you is to eat now while there is some light, and then go to bed. We will not be late. Eight o'clock, nine o'clock. And tomorrow we will tell you what you missed."

He sounded almost kindly, his warning a gentle consolation. He ended softly, but just as she thought he was going to lean forward to touch her or kiss her he abruptly turned away, making Delia flinch. He drove the car fast to the road.

Delia ate in the mottled half-dark of the back kitchen. She had no appetite in the dim room, and the dimness which rapidly soaked into night made her alert. The church bell in the village signalled eight; the Rameaus did not come back. At nine she grew restive. It was less dark outside with stars and the moon in ragged clouds like a watch crystal. The windows were open, the sound of distant cars moved through the hedges, the trees in the garden rattled dry leaves in her room.

"Well, yeah, I'd say you have a pretty strong case, but I'm not the judge. I'm the judge's son. Daddy lets me sit here sometimes."



She wondered if she was afraid. She started to sing and frightened herself with her clear off-key cry. She toyed with the thought of running away, leaving a vague note behind for Mr Rameau—and she laughed at the thought of his panic: the phone-calls, the police, his helplessness. But she was not young enough or old enough to run. She was satisfied with the stand she had taken against him, but what sustained her was her hatred for him. It was not the circus any more, not those poor animals, but the man himself who was in his wickedness more important than the animals' suffering. She had not given in. He was the enemy and he was punishing her for challenging him. Those last coy words of his were meant to punish her. She went to the doorway to hear the church bell better.

At midnight she anxiously counted and she was afraid that their car had been wrecked and the whole family killed; afraid of her hatred for him that had made her forget the circus. It was too late to remain in the doorway, and when Delia with-

drew into the house she knew by the darkness and the time how he had calculated his punishment. She saw that his punishment was his own fear. The coward he was would be afraid of the thickened dark of this room. It took her fear away.

So she did not hear the car. She heard their feet on the path, some whispers, the scrape of the heavy door. He was in front, Madame Rameau hurried past him, struck a match to a candle and held the flame up. He was carrying his son.

"Still awake?" he said. His exaggerated kindness was mockery. "Look, she is waiting for us."

The candle flame trembled in the woman's trembling hand.

"You'll go next time, won't you?"

Delia was smiling. She wanted him to come close enough in that poor light to see her smile.

He repeated his question, demanding a reply, but he was so loud the child woke and cried out with terror. And without warning he arched his back in instinctive struggle and tried to get free of the hard arms which held him.

Heath's Week



Start the week dreaming up my cartoon for 'Evening Standard'.



While at 'Punch' I'm asked to draw diary.

Draw up cartoon in same office as Jak and Frank Dickens

Deliver roughs to Simon Jenkins. He liked one (thank God!)



People still upset about cartoon I did the day Victor the giraffe died.



Lawyer objects, have to do another!

Next go to 'Private Eye' to discuss my Bore drawing with Richard Ingrams.



Rush off to 'The Spectator' who are kind enough to ask me to lunch.



Lunch with Graham Greene and Germaine Greer, feel inadequate as Germaine is cross between Max Miller and Henry Miller.



Later go for a drink with Jeffrey Bernard in the French (York Minster) pub in Soho.

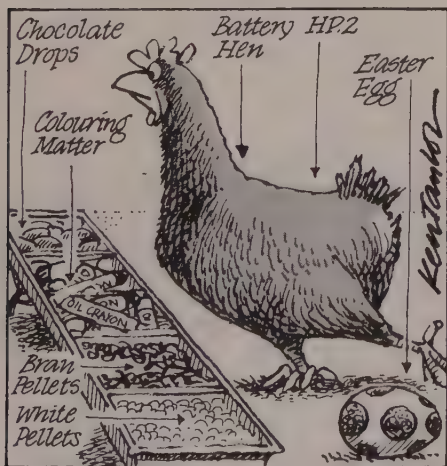


Arrive home.

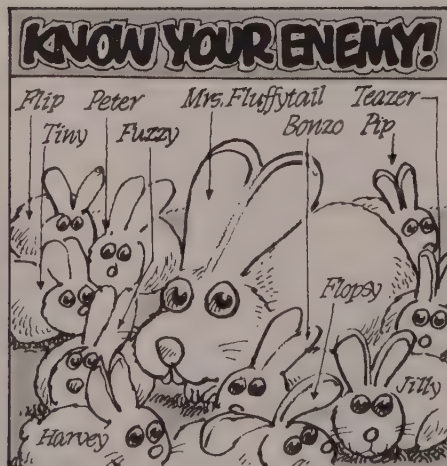


"It's the same with parties. Some battles take a long time to get going."

FARMING WITH MARK



Spring, Easter, tax returns—goodness, how time flies! In our part of the country, which I think is Gloucestershire, the traditional egg-rolling takes place, though in my case I can never get the egg far before it breaks and masses of Smarties fall out.



The egg is the symbol of rebirth. Goodness knows what bunny rabbits are a symbol of. Oh, are they? I see. Anyway, they are a perfect pest, and come Easter Saturday you will see me out rabbit-hunting with the horses and hounds and that sort of thing, for the farmer is the natural enemy of the rabbit.



And vice versa, of course. I myself was once surrounded by a herd of rabbits who look pretty business-like, I can tell you. I'm ashamed to admit that I didn't stop running till the private detective hove in view. Strange to think those harmless little things thought of me as vermin. Creepy, wh

I, Myself, v. My Father

IF A SKATEBOARD is left at the top of some stairs, and somebody's Father slip on the Skateboard and twist his ankle, while vouchsafing (Jesus Christ) as well as (Aaaaaarrggghh!!!), he cannot stop a person's pocket money for 4 weeks just because, it was that person's Skateboard. This exclaimed by Lord Justice Boniface in the appeal court, also Mr Justice Trimmer not to mention Mr Justice Dogood, they agreed with him. Also, they gave me a toffee for telling the truth, and, for not being frightened. I sat with them. They stated, (Come up here little boy) and I did.

Their lordships dismissed an appeal by My Father against another Judge who say, that he has to give me my pocket money, and also that I can keep Rabbits in my bedroom, also that it is Unnatural to expect Boys to be forever washing their Necks, also there not a shred of evidence to suggest, that, I touched his Whiskey. Also, if he Hit me again, I have to tell my solicitor. This Judge gave me a humbug for being a Brave Boy and knowing what the Oath is. I sat with this judge as well, and, he let me wear his Wig.

LORD JUSTICE BONNIFACE say he not impressed by, My Father's Demeanour in court. He go purple and start shouting, he ask if this British justice and also, that if it is, he will join National Front or emigrate to Australia. I would like to go to Australia where there is much bush and koala bears are to be got. But, I would not go to Australia if they do not have Laws like ours, for the reason that, My Father would get me. He would shoot a poisoned Arrow at me whilst I was asleep, and, he would say it was the aborigines.

Lord Justice Boniface ejaculated that, My Father's view that, (I need a good swift kick up the backside) was wholly irrelevant to the submission by, the Appellant. The only question at issue was whether, the Judge had correctly interpreted the Law when that worthy awarded damages to I, myself. Lord Justice Boniface retort that, the judge had based his decision on the precedent of (*Appleyard v His Father*). In the case just mentioned, it been a Roller-Skate on the Bedroom Lino instead of, a Skateboard on the Landing, but, in Law, a Skateboard was the same as a Roller-Skate, so

when My Father skidded on it whilst uttering (Jesus Christ) as well as (Aaaaaarrggghh!!!) he should still have given me my pocket money. Coming to the end of his narrative, the Latter concluded, (Whilst Mr Appleyard appears to have suffered Multiple Contusions, the Appellant in this case can apparently walk quite well with the aid of a stick, when it suits his purpose to do so. Therefore the Appellant is dotty and also spotty.)

MR JUSTICE TRIMMER say he agree with the Latter. Mr Justice Trimmer maintained that, he would Draw a Veil over My Father's behaviour in the witness Box. If the transcripts of his evidence were, reliable, he Foam at the Mouth when asked the reason why he thought, that, I, myself, gave his Whiskey to my Rabbits. This irrelevant as counsel should have known, therefore counsel silly and also pilly. Whatever the condition of the Rabbits on, the morning in question, it was not a Rabbit that My Father tripped over whilst explaining (Jesus Christ) as well as (Aaaaaarrggghh!!!), but, it was a Skateboard. Therefore, the threat to confiscate my Rabbits was wholly unjustified, and, a possible infringement of (*The Discrimination Against Children Act 1977*).

Warming to his tale, the Former continued that, besides (*Appleyard v His Father*), the Judge could well have cited (*Bullock v His Father, His Mother, His Grandmother and His Big Sister*), where a Boy had been wrongfully locked in his bedroom, just because, his Pet Vole had escaped. His Lordships say that, whilst my Father had not locked me in bedroom, also whilst Four Rabbits were not the same as a Pet Vole, also whilst the Pet Vole had merely run into the garden whereas, the Four Rabbits were Lurching around the Dining Room, My Father had expressly threatened violence, also he say (And another thing, those b*!%&y rabbits go back to b*!%&y pet-shop first thing tomorrow morning). Mr Justice Trimmer volunteered that, the papers should go to, the director of Public prosecutions, for the reason that, My Father had issued threats, this illegal under (*Children's Equality Act 1977*) I hope he get Seven Years Hard Labour. Mr Justice Trimmer also volunteer that, My Father's Belligerent Attitude, when he wave

Children in California may now take their parents to court in custody battles. "Kids are soon going to be using lawyers to get everything," warns one attorney. How long before our home-grown child guerillas are featuring in *The Times* Law Report?



Mike Williams.

"Gott in Himmel! Somebody must have a franc!"

his arms about and say that I, myself, should have been strangled at birth, did not do his case Any Good. Mr Justice Trimmer say it neither here nor there, but, my Father should see a Doctor about his High Blood Pressure. I would be sorry if he die, but, if he in prison, they have Prison Doctors. They could look after Him and put him in a straightjacket when he go Purple.

Mr Justice Dogood then took up the story. He say that, he must reluctantly concur with his Brothers. He agreed that, the Appellant might be liable to Criminal Proceedings. He had been provoked beyond endurance, but, that no excuse in law, and, he was ill-advised to bring the case to appeal. The Appellant was therefore nutty and also putty.

The third denizen of the Court, who had hitherto been strangely silent, then say that, the law was very clear on children's Rights. Parliament in its wisdom had laid it down, that, children however precocious, they were equal under the law, and, it had provided them with the channels to Prosecute their grievances. If My Father thought, that, the Law was Bad and also Mad, he should take matter up with his member of parliament, he should not chase I,

myself, up and down the stairs with His Hairbrush. If he had not been chasing I, myself, he would not have slipped on the Skateboard whilst mouthing (Jesus Christ) as well as (Aaaaaarrggghhh!!!). That surely was the crux of the Case, in so far as it concerned Whiskey, Rabbits, Skateboards and 4 weeks Pocket Money.

Mr Justice Dogood vouchsafe that, he would confine himself to the Neck-washing question. He had examined the Neck of I, myself, and he had little doubt, that, one could grow Seed Potatoes in it. But, Boys since time Immemorial had had Tide-marks around their Necks, and, their Fathers might have Forcibly Scrubbed them, but, they did not threaten to Drown them. The court had heard the evidence of I, myself, that My Father had blustered (If he not got clean neck when I come home, I shall throw him in Reservoir), also he say to My Mother (Why you not lock him in coal-shed). Mr Justice Dogood vouchsafe that, he not agree with Psychologist who stated (This could have Scarred I, myself, for Life), but, it a clear breach of the peace. My Father therefore Guilty and also Wilty.

COUNTRY LIFE

British Rail are looking at the idea of improving the service between Luton and London by making more trains stop at Luton.

Luton Evening Post

The cellar of her home was equipped with a rack, a bed of nails, whips and a pillory. Maria said she ran her whipping service to avoid drawing social security.

South African Sunday Times

Commonwealth security staff and army disposal experts have successfully blown up a box of mangoes at Townsville Airport.

Melbourne Herald

A liquor store was looted and police opened fire after they were stoned.

Cape Times

U.S. Junk Eating

SOONER or later in California an English person would be bound to be accused of being hostel.

You only have to offer the mildest criticism or even a trenchant observation about anyone or their way of life and you are ear-marked as hostel, and being California you'll then quite likely get shot by some enraged loony working the petrol pump or grilling the hamburger or whatever it was you didn't much like. The preferred attitude is that you be dossle. The food in California is designed, I came to the conclusion, to ensure that this will be so. It is the bromide in the West Coast way of life. It is continuous, spongy, yielding and tasteless and by the end of one week out there it made even airline food seem quite acceptable. You must admit you've got to be pretty dossle to think that.

Americans, who are agonisingly health conscious, putting in the best seller lists books about skipping and jogging and turning backs on butter, munch their way through piles of trashy food as if there were no connection between it and their well-being. An American breakfast as offered in a restaurant will start with what one waitress referred to as "fresh-frozen" orange juice. Though the trees are laden with citrus fruit and oranges sell at the roadside for practically nothing, the only time we had actual fresh orange juice was in someone's home. Or you could have tomato juice (sun-ripened in the tin?).

After that there is the offer of eggs done all manner of ways including one called easy-over, which is the phrase you'll need if you like the yolk runny. The eggs are never just eggs but are always extra-large and laid by caring hens. A popular way with them was an omelette served with a "Spanish" sauce of tomatoes and peppers. With the eggs you could have bacon, which is generally thin and crisply fried and the only commodity that doesn't just subside between your teeth, but there will also be hash-browned potatoes, hot biscuits (a sort of tasteless scone), tea-coloured slices that are served in the name of wholemeal bread, rolls, jelly and something called whipped butter. This is a process that renders firm butter all soft and spready. The carbohydrate count is staggering and for synthetics—from the fluffy bread to the non-dairy-product

cream in the coffee—it must rival a ladies outfit from British Home Stores. It is like that shabbiest of all tricks, a beautifully wrapped present that turns out to have a piece of wood inside. And as someone pointed out to me here, since it is a natural instinct in most of us to look forward to meals, you are continually disappointed.

The consumption of starch doesn't stop at breakfast, which could also have been a stack of melt-in-your-mouth pancakes smothered in corn syrup and served with cream. Shortly afterwards your average Californian will probably wander into one of the dozens of fast food establishments that punctuate every shopping street. It might be a McDonald's like the one we tried en route to San Francisco. As ubiquity and invariability is the McDonald policy, it could have been anywhere (though oddly not London where I once detected some fugitive taste in the meat). The American Big Mac is just one soft sinking sensation with only the mustard, ketchup and dill pickle nudging the taste buds as it all slips past. It arrives, as you probably know, in a sort of styrofoam box on which there is a lot of writing, in order, I am sure, to stop Americans eating that as well, washed down with a triple thick milk shake or other soda pop.

McDonald's dominate and every exit on the interstate highways tells you how many hungry miles you'll have to endure before you can grab another (the restaurants usually operate a "drive-thru" service as well) but there are plenty of other chains. Mexican snack food in the form of *tacos* and *burritos* is catching on fast and the tortilla-wrapped beef or pork or chicken, all with beans and sometimes rice too, can be got at places that rejoice in names like *Tica Taco* or *Nito Burrito*, the best, I decided, since they shove a bit of salad in as well.

There seems to be a primitive need to keep eating—Mother America's children are well provided for—and you get the feeling that the populace really believes such slogans as Colonel Sanders's "seven days without chicken makes one weak". Bumper packs of the secret recipe (secret because I don't suppose anyone has ever tried to find it out) are presented in buckets. Imagine, buckets of the stuff.

There are, of course, alternatives to eating snack food. In fact there is a big gourmet thing in California. Louis Malle, the French director, whom I was seated next to at a Beverly Hills dinner party, observed quietly (not wanting to be too hostel) that Americans have food the way they have pictures or stereos. Indeed, at the end of this same party the host nipped into the kitchen and brought out the Chinese lady who had cooked the meal. The guests all clapped like mad. Help is very hard to get, you understand, so some of the applause was probably in recognition of that. David Begelman, the shifty executive at Colombia pictures, solved that problem his own way, it was said. Gladys, his wife, simply urged the staff to help themselves to what they felt they were worth. Practising what you preach, I suppose.

The chatter and concern about haute cuisine, however, tends to go on among those sort of Americans who do take care of their diets—fanatically. I noticed that most of the slender ladies (if you can't be young, at least you can be thin) and trim gentlemen abjured salt. I never did find out what deleterious effect salt is thought to have, but a complete lack of it does tend to mar most dishes. They were also very restrained about drinking wine, though some opted for Coca-Cola which must be at least twice as fattening and immeasurably less good for you. At one restaurant meal we were taken to there was earnest discussion over the menu and finally we all decided to have *Carpaccio*, paper thin slices of raw beef, served in Italy with a trickle of olive oil and freshly ground black pepper, served there with a blob of mayonnaise and a slice of dill pickle. It arrived and I rather ungraciously commented on how extremely cold, not to say frozen, it was. It was carefully explained to me by our host that they had to freeze the meat in order to cut it so thin. Then I realised that the gourmandising was in the *choosing*, not the eating.

There is one restaurant in LA where you go to see who is eating with whom but where, completely coincidentally I imagine, the food is rather good. It has been started by the son of the owner of Le Tour d'Argent and is called *Ma Maison*. It is comparable to San Lorenzo's in

Beauchamp Place, only with French food. The salads were particularly well-made and the one I had with lettuce, like curls of *prosciutto* and anchovies was a meal in itself. Here are some other good things that I discovered; squab, which is a domesticated pigeon and which at Jack's in San Francisco (another restaurant to search out if you are in those parts) they hang long enough for it to develop that elusive quality, taste; also at Jack's: celeriac boiled whole, sliced while still *al dente* and served with anchovies and a French dressing; Dungeness crab, then at the height of its season; Californian wines, which really are extremely fine. Everyone you meet tells of how the red ones won out over French Burgundies in a blind tasting in Paris, and I can believe it.

Otherwise, although there is a glorious abundance of produce, most of it is just a pretty face. Just about every kind of fruit and vegetable is grown and indeed they stick up signs in the fields like "Ventura, Artichoke Capital of the World",

but little of the variety makes its way on to restaurant menus and I wonder what gets bought for the home. The 1978 Wine and Food issue of *New West* contains information in the guide to fruit and vegetables like, "Apples: Buying tips: Avoid soft or bruised apples. Preparation: Apples are mostly eaten raw, but can be baked, made into pies. . . ."

This is a magazine for what advertisers call ABC's, the sophisticated high livers, the winter sporting, tennis playing, five-car families, some of whom it must be presumed have yet to buy a fresh apple. Californian food was summed up for me when we went to drinks with a cookery book writer living there. He offered round what looked like strawberries. They turned out to be made out of squidgy pâté.

"How novel," I politely cried. "Do tell us how you manage to make them."

"Well," he said, "*wearing rubber gloves* you mix a two ounce bottle of red food dye into a heap of breadcrumbs. . . ." I won't go on.



"I often wonder how we'd both have coped with your success."

You tourist, me Robert Morley

EACH year around the winter solstice there appears in my morning paper the picture of assorted passengers dressed overall making their way heavily laden up the gangways of some great liner tied up at Southampton. Underneath the familiar caption, "Travellers on world cruise forced to carry their own baggage, owing to dock strike."

Nothing makes me more envious, not of course that they are permitted to carry their own suitcases, a facility nowadays increasingly extended to us all, but that they are up and away before the rest of us have had our morning bath, to spend a delirious three months or so encircling the globe. This could be me, I used to tell myself, if only I'd played my cards right and this year I dealt myself in.

I am not pretending ours was a world cruise, and in point of fact our luggage did get carried on board at Callao just up the road from Lima whither my wife and I had flown to await the arrival of the good ship *Viking Sea* and sail around the Horn or more prudently, perhaps, through the Straits of Magellan. We didn't get off to a very good start, as fog more or less closed down Heathrow and even the Monarch Lounge where I normally shelter before a flight was already overcrowded. I work here, I told others less fortunate, and shouldered my way to the gin and tonic fountain mercifully still working (and about the only thing that was for the next twelve hours) but we got off at last and even managed the connection at Miami which was more than a prominent British banker contrived en route for Bolivia, where he was to lend more money than I thought we had available just at present.

The number of British bankers travelling alone and in pairs that I was to encounter in the right places along the route was quite phenomenal; one of them confided to me that they borrowed the money in Dallas before lending it to any available junta which then in its turn did the right thing by the old country by ordering another hundred gross of machine guns for internal security purposes.

A word here, perhaps, about my own attitude as contrasted, say, to that of Bernard Levin. While he never goes abroad except to Salz-

burg but continues to animadvert lustily on books he hasn't read, T.V. programmes he has never seen, and countries he has no intention of visiting even in the unlikely event of their being willing to admit him, I for my part peruse and potter wherever and by whom I am permitted to do so. I do not approve of police states and torture and firing squads and nor for some far more inexplicable reason of Bernard himself.

On then to the jungle which is where we landed up after only three days in Lima. We found the city rather cheerless on our first visit. It has been palpably poorly sited, sheltering on a ledge straight down from the Andes. Here, like some unfortunate mountaineers trapped and bivouacked, the residents await rescue and realise as we did that the sun simply isn't going to shine on them. Peruvians have the saddest faces imaginable. I was reminded of Salt Lake City and Brigham Young's fatal mistake in not going on a little further. Not that there are many Mormons in Peru but then, of course, one never knows for certain who exactly still lives in the vast jungle which steams and sweats all around them. There are wonderful stories of this Rider Haggard-Stewart Granger world where helicopters disappear into swampland and aeroplanes laden with gold take off never apparently to land again, at least in Peru.

There is much talk of a tribe of fair-skinned and red-haired warriors entrusted with the guarding of the Treasures of the Incas from marauding explorers. In Callao there still lives the sole survivor of one disastrous encounter who, feigning death, was able eventually to escape and managed *en passant* and in headlong flight to cut off with a machete a golden thumb from a huge idol. "I shouldn't have thought," I told my informant, "you could cut gold with a machete." "This was soft gold," he told me.

"But didn't our friend go back?" I asked. Apparently not; once is enough for such adventures.

I must say once in the jungle was enough for me. After two days in Lima and still hoping for warmer weather we decided to fly to Iquitos and thence travel up or quite possibly down the Amazon to a sort of leisure lodge which had better re-

main nameless. Whatever Iquitos was once in the days when rubber was booming, it certainly isn't any longer: a few rusted wrought-iron balconies of great elegance cling to crumbling colonial mansions, most of them designed by Eiffel who seems to have had a hand in most of the architecture of Peru and whose speciality, besides towers naturally, were appalling little cast-iron churches.

The Iquitos Municipal Council, years ahead of their time and no longer relying on dustmen or employees in the public sector, have created or encouraged the citizens to create an enormous rubbish dump in the centre of the town and turned all waste disposal over to a flock of voluntary vultures. We ate a poor lunch and ambled downstream in an open launch on which someone had constructed a rickety and utterly ineffective shelter of coconut matting to keep out, or possibly in, the rain.

Almost at once the rain sheeted down and the boat halted in mid-stream to avoid the enormous logs which float aimlessly and in considerable quantities down to the ocean thousands of miles away. When it rains everything stops on the river to get thoroughly wet, but the storm eventually moved away and round about tea time we arrived, not without first having had to transfer to a sodden dug-out canoe at our rest camp. If you have ever wondered or indeed experienced what it must have been like in a Japanese prison camp on a damp Sunday afternoon, you will know something of the conditions prevailing down river.

The proprietor was American and made a short speech of welcome before offering a glass of rum punch and a warning not to stray off on our own. The sleeping cubicles, lit by kerosene lamps, were open to the jungle, window and shutterless and duckboards led to jungle loos and washing huts. "Not," I told the proprietor, "quite what I expected." "It is exactly what you should have expected," he told me brusquely, "a chance to live for a couple of nights as the Indians do." "But not at these prices surely?" I asked. I got little change and was violently ill all night, my spirits not improved by innumerable walks along the duckboards and a horror that a snake

might be ensconced in the lavatory bowl and I die of snake bites on the bottom, miles from civilisation, leaving my poor wife to cope with my corpse. But in the morning, although it was still raining, I felt well enough to crawl back on to the launch and head upstream for Iquitos. We said farewell to our fellow guests to whom indeed I had hardly said Hallo to before the rigours of the night.

They consisted of an amateur couple of Lepidopterists who seemed surprised we were leaving so abruptly. They were themselves spending an enjoyable week apparently, finding the jungle no problem as long as one remembered to keep moving. Otherwise, they explained, one was liable to be bitten by snakes or spiders or eaten alive by ants. The other guest was a keen French photographer armed with cameras and a quantity of bead necklaces which he was hoping to exchange with neighbouring tribes for shrunken heads.

For myself, on my way back to Iquitos and the friendly vultures, I could see no traces of tribes on the river bank. Only a few isolated huts and a general air of damp depression underlined the fact that to avoid the intolerable boredom of the rain forest the Peruvian is willing to live anywhere, even in a shanty town outside the capital. We got back to Lima just in time for the festival of Our Lord of Miracles and to find everyone wearing purple cloaks and in the streets to watch the procession of their most venerated image, a picture of the crucifixion painted by

a black Christian slave on the wall of a monastery which, unlike the artist and most of the inhabitants, survived the earthquake of 1665. The bishop, mitred and walking delicately under a canopy, followed thirty of his stout churchwardens bearing the heavy golden frame while priests, conducting a massive walk-about, snatched children from the faithful and held them aloft to kiss the painting before returning them hopefully to the right parents. The bands played and the flowers piled up and we partook of very special nougat baked for the occasion while having our pockets most skilfully picked of all loose change but surprisingly none of our credit cards.

By now the sun was shining and we spent two happy days exploring the museums, admiring the elegance of the early Spanish settlers with their golden bedsteads and the examples of pre-Columbian art with their golden penises. We found an extravagantly beautiful hotel and drank Pisco sours and dawdled till the ship was due to sail. We sat high up in the Windjammer Bar still clutching our Piscos and watched the pelicans and the not-so-secret police on the quay fade into the haze and hoped that one day the money will flow in to start the oil flowing out, the copper surfacing, the gold rushing to bring prosperity to this melancholy land where a patient people wait to catch a glimpse of their ruler (through a fence of British sub-machine guns) held at bay by the steel-helmeted members of his bodyguard.



"Actually, George, the financial picture isn't too bright here at Head Office."



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